Preface

The aim of the thesis is to study the short stories of Rabindranath Tagore and Kartar Singh Duggal with special reference to their Concept of family, family conflict and gender relation as depicted in their stories as well as socio-political study of their stories along with the study of men and women of their stories. The scope of this work is limited to some selected short stories.

The thesis has been divided into six chapters. The first chapter i.e. Introduction provides a comprehensive study on the historical development of short stories in India and abroad. This comprehensive study will help to provide a base on which the other chapters will rest. This chapter also looks at the beginnings of the Indian short story in English and also will deal with Rabindranath Tagore and Kartar Singh Duggal as short story writers. The second chapter titled Concept of Family, Family Conflict and Gender Relations focuses on the fact that family and familial relationships play a very significant role in the short stories of Tagore and Duggal. In many of their short stories it is often found that the familial relationships portrayed are not harmonious which clearly suggests that the two authors have tried to pen realistic stories of the exact conditions of their times, as it is a fact that though in the world, the institution of family continues to exist and to be upheld, yet we hardly come across a family that does not exist without compromises. In third chapter entitled A Socio-Political Study of the Short Stories of Rabindranath Tagore and Kartar Singh Duggal highlights the fact that Tagore and Duggal through their short stories very aptly showcases each dilemma while being social or cultural, is in its own way an existential problem and must be resolved subjectively by the protagonists, keeping into account the particular circumstances of their lives. Tagore and Duggal refuse to accept the conventional or the moralistic solutions to the problems that their
characters face and urge that these issues be resolved through a consideration of the unique situation in which their characters are placed.

The fourth chapter Men in the Short Stories of Tagore and Duggal brings to light the fact that the injustice and atrocities prevailing in society can only be curbed if the male characters become conscious, socially aware and refined. Both writers seem to indicate that in a patriarchal order, it is essential for familial and social health that the male learn to think rationally and to question the codes and mores of the society. In the event of the male character asserting his typical man’s prerogative, the writers leave out in their narrative, any scope for the sense of readerly empathy. Such characters are projected in these writers’ fiction as far from human. On the other hand, sensitive male figures are sketched memorably and the message is there for all readers to see that it is through the agency of such egalitarian men that a social change can be brought. In Chapter five of this thesis titled Women in the Short Stories of Tagore and Duggal both Tagore and Duggal reflect a considerable understanding of woman’s psyche, her status in social structure and their strong urge to gain freedom and power for decision making in the family as well as in the society. Both these writers have established the individuality of woman more than man and it is this individuality which ensures her dignity, self-respect and sexual-independence in the society. The sixth chapter titled Conclusion concludes the study by establishing the fact that Tagore and Duggal have not only established themselves as brilliant writers of the short story form but also as champions of progressive thought and as unparalleled humanists.

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