

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON WRITINGS OF RUSKIN BOND

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**Abstract:** Ruskin Bond is a well-known Indian author whose works are deeply rooted in his personal experiences and observations. His stories often feature an autobiographical element, with characters and settings inspired by his own life. This study explores the autobiographical element in Bond's writings and how it adds depth and authenticity to his works. Through an analysis of some of his famous short stories, the researchers highlight how Bond's stories reflect his experiences of growing up in small towns in India, observing people at railway stations, spending time with local craftsmen and living in the Himalayas. The researchers also discuss how Bond's works often explore themes of individuality, simplicity, nostalgia and the relationship between humans and nature. Overall, Bond's autobiographical element brings a unique perspective to his works and captures the essence of human relationships and the importance of finding beauty and joy in the everyday.

[Vemai, S. and Kumar, D. **REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON WRITINGS OF RUSKIN BOND**. *Rep Opinion* 2024;16(10):23-27]. ISSN 1553-9873 (print); ISSN 2375-7205 (online). <http://www.sciencepub.net/report>. 04. doi:[10.7537/marsroj161024.04](https://doi.org/10.7537/marsroj161024.04).

**Keywords:** autobiographical elements, human relationships, nature love, Ruskin Bond, India

### Introduction

Ruskin Bond has penned numerous titles including *The Room on the Roof*, *A Flight of Pigeons*, *The Blue Umbrella*, *A Town called Dehra*, *The Adventures of Rusty*, *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*, *Angry River*, *Roads to Mussoorie*, *All Roads Leads to Ganga*, etc. In the novels and short stories he projected his early feelings of insecurity and isolation through most of his adolescent characters. Personal agonies like separation of his parents and untimely death of his father imparted him an early but deep sense to belong to the world of nature and strangers. He embraced whatever was neglected and exploited by the ruthless society. Boyhood appears to be a favourite sphere for the writer. Most of his remarkable fictional heroes are boys between the age of fourteen and eighteen years who are filled with desire, curiosity, dreams, energy, sensation, thrill and of course, pure unconditional love. Like the writer himself, they are open to all. Living in pristine environs of nature, they have learnt the lesson of life through myriad forms. Nature is always there sometimes in the background and sometimes actively participating in the course of the action. He articulates his vision through his protagonists. *The Room on the Roof* (1956), 3 Ruskin Bond's first literary venture, is a masterpiece written at an adolescent age (17) about the life of adolescents in India. It has won the John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize for fiction in 1957. It is partly based on his experiences at Dehradun, in his small rented room on the roof, and his friends. It brilliantly describes the hopes and passions that capture young minds and hearts. It has a classic coming-of-age story that held generations of readers

spellbound. It has all the ingredients of a good novel with a wellcrafted plot with the characters drawn from real life. It is authentic and honest to the core. Though a maiden attempt, it has been edited and worked on by experienced editor and his mentor Diana Athill, who wrote in her letter to the author, dated 23rd March 1964.

**Ruskin Bond** is an award winning Indian author of British descent, much renowned for his role in promoting children's literature in India. A prolific writer, he has written over 500 short stories, essays and novels. His popular novel 'The Blue Umbrella' was made into a Hindi film of the same name which was awarded the National Film Award for Best Children's Film, in 2007. He is also the author of more than 50 books for children and two volumes of autobiography. Born as the son of a British couple when India was under colonial rule, he spent his early childhood in Jamnagar and Shimla. His childhood was marred by his parents' separation and his father's death. He sought solace in reading and writing, and wrote one of his first short stories at the age of 16. He then moved to the U.K. in search of better prospects, but returned to India after some years. He earned his living by freelancing as a young man, writing short stories and poems for newspapers and magazines. A few years hence he was approached by Penguin Books who published several collections of his work, helping establish him as a popular author in India. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1999 and Padma Bhushan in 2014.

## Review of Literature

Ruskin Bond is one of the most renowned Indian writers who has contributed a lot to Indian literature. He is known for his simplistic style of writing and his ability to capture the essence of life in the hills of North India. His writings are imbued with an autobiographical element, which is a major theme in his work. This Indian novelist, who was born in Dehradun, India, and had British parents, was awarded the Padma Shri Award in 1999 and the Padma Bhushan Award in 2014 by the Indian government. Ruskin Bond had a deep love and genuine concern for nature, which penetrates everything and it is apparent when you hold one of his stories in your hands. Bond can transport the reader by using a prism to represent nature's essence. He carefully and methodically works to draw our senses to the shining glory that is all about us and as a result, he offers a detailed account of the lovely lives that are all around him. The superbly realised natural landscapes and all the various life forms that have been portrayed in them, as portrayed by Bond's ingenuity and style, each and every one of them offer a potent lesson about the need to preserve and maintain nature.

Bond's short story, *Tenacity of Mountain Water* (1988b) uses a straightforward narrative to explore how everything in the world is connected. He marvels at how this seemingly insignificant component of the ecosystem has an impact on the entire area, observing how a tiny stream that sprung from an icicle evolves into a roaring cascade that nourishes and beautifies the entire area. It is written in such a way that the reader is able to review how humans view natural resources while also studying the underlying ecological values. Davidar (2016) in *Ruskin Bond: A Life in Letters* collected letters written by Bond over a period of 50 years. The letters offer insights into Bond's life, his writing process and his relationships. The book also includes a selection of Bond's short stories and poems, which are imbued with autobiographical elements. The book is a testament to Bond's ability to use his personal experiences as a source of inspiration for his writing.

Verma (2012) in *The Writing of Ruskin Bond: A Critical Study* critically analyses Bond's works, including his novels, short stories and essays. The author analyses Bond's writing style, themes and use of language. The book also focuses on the autobiographical element in Bond's works and how it has influenced his writing. The author argues that Bond's ability to use his personal experiences in his writing is what makes his works so authentic and compelling.

Thakur's (2012) book, *Ruskin Bond: Interpreter of Human Relationships*, explores the autobiographical element in Bond's writings and how his works reflect

his observations and experiences of human relationships. He highlights how Bond's stories often feature characters who are marginalised or outcasts in society, such as the kite-maker in *The Kitemaker* or the basket-seller in *The Night Train at Deoli*. These characters are often seen through the eyes of a child or young protagonist, who can see beyond societal norms and appreciate their worth as individuals. Thakur also notes that Bond's works often feature a sense of nostalgia and longing for the past, particularly for a simpler way of life. This is evident in stories such as *The Blue Umbrella*, where the protagonist is content with her simple life in the village until the arrival of the coveted blue umbrella disrupts her peace. Thakur argues that Bond's works are not just about individual relationships, but also about the relationships between humans and nature. This is evident in stories such as *The Room of Many Colours*, where the protagonist finds solace in a room filled with nature-inspired objects and *The Night Train at Deoli*, where the protagonist is captivated by the beauty of the mountains.

Mittapalli (2013) in *Ruskin Bond: A Critical Evaluation* provides a critical evaluation of Bond's works, including his novels, short stories and essays. The author examines Bond's writing style, themes and use of language. The book also discusses the autobiographical element in Bond's works and how it has influenced his writing. The author argues that Bond's ability to draw from his personal experiences and use them in his writing is what makes his works so relatable and powerful.

In *Ruskin Bond's World* (2013), Gulnaz explains the common roots that shape India's great and beloved storyteller, describing how the stories of his life in colonial India were built upon his formative years in Britain, as well as his days living in the hills and mountains of his country today. She is interested in the biographical as well as the imagined components of his writings and delves into these aspects in much greater detail in regard to subjects like nature, children, love and animals. According to

Pandey and Dixit (2017), the most dreadful of all fears is not having any control over the outcome. Death is just inevitable. The idea that there is life after death is one of many beliefs that result from this concern. Nearly all of the religions practised at the time included ideas of life after death. Numerous literary works give various perspectives on the presence of supernatural forces or life after death. When Ruskin Bond was acknowledged as the shining star of children's literature, he adorned his body of work with delicate themes like the charm of nature, the warmth of love, the splendour of India, or the individuality of children. Like many of his contemporaries, he thinks that writing's primary purpose is to lift readers' spirits

when they are experiencing a dreadful or unpleasant world. Although the author do not consider herself to be religious, if she had to identify a religion, she would call herself a worshipper of nature. Famous children's author, Ruskin Bond, is well known for his poems, short stories and novels. He has a huge fan base, particularly in children's literature circles (Jayasree and Ramaswamy 2017). His tales can be compared to ecological narratives intended to raise environmental awareness by vividly illustrating how human actions devastate the planet's fundamental life support system. Even our trees continue to thrive

Rani (2018) mentioned that the choice of Bond's favourite tales is built on the back of terrifying horror, as he has proved to have ample influence in luring his followers from the rich forest landscape of oaks and pines to the ominous wilderness to view the unsettling scenery full of nightmarish creatures. It offered a more realistic portrayal of the scene, drawing the readers in and making them more anxious and on the edge of their seats. His ability to make what is implausible seem genuine aided his rise to be a connoisseur of the enigmatic and macabre. Many readers have read and cherished all of Ruskin Bond's beautiful short stories and thoughtful novels, falling in love with them all. Bond has proven himself as an internationally acclaimed author with novels and short story collections that feature everything from acting as a grandfather to children's biographical tales to tales of unrequited love, along with studies on Indian society, which features both prominent and diverse elements and studies on nature, which brings together universal values.

According to Sharma (2018), Bond primarily wrote love stories that are told in the first person and don't give the title character a name. The narrator describes how the main character develops feelings for a young, naive girl. It is a joint relationship between two different spouses who have no connection to one another whatsoever. With regard to the whole social and natural world, this strong connection has been stressed in several spheres, which has led to the term "bionomics" or "ecological studies" being used to describe it. The study of environmental systems is referred to as the science of ecology. When you say that environmentalism pertains to the natural world, rather than human-made systems, then you indicate that ecology, in its own way, does not care about how the various parts of nature interact with each other; rather, ecology focuses on how various elements of nature interact with each other. While we may be able to observe this global ecological disaster in plain sight, the situation truly encompasses the whole world. Mass extinctions throughout the Holocene referred to as Holocene extinction, occur due to rapid environmental changes. The extinction of a species might have

occurred. One estimate has put the percentage of species that have existed on Earth between 1% and 3%. This, in short, has been clearly shown to be true throughout the long history of our world and on more than one occasion, we have experienced catastrophic destruction due to environmental change. As a result, if we desire to leave the earth in a better state for future generations, it is imperative that we take steps to save the environment. My article is connected not only to this hot problem of ecological disaster but also discusses how different Indian English writers from the past have evolved in their relationship with the environment, starting from adoration to devastation. To get to the heart of Ruskin Bond, an Indian English writer of contemporary times, a thorough analysis of his works was done, which came to the conclusion that he had a deep regard for nature and had therefore given a lot of importance to his writings.

This study will examine, according to Vaidya (2012), Bond's close relationship with nature. Bond has done a better job than any other Indian author in expressing their affection for their country and the environment. According to the researcher, Bond's declaration that he is as indigenous as the grass in a mountain meadow or the dust on the plains is also true. To put it in his own words. From his pals, he departed. The article also discusses how Bond's description of nature and the writings by Indian authors differ from one another. In this instance, the researcher has drawn on Bond's fictional writings to learn more about his love of nature. The researcher suggests conducting a study on the various facets of the culture, economy and geography of the area in order to comprehend the varied and vibrant manner in which Bond depicts North India. In light of this, the researcher wants to analyse in what way Bond has been able to do credit to the emotional growth of his characters in such a milieu. While Bond does not deal with a case of dual inheritance, he deals with a case of double inheritance. Bond was raised in a rapidly changing India and he has always shown allegiance to and still shows allegiance to India. Many Britishers who had been freed from British rule after India's independence returned to the United Kingdom, while just a handful who were too elderly to return or who were unable to return for financial reasons stayed in India. Bond wrote a number of beautiful short stories and thoughtful volumes, all of which Gulnaz (2013) and many readers adored. A variety of stories, from love in faraway nations to that of people and animals with nature, are included in a biography about caring for grandkids and a story about unrequited love from varied cultural views. From Bond's novel and short story collections to his biographical novels and books on being a grandfather, these tales all have a universal appeal. In Ruskin Bond's World, Indian academic, Gulnaz Fatma, investigates one of her

nation's greatest and most well-known storytellers, tracing the influences that shape his works as they change over time from his colonial Indian upbringing to his time in Britain to the present day in India's rolling hills and rocky mountain. Gulnaz examines his novels and short stories, delving deeply into their subject matter on various levels, including nature, children, love and animals, while also addressing both the biographical and fictional aspects of his literature. We learn about Bond's admiration for a variety of people in these contributions, including honest thieves, ungrateful beggars, betrayed lovers and clever seniors, through an extensive analysis of Ruskin Bond. Renowned poet and author, Stephen Gill, has agreed to serve as Ansted University's Poet Laureate. The literary luminaries of India have long been in the public eye and now their long-needed study is available. You will be given an entirely different, more personal view into one author's mind and spirit if you peer into Bond's world. The well-known human rights activist, Chawla (2014) mentioned that "In all times and places, nature and literature have had a unique and cooperative connection. This is evident in works by poets and other writers around the globe during human history". Handique (2015) considered that a certain type of civilization is where authority is placed only in the hands of males. Since social systems are maintained, there is a certain form of hierarchy and hegemony that applies to the two biological sexes. On the other hand, it is claimed that such a system is not a biological but a social fabrication. When it comes to patriarchy, females are regarded through the perspective being nothing more than simple sexual objects that are devoid of any human emotions. They have to go through a lot of hardship and exploitation in a wide range of professions and industries. This study is an attempt to examine Ruskin Bond's endeavour to provide a picture of a hierarchical and patriarchal society, the structure which he may well notice using the tools of critique. If investigated to the smallest detail, one may discover the vestiges of feminine pain that are illustrated and inhabited. Singh (2016) asserts that because of the increasing pace of human resource abuse, we will soon run out of natural resources. Environmentalists and scientists demonstrated to everyone how concerned they were about the depletion of clean air and water in the world after demonstrating to the rest of the world how environmentally negligent and wasteful they were. It is time to recognise the value of everything in the world so that we can continue to preserve its beauty and wellbeing. Since it is generally acknowledged that humans are the strongest social animals, no one should become a terrorist and seize the land of other species to satisfy their avarice. Ruskin concluded that Bond's stories serve a similar function in that they exhibit both

his overall fear of the environmental destruction caused by human folly and his loyalty to worldly gain. Bond's tales are a creative and sincere depiction of his inherent sensitivity. The human employs both ingenuity and cunning to impose his methods on the animals for the sake of progress; as a result, he has started building highways and flattening mountains to obtain access to the animal homelands. In the majority of the tales where Bond promotes a greater obligation to nature, he repeatedly reiterates the idea that it is our moral role as humans to protect the environment and, more importantly, to educate others about this responsibility

Bhatia and Kumar (2018) examine the autobiographical element in Bond's work. They explore how Bond's personal experiences have influenced his writing and how he uses writing as a means of self-expression. The article analyses various works of Bond, including his autobiography *Lone Fox Dancing: My Autobiography* (2017), and analyses the autobiographical element in each of them. The authors conclude that the autobiographical element is a prominent feature of Bond's works and is instrumental in making his writing relatable and impactful. The name Diya Panjwani appears on the 2020 presidential ballot as an example of the impact Britain's imperial past has had on subsequent centuries. Life in India presented the British people a significant difficulty because of the harsh weather. Because of this, they built hillside houses for their wealthy homeowners. White men no longer owned the tiger hunting, were allowed to have their own gardens, were invited to sophisticated tea parties and still participated in polo and horseback riding, after the British Raj ended. After some leisure, impoverished whites returned to England where they received an even worse quality of life from diamonds to grain. Because of their lifestyles as spendthrift rajahs, they naturally looked back in wrath at what they had lost. It was a completely different experience for the party this time around as they had to forge their identity in their own country. Raj administered by the British Empire established another society that they named Anglo Indians, individuals who were ethnically and culturally mixed, including individuals of British heritage who had chosen to remain in India. Bond's family was a member of the group. When he was still in his teenage years, his father was killed while serving the British Raj as a flight officer in the Royal Air Force. The long age of political uncertainty and mistrust offered Bond some personal relief in the form of time spent in nature. As he prepared to leave for England, he discovered that he was connected to the land of India in a very personal way. In addition, he turned down the job of a journalist in England to reside in India and do volunteer work on the condition that he was given

enough money to do so. There is evidence of his “self” throughout his works where he announced that India was his home. Race indeed had nothing to do with making me an Indian. History did, in the end. On the other hand, in the long term, it is history that matters.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, we can say that Bond’s short stories are reflection of his personal experiences and observations. His works often have an autobiographical element, which adds depth and authenticity to his characters and settings. Through his stories, he has captured the essence of small-town life in India and highlighted the importance of finding joy and beauty in the everyday. In his tales, the inherent love of nature, the unfairness of humans towards nature, and the severe repercussions that follow from cruel human behaviour are depicted in their truest sense.

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10/11/2024