



Role Of The Short Stories Of Rabindranath Tagore In Language Development At Secondary Level Students

Rupa Ghosh* and Dr. Amalendu Paul**

* Research Scholar, Department of Education, Diamond Harbour Women's University.

** Associate Professor, Department of Education, Diamond Harbour Women's University.

Abstract

Language is a collection of symbols, which may be spoken or manual (signed) or written by which human beings, as a member of social groups and participants in its culture, express themselves. Language development refers to the growth and improvement of language skills in an individual over time. The present paper attempts to make a study about the role of Tagore's short stories in language development of the secondary level students. Here the researcher has selected five short stories by Rabindranath Tagore namely 'Denapaona' 'Jibita O Mrita' 'Nishithe' 'Streer Patra' 'Laboratory'. The study deals with many aspects of language development. This study is purely qualitative in nature and here content analysis method has been applied. We can notice that all components of language are there in the selected short stories by Rabindranath Tagore. By reading these short stories the secondary level students can develop their imagination, critical thinking, creativity as well as language and social skills.

Keywords: Short Stories, Rabindranath Tagore, Secondary Level Students, Language Development, Components of Language.

Introduction:

Language development is a central objective of secondary education, as this stage plays a crucial role in shaping students' communication skills, critical thinking, and emotional expression. Effective language learning at the secondary level requires meaningful exposure to rich and engaging texts that go beyond mechanical practice of grammar and vocabulary. Literature, especially short stories, serves as a powerful medium for developing language skills in an integrated and natural manner. Rabindranath Tagore, one of the greatest literary figures of India, made remarkable contributions to the genre of short stories.

His stories are known for their simplicity of language, psychological depth, and profound portrayal of human emotions, social realities, and moral values. These qualities make Tagore's short stories highly suitable for secondary level students, as they encourage active reading, thoughtful reflection, and expressive communication. The present study focuses on examining the role of Rabindranath Tagore's short stories in the language development of secondary level students. It explores how these stories contribute to the development of form, content and use of language along with four domains of language; listening, speaking, reading, and writing, vocabulary, grammar, and critical thinking skills. In the context of the National

Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes holistic, experiential, and literature-based learning, this study seeks to highlight the educational relevance of Tagore's short stories as effective tools for language teaching at the secondary stage. NEP 2020 has focussed upon the promotion of Indian classical languages. From the above examples, we can notice that Rabindranath Tagore used many Indian classical languages in his works. Actually, Tagore realised the importance of classical languages and their educational implications. By reading these stories learners can develop their vocabulary and language proficiency. In this study, the researcher has selected five short stories by Rabindranath Tagore namely 'Denapaona' 'Jibita O Mrita' 'Nishithe' 'Streer Patra' 'Laboratory'. By reading these short stories the secondary level students can develop their imagination, critical thinking, creativity as well as language and social skills.

Definition of Important Terms:

Short Stories: Short stories are brief works of fiction that focus on a single incident, theme, or character. They are usually concise in length and aim to create a strong impression or convey a meaningful idea within a limited space.

Rabindranath Tagore: Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) was one of the greatest literary figures of India and a global cultural icon. He was a poet, short story writer, novelist, dramatist, philosopher, educator, painter, and social thinker.

Secondary Level Students: According to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, secondary level students are learners who study in the Secondary Stage of school education, which includes Classes 9 to 12 and 14 to 18 years age group.

Language Development: Language development is the process through which individuals acquire the ability to understand, use, and communicate through language. It involves the gradual growth of skills related to listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Components of Language: The components of language are sounds (phonology), words (morphology), sentences (syntax), meaning (semantics), and use (pragmatics). Together, they enable effective and meaningful communication.

Review of the Related Studies:

Sarkar, S. (2018) in his study entitled "Impact of the Short Stories of R.N. Tagore on the Language Development of the Children" shows that Tagore's short stories have significant impact on secondary level students. By discussing some short-stories the researcher enlightened the impact of Tagore's short stories on language development, imagination with social relationship.

Singh, R. & Singh S. (2017) in "Rabindranath Tagore's Contribution in Education" has discussed Rabindranath Tagore's educational theory that reflects Tagore's belief that education does not mean merely gaining of some information but preparation for a harmonious life with the surrounding world.

Singh, B. (2015) in his M. Phil. Dissertation entitled "Short Stories of Rabindranath Tagore: A Study" has made a study of three particular aspects from selected short stories of Tagore, namely, women, nature and environment and human feelings and sentiments. His analysis of the human feelings and sentiments as portrayed has been of particular importance for purpose of the present research. In this connection he has attempted to understand the many facts of human relations as it is reflected in the writings of the great humanist Tagore who had a great "concern with the interests and needs of human beings".

Rukmani, R.C (2013) had done research on 'A study of Children's Vocabulary'. The findings of research work was as; (i) by oral calculating / measuring total 1232 words were found, out of it 821 words were of textbook. (ii) The oral vocabulary proportion of the students was 63.58 %. This proportion shows the 51.85 % were textbook vocabulary.

Srivastava, S.K. (2012) studies on the title 'A study of Written Vocabulary of the Sixth Class children in Delhi Schools', the conclusion of the present study was (i) Girls were superior than boys in language matter (ii) Vocabulary of Girls was observed at all three social-economical level (iii) Performance of upper social and economic level students was better.

Research Question:

Based on the above description, the research question can be stated as:

“What is the Role of the Short Stories of Rabindranath Tagore in Language Development at Secondary Level Students?”

Objective of the Study:

The researcher has determined the objective of this study as:

To find out the role of the short stories of Rabindranath Tagore in language development at secondary level students.

Statement of the Problem:

The researcher determines the problem of this study as:

“Role of the Short Stories of Rabindranath Tagore in Language Development at Secondary Level Students.”

Significance of the Study:

Short stories are very close to human life. Every human being like to hear and read stories. So, story -telling method is received cordially in teaching learning process. Rabindranath Tagore was a great philosopher as well as an educationalist. His short stories have great influence on child development. Rabindranath Tagore's short stories are not only literary masterpieces but also powerful pedagogical tools that promote comprehensive language development, cultural understanding, and holistic growth of secondary level students. Language is a powerful tool of communication. Reading the short stories of Rabindranath Tagore, the secondary level students should develop their language proficiency that leads to all round development. In this perspective this study is very significant.

Methodology of the Study:

This study is purely **Qualitative** in nature because it is an in-depth exploration of some approaches and developing a detailed understanding of a central phenomenon on the basis of content analysis. **Content Analysis** method along with internal and external criticisms of the content has been applied on the primary source of data.

Contents (Short Stories of Rabindranath Tagore):

- 'Denapaona'
- 'Jibita O Mrita',
- 'Nishithe'
- 'Streer Patra',
- 'Laboratory'

Critical Analysis of the Contents:

Rabindranath Tagore was a great language artist. His experimentation with language is notable. His short stories are very helpful to develop language proficiency among the secondary level students. There are three components of language such as;

- **Form:** It includes Phonology, Morphology, Syntax.
- **Content:** Semantics.
- **Use:** Pragmatics.

Phonology is the study of the patterns of sounds in a language, how speech sounds are organised in the mind and used to convey meaning. In the story 'Nishithe', zamindar Dakshinacharan babu's addressing "doctor! doctor!" or his fear about first wife "o ke, o ke, o ke go!". Here the narrator has stressed upon the sounds and overall speech.

Morphology is a branch of linguistics that involves the study of the grammatical structure of words and how words are formed and varied within the lexicon of any given language. For example; in the story 'Denapaona', in the word 'chheleder' two morphemes are seen; 'chhele' and in plural 'der.' Similarly in the story 'Laboratory', the word 'Aladiner' two morphemes are 'Aladin' and 'er'. Thus, morphology is observed in the selected short stories.

Syntax is the part of linguistics that studies the structure and formation of sentences. It explains how words and phrases are arranged to form correct sentences. Bengali language follow Subject-Object-Verb in its sentence formation. Examples of syntax in Tagore's short stories are; "Ami stree ke loiya Allahabad e gelam." (Nishithe). "Emon somoy Sripati ghore probesh korilo." (Jibita O Mrita) etc. Here Tagore has put importance in sentence formation.

Semantics deals with the source of words, meaning of words and relation between them in grammatically. Semantics is also very helpful in increasing vocabulary among the learners. Tagore's short stories are a source of vocabulary. He has used different sources of language in his short stories which help in understanding the meaning of the texts; some examples are:

- In the story 'Nishithe', we can notice the impact of **Sanskrit language**. Here Tagore has used some verses of 'Raghuvamsa' by Kalidas. In the story 'Streer Patra' Tagore used some Sanskrit Tatsama words like 'Sannipatik Jor' means Typhoid, 'Mukti' means release; From the story 'Jibita O Mrita' 'Sinchan' means irrigation, 'Hritspandan' means heartbeat, 'Skandha' means shoulder. From 'Laboratory' 'Dedippoman Chhatra' bright student, 'Pingalbarna' means sorrel/brown colour. In the story 'Denapaona' 'Satantra' means separate, 'Akrosh' means outrage, 'Pira' means disease/suffering.
- We can note some examples of the use of **Arabic** language; that are: 'Tamasa' means fun or play, 'Manjur' means to grant (Strir Patra); 'Imarat' means building or structure, 'Tajjub' means surprise or wonder, 'Duniya' means the world (Laboratory).
- Tagore also used **Hindi** language in his short stories. Some examples are: 'Hangama' means a lot of noise and confusion (Strir Patra), in the story 'Laboratory' we can see hindi conversation in Punjabi guard character: "Babuji beimani matt kar".
- We can also see the impact of **English** language in Tagore's short stories, such as: 'Pump' (Nishithe), Engineer, Genius, Character, Stupid (Laboratory),

Pragmatics is the use of language in different perspectives. It helps the learners to understand different approaches of languages. It is used to clarify the inner meaning of a text. Some examples of pragmatics in the selected short stories are:

- “Raybahadurs’ became famous about the funeral ceremony of their elder wife as the idol immersion of Raychaudhuries’ within the district.” (Denapaona)

Here Rabindranath Tagore highlights the oppressed form of women in a patriarchal society. Cremation of the wife after her death is compared to the abandonment of idols. When Nirupama was alive, she did not receive any respect in her in-laws' house, but after her death, she was cremated with luxury. Rabindranath satirizes this. We do not give dignity to anything while it is alive. Cremation of the dead body is a matter of expressing one's own achievements, there is a sense of pride in it, which is never desirable in a civilized society.

- “Kadambini died to prove she was not dead.” (Jibita O Mrita)

Life means to live both physically and mentally. If any of these is lacking, this is not called alive. But in the story, Kadambini was alive physically and died mentally. One day, when she fainted, everyone thought she was dead and went to cremate her. But in adverse circumstances, when she went missing and returned to the home, everyone considered her as a ghost. Because she was dead to everyone by then. No one acknowledges Kadambini's existence. In this way, she dies mentally and at the end of the story, she commits suicide to prove her existence. Therefore, the quote under discussion becomes very relevant and significant at the end of the story.

- “If you want a wife who is devoted to her husband then first match the vows.” (Laboratory)

To become a chaste wife, at first, the union of the vows or opinions of the husband and the wife should be matched. The contribution of both the husband and the wife to the family is undeniable. An ideal marital relationship is based on mutual understanding, support, mental peace etc. between the husband and the wife. But in a patriarchal society, it is believed that only the wife should listen to everything the husband says or always serve him, then only that wife is a true chaste wife. Rabindranath has satirized the patriarchal society here and defined the ideal husband-wife relationship. The quotation of this story is very meaningful.

- “It is also worth considering why the play's humour is only directed at the saris of Bengali women and not at the kilts of Bengali heroes.” (Streer Patra)

The image of women's oppression in a patriarchal society is revealed here. In that society, all the blame was on women. Boys had no blame. Therefore, even though girls committed suicide, no image of boys committing suicide was found at that time. The social elite of that time considered it fashionable for girls to commit suicide. In protest against this, the storyteller said the following.

Findings:

The short stories of Rabindranath Tagore are important as they are written in such a language and a tone that can easily enter into the mind of readers. Form, Content and Use - all the components of language are there in the selected short stories and they are also relevant with the theme of these stories. Form is the basic element of any language. It helps to construct a sentence. If sentence is not formed, language becomes meaningless. The selected short stories help in formation of sentence. Content is an important part of any language. It helps to increase vocabulary. Tagore uses different sources of words and language in the selected stories. It makes learners grammatically strong and confident about the usage of language in different aspects. The last component of our study is the use of language. It is an expressive quality which make people socialized, imaginative, critical thinker and creative. Tagore shows different dimensions about the usage of language in his short stories. His stories are very helpful in language proficiency and development.

Discussion:

In a study (Sarkar, S., 2018) it was found that Tagore's short stories have significant impact on language development, imagination and social relationship among secondary level students, our study also supports this. But our study gives extra attention on the content and its use of the short stories of Rabindranath Tagore. Word meaning and its usage in various aspects play an important role in language development at secondary level students. The findings of a previous study (Srivastava, S.K., 2012) was girls are superior than boys in language matter; but our study doesn't find any information regarding this as the study is purely qualitative in nature, here only the role of the short stories of Rabindranath Tagore at secondary level students has been discussed through various content analysis and the role is significant.

Conclusion:

There can hardly be any doubt that any branch of literature is capable to enlighten the human souls. It evokes the thought process in human being and thereby assists the development of mind and soul. Language is the path to understand and express oneself within the world. Language can also socialize oneself. Tagore's short stories are very essential to develop one's cognitive and affective domain. Tagore's short stories play very important role in language development among the secondary level students. Tagore was an artist of language. His experimentation over the language is notable. By reading the short stories students can understand the word and sentence formation, they can increase their vocabulary and also can know how one language can use in different perspectives; that means the learner can realise the usage of language. Thus, Tagore's short stories play very essential role in language development.

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