

Role of Women as an Environmentalist in Ruskin Bond's Short Stories

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Ruskin Bond presents the role of women as an environmentalist. He is an advocate of ideas of environment conservation. He gives importance to the female protagonists who contribute a lot for the conservation protection of nature. He tries to portray the bond of relationship of women with the nature.

The present research paper is an attempt to study the Role of Women as an Environmentalist in the selected short stories of Ruskin Bond. The researcher has selected two short stories of Ruskin Bond for study. The researcher has studied the short stories like *The Blue Umbrella* and *Sita and the River* for the present study.

Ruskin Bond is a well-known Indian short-story writer. His characters and themes are not borrowed from the life of jungle but also from life of society. Bond handles the range of various themes in his short stories. They are from nature, peaceful co-existence, human values, love for freedom, Positive attitude towards nature, continuity of life, and social problem during period of partition between India and Pakistan. He conveys the message of conservation of environment through his literature. It is the need of an hour to concentrate more on the protection of environment and tribal life around us because it is national heritage of any country. Ruskin Bond is an ambassador of the jungle life. His ideas are completely associated with animals, birds, tribal people, mountain, hills, valleys, wild animals. Ruskin Bond looks at nature as friend, philosopher, teacher, preacher and guide like William Wordsworth.

The Blue Umbrella is a beautiful short story of Ruskin Bond. It has different themes. The story deals with the themes like rural people are cooperative and broad minded. Binya is the central character of the short story. She is lover of nature. She is lovely, cooperative, kind, mature, broadminded, obedient, practical and strong girl. Binya possess all the qualities of mountain girls. The narrator presents the character as "Like most mountain girls, Binya was quite sturdy, fair of skin, with pink cheeks and dark eyes and her black hair tied in pigtail. She wore pretty glass bangles on her wrists, and a necklace of glass beads." (Bond, *The Blue Umbrella* 5)

Binya and her members of family are the lovers of the animals. They treat animals as human being. They respect them as their relatives. Even names of the animals are also like human beings. Family of Binya address cows by the human names. Binya calls cow as "NEELU! Neelu!... Neelu-Blue was the name of the blue-grey cow. The other cow, which was white, was called Gori, meaning Fair One." (Bond, *The Blue Umbrella* 1). It shows that people in the mountain regions love animals as human beings which highlight the role of Binya as an Environmentalist. Binya worships nature as a God and considers the organs of animals as good fortune of omen. The narrator presents, "From the necklace hung a leopard's claw. It was a lucky charm, and Binya always wore it." (Bond, *The Blue Umbrella* 5). It shows the message that animals should be protected because organs of animals have also divine qualities. Indians believe in the divinity of nature and its objects through wearing of leopard's claw.

Binya believes in the freedom of animals. She allows her cows to roam freely in the forest on the contrary her brother pulls them forcefully. Cows prefer company of Binya. The narrator remarks that "The cows preferred having Binya with them, because she let them wander. Bijju pulled them by their tails if they went too far." (Bond, *The Blue Umbrella* 3). Animals love those who give them freedom. It presents Binya is true lover and care taker of animals. Some people of urban areas are more dangerous and inhuman than animals. City life is crowded which is far from the peace and tranquility. Binya likes the life of mountain area. Darkness and loneliness of forest is not serious matter for her. On the contrary she is disturbed by the crowd in the market. The narrator presents, "Binya belonged to the mountains, to this of the Himalayans known as Garhwal. Dark forests and lonely hilltops held no terrors for her. It was only when she was in the market town, jostled by the crowds in bazaar, that she felt rather nervous and lost." (Bond, *The Blue Umbrella* 3-4). It indicates forest is safe and convenient for Binya rather than town crowds of town life. Some people in urban areas are selfish and do not like to think about other people. By preferring to live in the forest or mountain life she conveys the message of love for the mountain and forest which is the duty of an environmentalist.

The second short story *Sita and the Rivers* deals with love of Sita for river and natural surroundings. The character of Sita and her life on the river is the dominant factor of the story her love and care for the nature is really appreciable. She is a girl of ten years. She is an innocent, uneducated, bold and an all-rounder. The people who live in the company

of nature always face adversity and even in adversity also they worship nature as their God. Sita matches herself the nature whatever the circumstances the has. ~~Nature takes away the loneliness of men.~~ Some people accept the adversity of nature and suppose it as a part of the life and Sita is one of them. God is the creator of the. The story also appeals that we should preserve the nature, especially trees. Company of trees makes us strong and happy. They perform a remarkable role in our life. Sita in the story never feels sad and upset because of trees. The narrator states that "And as the tree moved out on the river and the little island was lost in the swirling waters, Sita forgot her fear and her loneliness. The tree was taking her with it. She was not alone" (Bond, *Dust on the Mountain* 231). It means she indirectly conveys the message of love for the trees. Company of nature sometimes provides an opportunity to women to express themselves with nature. They help to make earth firm. If we preserve the trees they are very helpful. The Peepal tree is very useful for all human beings as well as animals and birds. The narrator has presented peepal tree he says that "The peepal tree was about three hundred. It provided shelter for the birds who visited it from the mainland" (Bond, *Dust on the Mountain* 219). The tree is useful for many forces in the society and nature.

Binya and Sita are the true environmentalists presented by Ruskin Bond. Through their activities in the company nature and animals they have proved it. Both have strong sense of attraction for nature. They both are the lover of human values like equality and freedom to the nature. They are against the forceful dragging of animals. They worship nature as the God.

Conclusion

As women love and protect her children and other kin and kith in the same way they have potential to love nature around us. They are true environmentalists. Many such women are there who sacrificed their lives in protection of nature. Though Binya and Sita are girls yet they possess the quality of love for nature. Ruskin Bond describes the environment and people around the mountain and rivers basin. The adversities and willing acceptance of adversities by hilly people especially girls are shown by the narrator.

Works Cited :

Bond Ruskin. *The Blue Umbrella*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt Ltd, 1992. Print.

_____. *Dust on the Mountain*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1996. Print.