CHAPTER II

SOCIO-POLITICAL HISTORY
Literature in general and fiction in particular has umbilical links with the socio-political conditions of the time wherein it is written. Literature has been a legitimate forum for raising socio-political issues. In Indian fiction written in English, the socio-political motif has been especially prominent from the beginning. M.K. Naik has perceptively analyzed the intimate connection between the growth of the freedom movement with the rise of the Indian novel in English: "for fiction of all literary forms is most vitally concerned with social conditions and values. With an increase in nationalist activities in India during the twenties, thirties and forties, there was a corresponding rise in Indian writer's preoccupation with politics, political issues and polemics". The birth of Indian novel in English was thus; intimately related to the evolution of the nationalist history in India.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to examine the works of Bhattacharya and Malgonkar with reference to socio-political history of the time wherein these works have been written. Both these writers have used socio-political facts in their writings. They have used some historical personages also which are given fictional names but they have true historical identity.
They are embodiment of history. Some of the prominent socio-political facts very often discussed in their writings are: the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the Indian freedom struggle, the IIInd world war, the Bengal famine, untouchability. Indian culture and old traditions in reference to changing scenario, the Partition of India and consequently communal riots, Chinese aggression, Internal emergency in 1975-1977 etc. These socio-political facts as rendered in their writings, are analysed critically here below.

The historical events in India which formed the background of Bhattacharya's writings and influenced them powerfully can be divided in two phases; the first phase stretches from World War II to Independence and the second from Independence to the late seventies. The social, political and economic conditions of both these historical phases are reflected in his writings. The first novel taken herein for critical analysis is *So Many Hungers!* Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers!* is based upon man's "hunger for food and political freedom". The novel is written in the backdrop of Indian freedom struggle, Bengal famine and second World War. Bhattacharya had witnessed closely National Movement and deals with the major events preceding Independence. The
Civil Disobedience and the Quit India Movements have been particularly treated in this book. Along with the Bengal Famine of 1943, which is its main theme, some of the important phases of National Movement, attached with it, are delineated in the narrative. In this regard, Chandrasekharan asserts:

The story was concerned with all the intensified hungers of the historic years 1942-43, not food alone. The money-hunger, the sex hunger, the hunger to achieve India's political freedom.  

So Many Hungers is regarded as a "socio-political novel." It is an authentic record of the Quit India Movement of 1942, the great Bengal Famine of 1943, World War II and the ongoing freedom struggle. K.K. Sharma asserts that this novel, "is, in fact a very deep and lively study of the history of India, of times first preceding the independence which no history book could have rendered in that detail and with that much of depth and liveliness. The novel records the political, social and economic history of the pre-independence society with minuteness and aptness."

Bhattacharya, by creating fictional beings from real characters and situations in Indian history of the recent times has been able to extract maximum
appreciation from readers. The book is basically made up of two plots: the story of the young scientist Rahoul who "is a representation in miniature of the struggle for freedom" and his family and the story of the peasant girl, Kajoli and her family. The first story with Samarendra Basu's father, Devesh Basu, who is respectfully called 'Devata' by every one and his eldest son, Rahoul deals with India's freedom struggle in the early forties. Devata's character has been created by Bhattacharya on more or less Gandhian ideas of ahinsa, non-belief in untouchability; truth, non-violence etc. Kajoli story, on the other hand represents in miniature the "pathetic record of what happened to more than two million men and women who become victims of a famine which was not an act of God, but was brought about by the rapacity and selfishness of profiteers and the indifference of an alien Government".

Rahoul and his brother Kunal, are the sons of a lawyer, Samarendra. Basu Rahoul has in himself strong patriotic and nationalistic qualities and has contemplated joining the Independence Movement and seeking arrest, but his father had shrewdly managed to send him away to England. As Rahoul returns to Calcutta, imbued with Nationalist spirit, famine sweeps the land
Rahoul knows that the famine is not due to "blight of Nature" or failure of crops" but due to the "man made scarcity". (p.103)

Samarendra Basu's main aim is to amass wealth for himself and his family. He is already very rich but "he hungered to be still richer" (P. 187). In this pursuit for wealth he joins hands with the prince among black marketeers, Sir Abalabandu and forms a trading concern with the ironic name 'Cheap Rice Limited'. In the end he has to repent because both of his sons for whom he has earned wealth by concerning the supply of essential commodities in difficult times of Bengal Famine, are arrested. His dream castle is shattered in the end. Kunal is reported missing somewhere in Italy and Rahoul is arrested when he joins the Quit India Movement.

Bhattacharya has authentically the state of the nationalist movement for freedom in all its varying aspects. Through the perspective of Rahoul, the reader has a first hand account of what every awakened Indian thought at that time. Thus, Bhattacharya is able to reveal the universal feelings of contempt for the Britishers in every
Indian's heart, in those terrible times. Rahoul is instinctively sympathetic to the "democracy's war against Fareist aggression". The hope was that Britain, fighting for democracy, would not deny India the same that precisely was the reason why the leaders of the national movement, despite their awareness that "the Champions of Freedom abroad were the eaters of freedom in this land" (p.41), offered full co-operation to the Britishers in the war-effort. These sentiments of the leaders of the national movement, especially Gandhi, at the time of the outbreak of the World War II are shared by Rahoul in his conversation with his younger brother Kunal. Enough evidence are mentioned here, in this novel, that there was a conflict between soft liner headed by Gandhi and the hard liners headed by Bose, on the issue of rendering help to Britishers combine with America, in the second World War. The followers of Gandhi in the Congress were of the opinion that they should support the democratic forces headed by Britain and America. Bhattacharya seems to be sympathetic with the Gandhian view. Towards the end of Chapter five, we have a telling description of this: "And the days ran on, the weeks, the months. The national movement still stood inactive, uncertain which way to turn. It would
not hurt Britain in the grave hour of trial. That would not be ahinsa, true non-violence. The National movement had more morality than strategy" (p.51)

The decision of the dilemma that Indian should fight for the Britishers against Nazis was resolved. So the National Movement "offered co-operation, pledging its full strength to the war-effort, in return for recognition of the Indian people's right to freedom " (p.42). From this war, Indians are reported to have had one greatly beneficial result: "they... killed their old foe - the sense of race inferiority". "The soldiers from India... fought and defeated white troops in pitched battles even against very heavy odds. The white man's bubble... exploded in the African air" (p. 107). The war, thus is presented as an event of proud self-realisation for the subject race.

The authenticity of the historic event of Quit India Resolution passed on August 8, 1942, has become very evident when Rahoul read the historic Quit India Resolution over and again:

A free India will throw all her great resources into the great struggle... Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it... No future promises or guarantees can produce the
needed psychological effect on the mind of the masses. Only the glow of freedom can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war (P.64-65).

After this, the very next morning all the leaders of the movement were arrested in a swoop. However, the indomitable spirit of the people cannot be curbed. The frenzy for freedom reaches an unprecedented dimension with "Sixty thousand men and women [in prison]. A thousand killed, twice as many wounded. Many had been hanged after a hurried trial—peasant lads had gone to the rope crying with their last breath, 'Victory, Victory to Freedom'" (pp 97-98). The authenticity of such a picture can readily be verified from a perusal of any authoritative volume on the history of the period. Majumdar, Ray Chudhary and Datta have this to say about the movement. "According to official estimates more than 60,000 people were arrested, 18,000 detained without trial, 940 killed and 1,630 injured through police or military firing during the last five months of 1942".12

Thousands more from place to place carrying with them the tricolour national flags. Most of the flags have a number of holes in them made by bullets. The flag saluting ceremonies are organised even in villages and leaders like Devata "spoke the new mind, the new words
of the national movement" (p.70). The description of these events of Indian political history is reflective of Bhattacharya deep perception into the immediate social realities of history.

Though Bhattacharya mainly highlights the Quit India Movement, the other phases of the National Movement and the breaking of the salt law are also referred to within the corpus of the novel. Early in the novel, the civil disobedience movement is briefly, but effectively described. Like Mahatma Gandhi in the real times of Indian history, Devata, whose character is deliberately developed along Gandhian ideals, organises a large number of peasants and fishermen and defies the law by making salt from sea-water. He and thousands of others are sent to prison for breaking the salt law. The movement spreads over the entire country. It gets such a momentum as almost everyone is ready" to break the salt law and be rushed into prison" (p.17).

Another historical fact which Bhattacharya depicts in this novel is Jawahar Lal Nehru's trial in Gorakhpur Prison. Rahoul, in the manner of Nehru read the statement given by Nehru in the Court, lying on his research table:
I stand before you, Sir, as an individual, being tried for certain offences against the state. You are a symbol of that state... I too am a symbol at the present moment, a symbol of Indian nationalism, resolved to achieve the independence of India... Perhaps it may be that, although I am standing before you on my trial it is the British Empire itself that is on its trail before the bar of the world. There are more powerful forces at work today than courts of law; there are elemental urges of freedom and food and security which are moving vast masses of people...(pp. 43-44).

Bhattacharya's telling description of the atrocities of the British Empire during the struggle for freedom on the masses is very much evident from his quoting of Nehru's statement during his trial in Gorakhpur jail. No historian can describe these barbaric events with that much of liveliness, clarity and aptness with which Bhattacharya presents them in this novel. Though Bhattacharya never records the actual dates and situations in his works as most of the history books present, even then his account of the incidents present a true and convincing picture of Indian political history of the pre-independence period. Further more, people's fervour for freedom reaches new dimensions towards the close of the novel. Bhattacharya by quoting the famous lines of Rabindranath Tagore, gives a description of inspired people singing loudly in chorus:
The more their eyes redden with rage the more our eyes open; the more they tighten the chains, the more the chains loosen! (p.205).

Bhattacharya in this book has been able to put forth the bare facts of political history of the freedom struggle in a subtle and comprehensive manner by creating characters in the manner of national movement leaders such as Gandhi and Nehru, situations depicting the true zest for freedom struggle amongst the Indian masses and the subsequent attempts by the British rulers to prevent these uprisings to bloom, by using oppressive methods.

Another major socio-historical reality that touched the creative genius of Bhattacharya in this novel was the great Bengal Famine of 1943 which is an epitome of the second part of the story which deals with the life of Kajoli and his family living in a village known Baruni. The novel unfolds the tragic story of a largely man-made famine, in which over a million people died of sheer hunger. It is the record of the most tragic calamity in Indian history. The Bengal Famine was so horrible and harrowing that:

Human endurance ebbed Hungry children cried themselves to death. Streams of desperate men ventured. Out of their ancestral homes in search of food hanging on to the foot boards of railways trains, riding on the sunbaked roof (pp. 110-11).
Along with the hunger for freedom, Bhattacharya in *So Many Hungers!* says that it is the hunger for food that gets more spectacular treatment and possibly steals the lime light of the novel as K.R. Chandrasekharan rightly points out, "Bhattacharya is at his best when he depicts the plight of the ruined peasants, their exodus to the city and their object misery and degradation". Even Bhattacharya himself declares regarding the origin of this novel:

... Then the great famine swept down upon Bengal. The emotional stirrings I felt (more than two million men, women and children died of slow starvation amid man made scarcity) were a sheer compulsion to creativity. The result was the novel *so many hungers!* 14

Samarendra’s father, Devesh Basu, popularly known as Devata for his love for the common people, is a Gandhian character and acts as a link between the two plots of the novel. He lives in a village, Baruni with Kajoli, the heroine of the novel. Her father and her elder brother are in prison for their participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement started by Mahatma Gandhi. Devata shares their simple food and even feels that he is the head of the family. Devata advises the villagers to be non-violent like Gandhi. Devata, in the manner of
Gandhi, speaks these words of exhortion to the villagers: "Friends and Comrades, do not betray the flag. Do not betray your selves, there is violence in your thoughts; that is evil enough. Do not make it worse by violence in action" (p. 72). This speech has enough Gandhian overtones and this influenced the villagers a lot. He went on saying: "The supreme test has come. Be Strong. Be true. Be deathless" (p. 72).

Kajoli is also the victim of this man made famine. After the arrest of Devata, they undergo terrible pangs of starvation. It was a situation where hungry children cry themselves to death. Rahoul notices this on the platform: "Some yards away on the platform, half concealed by another packing case, a destitute women lay on her side, her legs drawn up, eyes closed, a baby at her breast. The woman lay still, but the baby moved its lips faintly as it suckled. The mother was dead" (p. 154). In such a situation Kajoli becomes completely exhausted and hunger struck. When she meets an Indian soldier and begs food. When he gives her some bread, she is so ravenously hungry that she simply gulps it in, even without thinking of her mother and brother. And when the soldier's hand creeps down to her breasts, she is still drugged with eating and does not know what
is going to happen to her, "A piercing shriek, a deep, heavy groan" (p.145) from her, awakens him to his senses and he finds that she is bleeding and unconscious. Kajoli has an abortion. However, the two satisfy the hungers of each other for the time being - the soldier pacifies Kajoli’s fearful hunger for food while she satiates his long standing hunger for a sexual intercourse with a woman. As she lies bleeding, a jackal comes to eat her. Meanwhile her brother, Onu coming in search of her, meets the soldier and begs food with pathetic cries: "My sister. She is hungered. I am hungered. Mother’s hungered... Give us a little bread, mighty soldier....Hunger eats us" (p. 146). This is, perhaps, the most harrowing episode in the novel. Kajoli is at least saved by an army doctor and is admitted to the hospital in Calcutta. In this way Bhattacharya is chronicling of the Bengal Famine which is marked with reality and passionate depiction of this brutal calamity. When Kajoli is discharged from hospital she faces starvation again. When an officer comes from a betel woman, who also runs a brothel, to be a prostitute for a hand-some amount of money, she spurns it. This shows her belief in moral values - a long cherished trait of Indians. Here Bhattacharya portrays Kajoli as
an incarnation of faith in nobleness and fullness of life. Speaking of her, Devata says to Rahoul: "she has a legacy of manners and proprieties to suit your new fangled city ideas" (p. 28). Furthermore, Kajoli's mother's rejection of the advance made by the betel woman is suggestive of her strong belief in moral value. In this way Bhattacharya hints at the ethical history of the time. Thus the novel shows different dimensions of hunger: Kajoli is suffering miserably for the hunger for food and Samerendra Basu from the hunger for money whereas Devata and Rahoul ennoble themselves by having the hunger for freedom.

Thus *So Many Hungers!*, in a way holds the mirror to the history of India of pre-independence times. The depiction of social reality and Bhattacharya's treatment of the contemporary historical events is par excellence. *So Many Hungers!* may, therefore, be taken as "a worthy illustration of how contemporary history can be transformed by a socially conscious artist into fiction of permanent relevance to mankind". Bhattacharya has been able to keep into these socio-political facts, because of his observant eye and his creative sensitivity. In this regard S.C. Harrex points out, "*So Many Hungers!*, both as fiction
and fact is more effective than a straight documentary account because it examines the problems from moral and artistic, as well as practical points of view. By creating fictional prototypes of real characters and situations, Bhattacharya in this novel, has been able to present a real picture of the socio-political, economic, cultural and ethical history of India. In doing this, Bhattacharya has often quoted certain statements of our leaders and has even created his characters on the lines of Gandhi, Tagore and Nehru's ideologies in *So Many Hungers!*

The second novel of Bhattacharya taken up here is *Music For Mohini* (1952). The novel records the socio-cultural problems of India in a deep perceptive manner. It is a study of the tensions and conflict between the newly achieved freedom and the age long history of slavery of the Indians. Because by the time, Bhattacharya came to write this novel, as R. S. Singh puts it, "India had become free and the famine of Bengal and Quit India Movement were things of past". Now the growing concern is about the shape of things to come and the problems which India is to face for her economic development and the steps are to be taken in order to ensure the country's stability and greatness. Infact
Music For Mohini (1952) portrays in miniature the social, cultural, economic and to a lesser extent the political history of India of the period just after the attainment of freedom. The heroine of the novel is depicted in confrontation with the existing age old orthodoxy of her old mother and her mother-in-law.

Bhattacharya frequently affirms that freedom from social taboos is all important for the real progress of the people because, without it even political freedom is ineffective and of little value. This is in a way, a reflection of the thinking of our leaders such as Nehru, is depicted in this novel by creating the character of Jayadev. He is the mouth piece of Nehru regarding his ideologies and confirms Nehru’s claim that social freedom is of utmost significance of India after she has achieved political freedom.

Mohini, who is the central figure in the narrative, is described by the novelist as having a passion for the bright, joyful life, and a contempt for all that is dull and dead. "Mohini, who loved the warmth, the colour of life, could not bear images of decay." She is instinctively vivacious, playful and carefree. On the other hand Jayadev, whom Mohini is
married, is, "a silent, solitary man with heavy lidded
dreamy eyes in a young tranquil face" (p.67). A scholar
observed by his dream "to reorientate the values and
patterns of Hindu life" (p.67), he lives in a remote and
traditional village. Though thrilled with love for his
newly wedded wife, Mohini, this visionary philosopher
desists from being absorbed in it, so that he may help
to accelerate the process of social uplift:

How could he pause and give himself to his
private life at this great moment of history when
India, proud with the freedom of which he had
often dreamed must reorient her national life on
a new social basis? He, too, in his way had his
contribution to make to India’s developing
struggle for social freedom, the fountain of all
true freedom. This in his heart he believed.
(PP.123-24).

Jayadev shares Nehru’s beliefs at the time of India’s
attainment of Independence. In this manner of Nehru,
Jayadev is of the opinion that the greater task of
social freedom is still lying ahead. Jayadev is working
towards the attainment of his goal even at the cost of
neglecting his newly wedded wife. Jayadev is a social
reformer and tells Mohini: “Our political freedom is
worth little without social uplift... That means
struggle” (p.127).
Bhattacharya in his attempt at chronicling the events of the immediate post independence times, creates fictional prototypes of our great national leaders. Jayadev's character is depicted in the manner of Nehru. He shares Nehru's ideas of social upliftment as essential for social freedom and also possesses a scientific bent of mind for the development of the villages. Jayadev knows the fact that without literacy among its residents, India could not achieve the true meaning of freedom. So he wishes to seek help of Mohini in this regard to achieve his ideal. He considers ignorance to be the chief enemy of the common village folk and finds in it a reason for their backwardness and slavery at the hands of the dominant people. Jayadev is determined to translate his ideas of social upliftment in to practice, so he firmly decide to "step out of his temple of silence and lead his people across the valley of conflict and discard to end social slaveries" (p.138). Bhattacharya in his attempt at chronicling the events of cultural development in this post-independence period hints at the prevalent problem of illiteracy in the society.

Another important character who follows the concept of social freedom which is more important to
preserve the political independence is Harindra, the young surgeon who makes up his mind to live in Behula so as to work whole heartedly for their social freedom. In that way Bhattacharya's portrayal of socio-cultural history of the country in the fifties reaches new dimensions with his depiction of the central character's efforts for the banishment of prevalent ills of the society.

Another social evil which catches Bhattacharya's attention is the caste-system. Bhattacharya by depicting Jayadev's and also Harindra's hatred for inequality on the basis of caste, hints at the ideas shared by Mahatma Gandhi in this regard. Mohini and Jayadev notice that even the revolutionary Harindra can not find it easy to marry his beloved, Sudha, because of the difference of the caste: "But what of the rock like barrier of caste? even the bold impulsive Harindra would find caste hard to sermount. Even Sudha's great uncle would be against the marriage" (p.153).

Bhattacharya has brilliantly portrayed the social reality of confrontation between old and the new ideas, the traditional Indian and the modern Western
ways of life. Bhattacharya in this novel, hints at the basic tenets of Indian cultural history in his depiction of the search for a suitable husband for Mohini. In one of the selections of the groom, old mother rejects outrightly the idea of marrying Mohini to that modern young man:

No, childling, she shook her head with quiet decision. He is not the right sort for our Mohini. He and his friends have no respect for elders. They smoked cigarettes in your presence, didn't they? And they asked our girl such indecent questions. 'Do you dance?' As if she is to be an actress or something. What vulgarity! No, our girl has not been trained up in their un-Indian way, even if she has read at a Christian convent school. She will be a misfit in that fast circle. Why, they may force her to dance in public, English fashion, man and woman together, arm in arm. What misery! (p.44).

The conflict is suggestive of the fact that in the period just after independence the new developments that were taking place in the wake of the newly achieved independence were met with a stern opposition from the old fashioned majority in our society. Old mother further states: "The groom belongs to his circle. He has his roots in that soil. They are all alike. No tradition, no true culture. Apes of Westernism!" (p.44). Old mother is the representative of millions of uneducated Indians who were opposed to the sudden socio-
political, economic and cultural changes that were taking place.

Bhattacharya has a firm belief in the synthesis of the opposites to describe the social history of the country, the novelist in this novel, hints at the essential conflict between orthodoxy and modernism in the wake of newly achieved freedom. Bhattacharya’s portrayal of Indian culture is evident from Mohini’s marriage to Jayadev who belongs to a very orthodox family named The Big House of Behula, while she is septic because of her father’s teachings. Regarding marriage there was a great difference between them. Jayadev thought marriage “a measure of their spiritual union” (p.106) but Mohini concept of marriage includes the emphasis upon the physical aspect. Mohini tries her best to compromise with the old ways and disciplines of the Big House, she realises that whereas the old mother is a synthesis of the old and the new, her mother-in-law is all for the traditional ways of life:

Old Mother had compromised with modernity and her struggle to uphold the orthodox way was without passion. But the mother of the Big House was stern, adament, like iron. Old mother was of the old and the new; this mother had nothing in nature that would allow change (p.130).
Bhattacharva's depiction of the conflict between orthodoxy and modernism reaches its climax when the mother blinded by her orthodox superstitions, wants Mohini to offer her blood to the Goddess in the primitive way to get rid of her barrenness. But Jayadev sternly opposes it. In this reaction, the infuriate mother rebukes him by saying "Old beliefs, old morals, old values mean nothing to you" (p.180). But a little later after the pregnancy of Mohini, she comprehends reality with the light of reason, and the bridges over the gulf between the old and the new:

... and for the first time, she could see her son clearly. His ideas, his point of view, molded by the new spirit in the land, were different from hers and opposed to them, but they were nonetheless, true ideals. Right and wrong, he had honest faith in his set of values, his set of tools for improving life. How could she have misjudged him so completely or think him bebased? In that moments of insight, the mother almost understood her so and, through him, the new revolt, the restless spirit of the new dawn (p.187).

Thus in a way, Bhattacharya suggests ongoing changes in the Indian social set up. Again Bhattacharya, in this novel, has cited an example of Harendera and his father about views on the different styles of Indian medicine i.e. Ayurveda and Western medicine, between the Indian and European styles of medicine!" There are many goods,
drugs in our Ayurveda system... What's wrong in using in the fight against disease the best that East and West have to offer? Medicine knows no race, no nationality, Father! No greater blessing for our people than the Sulfa drugs!" (p.140). Thus, the old man who earlier only laughed at the Western medical system, comes to his senses when he is unable to cure his wife.

Bhattacharya makes Rooplekha as his spokes-person to propagate his own views about the future progress of India. Jayadev is the embodiment of the future India. His personality is a healthy mixture of the old and the new, the Indian and the Western values. When Mohini meets his sister, Rooplekha at the Big House, the later explains to her Jayadev's essential nature: "A strange mixture of the old and new is he, my brother... He would have a harmony of cultures for India. He reads ancient thought in today's light. He seeks in ancient thought sanction for the West influenced ideals of our time. And he finds it. He is a man with a message for his country" (p.94). Thus, Rooplekha hints at Bhattacharya's future vision of India in this novel, in her narration of essential characteristic qualities of her brother Jayadev. The other important point in this novel, is the difference
between city and village by Rooplekha. There way of life are different. So they should exist apart. But both Mohini and Rooplekha prove that an adjustment of the two modes of life is possible.

Thus *Music For Mohini* dramatizes the conflict between traditional Indian culture and modernity. Bhattacharya does not recommend one at the cost of the other but he does advocate reconciliation of the two for the betterment of the country and which might make Mohini's survival not so difficult:

At last, there was no discord. Life was music—a note of song for the old mother was in her, a note for Jayadev and his rebel gods, a note for the Big House and Behula village, torn and at cross-purposes for a while. Her life was music—the true quest of every woman, her deepest need (p.88).

Marjories B. Snyder considers *Music For Mohini* as "a sociological battle ground in which the older generation clings to tradition" whereas the educated people struggle" to throw away charms and bangles, to open themselves and their country to Western ideas"19. His analysis of the novel seems to be true and realistic Bhattacharya wanted to show that he is neither completely for seeking decayed traditions, nor for modernity but for a reconciliation of the two. Thus
Bhattacharya in this novel picturesquely depicts the social, cultural and economic history of India just after the achievement of freedom in 1947. Bhattacharya shows his firm belief that for the betterment of the society, the existing opposites must synthesize and also advocates that without the attainment of social and economic freedom, the real meaning of political freedom can not be achieved.

In this study the next novel is *He Who Rides a Tiger* (1955). This novel, in great deal, is considered in common with *So Many Hungers!*. The background of the novel *He who Rides a Tiger* is similar to that of *So Many Hungers!* as Bengal Famine, Quit India Movement and World War II. But the novel deals mainly with the theme of hunger. The only difference is that whereas *So Many Hungers!* is a silent saga of human miseries and sufferings, this novel is their vocal protest. It is essentially the story of a crusade to challenge the very organisation of society. Set in the early forties when the British Policy of reservation of seats in the legislature for different communal and social groups was in air, the novel records the inner-class struggle within Hindu community.
The socio-political facts from the contemporary Indian History act as a catalyst in writing of this novel. As Chandrasekharan puts it, "The background of *He Who Rides a Tiger* is partly political and mainly economic and social". There are numerous casual references to the Indian freedom struggle especially the Quit India movement but the novel mainly deals with the theme of hunger. Through Viswanath, an interesting minor character in the novel, we learn how the prison cells are choked with ‘Quit India’ men:

> Imprisoned for no crime save the one of loving their country and asking a better way of life for it, a life free from hunger and indignity, a life built by hard self-denial which was a joy because each iron today was the framework of a secure happier tomorrow.

Bhattacharya in *He Who Rides a Tiger* mainly deals with the story of Kalo’s hunger and his revenge on society. Hunger and famine drive him from his town Jharna to Calcutta. Famine of Bengal was grinding the people to death: A plague took the land in its grip, the plague of hunger, in the wake of war... no rationing of food grains, no price control, no checking of the giant sharks who played the cornering game on a stupendous scale (p.18).
The description of Jharna, is a heart rendering scene of starvation and death. The whole Jharna becomes a veritable "hungry town" (p.18) and its fleeing residents to starving paupers begging for a fistful of food grains, as if God had "sent this mighty hunger to teach the lowborn people a true lesson" (p.19). The destitutes move to the city on footboards and cry out, "Hungry, we die... give us a few grains of food; Baba... Give us a ride for the great city" (p.26). The various scenes of the novel are so well managed that every thing Bhattacharya describe, comes and alive before the reader's eyes. Destitutes fighting with dogs for crumbs of breads or carrying corpses on their heads for nominal wages, helpless mothers discarding and selling away their children or unfortunate women selling their bodies, the piercing cry of whole begging for a morsel of food, the hungry being beaten up by the police for presuming to stand before a food-shop—all bring out the novelist's capacity to observe the seamy side of life in its true colours whatever may be the occasion. "Bhattacharya is adequately equipped with a sympathetic heart, sensitive pen and judicious sense of proportion". Bhattacharya sums up the crisis of 1943:
"The Plague washed up in fierce tides. Bengal was dying. Jharna was dying" (p.16). In that way Bhattacharya portrays the socio-economical history of the country during the Bengal Famine.

Kalo, the protagonist, is soon forced to leave his town in search of work and on his way to Calcutta he steals three bananas to relieve himself of his starvation results in "three months hard labour". He stole bananas to preserve his life for the sake of his family, but the magistrate says in a most inhuman manner "Why did you have to live?" (p.34). In prison he meets B-10 (later bitten) who transmits his revolutionary fervour to Kalo and convinces him that a right answer to a society full of exploitation and inhuman callousness is to hit back:

We are the scum of earth. They hit us where it hurts badly - in the belly. We have got to hit back (p.76).

Furthermore, B-10 sets Kalo to know of several ways in which "to hit back"- faking a miracle to get a temple raised by exploiting the gullibility of people and to
make them fools. When the temple has been built, Bhattachrya makes this significant comment on its genesis!

Out of that song the temple grew, and the battle began a new phase, not a battle of survival but attack, hard hitting (p. 112).

Now his fight starts against the social, religious and economic exploitation inherent in the very foundations of Hindu society. He poses himself a Brahmin and adopts a name; Mangal Adhikari and in that way he is now riding a tiger and cannot get down from its back.

Kalo, "a smith reincarnated a Brahmin. A convict and harlot house procurer becomes a master of a temple, placing the hand of benediction on the bowed heads of pious folks" (p. 85) enjoys his revenge. Bhattacharya here justifies Kalo’s revenge against this social evil; caste system. Now Kalo takes pleasure in seeking them polluted and fallen. He confides in Lekha, his daughter:
... They're paying. They touch our low-caste feet. They pray to a God who is no God. What expiation could ever cleanse their souls. They're polluted, fallen. They are doomed – for many lives to come (pp. 91-92).

In that way Bhattacharya denounces the caste system and empty rituals which are present in Indian society, arrests growth and dries up the springs of love and fellow feeling from the human heart. In this novel, Bhattacharya mirrors the socio-cultural history of pre-independence period of Indian history.

Bhattacharya accepts Kalo's revenge but he does not justify the manner in which it is taken. So, Bhattacharya shows Kalo, initially elated with his revenge but gradually his transformation into Mangal Adhikari starts eating his soul. He finds that he himself has become an instrument of the very oppression against which he has been fighting. He learns that "a mask on one's face could eat into one's spirit" (p.121). Kalo, finds himself in the midst of a conflict going on in his soul. His dear daughter for whom he is riding the tiger starts getting estranged from him. In order to win her back, it is essential that "evil is to be faced and fought with its own knives" (p.220). So he prefers to kill the tiger and emerges victorious. With fortitude,
he reveals to the big crowd that has gathered, the bitter truth about himself:

Now listen well, priests and pundits listen to the truth... I have installed a false God, for there was no dream at all. I have made you commit sacrilege and blackened your faces. There is no expiation for you — may be the writers of the holy books have not dreamed that such a thing could happen!... A downtrodden "Kamar" has been in charge of your inmost souls, souls corrupt with caste and cash (p.227).

Biten, the social reformer who has renounced his Brahminism to lead the destitutes in their struggle for food, has come back in time to hear Kalo, "to see him drive his steel deep in to the tiger" (p.230). Immensely gratified, he congratulates Kalo on his success:

You have triumphed over these others — and over yourself. What you have done first now will steel the spirit of hundreds and thousands of us. Your story will be a legend of freedom, a legend to inspire and awaken (p.232).

Thus, the victory of Kalo is not the end of the war. But Bhattacharya suggests that it is only a step in the process and with that Kalo moves out of the temple alongwith Biten and Vishwanath to continue his struggle on a larger plane and in a different way.

Thus Bhattacharya in this novel has protested against the social evils - the evil of
exploitation which results in hunger and degradation and the evil of caste system. Regarding this novel Chandrashekaran observes "it is a novel of protest not only against a political and economic system which degrades the human being but also against an established social order which labels men as superior and inferior by virtue of the accident of their birth".23

Bhattacharya by chronicling the events of pre-independence period of Indian history, describes the need of ongoing changes in the Indian social set up. The novel depicts the social, cultural facts of Indian society of a particular time from Indian History. The authenticity of the facts become evident by the statement in the Sunday Times (London) "The book crystallizes with compassion and understanding the heart and tragedy of India."24

The next novel of Bhattacharya in this present study is *A Goddess Named Gold* (1960) which deals with the happenings in a village during the period immediately preceding India's attainment of freedom. The novel is set in the hundred days prior to the attainment of Independence on 15th August, 1947.20 Consequently, it refers to the Freedom Movement, though it mainly
embodies the novelist's concept of ideal freedom. In this novel, Bhattacharya has pointed a vivid picture of contemporary Indian village society. This novel transcends the time of the late forties and projects itself in the post independence era of Indian history. The preoccupation of Bhattacharya in this novel is with the way in which a country should use freedom and what benefits may be derived from it.

Besides referring repeatedly to the Quit India Movement, and the other political events around Independence day, the novel gives a realistic account of the social life of Indian villages. It is the first time women came out of the four walls of their homes and hearts to take part in the freedom struggle of India. How Gandhi cast a magic spell on the women of Sonamitti is clearly portrayed by the novelist. Most of the women in Sonamitti have participated in the Quit India Movement as one of them recollects it in the very beginning of the novel:

Gandhiji touched our spirit as it slept. Wakened, we became the equals of our menfolk.... Quit India! We shouted to the Engrey aliens in big voice (p.12).

Moreover, a eleven year old girl, Meera, could not confine herself to her hut at the time of Quit India
Movement, in the village. She joins the volunteers on the main road: "How the child yelled "Quit India" lest she miss the side to town and to prison" (p.12). Meera's grandmother was equally full of spirit of nationalism that she "mocked her age old gout, marching in the hard sun and heavy down pour" (p.30). Lakshmi, the wife of the village cloth merchant, the Seth, did not worry about her inconvenience for a moment and joined the procession:

"Seventh months". There was the heavy-bellied mother-to-be with short quick-steps, breathless in her effort not to be left behind (p.12).

Thus, in a way Bhattacharya, in the opening of this novel has been able to put forth the bare facts of political history of the freedom struggle in a subtle and comprehensive manner.

The other dimensions of the socio-political history is economic history. Because without economic stability it is difficult to maintain social and political freedom. Bhattacharya in this novel expresses his fear and anxieties after India got freedom, for he is worried that freedom might be exploited by the corrupt politicians and business men to feather their own nests. Bhattacharya observes the exploitation of the
people of Sonamitti at the hands of the Seth who is a cloth merchant and a money-lender in the village. The price of saris are raised so high that the women of Sonamitti wore saris "patched over and over and the jackets made from cast off gunny sack" (p.14). Moreover, the villagers are unable to understand his shrewd calculations when they take a loan from Seth:

A loan standing in the Seth's ledger doubled itself in a twelve-month. When he paid out twenty rupees, the figures he entered in his book was forty—a year's interest charged in advance as soon as the loan was given (p.64).

Bhattacharya in this novel suggests a Gandhian prescription to get out the political as well as economic exploitation of the Seth. For that purpose, Bhattacharya has portrayed the character of the minstrel in this novel. He is a Gandhian prototype and a reminiscent of Devata in So Many Hungers. Bhattacharya makes the minstrel possess the marvellous power like Gandhi to sway the masses with a few words:

Owing nothing, he had the dignity of a King. He had more power than a King, for he could take the hearts of people in his fist he could make them laugh and cry at his will (p.59).

The minstrel is very much concerned with the village folks and he grieves over the fact that one of the causes
of poverty of the peasants is unequal distribution of
land.

This fruitful earth enough for all if shared fairly. So much belongs to so few ... one man
owns half of the village; the tillers have the
rest for five hundred morsels (p.65).

The character of the minstrel is so much similar to
Gandhi that a few critics believe that he is
Bhattacharya's Gandhi in A Goddess Named Gold: "It may
very well be that he is veiled representation of the
father of Nation, a homeless wander at home with large
crowds: a man among men but deified by a grateful and
admiring people".26

The minstrel, time to time advices the
people of Sonamitti regarding their newly attained
freedom, with the foresight: "Freedom is the beginning
of the road where there was no road. But the new road
swams with robbers" (p.119).

The idea of a touchstone in the form of a
taveez, given to Meera by the Minstrel, is also
suggestive of Bhattacharya efforts to prevent the
village folks from the hands of exploiters. It is
believed that the amulet will enable Meera to turn
copper into gold, provided she does an act of real
kindness as a natural and spontaneous expression of herself. Thus Bhattacharya emphasises the need of fundamental human values viz., selfless and spontaneous kindness emanating from the spirit of compassion:

Wearing it on your person, you will do an act of kindness. Real kindness. Then all copper on your body will turn to gold"... Parted from your arm, the touch stone will be dead, a worthless pebble (p.85).

Consequently, Meera tacitly joins in all kinds of artificial acts of kindness invented by the Seth to stir the taveez, given to her by the minstrel, into action. The taveez instead of transforming copper into gold, becomes a means of her alienation from all others. Meera wants gold for altruistic purposes and she says to Sham Lal:

Gold is a strip of field released from bonds... a new straw thatch on the walls of the mudhut. It is the rag woman's escape from the hunger and old father's wish a pilgrimage to Holy Benarus (p.162).

Meera's acts, in spite of her pure intentions, arouse bitterness in the hearts of the village folks but as soon as Meera retraces her steps from the wrong direction, she regains all the love, respect and affection from the villagers and close communion with
Sohan Lal, who justly points out to Meera "you can not have gold enough to save all India!... It is the fight with the Seths that will save India, not a miracle, not armfuls of Gold" (p.197).

Towards the close of the story the minstrel points out to the people that for them more important than political freedom is "to win the freedom to be free. It is a state of mind, so Gandhiji tells us" (p.301). In that way Bhattacharya in this novel unfolds the multi-dimensional freedom philosophy of Gandhi towards the end of the novel. The minstrel, celebrating the independence day, describes that freedom is not an end in itself, rather, it is a means for greater ends to be achieved. It is by using the freedom as a means the miraculous change in the life of the people can be brought:

The miracle will not drop upon us. It is we who to create it with love and with sweat. Freedom is the means to that end (p.303).

Thus, Bhattacharya in this novel depicts the social, cultural and economic history of India just after the achievement of freedom in 1947. Here Bhattacharya main concern was how to preserve this newly attained freedom. Harish Raizada asserts "A Goddess Named Gold is
complementary to Music for Mohini, while in the latter the author emphasizes the need for social freedom to make the political freedom effective, in the former he tries to awaken his countrymen to the need for economic freedom of masses to save independent India from being exploited by the greedy capitalists and profiteers for their own selfish ends."27

**Shadow from Ladakh.** is the Bhattacharya's next novel which is also written on socio-political facts. This novel deals with India's recent history; the problems and challenges that India has faced in the wake of Chinese aggression. On the political level it deals with the conflict between Gandhian social and political ethics, and the modern forces of science and technology. Comparing this novel with So Many Hungers, Bhattacharya himself declares that it is "rooted more deeply in Gandhian thoughts".28 This novel "preaches by implication... that India needs a blending of divergent set of values if she is to cope with the challenge of the times".29 In fact, it is a study in review of the prevailing Indian political, social, economic and defence strategies in the wake of the treacherous Chinese invasion. Emphasis is laid on the fast developing industrialization which is inevitable in view
of the crying need for enormously greater production and especially in the context of the continuing threat of external aggression. Thus the novel depicted “a cross section of contemporary India during a period of transition and rapid development and has reflected the intricate pattern of present day life with a remarkable understanding and clarity.”

**Shadow From Ladakh** (1966) is set against the menacing background of the Chinese aggression against India starting in October, 1962 and in this wave of Chinese aggression, the country was faced with the desperate need to match its policies with the contemporary geo-political realities of the world. In this novel two major characters Satyajit and Bhaskar represent two contrasting attitudes of life: one is governed by Gandhian’s ideologies and second one is by modern forces of science and technology. Satyajit is dedicated to the Gandhian way of life and loves in Gandhigram modelled by him after the Gandhian philosophy of life. Bhaskar, as against Satyajitism, has created a new Westernized kind of life centred around steel civilization in Steeltown. One of the critics observes: "Gandhigram and Steeltown are not simply two localities but concrete symbols of Gandhian and Nehruite
ways of life - one believing in simple living and cottage industries whereas the other in Western ways of life and industrialization. Bhattacharya is of the opinion that industrial revolution, ought not to transform Indian life into a mechanical copy of life in the West. He is of the view that for the development of the country on all fronts, there has to be a synthesis of the spinning wheel and the spindle. On the other level, between small scale village cottage industries suggested by Gandhi and the Nehruian ideas of establishing large-scale mechanical industries.

Bhattacharya's chronicling of the happenings of the society, in the wake of the Chinese attack in 1962, include the creation of the central character, Satyajit, as a follower of Gandhian ethics and is made by the controller of the activities of Gandhigram. Founded by Vinoba Bhave, one of the truest exponents of Gandhian philosophy, Gandhigram presents a model of rural India as envisaged by the Father of the Nation. Satyajit has been selected to guide the destinies of this ideal village so that it may become a model for other villages. He is an embodiment of Gandhi and his ideologies. In this novel, novelist hints at the limitations of the Gandhian economics, in the wake of
the new developments in Indian political history as a result of the Chinese attack; by creating the character of Bhaskar; the young Chief Engineer of the steel factory, on the lines of Nehru's vision. Bhaskar, with his American training and highly westernized outlook, represents a three dimensional opposition to Satyajit and Satyajitism. He believes that steel, standing for mass production, is the only solution to India's growing population. Similarly, steel is the only shield that can protect infant Indian democracy against all enemies threatening her freedom and security. In that way Gandhian economic which is based on agriculture is like "frail old world wheel of wood set against the giant machines of the modern age". In the sphere of education, the village follows the basic scheme of craft centred teaching advocated by Gandhiji. Gandhian ethics is reflected in Gandhi gram's seeking to build up a new set of values, the most important among them being full equality, unreserved fraternity and non-violence in thought and action. The village was intended to be a witness to "the spirit of man striving to transcend the physical" (p.49).

Bhattacharya in his attempt at chronicling the events of Indian history in the wake of Chinese attack...
attack raises a basic question in Shadow From Ladakh about the extent to which industrialization is relevant to the Indian situation. Bhaskar and Satyajit represent two opposing points of view in the debate. Bhaskar an embodiment of Nehru's vision of industry based economy, has the conviction that the salvation of the country lies in industrialization. Industrialization to him means not only the use of machinery and the establishment of factories for large scale production but also more importantly a re-orientation of values and a revision of our way of life in the wake of threats to India's integrity and freedom. Bhattacharya presents clues to support Bhaskar's view or symbolically speaking Nehru's views. At the material level, Bhaskar thinks that the problem of India's rapidly growing population can be solved only by adequate production of the necessities of civilized life. Defending industrialization like Nehru, Bhaskar thinks that adequate production of the necessities of the civilized life is the only answer to rapidly growing population. This is forcibly presented by the novelist.

Each tick of the clock meant an opportunity used or lost. Each five ticks or it could be four-sighaled the birth of an Indian: child. A child to be fed, clothed, reared, educated; given cultural fare, given employment, given his due
share of human heritage. Sixteen hours that was nearly sixty thousand babies born in that span of time between the Himalayas and the cape. Had production risen over that period to meet the new born demand? (p.34).

Bhaskar further supports his claim of industrialization at the time of Chinese aggression. He thinks Gandhigram "a road-block in the path of progress" (p.200). He is of the view that aggression can be met only by force and force means armaments and sophisticated equipment. Bhaskar presents his viewpoint brilliantly in literary terms:

The babies would not eat steel. But steel was the spine of the economy. Steel was food and clothing and dwelling. Steel was culture and art and ritual. And steel was soon to be the honour of the people, the shield of their freedom (p.37).

Bhattacharya while chronicling the events of the Chinese aggression even goes to the extent of describing bare political facts of the times. Shadow From Ladakh presents a true and telling account of India’s political history in the wake of the Chinese attack in 1962. The question which the novelist raises is that of the choice of a proper political ideology in the face of internal and external problems. Flying over to Ladakh on her way back to Delhi from Moscow where she had gone with a delegation, Suruchi thinks of "Aksai-
Chin Road, a motor way the Chinese had built to link up their frontier province of Sinkiang with the Tibetan table land... across India's map over a wide sector" (p.6). In that way Bhattacharya makes his characters speak bare historical facts. The account of Tibet presents a full picture of its history and culture:

That high plateau behind the Himalayas was peopled by a distinct race with no ethnological kinship with any other in Asia. Its culture was all its own and in bred, for within the isolation imposed by geography was the spirit's solitude nurtured with deep care, an reinously guarded. It's people were apart from their neighbours China in east and north. India in the south in looks, language, tradition, custom (p.77).

The novelist presents a picturesque view of Tibetan cultural history. Further references to Tibetan history include, the earlier attacks by Chinese Emperors, the tick of the present century, the Revolution of 1911 led by Sun Yat Sen, the Shadow of Mao Tse Tung advancing from Peking, the futile appeals to U.N., the Indian diplomacy (pp. 75-76). He also provides an account of China's history in recent times. The novel deals with the political upheavals in China--" the ruthless kuomintang, the long March to Shensi and the Rise of Mao Tse Tung ' (p.76-77)'. The novel projects a picture of India in a comprehensive context. Freed from colonial
subjugation only recently, India had made rapid strides.

The pace of progress had been set:

Ten years more, two other five-year Plans, fifty million kilowatts of hydro power?, new-found oil gushing generously from the desert sands of Gujarat and Rajasthan, reserves of uranium yielding atomic power for peaceful use (p.56).

This, in a way, is suggestive of Bhattacharya’s deep and penetrating insight into country’s political and geographical history.

Bhattacharya depicts the sinister design of the Chinese attack in the following reflections of Bhaskar:

I can see how your mind works. Mr. Mao India, making economic progress at this rate, will become a road block on your path of imperialist expansion. Not expansion of territory – that’s an out dated concept. Power. You need power over Asia. Then-onward to the African continent... Aggression in the Himalayas would force this country to begin a massive build-up of the armed forces lest freedom the imperiled. The limited resources, the potential for economic progress, would have to be hugely diverted to non-productive effect (p.36).

Bhattacharya finds in that an explanation for the Chinese attack. He points out that the Chinese had "surreptitiously annexed sixteen thousand square miles of territory that had been an integral part of India"
not merely that, "they wanted fifty thousand square miles at the eastern end of the frontiers, south of the so-called McMahon Line" (p.81). Bhattacharya's depiction of such details about Chinese claims, proves him to be a champion amongst historical novelists. The conduct of China in stabbing India in the back and deliberately trying to thwart her progress along the path of democracy catches considerable attention in the novel. Bhattacharya's description of the aggression is factual and the sentiments he expresses in the novel are the sentiments of all patriotic Indians.

Tagore set up an example of friendly association between the people of these two countries, by instituting a chair for the Chinese language and culture at ShantiniKetan and invites a Chinese professor to adorn it. This gives a visible proof for the existing cultural ties between India and China. Nehru made it clear in his broadcast to the nation on the eve of China's attack that India had no ill-will towards the Chinese people. Even Dalai Lama, victim of Chinese aggression and brutality, declare in an interview that he had no quarrel with the people and added: "There are no better people I fully realize that a nation cannot be held responsible for the crimes committed by a group of
individuals." (p.296). Bhattacharya's description of almost all our great leaders such as Nehru, Tagore, Dalai Lama, Gandhi and a few characters based on the Gandhian and Nehru's vision of India, clearly shows his keen insight in the Indian political history.

Bhattacharya is trying to chronicle the events of Chinese aggression in a humanistic outlook. Separating from Rupa, Nuhsin one of the sisters tells: "All that love and joy and ... I don't know the words, Rupa, but may be you understand all that feeling has gone into our bone and blood. When we are back in China and people ask us about India, we will tell them the truth, Rupa" (p.334). One can not say whether in these episodes the novelist is faithfully reflecting the true feelings in either country, but it is clear that Bhattacharya is depicting the situation as it ought to be. These depictions are in tune with the novel's final message to India and the world which is the Gandhian message of conquering hatred through love.

Once again in this novel, Bhattacharya's method of presentation of the historical perspective is one of comparison and contrast; "The challenge is not just between Gandhigram and steeltown. It is between two
contrary thoughts, two contrary ways of life. The spinning wheel set against the steel mill" (p.342). In this manner; by comparing the activities of Gandhigram and steel town, the novelist is able to comment on the socio-political, economic, cultural and ethical situation of the country in the wake of Chinese attack. Moreover, his presentation of these social realities is keeping in time with his future vision of India.

Satyajit’s plan of forming a Shantisena is born of his faith in Gandhi’s gospel of non-violence. Gandhiji believed that the human spirit had the power to prevail over armaments and armies. Satyajit quotes Gandhiji by saying, “Even if one nation were unconditionally to perform the supreme act of renunciation, many of us would see in our life time visible peace established on earth (p.82). He feels that Shantisena could touch the hearts of Chinese and draw them away from their aggressive designs. The Government’s turning down of Satyajit’s request for arranging a peace march to Ladakh is suggestive of India’s declining belief in the Gandhian principle of non-violence, in the wake of the recent threats along the border.
Bhaskar is of the opinion that India who has been a slave to the Britishers and Muslims should achieve her full share of a free and happy life. Bhaskar is, in a way, the supporter of the change in the wake of the Industrial revolution. Bhaskar is intelligent and imaginative enough to understand that he may not succeed in making his viewpoint adopted by people through mere force. He is of the opinion that such changes in social structure does take place slowly. Bhattacharya’s portrayal of the importance of ‘Meadow House’ activities is suggestive of the fact that writer is defending the modernist developments. On all planes, development is as a result of the fast changes in scientific and technological circles. Meadow House encourages cultural activities and provides recreation. It is to be a meeting place of Steel town and Gandhigram. In a way Meadow House is a symbol of a planned opposition to the traditional, custom-bound Satyajitism on the socio-cultural plane.

Bhattacharya presents cultural integration in the novel which is, in a way suggestive of the novelist’s deep perception of the cultural history of the country in the sixties.
He, in this novel, has advocated the cultural synthesis. He has been an advocate of the mingling of the best of the Eastern and the Western life traditions. Throughout the novel Bhattacharya concentrates upon the problem of bridging the gulf between the old and the new. East and West, and the different cultures so as to bring about their integration. Bhattacharya is an advocate of synthesis on all fronts Gandhi and Nehru arrest that Indians should not merely feed on the ancient culture of their land, they should enrich their old traditions with the experience of the new times. Satyajit, the embodiment of Gandhian philosophy, in the novel, is of the same opinion.

Bhattacharya in his attempt to project the future developments in Indian history makes Suruchi as his spokesperson to present his viewpoint. She is the first person to comprehend the synthesis of traditional and modern values of life. Bhattacharya writes: "she had not accepted Gandhigram in its entirety. But she had not rejected it, either " (p.273). She believes in the Tagorian philosophy of the fusion of diverse elements of life and recalls:
Integration that the poet's life long quest: integration of the simple and the sophisticated; the ancient and the modern; city and village; east and west (p.215).

So she favours the harmonious blending of the old and the new which can help in leading a healthy and happy mode of life. This is the message this book gives to the world: "let there be a meeting ground of the two extremes; let each shed some of its content and yet remain true to itself" (p.274). Satyajit and Bhaskar realise the essence of one another for the benefit of the country. For Chandrasekharan, it is not a coexistence of different ideologies but a reconciliation and an apt plea of Bhattacharya for adopting" the way of integration and synthesis" of Gandhigram and Steeltown, the kind of reconciliation in which "each meets the other half way and each surrenders and makes a sacrifice to make the synthesis possible". The novelist resolves the conflict between Steeltown and Gandhigram towards the end of the novel ... Steeltown began to move toward Gandhigram!" (p.352). Finally Bhaskar appeals to the assembled workers to stand by Gandhigram people for all time to come:

One thing I must ask of you. Don't move away from Gandhigram - after the passion of the moment is spent. You will have to be with these people,
always. Try to see what they stand for. Give them chance to understand what we are striving to attain. (p.352)

In that way Bhattacharya projects the future vision of synthesis for a happy mode of life. Again the same principle of co-existence, compromise and readjustment is seen in the marriage of Sumita and Bhaskar, in Satyajit's new resolve to come down from the Olympian heights of asceticism in order to live a natural human life and finally, in Baskar's resolve to expand the steel town but in another direction, allowing Gandhigram to "live as long as it has vitality within" (p.355). This is the real synthesis of ideologies of Gandhi and Nehru which is what the country has today.

Thus, we see that the novel records graphically the political condition of India, China and Tibet around the year 1962. The background and the aftermath of China's attack on Tibet and India are vividly described. The war scenes are also portrayed effectively and are invested with a lot of human interest. In a word, the novel thoroughly examines the various planes of reality - political, historical, social, economic, moral and spiritual. Bhattacharya has presented these realities of the Indian history, in the
wake of Chinese aggression with a lively description which few historian could do. Bhattacharya in his attempt to project the socio-historical realities in the sixties has created his characters along the ideals of the national leaders. This book presents the realistic treatment to the war time situations. Bhattacharya in this novel has even gone to the extent of describing the bare political happenings of the war time in a manner of a professional historian. His presentation of the social history of India, reflects the conflict between Gandhian notions of simplicity and austerity and the new outlooks about life in the name of change.

The last novel of Bhattacharya, in the present study is 'A Dream in Hawaii'. Again in this novel too Bhattacharya has projected the same idea of integration, as he did in Music for Mohini, and Shadow from Ladakh, that is there must be a blending of the old and the new values, the spiritualism of the East and the materialism of the West, in order to attain fulfillment in life. This novel again displays the clash of cultures; Eastern and Western which has been quite a pronounced theme. In the very opening of the novel Swami Yogananda asks Stella "Why Hawaii? Why not some where else in America? Let's say New York. She stopped 'Why
... Hawaii? That’s easy to answer, Swamiji. No better meeting ground of East and West.

Bhattacharya, in this novel has taken up the problem of the people of the west, which is entirely different from the problems of our country as it does not originate from poverty and old traditions. It rather lies in the excess of material luxuries of life leading to a disenchantment in the Western society. So Bhattacharya in this novel projects the clash of different cultures that is East and West. The novel analyses these problems by juxtaposing the values of spiritual India with those of the permissive society in America, the most advanced of the Western countries. For that purpose Bhattacharya has used the same device which he commonly uses in delineating his ideas, that device is of parallelism and contrast as already used in different novels. In this novel, Bhattacharya has contrasted Indian spiritualism with Western materialism as represented by Swami Yoganand and Dr. Vincent Swift respectively.

Bhattacharya in this novel shows his intention to harmonize the values of the East and the West which becomes evident by his setting of the novel.
in the most Westernized island of Hawaii. The island presents "a multiple image" where one may visualize the "Unique East-West mix". The strong interculturatiom" (p.56). The novelist observes: "You can not find the like of this ethnic spectrum anywhere else on the globe" (p.56).

Through this novel Bhattacharya tries to guide the public opinion at a time when clear-cut-goals are not visible to most people. They believe that perhaps the apex of civilization lies in complete industrialization and westernization of society. By pointing a realistic picture of such a society in A Dream in Hawaii, Bhattacharya falsifies their ideas and shows how such a society is suffering from the disease of over materialism. The youth of such a society is simply restless and frustrated in the absence of any meaningful ideals in life. They are looking to Indian Guru’s and Sanyasis for guidance and peace. At the same time he shows how these gurus themselves are not above reproach. So Bhattacharya, through this novel makes it clear that Indians should not ape the west blindly, nor stick to its ancient religion without critically examining it.
In this novel Bhattacharya pleads for a synthesis of the modern materialism of the west and traditional spiritualism of the East. For this purpose Bhattacharya projects Swami Yoganand, the principal character of A Dream in Hawaii, as a Professor turned Yogi. Although he preaches the spiritualism of the East, yet he understands fully the Western value-pattern. Stella is convinced: "Within him the East and the West so readily coalesce end" (p.18). Swami Yogananda is a universalist whose character signifies a fusion of diverse cultures: "He belongs to America as much as to India" (p.197). Swami Yogananda also knows that an adequate knowledge of the material world is as significant for man as the profound spiritual wisdom. When Jennifer suggests that Swami Yogananda, the Eastern sage, may be an epitome of the spiritual wisdom, while Dr. Vincent Swift, the Western Scholar, may represent the materialistic knowledge, Yogananda declares that the two are supplementary and complementary to each other." There can be no true knowledge without wisdom, and no true wisdom without a hard core of knowledge" (p.201).

Another important character of A Dream in Hawaii, Dr. Vincent Swift, is also a votary to the Western materialism. Being "a romantic-realist, a down-
to-earth visionary, " (p.69). Dr. Swift always pleads for a compromise between the diverse values of life. He reasons:

Swami Yogananda wants to Easternize us to a certain extent; in fairness, he should be ready to westernize himself to the same extent (p.129).

In his opinion, to stick rigidity to one's own ideas is never justified. One "must have a pragmatic attitude", (129) and be able to readjust to one's values. He warns Swami Yogananda:

Any attempt to easternize all our western concepts will be futile. We who seek success must accept certain limitations or else we shall find ourselves beating our wings in the void (p.129).

In this way Dr. Swift keenly desires to have an integration of the Western materialism and the Eastern spiritualism on a American land.

In the end of the novel, Swami Yogananda himself learnt that human life is not fulfilled merely on the ascetic plane; man must live life in its natural course, respecting all the fundamental urges. Devjani understands Swami's inner dilemma and approves his decision to leave America. When Stella asks her why Swami Yogananda called himself Neeloy while addressing
her Devjani makes a revealing reply: "It may be that one can not exist without the other, she said" (p.245).

Thus Bhattacharya gives a subtle expression to his ideas regarding the integration of the traditional and the modern values - the Eastern spiritualism and the Western materialism in A Dream in Hawaii. The major characters emphasize its significance and attempt to mould their lives accordingly. So the critical analysis of Bhattacharya's A Dream in Hawaii serves as a vehicle to project his concept of synthesis in the right perspective. Bhattacharya's description of such details about East and West proves him a true historian.

The other novelist whose works are critically analysed in the present study is Manohar Malgonkar. Malgonkar has a special genius for threadbare analysis of socio-political problems. All of his novels reveal a sound socio-political-history of its time. The novels taken up for the purposes of this study by Malgonkar, are: Distant Drums (1961), Combat of Shadow (1962), The Princess (1963), A Bend in the Ganges (1964), The Devil's Wind (1972), Bandicoot Run (1982), and The Garland Keepers (1986).
The first novel in the present study is *Distant Drum* (1961). In *Distant Drum*, Malgonkar attempts to present various facets of army life in India during the period of transition from the last years of the British regime to beginning years of Congress rule. The action of the novel covers the period from 1938 to 1950.

*Distant Drum* has a solid three dimensional background of recent history. The novel traverses the course of the action in the Eastern theatre during the Second World War. It takes the readers further, into the tragedy of the recent history as it recreates one of the saddest phases - the communal riots in the wake of partition of the country in 1947. However, it is after moving to the post-independence period that the chronicling is invested with pertinent socio-political facts of Indian History. The novel is divided into three parts - "The Regiment", "The Staff" and "Active Service". Kiran Garud is the central figure in all these parts. Using the techniques of flashback, Kiran focusses light on various aspects of army life. C.L. Proudfoot remarks Malgonkar:

Recaptured the atmosphere of the earlier days faithfully and right through the whole book runs the golden thread of authenticity with never a false note."
In this novel Malgonkar has projected much of the details of army life through action and experiences of the principal characters in the novel. As Malgonkar himself says:

This book is largely the story of the success or failure of the efforts of one of the officers of the Regiment to live up to its code.

The first part of the book "The Regiment" represents the growing experiences of Kiran Garud as the Commanding Officer of the Regiment in Raniwada where he learns the Regiment's customs and etiquette. In the beginning Kiran, like all "Bumwarts", went about feeling angry and bitter. Later on, he began to realise that all this was part of the process of putting him through the paces",...It was not merely a matter of hard training... It was even more, a process of cutting you down to size, as they put it, of making you learn how to take it..." (p.79).

Malgonkar in this novel, takes the opportunity of criticizing the red-tapism of the Government and the various conflicts especially between the personal code and the political power. This is seen in the incident of Lala Vishnu Saran, the "District Congress President", who tries to brow beat Kiran who in
turn holds on his strict code of army morals. Malgonkar's
projection of the character of Vishnu Sharan Dev, is a
fine contrast to an army officer in all respects — in
dress, speech, appearance, attitudes and ideas.
Professor Iyengar very aptly comments:

Not that the Army has not its black sheep too—its 'bastards' and its boobies. But take it all
in all, the Army is a cleaner thing than a mere
political party. At least the Army has ever to be
ready to undergo ordeal by fire; and the ballot
box, is a much tamer affair compared to the
modern battlefield.49

On seeing Kiran's outright refusal to lend the Shamiana
"for a political show", Lala Vishnu Saran Dev, threatens
him in all possible ways:

I would shay that in refuging this ishmal favour
you are running a great reshk. He may complain to
your own minishter. You musht remember that thish
will amount to belittling a minishter of the
gournment aaf which you are only a servant (p.60-
61).

So in this way, the mushrooming of the post-independence
crop of selfseeking and unscrupulous leaders at the
glass-root level is another facét of the current
scenario which does not escape the painstaking
chronicler in Malgonkar. Henceforth it is contented,
that "the party and the government are the shame".40
(p.60) Another impalatable aspect of the post
independence reality is the rise of sycophancy of their political bosses in military top brass which is captured authentically by Malgonkar in this novel. This, in a way represents the politicization of the army. So, ultimately Lala gets the shamiana in the end only after Col. Garud has been transferred from Raniwada to Delhi.

Garud's transfer to Delhi and the deepening of his relationship with Bina; which forms an important theme in the second part of the novel; 'The Staff'. Kiran comes close to Bina Sonal, a radio announcer. But when her father, Govind Ram Sonal, an influential Secretary in Government comes to know about her daughter's affair with Kiran, he at once rejects it, as he does not regard an army officer to be suitable for his daughter. But for Kiran 'the army, the profession itself, is a great thing, although it might be the meanest life in the eyes of Sonal. He tells Sonal: "My career to me is more important than anything else more, important than your daughter". In that way Kiran sets his career at a higher level than his love for Bina and Mr. Sonal afterwards, manages to get Kiran transferred from Delhi to the operational area of Kashmir.

The other example of his love for army is put to test when Ropey Booker offers him a good job.
Ropey is highly respected by Kiran as an ideal military officer but it is he who quits the army and also advises Kiran to quit the army and join him with a handsome salary. But Kiran refuses him and his reply to Ropey shows his idealistic attitude:

Well, Sir, joining the army becoming a soldier, had been an ambition with me. It has not been merely a means of earning a living; it has been rather an end itself. If they kicked me out, of course, I'd take on any job that I would get; but on my own will, I don't want to leave (p.250).

Malgonkar has projected his socio-political vision in almost every novel. The authenticity of Burma War, a living description of India-Pakistan-Partition, and Delhi riots in 1947 clearly shows his insight in Indian socio-political history. In Distant Drum, there is a description of Burma War in all the three parts of the novel, in which the protagonist of the novel Kiran and his friend Abdul Jamal both participate from the British side. Abdul saves Kiran twice— one in an enquiry made about Bob Medley's suicide when Abdul gave evidence and cleared Kiran from any involvement in the Medley's affair; second time at the time of riots in Delhi in 1947 September, when Kiran was surrounded by a Muslim mob and about to be assaulted. Abdul threatened to kill the mob if they did as much as touch a hair of Kiran.
But after the partition, both friends who together participated Burma campaign, were separated now and poised to fight against each other. After the cease-fire on 21 Dec., 1949, Kiran drinks champagne with the erstwhile colleague Abdul Jamal "under the busy-topped tree". Although the meeting was purely non-political and sentimental, Kiran had to face the wrath of his higher officials because they thought "A soldier could not remain friendly with some one who had now become an enemy". Brigadier Swarup takes it as "a plain case of conduct unbecoming of an officer". Kiran feels that in the stupid rigidity of the rules, "the very essence of friendship, frankness, had been completely drained off" (p.241).

He knew that the Brigadier was finding it unpleasant to have to make a report of such nature against one of his own battalion commanders, and yet his sense of duty combined with the limited vision which is almost the hallmark of the military mind, would not permit him to act otherwise in the matter (p.242).

Though, Kiran was perfectly convinced in his mind that he had done nothing wrong, it was of no avail to argue with such "military minds". Friends like Spike Ballur, however, appreciate the good hearted spirit of Kiran and try to help him. The matter ends up with a mild warning
from General Torqal. Thus in the third part of the novel; 'Active Service', Kiran shows his capability of commanding a battalion in action on the Kashmir front where he displays his courage and leadership qualities. In fact the whole novel is about the development and growth of its main character Kiran, as a military officer in Indian Army. The action of the novel starts in pre-independent India and finishes when India got freedom. Although in this period we find Kiran Garud, trained under the British regime, now commanding the Indian Army on the Kashmir front. This is an indicative of the maturity of Kiran who has outgrown his 'Calf love' and his blind initiation of Ropey. Initiation is the first step but assertion and self-realisation is the finale. Now, no material temptation can shake Kiran from his idealistic adherence to duty. Just as he could not give his army code for the civilian code. Kiran could not give up his code as a human being, his permanent code of honour and love to that of the army. Professor Iyengar says:

While the army civilian clash of codes provides the background, Kiran's love for Bina and his friendship with Abdul Jamal form the human foci that hold the action together.  

111
In this way, the novel *Distant Drum* begins in Raniwada, moves to New Delhi, Burma, Kashmir and returns to Raniwada. Kiran is happy to go back to Raniwada. On his way to Raniwada, he stops in Delhi to meet Bina Sonal, his beloved. Kiran frankly makes the commitment of love and offers to marry Bina and promises her to give an ideal surroundings, a small bungalow near the bend of the river:

*It is wonderful! in the afternoons, we can have tea on the lawn, just you and me, under the tamarind tree... and in the distance, far away, you can hear the drums... (p.270).*

Thus in a way, Malgonkar gives a true description of battalions in action and a life in relax. Moreover, in this novel, Malgonkar has been able to create a very realistic picture of the Indian army in the throes of change– marked by the Second World War, the dawn of independence, the vivisection of the nation, the departure of many British officers of the Indian Army, the division of army, the quick promotion of the Indians to the higher echelons in the army, the Kashmir War, the emergence of national spirit in the army. Malgonkar's description of socio-political facts and the treatment of contemporary historical events is par-excellence. About the authenticity of its material, particularly as
it relates to life in the army. Major C.L. Froundfoot, a fellow officer and a poet, testifies the quality of Malgonkar’s book and says:

You have recaptured the atmosphere of the earlier days faithfully and right through the whole book runs the golden thread of authenticity with never a false note.\(^3\)

Thus in this novel, Malgonkar has shown a happy fusion of the political and the social aspects. In the political aspect, Malgonkar shows how the politicians after independence have degenerated into career-hunting their personal issues into national ones. It is because of the wide spread corruption in the political and administrative fields that the protagonist of *Distant Drum*, Kiran does not appreciate the way independence has really come.

The second novel of Malgonkar in this present study is *Combat of Shadows* (1962). The novel recreates in all essential details, the backdrop of the east-ernmost corner of India. Malgonkar himself specifies the period and the locale before the story gets underway:

The action of this story takes place in North-Eastern Assam, India. The time: September 1938 to March 1940\(^4\).
Like *Distant Drum* combat of Shadows has a double theme. On the personal level, there is a portrayal of Henry Winton, a British tea-estate Manager in Northern Assam who begins to like an English way of life at the Highland club. In the beginning of novel, he is honest, well intentioned and guileless. But soon he finds himself in a demoralising situation which leads him to corruption and moral degeneration. In this regard G.S. Amur has aptly described the novel as one that:

*tells the story of an English man's moral disintegration and death in the Indian soil.*

On the public level, *Combat of Shadows* tells of establishing of relationships between the Indians, Anglo Indian and Britishers. It projects the dehumanising moral shallowness of social encounter.

The novel is written in the backdrop of the political situation in Assam after the elections to the provincial assembly under the Government of India Act (1935). The Congress did not fare well in this part of the country. "They have not been able to collar more than 35 out of a hundred and Eight" (p.130) and also at that time the Second World War was underway and the Englishmen's concern at the situation was exacerbated with the rising nationalism of the natives.
In India every thing that concerns a sahib is politics... His every presence is the basis of all their political agitation (p.86).

However, the nationalist aspirations of the people have been fully aroused. This political awakening of the masses gets conveyed indirectly through the lament of the Englishmen. Even though Indians have been given "the fullest possible measure of self rule with their own minister in province: yet politicians clamour for more and more power" (p.75). And Malgonkar says that arouses a new brand of politicians in whose hands political nuances of the Indian scene come off unobtrusively. In Combat of Shadows Malgonkar is more critical in the assessment of the emergence of the New India and its political life during the forties. In this novel Jugal Kishore, a trade union leader serves the purpose of the novelist. When Henry Winton, the British tea-state Manager refuses to appoint Gauri, the niece of Jugal, as a teacher in the tea garden school. Jugal Kishore makes it a political issue by manipulating it the colour of racial prejudice.

Jugal Kishore wins the election and he is sworn as a Minister of Plantations but the irony is that the condition of labourers remain unchanged. Malgonkar
draws a complete picture of the nation in its political and social aspects in the forties. Malgonkar, in this novel portrays a chaotic period during the transition from one phase of the Indian politics and administration to another. The Resident Director of the tea-estate explains the motives of shrewd and devilishly cunning politician like Jugal Kishore. The Resident Director’s remark is conspicuous as he says:

"Politics is his business, just as growing tea is yours and mine. We grow tea for no other reason than because it gives us the where withal to live according to our standards, he goes into politics for much the same reason (p.227)."

And then he makes the surprising revelation:

Did you know that the Brindian Tea Company contributed five thousand rupees to his election expenses and the other two companies, two thousands each? Do you know that the day he became Minister for Plantations he was given an assurance on behalf of three companies, that he would be given a monthly remuneration of one thousand ruppes if he stayed on our side? (p.228).

Thus, Malgonkar in Combat of Shadows clearly delineates the Indian politicians who could sell out the national cause for self-interest without any moral scruples.

When we analyse the character of Henry Winton, the protagonist, in his social context, it is
found that he is a man of no integrity. He fails to establish viable relationship either with Ruby Miranda or with his English wife Jean. He is torn in conflict between "desire and aversion". R.S. Singh, in his assessment of the novel says that "the writer has tried to show how the two shadows of desire and aversion are always active to take possession of the soul of man." 47

Henry Winton is not an exception. He although the novel, is obsessed with it. Henry is a "man of lust without love" seeking sensual fulfilment in women. When he saw Ruby, he is moved by lust for her" eyes of the real Chandni Chowk whore, black and bold" (p.19). Moreover, he finds in her, "the rare mixture of the submissiveness and surrender of oriental womanhood with the freedom and gaiety of the west" (p.116). He shudders at the very thought of marrying her because she is not all white. He always remains cautious about "the thin line that separates fun from serious involvement" and uses Ruby only for fun. Later he marries to Jean Walters, an English girl.

Henry's selfish irresponsibility is seen in his confrontation with "one tusked rogue elephant" which has been a menace for many years in the
surrounding villages. When lame Kistulal, an aborigin and an expert in tracking down animals, traces the elephant. Henry fails to shoot the animal as his cartridges prove ineffective. His irresponsibility costs the life of poor Kistulal. Later on Henry was saved by Cockburn.

Henry’s relation with his wife could not last for long. Jean is a woman of self-respect and loves integrity in a man which Henry lacks. She resents Henry’s duplicity and cunningness in concealing his past relations with Ruby. When Henry objects to her intimacy with Eddie Trevor, she hits back at him detailing his past liaison with Ruby. She complains that Henry is still infatuated with Ruby and says:

You have never given me your whole-hearted love, Henry, although you have demanded it from me. You have always held back—and that a woman can never forgive (p.200).”

She accepts Eddie as her love to spite the cowardice in Henry.

One day Gauri, Jugal Kishore’s niece approaches Henry and urges him to follow her. She takes
him to Wallach's Folly; a place where Eddie Trevor and Jean are making love. In that way Gauri has given him the stunning rebuff by revealing the moral depravity of his English wife. Henry is shocked and plans to kill Eddie by a duplicating device. He sends Eddie to meet the "one tusked elephant with spurious cartridges which causes Eddie's death. It is the most dastardly act of his life and it marks the completion of the process of corruption and disintegration initiated early in the novel. Although Henry, in this way, experiences "the sweet joy of revenge" but it costs him Jean's love. She leaves him for ever.

In the end, Henry becomes a victim of Ruby-Dort-Pasupati conspiracy and is consumed by the raging fire. Thus in that way, Malgonkar has presented an authentic picture of the private life of the Britisher tea planters in relation to Anglo-Indians and Indians.

The next novel taken up here for analysis in this present study is The Princes (1963). It is an authentic record of the events that took place in India between 1938 to 1947. It details with the growth of nationalism along with decline and fall of 565 Princely
states into the Indian Union in post independence India. Besides this political movement in Indian history, there is another movement too which deals with the development of protagonist. Abhay Raj from a state of personal and social alienation caused by emotional problems of childhood and adolescence through a maturing process which involves the experience of sex and war, to the fulfillment of personality in the realization of human relationship and affirmation of traditional values. In this regard J.Y. Dayananda observed: “In the novel, truth is skillfully interwoven with fiction, the growth of nationalism and the decline of princely way of life are interwoven with the growth of a Prince”. The Princes is a history of disintegration of the princely state of Begwad, from the early days of political unrest in 1938 to its merger in 1949. It deals with an exclusive phase of recent Indian history; not so commonly dealt within Indo-Anglian fiction and nowhere taken up with such a sure touch as in Malgonkar.

The novel is written in the backdrop of Indian freedom struggle and IIInd World War. The action of the novel begins in pre-independence India. Before Independence, India was divided into so many princely states. But when Britishers left India in 1947, these
states were to be integrated into Indian Union within a matter of months. Malgonkar relates the narrative in The Princes to the very beginning, November 1, 1858 when a royal proclamation transferred India from the jurisdiction of East India Company to the Crown which assures the princely states in India, absolute power. The later happenings in the novel bring the action much closer to contemporary times that is about the political crisis that arises with the merger of princely states into Indian Union.

One of the important historical events discussed in this novel is the IIInd World War in its fiery phase: the Middle East theatre with Old Rommel 'entrenched in Egypt'; his being checked in his audacious push in late April 1941 (p. 190) and the abandoning of Burma in the wake of the Japanese strides (p. 207). The Quest reviewers of The Princes, Jill Hugh Jones found the 'Minnie and Punch episodes', 'the worst features of the book' and dismissed the Burma War chapters as irrelevant to the novel. Perhaps they are so, if one reads the novel only as the story of Bega and the elder Maharaja. But, in the context of Abhay's development, they have surely a place of importance. It is his encounter with Minnie Bradley, the Anglo-Indian
girl, and his participation in the Burma wars which cure him of his romanticism and reveal to him his real identity.

Malgonkar in *The Princes* has also captured most authentically the state of the national movement for freedom. Coming to national politics one encounters the period 1940-47 recreated in most of its essential details "the Gandhian movement for self-rule" (p.65), "the popular spread of the use of Gandhian-cap as a mark of protest and the harsh deterrent treatment meted out to those who donned the cap" (p.66), the Salt Satyagraha (p.64), the wide spread disenchantment at the failure of Cripps Mission to resolve the impasse created by the conflicting stands taken by the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League and others (p.232), the Naval Mutiny in Bombay (p.258) and the communal riots consequent upon the decision to partition India (pp. 258, 262). The authenticity of these events clearly shows Malgonkar’s insight in Indian history which he uses in delineating his theme in the novel, *The Princes*.

However, the most significant component of the chronicle comprises an authentic account of the
conditions in the princely states during that eventful period. Even after the formal acceptance of Independence of India as a foregone conclusion, there was a lot of confusion as regards the princely states. "The Government drew up a formula for the acceptance of the princes which was called the Instrument of Accession". But that cleared the decks only technically. "The transfer of power was to take place on the 15th August. Three weeks before hand, the majority of the rulers had still not formally accepted the Instrument of Accession" (p.276).55

The novel, The Princes, is about one of the such princely states, Begwad whose ruler Maharaja Moroji is not ready to accept the Instrument of Accession theory and welcomes death which he prefers to the abdication of power. The Princes gives a bold, vivid and precise picture of the last phase of princely India. H.M. William considers it to be a milestone in the Indian novel of Indian life and states that it:

is free from the rancour and free from the intense party spirit of the politically committed novelists, free from caricature and exaggeration, free from all self pity, posturing and assuming of attitudes.56
It gives a representative picture of almost all the princely states. Malgankar has taken care to make it clear in several places in the novel:

What has happening in Begwad was happening everywhere else in Padmakoshal and in most Indian states (p.287).

Besides the historical movement, there is another movement that is "the development of the protagonist, Abhayraj from a state of personal and social alienation caused by emotional problems of childhood and adolescence through a maturing process which involves the experience of sex and war, to the fulfillment of personality in the realization of human relationships and affirmation of traditional values."57

The two movements merge in Abhay’s decision to give up his role as an unaffected spectator and to stand by his father.58 The change is effected very deftly, defining the evolution of the prince. Like Amur, J. Dayananda also points out "to the dexterous interweaving of the two themes in the novel - the rising freedom struggle and the growing up of a prince."59

The opening scene of the novel takes place in Begwad, a small princely state in the Deccan Plateau in 1938. The first scene of the novel entitled - "So
long as the Sun and the moon go around" is the key-note of the novel. In this scene Maharaja Hiroji upholds that "there will always be a Begwad and there will always be a Bedar ruling it... so long as the Sun and Moon go around" (p.13). This shows father's sole intention and cherished aim of life which is to preserve the integrity of the state at any cost. The old Maharaja is guided by vanity and sense of security. He says to Abhayraj:

I would prefer the British to the Gandhites any day, so that the integrity of our state is preserved for all times. It is more important than anything else (p.19).

In the beginning of the novel, there is a confrontation of ideas between Abhayraj and his father, Maharaja Hiroji. Both father and son take extremely opposite stands regarding the nationalist movement. Hiroji has nothing but contempt for the nationalists who are, according to him, "goondas led by traders and lawyers" (p.13). But Abhayraj has sympathy for the nationalists and condemns all his father's political views. Again in the case of Kanakchand their views differ. As Abhayraj is considerate, he gives his books to Kanak Chand and his tutor appreciates this generous gesture of prince:
it is one of the most satisfying thing in life to be able to give someone what he really needs; only it takes a long, long time for most of us to find it out (p.47).

But contrary to it, Kanak Chand is flogged in public by Maharaja for cheating and also for possessing the banned Gandhi cap. As the novel approaches to its climax, we find Abhayraj, getting more and more shape of his father. G.S. Amur considers "the change in Abhayraj, brought about by a strong sense of loyalty to his father, is nothing more than a recognition and a return". Later in the novel, we see that Abhayraj acts exactly like his father in a horse whipping incident. In the beginning of the novel, Abhayraj himself revolted against his father, when his father had whipped Kanak Chand. In this regard J.Y. Dayananda writes: "Abhay is an extension of his father in the end of the novel ". He also quotes Abhay's wife Kamala's comments, "sometimes you act so much like your father that it makes me frightened" (p.318). Even when he learns about his mother's going to Pakistan with Abdulla Jan, he says "you are nothing, but a bitch, a shameless woman" (p.319). Thus Abhay's acting like his father is the recognition of his self and confirmation of the old system.
Thus, Malgonkar, in this way shows the social history of the princes at the time of disintegration of their princely states. To convey his themes, Malgonkar creates fictional type of real characters and situation from the Indian history. Malgonkar, as observed by C.M. Mohan Rao takes no liberties with the historical facts connected with the princely states\textsuperscript{62}, proves his insight in Indian history.

Malgonkar's next novel in the present study is \textit{A Bend in the Ganges} (1964). In this novel, Malgonkar has depicted the Gandhian era, that is 1920-1947. Besides the followers of Mahatma Gandhi and his ideologies of non-violence, Malgonkar at this time in \textit{A Bend in the Ganges} has concentrated his attention on the role of terrorists as well in the ongoing struggle for freedom. Malgonkar truly points out that all those who fought for freedom were not followers of Gandhi only, but there were others too, who had used the methods different from those recommended by Gandhi. The novel reflects the true picture of such fighters and their role in the ongoing struggle for freedom. In this way, Malgonkar in this novel, has been able to put forth the bare facts of political history of freedom struggle in a
subtle and comprehensive manner, highlighting the role of violence hidden in the midst of non-violence.

Regarding the authenticity of the events discussed in the novel, P.P. Mehta observes:

The background of the plot is equally authentic and possesses a sort of documentary validity. He has selected the most unusual background: the terrorist movement, the Andaman Jail, the native head-hunters, the great explosion in Bombay harbour and the communal upheaval in the Punjab.

The novel opens with an important part of the freedom movements; Swadeshi Movement under the impact of which "they were burning British Government by peaceful means with "no coercion, no intimidation" (p.9). Here Malgonkar admires Mahatma's strategy of opposing the alien rules. The novel conveys through Gian's act of discarding his much-prized blazer in the enthusiastic manner wherein thousands responded to Gandhi's call for making a bonfire of foreign clothes. Not merely that Malgonkar goes ahead to include in his tale even the rationale for this seemingly novel-means of protest.

Those of us who wear clothes of British materials help to pay the administrators who are sent to rule over us, to buy the rifles and bayonets for the soldiers who hold us in captivity, to arm the police who now surround us (p.9).
The novel ends with the partition, violence and bloodshed that marked "the sunrise of our freedom" in 1947. Malgonkar records graphically the political condition of India during the freedom struggle. He also records violence occurred due to partition of the country. Richard Church remarks:

...A novel could not convincingly contain more violence than this tale of the sub-continent during the post quarter of a century. It is not likely that we shall be given a more revealing, a more sanely balanced, or a more terrifying account of those years. The paradox of life is there, and out of it the author has made a work of art.6

Here again, in this novel also Malgonkar's method of presentation of the historical perspective is one of comparison and contrast. Malgonkar has portrayed Gian Tulwar, a prototype of Gandhian's ideologies of non-violence, who was cowardly, cunning and corrupt. He is matched with Debidayal who is a fearless, duty-conscious and patriotic. Debidayal was betrayed by his friend and discarded by circumstances, he did not lose courage, nor did he grow suspicious about the validity of his convictions. Gian who had taken a vow to practice non-violence killed his own cousin to take revenge for murder of his brother. Here Malgonkar depicts man's inner urge for violence or his "hidden capacity for
violence often brought out by the destructive acts of others.* Perhaps Malgonkar would like to ask more precisely like the revolutionary Basu in the novel:

Would you remain non-violent if someone threw acid at the girl you loved? would Gandhi? (p.291).

Malgonkar appears to discredit non-violence through the weak and fumbling Gian even before the terms are stated properly. Amur accuses Malgonkar of ignoring the non-violence of the strong which demands "a greater heroism than violence itself" as exemplified by the Mahatma and Martin Luther King in their lives. Malgonkar gives the impression that he wants to tell the whole story from the point of view of revolutionaries who condemn non-violence as "the philosophy of sheep." Both Amur and Asnani accuse him of "being biased and influenced by his own personal predilections in focusing only on the superficial aspect of non-violence." Later, both Gian and Debi met again in cellular Jail at Andamans. Malgonkar has portrayed a very lively picture of the circumstances of the prisoners over there.

Malgonkar, in this novel has used the real historical personages. Besides Gandhi another real-life
freedom fighter who figures in *A Bend in the Ganges* is "Jatin Das" (p.74), the arch-revolutionary who is very much alive in the memory of shafi, a key character in the novel. There is a graphic invocation of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre on “a hot April day in the year 1919” with General Dyer ordering his soldiers to fire at a crowd of Gandhi’s followers. The result was “379 dead and over a thousand wounded” (p.75). The novel goes on to record the humiliation the Indians were subjected to, subsequently “they had to crawl on their bellies because General Dyer had promulgated what was called the crawling order” (p.75). The specific reference to Kucha Kaurianwala in Amritsar in another historically authentic stroke (p.75). The strange-hold of the police and lower rungs of the bureaucracy on the people in general and the poor in particular under the very nose of alien administration is graphically portrayed through the poignant frustration. Gian and Hari in their endeavour to enforce their rights.

Khuswant Singh considers Malgonkar’s *A Bend in the Ganges* a successful novel due to the number of great national events depicted by the author. Sankar Bhattacharya considers *A Bend in the Ganges* a sensational novel about the struggle for independence,
the agony of the partition and the bathos of post independence fumbling." The novel records the vignettes of the hell India had to pass through during this unfortunate period. Partition in India represents the sinister culmination of the British Policy of divide and rule. The single-minded zeal for freedom got attenuated by the spread of the virus of communalism which slowly ate into the thrust of the movement for liberation." The Congress and the Muslim League had come to a parting of ways with Hindus and Muslims separated into opposite camps, learning to hate each other with the bitterness of ages. Even their own leaders had begun to take sides" (p.81). This is virtually proved true later when Hafiz tells Shafi in no unmistakable terms:

"Now the fight was no longer against the Britishers, but against the Hindus who were aspiring to rule over them. It was a Jehad, a war sanctioned by religion; a sacred duty of every true believer (p.289)."

Malgonkar also records the second World War in this novel. Japan's promise to liberate India from Britishers fails and Indians realize that Japanese were "for more tyrannical themselves" (p.260) and their aim was obviously not to liberate the Indians but to disintegrate and destroy the British Empire even if it
involved (as it actually did) subjecting helpless Indians to callous, wanton misery (p.264).

When the country was "ready to fall like a ripe mango in the hands of the Japanese" (p.282), there was seething discontent every where. In their anguish and frustration, "fired by their anger at the mass arrest of their leaders, goaded by the thought of the Japanese armies poised for an offensive, the people had chosen to discard their vows of non-violence" (p.283). The repressive measures taken recourse to by the authorities, "the callous prison sentences pronounced on Gandhi and Nehru" and the show of naked aggression of stifle the upsurge "back fired" (p.283) provoking the mobs into acts of violence were kept secretly locked up in prison" (p.282), the people discarded what Debi terms "Bullock-cart speed and vegetable logic of the Indian National Congress" (p.284). Their desperation burst forth into acts of violence. At that time Gandhi's message of non-violence had no significance than as a mere political expedient:

It seemed that the moment, the grip of British power was loosened, the population of the subcontinent had discarded non-violence overnight and were now spending themselves on orgies of violence which seemed to fulfill some basic urge (p.333).
The national situation in India as well as the post-war international scene brought the tussle of independence to a decisive phase. It was clear that the British were ready to pull out of the country. Only the terms of transfer were to be agreed upon" (p.295). But at the same time the differences between Hindus and Muslims were aggravated by the unwillingness of the Hindu-dominated Congress to share power with the Muslim League. Consequently when the stipulated day of Independence approached" tens of millions of people had to flee leaving everything behind, Muslims from India, Hindus and Sikhs from the land that was soon to become Pakistan" (p.232). The time of Shafi's prediction has come:

A million shall die! Debi-dayal kept remembering. That was what Shafi had predicted. 'A million shall die!', he had told them' perish as a result of the violence hidden in the midst of non-violence (p.355).

Again Malgonkar portrays a true picture of that horrible scene as "the land of the five rivers had become the land of carrion. The vultures and Jackals and crows and rats wandered about, pecking, gnawing, tearing, glutted, staring boldly at their train" (p.360). In that way, Malgonkar presents an authentic picture of the events from the Indian history in this novel.
In the end of the novel, we observe that Gian's life in the Andamans and later in India was "a bundle of lies and series of deceitful deeds", whereas, in comparison to him Debidayal remained a fearless, simple and straightforward patriot. Debidayal wanted to go to Duriabad, the town of his birth, to see his parents, but his train was stopped on the way and attacked by Muslims; he was murdered along with his beloved Mumtaz. Though Gian manipulates to make his life comfortable and wins Sundari's love, but he fails to impress as a man of character. On the contrary, Debidayal loses his life, but gains everybody's sympathy in the end of the novel.

Thus Malgonkar has depicted the Gandhian era in a very subtle and comprehensive manner concentrating on various aspects of life - political, social and moral. A critic observes' "If any thing the novel gives the feeling that its creator is not only thoroughly read in the history of freedom movement but also has been a keen observer of the feverish happening of the Gandhian era".

The next novel, in the present study is The Devil's Wind (1972). This novel is written in the
background of the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. While *The Princes* deals with the story of princes in general, *The Devil's Wind* narrows down to focus on the story of Nana Saheb, an individual character of history. The story of Nana Saheb is narrated by himself and he is seen both as narrator and a protagonist. There are two stores in the novel. The first is a factual narrative of the events of the Revolt of 1857; especially the rebellion in Kanpur. Nana Saheb may have been painted as a hero by Indian historians and as a villain by the British historians, but Malgonkar treats him "a human being". He said in a pre-publication interview, "I write of him as neither a patriot nor villain but as a rather mixed up human being, like most of us." Malgonkar in this novel has presented a true historical picture of Sepoy Mutiny in a more subtle and comprehensive manner, highlighting the overall development of Nana Saheb as a human being. All the events and circumstances described in this novel have a true historical identity. Malgonkar in this regard assures in the Author's note:

...I discovered that the stories of Nana and the revolt have never been told from the Indian point of view. This, then, is Nana's story as I believe he might have written it himself. It is fiction, but it takes no liberties with verifiable facts or even probabilities."
Malgonkar has recorded the revolt of 1857 in this novel which began on Sunday, May 10, 1857, when Indian soldiers called Sepoys, stationed at Meerut, killed their British officers, women and their children; marched to New Delhi, fifty miles away, captured the city without much difficulty. The Sepoy Mutiny had begun and the rebellion swept across India from May, 1857 to July 1858 - a period in which terrible atrocities were committed by both sides, British and Indian. Delhi passed into the hands of the rebels and Bahadur Shah was proclaimed the Emperor of India.

The mutineers got popular support in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. By the end of June, 1857, Kanpur was taken by the mutineers. Delhi was recaptured by the British in September 1857 and in December, in the Second Battle of Kanpur, the armies of the Rao Saheb and Tantya Tope were defeated by Campbell. Lucknow was recaptured in March and Jhansi fell in April. The Mutiny was substantially over by May, 1858 and all the rebellions were suppressed. Malgonkar’s main focus in the novel is on the Kanpur revolt which was led by Nana Saheb. Malgonkar describes the genesis of the revolt, the exile, and the deposition of the Bajirao II, the discontinuation of his pension, and titles, the inhuman
policy of annexation by Dalhousie, the animosity of the Indian princes, the introduction of the cartridges greased with the fat of the pig and the cow that was abominable to Muslims as well as Hindu sepoys. For this historical part of the novel, Malgonkar in an interview with Professor Dayananda, said that he had spent two years on research and read over 150 books by both Britishers and Indians on this great revolt of 1857, so that he could project the real socio-political condition of India at that particular juncture of history.

Thus, the story of the Sepoy Mutiny serves as a background to the imaginary main story of the novel. It is the undocumented inward story of Nana’s life. Nana was a adopted son of Bajirao II and most of the novels and historical works have depicted Nana, as the arch villain of the day, thus reflecting only the British point of view. A representative view of the British could be seen in Pattley’s comment:

Few names are more conspicuous in the annals of crime than that of Nana Saheb, who achieved an immortality of in famy by his perfidy and cruelty at Cawnpore.

Nana was considered as "the rebel Nana" and Britishers impose whole responsibility of massacres on him. They
think Nana Saheb was responsible for Satichaura and Bibighar massacres. But Malgonkar’s Nana Saheb is not a monster of evil and the novelist does not hold him guilty of the two inhuman massacres. However a few historians like Edward Thompson, R.C. Majumdar, Surenderanath Sen have come to the conclusion that there is no dependable evidence to fix the responsibility of the genocide in the Sepoy Revolt upon Nana Saheb. Malgonkar, in his endeavour to set the history in correct perspective undertakes to absolve Nana of the false charges.

Malgonkar’s concern is what makes Nana human, a compound of good and evil. He shows a keen sense of "a feeling for life as it is, in an artistic acceptance of reality." He does not shrink to turn the history of Sepoy Revolt inside out to reflect on Nana’s role in it. He evokes the picture of 1857 with a concern for reality and transforms it into art. Malgonkar has broadened our understanding of the Sepoy Revolt taking advantage of the novelist’s perspective, and also by delving into inner recesses of the mind that historians find shy of entering. In dealing with the character of Nana Saheb. Professor G.S. Amur observes that "Malgonkar has succeeded in restoring to the image of Nana Saheb
its basic humanity and in setting the record straight." Some of the critics feel that The Devil's Wind is more history than novel and the novelist has not succeeded in transmuting historical fact into a work of art as he could in The Princes. Malgonkar considers The Devil's Wind as a triumph of art, not of simple recording since according to David Daiches:

...if a novel strikes us as being even more historical than history while at the same time containing all the illumination of art, this is a triumph of art, not of simple recording.\textsuperscript{39}

The Sepoy Revolt had come unaware to the Englishmen in India as they were living "a life of ease, comfort and luxury."\textsuperscript{39} It was a sudden outburst of the long pending impatience gradually nursed among the soldiers and Kings against the repressible acts of the British. Malgonkar tries to prove that the Revolt was "a spontaneous explosion of accumulated discontent of the Indian people".\textsuperscript{90} And when, the Devil's Wind breaks and the Revolt begins on May 10, 1857, with the Sepoys marching to Delhi and massacring Whites and Christians, Nana Saheb remains uncommitted. "Apart from my own retainers" he says, "English men were the only people I had any intimate contact with. I did not wish them ill" (p.125). Nana clarifies his stand to his English friend Hillersdon:
Once the sepoys here rebel, I have no choice. I shall join them and work for them (p.141).

NanaSahasheb did not claim to be the original planner of the revolt. The strategy was settled at Delhi and as such the Mad Mullah might be considered to be the brain behind it. In his heart of hearts, Nana did not want the revolt, nor did he want the continuation and perpetuation of the rule of the East India Company over the Indians, but what he wanted was:

...to be the voice of reason, the keyman to be held in esteem by both sides, the mediator and the negotiator, someone who would go down in history as the man who had tempered a revolt, who had helped his own people to achieve freedom from foreign conquerors with only minimum blood letting (p.132).

Nana pleads his innocence about the Satichaura and Bibighar incidents in this novel. He was not present at the scene of Satichaura and Bibighar incidents. He feels intense agony at the unforeseen horror:

I am sorry, I said to them, but without uttering a sound. This is not how I wanted it to end. forgive me, I am sorry, sorry, sorry. I have not saved your lives. I have compromised, borrowed a little time for some, perhaps saved a few. I don't know. I am sorry (p.194).

His intense anguish could not be expressed.
Even though Nana was not connected with any of these massacres, he was conscientious enough to feel concerned about the Satichaura and Bibighar incidents. He regrets:

Satiehaura and Bibighar are monuments to our brutality. "Look and be ashamed", the world will forever admonish us". This is what you have done; this is what you are capable of. So long as the sun and the moon go round, our noses will be rubbed in their dregs (p.212).

He further asserts in defence that:

If Daryaganj and the other villages had not been burned down as guilty villages, Satichaura might never have happened and if Fatehpur had not been destroyed merely as a follow through to a victorious military action". Bibighar might never have happened (p.212).

In that way, Malgonkar has presented Nana defending himself vigorously against the charges of responsibility for the Satichaura massacres and the Bibighar tragedy. Critics hail Nana not a patriot. But Malgonkar has projected Nana as a true patriot. His unflinching commitment to the cause of his country is stressed in an open letter he wrote to Queen Victoria and her Government in India. He writes:

All I want you to understand is that I am not a murderer", I wrote" but at the same time you have no enemy more determined than myself. So long as I live, I shall fight (p.270).
When British Lt. Governor of Oudh declares him an 'outlaw' in his own country, he reacts and further writes:

"What right have you to occupy India?" I demanded. "How can we accept the argument that you, firanghis are masters and we, 'outlaws' in our own country (p.271)." 

This shows his love for his own country.

The Queen's administration sanctioned pardon to all except Nana and as a result, Nana left India and went to Nepal to live. He spends fourteen years of his life in the Nepal forests, moving from place to place with the charge of seasons. Now he was trying to lead a life of contentment like a saint with Eliza by his side, his daughter to call him father and a small group of people to hail him as their leader. He states:

Eliza and I were like some symbolic couples, like Rama and Sita during their exile, finding total fulfilment in one another and hankering for nothing which he could not find in our own surroundings (p.275).

Thus, in finding happiness in the Company of a woman, he compares well, as Amur says, with Abhayraj in The Princes and Debidayal in A Bend in the Ganges. Where Debidayal the revolutionary turns away from a life of
violence and public concern and finds his peace in the love of a woman. The same pattern less emphatically traced, is worked out in The Princes, where Abhayraj's marriage with Kamla becomes a meaningful relationship under the strain of public events that follow the merger of the state of Begwad."

The next novel for critical evolution, taken up here is Bandicoot Run (1982). This novel too, as its predecessors, has a significant base, a true, verifiable historical substratum. Like Distant Drum this novel also bears the imprint of Malgonakr's own experience in the army. The subject matter of the novel is an intelligence operation poised to run the careers of some of the most brilliant top officers of Indian Army. Therefore, the novel presents a stark corruption in the Indian Army after the independence. Malgonkar also includes mention of Gandhi and Nehru in this novel in a manner which is a pointer to the novelist's treatment of the socio-political history of India of a particular phase. Through the reminiscences of Brain Gilchrist, a key character, is created a picture of Gandhi: his "Puckish humour", "agility of mind, scuttling behind abstract philosophy when cornered, but never without a merry glint in the eyes", a hypnotic
personality indeed”72. Gandhi is mentioned in the later part of the novel when hundreds of volunteers fired by nationalism courting arrest under the non-violent movement spear headed by Gandhi (p.300). The real presence of Gandhi is shown in Noakhali in Bengal, the worst affected place in pre-partition riots where hundred of Hindus had been done to death in one of the worst orgies of communal violence (p.318).93 In that way, Malgonkar records graphically the political condition of India.

Bandicoot Run is divided into two parts, the first is entitled “the Sahib who stayed behind the sun” and the second part is called “The Gilchrist Story”. The first part of the novel begins with Prologue Thursday, 7th March, 1961 in which there is the description of a room of the Directorate of Inter-services Intelligence (ISI), in the Defence Ministry building in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Six officers, two each from the Army, the navy and the Air Force are shown discussing with the Director of ISI, Major General Kadar Hussain, the senior most among the six. A Captain in the Navy says to General Hussain:

I take it... it... well, the real thing, Sir? It could be a plant by the Indian net work. That or an absolutely stupendous feat of intelligence
gathering on our part. It purports to be the full text of their exercise for the annual conference of the services chiefs. We know that conference is scheduled to take place on Monday, four days from now. That means that even in India most of those who are going to participate in the conference have not seen these papers. And yet, we seem to have the full text in our possession (pp.9-10).

Malgonkar in the early chapters of the novel introduces Major K.Y.T. Nadkar, Brigadier Sham Lal Behl and Brigadier Kiran Garud. Major Nadkar is in the charge of the Records Section of the Adjutant General’s Branch at Headquarters. These files of the branch are to be kept for the years before they are either sent to the archives department of the Defence Ministry to be preserved for eternity or destroyed by burning in an incinerator in the presence of an especially constituted board of officers. Malgonkar with the help of flashback technique, presents Major Nadkar remembering his past life. He remembers Brigadier Behl, a man of medium height, very fair complexioned, with a full and feminine face and restless in manner. Thus Malgonkar, in the first chapter of the novel, recalls most of the memories referred to Nadkar’s career in the Army. He thinks life in army to be dull and restrictive and he had also convinced himself that he would never make an ideal officer and was very eager to resign from the Emergency
Commission in the Indian Army. It is important to stress here that the clash of army codes provides the background of the novel.

*Bandicoot Run* also captures in small but telling strokes the abysmally low morale the army went through in that eventful period: the penchant for "Gandhian ideals of austerity" (p.18) among the politically ambitious in the army and elsewhere," favouritism in high places and... politicians interfering with the promotions and postings of service officers" (p.62). Malgonkar not only invokes admirably the historical milieu wherein this novel is set, he also throws in frequently actual historical personages in the background to lend credence to the picture. K.M. or Krishna Manikam deserves special mention. He is the most obvious example of a historical character being given a fictional garb, rather transparent though K.M. is the Minister of Defence. For the post of Chief of Staff, he wants "someone he can depend on... someone who owes everything to him" (p.154). K.M. likes to throw his weight around. He tore an Admiral to strips for a minor fault (p.147). In that way, Malgonkar sketches the thinly veiled portrait which is obviously that of Krishna Menon, the Defence Minister in office at the
time of the 1962 debacle on the Sino-India frontiers. His opting for General B.M. Kaul as the Army Chief had been equally controversial. Here is an excerpt from what M.V. Kamath had been quick enough to observe while reviewing the book for The Sunday Observer. The blurb on the orient paperback edition of the novel displays the observation prominently:

Bandicoot Run is a savage and merciless attack on the late Mr. V.K. Krishna Menon and one of his favoured Generals who was promoted out of turn.

Malgonkar’s method of presentation of the historical perspective is one of comparison and contrast. Again in this novel, he presents an age-old conflict between good and evil. Malgonkar portrays Kiran Garud, an army officer, who stands for certain positive qualities. While Sham Lal and Brain Gilchrist typify the opposite qualities. Behl is a crook and shrewd. Brigadier Behl offers a bribe to Brain Gilchrist to change his posting order to the eleventh Battalion of the Marathas. When Gilchrist refuses to take bribe, Behl offers a piece of ivory miniature to Mrs. Gilchrist. Behl also plants an idea in the mind of the members of the Court martial that Mr. Gilchrist often takes bribes. The Court martial recommends the stoppage of Gilchrist’s promotion for three years.
The novel also records some of the instances in which Malgonkar deals with, how the secrets of Indian forces have been transmitted to Pakistan. A file has been stolen by somebody from the Army headquarters in New Delhi. General Sham Lal Behl accuses his colleague General Kiran Garud. Later the Board gets the evidence as to how the secrets have been transmitted to Pakistan and who has revealed them. The Board accuses Sham Lal Behl for the leakage of secrets.

Malgonkar, in this novel, retains the ingredients of a thriller and suspense that makes the novel enjoyable for the reader. The "Gilchrist story" unfolds the suspense of the novel and mystery is dissolved. Captain Brain Gilchrist came into contact with Jack Pasotti, C.I.A. agent in India. The C.I.A. was interested in getting the full file on Gilchrist's court martial. But Gilchrist did not want to betray the people who were his colleagues in the army and his conscience did not allow for the disloyalty to the nation. What led Captain Gilchrist to the crime is described in his statement:

A quarrel between a husband and wife over money is always a demeaning thing... "What do you think you are! Do you really believe that anyone takes you for a Sahib? even the people you're supposed
to be saving from disgrace and ruin? And then I reminded myself that this was not my wife who was ranting at me so much as what her years with me had done to her; the privations of hand to mouth living, of doing without, of making and mending a combination of the cheap cotton dress with the mismatched buttons... the plastic chappies mended by the corner mochee rearing up to spit (p.330-31).

Nancy, the wife of Major Gilchrist never tried to understand the feeling of national loyalty. Instigated by his wife, Jack Pasotti commits a crime and sells the court martial file to the Pakistani Major General Kadan Hussain for a handsome amount. Thus, the novel Bandicoot Run reveals that the question of national loyalty is vital to Malgonkar. The novelist's description of such details about 'army life' proves him to be a laborious accumulator of data which impart to his writing actuality and authenticity.

The present study makes a critical evolution of yet another novel, The Garland Keepers (1986) written by Malgonkar. In this novel Malgonkar projects the same and corrupt politician in the light of prevailing situation. In that way, Malgonkar highlights the socio-political history of India of recent times. The socio-political facts of the contemporary period get a vivid and lively treatment in the hands of Malgonkar.
in the present novel. This time he deals with the Emergency during 1975-77. Although Malgonkar asserts in Author’s note to the novel, that the novel is not based on the Emergency of 1975-77, but a "fictional one, supposedly imposed some years later, "it is evident that it draws inspiration from these events and is intended to drive home subtly the lesson of Emergency. The passing resemblance is ascribed to the fact that "all fits of national epilepsy must show some common outward symptoms." Even M. Rajagopalchari considers 'The Garland Keepers' "an indictment of infringement of human rights and gross abuse of power in Emergency."

The novel describes the socio-political facts of the times when India witnessed the rule of Emergency during 1975-77. It was notorious for its excesses through Press Censorship, MISA, indiscriminate implementation of Family Planning and the extra-constitutional authority of a caucus of sycophants. The country as a whole rose up against it to overthrow the government in the subsequent elections. Malgonkar emphasises less on the political personalities and more on to castigate the import of Emergency which has put democracy in jeopardy.
Malgonkar again in this novel has adopted the same technique of comparison and contrast like his other novels to project the callousness of the Indian socio-political scene. Malgonkar projects the rule of Emergency in which the power was being used to serve the political ends of the top leaders. Anybody could be arrested, terminated, or promoted depending on his compliance or otherwise with the higher-ups. Seniority "means nothing— not even for the highest judges in the land" (p.44). The Executive, the Judiciary and the Legislature could be nudged to toe the line of the authority by hook or by crook. Malgonkar projects certain fictitious characters against this back drop to reveal their moral degeneration. Malgonkar portrays one such character Swami Rajguru who is the villain of the novel and also a root-cause of all evil machinations. The cunning Swami Rajguru is the head priest; his chief disciple Ekanti Ma, the great Leader’s son and the ‘most dreaded man’. Kales Kak, his favourites Kaul and Pashupat known as the Owl are portrayed against some of the characters like Om Parkash Aggarwal Visram. A.B. Chopra etc. which suggest the hope of resistance in the novel.
Maalonkar records all the atrocities committed in Emergency in this novel. In doing so he reflects his bend of mind; to love the freedom and hatred for corruption and dictatorship. Malgonkar mirrors the society which is rotten under the impact of emergency. The police turn out to be puppets in the hands of power-crazy politicians and are put to all sorts of shameful deeds. Batra lists out the indiscriminate disorder perpetrated by the police.

You take your orders from palace flunkeys, not from your superiors— and no written orders at that. Two men whom both of us have seen as clerks now crack the whip and you jump, send your minions to plant bootleg whisky or foreign money in some one’s house and carry out raids. You bug telephones and put cameras into people’s bed rooms to record their sex life. You hush up a bank fraud of millions because you are terrified of the gang at the top, and then sign blank warrants by the dozen to send innocent people to jails! (p.15).

Describing the role of police during emergency, Malgonkar says that “the police are, transformed into an immense, dehumanized machine of master terror” (p.52). They would unashamedly bulldoze the units of thousands of poor people over night to remove” a blot on the face of the city”.

Malgonkar pinpoints the condition of Press during the Emergency time. The Press is regarded as the
Fourth Estate of Democracy but it was in a vulnerable position due to censorship. The "emasculated and precensored" press filled its space with the doings and pronouncements of the Thirty Point Programme. The Thirty Point Programme is published on huge hoardings as 'if to sedate the public'. One is reminded of a situation in Orwell's 1984 with "a barrage of slogans pounded at the proles to keep them under massive sedation" (p.52-55).

Corruption reaches to its highest point when a party does not hesitate to topple Padmakoshel Government by unethical practice of buying nineteen-legislators for a million rupees. Ironically the money is paid by Vinay Surana, a big industrialist.

Malgonkar also describes the jail conditions which are abhorrent. Particularly the Tihar Jail represents the worst. Visram felt creeps at the thought of "cockroaches and bed bugs in Tihar Jail, the filth of its communal laboratories". It was the time, when the compliant officers rewarded with quick promotions, the duty bound employees are transferred and arrested on foisted charges under MISA or killed. When Om Parkash Agarwal tries to reinvestigate a case, he was killed by an arranged accident. Similarly Dorabji is "clinically" killed for leaking out the secrets of black
money operation. What is worse in this situation is the timid compliance of the majority of the people when they are asked to bend, they crawl. Visram wonders "why some of his colleagues were helping the very people whom they should be doing their best to put behind bars" (p.106).

Malgonkar presents an age old conflict between Good and evil. The evil forces are represented by Swami Rajguru Pashupat and Kaul working for the great leader and his son Kalaskak. The other side which is good is represented by Om Prakash Agarwal, Visram Lal, A.R. Chopra, Batra, Sartaj, Metra Agarwal. Om Prakash falls a victim of these evil forces but Visram Lal and A.B. Chopra both succeed in outwitting Rajguru.

The action of the novel springs from the crucial Bank Fraud case. Manekji Hormusji Droabji is convicted with a five year term of imprisonment for having swindled a bank to the tune of 7 million rupees. The money was to deliver to Mukti Bahini but Dorabji failed to do so because of the delay in the bank, but he was only a stooge. The Great Leader and the caucus are behind it. The Dorabji case proves to be "the kiss of death" as feared by many; for Om Prakash. With the death of Om, Visram steps into his shoe. Visram is joined by
Chopra and they both together take the cudgels to fight the monumental corruption which results in a series of moves and countermoves between them and Rajguru and his followers. In that way is chronicling the socio-political facts of Indian history of the times when corruption was at its peak.

Swami Rajguru knows each and every movement of Visram and Chopra through the network of Surbinder, the new DIG. Both these men who are top police officials and men of integrity are relieved of their duties and even persecuted. Chopra is eased out of his office on a false charge of CIA connection. The three hard boiled professionals - Visram, Chopra, Batra - are brought together" by nothing so much as a shared service ethic and trust in each other's integrity and professional skill" (p.122). Under the leadership of Chopra, they decide to fight the evil forces unitedly. Their commitment to truth and work is uncompromising in unison to expose the highest echelons of power. They are now certain who the culprits are in the black money operation:

From the onset, it was clear who the principals were: Rajguru and that woman he calls his chief disciple, Ekanti Ma. And they were aided and abetted by Kaul and Pashupat (p.124).
Chopra chalks out the strategy to encounter Rajguru but he was finding Rajguru a hard nut to crack because Swami Rajguru was a highly privileged person - "that any favour done to him by officials would not go un.rewarded and that anyone whom the Swami found uncooperative be shown no mercy" (p.57).

When Rajguru was trapped completely by Visram, he tried to coax Visram, lure him with money and bully him:

What is it to you if I and a few friends have worked out a method of siphon ing off some of the funds which are illegally obtained in any case? And how do you know that those who are in charge of the funds are not our accomplices? Have you ever stopped to think that something which became a, parent to outsiders like you and Chopra is not known to the Great Leader? Could vast funds have been sent abroad without the Great Leader's knowledge and even connivance? Have you not heard of the chain of motels in Canada that Kakji owns, the five-star hotel on the shore of lake Garda that is coming up? - the family's vast holdings in multinational companies (pp.192-193).

Rajguru uses all his tact to direct Visram's anger to the Great Leader but fails. Now he dreads to face his sinful past. The final revelation of his identity as Naik Fida Ali comes off with cataclysmic force. Rajguru is now ready to beg him not to hand him over to the Pakistani military:
Don’t you know what barbaric punishments they dole out for the commonest offences? - like chopping off your hands and feet? Come on, you bastard! Kill me- kill me if you dare! (p.196).

In the end he is dropped from a plane in a desert, two hundred miles away to the charge of General Jamal Din.

Thus, the novel ends on an ambivalent note. Visram’s plan suggests the secret support of the Defence Ministry. The possibility of dethronement of the Great Leader is not ruled out. What Malgonkar through this novel, wants to suggest that Emergency transforms a country into a dystopian nightmare with the corrupt politicians. In that way Malgonkar has projected the socio-political facts during the time of Emergency. It reflects the true picture of contemporary India during the Emergency period and also exposes the treacherous underhand dealings of Rajguru and his caucus.

The Novels by Bhattacharya and Malgonkar taken up hereabove are obviously works of art, engendered by imagination and creativity but can any discerning reader fail to notice the thin line separating facts from fiction? What stares one in the face as one goes through these novels is the unmistakable impression of a phase of contemporary
history having been revealed in all its multifacetedness before one's eyes. What history presents are bland facts but what these novels present are facts throbbing with life and vitality. Verily does one conclude: In history there is nothing true but names and dates. In literature, such as the one analysed here, there is everything true except names and dates.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


5. Ibid.


7. Ibid, p. 11.


162


29. Ibid.


35. Ibid.


*Quest*, 44, Jan/March, 1965.


55. Ibid, p. 431.


58. Ibid, p. 81.


60. G.S. Amur, *Manohar Malgonkar* (New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann (India), 1973), p. 84.


73. C.f. "Official estimates... spoke of 379 killed, unofficial accounts gave much higher figures"


77. Ibid, pp. 394-96.


95. Ibid, pp. 204–5.
