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SOCIAL INJUSTICE IN RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S MUKTA-DHARA

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ABSTRACT

Social injustice is based on the concepts of violation of human rights, inequality in gender and slavery systems manifested in the everyday lives of people at every level of society. The authors who have written about social injustice are Rabindranath Tagore, Mulk Raj Anand, Dr.Ambedkar, Edwin Moses, Sheena Kaimal. Subhra Goswami, Sumit Sharma, M.S.Pradeep, Supriya, Tapashree Ghosh. Rabindranath Tagore's *Mukta-dhara* shows various social injustices against the people of Shiv-tarai. It deals with the violation of human rights against Suman, male chauvinism of the king Ranajit and economic crisis by erecting a wall across the Nandhi pass road.

Introduction

Social injustice is based on the concepts of violation of human rights. It is manifested in the everyday lives of people at every level of society. The authors who have written about social injustice are Rabindranath Tagore, Mulk Raj Anand, Dr.Ambedkar, Edwin Moses, Sheena Kaimal. N, Arjun Singh, Subhra Goswami, Prafull D.Kulkarni, Sangeetha G.Avachar, Kalaiyarasan, Md.Zillur Rahman, Sumit Sharma, M.S.Pradeep, Supriya, Tapashree Ghosh. They have raised their voices in their works against the social injustices.

Social injustice in Mukta-Dhara

Rabindranath Tagore has clearly presented the social injustice of violating the human rights. His play *Muktadhara* consists of such social injustices. It takes its name from mountain stream named *Mukta-dhara* which means a free rivulet. The drama is full of social injustices that vex the modern world-the misuse of science by men, the pursuit of pleasure and

the worship of the machine race and the system of education.

The king of Uttarakut, a small kingdom named Ranajit builds a dam over the river which presents the people of Shiv-tarai from irrigating their fields. By resisting the flow of water, the king Ranajit wants to make the people of Shiv-tarai depend on him for food items. This causes great social injustice in the hearts of the people of Shiv-tarai for not having water supply. A dam is necessary for irrigating the field. The king has built the dam in order to make famine and starvation in the neighbouring country. After building the dam, the people of Shiv-tarai cannot produce any crops. They suffer a lot. The king does not bother about their sufferings. He wants to collect taxes from Shiv-tarayans. He does not show them mercy. The king Ranajith says "Taxes two years in arrears! There they have been plenty of famines in Shiv-tarai before this but they always used to pay their taxes." (Rabindranath Tagore 17)

The king has made injustice to the pilgrims who worship Lord Bhairava. The statue of Lord

Bhairava is located near the dam looks majestic. While comparing the height of the statue of Lord Bhairava, the dam looks so high. It prevents the pilgrims from worshipping Lord Bhairava. A pilgrim who passes the dam gets amazed seeing its majestic appearance. He says "Ugh! It looks like a demon's head, a grinning skeleton head, lying in wait to devour your city in its sleep. To have it before your eyes night and day will dry up your souls like dead wood. The sight of the thing (dam) so suddenly today makes me shudder. It seems like blasphemy that it should soar so high above the temple tower" (Rabindranath Tagore 10). One of the pilgrims says "I come every year at this season. But I have never known such a blocking up the sky above the temple. The sight of that thing (dam) so suddenly today makes me shudder". (Rabindranath Tagore 10) This dam is constructed against the wish of God. It restricts the pilgrims from worshipping Lord Bhairava. Injustice is implicated against the people of Shiv-tarai. The power that God gives to man has been abused. It is this power which is used ruthlessly for the destruction of man. Tagore has tried to prove that this is the age of violence and social injustice which occurs as man does something against the wish of God.

The king Ranajit constructs the wall across the Nandhi pass road in order to stop the trade of Shiv-tarayans with neighbouring countries. He can import everything from Shiv-tarai at low cost. He causes injustice to Shiv-tarayans. "Ranajit rests by the roadside when the play starts, waiting to go with his ministers to the temple to participate in a festival there to behold in honour of the construction of the dam. The temple priests are getting ready to perform the rites. A procession of devotees comes along chanting a hymn of Bhairava, the Lord of Terror. A pilgrim from a foreign land who attends the retrieval regards the machine (dam) as an evil thing". (Rabindranath Tagore 9)

King Ranajit performs some atrocities by seizing the men for laborious work in the construction of the dam. A messenger says "After all these years you have finished the dam on Mukta-dhara waterfall. Again and again it has burst, many men have been crushed under earth and sand, many others have been swept in floods" (Rabindranath

Tagore 12) This statement shows that the king Ranajith does not consider about the loss of human lives. He does not know the value of human life. He looks man as a machine. Ignorance of a human value is a social injustice.

Suman is the son of Amba. He is made as a slave. He is washed away by water while constructing the dam. His mother is not informed of her son's death. She is not given justice for the loss of her son. Her appeal is unheard and ignored. Amba says "Suman! My Suman! [To the citizen] All the rest have come back, baba, but my Suman hasn't come home yet. They took him somewhere. I had gone to worship in the temple, when I came back they had taken him" (Rabindranath Tagore 11) Tagore proves that women are not given importance. No men can be forced to do work without their consent. But the king Ranajit does injustice by misusing his power.

Dhananjaya stands against injustice. He is an advocate of non-violence like Mahatma Gandhi. He says, "Won't stop the storm but hold your rudder steady and you win." (Rabindranath Tagore 34). He inspires people of Shiv-tarai to fight for their lawful rights. He is a peaceful warrior.

As soon as you can hold on your heads

Nothing has power to hurt you

The roots of violence will cub.....

Nothing can hurt your manhood

For that is a flame of fire (Rabindranath Tagore 48)

Dhananjay has been bound with a rope by the Uttarakut citizens. He is compared to a veena and the tightly bound rope to the tuned strings. The minister is God. He believes that God proposes and man disposes. Even the king is dependent on king's will. No king can be powerful unless he believes that the real master of the throne is God not king himself. He takes steps to destroy the tyrannous of Abhijit. "The play is laid in the mountain land of Uttarakut; the people of the north, on a road leading to its mountain temple of Bhairava. In a mango garden by the roadside stands the tent of king Ranajit. The play begins with the procession of devotees' prayer across the stage singing song. Victory, Lord of terror

Shankara!" (Rabindranath Tagore 77) The play ends with the same line.

Mukta-Dhara has two important issues- man against machine and the other non-violence against violence. The play ends with the death of the crown prince. Abhijit releases *Mukta-Dhara* from the imprisonment of the dam. His spirit is shown as triumphant over the injustice forces unleashed by the king. Some injustices are made to the people of Shiv-tarai, but the crown prince stood against these injustices through the destruction of dam in order to free flow of water.

Conclusion

The title, *Mukta-Dhara* is a perfect symbol of individual freedom. God has created every man in his own image. The king should always be humble before the almighty. The picture of social inequality, exploitation of the poor's manpower and unhealthy consequences of economic crisis has made *Muktadhara* a bundle of social injustice.

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