



Gandhian Heroes in the Novels of Bharani Bhattacharya

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Abstract

Gandhian Heroes in the Novels of Bharani Bhattacharya is an attempt of this paper. Ideas of Bhabani Bhattacharya according to his writings, all the heroes in the novels like Devesh Basu, Rahoul, Jaydev, Satyajit described as the followers of the Gandhiji and their views also the same that of Gandhi .

Key words: Gandhiji Heroes , Novels, independence, good of society

Gandhi and Bhabani Bhattacharya

The main Indian freedom struggle began under the leadership of M.K.Gandhi. Gandhi and his followers wanted "Purna Swaraj" or complete freedom from the British rule through non-violence. Gandhi differed from the other leaders, in the sense that he insisted more on moral evaluation of people of the country for winning freedom. Non-violence was Gandhi's weapon for winning freedom.

Non Violence meant for a deep faith in love for all, whether friends or enemies, a complete dissociation from evil, and abstention from such brute reaction as retaliation or revenge. As for non-cooperation for Gandhi, it was only a new name for suffering. It was to him an acid test of people's sincerity, because it required silent sacrifice. He thus gave the new name Satyagraha to non-violent non-cooperation. Passive resistance for Gandhi was restraint undertaken voluntarily for the good of society. Swaraj (independence) meant to Gandhi something more than mere political

independence from foreign rule, it was a state of being in which all people live in peace and harmony, getting rid of fear, helplessness and other evils.

Bhabani Bhattacharya in one of the Indo-Anglian novelists of the period of Gandhian movement who were witness to Gandhi's spirit of the period and had felt the spirit of those times in their own views have depicted these experience in their writings. His first novel "So many Hungers" (1947) reflects the aspect of the freedom movement under the leadership of Gandhi. It deals with the Gandhian ideal of rural reconstruction as a step towards winning freedom. There is a theme of rural reconstruction of India after the ideal of Gandhi. Devesh is introduced here as a character with the ideals of Gandhi and the novelist seems to have done it with a purpose. The novelist shows us how every village or town during the time had one Gandhi of its won to lead the people by staying in their midst.



Devesh Basu in this novel is shown as a great patriot and a freedom fighter. He is shown as man of simplicity with full of Gandhian principles. He detaches himself from his son and family and lives with the village people. The people of the village Baruni love him and honour him by calling him Devata (God). Devata becomes philosopher and guide to them. He educates them, and trains them as freedom fighters. Devesh adopts a peasant's family in Baruni. He acts as master of the peasant's family and he refers to the peasant's daughter, Kajoli as his grand daughter. He cultivates moral strength in them. He shares their joys and sorrows.

Rahoul is grandson of Devesh. He had DSC degree from Cambridge where he has carried on research under a famous scientist. Influenced by the noble principles of his grand father Devesh, Rahoul joins in the national movement. He becomes staunch nationalist and follower of his grandfather. After the imprisonment of Devesh by the Britishers, Rahoul takes the responsibility of Baruni. He develops deep attachment with the village people and serves the hunger stricken people.

Bhattacharya projects Gandhi's reformatory and nationalistic ideas through his second novel "Music for Mohini". Jaydev, the protagonist of the novel strives for political freedom and social emancipation of weaker sections. He dedicates his life for the development of his village, Behula. In spite of taking

his higher education in city, he stays at home for sake of his people. As a master of the village he feels that even married life will be secondary. He always adheres to his aim of development of the village and even he hides his affection and keeps away his wife in his married life. He adulates his wife, Mohini but convinces her by explaining his aim and concept and makes her partner in his ambition. Even he employs her in the programme of literacy to the village people.

Jaydev encourages young people to serve for the village people. He eradicates the age old evils and absurdities in the village with the help of youth. He solves many problems successfully relating to economic development, political integration and emancipation of weaker sections. He protests against his mother who blindly believes in horoscopes and unwanted age old customs. Harindra the young medical man accompanies Jaydev in his reformatory tasks. Against to the orthodox views of the village people Harindra marries Sudha who is forbidden for marriage as her stars are not in favour for her marriage.

It is thus seen how the author portrays here ideal men who build India of Gandhi's dream. Though the stories do not appeal as political novels, the author's insistence on the reconstruction of the national economy through the development of economic condition of the villages, and his appeal for a love for country's tradition, become abundantly clear, and not only from the story but



also from the conversations of the characters idealized by the novelist.

In the novel "He who Rides a Tiger", through the character of B-10 Bhattacharya protests and revolts against selfish and orthodox communities who always drag the civilization into the backward direction and they remain as hurdles in the growth of the nation.

Bhattacharya's "A Goddess Named Gold" deals with happenings in a village, Sonamitti during the period immediately preceding India's attainment of freedom. The Main object in the novel is the way in which a country should use freedom and what benefits may be derived from it. Freedom is the golden key which can open magic doors and admit us in to a realm in which men think noble thoughts and do kind deeds so that happiness may be the portion of all.

The Minstrel (Old Man) is an unusual character who plays a vital part in this novel which deals with India's freedom. He is a homeless wanderer. The arrival of the minstrel in the village is the starting point of important developments. He conjures before people's mind a picture of a new India that has attained material prosperity, but which also suffers from the evils of such prosperity. Towards the end of the novel the old man tells them that the freedom which they are celebrating is the touchstone. It belongs to every one of them but will yield results and transmute copper into gold only if acts of faith are performed. When he is

asked to define acts of faith, he modestly replies that he does not have wisdom enough to give guidance, but he is sure that miracles can be performed if they all hold themselves in readiness. Bhattacharya emphasizes the views of Gandhi that the freedom, but freedom of the mind. The minstrel refers to Gandhi's definition of freedom as "a state of mind". The novel ends with the decision of the villagers to use their newly won freedom in the right way by electing the minstrel to the district board. Thus the novelists gives us reminisces of Quit India movement and Gandhi's struggle.

Bhattacharya's "Shadow from Ladakh" is set against the Frictional background between Chinese and India. The novelist reveals India's condition which needs new strategies for its development according to the changing conditions in the contemporary situations. Industrialization is inevitable in the competitive context along with neighbor countries. The industrial revolution, ought not to transform conventional life into mechanical. Bhattacharya hopes the amalgamation of the ideological views with the western ideas.

Gandhism is represented by the simple rural community of Gandhigram, established by the veteran man, Satyajit Sen who follows Gandhi, While industrialization is represented by a young engineer, Bhaskar who is in charge of Steel town, which is in the process of its growth to swallows up Gandhigram. The confrontation



between Gandhigram and steel town takes on a political colouring owing to Chinese invasion. The exigencies of war production make the steel town engineers anxious to take over the adjoin Gandhigram.

Gandhigram presents a model of rural India as envisaged by Gandhi. Satyajit has been selected by the founder to guide the destinies of this ideal village to regulate its life so that it may become an example and a source of inspiration to the rest of country. The growth of Satyajit till almost the end of the novel is a growth in the direction of asceticism and Gandhi's ideology.

For all appearances Satyajit is a disciplined Gandhian applying the principles of Gandhian economics and ethics in the regulation of life of Gandhigram and conduct of his own life. A testing time comes with the launching of Chinese aggression against India. One point of view in the country is that strength can be met only with strength, but satyajit represents the opposite point of view, namely that physical force may be conquered by spiritual force. He, therefore, uses a weapon from the armory of the opponent himself, the weapon of non-violence. Gandhigram to be won over gradually to the new way symbolized Steel town. The crisis in the novel comes with Satyajit's commencement of a fast to death to protest against the Government's decision to let Steel town swallow the village. Bhaskar has, in the meantime, unconsciously undergone a profound change.

The crisis of the novel is resolved by Bhaskar himself leading a procession of workmen from Steel town who march to Gandhigram to support the cause of Satyajit. This means that Steeltown has given up its plan to expand at the expense of Gandhigram. The two are to co-exist. The Co-existence, however, is not merely a matter of live-and-let-live, it is a result of compromise and readjustment of values on either side.

The novel makes numerous references to Gandhiji's teachings and his work. Satyajit is a character who tries to mould him and others according to the principles lay down by Gandhi; Gandhigram is a model village in which we find principles of Gandhian economics and ethics worked out. The village is self-sufficient as all its needs besides food are satisfied by cottage-based industry. In the sphere of education, the village follows the basic scheme of craft-centered teaching advocated by Gandhiji. Gandhigram seeks to build up a new set of values.

References

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