



**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENGLISH:  
LITERATURE, LANGUAGE & SKILLS**

Volume 10 Issue 1 / April 2021  
ISSN 2278-0742 / [www.ijells.com](http://www.ijells.com)



## From Self –Abnegation to Self Assertion: A study of Tagore's Binodini

Monika Malhotra

### Abstract:

Tagore's novel *Choker Bali (Binodini)* limns out the psychological, emotional yearnings of a young widow woman in tradition-bound Hindu society. The novel shows not only the woeful conditions of Hindu widows through Binodini's wretchedness but also deals with the silent sufferings of Indian wives in male dominated society in early twentieth century. Binodini is portrayed as rebellious who tries to assert her right to love and live a dignified life. She encounters the searing assaults of existence with equipoise and resilience. Tagore attacked the orthodox Hindu customs of the society of the time through central character Binodini's sufferings, frustrations and her self-abnegation in the end. The paper aims at bringing the humanistic concerns in the novel *Choker Bali*. Through the central character Binodini, Tagore was awakening the society to a sense of realism. Tagore's rationalism is reflected when he exposes the unrationalistic side of male dominated patriarchal taboos ridden Hindu society of his times. The paper analyses humanistic concerns like self-discovery, equality, justice, individuality and dignity.

**Key Words:** Humanism, Freedom, Self assertion, Individuality, dignity, rationalism.

Humanism emphasizes human dignity, education, individual freedom, social justice, and preservation of cultural values. Its main focus is on man and his activities. It emphasizes, "Dignity of man" (Davies 22) and "development of every human being in context of present world rather than spiritual concerns for the other worldliness." (Herrick 101) This philosophy considers man to be measure of all things as Protagoras said. Its main concern is always the man and his happiness. Humanism is content with the life here and now. It does not believe in God or religion. Humanism is like a prism reflecting the various shades, colours and nuances of human kind. The early twentieth century witnessed turbulence in many spheres of the Indian society. Born at that time when the nation itself was involved in the process of rebirth, there was headlong rush for adopting Western rationalism. The spread of rationalism began to show itself in attitude, conduct and writings of this period. The collective effort of the writers for a better future and to interpret the various ways for instance, victimization that has taken place under caste system, the sympathy for the downtrodden, exploitation and bondage of women in the male dominated Indian society were the main humanistic perspectives in their writings. From time to time they have attacked the various narrow concepts and upheld the values of human life such as equality, affection and brotherhood. Among the Indian writers, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi are the great figures who preached the message of humanism. Rabindranath Tagore in his works emphasized the importance of man above all types of orthodoxy, narrow mindedness, violence and difference in castes. As a humanist, he asserts his faith in freedom of an