

VAGRANTS IN THE VALLEY: A CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF RUSKIN BOND'S VIEWS ON ADOLESCENCE

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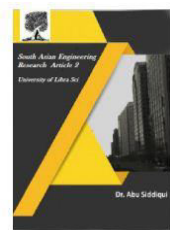
Abstract-

Ruskin Bond is one of the well known short story writers in the world who received acclaims due to his focus on children literature. He is an Indian writer of British origin. His literature has created a captivating world that entices readers of all age group. Bond is considered as a major contributor in the field of short fiction in Indian. Due to writers like Ruskin Bond, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Manohar Malgaonkar, Indian fictional world has reached to the pinnacle of short story genera. Their major literary works evinced worldwide interest and thus plays a vital role in taking the Indian short story to a substantial position. Bond's stories and Novel display dominance of Personal elements in his works. Most of his works presents childhood memories and picture of children world in a very picturesque manner. He never fail to share bitter as well as sweet experiences of parental care, love and guidance. Moreover he uses element of descriptive technique to reveal places, people and nostalgic moments. In short, Ruskin Bond has used short story as a medium of depicting the diversities of life. Ruskin Bonds themes prominently deals with adolescents and children, It appears that Bond strongly believes in strength of young generation, according to him young people are pillars of future of nation. In order to direct them on right and positive path it is necessary to understand their aspiration and frustration. Keeping in mind the same objective, Bond has created his child protagonists endowed with tremendous power to fight against adverse circumstances. The present study analyses juvenile activities and phase of change in the lives of vagrant adolescents who become responsible and ambitious after struggle in their life. Thus prominent objective of the research is to reveal authors noble message hidden in the novel 'Vagrants In the Valley' and to explain process of revival of an antisocial to a responsible adolescent ready to fight with all odd conditions of life.

Key Words- Captivating, Fictional, Picturesque, Juvenile, Vagr

Introduction –

Bond's stories and novels present the picture of his childhood consisting of bitter-sweet experiences as a secure and happy child under his father's care, love and guidance and later on as an insecure and lonely orphan's journey into adulthood and maturity. Bond explains the pre-dominance of the personal element in his works. Bond's novels are characterized by its direct language, rich beginning and critical significance. His stories reflect a specific connection between human creatures and nature, however writer's awareness about young



people's psychology and contours of their personality is the soul of his stories..The India government has recognized his innovative virtue and bestowed him with awards like esteemed Padma Shri (1999),and Padma Bhushan (2014) for his commitment to Indian English literature.

The term 'adolescent' is derived from the Latin word *adolescere* which means " to grow up" According to Lester D.Crow and Alice Crow –

The ,period of transition from childhood to adulthood or from dependence on adult direction and protection to self-direction is referred to as adolescence, adolescent age or adolescent period of development.¹

Thus adolescence is that period of life where physical and psychological changes take place These changes equips a personality with emotional, intellectual ,social and economic maturity. Adolescent period is bound to show rash judgement and immaturity of thoughts ,prominently the age lacks experience and hence the ideas pop up in the mind of an adolescent have their base in heart ,not in mind.

Abilities of Ruskin Bond's adolescent characters –

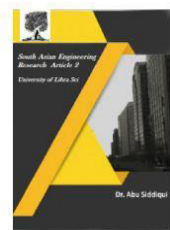
Most of the characters of Ruskin Bonds short stories and novels are either children or adolescents .The major reason behind his attraction behind depicting young milieu in his works can be traced in Bon'ds early life. It has been clearly revealed in 'Scenes From a Writer's Life'in a very realistic way as :

The first twenty -one years of my life from the period covered by this memoir. Although , for Most of us ,these are not years of great achievement ,they are the formative years ,and the most emotional, impressionable, vulnerable years .These are struggles, setbacks, failures, but hope and optimism have not been blighted ,and the cynicism of middle age is yet far distant ²

Vagrants in the Valley is the interesting depiction of adventurous journey of Rusty and Kishen in to the forest while proceeding to Dehradun . In fact ,The Room on the Roof ,Vagrants in the Valley and Delhi is Not Far are the three novels that forms a mesmerising trilogy.All the three novels are corelated with each other .Rusty ,the main character ,is a homeless orphan .Though he is economically weak he is shown courageous enough to save young Kishen from wayward attitude ,it is only Rusty's kindness and love that protected his youngest friend from being cruel and vagrant .Thus the novel depicts four main characters : Rusty, Devinder, Kishen and Sudheer who involves in interesting adolescent activities. They are full of strength, energy and insane zest to overcome odd situations of life and also shown courageous enough to dream most impossible things that are beyond their capacities .

Analysis of Vagrants in the Valley-

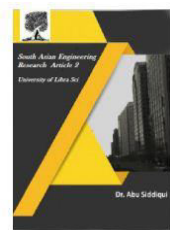
Ruskin Bond depicts his own experiences and the impressions he create about things and people he came across are usually echoed in his writings. Most of his works delves deep in to various social problems and propose solution to theme. His works are embedded with the



themes that are originated in Indian in soil and in Indian locality. In his Novel vagrants in the Valley Bond spreads the fragrance of rootlessness, torrents, friendship, and good faith of youth accompanying with common scenes of routine life. The aroma of Indianness is the soul of his art of storytelling. His novels revolves round young generation and issues related to their social,economical,physical,and psychological problems . Vagrants in the Valley can be taken as a sequel of The Room on the Roof . Rusty the protagonist of the novel appears to be a guardian of Kishen ,another vagrant ,who ran away from home to avoid his drunkard father .Vagrants in the Valley begins with Kishen and Rustys adventures in the forest while proceeding to Dehradun. Their plan to travel to Dehradun without ticket in a midnight train shows how psychology of adolescents work. An adolescent is derived with a passion to do something extraordinary to prove their dashing attitude and zest for life.Rusty and Kishen symbolises life-force that is incorporated in the personality of an youngster. their tortured souls shows how they are unfortunate to enjoy privileges of parental care and love ,both have accepted vagrant life du to cruel attitude of their guardian . Their revolt against wrong attitude o their guardians symbolises adolescent psyche that believes in freedom, friendship , love ,compassion for tortured souls and bond of comraderies. Thus Ruskin Bond unfolds strong rejection of common Indians against colonial attitude of the westerners .The social scenario that runs in the backdrop truly shows how youngsters could not resist attitude of slavery, suppression and domination ,on the contrary they refuse accept the plight of a helpless .Rusty, Kishen and Devinder changes their vagrant life at the end,it is only Sudheer who choose wrong path . Thus Ruskin Bond shows changing and maturing mentality of adolescents , he keenly observes how their attitude towards llife changes with the increasing age .Especially Rusty is highly moved by loneliness of Mr. Pettigrew , when he finds the old man sitting all alone and lost in his own ideas ,he feels sympathy for his loneliness .His remembrance of his lonely aunt who lives alone in a secluded Rcorner of the hills shows hidden contours of Rusty's personality .The signs of his psychological maturity and growing age are quite evident from his realization of realities of life :

Already the dream was fading .That's life ,thought Rusty.You can't run away from it and survive.You cant be a vagrant forever .You are getting nowhere ,so you've got to stop somewhere .Kishen has stopped .He is thrown in his lot with the settled income -he had to.Even Mowgli left the wolf-pack to return to his own people .And India was changing .This great formless mess was taking some sort of shape at last .He had to stop now,and find a place for himself,or go forward to disaster .³

In short ,Bond has delineated the adolescents in the most vivid and realistic manner . All the virtues and vices of the particular age are recorded out sincerely to create life like characters .Their characters are marked with qualities like vivaciousness, full of energy, constructive, funny, notorious and sometimes immature and rash .Among all his adolescent characters Rusty is the most complex character. Rusty appears friend ,philosopher and guide to all though depply hurt by bad experiences of life. In Vagrants in the Valley , Bond has



developed Rusty's character in to a very emotional and mature young man at the end of the novel.

Conclusion -

Ruskin Bond Shows his potential as a writer for young people by delving deep in to the psyche of children, adolescents and young people .He peels off layers off their personality to show their inner world that lay hidden in most of the stories and novels based on the theme of incidents corelated to young people. Vagrants in the Valley thus opens up vista of male adolescent wold that help reader to analyse particular age group on the ground of their emotional ,psychological, economical and physical needs.Most of Ruskin's young characters are poverty stricken, helpless and emotionally starved . Their struggle to rehabilitee themselves shows their determination to improve life and economic condition. Finally, Bond has infused his adolescent characters with tremendous optimism and positive attitude that helps them to change their pathetic condition .Thus Vagrant in the Valley is a remarkable example of optimism and sunny attitude which is very essential virtue to overcome fundamental problms of life and achieve secure position in the world.

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