

# **A Comparative Study of Four Major Shakespearean Tragedies—In Bengali Translations and Adaptations**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present research is primarily on Shakespeare in Bengali instead of “Shakespeare in Bengal”. To constrain the enormous periphery into a plausible one this research centers on the published Shakespearean texts (four major tragedies) in Bengali translations and adaptations from 1874 to 2008 in Bengal (after 1947 West Bengal) and in Bangladesh (post 1970). Selection of Shakespeare is undoubtedly because of his unending legacy over once British colonised undivided India and the most prolifically translated foreign author in Bengali. The choice of four major Shakespearean tragedies(i.e. *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*) is due to their interesting introduction to the land of *Natyashastra* and the association of the great names of Bengali literature and theatre in the extensive list of their translators/ adapters even in the post-colonial phases of the history of West Bengal and Bangladesh. The thesis is divided into nine separate chapters. In the first chapter the researcher tries to locate Shakespeare in the context of Indian and Bangladeshi theatrical traditions. Literature review comes in the next chapter. The third chapter focuses on the

involvements of some theories from Translation Studies and Cultural Studies. Subsequent four chapters deal with the analysis of the selected translated/ adapted texts of four major Shakespearean tragedies. Chapter eight documents the interviews of Ramendu Majumdar, Dr DattatreyaDutt, and Prof. BratyaBasu. Ultimately in the final chapter, to conclude, the researcher draws the inferences as,

- a) Every Shakespeare translation/ adaptation in Bengali is a unique transcreation of the master text against a specific historical, cultural, geographical, political and linguistic framework.
- b) This process can simply be not judged against the relationship between coloniser and colonised. The relationship is “ambivalent” throughout. The nineteenth century translators encoded the texts with ideas of Hindu nationalism. The twentieth and twenty first century translators try to deconstruct them while at the same time consider Shakespeare as a canonical model in Bengal. The Bangladeshi translators, in some cases, aspire to create a utopic “third space” through it.
- c) At almost every age Shakespeare has been utilised by the Bengali translators/ adapters as a tool to camouflage their socio-political ideologies, to get help in enriching theatrical style and thematic variety, and, sometimes, commercial success.

**Key words:** Shakespearean Tragedies, translation, adaptation, Nineteenth Century Bengal, Bangladesh, Hindu Nationalism.