

**Theme of Human Miseries and Misfortunes in Anton Chekhov's Select Short Stories.**

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**ABSTRACT:**

The present research paper in an attempt to highlight Anton Chekhov's talent of voicing human emotions and feelings through the characters of his short stories. Anton Chekhov was one of the greatest mastermind in the genre of short story writing who has been very practically described the realistic and visible picture of human life in his short stories. The major theme of his short stories is misery and misfortunes faced by the very common people of the society. Anton Chekhov's stories mainly deals with domestic human life and their relationship with misfortune, misery, and hardships of routine life. Chekhov's stories are always based on very radical theme of human emotion sufferings, agonies and sociometries which has been presented through the amazing characterization, realistic background and variety of subjects.

**Keywords:** Anton Chekhov, misery, grief, misfortune, despondency.

**Introduction:**

Anton Chekhov the Russian playwright, short story writer and physician was born on 12 January 1860 in Russia. His grandfather was a serf and also a freedom fighter and his father was extremely religious man, beside his father's ill-tempered nature he was much attached with his mother, because she was a good story teller. Anton was third child of his parent during his childhood his father's business was failed and he was bankrupt and cheated by a contractor in order to avoid his debtors, he flew to Moscow with his family, but his mother physically and emotionally broken because of this incident. After his family migrated to Moscow in 1876 he left at same place to complete his school in 1879 he joined his family in Moscow where his father was a labourer and mother was doing part-time sewing work. He recognized his responsibility towards his family very soon and in order to support his family he started writing short stories, humors sketches and vignettes of contemporary Russian life. After getting admission in Medical University he took his father's place as head of family during 1860s he practiced as physician and also began to publish serious works of fiction and his works appeared in newspaper and established him as one of the growing writer of Russian civilization. And along with this he hold position of qualified physician which he considered his principal profession, though he made very little money from it because he treated the destitutes penniless patients free of cost, he once said "medicine is my lawful wife and literature is my mistress." this shows Chekhov's dense interest about literature.

In year 1901 he married with a stage actress named Olga Knipper, whom he had met first time at the real rehearsal of his play "Seagull". After passing some year, during the mid 1880s he found himself coughing and diagnosed with tuberculosis but he hide. it from his friends and family and he continued writing to provide progressively better accommodation to the his family. Chekhov famous for his emphasis depth of human nature and the hidden significance of daily life events described Russian life of his time using simple technique and he established himself as outstanding representative of tell 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian life.

Great Victorian novelist Charles Dickens has stated "no words can express agony of my soul" and Anton Chekhov has very practically used this statement in his short stories and made his characters immortal, no doubt Chekhov can be recognized as one of the prolific writer of short stories because of his extraordinary talent of conveying the very touching message of everyday life through his beautiful characterization as well subject of his stories. After reading stories one can easily say that, Chekhov has lived a short but very practical life because most of his stories are based on his real life experience, despite living very short span of life, Chekhov has established himself among the greatest short story writers of his time. Most of his stories focus on the character and their background as well situation rather than action and status. His stories are full with ordinary events, incidents and accidents of everyday life in small town and villages of 19<sup>th</sup> century in Russia.

Whenever the reader thinks about stories of Chekhov the words such as depressing, dejection, feelings of helplessness, woe and despondency comes to mind and all these words create a kind of keen interest among the readers and entice them to read more about this proclaimed writer. Chekhov's various short stories and unique style of creating certain circumstances and moulding the characters into it has rightly earned him the title of "father of modern short story" in the genre of short story writing. Chekhov has been mostly considered as exemplar author of realism because all his short stories deal with very radical but functional themes which is deeply connected with the lives of common people, he always tried to depict the unspoken feelings of common people of society. He has a great ability to represent the agony of people in very easy way in front of the reader. Not only Chekhov's short stories but also his quotes are also good example of meaning of life his quotes are full with a kind of deep message and experience which itself has a story within a story for example once Jacob red medicine is my lawful wife and literature is my mistress when I fed up with one I spend night with other this tiny quote has massive meaning and it is completely based on his own life because as we all knew that Jacob had suffered by a fatal disease which ultimately put him in the lap of death, despite having fatal disease Chekhov had same affection for literature as he above said and his firm's dedication towards literature influenced him to write about the realities of Russian life of his time, Chekhov has spent his early life in misery and dejection and that is the one of the reason that he could depict the grief and melancholy of other people very flawlessly because most of his stories are based on his own experiences of life.

Chekhov's short stories always try to convey the sad realities of modern world in very practical way in his well-known story 'The Misery' he has given a beautiful life lesson through its character, everyone has many problems and troubles in their life and people used to share their problem with their friends and family and try to get its solution but in same life there are so many people who don't have anyone neither to share problem nor to talk, this same situation is the faced by the major character of the story named Misery. Central character of the story tried a lot to share his grief of losing his sole son with the people who hired his card but none of them shown any kind of interest in his grief and after getting so much despondency from all his fare. He eventually shares his agony with his horse and found a state of relaxation. In modern life we can often feel or see these kinds of situation. We all are living in modern and fast life but Chekhov has depicted this situation very long ago because of his great sense of looking towards life and circumstances. Chekhov always choose his story subject from the visible stuff of everyday life and gives it a voice.

In many of his short stories we can see how he had a great influence of reading books and literature on himself because it is true that books have the power to influence the reader and PB Shelley also stated that "poets are acknowledged legislators of the world" so we can accept that a good piece of any literary work can easily influence its the rereadth Chekhov's one of the finest story titled 'The Bet' in we can see the how a young man had a great influence of books and literature on himself and he sacrifices all his pleasures of world and live a life without any worldly amenities, this story conveys the gist that we all are running behind the worldly pleasure and luxury but actually all these worldly pleasure and things are perishable. At the end of life we will only have our good deeds and fine memories with us, nobody whether he may be a king or a beggar, could bring wealth with him at the time of death. In modern life it is clearly visible all are expecting luxury of life without thinking that we are losing so many beautiful moments of life, the real joy of life is not living in luxury life but actually it is in exploring the nature and praising the creation of almighty God but the modern people has forgot the numerous beautiful things created by God and running behind the artificial beauty which seems dazzling but actually it is going to be perish one day.

The subject matter of Chekhov's stories is very lucid and full of reality because he has very sharp sight which could easily spot the realities of modern society and the problems faced by common people. Same kind of domestic problem we can see in Chekhov's one more short story named 'The Darling' in this story Chekhov has focused on very basic theme of being dependent. There is one quote by William Shakespeare which might have inspired Chekhov to write this story and this quote is "*expectation is the root of all heartaches*" the same theme has been very practically used in this story by Chekhov. The central character of the story is in extreme grief because of her frequent heartbreak, all the time she always depend on someone and as the life pass everyone lefts her and this made her life extremely desperate. The lesson given in this story is that we should not be dependent on anyone because with the people we have deep attachment when they leaves it

gives a lot of pain and this fact we can easily experience in our routine life so here we can see that how sharp sight Chekhov had, and through very lucid and practical manner he had conveyed the gist of story. In our life many times we stays depend on many people and things but whenever we don't get all these things that we expect we became restless and feel the sorrow around us ,this is the very common matter in modern life which has been cited by Chekhov long ago and poured it in beautiful story.

In his another short story the 'Lottery Ticket' he shows a very realistic and typical middle class behavior of a couple. The story shows how a middle class person reacts in some certain situation of life which we can see in this story. In this story how a couple reacts and starts to build their dream when they knew that they have won the lottery jackpot prize .In this story Chekhov has very perfectly described each expression of the characters and after reading the story we can easily feel that Chekhov has depicted all the certain things of everyday life and also tried to show how people behave in an abnormal way also tried to bring out the inner feelings of characters of the story it is very natural for all human to behave in an abnormal way in some situation in our life we often behave abnormally in our happy time and in sad time and during this certain situation of time we goes away from the real world and builds our dream in other world at this time we behave naturally from heart and express our unspoken feelings either it is happy or said and for a while we live in a world which is full of imagination and there we could see all our wish and desires are fulfilled the same thing happens in the same thing happens in this story when the couple knows about their jackpot they starts to live in a world of imagination and all their inner unspoken feelings came out but when they realized that they have not won the jackpot everything gets gloomy and a kind of despair occurs and all their dreams and plans get ruined so in this story Chekhov has very practically shown how a common person behave in certain situation of life the ability of describing the certain detail of life has made Chekhov one of the greatest short story writer of all time his writing genius has established himself in the role of world's best short story writers.

Chekhov's stories not only deals with psychological human behavior but also deals with social status of people. In modern life the social status has become one of the most prominent part of human life and everyone always tries to maintain their own social status and behave according to it. As we often noticed in society upper class people always have a kind of high social status and they behave with the people who have lower social status in very rude way unfriendly manner and we often see the some people with high social status always try to please the people who have more higher status, we can say that it is the visible picture of today's society and this theme has been very beautifully described by Chekhov in his short story named 'Chameleon'.

In this story Chekhov has shown how a person frequently changes his character behaviour under the influence of other people and in particular situation the same thing we can observe in our life in fact we often changes are mood plan intention and behavior for the things which is beneficial for us in this story Chekhov has highlighted this subject in a very easy way so we could understand it properly in the story the central character a police officer swings his mood and attitude towards a victim by taking his favor sometime and by blaming him sometimes same as chameleon changes its color in different situation for his own benefit in this story we can see the same thing how a person changes with a moment with when he come to know his profit and also try to hide the truth and favor the false things because he sees his own advantage in fall things so he neglects the real stuff in society we can easily observe these things many people changes their behavior without thinking whether it is true or false and many people changes their behavior just like a chameleon for the things of their advantage without thinking whether it is factual or baseless. They only seek their own advantage from it.

In the story "death of government clerk" Chekhov has described how a small incident could cause for life taking impact on the protagonist of the story. In this story we can see the protagonist has committed a very common mistake by sneezing on his senior officer by mistake during an opera but this tiny mistake gives him very deep jerk of doing a big crime by sneezing on his senior officer and this incident gave him very deep jerk of doing a very dangerous crime by sneezing on his senior officer ,which him really very restless to feel him uneasy and he decide to apologize the officer and he went to officer and says sorry about his mistake the officer also forgives him without saying a word but the protagonist did not satisfied with his senior's reply he thinks that the officer has not forgiven him so he approaches the officer frequently until the officer gets

extremely angry on the protagonist and this makes him so much desperate and because of his seniors furious behavior he became deeply sad and he finds his life is filled with gloom and sorrow he loses all the hope in the life and everything became dark for him he dies emotionally spiritually and socially because he failed to understand that the senior officer has already forgiven him but he never realized that. In this story we can see the theme of embarrassment, fear, anxiety, worry and overthinking the story also deals with strict convictions of society that have seemingly arbitrary and cause people unnecessary anxiety we can also say that the moral of the story is we should not mind on the trivial incidents of life if we commit any mistake then we just make apologize for it and move on in the life. Chekhov's short stories always has a deep and real observation of society and human nature as well behavior and that makes him one of the best short story writer of all time.

### **Conclusion:**

Anton Chekhov recognized for his art of giving voice to human feelings and emotions and he preferred to write about the ordinary events and relationships of the people in small town and village of late 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia. He believed that even an ordinary character or situation like people going to works, argument, quarrel, debating with their wives and eating cabbage soup could provide sufficient material for a short story writing. He employed a variety of techniques including pacing and word choices that paint imagery to create his character and reveal their changing moods his story is also considered as the transcription symbolic representation of life. According to Chekhov any significant fragment of life could provide sufficient material to write a short story.

### **References:**

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