

Reflection of the Freedom Struggle of India in Some Selected Novels of Eminent Personalities from Indian Context

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Abstract:

Literature reflects the history, the society and the cultural aspects of the time when it has been produced. Basically it reflects human activity in that particularly society. Literature helps to expose societal realities. Most of the works in literature deals with the social issues in detail and carries the real events in the society and presents it as a mirror of the society so that people can view it and atone wherever it is necessary. It is also true that the seeds of the great revolutions and movements of the world are found in literature. The American Revolution, The French Revolution, The Russian Revolution, Peasants Revolt in England etc. is the examples of movements that have a considerable stake of literature in its rise. The Indian Freedom Movement is also not different from it. Each and every genre of the literature is concerned about it. Through this study attempt has been made to investigate reflection of the Freedom Struggle of India in some selected literary contributions of some eminent personalities from Indian context. For limitation of the words and time constraints the novels written by few literary figures are taken into consideration. It is true that lots of study has already been done considering the broad subject from various angles. Through this study attempt has been made to understand the contribution of literature in that movement and at the same time the role of literature in preserving the history of that great movement in Indian sub continent. The information collected for the purpose of the study is based on secondary data sources. Intensive observation was also made to acquire necessary information. Secondary data was obtained from various published and unpublished sources like relevant literature, news papers, journals, related websites, social media and others. The nature of the present study is explorative and descriptive in nature. It is expected that such type of studies will establish the endeavor made by the novelists as literary figures in inspiring the common masses for the revolution and at the same time preserving the glorious history of that time for the future generations. There is lots of scope for further studies in this aspect.

Keywords: Freedom Struggle of India, Novels, History, Reflection.

1. Introduction:

Literature reflects the society. It plays an exceptionally important role right from the history. Basically it reflects human activity in that particularly society. Literature helps to expose societal realities. Most of the works in literature deals with the social issues in detail and carries the real events in the society and presents it as a mirror of the society so that people can view it and atone wherever it is necessary. It is

also true that the seeds of the great revolutions and movements of the world are found in literature. The American Revolution, The French Revolution, The Russian Revolution, Peasants Revolt in England etc. is the examples of movements that have a considerable stake of literature in its rise. The Indian Freedom Movement is also not different from it. Another aspect is that the literature of that time and aftermath very clearly reflect the socio historical events of that movement. It has instigated, inspired and guided the people and at the same time performed the vital role for the preservation of the history of that time. It has aroused the national consciousness and created a sense of Patriotism among the masses. Through the present study attempt has been made to look into the matter how the literature of that period reflect the history of Indian Freedom Struggle on the basis of the data available in different domains. For the limitation of time as well as words the genre novel has been taken into consideration.

2. The Significance of the Study:

The study is undertaken to investigate reflection of the Freedom Struggle of India in some selected literary contributions of some eminent personalities from Indian context. It is true that lots of study has already been done considering the broad subject from various angles. Through this study attempt has been made to understand the contribution of literature in that movement and at the same time the role of literature in preserving the history of that great movement in Indian sub continent.

4. Objective of the Study:

There is no doubt that the freedom struggle of India had impacted all the sphere of the life of the people of India. The literary figures were also not different from it. The major themes adopted by the writers of that time were various themes in the context of the nationalistic movements for independence. The objective of this study is to highlight how the literature of that period played an important role in the Indian independence movement and at the same time in preserving the history of that time.

5. Materials and Methods:

Research methodology is the most important aspect of research work and is a way to systematically solve research problems. It facilitates the research work and provides reliability and validity to it. The information collected for the purpose of the study is based on secondary data sources. Intensive observation was also made to acquire necessary information. Secondary data was obtained from various published and unpublished sources like relevant literature, news papers, journals, related websites, social media and others. The nature of the present study is explorative and descriptive in nature.

6. Limitation of the Study:

The impact of literature in the freedom struggle of India and reflection of the history of this great movement in the literature is so vivid that it is not possible to cover everything in a single study. The time and the limitation of word is the main concern in this aspect. The works has not been mentioned chronologically and it is not limited to any literature of a particular language. The study has been carried out on the basis of the available data extracted from available previous literature and works of some selected personalities are discussed. Leaving aside the other genres only novels are taken into consideration.

7. Discussion on Findings:

Literature plays a pivotal role in reflecting the social, cultural, economic and political aspects of a nation. India being the multi lingual country has diverse languages and all the literature of each available language reflect the story as well as the history of the Indian freedom struggle very dedicatedly. Datta G. Sawant gives a very elaborative description about it in his scholarly work “Indian Freedom Struggle in Indian English Literature”. According to him all the eminent personalities of that time contributed extensively to unite the masses against the British rulers. “Anandamath” written in 1882 by Bankim Chandra Chatopadhyay is one of them. It is based on the struggle of two major characters Mahendra and Kalyani during 1770. The Bengal province caught into a severe famine. The British rule had worsened the condition of common people in Bengal. Not only was it a struggle against famine but also unjust and exploitative rule of colonialism. This novel is also famous for the nationalistic song “Vande Mataram”. Rabindranath Tagore another stalwart of the Bengali literature inspired the people through his literary contributions. Rabindranath Tagore, the first Asian Nobel Laureate is the author of a number of novels wrote Gora, the greatest novel of modern India. It is a colonial novel written in the year 1907 when India was under the British rule. It is a classic, it entails various issues or concerns which seems very contemporary to the current scenario of the country. It portrays diverse social life in colonial India. The novel was set up during the times when the Bengali society was divided in to orthodox Hindus and Brahmos. Thus it portrays religious intolerance and disharmony, and can be called as the clash between the old and the new. Tagore also portrays universality of religion and its core which is humanity. It is also about alteration in one’s beliefs with the changing times, society, and community. It also shows the changing status of women in the Indian society. He has depicted a significant period in India’s History when Hindu society was very much striving hard to prevent its own crumbling in the face of challenges from within and without. Tagore’s nationalism is seen in Gora as he wants to firmly hold customs and beliefs to save Hinduism. He wants Hindus to come back to its roots and traditions. He voices his concern regarding the division between superstitious and the non-superstitious, between the believers and the non believers. According to Gora the customs and the traditions are the heritage of the country. One should preserve them. Then only our country can become united. It is very important to take pride in what country owes. The faults do exist in the society but when the people are united by the bonds of love then they can muster enough strength to combat with the evils, if at all, they persist. They will be able to neutralize poison. The reformation will come in by itself. Gora considers himself a privileged man to be born in a country which has a rich cultural heritage of its own. Therefore it becomes the duty of everyone to safeguard its traditions, faiths, or its scriptures. What Tagore has conveyed through his novels is his unique idea of freedom as nationalism, which implies that before gaining outer freedom from the English, the people of India must achieve their inner freedom from within. He implies that people can gain freedom through education. The novelist firmly believed that people in colonized India were not suffering so much at the hands of the Englishmen as from a ‘veil of ignorance’ put on them by the greedy moneylenders as well as sly religious and political leaders who were feeding them with slow poison. Frantz Fanon, a French philosopher aptly expresses Tagore’s views that, “during the colonized period the people are called upon to fight against oppression; after national liberation, they are called upon to fight against poverty, illiteracy and under development. R. K. Narayanan one of the famous literary figures in Indian English literature reflect the freedom struggle through his works. He wrote several stories and novels depicting the theme of struggle of ordinary people for their routine life. Conflict of ideas or principles also appears as a prominent theme in his novels. “Waiting for the

Mahatma” written in 1955 is such a novel which depicts the conflict and controversy between Gandhian ideals and traditional views of freedom, individuality, and nationality. The protagonist of the novel Sriram is a young man without any goal in life, who comes into contact with Bharati, a beautiful young girl, who is an active member of Mahatma Gandhi's Quit India Movement. Bharti introduces Sriram to Gandhian ideals and the freedom movement. Sriram is attracted towards Bharti and Gandhian ideology. Basically, it is a story of an aimless young man turning into a staunch activist and nationalist. It shows how Gandhian influenced the common man. Though the novel has been published after independence, it is set in the freedom movement of India. The novel shows the deep impact of Gandhi and his thoughts on the mind of novelist also. Raja Rao in his novel “Kanthapura” shows the effects of the Indian freedom movement on a small South Indian village and the people living there. The second half of the novel describes the resistance and fight of villagers against British colonial rule. Gandhian ideals and means of resistance are the chief tool to unite people and their inspiration for the struggle. In an incident, when the police assaulted villagers for their agitation, the villagers loudly raised the slogan "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai". It is a strength and energy for them. Nobody in the village ever met Gandhi but they had assurance about Gandhi and his principles that one day this man was going to free them from the shackles of colonial rule. They heard about Gandhi and his work for the freedom movement. Many villages started to believe that Gandhi was an incarnation of lord Shiva who came on the earth to release the exploited from the bondage of misery forced by colonial rule. The villagers open the resistance campaign against British authorities appointed for the village. The final conflict occurs in the novel when villagers try to hoist the Indian flag at the outskirts of the village called Bebbur Mound. The novel becomes successful in portraying the inevitable and long lasting impact of the national freedom movement and its great leader Gandhi with his tactics to get freedom from colonial rule. Munchi Premchand’s famous novel “Goodan” translated into English by Jayaratan and Purushottam Lal first and then by Gordon C. Roadarmel reflects the colonial India in a different way. The central theme of the novel is caste issues, social and economic deprivation and exploitation based on it. But the novel vividly portrays the havoc impact of colonialism on the life of poor villagers. It was a system which did not interfere in the caste system with untouchability issues of villagers but intensified the issues by supporting upper castes. The novel shows how the Indian freedom struggle formed the influence on the life of villages and how some people were using the movement for their personal benefit exploiting the poor and the downtrodden. Kamala Markandaya’s novel “Some Inner Fury” reflects the struggle for independence, anger and hatred felt by the people of India against the British rulers. It dramatizes the lives of young people facing the disturbing dilemma of their freedom in terms of individual as well as of their nation. The story revolves around Mirabai, Kit, Premala, Govind and Roshan- all educated, sophisticated and to some extent westernized Indians and Richards- an Englishman in love with Mirabai. The novel portrays how their fates are sealed by the independence struggle, especially the Quit India Movement. Chaman Nahal, a modern Indian English novelist has fictionalized history of the Indian freedom movement in his series of historical novels “The Gandhi Quartet”. The series of novels depicts the arrival of Gandhiji in India in 1915 from Africa and ends with four years after his death. All these four novels depict the freedom struggle of India from very close quarters. “The Crown and the Loincloth” expresses the days from 1915 to 1922. “The Salt of Life” covers the period from 1930 to 1941. In “The Triumph of the Tricolour” Chaman Nahal returns to India’s freedom movement and this novel deals with the 1942 Quit India period. “Azadi” the last novel based on the partition of India in 1947, the greatest socio – political incidents of Indian subcontinent that led to the formation of Pakistan

as a separate country. Mulk Raj Anand born on December 12, 1905 at Peshawar, now in Pakistan is a prolific writer in Indian English literature. He started his writing career during 1930s when the struggle for political freedom was gaining momentum. The predominant themes in his works are the freedom struggle of India including the fight against poverty, illiteracy, casteism, untouchability, superstition etc. His most famous novel “Untouchable” has a tremendous descriptive quality and has been able to draw the attention of the readers to the pathetic condition of the oppressed people. He has strongly and forcefully presented the desires, hopes, sorrows and sufferings of this class of society in a realistic vein. This novel is indeed a touching cry of the sufferings of the low class people under the British rule and also under the pressure of outdated Brahmin customs and oppressive traditions. One of the eminent novelists from India is Nayantara Sahgal, who is usually considered as an exponent of the political novel. She herself has admitted that his novels more or less reflect the political aspects of the contemporary times. Her literary career as a novelist spans over a period of thirty years with eight novels. The first novel was “A Time to be Happy” published in 1958. The other novels are “This Time of Morning” in 1965, “Strom in Chandigarh” in 1969, “The Day in Shadow” in 1971, “A Situation in New Delhi in 1977, “Rich like Us” in 1985, “Plans for Departure” in 1987 and “Mistaken Identity” in 1988. The first six novels deals with the chronological accounts of Indian politics from the last phase of freedom struggle to the breakdown of democracy in the mid-seventies. The set up of her first the novel is post – independence India which celebrates the concept of freedom. Apart from the above mentioned literary works in the genre there are so many other works that depict the Indian freedom struggle of India in a very artistic and convincing way. Such type of novels is spread across different Indian languages and a good number of these are translated into English. The works of Assamese novelists has also played a significant role in preservation of the memory of freedom struggle of India. Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya an acclaimed novelist from Assam and a recipient of Jnanpith award reflects the freedom struggle in his novel “Mrityunjay”. It is based on a singular event during the final movement of 1942 in the struggle for India’s independence. Written in the context of Indian freedom struggle it is a unique novel. It narrates the derailing of a train at Mayong area close to Nagaon, Assam. Indian independence movement near its end got split, based on two idealisms. One was the non-violent path led by Mahatma Gandhi which was based on passive resistance and the other which was led by Subhash Chandra Bose based on violence. Believers of extremism thought that freedom for the country could be secured only through guerilla warfare. The novel has been built-up on the priceless sacrifices of a section of individuals who had faith in the guerilla tactics to make their nation independent. Another novel comes to the mind is “Swargadapi” written by Dhrubajyoti Bora who is also an acclaimed novelist from Assamese literature and a recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award. It narrates the story of a freedom fighter from tea garden community. The impact of teachings of Mahatma Gandhi upon the tea garden community and the policy of the colonial rulers to keep them away from joining in the freedom struggle has been depicted vividly by the novelist in this novel. Image of women’s participation in Indian independence struggle is another important aspect of this novel. Through his narrative Dhrubajyoti Bora very perfectly reflects the socio political aspects of that time in this novel. All these literary contributions depict the dominant themes of freedom struggle for independence apart from their civilization, cultural and historical antecedents. But because of time constraint and limitation of words I have to limit my study leaving room for further study in this regard.

8. Conclusion:

The freedom struggle of India has lots of significance in the human history and it has far reaching impact in the literary domain. The struggle and aftermath of the struggle inspired a lot of novelists to create their acclaimed works of literature which immortalized the spirit of the struggle. They adopted some of the most compelling themes of the contemporary period like the ordeal of the freedom struggle, the east-west relationship, the community problems and the plight of untouchables, the landless poor and the downtrodden, the economically exploited and the oppressed. Their works inspired the common masses for the movement and at the same time became the tool for the preservation of the history of the movement. It is expected that such type of studies will establish the endeavor made by the novelists as literary figures in inspiring the common masses for the revolution and at the same time preserving the glorious history of that time for the future generations.

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