

The Universality of the Perception on Indian Women

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Right from Tagore the Bengali writer till now the living Scottish novelist, Roderick Craig Low who has not yet been to India, have well portrayed the Indian women remain the same in their emotions, despite a lot of changes in the political systems and even though they live in any parts of the world.

In Tagore's *The Postmaster* the central character Ratan has played a vital role in the story. She is a simple, humble, honest, loving and caring girl, at the age of 11 has been the house keeper of the postmaster who has come from the busy city of Calcutta, trying to adapt his new lonely life in a remote village of Ulapur. He feels isolated in the village. When he finds leisure hours, he would go to fields in the village and being enthralled by the scenery and write poetry. But to a contrast, he is an icon of rationality. As he has got Ratan's friendship and companionship he feels better. She nurses him, when he has fallen ill. As a reciprocation of it, she has been taught to learn and write .. She is portrayed as an icon of emotions. He decides that he cannot serve in the village as the postmaster anymore, as he feels like a fish out of water in the village. When he leaves the village, she prays him to take her along with him to his place. He offers her his salary for her future and leaves his home without proper explanation. But she refuses to accept his help despite her need and poverty. Even the postmaster too has the feel to meet her again when the boat is about to move. She remains in the village.

Roderick Craig Low's protagonist of his novel *Rewards and Dilemmas* is Miss. Bhavan, the house keeper of Mr Hugh, who is introduced as no more in the beginning. The name of the housekeeper is mentioned only in the end of the novel. The course of action takes place

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in a form of flashbacks. She has fled to Kenya for her livelihood from India. She has her proper education in public school and a degree in a university. She has worked for three years in Kuwait. Later the Gulf war has broken out and made scatter everybody. She has been at a wrong door number by mistake, as a housekeeper and met Mr. Hugh in Kenya, a literary agent with a stylish of British at his 72. "The meeting of the Asian girl and Mr Hugh is an accident more than a design (57)."

The story begins with the death of Mr Hugh. Beyond the grave, Hugh Ballater orchestrates the lives of all around him. "He was a good friend-a good friend to Kenya .He` ll be missed". His friend Dr Ishmael informs his Kenyan friends and his family in London. Mr. Hugh had divorced his wife Virginia, a Black woman, before he moved to Kenya. She has married to a minister after the divorce. His family demands that his funeral must be held in London and he is taken back to London.

The house keeper cannot tolerate his separation by means of his death. She has longed for his love and affection .Though he has addressed her as a house keeper, he always says, 'This is your house' (67) When his daughter Anne Ballater raises a question whether a pretty and young girl can be a housekeeper of a wealthy person like her father. She has been very precise and answered wisely that though her father had been very wealthy they lived simply. She replies to her, 'I don't need more than I got at the moment. ' In fact .I need a good less' (37) .She cries a lot and tells Roberta their friend, ' Poor Mr Hugh....I loved him so much. (230)'

Mr Hugh's wife Virginia starts enquiring her whether she has been with him during his death. Besides to this she wants to know whether she has used to visit Hugh's office on Wednesday. She is very inquisitive to know what Mr Hugh has done to the housekeeper. She is depressed and jealous of her when the will of Mr.Hugh is read out loudly,"that Indian housekeeper. When they came to know that she was given a million and the house in Kenya but not even a word of thanks (74)". Due to this, she starts humiliating Miss. Bhavan till the end.

Mr Hugh's family blames Miss Bhavan that she has been with him just for his property. But she denies that she has not been with him

for mere monetary benefits. She is bold enough to stand by herself. She comes to know Mr Hugh's love for her through his diary after his death. She is so glad to accept his love rather than his property and realises that she too has fallen in love with him.

Miss. Bhavan hands over his house which has been admired and loved by Mr Hugh to the Government of Kenya. She is quiet content with his approval of her love for him. The optimistic note of the young girl about her self-identity is seen at the end of the novel. Though she has lost her relationship and support, she has got enough sources to write a story upon her. She elevates herself from the House keeper to a writer. "Of course she is ready to strive to succeed in her life.....(234)"

Both Ratan and Miss. Bhavan are portrayed as an icon of human emotions. Both the Postmaster and the journalist are much elder to these two girls. Tagore has not given the name of the postmaster till the end, which shows that he has acted only as a postmaster till the end. Similarly, the housekeeper's name is mentioned only in the end of the story when she realises herself. When the postmaster looks back, it shows that he too has a soft corner for Ratan. He and Mr. Hugh are portrayed alike. Mr. Hugh's love for her is known through his diary and the postmaster's turning back to Ratan after his embarking the boat shows his care for her. Both would never see those two girls again in their lives. The postmaster, "At one time he had an impulse to go back, and bring away along with him that lonesome waif, forsaken of the world (82)" Ratan remains in the village because of her illiteracy. Miss. Bhavan evolves herself to become a writer due to her confidence that she has gained due to literacy. Hence Indian women are portrayed emotionally alike by a Pre-Independent Indian writer and a foreign writer more than half a century of Independent India.

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