Bibhuti Bhattacharya, as pointed earlier, is a writer basically concerned with the socio-economic problems of the India of his times. He had close association with men, women and their personalities and problems. He showed his concern with the socio-political and economic problems of hunger, poverty, famine, exploitation of man by man, war, peace, imperialism, nationalism and a good deal of other aspects concerning the condition of India before and after independence. Ramon Rolland describes artists as having a Dionysian ear where resounds all the underground rumblings of the period, a super-sensitive seismograph which records the most secret movements stirring the world which surrounds them. Bibhuti Bhattacharya also firmly believes in the social character and significance of art and literature. In this context he himself observes:

I hold that a novel must have a social purpose. It must place before the reader something from the society’s point of view. Art is not necessarily for art’s sake. Purposeless art and literature which is much in vogue does not appear to me a sound judgment.

In a very similar manner in his interview with Ramash K. Srivastava, when he was asked questions like, "what are the main sources of your plots and character? Have
they been taken from real life? Since you believe that a novel should have a social purpose, have you given them a tinge of your liking?" he replies,

Real life is the earth out of which my stories and peoples grow. I should add, though, that sometimes life follows art. To be more specific, I have conceived characters and then discovered that they have a flesh and blood existence. Not exact copies but basically alike.

He sincerely writes novels with a clear cut intention of drawing his readers' attention to the social evils as pointed out by Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi, though not a literary artist, did influence Bhattacharya to an extent which always opened his eyes as a novelist of social realism. Speaking on the Gandhian influence on Indian as well as Indo-Indian literature Bhattacharya says that the catalytic role of Gandhi helped the writers in India in imbuing a depth and dimension of the low, down-trodden as well as the high and the privileged. Bhattacharya felt that during the days of Gandhi the writers could not escape and resist from the nationalist struggle for India's freedom. At the same time, he feels that there was something deeper than the mere political image of Gandhi that appealed to the writers. In this context he observes:
The other part of Gandhian personality
was even more meaningful for the poets,
novelists and dramatists. He stood for the
common man, for the humblest, the lowliest
and the lost.1

In this context another noted critic Ram Jha has a
similar opinion when he says,

Obviously, for Bhattacharya, the novelist,
as it was for other Indo-Anglian novelists of
the time, Gandhi's feat of upholding of the
common man provided a new literary possibility.2

Personally Bhattacharya feels that a writer committed
to paint social realities should not be disturbed by any
kind of labelling. A committed artist should always thrive
for a better world. According to him an artist has every
right to plead and to work for a better world provided his
commitment to a cause does not impair the value of his art
as art. Because of his belief that a novel deals with
social reality, he expects a novelist to give descriptions
that are true to life. Regarding his own practice as a
novelist he observes:

Unless a writer has keen observation
and an eye for noting the details of general
behaviour of folks, he can not write a
social novel. I have developed this habit
and I have not missed a single opportunity
of observing incidents, happenings, where
I can gain something for the writer in me.
Most of my characters have shaped themselves
from the real earth.3
In a sense Bhabani Bhattacharya can be rightly described as one of the leading novelists of recent times who exerted world-wide influence as an artist by presenting before the world the changing social and political realities of India. In the words of Harish Raijuda:

"... Very few writers are able, as he is, to portray with such power the real agony of the peasant and the down-trodden and their ability to remake the world."

His first novel, *So Many Hungers*, brought his world-wide fame in which he could paint very aptly the hideous Bengal famine and the early stages of the second world war. It highlights the unfortunate predicament of Bengal by portraying the ups and downs of two Bengal families. The hunger for food and freedom is the keynote of the theme of the novel. But at the same time it also gives a true picture of the various aspects of hunger like hunger for money, hunger for love, hunger for sex, hunger for freedom and hunger in its varied forms that debase man in the eyes of humanity. But that is exactly what happened to Bengal and India as a whole during that period. A study of the noted Assamese novelist Dr. Birandra Kumar Bhattacharya's novel *Utritranjana* and Premchand's novel *Godan* reveals similar kind of social changes during those turbulent days in Assam and Northern India respectively. Hence, Bhabani Bhattacharya's novel, in
no case, is an aberration from the social realities. In this respect the leading literary journal The Hitiyada, after the publication of So Many Hungers, observes:

"One of the master-piece of Shabani Bhattacharya written in a highly polished English with intense realism, a sense of sincerity and dedication to the theme and art... an impeachment of man's inhumanity to man."

First it is the story of Rahoul, the astro-physicist, in the University of Calcutta. It unfolds his development as a freedom fighter on Gandhian lines. From being a pure academic enjoying the glamour of foreign degrees to his name, unconcerned with the reality of social problems around him, he was always in love with the security of home and hearth. In course of time Rahoul emerges as a man with determination to fight the social maladies and jumps into the fray of Gandhi's Civil Disobedience Movement.

Bhattacharya takes the plot of the novel on two levels. Rahoul, Sauronandra Dasu and Rahoul's younger brother belong to the class of aristocrats where as Kajoli, her mother and Bau belong to the suffering class, their proletariat. They are the representatives of the down-trodden, the low and the peasant mass. Rahoul is a divided personality in the beginning of the novel.
Though he has the highest degree in science, he feels it his moral responsibility and duty to join the freedom movement and make the suffering humanity free from bondage and slavery. His grand father, Dewsh Babu, popularly known as 'Devata', is an apostle of everything that is good of the people, by the people and for the people. On the other hand Rahoul's father, a rich merchant, is bent on making profits by hoarding rice. He adds fuel to the fire of suffering by his selfish motive.

As the novel is a realistic picture of the famine-stricken Bengal the socially conscious artist makes his presence felt throughout the novel. Bhattacharya appears to have a strong affirmative vision of life. Though the central theme of the novel is hunger, poverty and suffering, yet nowhere the novelist is a nihilist. In the words of N.R. Sharma,

What emerges prominently in every chapter of his novel and finally at the end of it as the pith of the world is the affirmation of life. Even in the midst of ghastly and heart-rending scenes of human sufferings and tortures, life asserts itself sparking amid ashes.

Rahoul, the young intellectual, plays the key role. Like any other educated young man of his times including great leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subash Ch. Bose,
Bhattacharya puts Rahul in an ordeal of 'to be or not to be' in every situation that life unfolds. He nicely portrays the pathetic fate of millions who suffered immeasurably from a famine, which was the result of the most heinous selfishness of profiteers and the relentless indifference of the British Government.

Rahoul in course of his career as a scientist, teacher and a guide comes in close contact with the problems of his people and his research scholar, Prokash. The problems of Prokash and his reactions to the changing political scenario also change his mind as a guide. When the whole of Bengal is affected by famine created by the alien rule and people die in numbers, Rahul recognises in him the common Indian whose fundamental needs are freedom of his country, freedom of his speech and the minimum freedom to enjoy the agricultural products of one's own country. Bhattacharya who was highly influenced by Harold Laski projects Rahul as the chief spokesman highlighting the economic sufferings of his people. Rahul was afraid of the war which made the rich richer, and the poor poorer and in the same time it gained a ruthless intensity. The socially conscious artist is pervasive in almost all the characters and more so in the character of Rahul. Even Honju, his own wife who felt in a different manner and told him,
You are for all humanity, but you don't care for your child. You never wanted her, I knew. She means nothing to you.

In this context Dr. Chandrasekharan aptly observes:

Rahoul's story is a representation in miniature of the struggle for freedom. The sad tale of Kajoli is likewise a pathetic record of what had happened to more than two million men and women who became victims of a famine which was not an act of God, but which was brought about by the rapacity and selfishness of profiteers and the indifference of an alien Government.

Whence Rahoul ponders his reaction to world events, his daughter, Khushu, is born. This milestone in his personal life is equated with one in the international sphere:

The scream! The thin, helpless, persistent scream of a new-born one! Rahoul stood rooted. The elation that made his heart swell! Two exciting things had happened to him this autumn day. The Prime Minister of Britain had declared war on the Swastika. Manju had given birth to a baby girl. Either event was a profound experience that made his emotions vibrate, as though he had achieved some personal fulfilment.

In the blood bath of war much else would be drowned besides the Swastika. A million youths would not die in vain.

Bhattacharya could clearly perceive the deep-rooted feeling of nationalism prevalent during the famine-cum-war
days in Bengal in particular, and in India in general. While Rahoul's father, Samarendra Basu is using the war for his own financial and social advancement, he finds himself increasingly involved in India's independence movement. Back from abroad in the initial stage, the trauma of Europe had seemed more real to him than at home. But now Rahoul is torn by a variety of conflicting loyalties: home and family, scientific research that has power, potential for peace or war, participation in what he sees as civilization's greatest 'war of liberation,' or the liberation of his homeland for which many patriots were now imprisoned. He needs the inner vision of the shape of things to come and the inspiration to meet the challenge that only his grand-father, Dadu, can help him attain. Rahoul's visit with his grand-father to the village of Baruni establishes the tenuous link that joins the narrative line between the Calcutta and Baruni characters. The fervour of nationalism is revealed in the reply of 'Dada' to Rahoul's question as to what hope the common people of India could have,

The national movement gives top priority to village reconstruction work, that you know. This is the very basis of our life to live. The Government do not like it, of course. They and the landlords have grown to fear the peasant masses. Once, not many years ago, odd to think, they posed as champions of the voiceless people against the intellectual class, the sedition mongers who talk of freedom for all. But the times have changed, the mask
The socially conscious artist gives a very true picture of the rural Hindu society of those days when the village cow was considered as a loved member of the family. The tone of introduction of the family members of Baruni by Dadu puts Kankul in surprise when he comes to know that 'Mangala' happens to be the milch-cow only. The orthodox Hindu sentiment associated with the family cow is nicely revealed by the novelist in its multifaceted forms from the beginning to the end of the novel.

On his return to Calcutta Rahouli, eventually, learns that Prokash, his laboratory assistant, is active in underground nationalist activity. Now both of them work together as political activists as well as research scientists. With the Japanese battle fleet in the day of Bengal, British authorities round up all the fish-folk's boats to prevent their being taken and used by the enemy. Though the fishmen of Baruni are paid in gold for their scuttled boats, it all appears worthless when a family's livelihood has been stripped away. Here also the artist
is very keen in observing the nationalist fervour when the villagers of Baruni rise up against their rulers:

"We curse you. We curse your dear ones. We curse your butcher master. May you, too, burn like that; man, may you, too, and your masters stand by and see your lives burn like that. We curse you all."

The outbreak of famine along with war caused disorder in the society; disorder mainly in the economic sphere, disorder in supply, disorder in distribution and finally disorder in the socio-economic structure leading to loss of peace and stability. The ultimate result was revolt — revolt against colonialism, imperialism, revolt against oppression and exploitation, revolt against racial superiority. Thus Kunal, Rahul's younger brother writes joyously from the warfront:

"Our soldiers from India have won a great victory, I am proud to say," he wrote. "I don't mean their victory over the enemy, I mean their victory, as it were, over themselves, you see, dada, they have killed their old foe — the sense of race inferiority .... The soldiers from India have fought and defeated white troops in pitched battles even against very heavy odds. The white man's bubble has exploded in the African air .... the myth that has been the spine of empire lies in pieces on the desert lands."

Following the arrest of Nehru, Gandhi and other leaders, a spontaneous peoples' revolt breaks out and is
violently suppressed by the British rulers. Rahoul is briefly imprisoned. There is violence, also, in the village, and Badu, his son-in-law, and grandson are jailed. As the steadying influence of the old man diminished, the village helplessly succumbs to the black market enticements. This eventuality has been nicely portrayed by Bhattacharya through the storeman who goes on convincing people from village to village:

Brother, this is your true chance. Sell all you can. English rupees for a mound of rice. Ever heard of such a price in a hundred and one years and in all the days of your fourteen generations? It is as though your paddy is dyed with wat-er-of-gold.

Famine sweeps the land. Artificial scarcity sweeps away the purchasing power of the poor villagers. Burning of fishing boats by the English soldiers wipes out the humblest means of livelihood. Hunger for food becomes the predominant hunger in millions of poor Indians. Bhattacharya rightly observes on the situation:

The empty stomach was due to no blight of nature, no failure of crops Rahoul knew. It was man-made scarcity .... with rationing at the right level there could be food for all. But there was no rationing .... Inflated currency added the finishing touch.
As one fulfillment leads to the other, similarly one hunger leads to another. Because, right from down the ages the human society, in any form or under any 'ism', has been an integrated and inter-related phenomenon. Rahoul, the most sensitive character in the novel — sensitive to a purposive and fruitful extent to serve the needs of a social novel — also loses his mental and intellectual poise what Bhattacharya very well describes:

Rahoul paced the laboratory floor, his feet restless.

Why could he not escape from the oppressive darkness of Bengal far into cosmic light? That was his true concern. Not the people's hunger for food or freedom, for he had his own separate hunger. His own hunger was his true concern. Why had he lost his intellectual poise?

He could not help it, he knew. He was made that way. He knew in his spirit the hungers of his people. And they were his hungers too?

Having seen their rice and cattle sold to the cities, the village folk believe food will be found there. They began the exodus cityward. Dadu's grand daughter, Kajoli, however, clings to the land. She is left with no more than the family cow, too starved to give milk, too loved to be sold and too revered to be eaten. As the journey
towards Calcutta in search of food begins, the plight of Kajoli, her mother, Ghun and the villagers worsens. The grim realities of hunger in its many forms is nicely described by Bhattacharya in the subsequent stages in the novel:

It was the high-road over which uprooted humanity dragged sore-foot towards its destiny. One of a hundred high-roads, and the destiny was far and nasty and incalculable. You had no yesterday, no tomorrow. You lived from moment to moment, breath to breath. You died as you slept, and you woke to life, and you died again. For your hour was the high-road which had no visible beginning, no visible end. You were the dust of the high-road, inseparable. They called you a destitute.

In stead of getting a good fortune in Calcutta, the plight of the family grows worse. Kajoli, desirous of saving his mother and brother becomes a victim of the lust of the soldier only for a piece of bread. Bhattacharya's sensitive eyes thus observes:

The silver had no meaning for her, but the bread, so much bread; it would mean life for her dying mother and her brother. Her answer came like a groan of anguish. "I am hungry. A little bread. God will give you abundance. Hunger eats us -"

He clutched her arm. She shrank a step, her eyes opening wide on his face — a face that had shed its kindness, a hard face, copper like. She knew that face. She had seen that face peering from the Army trucks that roared past. But she did not cry out, cover. All feeling was dead in her saw one dull ache: remorse that she
had eaten all the bread, all.

The soldier's grip tightened round her thin upper arm. He pulled and led her away from the road down the wet, sloping grass to the shadow. A night bird cried harshly from some tree top. A stooping bough stung the girl's face like a whiplash, and she nearly fell, but the soldier held her in his firm clasp. She walked on as in heavy sleep, led by the other's will, barely aware, for her body was but a bit of rag to cover her soul, and the rag was of no account, a mere encumbrance, and she had fled her body, fled to her mother and her brother, who needed bread to eat.

The soldier was a man of feeling. But he desperately needed a woman. It was over a year since he had seen his wife. And in this instant he was back home with his wife. He could barely see Kajoli's face in the dark, but he knew the smell that was ever with her — the clean woman smell, like rain-wet earth that was part of her. He spoke words of caress, words lain buried in his feelings. The soldier was lost in a twilight, half dream, half reality......

In this context Dorothy Blair Shiner rightly observes:

The journey towards "Utopia" of Calcutta is marked by harrowing days of starvation, the rape of Kajoli, and the ultimate degradation of life on the city streets. In stead of the promised land, the misery they have known is compounded a thousand times over in the lives of the city's poor among the refugees who have left their land only to die in alien streets. Bhattacharya's description of human starvation is grim with authenticity.
The author deals with irony after irony as he brings his bitter account to a conclusion. On one hand Rahoul and his once impractical wife, Manju, direct and work jointly in the food kitchen to which their village cousins resort daily for their mid-day meal. On the other hand the beautiful Kajoli determines to sell herself into prostitution just as her mother sets out to drown herself in the sacred Ganges in order to relieve Kajoli of the burden of her existence. Fortunately, Kajoli is saved from her shame providentially and her mother from drowning. Rahoul's father, the ambitious financier becomes a Companion of the Indian Empire — C.I.E. — as he had dreamed all along his life. But in the final irony he learns that Kumal, his younger son is missing in action and Rahoul has been arrested for his open opposition to India's participation in the war.

Shattacharya has always said that So Many Hungers was written from a compulsion to record for the widest possible reading public the intense suffering of the people of India during the famine of 1943. In her analysis of the novel So Many Hungers Dorothy Blair Shimer observes:
His fictional representation was based on fact — personal observation or news accounts of actual incidents. As he himself has pointed out, however, hunger is used metaphorically as well as specifically and realistically.21

Leaving aside Rahoul, the novelist also identifies himself with the artist who tries to paint the picture of the hungry child sucking the breast of her dead mother. The artist is totally engrossed as any other committed artist. But the crowd goes frenzy and throws his pencil and paper. Rahoul is the rescuer who goes near the artist and collects the paper and pencil. It is Rahoul through whom Bhattacharya observes:

"Bad luck," Rahoul went on, "These fellows didn’t know what they were doing. They hit you? No, they hit the mother lying dead. You have the picture within you. Let India see the picture...."

Neither spoke for a time. The artist seemed to be struggling with some inward pain. His face brooded. When he spoke, his voice was heavy with emotion.

"What will happen to the child? I have neglected my duty, it is true. So much time thrown away. The child needs immediate care...."

Rahoul stared at him. The artist had lost his detachment, and, with detachment, vision. He seethed with human feeling.22

Here in this context Shimer further observes:
Here, it seems to me, Bhattacharya was not only reporting a moment of human suffering that he himself had seen (as he told that group of students) but was summing up his philosophy as a writer. His role in life is to be sensitive to (but not sentimental about) the human condition and get it into words that will capture it for the widest possible reading public and for posterity. His role is 'not the noble, but comparatively limited one, of the social worker, ministering to a specific human need.'

In fact the role of a perceptive social worker and a sensitive literary artist has always been one and the same. The crisis in soul, as we find in Bhaoul, has always been there either in his England days or his stay in India. He was duly convinced by Tagore that the best contribution he could make in the reformation of the Indian society was only through his writing. Otherwise his keen awareness of the changing Indian problems had always attracted his mind to join hands with the Mahatma. Thus his first novel So Many Runners is a truthful depiction of social and historical realities. He justifies his unflinching faith that the novel should have a social purpose. Dr. Marlene Fisher is right when she notes that:

\[\text{In So Many Runners! (1947) the Bengal Famine is more than just a background; it is the very heart of the book.}\]"
With the advent of independence the Indian society undergoes a rapid process of social changes. Naturally there is a shift in attention of the Indian novelists. The excitement of the freedom struggle and the excitement of achievement had died down. Writers began to look at the social problems with greater realism and detachment. In *Music for Mohini*, Shattacharya concentrates on the conflict between the orthodox rural India and the liberal modern India with a new scientific outlook. In the words of K.R. Chandrasekharan, *Music for Mohini* is a forward looking novel in which the author dwells on certain sociological aspects of Indian life and suggests the direction in which we have to move if we are to fully benefit by our political freedom.

A Goddess named Gold is also based on similar sociological background. In *Music for Mohini* the heroine, Mohini is the beloved daughter of the Calcutta based professor. She is uninhibited, unaffected by any difficulty and therefore she is radiantly happy. She considers her inclination to music quite normal though the 'Big House', her mother-in-law's orthodox palace does not approve it. Her flamboyant dances and childish hobbies with Meeral, her brother, leads her to associate with Ranjan as a playmate amidst the grooves which is not
linked by anyone except Jayadev. Mohini's grandmother is all orthodox while the mother in the 'Big House' is all for time-honoured traditions in India. Jayadev, Mohini and her father project the willingness to assimilate and synthesise all old with the new scientific rationalism.

The renowned Professor of History approves of Mohini's talent and feels proud that her voice will be recorded. He says,

Mohini? It's a matter of pride, Mother, that Mohini gets her songs recorded. In deed she has made a name for herself in the world of music, that girl of ours. She has a contact to sing for All-India Radio once a week. 'Why'—he sighed fondly—'as her father I'll soon be a celebrity myself!'26

On the other hand the orthodox mother's protest is noteworthy when she says,

.......... you are in your early infancy. All these years you have not grown. Why do you not get this plain fact in your stomach? A fellow, good or bad, saint or lout, can go to the gramophone shop and buy a shiny black disc for 2.3, and it is as though he buys a little of our girl, for her voice is truly a part of herself. Terrible! Even her name is printed there, on the disc, for every eye to see...........

I won't have this family disgraced. Rogues and roughs and scamps, all the vagabonds and cutthroats in the four bazaars, muttering the name of our girl with a leer, befouling it, and they make her sing at their bidding—27

The artist is also keen in observing minute social
phenomenon, like the village marriage makers. The
sangle-seller, like a barber, has access to several
families and his position thus makes useful in Indiamife
as a match-maker. On the other hand the Professor gives
the marriage ads in the English Newspaper which Mohini
picks up and reads the clippings as,

Wanted a suitable match for
handsome, educated maid of charming
disposition. Highly gifted radio
singer.33

Usually in India tradition in the guise of orthodoxy
takes an upper hand. Jayadev's widowed mother, a staunch
pillar of orthodoxy presses him to marry Mohini after the
two horoscopes have been carefully compared and the
planets found to be in favourable conjunction. Another
social stigma is revealed when the old mother rejects a
marriage proposal for the sole reason that the suitor's
friends who have come to see the bride smoke before the
idols and thus show disrespect. On the other hand the free
and frank manner of the interview is well appreciated by
both Mohini and her father. The other group of visitors
who come without the groom is appreciated by the Old mother
though they make a nerve-racking investigation of Mohini
from tip to toe; verifying whether the hairs were true,
whether the complexion of Mohini was not beautified by
modern cosmetics etc. This is also quite typical of the
rehearsals that proceed a negotiated marriage in India even now.
Shibbancharya, in his course of narration, mentions certain customs and norms of behaviour which have become strongly established in India. One such practice is that of a suitor's friends or relatives inspecting the bride and subjecting her to an examination as if she were a candidate at an examination. During a marriage, a bride is not supposed to touch food until the whole ceremony is over. A Hindu wife is not supposed to eat before her husband. It is considered unseemly for a person belonging to a high caste to talk during a meal. In the rural areas older people have an aversion to allopathic system of medicine. Untouchability is an accepted and time-honoured practice. Widow remarriage is frowned upon and considered a social sin and defilement of the woman race in general. These are the prominent manifestations of orthodoxy in social life referred to in the novel.

In the words of K.R. Chandrasekharan,

One of the major concerns of Shibbancharya in this novel is the need for a change of social outlook and reorientation social values in India. As a necessary corollary to his implied plea for change he presents to the reader a picture of society today and invites attention to many beliefs and practices which have become strongly entrenched. Some of these concerns norms of personal etiquette, others relate to social behaviour while some others relate to religion. Orthodoxy is a phenomenon which covers all these aspects.
The novel highlights orthodoxy in the sphere of religion. Vows and offerings to the deity are duly specified in the novel. Jayadev’s mother eats with her left hand as she has dedicated her right hand to Lord ‘Shiva’ to bring the blessings of long life on her son. As Mohini remains childless for a long time, there are repeated vows on behalf of the Old Mother and finally Mohini to appease the Goddess birth. In *Bhagabata*, Bhatavacharya illustrates people’s faith in astrology and palmistry. The beautiful young Brahmin maid, Sudha remains unmarried only because of her uncle’s firm belief in astrology. Her uncle rejects a good marriage proposal because he thinks that the girl is under Saturn’s influence and he wants to wait till the influence has passed. Unfortunately, Sudha remains unmarried for no fault of her own and comes to be nicknamed in the village as ‘Saturn’s eyeshore’. Mohini is accepted as Jayadev’s bride only after the mother has satisfied herself that she has on her palm all the eight signs of luck. There is another reference in the novel to a pilgrim doing penance by crawling on hands and knees to a shrine situated on the top of a hill.

In this context K.R. Chandrashekhar observes:
These references to established customs and practices are not brought into the novel for decoration or producing an exotic effect. They have an organic place in the structure of the story as one of the aims of the author is to suggest the need for change.30

After Mohini's marriage in the 'Big House' the social customs of the rich and poor are more clearly revealed. The 'Big House' is symptomatic of an ordered way of life. It has many restrictions that it imposes on its members, specially the ladies. It is unseemly of a woman to sing loudly in the hearing of others. Plain cotton saris are preferred to mill-made muslin. Hair-dressing is regulated by custom. The mistress of the house is not supposed to move out of the house on foot. Men and women are usually segregated and do not eat together except on special occasions. The whole house seems permeated by the presence of the ancestors and the high ideals they stood for. The Old Mother tells Mohini about the importance and sanctity of the 'Big House' in these woods:

"THIS BEDSTEAD", said the Mother, has known honey and bitter: birth, growth, married life, age, disease, death, festive gaiety, toil. My son's grandmother brought this bedstead as part of her marriage portion. On this
her Flower-bod, her seven children were born. Here died my son's grandfather. Grandmother, too. This was my Flower-bod and here I had my four children, the first-born son and the next girl who died as babes. This bed is now yours, daughter. When you lie in it, do not forget its history, its sanctity.

The preservation of the sanctity of the 'Big House' appears as a distinct instinct in the mother. Her dedication of the heir to the 'Big House' may not be harnessed in anyway. On Mohini's arrival the first blessing that she invokes is that she should have an offspring to continue the traditions of the family. Her compulsion to make Mohini agree to offer her blood to the Goddess is also based on a similar motive. In this context K.R. Chandrasekharan observes,

The Mother is not prompted by any attachment to persons; her attachment is to a tradition and a way of life.

Bhattacharya has equally a keen eye for noting the superstitions prevalent in the then rural India. Widowhood is regarded as inauspicious. Therefore, a widow is not supposed to take part in the reception of a new bride into the household. A bamboo chip worn in the braided hair is imagined to ward off evil and to protect the pregnancy of a woman. The city-bred leeralal interprets the itching of his back as an omen of a sound beating to be received.
A crocodile is considered to be the re-incarnation of a devout Brahmin capable of offering worship at a temple in the silent hours of the night. That is why, a pond inhabited by crocodiles is regarded as a sacred one. The Brahmin priest in the temple objects to the cutting and removal of the hyacinth growing on the water lest the devout crocodile should be offended. These nice descriptions of superstitious beliefs also add to the touch of realism in the story. Another normal practice that was very much in vogue in the countryside India was the role of the storyteller from the 'Pancha' or the epics. Ceremonies in different forms have been adequately treated as a social phenomenon by the novelist. The ceremony of a sister anointing her brother or brothers is a very common practice in India. Even in the medical world Bhattacharya, the artist minutely reveals the traditional patronising of Ayurveda through his spokesman, Harindra's father:

Worse still, here was a challenge to the indigenous system of Ayurveda, the system that had prevailed for a millennium, enriched by the genius of the great physicians, Charak and Susruta. Cities had gone over to the new medicine, cities deserved no better but its onslaught on the country, strong as it was might yet be absorbed. To think that his son should be a carrier of the alien contamination! The old man's heart burned. What madness come upon him that he had sent his son to town and let him study at a medical school where they cut up live rats and dissected corpses?
Like the mother in the "Big House" Bhattacharya projects Harindra's mother as a stern symbol of all that is tradition and orthodoxy. Her vehement protest to accept the alien system of allopathic medicine is revealed in the following lines:

As the pātī dropped from her son's limp hand she reached out and pulled him close. She held him a minute to her bosom and said, "promise me, never to try to give me anything without his knowledge."

"Promise me, Harindra," she repeated, in a soft, caressing voice.34

Bhattacharya, as he has always said and practised, has always taken the novel as a means of social change. He not only tries to reveal the social realities but also tries to remove the social maladies. Hence the artist goes for a reconciliation of all that is good and rejection of all that is evil and valueless. In this context K.K. Sharma observes:

Music for Mohini portrays, in detail, the old and the new values. In the beginning, the two contrasting values are shown in sharp conflict with each other; but by and by the clash becomes less severe, and ultimately reaches the ideal stage of reconciliation and synthesis.35
The group of young men, 'Ruffians' as branded by the older people, decide to act. The fourth marriage of the rich money lender is duly intervened. Harindra's Kabiraj father finally agrees to the application of the allopathic system of medicine to his wife when the traditional Ayurveda fails to save her life. The root of firm belief in astrological predictions is demolished when Jayadev timely intervenes and saves Mohini from sacrificing her own blood to the goddess. Jayadev says,

We're fighting ignorance and superstition, aren't we? We're fighting the false clayfoot gods. They've had their day and now they must quit....

In the course of the conflict Harindra also becomes mentally decisive to break the caste barriers by marrying Sudha, the Brahmin girl. Harindra's revolutionary thoughts are nicely represented by Bhattacharya:

He would break Behula. In this fight with reaction he was not alone. He was much more than Harindra. He was the new free India, strong because he was aware after dark ages, because he hated all chains.

Regarding the uprooting of superstitions Harindra's thoughts have been recorded as:
Never again shall the hyacinth grow in Shantala village. The myth of the devout cow along with a hundred other myths is dust for the breeze of a passing age. We march ahead, we progress.38

Amongst other social reforms that the artist keenly delineates are abolition of child marriage, equality of norms for both men and women, abolition of untouchability and elimination caste barriers. The reformist group champion the cause that a man should not be given the privilege denied to women. They canvass the idea that when a widower wishes to marry, he should be compelled to marry a widow. A minimum age of fourteen is fixed for the girls for marriage. In the words of K.R. Chandrasekharan:

The winds of change make themselves felt in the novel at several places. Exposed to them, not only minor taboos and observances but also deeply-entrenched social institutions begin to shrink and wither.39

The socially conscious artist leaves no stone unturned in his observance and depiction of different social realities. As marriage occupies a predominant theme through which major social changes take place, Shatranjaryan’s keen eyes reveal the ceremonial details with fine artistic excellence. The turmeric ceremoniously carried to arida’s home, the trayload of gifts including the lovely saris, the
arrival of the bridegroom, the 'Auspicious glance' during which the bride and the bridegroom see each other for the first time, the giving away of the bride by the father to the accompaniment of chanting by priests with the holy stone as witness, are described in detail. Minor details of food revealing the customary habits and food habits of both the urban and the rural folks have been nicely portrayed. A taste of the noonday meal in the Professor's house gives a picture of the urban upper middle class Indians. The marriage dish served to Necralal gives the taste of ceremonial food practices in rural India; Jangal in particular.

Fish, and meat, and prawn
rissoles, and curried lobsters, and sweet rice with almonds — 49

The festive meal at the Big House on the arrival of Mohini is described with similar details.

As with all his novels, Bhattacharya has an underlying social purpose in Music for Mohini. When independence is realised, how will India enter the future? Will she be able to throw the shackles of ancient superstition, tradition and stultifying inhibitions to face the challenge of a new world? All the incidents and
characters in the novel represent the conflict between the past and present and the need to achieve a social balance and harmony if independence India is to survive. The author expresses his social philosophy most positively and directly through the thoughts and words of Jayadeva and Harindra. At one point Jayadev echoes:

Thought had to be related to action. Abstraction had to be resolved in human terms. The philosopher had to stop out of his temple of silence and lead his people across the valley of conflict to end social slaveries.

Social slaveries were cactus growths that would renew themselves over and again unless the roots were cut, roots that were deep in economic bondage. A hungry man could not be free in spirit.

Marjorie S. Synder, writing in The Chicago Tribune (August 10, 1932), finds modern India revealed in Music for Mohini as a "sociological battleground in which the older generation clings to tradition... (while) the intellectuals... are struggling to throw away enmies and bangles, to open themselves and their country to Western ideas." A Chicago Tribune review terms the book as "a splendid novel that may take rank with Pearl Buck’s The Good Earth."
Bhattacharya's third novel *He Who Rides A Tiger* projects a major social problem, that is Caste War in India prevalent even today. Along with caste war the author also successfully highlights the class war and the Bengal Famine of 1943. In a way *So Many Hungers* and *He Who Rides A Tiger* owe their inspiration to the same source — the Quit India Movement and the Great Bengal Famine. The novel projects the truth that any individual that rebels against the society cannot adjust himself and inevitably he has to reconcile himself to it. Kalo, the protagonist raises his caste war against the upper caste dominated society that disowns him. Though nationalism sounds a recurring note in this novel too, the problems of deprivation, caste war, exploitation by the privileged class are nicely revealed with much ironic humour. In fact in his interview with Dorothy Blair Shimer Bhattacharya himself says that while *So Many Hungers* is a straight story, *He Who Rides A Tiger* is a satire. In fact both the wars get nicely revealed in the words of Bita, the unorthodox Brahmin, popularly known as 3-10 among the jailmates when he explains to Kalo, the blacksmith.

We are the sons of the earth. The Joss people scorn us because they fear us. They hit us where it hurts badly — in the pit of the belly. We've got to hit back.
Kalo, the blacksmith feels that the Indian society normally oscillates between caste and cash like a pendulum. He hides his Brahmanism to one and all, even to his closest associate, Kalo. On the other hand Kalo frankly confesses about his plans to disguise himself as a Brahmin and take revenge on the caste-ridden orthodox Hindu society. In this context Dr. S. Shyamala Rao observes:

The novel is an epitome of man versus society, relates how Kalo masquerades himself to wreak his vengeance on the society but ultimately realises the futility of his disguise.

The novel demonstrates that a man's caste is too much with him. Though the low-born blacksmith is unhappy with the people of his class and maintains his distance, yet inwardly 'his heart was truly with his own people whose life he shared. His roots were deep in the age-richened soil of his own caste'. Kalo and his daughter Chandralakha suffer immensely owing to the caste system and the economic pattern of the society. But as a man with some inner strength Kalo is able to befoul easily the caste-aristocrats and the rich and becomes able to prove the vulnerability of the so-called high-born people. He becomes the champion of the down-trodden and a legend of freedom. The caste system is the worst of all that has been always dividing and crushing the Indian
society for ages. Kalo narrates to his daughter Lekha that the low-caste, untouchables are mere helpless creatures who can neither raise their voice, nor lodge a complaint to the police. A marriage between a boy and girl of the same caste is also an impossible thing in India. Kalo undergoes a lot of trouble in getting his daughter married to a suitable boy of his own caste. As a student of outstanding merit Lekha wins the gold medal. But Kalo is deeply shocked to find the lack of applause and admiration amongst the higher castes. Bhattacharya nicely records the feelings of Kalo in the following words:

"There was the time when she won the medal, and not a breath of recognition had come to her from Jharmia town because of her humble place. Imagine if the magistrate's daughter had won the medal how the town would have rejoiced and feted her! It had been Jharmia's sneaking shame, not glory, that the medal was won for them by a Kmar's daughter."

Biten also gives a vivid account of the tragic life of his sister, Purnima. He fails to comprehend why his parents turn against the wishes of Purnima to marry a young man of a different caste. Biten's heart cries in protest against such parent who make their children's life miserable simply because they firmly believe in the traditional caste system. The tragic predicament of Purnima fills his heart with hatred and he begins to defy all social customs including Brahminism."
As always Chattacarya in KaWHO RIDES A TIGER also projects some kind of a spirit for an end, a solution. In spite of the deep-seated caste barriers Kalo proves through his deliberate and deceitful actions that the barriers can be broken easily and the falsity can be exposed without causing much harm to the society. Kalo, by caste and a blacksmith by profession, pretends to be Bangal Adhikari, the Arhain. Kalo upsets the age-old social order by attaining a higher status through his disguised Brahminism. In the end of the novel, Kalo indignantly declares before the so-called owners of the society.

A downtrodden Kanoor has been in charge of your innocent souls. Souls corrupt with caste and cash.

Trafficking of good and innocent women in hard times to prostitution is a common social phenomena. Like Kajoli in SO MANY HUNGRY Lebha is also pushed into a brothel. Though rescued timely Kalo's access to various brothels as a procurer is highly representative of the evil mongers that filth the brothels and spread prostitution as a social malady in the towns and cities of India. Kalo's thought that Lebha would for ever be considered as a fallen woman is also a revelation of the reality of the Indian social psyche. His own musings appears as:

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His daughter was polluted, fallen. Even to have breathed the air of the harlot house would make a woman as fallen. That was the terrible fact, almost displacing all feeling. Whoever was to blame the fact was there. What could he do about it? Was he not helpless against the social idea which branded her for all time? 52

In this context K. K. Shama aptly observes:

"... The novel is an attack on some of the repulsive realities of Indian social life. 48"

The double standard morality of the Indian public life is also revealed by Bhattacharya in the feelings and thinking of Kalo. He is unjustly locked in a prison for stealing a banana to avert the agony of his hunger. On the other hand he is rather treated respectfully by the police when he finds himself sincerely involved as a procurer for brothels. He himself feels:

Society, red-eyed with rage, had branded him as evil when he had done nothing truly wrong. But now that he was engaged in work truly evil, he was smiled at and paid handsomely. The Policeman at the street corner who raged at the sight of the skeleton people and tried to befriended him and had winked at him, saying, 'Brother, how is business?'
The deep gulf between the rich and the poor—in other words the class war in the Indian society—is a very significant aspect of social life painted very realistically by the socially conscious artist. Hunger as a background in the twin novels and as a natural phenomenon during the Bengal Famine reflects the tragic predicament of the poor. Kalo finds the poor dying, migrating miserably and hopelessly under the impact of the hunger created by hoarders and profiteers like Sir Shubhniktandallia. Such characters are so real and forceful that probably Shuddhcharya kept Abolabandhu constant even in He Who Rides a Tiger. Another social reality is that in such a caste and class demarcated society a man always exhibits a sense of profound feeling, sympathy and support for the people of his own class or caste and contempt for the other class. Kalo's natural sympathy for the destitute Obhijit, 8-10's sympathy and feeling for Lekha, Kalo's challenge to give the temple milk to the hungry children inspite of the Trustee's severe objection—all bear testimony to this social phenomena.

The inhuman treatment meted out to the convicts in the prison is another social reality that hardly finds place in the novel form. But Kalo describes in detail about the atrocities in the prison to Lekha and her heart bleeds for the prisoners. This social reality which
always took place behind the bars in the pre-independence
days has been nicely represented in the prisoners' chorus:

Eat this, the oil of our bones, eat. Take this to fry thy fish with
...... That for the egg — apple curry
then fancy ...... And this to rub
thyselv with ...... Eat this the oil
of our bones, eat! So

Talking about the novel as a depiction of social
problems and realities K.K. Sharma observes:

These three social realities —
innocent girls' going to a brothel
under compulsion; innocent persons' imprisonment for very ordinary and
minor lapses; and the miserable life of the convicts in prison —, lead
Klo and Chandra Lekha to wage a
fierce battle against the vicious
social order ...... His fight is not
with men, but with the social forces
that cause cruel and wicked human
beings. XI

In So Many Hungers Bhattacharya aptly takes note
of the great Bengal Famine and its impact on the urban as
well as rural life. In the former famine is the vast
emper but in the latter famine is the cause to which the
resultant factors exhibit the effect. The wrath of the
protagonist is founded on these resultant forces.
Bhattacharya gives a very pathetic account of the
imnumerable indignities and cruelties to which human beings
were subjected during the famine; young girls were lured
to prostitution whereas the higher class preferred hoarding and black-marketeering. Even people lost their faith in religion. As Kaila himself observes, it was the outward form of religion, the shell of ritual, empty within. Religion could be cashed in India by the rich. This is represented in the milk-crisis. It is also obvious in the temperament and activities of people like Sir Abulabandau. In the words of Dr. Ram Sewak Singh:

Bhattacharyya not only records the misery of the poor, but misery of the rich also. The irony of the rich also. The irony of the situation very ably presents the ghastly contrast between affluence and poverty, power and helplessness, goodness and hypocrisy.52

A similar observation is made by Dr. B. Shyamaln Rao when he says,

Thus 'he who rides a tiger' has for its three dimensional view — the political, economic and social background. It is in main a social novel. The Quit India Movement, the imprisonments, defiance of authority and hunger strike the political atmosphere. The economic crisis consequent on the Bengal famine of 1943 and the social injustices and inequalities of the various classes in the society are an echo of the economic and social background.53

Leaving aside castesism in India and other significant political and social aspects, Bhattacharyya also vividly portrays other minor social realities.
Chiefly among these are the ordeals of the destitutes, the typical commercial psychology of the blackmarketeers and hoarders and faith in rituals and divine miracles.

In Ho! Who rides a tiger, the ordeal of the destitutes inevitably leads to protest and rebellion. The entire story of Kalo is that of a protest like that of Shakan in Anand's Untouchability. Bito's is arrested and jailed because he protests against the brutal and inhuman behaviour of the police towards an innocent and agitated man whose only crime was to be hungry. Bhattacharya also gives prominence to one type of hunger — the hunger of the masses of people uprooted from their old homes and turn into beggars, and the hunger of the all-consuming few for pleasure and more pleasure, a raging fever of the times. Kalo's retaliation against the 'hungry' rich is sparked off by the incident of his daughter narrowly escaping from becoming a victim to this variety of hunger. The starving men and women decisive of their protest in spite of the police atrocities and imprisonment is also a revelation of the destitutes' ordeal. As Bhattacharya describes:

They yelled, 'Shango!' and charged, scattering the crowd. Howls of anger, screams and curses, flying feet, clop of hoofs, and above it the cry, 'Food! Food for the hungry!' Thunderous roar on thunderous roar.
The selfish motive of the people who offer worship in the temple is a revelation of the typical selfish commercial psyche of the rich hoarders and blackmarketeers. Motichand, a speculator in shares comes in contact with the young votaries, Lekha and tells her everything about his business. He asks her whether to buy or sell. Lekha, who has practically no idea about the share market just repeats the two words mechanically. Motichand takes it for granted as an oracle and he promptly proceeds to carry out the transactions of buying and selling in the manner in which Lekha had uttered the two words. Fortunately the miracle works. The British empire wins in the war beyond all expectations and Motichand makes a huge profit. Motichand, a man with three wives, thus, becomes a regular visitor and worshipper in the temple with the motive of securing more wives and acquiring more wealth.

The rich donors take it for granted that the donor of the milk in the temple gains expiation for sins and accumulates merit. As donors come in large numbers, a schedule is made and reservations are made in advance for the convenience of all concerned. It so happens that a dying man expresses his desire to have a milk bath performed in his name so that he may die peacefully.
Mangal Adhikary talks to all the donors in this connection and tries to persuade them to exchange their scheduled date with the dying man. Unfortunately all the seven donors and so-called pious men refuse to do this favour. It is here Kalo's true character in the guise of Mangal Adhikari is revealed.

'Scarendels all,' he said to his daughter, 'It's better far to be in hell than share heaven with such selfish people.' And he explained how all seven men had refused to forgo their claims of priority. They did not care what happened of it before,' they said, 'why, any of us may die any moment.' And one of them quoted a line from an old Sanskrit poem, 'Life is as transient as a dewdrop on a lotus.'

One of the seven prays in the temple for the simple reason that the price of gold may rise and keep on soaring. Another donor wants that the God should cause a slump in the price of the same commodity. In this context Chandrasekharan observes:

Through these episodes the novelist shows that what we have in many holy mansions is a mockery of religion and not true religion.

Kalo's trick about the 'Shiva Linga' and the eager expectation with which the miracle is awaited by the assembled people show that faith in miracles is
neither a matter of the past nor it is confined merely to villages. Sven Leona, who always remains in the novel as a keeper of her father's conscience succumbs to this psyche. She knows that the temple is not a real one. Even then she seeks refuge in its rituals when Sitan leaves her. The aged mendicant who has been seeking the Mother of Sevenfold Bliss identifies the Goddess in Leona. This miracle is conceived by Leona as something truly divine. On another occasion a millionaire's son arrives in a big Chrysler and decides to renounce his home and parents to become a Yogi when he identifies divinity in Leona. In all these independent happenings the novelist has a definite aim of sanctifying Leona and projecting her as a symbol of piety and compassion.

But more than that the novelist also depicts the significant aspect of our socio-religious life in which rituals and miraculous incidents are deep-rooted and idealised.

Speaking about the artist's sincere effort in painting the social realities of India Dorothy Blair Shimer, the most authentic Western critic on Bhattacharya observes:

Bhattacharya's third novel, He Who Rides a Tiger, is considered by many to be the higher-water mark in his career, his "masterpiece." I am inclined to this opinion myself, although I admit to some bias, perhaps. For I came upon Tiger in a Madras bookstore not too long after its publication, and it is the only Bhattacharya book I have read in the Indian setting. With the sights, sounds, and
people of India about me, the story and its characters seemed obviously genuine and the situations sincere. The novel spoke to me with the affirmation of the home source.

About He Who Rides a Tiger Orville Prescott wrote in The New York Times:

Bhattacharya writes of Indians and the social, cultural and religious world in which they live with an authority and understanding that no Western writer could hope to match. He writes with complete mastery of the fictional technique of the West. His English prose is smooth and supple. He Who Rides a Tiger is a skillful and entertaining story and an illuminating glimpse inside one corner of India. But it is more than that. Its indignation is warm and generous; its material is fresh; its writing blessed with vigor and charm.

Speaking about the universal appeal of the novel and its wide range of translation and sale in different countries Shimer observes:

...... One can see the basis for its appeal, not only there but in diverse cultures and languages. For there is universality in this story which, in its telling, combines warmth of human understanding, concern for the inequities of the social order, and a sense of the dignity of common life.

The next novel of Bhabani Bhattacharya which depicts the anxieties, forebodings and doubts of the Indians on the eve of independence is A Goddess Named Gold. In
this novel Shattacharya deals with the theme of economic freedom of hungry masses and warns against the evils of profiteering, black-marketing, hoarding and consequent poverty. The novelist aims at eradicating these ills so that the new freedom can pave the way to progress. As in all Shattacharya novels, in *A Goddess Named Gold* the novelist too has a social purpose. He propagates the message that freedom is not an end but a means to attain economic freedom, social freedom, individual freedom and freedom in its meaningful perspective. The novel also preaches a new message; women can prove to be more powerful agents of social change than men, women have the potential to shape the future in a flawless manner than their male counterpart.

The novel takes the reader to the crisis ridden days when each individual fought his own war and prepared himself to welcome the new dawn of independence, well aware of the challenges that beckon him. The conflict, when one age is dead and the other is powerless to be born come a-live in the novel.

*Amaran* is a wondering minstrel who gives his granddaughter Meera an amulet supposed to have the power to transform base metal into gold if she does an act of genuine kindness. The Soth who by any means desires to
come in collusion with Moera to share the advantages of the miraculous amulet is utterly disappointed. Hoera is equally disappointed when the amulet does not produce the desired result because of her partnership with the Seth, the traditional exploiter. Consequently she throws the amulet into a river in utter disgust. At such a juncture, the minstrel appears in the village of Sonnuti and interprets the true significance of the symbolism of the amulet. Through Atmaram the novelist desires to project the social purpose of the symbolism. Through him he asserts the fact that political freedom opens up ways where there are no ways, but miracles can not occur without dedication and hard work. Here in this context K.R. Sharan observes:

Through him the novelist expresses his belief that political freedom is not a remedy for all social, political and economic maladies; it cannot impart an all-sided prosperity to a country. It can only create an environment suitable to give man an opportunity to show his best and attain all-round prosperity by hard work.

A similar observation is made by K.R. Chandrasekharan when he says:
The novel, however, contains a warning that freedom is not an automatic passport to greatness or plenty. It only provides an essential climate in which the endeavour of the people will fructify.62

Bhattacharya time and again makes use of the phrase 'the freedom to be free' in the novel to project before his readers the true meaning and perspective of the newly attained freedom. Chandrasekharan while appreciating the way Bhattacharya deals with the theme of freedom in this novel speaks of freedom as a state of mind. In the novel Meera herself nostalgically remembers of her grandfather's words:

*Freedom is the beginning of the road where there was no road. But the new road swarms with robbers.*63

The background of the great famine and war also finds a recurrence in this novel as in his earlier novels. The writer reminisces over the legacy left by the famine and war. Sohanlal had the bitter memories of fighting a war far away from his home. Shamsunder, the selfish and calculating moneylender cum blackmarketeer is also a product of famine like his counterpart Abalabandhu.

Bhattacharya referred repeatedly to the Quit India Movement, the Bengal famine and the major political events to project the socio-economic maladies very effectively.
He has seen the rise of the new class of exploiters. They were the Seths who wanted to reap the maximum benefits of freedom. Common men and women who shed their blood for the freedom became pawns in their hands. Women of Sonamati who had joined the freedom movement at the call of Gandhiji had to fight another battle against the Seths who raised the price of the Sari by creating artificial scarcity. Shamsa echoes her grandfather's elaboration of socio-economic exploitation and exploiters in the following lines:

Yes, there were robbers-Seths of many kinds. The cities had greater variety and profusion of them than the countryside. There was the money-Seth, of course, to whom freedom meant a chance to seize fields of trade vacated by the aliens. Then the Seth of politics, ready to dupe the people with the power of his glib tongue. The official Seth, a man of arrogance ready to change masters without a change of mentality, human chattel open to the best offer. The Seth of religion with gods for sale. The Seth with a Gandhian cap on his head and the cap itself a deceit. And several others on the list ......

Shonsunder is a good mixture of the money Seth and the Seth of politics, Hosair Singh symbolises the official Seth, the arrogant bureaucrat. At the end of the novel the minstrel once again speaks of faith in true freedom:

Brothers, now that we have freedom, we need acts of faith. Then only will there be a transmutation. Friends, then only will our lives turn into gold. Without acts of faith, freedom is a dead pebble tied to the arm with a bit of string, fit only to be cast into the river.
Bhattacharya here rightly reminds us that the novel must have a social purpose. Regarding freedom which is hard earned as well as newly attained he not only urges his readers to understand it in its true, useful and practical perspective but also insists on social change through socio-economic freedom as a means. Political freedom remains a good background in the novel. The novelist also highlights the duties of citizenship. Through Sohanlal the author suggests that no one should be content to live on charity in a free country. Sohanlal tells Meera: 'We must demand what should be ours, the right to live as human beings.'

Like Prakash, Sohanlal's politically active laboratory assistant in So Many Hungers, Harindra, the Western educated physician in Music for Mohini, Siten, the Brahmin turned social reformer in He Who Rides a Tiger, and Sohanlal too are the harbingers of social change. Often it seems as if Sohanlal belongs to the other side of the coin of which the Minstrel comprises of one side. As an effective agent of social change Sohanlal is viewed by Shimer as,

Although Sohanlal, in his somewhat bemed association with the Sotth, is partner to much of the slapstick fun in A Goddes Married Gold, he is also co-agent with the Minstrel in helping to move the townspeople into a future in which the India of the past will unite with the India of the future.
Shimer in her interpretation of the "tawees" symbol in political terms had thought of the American assistance given to India. After clarification with Bhattacharyya on this point she was duly convinced of Bhattacharyya as a novelist with a purpose. She herself notes:

Bhattacharya says that, after reading _A Goddess Named Gold_, an American diplomat asked whether he was not, in fact, speaking against American aid to India. Just money, he concluded, would not solve problems of the village — "life is not all that simple."

Speaking about her conversation with Bhattacharya on this point she further observes:

Bhattacharya made an interesting transition by commenting on American aid to Pakistan. Pakistan, he said, "has been fed on American money. But they have not developed their country as they might have done." Implying, if they had used their own dedication and resources to the full rather than depending so much on the "magic Tawees" of American assistance things might have been different.

Besides Bhattacharya's reference to the Quit India Movement, the Bengal Famine and the changing shape of the newly attained freedom, the novel also gives a very realistic account of the social life of the Indian villages.
The suffering of the women due to acute shortage of clothes caused by the profiteers is a highly touching description. We find an account of how women have to wear saris patched over and over and jackets made of old gunny sack. Most of them have to sleep almost naked at night in order to save their saris from further wear and tear. The Seta alone is responsible for their miseries. Meer's concerted effort and Lakshmi's vehement protest signify women as the keynote of a social change.

In an highly illiterate citizenship, the role of the profiteers has been nicely pictorialised by the socially conscious artist. Though the Seta is compelled to distribute free saris to the needy women of Sonagiri, he does not find any fault with his basic profit making instinct. For his profiteering is a natural instinct, a big tradition to be maintained without any moral ratification.

He did not enjoy the sight of ragged women, far from it. But how, otherwise, could he get more for his limited cloth stock? The trick of cornering the market was not his invention. He had learned it by watching his betters during the rice famine in Bengal four years before. At that time three million men and women had to die, so that there could be thirty now millionaires, and none condemned the profiteers. His present role, set beside theirs, was a child's prank.
The novel gives equally a vivid illustration of the nasty election methods, pre-election tricks adopted by the selfish politicians in India. At the same time the purposive novelist dreams of a highly conscious electorate as a means of social change and progress. The Seth decides to contest in the election for the district board. The use of the propagandist squad, the plans of a good number of schemes and the use of the good number of young teachers — like the Masterji, the learned vulture up to his neck in debt — are a part of election tricks in India. As soon as democracy is born in India the role of a conscious Indo-Anglian novelist is quite vivid in case of Bhattacharya.

As in his earlier novels Bhattacharya in A Goddess also depicts the taste differences and superstitions prevailing in Indian villages. The Halwai thinks of overcoming this barrier by sheer money power. Viewed as a golden god the Halwai dreams of marrying Meera by paying heavily the five elders in the village. The Halwai says:

The sadness that our castes disagree, mine and thine ......still there is a way. Money has nect! Money will buy even the milk of a tigress!
Superstition in the villages still pay a vital role in the way of thinking and behaving of the people of Sonsaiiti. People in the village are obsessed by the fear of the apparition in the night. The liuan tree is haunted by the Shootni. The Seth who happens to be more courageous than the rest of the villagers is terribly frightened one night when he has to pass by the liuan tree. Bhattacharya nicely captures his thought process:

Four men in Sonsaiiti had seen the apparition, the female of the species, dangling skeleton legs from its roost. One of them, attacked by her, had gone mad and had to be treated by an Ojha, an exorcist, brought from Bhittek twenty miles away.72

There are several other reference to the apparitions in the novel. The superstition is firm and deep in the minds of the people inhabiting Sonsaiiti. The people of Sonsaiiti utter the name of God not only to greet each other but also to keep the evil spirits away. Bhattacharya describes it as:

"Ram - Ram !" Men spoke the sacred to greet each other and to express several emotions, but used it also to hold evil spirits at bay.73
It is superstition alone that leads the villagers to believe in the 'magic spell of the amulet'. The Seth questioning the validity of such beliefs, miracles and fairy tales to Bajoria is in itself a revelation of the superstitious society. The description of the marvellous legend of the talking goat is another instance of faith in miracles. Even Meera, the idealist in the novel is excited by the prospect of a miracle that the taveez would bring to her. She is overwhelmed by the prospect of getting enormous gold which she desires to use for the benefit of the poor villagers of Sonniti. Meera's desire to wipe every tear from every eye and Shamsunder's desire to snatch every piece of gold from every house are but the resultant reactions of the faith in the magic taveez.

As in Music For Mohini the traditional match-maker in marriage is once again described as a man with deep-roots in social affairs. The barber is the bangle-seller's counterpart in the novel. The villagers' faith in horoscope is also brought out in the novel. This social phenomenon has never been lost sight of by the socially conscious artist. The description of the impact of the stars and planets and their movements have always found place in Bhattacharya's novels whenever the setting of marriage is a rural one. Regarding the social beliefs of the Indian villagers as described in A Goddess Named Gold Dr. J. Shyamala Rao observes:
Sethji, I am not such a goat as you think. The Contractor follow my just as well deal with me. I know what low-grade cement he has earmarked for the bridge, he bought it from a dump of the Military Disposal. Let him supply it. What do I care, so long as I get my ten percent?

"What ten percent?" The Seth had the innocent look of a new-born infant. "I have never heard of such dealings. Why, it is theft and even worse. Think of an ex-cart crossing the bridge and the structure toppling into the river. The Contractor, son of a crocodile, will be skinned alive."

The sweetshop would laugh in the Seth's face. "No, brother. The crocodile will not lose his skin. He will simply have to part once more with some of his gains. Let us talk business. The bridge is just one item among many others, each giving its ten percent......"

After independence the rise of the native Seths and economic offenders also solidified the existing class barrier. In A Goddess Turned Gold the village women, who at first sought in Meera the power to change their pitiful pice into precious gold and then had suspected her integrity, submit themselves once more to the power of tradition. One village woman sums up their thought:

How can we change the past thousand years of our living? A river has flown between the rich and the poor. There is no boat to take the poor to the other bank. The rich cross the stream at their will. They put wary feet on the mud and from a distance they hail the poor and speak good words and feel pleased with themselves that they have been so kind. It is a game for the rich to play. But the river flows on and the rich return to their bank and wash mud off their feet. And the river flows on.
Bhattacharya throws his lance at the beliefs of Indians about miracles, magicians, alchemy, fairy tales and fake sanyasis. The miracle of the 'Magic chamundi earth' and 'the dropping of sweetmeats into the Kamard' illustrate the same. Their interest in horoscopes and odder conjunctions leading to good and evil omens is also markedly presented in this novel.

In this novel, Bhattacharya also portrays very artistically the evils of dowry system and bribery. Poverty has been described as a resultant effect of dowry. As a social malady dowry causes immense suffering and agony to various Indian families. The plight of a marriageable girl's parents has been nicely portrayed. There is a reference to an unfortunate old woman who has to suffer excessively because she fails to manage dowry for a daughter. On the other hand Bhattacharya narrates that the girl could have been given in marriage if eighty rupees could have been arranged for her dowry though the said had crossed her marriage age. The corrupt practice of bribery is so rampant in the Indian society that the Seth himself is astonished to find this evil though he himself happens to be a big economic offender. There is a nice illustration of bribery as an accepted practice in the conversation between the Seth and the clever villagers.
Leaving aside the social elements the chief purpose of the novelist is to project the people's preparation for a nationhood. He dreams of a new age, a new Somnati, a free and prosperous India based on equal opportunity and equitable distribution. The novel depicts not a mere clash of interests but a new emergence. Regarding the emergence of the new nationhood Shilajit observes:

The ultimate test of nationhood will be the moral fibre of villagers such as these — impoverished, illiterate, superstitious perhaps, but hard-working, basically intelligent and wise in tradition.

The emerging Indian society as captured by Bhattacharya in A Goddess Named Gold was poised to make a historic march to the future. Its people had surfaced from the mire of the past well aware of the hard responsibilities ahead. This crisis appeared in the life of each and every individual when their struggle came to an end with the alien rulers decision to free India. The struggling Indians were caught in a dilemma as to what they should do with their hard-earned freedom. A Goddess Named Gold basically portrays this crisis when one is launched in the cross roads of life and is indecisive about which path to pick for the future. While projecting a new emergence the artist has also exposed and criticised the
motives of the native exploiters, prostitution, casteism, superstition and other social evils like commercialisation of religious customs and rituals that were cutting at the roots of an emerging society.

As India emerged as a new democratic nation in the world it also lost its political and spiritual leader, Gandhi. As with the advance of time the generation gap widened between the old Gandhians, who had strong faith in the principles laid down by Gandhi and the infallibility of these principles as a remedy to the national and international problems and ills, and the young and energetic educated youth at the helm of affairs. They were the mirrors of a free and fast developing society. They honoured the ancient values, principles and philosophy but considered them as outdated in the emerging industrial world. Thus there was a silent clash of values and ideals. As a socially conscious artist Bhattacharya projects this socio-political dilemma in his academy award winning novel Shadow from Laddakh as well as he dreams of an amalgamation of values which he termed as synthesis of the East and West in his next novel A Dream In Hawaii. This amalgamation is viewed by Dorothy Blair Shinar as:
The shadow cast by Ladakh problem darkens Shastri's broader and more basic question that continues to face present-day India: How can the nation move its village-centered rural masses forward into a technologically controlled world society without destroying the values of an ancient culture?

Discussing about literature as an expression of social reality K.K. Shama has a similar observation when he says:

Shadow from Ladakh, though occasioned by the unfortunate political event of China's invasion of India in 1962, is a study, besides so many other things of the problems and challenges that India has faced in the post-independence period. It delineates the conflicting Eastern and Western attitudes towards the varied aspects of life. The novelist strongly pleads for a meeting-ground between Gandhian social and political ethics and the modern forces of science and technology.

The clash of values of 'Gandhigram' and 'Steeltown' bring out the real clash of values between one generation and the other. Gandhian values are dynamic and universal. Though the principles are very simple to understand, they are very difficult to practise. The post-independence decade was basically a susceptible stage. Gandhian philosophy which was primarily meant to fight an alien Government was in need of some flexibility when the country came under home rule. Deeper thought and better planning was expected before applying them to the contemporary problems that normally crop up when
a new nation moves ahead and makes strides in divergent fields. At the same time the innate quality and philosophic glamour of Gandhian principles was to be preserved.

Satyajit and Bhaskar represent two contrasting attitudes to life. A dedicated Gandhian, Satyajit is bent on establishing Gandhigram modelled by him after the Gandhian philosophy of life. On the other hand the Westernised youth, Bhaskar visualises of Steal Town as the only scientific means to India's progress and stability as an independent nation. Ultimately Satyajit realises that there is something of Bhaskar in him and Bhaskar also feels that there is something of Satyajit in him. Bhaskar's inclination towards Sumita in spite of his affiliation to Suka, half American and half Indian, bear a clear testimony to this fact. The presentation of this clash of values and the ultimate realisation is no doubt a depiction of the social realities during the Chinese aggression. The historical background is no doubt a historical truth which had influenced the socio-political structure of India. For this reason we can not brand Shadow from Ladakh as a purely political novel. Rather it presents the pre and post-independence era in the history of India through Satyajit and Bhaskar, and projects a solution by synthesising both the values symbolised in the marriage between Bhaskar and Sumita. In this context Dr. Ran Singh affirms:
The difference between the two periods is brought out through the conflict between Satyajit and Shaskar, which is not a clash of personalities, but a historical inevitability that had to come to the fore sooner or later. Bhattacharya as an artist has always emphasized the fact that the novel must have a social purpose. Besides projecting the historical realities the novel always emphasises on synthesis of values as a solution. It is at this point the socially conscious artist is highly successful.

Allegorically the marriage symbolises a harmonious co-existence of Ghaghigram and Steel town. The co-existence can not be described as a cool surrender on anybody’s part. Rather it is a happy blending with vigour and fullness of life. The last words in the novel are words announcing that the ascetic girl trained by Satyajit has surrendered herself to ‘the terrific wave’ which stands for love and fullness of life. Satyajit’s willingness to bring himself down to the level of Bireswar from a state of pure asceticism reverberates with a new vigour and fullness of life. Hero Bhattacharya apparently seems like a visionary. But if viewed analytically the purposive artist emerges successful in giving a new shape to the society he is keenly associated with. Regarding the conclusion of the novel K.R., Chandrasekharan observes:
The reconciliation between Gandhi and Steel town with which the story ends is the most appropriate conclusion to a novel which advocates the way of integration and synthesis.

Birendar exposed the cruel irony that post-independent India witnessed. Decadence in values had set in. The ancient rituals and orthodoxy which according to Bhaskar, was the cause of all troubles were taking a new form. Shatranjcharya aptly describes:

Vice in this country lay choked in taboos, inhibitions — the rickety pros of spiritual India! There was more of the truly spiritual in the world beyond. The modern state with its accent on equality; the same opportunities given to the elevated and the depressed; the social services. Yes, that was modern materialism. Let India receive its full share. Let life be easier, freer, happier.

In comparison to the Seth projected in Goddess Gold of Allahabad, the hoarder in So Many Hungers! there is the post-independent Indian Seth ready to squeeze the entrails of the infant nation. These new-born Seths, a different version of social reality, had elevated Gandhi to that place where from the father of the nation could only be a mute witness and a silent party to their greed and lust. This social phenomenon has been nicely portrayed in Shadows from Lekhkh in the following words:
"My friend Jhum Jhunia, a big business man. He deals in wheat, he makes a fortune by a shady transaction — it may mean hunger for a thousand men and women — he comes to Rajjat with flowers. In the bygone days of empire he used to take his flowers to a temple." Bireswar was laughing again. "And it was Gandhi who dreamed of wiping every tear from every eye." 83

Bhattacharya realised that economic planning was very essential for independent India's growth and progress. Village economy based on cottage industries like Khadi was the key to progress. Like a true Gandhian he opted for Khadi and Village industries. Bhattacharya's Gandhigram, an insignificant village was building up a model for the whole of India. As a novelist of social concern, he had realised that distribution of land and co-operative system was equally necessary for the rural mass. Alongwith Gandhi and Khrushchov symbolising the East and the West, Sinob Shiva has been nicely idealised for his land distribution theory. Dignity of labour has its firm place in the new nation. Bhattacharya, the social reformer views of Gandhigram and its economy as:

The apparently insignificant village was building up a model for the whole of India. The new community of people was creating a social order in which all were truly equal. All land belonging to the co-operatives, food from the fields distributed according to needs. Other needs met by small industries based locally; economic self-sufficiency was the set aim.
There were the weavers who produced on handlooms every yard of the cloth the village consumed. Two blacksmiths forged ploughshares, cartwheel rims, and the pots and pans the householders needed. Two men turned sugarcane into jaggery — the coarse unrefined jaggery was a better diet than factory made sugar. An artisan made paper out of pulp drawn from certain trees in the adjoining woods. Three men pressed the crop of mustard seed.

The women had their share in the productive work. They husked the rice, ground their own flour. And above all else they spun the yarn with which cloth was woven. Every house in the village had its spinning wheel.

Gandhi had spoken a thousand times about khadi, the cloth handwoven from homespun yarn. He had called it the sun of the village solar system: "The planets are the various industries that can support khadi in return for the neat and sustenance they derive from it. Without it, the other industries can not grow. But without the revival of the other industries, khadi could not make further progress. Village life must be touched at all points."

Besides discussing the Chinese aggression and its impact on Indian social and political life, the novel gives consideration to the evils of caste system. Like his other novels touching many aspects of caste system, *Shadow From Ladakh* is a voice in record against the deep rooted maladies of the caste system in India. Satyajit dreams of a casteless society in the new India. In
Gandhigram caste had no place. All were equal irrespective of caste, class and colour as Satyajit in the novel has discarded his surname and become casteless. For him the surname denotes caste affiliation. Shuttshurya has always painted this pernicious evil in its variegated aspects in a flawless manner. Here in this novel too the novelist turns out to be a reformer when he describes Satyajit in Shantiniketan as:

A fact to note was that, before entering the new village, Satyajit Sen discarded his surname denoting caste affiliation. As simply Satyajit he would be casteless. Somewhat like Yogis who renounced the world. The Yogis, however, discarded name as well as surname; they made themselves not only casteless but rootless.

When Satyajit falls in love with Suruchi who belongs to a different caste, he is not at all disturbed as he thinks that caste has no meaning and significance at Shantiniketan. The two are happily married transcending all caste barriers and are happy and satisfied with their marriage. Like Shantiniketan Satyajit’s Gandhigram also waged war against this pernicious system. All men in Gandhigram were casteless; all were equal in status. In Gandhigram the untouchable and the casteless are given homesteads beside the people belonging to high castes and strata.
The novel also touches the problem of population explosion causing a threat to India's capacity to meet its basic demands of life. At the material level Jhaskar alone is disturbed when he presumes that 'Steel' is the only solution to India's growing needs. He is troubled by this fearful menace causing a threat to the welfare of his country. This view is forcibly expressed by the socially conscious artist in the following words:

Each tick of the clock meant an opportunity used or lost. Each five ticks - or it could be four - signalled 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 ticks of the clock. More than twelve thousand babies born in that span of time between the Himalayas and the Cape. And production risen over that period to meet the newborn demand?55

Jhaskar realises that India needs to boost its economy and a sophisticated defence system if at all she desires to remain an independent democratic nation. His reasoning is a solution in itself to the contemporary realities. Jhaskar's reasoning is described by Chatterjea as:

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.57
In other words through Shaskar the artist seeks reformation in the society. The Indian government's willingness to accept the proposals suggested by Shaskar paves the way for industrialisation. Steeltown begins to expand at the cost of Gandhigram. The industrial complex is built up with its slum areas, drunken labour, broken families and waste materials causing pollution. Shattacarya has not lost sight of this social malady that dehumanizes the workers in any industrial complex. People working as labourers are reduced to mere machines devoid of human kindness. Loss of life is a common feature. Life is accident prone. Aesthetics and moral values have no significance in Steeltown. On this social phenomena taking root in the steeltown K. A. Chandrasekhar comments on Shattacarya in the following words:

In his anxiety to be objective, the novelist hints at some of the evil which follow from industrialisation. The incident of a worker who is killed in an accident in steeltown represents one consequence. There are others which affect the minds and outlook of people. Shattacarya mentions prominently the evils of insubility, frustration, intrigue, graft in any large industrial establishment where large numbers of people are thrown together and compete with one another for more possessions and for position and power.
The traditional custom of matching in marriage has been duly criticised in Shadow From Ladakh. Unlike the 'Bangle Seller' in So Many Sundays or the 'Bourjois' in He Who Rides a Tiger as the traditional match makers there is no place for those people in Shadow From Ladakh. The system of marriage has been challenged by the American educated Ashoka. He rebels against many aspects of the convention bound life of the average Indian. He rebels because he becomes a victim to this humiliating process of arranged marriages. His heart rebels for many Indian girls who have to give their body and soul to some unknown man without any consideration of their personal feelings. They have to surrender to the unknown man forever and live with them all the time in subjugation. On marriage as an institution Shattacharya makes a protest through Ashoka in the following words:

But this was not the right way, this gambling with the innermost feelings. Then would we catch up with the West? Not until the big machines had taken over. Production, more production — economic revolution leading to a revolution of the mind. Society forced to accept the man and woman of the new age.

On the political scenario the Chinese aggression provided Shattacharya a strong plea to advocate for economic development and a strong military system. Satyajit's fasting and peace march is no solution to the shadows cast
on Ladakh. Internal unrest due to extreme poverty and merciless attack on India without the slightest regard for 'Panchashool' or the Bandung Conference reassured Bhaskar that 'Development plus defence — a compulsion of our current history,' was absolutely necessary.

The battle line was drawn. Steel tower was no more ready to watch indifferently at the developments in Gandhigram. Steel tower wanted to annex Gandhigram to expand its territory like the Chinese occupation of Indian territory in its expansion programme and its forcible occupation of Tibet. Satyajit had to restrain the probing hands of both in the manner laid down by Gandhi. He can neither hate his enemy nor eliminate them without providing an equal chance to fight back. Both Satyajit and Gandhigram had to rise to the occasion and redemonstrate the power of love and non-violence that would sweep the enemy off their feet. Unfortunately Satyajit was a staunch Gandhian but not Gandhi himself. He was incapable of improving on his own ideas and ideals by making necessary corrections and modifications without adhering to them blindly. At this point of time Bhaskar did not represent an alien rule in his total activities. Even Satyajit's decision to make peace march to the occupied territory braving the barrels of the Chinese guns was not truly Gandhian. That was the reason for which a compromise
and a synthesis was required. The Indian socio-political scenario required a new approach drawing its principles and strength from both the sources assimilating them as far as possible. In this context K. R. Sharmen observes:

While Shatucharya's earlier novels concentrate upon India's urge for political and social freedom, his latest masterpiece, Shadow from Ladakh, deals with people's concern to preserve the country's political independence at all costs. In the words of K. R. Chandrasekharan:

"What is presented is the spectacle of a new state with an ancient culture facing a massive physical threat to its existence and at the same time struggling for a way of life that will enable it to take its place in the new world order without losing its moorings and its distinctive identity."

In comparison to his other novels, Shadow from Ladakh brings history to life through the sufferings and struggle of the characters that feel shadowed by the shadow..."
cast in India. But the basic questions posed, the basic problems highlighted by the novelist essentially centre round the villages; the rural masses with their customs, taboos, inhibitions in the background of a new political scenario. Shuttacharya makes an objective analysis of this scenario and finally as a novelist with a social purpose, he tries to solve the problem by bringing synthesis among the values clashing with one another. This synthesis is, in other words, a reconciliation of values.

To conclude this discussion, we may state that Shabani Shuttacharya draws a very real and powerful picture of the Indian society, the crucial calamities and complex social problems that preceded India's independence and the formative period that succeeded it. The discussion also shows that Shabani Shuttacharya made a deep study of the various social problems of his time and consistently tried to solve the problems and crises by bringing synthesis among the values clashing with one another. He has always an integral and affirmative vision of life: an outcome of living understanding and deep social compassion. In comparison to him Manohar Malgonkar projected these problems that had its deep roots in the higher strata of the Indian society as well as the military life. With a deeper awareness of history he projected the problems that stalked the land from a different angle. This logically leads us to an exhaustive study of social consciousness in the novels of Manohar Malgonkar.
NOTES


10. Dr. Chandrashekhara, Shabani Bhattacharya, p.11.


13. Ibid, p.58

15. Ibid, p.79.
23. Dorothy Blair Shimer, Bhupani Bhattacharya, p.21.
27. Ibid, pp.15-16.
28. Ibid, p.35.
30. Ibid, p. 46.
34. Ibid, p. 143.
38. Ibid, p. 150.
43. Dr. B. Shama Rao, *Bhabani Bhattacharya and His Works*, Students Store, Secunderabad, p. 52.
45. Ibid,
46. Ibid,
47. Ibid
55. Ibid, p.171.
58. Shimer, op. cit., p.53.
60. Shimer, op. cit, p.97.
64. Ibid, p.119.
68. Ibid, p.67.
69. Ibid.
70. Nabani Bhattacharya, *A Goddess Named Gold*, p.31
72. Ibid, p.58.
73. Ibid, p.31.
74. Dr. B. Shyamala Rao, *Nabani Bhattacharya and His Works*, p.66.
76. Ibid, p.256.
77. Shyam, op. cit., p.67.
78. Ibid, p.68.
84. Ibid, pp.28-29.
85. Ibid, p.20.
86. Ibid, p.34.
89. Nabani Bhattacharya, *Shadow from Ladakh*, p.95.