

Human Connection and Empathy in Rabindranath Tagore's *Post Master*

OPEN ACCESS

Volume: 13

Special Issue: 2

Month: March

Year: 2026

P-ISSN: 2321-788X

E-ISSN: 2582-0397

Citation:

Shifana Safrin, M., and R. Kavitha. "Human Connection and Empathy in Rabindranath Tagore's *Post Master*." *Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*, vol. 13, no. S2, 2026, pp. 23–26.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v13iS2-Mar.10225>

Shifana Safrin M

BA English Literature

Rathinam College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore

R. Kavitha

Assistant Professor, Department of English

Rathinam College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore

Abstract

Rabindranath Tagore is an important writer in Indian English literature. His works often focus on emotions, social relationships and moral values. Rabindranath Tagore's short story The Postmaster presents a village setting to explore deep human emotions. The story is about loneliness, the need for connection and the pain that comes when empathy is one-sided. The relationship between the postmaster and the orphan girl Ratan shows how people search for warmth. This paper studies connection and empathy in The Postmaster. The story reflects human experiences such as isolation, hope, care and disappointment. The Postmaster highlights the responsibility we have toward each other. It shows that empathy is not just feeling sorry for someone but understanding and commitment. The story is written in language. Rabindranath Tagore's The Postmaster is an example of this. The story makes us think about our relationships, with others. It also makes us think about how we can be understanding and caring toward each other.

Keywords: Commitment, Disappointment, Empathy, Isolation, Responsibility.

The Postmaster is a story that seems simple at first. However, it holds many deep emotions. The story is set in a village where a young postmaster from Calcutta starts a new job. He feels sad and out of place. This paper explores how people connect with one another and care for each other in The Postmaster. The postmaster and Ratan, a girl without parents, grow very close. This part of the story evokes strong feelings. Their friendship highlights the need for companionship during lonely times. The Postmaster and Ratan rely on each other. The Postmaster also illustrates how being rich or poor, wanting to be comfortable, and focusing only on oneself can harm others. People have feelings. They can stop caring for one another. The bond between the postmaster and Ratan is significant to The Postmaster. Human connection happens when people feel close to one another. It involves caring, understanding, talking, and sharing feelings. Empathy means understanding and feeling what another person experiences. True empathy goes beyond feeling sorry for someone; it involves being engaged and taking responsibility. Tagore uses characters to show complex emotions and empathy is a big part of The Postmaster.

The postmaster is transferred to a village far from the city. He feels bored, sick, and lonely. The village is strange and uncomfortable for him. He longs for conversation. Ratan, the orphan girl, is also very lonely. She has no family and must work for others to survive. When the postmaster pays attention to her, she feels special. They are both lonely, which is how their connection begins. This shows that people often connect when they need someone. The relationship between the postmaster and Ratan is based on care and spending time together. The postmaster teaches Ratan how to read and write. He shares stories about his home and childhood. These moments bring them closer. The postmaster is like a father to Ratan. She listens to him and wants him to remember her. She genuinely cares about him.

This indicates that Ratan can understand and connect with people. It is not a fleeting thing. This becomes important later in the story. Ratan shows a lot of empathy throughout. She realizes the postmaster is lonely and sick. When he falls ill, she takes care of him. She is very concerned. She brings him water, cooks for him, and stays by his side. She does not expect anything in return. She is just pleased to be helping and connecting with him. Tagore presents Ratan as a symbol of human empathy. Ratan is not affected by social status or selfishness.

The postmaster feels sorry for Ratan. He does not really understand her. When he chooses to leave the village, he does not think about Ratan's feelings. He gives her money to help her feel better. This indicates that the postmaster does not really understand the concept of connecting. You cannot replace empathy with money. He cannot really connect with Ratan on a deeper level, which indicates the extent of the postmaster's humanity. Social class is also an issue in the story. The postmaster belongs to the city, and Ratan is the village kid. There is a distance between the two characters. The postmaster never considers Ratan a part of his life. The city attitude prevents the postmaster from getting attached to the villagers.

Tagore describes the problem of understanding between people because of their social classes in an subtle way. The most important part of the story is the part where the postmaster leaves. Ratan expects her to go along with the postmaster or that the postmaster would return soon. Once she knows the truth, she suffers. The pain of human connection is depicted in the story. The postmaster feels sorry for what has happened. Goes on with his life. Tagore believed in human values such as kindness and staying true to your feelings. In "The Postmaster," Tagore does not blame the postmaster strongly. He shows him as a normal human being. With this story, Tagore tells us that to be human is to be able to understand and care for other people. Our relations with other humans must be long-term and unselfish. Nowadays, people befriend someone based on the ease of the relationship. It is quite easy not to care about other people's feelings because life is going at a fast pace. "The Postmaster" reminds us of the importance of caring about other people's emotions. Understanding and caring must go together. Tagore's message in this story is still relevant to readers from different cultures.

This story teaches us that not caring about people's feelings can cause as much pain as physical suffering. Ratan's silent sadness at the end of the story shows us that if people do not care about each other, it can cause emotional pain. Tagore does not use language to describe the suffering. Instead, he uses silence and simplicity. This makes the end of the story more realistic. It teaches us that many people suffer silently.

Another theme in the story is loneliness. Both the postmaster and Ratan feel lonely in their own way. While the postmaster feels lonely because he misses his family and his life in the city, Ratan feels lonely because he does not even have a family. For a while, both men find comfort in each other's company. This is how human beings, by nature, tend to seek connections. The story also teaches us that small actions can affect others in a big way. The postmaster might think that moving away from the village is an easy decision for his life, but for Ratan, it is a painful decision

because she thought she had found someone who cared about her. People do not know how much their decisions affect others.

Ultimately, the story leaves the reader with a strong but subtle message about the importance of kindness and responsibility. It teaches us that relationships must be taken very seriously. Even the smallest of relationships, such as friendship, can be everything to someone who feels like they have no one. Tagore gently teaches the reader the importance of considering the feelings of others. Another theme of the story is the reality of hope. Rattan begins to hope that the postmaster will take her with him when he leaves. She dreams of a new life in which she will no longer be alone. However, when the postmaster does not take Rattan with him, she learns the pain of unfulfilled dreams.

Finally, Tagore teaches us that life goes on without even recognizing the pain it has caused. The postmaster goes on his way, and soon he forgets Rattan. However, Rattan does not forget the postmaster. This is the moral behind the ending of the story by Tagore. This teaches us that some people in life find it easy to move on, but there are people who suffer silently.

“The Postmaster” is a story by Rabindranath Tagore, who is urging us, in a temporary world of relationships, to be aware of our emotional obligations, to others. Real relationships require sensitivity, respect, and continuity. By displaying kindness and failing at it, Tagore is showing us that it is understanding and caring that form the foundation of humanity, of Harmony. Tagore is also telling us that we, as a whole, do not use our emotions in a responsible manner. He is doing this at the end of “The Postmaster”. We can see that the postmaster considers taking Ratan with him for a while. But then he decides it would not be a good idea. He does not want to take care of the trouble. This shows that people do not want to take care of their duties when it gets too hard. The Postmaster is a reminder for the readers. The world is a transitory place, but Tagore reminds us of our emotional responsibilities to others.

He shows kindness and failure. He shows that kindness and understanding are the basis of humanity and social Harmony. This is what we see in the story. He also talks about how people do not use their emotions correctly. He shows this in the end of “The Postmaster”. We see that the postmaster considers taking Ratan with him for a moment. But then he decides it is not a good idea. He does not want to have problems. This shows that people do not always want to take care of their responsibilities when it gets difficult.

On the other hand, Ratan is very positive and she waits for the postmaster after he has left. This demonstrates how much she really cares about him and how real her emotions are. Tagore doesn’t make a big deal about the postmaster leaving. He just demonstrates that sometimes people have to say goodbye to one another. This is more emotional because this is something that happens to everyone. Tagore is talking about harmony. Harmony is between people. How they deal with their emotions. The story “The Postmaster” is an example of harmony and how people should deal with their emotional responsibility.

The story also illustrates the significance of understanding in relationships. There are cases where people live or work together, yet they do not understand each other’s feelings. The postmaster treats Rattan nicely and teaches her some things, yet he does not understand the level of her dependence on him emotionally. The lack of understanding creates a distance between the two characters. The second idea that can be derived from the story is the innocence of Rattan. Rattan trusts the postmaster and feels that the old man cares for her like a member of his family. The feelings of Rattan are genuine. Because of her innocence, Rattan feels hurt when the old man makes the decision to leave without her. The character of Rattan illustrates the significance of genuine feelings in the character of an individual. Finally, the story promotes a greater understanding of the emotions of others. It is true that people do not always display their emotions openly. However, the

emotions are there. Tagore's depiction of Rattan's silent suffering reminds us that kindness, care, and emotional responsibility are extremely important in human relationships.

The story also emphasizes the need for compassion in human life. A small act of kindness and care can bring about significant changes in the life of an individual who is lonely. If the postmaster had attempted to understand Rattan's feelings more profoundly, he would have acted differently. Tagore is trying to convey to the reader that if one is compassionate enough, then one would not suffer from emotional agony. The other moral lesson that Tagore is trying to convey from this small story is that relationships between humans are sensitive. A small relationship can bring about great emotional connections between humans. If such connections are severed abruptly, then there is bound to be some sadness left behind. Through this small story, Tagore is trying to convey to us that we should respect the people around us. The story also teaches us how silence can be used to show emotions. Rattan does not complain or argue when the postmaster leaves. Instead, she shows how much she is hurt by staying silent. Tagore has used the silence in the story in a way that the reader can feel the pain of Rattan more.

Another thing that the reader can learn from the story is the difference between temporary and permanent feelings. For the postmaster, his stay in the village and his relationship with Rattan are only temporary. However, for Rattan, the relationship is very significant and important.

Thus, the difference in the feelings of the characters makes the story more tragic and emotional. The story teaches us the importance of being careful with our actions and words. What may be of little importance for us may be of great importance for others. Tagore's simple story helps the reader understand the importance of being kind and caring in establishing relationships with people.

References

1. Banerjee, Sanchita. "Human Connection and Emotional Isolation in Tagore's 'The Postmaster.'" *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2019, pp. 132–138.
2. Chakrabarti, Anupama. "Empathy and Loneliness in Rabindranath Tagore's Short Fiction." *Research Journal of English Language and Literature (RJELAL)*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2020, pp. 101–107.
3. Dutta, Arindam. "Village Life and Urban Sensibility in Tagore's 'The Postmaster.'" *SMART MOVES Journal IJELLH*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2021, pp. 55–62.
4. Ghosh, Riya. "Emotional Bonds and Social Barriers in Tagore's 'The Postmaster.'" *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*, vol. 11, no. 4, 2020, pp. 119–126.
5. Mukherjee, Debolina. "Compassion and Abandonment in Rabindranath Tagore's Short Stories." *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)*, vol. 9, no. 6, 2021, pp. 470–476.
6. Sen, Abhijit. "Innocence, Attachment, and Separation in 'The Postmaster.'" *Creative Saplings*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2022, pp. 28–35.
7. Tagore, Rabindranath. "The Postmaster." *Selected Short Stories*. Translated by William Radice, Penguin Classics, 2005, pp. 15–25.