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# CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH IN INDIA

A Peer-Reviewed Multi-Disciplinary International Journal

Volume - 3 : Issue - 1 : March, 2013

**Deepak Nanaware**

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## Editorial.....

It gives me immense pleasure to present the first issue of the year 2013. Contemporary Research in India has successfully entered into the third year of its publication service. The readers, contributors and researchers have constantly been communicating their feedbacks and reviews which gives us scope for the development and innovation. Contemporary Research in India has always attempted to maintain and adhere to its vision and goal of propagating research writings from the different subjects and faculties worldwide. Research as the term suggests is the sign of man's curiously and investigation; however, the flair for the search should be done with certain methodology and skill. Thus, it forms art of scientific investigation.

Contemporary Research in India has provided platform for the researchers for the access to the contemporary investigations; which, has given them an idea of the direction of the research undergoing in their respective faculties. This is the matter of great importance as the education and higher education, specially, has acquired immense importance during present times all over the world. Along with importance, the expectations from it have also increased. At the global level, there are infinite innovations in all the fields and there is rapid collaboration and dissemination of ideas alongwith experimentation in terms of greater pluralism, the deliberate cultivation of diverse models and greater specialisations identifying new areas. Technology has also given an opportunity for Universities and individuals to share knowledge and integrate effectively with their peers and stakeholders. The scholars all over the world have been joining up research efforts across institutions to share resources, cultivate areas of excellence and so on.

It is fact that all the economies of the world have been trying to increase the percentage of enrollment in higer education. Actual percentage of the enrollment is need of the day as more dynamic economies require a greater supply of well-educated graduates. Thus, the need of the day is that higher education should become more diverse in order to respond to a range of conflicting pressures. These challanges and oddities of present higher education systems around the world could be attended by the organised effort through optimum attention to innovation in higher education; which, would be attended by conservatism of institutions, emphasis on research, and intercultural and intersocial exchange of knowledge to which Contemporary Research in India propagates.

*Deepak Nanaware,  
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*Contributors are requested to forward their writings to Deepak Nanaware, Editor-in-Chief and Publisher, Contemporary Research in India. The articles will be Published after thorough review by experts.*

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## WOMANHOOD IN TAGORE'S PLAY CHITRA

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**Abstract:** Rabindranath Tagore wrote *Chitra*, a lyrical drama in one act, in the year 1913 when he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. The drama is based on an episode in *Mahabharata* when Arjuna was on the course of his wanderings to fulfill a vow of penance. He came to Manipur after having married Ulupi, the Naga Princess. He came across Princess Chitragandha who was wandering freely within the city. He was enchanted by the beauty of her and asked her father Chitravahana for marriage. The King told him that he has brought up Chitragandha as a Prince and not Princess. He agreed to marry his daughter on the condition that their child should become the King of Manipur. Arjuna lived there for three years. This episode of Arjuna and Chitragandha is described in *Mahabharata* in just nine verses. Like Shakespeare, Tagore deviated from the original story to suit his requirements. In the play *Chitra* is not that beautiful. Here she wants to marry Arjuna when she looks at him. But his denial awakens her spirits and she lures Arjuna by the borrowed beauty for one day. The drama is a beautiful presentation of man-woman relationship. Here woman is shown more powerful than man.

**Keywords:** Womanhood, Rabindranath Tagore.

*Chitra* is a lyrical drama written by Rabindranath Tagore in blank verse in one act and nine scenes. It is based on an incident from *Mahabharata*. Though the drama has the incident from *Mahabharata*, it reveals the true spirit of an Indian woman. Tagore's *Chitra* is not a common woman who believes in serving her man and his family only. She has the spirit of an individual which is ready to retaliate if hurt.

Arjuna came to Manipur during the course of his wanderings to fulfill a vow of penance. There he saw Chitragandha, the beautiful daughter of Chitravahana, the king of the country. He was fascinated by her charms and beauty. He asked the king for the hand of his daughter in marriage. The king asked him who he was. On learning that he was Arjuna, the Pandava prince, the king told him that one of his ancestors in the kingly line, named Prabhanjana, had not got a child for quite a long time. In order to obtain an heir he performed severe penances. He was granted a boon by Lord Shiva, who was pleased with his austerities, that he and his successors would each have one child. It so happened that the promised child had invariably been a son. Chitravahana was an exception. He was the first to have only a daughter to perpetuate his race, whom he named as Chitragandha. He, therefore, always treated her as a son and had also made her his heir. The son that would be born to her would perpetuate the race of the king. He demanded from Arjuna that son as the price for the marriage. On this condition Arjuna could take her in marriage. Arjuna made a promise to the king that the son born of this union would perpetuate his race and took Chitragandha as his wife. He lived in her father's capital for three years. When a son was born to them, he

embraced his wife with affection, and bidding adieu to her and her father, set out again on his travels.

Tagore used this story but changed certain facts. In *Mahabharata*, Chitragandha is a submissive woman who obeys her father and readily marries Arjuna. Her ambition and desires are not explored. Not even much is written about her. The incident talks about Arjuna. But Tagore's *Chitra* is a strong woman. She sees Arjuna when he was lying on a bed of dried leaves. She pricked him in contempt and "he leapt up like a sudden tongue of fire from a heap of ashes" (Scene I). She fell in love with him and proposed him but he denied her saying that he was not fit to be her husband.

Denied by Arjuna, she became restless. She had been treated by father as son and not as a daughter. She never knew what rejection is. She went to Madana, the god of love and Vasanta, the god of Spring and pleaded before them a single day of superb beauty. Gods fulfilled her wish. The next day with the perfect beauty, at the river bank, Arjuna saw her and fell in love with her. She became very happy but at the same time realized that the man whom she loved had fallen in love with the borrowed beauty. As she was waiting for him she accepted him as her husband. They lived there for three years. Arjuna became so impressed by her that he wanted to take her home. But she denies saying,

"I am Chitra. No goddess to be worshipped, nor yet the object of common pity to be brushed aside like a moth with indifference. If you deign to keep me by your side in the path of danger and daring, if you allow me to share the great duties of your life, then you will know my true self." (Scene IX).

They consumed love and Arjuna left her giving the fruit of it in her womb.

There is little similarity between Tagore's Chitra and the epic *Chitragandha*. In both the cases the daughter has been treated as a *Putrika*. But in Tagore's Chitra, Arjuna never met her father and asked her hand in marriage. In Mahabharata Chitragandha had been shown as beautiful but here she is quite plain. She wears men's attires and goes on hunting. She even has the desire to defeat Arjuna in single combat. Chitra is an ambitious woman who wants to share equal rights with men and doesn't consider herself inferior to them by any way. To retain her identity as a woman she decides to stay where she had been.

Tagore is an inheritor of the great literary tradition of Bengal, which regarded a woman as the primordial energy of the universe. For Tagore women are not abstract entities but creations of flesh and blood. His women characters are never static and are not the products of mere artistic control of manipulation. Chitra is a fusion of two kinds of women – the emotional and the tranquilizing. There is an evolution in her character which can be traced from dream to reality and the transition from the fire of flowery spring to the mellow fruitfulness of Autumn.

In the play when Chitra is denied by Arjuna she did not lose heart. She goes to god Madana and tells, "I am not the woman who nourishes her despair in lonely silence, feeding it with nightly tears and covering it with the daily patient smile, a widow from birth. The flower of my desire shall never drop into the dust before it has ripened to fruit." (Scene I).

When she gets what she wanted, she becomes very happy. But later she realizes that Arjuna loves not her true self but the borrowed one. Here Tagore has very symbolically explained the meaning of beauty. Before falling in love we all know that we look good but someone comes in our life and makes us realize that we are

beautiful. That person becomes our love. It is Chitra that becomes a woman when she realizes that there is a man before her. But this happiness does not last long. Her realization of self makes her tell Arjuna,

"When a woman is merely a woman, when she winds herself round and round men's hearts with her smiles and sobs and service and caressing endearments then she is happy. Of what use to her are learning and great achievements?" (Scene VIII).

Tagore at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century is talking about the consciousness of a woman. He is trying to show woman not as a second sex but the equal one. Unaware of the fact who Chitra really is, Arjuna enjoys her. After some days he gets tired of the sensual pleasures and becomes interested in the stories told by the villages about the Princess Chitra. He comes to know that she is a brave warrior and a very good care taker of the people. Chitra understands the eagerness of Arjuna to meet Chitra, the Princess. She reveals herself before him and shocked by the revelation, Arjuna says, "Beloved, my life is full."

In Mahabharata the story of Chitragandha and Arjuna is told in just nine verses and Tagore in just nine scenes has given full justice to the character Chitra. She is a daughter, a warrior and also a good wife and more than all these she is a woman in the true sense of the word. She is never inferior to her counterpart. The birth of the child is the realization of life's purpose for both of them.

Tagore is a true feminist who portrays woman as equal to her counterpart. In this drama love is reason of meeting between Arjuna and Chitra but Chitra is not ready to lose her identity for the sake of her love. She knows her responsibilities for her nation. Now women want freedom but at the same time they want protection from men and they talk of feminism. Tagore's Chitra is a message to the modern woman. If a woman asks or requests for security and dependence, her talk of womanhood and its spirit is useless.

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