

## Tiger in the Tunnel

Ruskin Bond, known as William Wordsworth of India, was born in Kasauli in the year 1934. His parents, Edith Clarke and Aubrey Bond, were British Migrants to India. Bond spent most of his childhood in the Himalayas. He was brought up in Jamnagar, Dehradun and Shimla. He wrote his first short story *Untouchable* in 1950 when he was at the age of sixteen. He has published three collections of short stories: *The Night Train at Deoli*, *Time Stops at Shamli*, and *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*.

When he was at the age of seventeen he wrote his first novel *The room on the Roof*. He received John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial prize for this novel in the year 1957. It's a semi-autobiographical novel reflecting parts of his life. It was made into a T.V series produced by BBC. *Vagrants in the Valley* is sequel of *The Room on the Roof*. Bond received the Sahitya Akademy Award for his novel *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra* in the year 1992. He was given Padma Bhushan award in the field of Literature and Education in 2014.

Tiger in the Tunnel is the story of a small tribal man named Baldeo, who killed the tunnel tiger, a man-eater. Baldeo was a Khalasi at a small station where trains only stopped there for few seconds before entering into the tunnel. He had a wife and two children. They lived in a village on the outskirts of the forest about three miles away from the station.

Baldeo was awake at the night. His son Tembu was sleeping along with his father in the hut. Baldeo's family was in the village where they had small rice field which did not provide them more than living. Baldeo was responsible for signalling, checking whether the tunnel was empty and the train passed through the tunnel safely. Still drowsy, he took the lamp and went out along the rails.

Entering into the tunnel Baldeo was thinking about the wild animals he might face. He heard many stories about the famous tunnel tiger, who killed many people, often comes to this place. But he had not seen the tiger since his appointment in the job a month ago.

Baldeo walked confidently because he was a tribal man and he was not new to the forests. He carried a small axe like his fore-fathers. Its head is made up of pure steel. Baldeo had already killed a young boar with it. This axe was a part of himself, wherever he went the axe was always in his hand.

Baldeo started repairing the signal lamp as it was not working. The mail was about to come in five minutes. Then suddenly he heard the frightened cry of a barking deer. After an instant's hesitation he lit the signal lamp and he walked quickly down the tunnel. After checking the line he returned to the entrance of the tunnel and sat down to wait for the mail train.

The train was late and Baldeo soon forgot the surroundings and began to nod. There was a low grunt which resounded from the top of the cutting. That was the sound made by the tiger. Immediately Baldeo woke up and became alert. He held the axe tightly and looked at the direction from which the animal was approaching. There was a silence for some time. All of a sudden the tiger had sprung into the cutting of the tunnel. Baldeo saw the tiger coming towards his direction. He stood with his back to the signal post. He was ready. The tiger jumped onto him. Marvelously he escaped the paw of the tiger and struck on the animal's shoulder with his axe. The tiger gave a big roar and attempted to close in. Baldeo struck the tiger again. But to his horror the beast had changed the direction and the axe was caught on the tiger's shoulder. Baldeo was left without a weapon. The tiger roared with pain, sprang upon Baldeo angrily and tore his body. It was all over in a few minutes and Baldeo was dead. The tiger sat down licking his wounded leg roaring with severe pain. The overland mail approached and entered the tunnel whistling loudly. The tiger got up and ran as fast as possible with its wounded leg. With a roar and a shower of sparks the train passed through the tunnel. Silence returned once again to the forest and the tunnel.

At the next station the driver stopped the train to water the engine. He got down to check the

head lamps. To his surprise there was tiger's body cut in half by the engine just above the cow-catcher of the train. There was excitement at the station. But at the tunnel there was no sound except the sound the boy crying beside his father's dead body.

Tembu regained the strength and took the responsibility of his father. After three days he took the charge in the place of his father as a signal man. He sat down in the darkness to wait for the train. There is nothing to be afraid of because his father had killed the tiger. He had his father's axe, and soon he learned to use the axe.

**[More than 100 Million Women are Missing](#)**

# Summary

Amarthya Kumar Sen was born on 3rd November 1933 in West Bengal. His father, Ashutosh was a professor of Chemistry at Dhaka University and his mother Amita was a writer and performed in the plays of Tagore. Amarthya Sen has grown up in Shantiniketan. His maternal grandfather was a friend of Rabindranath Tagore and worked in Shantiniketan. Amarthya Sen was christened by Rabindranath Tagore. Sen was influenced by Rabindranath Tagore. He has written more than 25 books like "Development as Freedom", "Idea of Justice", "On Ethics and Economics" etc.,. He got Nobel Prize in the year 1998 for his research in *Welfare Economics*. Government of India honored him with Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award in India in the year 1999. NDTV honored him as "25 Greatest Global Living Legends In India" in 2013. He was a visiting professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in United States, He is working as a Professor of Economics and Philosophy in Harvard University. He is also a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge and the first Asian head of an Oxbridge College.

Present lesson "More than 100 Million Women are Missing" is a controversial article appeared in "The New York Review of Books" on December 20th 1990. The author tells the readers that there are many number of women missing in this world due to discrimination shown against them and advises us how to overcome from this situation. We generally think that in the world's population majority are women, but it is not true.

In the countries like Europe, the US and Japan women outnumber men because they suffer little discrimination in basic nutrition and health care but in most of Asia and North Africa there are fewer women surviving than if they had equal care. In India the death rate of women in all age groups is higher than men because women are neglected especially in health care and medical attention. Within the country of India there are sharp diversities among different states. The states of Punjab and Haryana has 0.86 which is lowest and Kerala state has a ratio of 1.03. The number of women missing in a country can be known by calculating the number of extra women who would have been in the country if it had the same ratio of women to men as obtained in the areas of the world in which they receive similar care. If we calculate like this there is a deficit about 11% of women in South Asia, West Asia and China. If we add North Africa to this there are 100 million (10 crore) women missing. In China alone there are 50 million (5 crore) women missing. This shows how the inequality and negligence leads to the excess of death rate of women.

The reasons for the negligence towards women can be assumed to be

1. The cultural differences between East and West : It is believed that the western people are less sexist (treating unfairly towards women) than Eastern people. So there are more number of women in western countries.

2. Stages of Economic Development : Countries which are economically poor are providing unequal nutrition and health care to women.

But these two opinions are not completely correct. If we take cultural view first 'East - West' divisions is flawed because Japan, being an Eastern country has a ratio of women to men almost equal to that in Europe and North America. In 1899 and 1908 censuses Japan had very less number of women but after the World War II, as it became richer and industrialized there was a surplus rather than the deficit of women. In South Asian countries like India, Bangladesh and Pakistan where there is lowest ratio of women than any other country, women has become top political leaders. But it was achieved only by the women of upper class though they have not changed the situation of women in their countries. If the ratio of women in American Legislature and Indian Legislature are compared there are 6.4 per cent of women in the U.S House of representatives while in the Indian Lok Sabha there are around 7.5 per cent of women.

Secondly if we take the economic development as a reason for showing inequality towards women all the countries which have women deficit are more or less poor and no developed country has such deficit. For example the death rate of mothers at childbirth can be reduced by providing with better hospital facilities. But this explanation for women's inequality also is not completely correct because underdeveloped countries like sub-Saharan Africa has excess of women. In India the richest states, Punjab and Haryana has a low ratio of women to men i.e. 0.86 and the poorer state Kerala has greater than 1.03 ratios.

The decline in women's position is largely because they were not given the advantages of medical and social progress. Economic development does not always reduce the death rate of women. The complex ways in which economical, social and cultural factors can influence the regional differences should be examined. The status and power of women in the family differ greatly from one region to another and this can be related to the economic role and independence of women. Employment outside home and having assets gives women economic independence and power. These are the "entitlements" for women.

Women can have the division of a family's joint benefits if

1. they can earn outside income (in the form of salaries)
2. their earning is recognised as productive (helpful to the family)
3. they own some economic resources on which they depend upon
4. the ways in which women are deprived are understood and tried to change the situation.

"Gainful" employment (i.e. working outside home for salary) helps women in many ways. First it helps women to depend upon themselves and makes them less vulnerable. Second it improves their status and standing in the family. For example they can share the respect of being a "bread winner". Third outside jobs give them security and legal protection. Fourth working outside home also provides experience of the outside world which is important for improving women's position within the family. So outside world is educational to women.

Boys are preferred in many countries because they are expected to provide more economic security for their parents in old age; but this partiality can be changed if women as well as men can regularly work at paid jobs. If the status of women in general raise and women's contributions are recognized, female children may receive more attention. At last the exposure of women to the world through work outside the home can weaken, though it is educational, the hold of traditional beliefs and behaviour.