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**PORTRAYAL OF CHILD PSYCHOLOGY IN RUSKIN BOND'S
'THE ROOM ON THE ROOF'**

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Abstract: *Ruskin Bond is the person who takes us in the world of natural beauties, forest walks and small towns. Ruskin Bond is a writer who furnished the every fragment of Indian society but showed his mastery in the children literature. Despite being considered as the pioneer of Children literature in India with a great reputation, Bond also stands as an exemplary novelist and a successful short story writer. Ruskin Bond found Indian Children Literature unborn and made it perennial due to his everlasting contribution. Bond looks at life with the curiosity of a boy and undiminished desire to enjoy it. He fabricates an austere, innocent world, where man does not cut each other's throat for their advancement. Bond has portrayed various sections of society in their respective way of living. The present paper aims to delineate how Ruskin Bond, a man of varied thoughts has portrayed the delicate children life in the novel *The Room on the Roof*.*

Key Words: *Children Literature, Child psychology, Adolescence, Love*

Introduction

Bond is a living legend who has been ceaselessly portraying life and experiences through various genres of literature. Bond has published many short stories for children in magazines and newspapers both in India and abroad, but he showed his interest to write for children when he shifted himself from Delhi to Mussorie. *The Room on the Roof* is a charming little novel that will regale all children and adults. The novel got a wide range of appreciation for its rich diction and subject matter. The Dust Jacket described it as "an adult novel written by a teenager". The 1993 Penguin (India) defines it as "a novel of adolescence".

Ruskin Bond wrote *The Room on the Roof* when he was only seventeen years old. It is the story that got his fame and won him the John Rhys Memorial Prize in 1957. Although young adult literature was not recognized as a literary genre when the novel held the title of being a pioneering young adult novel. This is the novel in which Bond deftly highlights the child concerns of Identity formation, seclusion, rebellion against restriction, emerging sexuality etc. Bond has a close affinity towards children that is why he devoted much of his attention to children's literature. He himself asserts:

"I have the temper of a child, and a tendency to be mischievous. And I still retain a childlike interest in grownups..... I think I have remained young because I have always had children around me..... I love to watch them grow. Adolescence is a fascinating period and I keep going to it in my fiction".

Ruskin Bond makes the story not simply about the unbridled, pure and innocent joys of adolescence but also about the certain issues that rack one's mind at this age e.g., the protagonist Rusty's loneliness, his adolescent love, his insecurity etc. Bond's child psychology is an epoch making current of his writing. It is only the child psychology that attracts the attention of the most critics. M.A. Jeyaraju, a renowned critic gives an illustrative interpretation of Ruskin Bond's Child psychology.

"In the absence of a conventional love, the adolescence draws all their lonely comforts from youthful comrades. Kishen wouldn't mind of their destitute existence, the vagrants abide by an admirable code of principles and propriety".

Bond aims to spread love and understanding among all creatures of the world. He found the children the most active recipients of his thought and vision. He further highlights the lively nature of children. Bond also favours KamlaDas' view that "Children are funny things they laugh in mirth at

others tears”. According to Bond children does not know any barrier on the basis of caste, colour, creed, sex, religion. It is clearly shown in *The Room on the Roof*, Rusty being a Christian fell in close intimacy with Kishen (a Hindu) and Somi (a Sikh). He also participated in the rituals of Indian festivals. *Vagrants in the Valley*, a sequel to *The Room on the Roof* shows clearly this friendly nature of adolescents, where Sudhir craves for a genuine friend. He himself is a crook but he wants a gentle youth to be his friend. He finds Rusty an ideal friend and says:

The day I met you, I wanted you to be with me. I am a crook; I do not have any real friend. I do not ask you to be a crook. I ask you to be my friend.

No doubt the novel also attacks the existing racial and Colonial attitudes of the British through the existential anguish of the seventeen year old Rusty, but it also shows most vividly the beautiful scenario of children world. In *The Room on the Roof* Bond advocates that children are free creatures they love to do prohibited enterprise and take an impish sort of delight in pursuing prohibited enterprise. It is Rusty the protagonist of *The Room on the Roof* who trespassed into that forbidden dominion of India that most Colonials denounced as primitive, licentious and exotic. Emerging sexuality of teenagers is one of the main disquisitions of the novel. It is the subject that was neglected during 1950's about young adults. Bond highlighted this issue with high seriousness and sincerity. Rusty being an adolescent falls in love with Mrs Meena Kapoor, the mother of his young pupil, whom he sees as the mother he has never known.

The novel also touches the innocent strain of children's phenomena that is the straight forwardness of children. According to him children are clear at heart and frank in discourse. Their expression is the direct output of their heart rather than their mind. Kishen Kapoor one of the main characters of *The Room on the Roof* blatantly speaks to his tutor Rusty:

“You can be a teacher on the condition that we do not work hard. You supported me when I tell them lies, and that you tell them I am working hard”.

Conclusion

The Room on the Roof succeeds in presenting the adolescents perspective of adults. It portrays the false values, impoliteness, rationalization, and selfishness of adults—both British and Indian in their dealing with children. Bond has also skilfully portrayed the innocent and cooperative behaviour of children and adults.

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