

PORTRAYAL OF IMMEASURABLE SUFFERINGS AND EXPLOITATION IN BHABANI BHATTACHARYA'S 'SO MANY HUNGERS'

Sonia Bajpai

Research Scholar,
Jiwaji University Gwalior (M.P.)

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ABSTRACT

This paper at the outset, introduces the readers to the origin and growth of Indian English novel laying focus on the Indian themes like hunger, poverty, Economic exploitation, immeasurable sufferings, humanism, class consciousness etc. explored by the writers Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, The paper focus on the portrayal of Immeasurable sufferings and Exploitation with a special reference to So Many Hungers, related to the political and economic situations of Bengal Society.

Keywords: Immeasurable sufferings, Exploitation

INTRODUCTION

Every piece of literature is like a treasure and its value greatly depends on its explorations to make it useful for life. Writer like Bhabani Bhattacharya is of the view that art must have purposiveness and the novel must have a social purpose. He himself confirmed this view point in an interview.

"I hold that a novel must have a social purpose . It ... must place before the reader something from the society's point of view. Art is not necessarily for art's sake, purposeless art and literature which is much in vogue does not appear to me a sound judgement."(Badal 25)

Bhabani Bhattacharya was born in Bhagalpur port of the Bengal presidency of British India. His parents were Bengalis. Bhabani Bhattacharya studied at Patna University and received a bachelors degree in English Literature. He received masters degree in 1931 and Doctoral degree in 1934 from the University of London. He won Sahitya Akadami Award in 1967, he passed away on 10th October 1988. His thematic concerns in his novels lay focus on the social, political and economic realities in rural and urban lives and their resultant influences on society. The need for the change of traditional beliefs for the betterment of modern society. Bhabani Bhattacharya does vividly portray various kinds of hungers prevalent in the society and their consequences and immeasurable sufferings in his first novel So Many Hungers!, The novel for its background has the second world war and Bengal Famine of 1943. Though the location of the novel is Calcutta and a nearby village Baruni, it represents the urban and rural lives of the society of the pre-independent India with its good and evil. The plot of the novel is woven around two families. Rehoul's and Kajoli's K.R. Chandrasekaran rightly observes. Rahoul's story is a representation in miniature of the struggle for freedom. The sad tale of Kajoli is like wise a pathetic record of what happened to more than two million men and women, who became victims of a famine which was not an act of God, but which was brought out by a rapacity and selfishness of profiteers and the indifference of alien Government (P11). In the story, though certaining round two families, the focus of the novelist is on society and its varied hungers. Due to the announcement of war by Britain against Germany, Rahoul was very disturbed. He thought if it launched for the battlement of the people, it will have a positive aspect but if it will for their own benefits, it will take the negative shape. Thus we can compare this conception with the immeasurable sufferings. According to Bhabani Bhattacharya, the novel must have a social purpose. He wanted to do something for the hungry humanity, because it was the need of the day. The moral unselfishness of hungry people has been described in very detail. And the best examples are onu and Kajoli's mother. Although throughout the novel we came across the various instance of misery, poverty, starvation but these negative elements are subdued in to the background when we think the hope and assertion of the self. The conflict of the self throughout the novel has not been the materialistic forces of evil but with the social forces of exploitation there is no doubt that the novelist is successful to strike the heart of everyone. This novel also reflects the image of Gandhi in Rahoul. On the other side, Samarendra Basu also plays a major role in this novel. Though born poor , he gets good education and becomes a lawyer. He has two sons and both were well educated. In this novel the first brother is cut from the society and the second for himself. Devesh is their parental grandfather. He is a retired teacher presently occupied in training the youth of the country to conduct satayagraha for the liberty of the country. Nothing interest us in a better way than the other side picture. Kanu is other

character recollecting us the Kargil Martyrs. Onu is his younger brother, a symbol of an innocent Indian peasant. His life is simple but helpful to others, Kajoli the chief female character, suffers the pangs of the disintegration of her sprightly and innocent self on account of the catastrophic famine. She has a brief spell of happiness after she is married to Kishore but this happiness is put an occasional episode in the general drama of life. Alienated from her 'self' Kajoli suffers from the conflict between situational compulsions and moral considerations. She never intends to live a sinful life but her utter poverty urges her to sacrifice her virginity and stoop to moral turpitude. Kajoli's alienation from herself is the offspring of her needs and necessities. It is a phonotypical manifestation of her inner drives and desires. So through her character Bhabani Bhattacharya portrays the dehumanization of a man in a mechanical society, where an individual remains alienated from the human aspect of his identity. Kajoli's immeasurable sufferings are not with the materialistic forces of evil and vice but with the social forces of exploitation and degradation. Bhattacharya's first novel *So Many Hungers* and the third Novel *He Who Rides A Tiger* deal with the theme of immeasurable sufferings, hunger and exploitation. Born of the world war second and the famine of 1943. Both novels have Bengal for their fictional locale. In *So Many Hungers*, the general picture of starvation is particularized by showing the plight of Kajoli, her mother and their search for food.

Bhattacharya's mode of fictional presentation is determined largely by his concept of literature. He holds that art should be firmly based on reality-social or historical. He believes that the creative writer's final business is to reveal the truth. The events in his novels are dramatized through the shifting view points of characters inside the story. This gives an impression that he plans his plots stories before writing them and that his plots, therefore lack natural growth or evolution. Bhattacharya is thus a class by himself among the contemporary Indian novelists both in the selection and treatment of his themes. His works are both artistic and infused with social awareness and thus relevant to all ages and all places. Bhabani Bhattacharya is described as belonging to the social realism school of Indo-Anglian Literature. His writings exhibit the influence of 'Rabindra Nath Tagore' and 'Mahatma Gandhi'. Unlike other social realists like 'Premchand', Bhabani Bhattacharya adopted a pedagogical approach, to making novels out of ideas, utilizing satire and making his ideas more tangible through situational examples.

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