

Different Aspect of the Nature: - Study of the Travelogues, Rabindra Nath Tagore and Mahasweta Devi

Kailash Rana

Research Scholar, Doctor of Philosophy, Humanity, Department of English
Rabindra Nath Tagore University, Bhopal (RNTU)

Supervisor- Dr. Ritu Kumaran

Supervisor- Doctor of Philosophy, Humanity, Department of English
Rabindra Nath Tagore University, Bhopal (RNTU)

ABSTRACT

Nature is the very first creation of the world; it is quite prior to the origination of human civilization. It has an ultimate power of leading, teaching and ruling over earthlings. It has its dominance over us. We are to follow the rule of nature deliberately or reluctantly, nature leads the world according to its own. We are just to go behind it, else we may fall into problems, we cannot go against the rule of nature. We are directed by nature in fact. When winter descends we need to take out our warm clothes, it is not so that when we take out our warm clothes the winter arrives, in fact winter which is under the function of nature makes us do so. We are simply the followers of nature. History is the witness for the one, who tried to go against nature, made himself out of the right track of life. Nature is providing us with almost each and everything in order to sustain our life on the surface of the world. The natural environment is the best aura for the overall development of any civilization. But the advancing period is compelled to have a compromise with nature and wantonly nature is being exploited. Even after our best efforts we have been facing a lot of problems to protect our nature and environment. Nature holds supernatural power, we are under the clutch of it. World is the product of nature, it is omnipresent and dominating over us. Rules of nature are the great theories for Human civilization, and civilization is a combination of both nature and environment. Activities and the functions of nature are the rule of life. By understanding it we reach to the door of truth, if we miss to access it, a dull life may linger in front of us. By observing nature, we have made ourselves developed up to such an extent that we have started neglecting it, and artificial things are being used to make the presence of nature in an ostentatious way.

Degradation of nature means elimination of lives from the surface of the world as it is an abode to universal creatures, degrading nature has played an important role for extinction of the endangered species. Nature has been formed with the necessary things, everything has an equal importance to hold its place, if any of the chain is going to be loose or disturbed, possibly the whole system is affected. Things of the world, even a crystal of sand is to play its role. Intelligent creatures of the world have to take this responsibility to look after nature then only it can nurture us in a healthy way. Since the origin of the beginning of human civilization we have been in a race to decimate our jungles/ forest and disturb nature for our various purposes. Nature is a gift of god; we must try our best to preserve it.

Rabindra Nath Tagore, a great environmentalist kept on turning his attention towards nature throughout his life. He had a deep intimacy with nature. He travelled to more than 34 countries in different continents of the world. Tagore was deeply concerned with nature. While travelling European countries, Russia, Japan and Bangladesh along with his home land trip, he caught the plight of nature and developed an intimacy with it like Wordsworth. In his travelogues has presented his concern towards nature, he always advocated for harmonious relationship between human and nature. Tagore, a sentinel travelling throughout the world tried his best to convince the people that nature has a potential to produce each and every creature of the world, it has a legacy to maintain everything, without the help of nature human civilization could have hardly been imagined, hence it becomes inevitable for us to save nature. In fact nature is our life. We get each and everything by nature only to support our existence.

Mahasweta Devi, an angel of poor, unspoken, exploited, neglected group of India too dedicated her life especially for the real hidden underdeveloped resident India. She widely travelled to the different states of India like Jharkhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Orissa, and recorded the need of nature, she seriously criticized programmes of government in the natural palaces as it was nature destroying. She remained with tribes deep in the forest for long and made them aware of the importance of nature. Nature is as important as breathing. The travelogues she has written are telling about beautiful nature and its destruction of the landscapes. She saw, nature was rooted in the culture of tribes. Even some of her works are talking about heroes against the destroyer of nature like brokers, sycophants, and middle man

Thus, the paper is going to see the various aspects of nature, its impact, and factors affecting it in the travelogues of Tagore and Devi during colonial and post colonial rule. This paper, is to look out for the places (mentioned above) Tagore and Devi visited. The period is to cover the reality and condition of nature for 150 years. Power, function and the mode of nature is quite familiar to us. We shall see its function and impact with respect of the time.

KEYWORDS: - Nature, nurturer of the earth and earthlings.

INTRODUCTION

Vishvakobi, Rabindra Nath Tagore (7 May, 1861 - 7 Aug, 1941, West Bengal, India), the first Asian Nobel Prize winner, educationist, writer, poet, philosopher, social reformer, painter, travelling throughout the world in more than 34 countries in five continents tried his best to record the nature in his letters, he used to send to his niece Indira, and other relative at various occasions, the perspective of his writing reflects natural aura of the time and place, this same is offering us to have a glance of nature for the paces described in the travelogues of Tagore. His travelogues tell that he convinced the people that nature has a potential to produce each and every creature of the world. He visited Europe two times, Russia, Iran, Bangladesh (at that time India), and in his home land India too. Travelling along Padma and Gorari river he aptly painted the scene like beel. There was a deep influence of nature inside him. He has included the plight of universal nature in his works; he never missed a chance to feel nature in his solitude. His perspective towards politics, education and nature had always been sombre. He was a pioneer of environmental thinking; he deeply valued the relation between human and nature. Being a prolific writer, he has presented many significant subjects in his writing. Which are the concrete sources of contemporary facts.

Mahasweta Devi (14 June, 1926 - 28 July, 2016, Dhaka, Bangladesh) incarnated in the world for the welfare of the remote hidden treasure of the nation, born in Dhaka she travelled a lot in the Indian region and turned her attention towards the exploited and marginalized group of India. She lived with them for a long time and understood their core problem. They were underdeveloped and crushed to show any courage to raise their voice against injustice being done upon them. They remained under the clutch of middle men, brokers and sycophants. For these souls, God sent an angel in the form of Devi. She directly targeted those programmes of government which were somehow responsible for disturbance in nature. And the people who depended on nature for their livelihood were explored by Devi. She travelled among the tribe and saw them with their close issues. They are an inseparable part of our nation, they rely on jungles for their life, we must think about their development, then only we can imagine our nation developing. Devi recorded her issues in Bortika magazine, she wrote these issues while travelling to the Indian states like Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh etc. she developed a great intimacy with the tribal people and made them revealed in front of the government. They were deliberately or reluctantly exploiting nature with the help of some powerful authority. The theme of exploitation in nature comes out of her significant works.

Hence this paper is going to talk about the different aspects of nature found in the travelogues written by Tagore and Devi with their extensive travel. Natural elements and human civilization are two sides of a single coin which has been giving shape to civilization since the creation. Interference in nature means interference, with the whole universe, 'changing nature' is responsible for change in human civilization. The paper is to see what impact has nature made upon humanity according to the culture, tradition and time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to find out the desirable outcome of the paper, travelogues, literary piece of two great souls, Tagore and Devi have been studied, while going through the pieces we find that nature has frequently been changing, as it is its rule, and its great influence is there upon each and every things of the world whether it is living or inanimate. It has its dominance over us. Tagore's first trip was to England when he was just 17 years old as a student in school in Brighton, East Sussex. Later in 1930 for almost one year-long tour he visited countries like Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, and the Soviet Union, he recorded his experiences in his letters during this trip he wrote 'Europe Jatrir Patro' or 'Letters from Europe'. The book 'Letters from an Expatriate in Europe' was published in 2012, which is a collection of his letters or writings, during his European travels. Tagore's 'Spirit of Japan' is a speech delivered at Keio Gijuku University in Tokyo. Tagore strongly made them aware of European imperialism and admired the nature and culture of the place. He has beautifully embodied the joy he got while living under Japanese nature, he accepted it while giving his lecture. He advocated harmonious modernization. 'Glimpses of Bengal' published in 2023 is record of his experience around 1885- 1895, while he was in trip on boat along the bank of Padma and Gorari river - and by the sea too, his letters open various scenes in front us where we find natural aspects of the places and the philosophy Tagore had for nature. He has sketched a very attractive description of nature for the places like- Bondora, Shelidah, Shazadpur, Kaligram, Cuttack, Tiran, Bolpur, Goalunda, Boalia, Natore, Blja, Patisar, Dighapatiya, Culcutta, Pabna, and Kushtea. The scene of nature like Sky, Air, Water, River, Trees, Sunset, Sunrise, moonlight night, rainy scenes, green fields, Crops, Sand banks, Islands, seasonal changes, are some of the natural elements in his work and it reflects that he had rejoiced in these all during his trip. Tagore's 'Selected Short Stories' was published in 1994, beautifully captures the natural aspects of Bengal weaving together myths. The work frequently features river Ganga, its ancient ghats as a part of nature. While writing about the places he has romanced with nature like Wordsworth. 'Letters from an expatriate in Europe' (Europe Prabasir Patro) presents vivid landscapes of nature in Europe. He admires the serene atmosphere of snowfall, Rocky hills, Sunset etc, by sipping tea in open nature. As a sum it may be stated that Tagore has left many pictures of nature with us giving hints about it of his time.

Mahasweta Devi, who herself was a student of the university founded by Tagore, Vishwabharti university. Having the background of writers family writing, was there in her blood. She belonged to the literary family. As a blessing of god, she turned her art as a weapon for the welfare of humanity. She travelled a lot in order to see the success of her life while travelling various corners of the nation. She travelled very deep to the remote people among the tribals group of India who live in the lap of nature. She travelled to Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and recorded her experience for the sake of humanity as an activist. She wrote "Imaginary Maps" when traveling in these states. She has basically raised her voice against the exploited and marginalized group of people. The book is a collection of three stories- The first one part, 'The Hunt' is set in Jharkhand, Palamu the piece states that there was an exploitation over humanity as well as nature. The document proves that the place is full of nature but some people were selling some most precious trees for their personal profit. Nature is being oppressed in this piece. The second one, 'Douloti the Bountiful', depicts a bounded labour system where we find exploitation over humanity and nature by upper class people. The Third one, 'Pterogactyl Pura Saha and Pirtha' reflects the programme of government in which there was loss of nature and people living in the forest as permanent citizen of India who depended completely on nature for their life was going to be affected, struggle against nature can be seen by the people here. Over all these three pieces are telling the contemporary nature of the states. 'Dust on the Road' is the record of her experience about Jharkhand where we see resistance of the people against the people programme because it was nature destroying they were directly going to be affected because of this programme. 'Chhoti Munda and his Arrow' is set very deep into the dense forest of West Bengal, where Chhoti Munda the protagonist of the story kept on rebelling against those programmes of Government which were going to destroy their culture which is very tightly bonded with nature. The loss of nature was a loss of culture there. People thought there, nature to be there for everything. They follow nature as their God and worship the sun, moon, air, river, mountain, trees, animals, nature is present all around them and inside them too. 'Right to the Forest' (Aranyer Adhikar) is work by Devi, the novel is set in Jharkhand telling about the struggle of tribal hero Birsa Munda against the colonial rule for saving their culture, Nature and identity. 'Arjun' a short story by Devi directly tells about decimation of forest and Arjun tree by Shabar tribes. The tree was being cut and sold by some upper class people. Arjun, a medicinal tree was so profitable. The piece depicts an attack upon nature. In her book, 'The book of Hunter' strongly highlights the

struggle of tribal communities in west Bengal, their connection with nature. It shows the impact of mainstream settlements on their way of life. The story revolves around Kalketu, the Shabar hero and Mukundaram, a medieval Brahmin poet.

Apart from these sources, websites like google scholar, some online research papers published upon the same topic have been discovered but a paper telling different natural aspect of places in the travelogues of Rabindra Nath Tagore and Mahasweta Devi have not been seen yet by the researchers, and the aim of this paper is to find out the same outcome.

Methodology/Experimentation

This study employs a Qualitative approach, utilizing textual analysis of selected travelogues of two prominent writer of India Rabindra Nath Tagore like 'Glimpses of the Bengal', 'Spirit of Japan', 'Selected Short Stories', 'Europe Jatrir Patro', and Mahasweta Devi's 'Imaginary Map', 'Dust on the Road' Arjun', 'Chhoti Munda and his Arrow', 'Right to the Forest' (Aranyer Adhikar), 'Arjun' a short story, 'The book of Hunter' along with some latest research papers have been studied. Primary data sources are the texts written by them with respect to the time while travelling to the different places. The works have deeply been studied. As the secondary data some online videos available on different websites have been watched. These were from the educational channels. The real account of life comes out of these works. An inductive method of this research is going to see the real plight of nature of the contemporary period. The effect of policy by the government leaves a deep impression upon the people living under the area. The impact of nature over the environment is next to see. Being both the Bengali writers they originally wrote, some of their work in Bangla but its translated version available offline and online have been read. The works are non-fiction hence this text presents an eye witness proof of the time and the place.

Apart from these all many of the research papers have been accessed at online platforms, the papers are available there but it is in a separate study of either Tagore's work or Devi's. No work could be accessed by me which should give a view of different aspects of nature together in the work of Tagore and Devi. The present paper is to show the nature for the period Tagore and Devi lived in the world. Almost 150 years. Being world class figures their words matter a lot for humanity. And their view towards nature seems to be path finder for us.

Result/ Discussions

After going very deep with the works of two legendary souls of India, Rabindra Nath Tagore and Mahasweta Devi, who travelled a lot throughout their life and caught the sight of the world - nature, its need and impact. They drew their vision in the form of travelogues with their literary art. It is quite clear that humans have always been worried about nature. We may sustain here only if nature is healthy, many scholars keep on barking about nature still no awakening is there, somehow we are compelled to interfere with our nature for some urgent need but futuristic plans are hardly being taken seriously. The work presents a scene where we find that colonial and post colonial powers have always played a trick to interfere with nature. It is the upper class who targeted nature for their personal profit whereas the poor class were spiritually connected with nature and protected it till their last breath. Most of the upper class people have played an important role in converting natural property into personal property. It must be noticed that humans have made an artificial nature to have a natural feeling. In place of natural products we have started using artificial products that resemble natural products. See, a chain is there if we create a system where nature is not respected and wild animals are killed, gradually the forest will definitely be cleared, animals are protectors of nature, and clearance of flora and fauna means a barren land where no life can be imagined. Nature is an ultimate source of livelihood. A nation rich in nature is rich in fact. The people of such a nation live for long and the long life understanding creates innovations. Hence interference in nature means destruction of every aspect of life. History is the witness that when nature was quite healthy the people were of more physical and mental caliber or capacity. The life span of the living organisms has decreased just due to weakness of nature; we have made our environment polluted. That's why we are falling ill

from various diseases day by day. These are all a result of nature disturbance. Natural elements are supporting life on the surface of the world, but what we find with the study of this paper is that some people of the time, in order to fill their pockets, exploited nature. Nature has been in their target always, by name of development, nature has brutally been treated. Both colonial and post colonial systems exploited nature to settle down their estate. They hardly cared about long term ill impact due to interference in nature. Poor people residing in the forest bestowed their life but government programmes, brokers, colonialism, policies of government have played an important role for the degradation of nature.

Conclusion

After the study of the sources, as a conclusion of the paper of the facts, different aspects of the nature, attitude of different social bodies towards nature, during the life of Tagore and Devi. It covers almost 150 years and comes out with the reason that the factors responsible for deadly change in nature are government programmes, brokers, colonialism, policies of government. Government programmes could have been practiced without any harm to nature but it could not be cared for. Colonial and post colonial systems both are responsible for the present pathetic condition of the environment. In spite of talking a lot we fail to save our nature, we must accept responsibility to protect our nature else our next generation is going to die before its birth. Still the same is continuing in disguise, we must be aware of them and as much as possible let's try to save our life, because the fact is that **SAVE NATURE AND SAVE FUTURE**.

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Thank you.

Kailash Rana