

CHAPTER- 5

CONCLUSION

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The detailed study of the prestigious Novels; *City in The River* by Arun Joshi, *Rich Like Us* by Nayantara Sahgal, *Shadows From Laddakh* by Bhabani Bhattacharya, *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh and *The Gandhi Quartet* by Chaman Nahal provide us with ample knowledge about Indian Politics, the freedom struggle and its aftermath. The study in the five preceding chapters reveals some first-hand painful experiences of the writers' lives. The themes dealt by all the writers might be the same somewhere but their versions are so unique and different those represent the genius of the novelists selected for the study. Through their different perspectives and experiences they penned the pain and anguish of a common Indian.

The main concern of these novelists is social, political, cultural and economical. Bhabani Bhattacharya has focused on social evils like poverty and untouchability. Nayantara Sahgal and Arun Joshi have highlighted exploitation by the capitalists of the common men and the Emergency, State War while Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal focused on the catastrophe of Hindu-Muslim discord and the tragedy of partition, the cultural confusion consequent in the east-west and the political and economic problems that independent India faced.

The theme, characterization, plot, dialogue, language and background comprehensively concentrate on the politics, freedom struggle and its consequences. These novels represent

the journey designed to oust the British from Indian Territory and narrate the heroic deeds done by our martyrs. All the novelists sum up their fiction with an optimistic note that communal harmony, cultural heritage, peace and brotherhood are very significant in India and this kind of communal harmony will create a new era of love and prosperity in India. They believe that we must not forget the sacrifices of our soldiers and leaders and by the recreation of their fictional characters; they have immortalized these great people. No country can grow and progress until and unless it has sound communal harmony and brotherhood among its countrymen, irrespective of their caste, creed and colour.

Chaman Nahal had to flee from his birthplace in the early youth because of partition. The traumatic experiences of partition contributed a lot to his literary career because he was greatly influenced by it. He has synthesized that very sensibility in his novels which he either witnessed or felt during the horrible years of his life. Nahal is also a great literary critic and in one of his interviews he has mentioned that in the growth of his literary career he was highly indebted to the great literary gems D.H. Lawrence and Earnest Hemingway.

From Lawrence he learnt the delineation of man – woman relationship in all their difficulties while from Hemingway he learnt how to make his characters survive under huge strain and struggle without ever giving up. The freedom of our country and the birth of a new country named Pakistan brought joy and celebration on one hand; but tears and tragedy on the other hand.

The basic component of partition was the geographical distribution of land between India and Pakistan. The Bengal province was divided into East and West Bengal and later became the country Bangladesh. In the north region East Punjab has remained a part of India while West Punjab was annexed to Pakistan. All the princely states after partition were either annexed with India or Pakistan. Though it was just a geographical distribution but it created a huge wall of bitterness among the hearts of the Hindus and the Muslims.

Nahal in his literary world might have been influenced by a lot of people but the one person who happens to be omnipresent for him always is Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi and his idealistic principles surpass all other influences. From the very beginning of his personal and literary life Nahal was fascinated by Gandhi's humanism and way of life. It was Gandhi and his ideology that inspired Nahal to fictionalize and immortalize him and his heroic struggle for freedom in *The Gandhi Quartet*.

Nahal has fictionalized Indian history in his books. Though Gandhi has played the lead role in his books but he has not failed to maintain the contribution of other Indian revolutionaries. Ras Bihari Bose, Bhagat Singh and Subhash Chandra Bose have also played a great role in his novels. The sacrifices of these young revolutionaries touch the heart of the readers. He has proved through his novels that when violence and non-violence had both aimed at realizing a noble purpose the victory was definite. And this very trust becomes the message ultimately each of his novels.

The politics and the freedom struggle and especially the partition influenced and encouraged many literary gems across the country. Many authors intertwined these historical events with imagination in order to expose the horrors of partition, Emergency and India- China war graphically. Right from the time of partition upto now the politicians and the common people of both the nations treat each other as their rivals. The evergreen, wounded and painful souls of the victims of partition are captured in many forms like paintings, stories, movies, songs and novels by artists, musicians and authors. Partition – a division based on religion has created too many disputes and troubles among the Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. The communal riots and massacres of the partition days are often repeated in these countries.

There are many incidents in history which reflect the rivalry like the issue of Kashmir, the first Indo-Pakistan war in 1947, the second Indo-Pakistan war in 1965, the third Indo-Pakistan war in 1971, the formation of new country called Bangladesh, the Kargil war in 1999, Godhra and Babri Masjid issues and many others. Both of the countries are facing, the LOC terrorism, continuous bomb blasting and attacks, riots between Hindu and Muslims within the country which are the examples that prove the wounds of pain and anger of partition to be still green in the hearts of people. The ambition of a few leaders changed the entire outlook of the country. We still can not forget its bitterness and it is a hurdle in the growth and development of the country.

Both novels Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* deal with the same theme i.e. partition. It seems as if Nahal's *Azadi* is the answer of Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*. It is a heart-touching and realistic picturization of the trauma of partition. These authors were the real victims of partition holocaust. Both Kushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal were born and educated in Pakistan. Due to the partition of the Indian sub-continent, they along with their families had to migrate to India in 1947. The cause behind the success of the novels is that these two authors had witnessed and felt the horrors themselves.

Train to Pakistan received much appreciation because it was the first novel written on such a theme. It is set in a unique village Mano Majra, where Mslims and Sikhs had dwelled for centuries with lots of love and brotherhood. The title used by Khushwant Singh is very apt as it reveals many told and untold events. It is the life line for the villagers; the life of Mano Majra is connected with the train. It is the symbol of terror and love also as on the one hand it carries the dead bodies of Sikhs and Hindus from Pakistan and on the other hand Jugga sacrifices his life for saving hundreds of Muslims as his love, Nooran , is also travelling in this train. In the preface to *Train to Pakistan*, Singh writes:

The only conclusion that we can draw from the experience of the partition in 1947 is that such things must never happen again. And the only way to prevent their recurrence is to promote closer integration of people of different races, religions and castes living in the subcontinent.' 1(TTP xv).

The writer has beautifully merged different kinds of characters related to various creed and communities, ordinary and political workers and officials and culprits. Even the protagonist is a blend of the hero and villain. Prafulla C. Kar in his article “*Khushwant Singh: Train to Pakistan* remarks,

Some novelists, who actually suffered due to partition, have used the incident as aesthetic compensation for their loss; those who did not suffer have used the occasion as a watershed in history to suggest that fiction can re-live the event which history tends to distort. (*Khushwant Singh: Train to Pakistan 90*)

We find that both of the novels run on the same theme but with a variety of characters. Singh took up the Indian Territory while Nahal touched the Pakistani Borders. The characters either Hindus or Muslims felt the same pain and bore the same terror. Both the writers have condemned the riots and the holocaust of partition. Lalaji, a Hindu in Pakistan of *Azadi* and Noor, a Muslim in India of *Train to Pakistan* have paid a lot for belonging to minor communities.

Nahal here is seen as an angry young man who tries to present his feelings of torment through his novel. The novel is set in Sialkot and covers the eight horrible months from June 3, 1947, the announcement date of partition to January 30, 1948 the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. He uses the title *Azadi* in an ironic way because his characters did not celebrate it but rather mourned it. Nahal’s dialogue narration quality is superb. A few incidents of the novel can never be forgotten by any reader like the death of Madhu, the suicide of Niranjana Singh, abduction and rape of Sunanda and the naked parade of Narowal. Like Lala Ji,

Nahal himself follows the Gandhian principles so he also mentions a few harmonious relationships irrespective of communal differences like the love between Arun and Nur, the friendship between Lala Kanshi Ram and Chaudhri Barkat Ali.

Nahal's novels have captivating attraction. His characters, dialogues, expression and images are realistic and significant. His narratives and description is picturesque and loving. He feels the sentiments of his characters and expresses it beautifully. The writer has successfully presented the psychological effects of the trauma, Lala ji and the other characters like Barkat Ali Khan, Davidson, Arun, and Nur exemplify the status of common people at the time of partition. *Azadi* excels all other novels. As a victim of partition the writer has beautifully wrapped his sentiments.

The experience of partition through women's eyes, the innocent love stories of Nooran and Jugga in *Train to Pakistan*, Arun and Nur as well as Arun and Chandni in *Azadi* could be a heart touching subject for future research. Women's writing and their perspective regarding partition can be another theme for future research. The role of politicians and their dictatorship can another topic be analyzed by future research scholars.

Though partition had divided the Hindus and the Muslims into two nations but the Muslims lie scattered in India even today. All the writers in their novels emphasize the maintenance of communal harmony. They advocate that some humanistic values must be maintained in every condition. The leaders advocating partition were highly ambitious for name and fame and partition was the result of their ambitions. Even after 1947

incidents like imposition of Emergency by Indira Gandhi in 1975 created a kind of slavery within the country.

Nayantara Sahgal in *Rich Like Us* deals with the theme of Emergency. She being brought up in a political family understands the pros and cons of Emergency. She has taken this event Emergency as the plot of her novel. Sonali, joint secretary in the Ministry of Industry, is the main protagonist of the novel. The largest democracy appeared more like a dictatorship because Emergency had given all kinds of twists and turns to politics.

Emergency and its effects have been presented in many versions. The official version of Emergency is the one in which the idealistic Sonali was replaced by Ravi, a puppet in the hands of politicians; the personal version of Emergency is where Dev forges his father's signature and kills his step mother Rose for his personal benefits and the business version of Emergency is where Newmen got profit by collaborating his secret business with Devikins. O.P. Mathur in his book *Indira Gandhi and the Emergency* made a comment on the novel and writes: "*Rich Like Us* is perhaps the only novel which subsumes the horrors of the Emergency in the consciousness of human beings affected by them". (38)

Like Nayantara Sahgal Arun Joshi, Shashi Throor, Salman Rushdie, Raj Gil, Rohinton Mistry, Manohar Malgonkar also penned on Emergency. Arun Joshi's *The City and The River* is one of the noticeable works where he describes Emergency in a mythical way. Grand master denotes the prime minister and all the rules and regulations mentioned and created by him directly

satirize the rules made during the Emergency. His 'ways of three Beautitudes' are similar to the Twenty-Point Programme of Emergency. The grandmaster had members of council who are nominated by the king himself for his personal benefits, as the legislative had become ineffective during the Emergency.

The grandmaster controlled the satellite, the astrologer, the rallies master; the military and the rallies master are fully under his control. He is the dictator who not only wishes to be a king but wants to promote his son also. Joshi has attacked on every part of the Emergency; be it the impractical family planning, or the harassment of common people in the name of the beautification of the city.

On the side there are rebellious boatmen, the owner of the river refuse to take the oath of alienation and stick to their traditions and customs. Just Sonali sacrificed her job in *Rich Like Us*, the head boatmen, professor and Bhoma also sacrificed their lives but never gave up their values. O.P. Mathur connects this suppression with other historical incidents in his book *Indira Gandhi and the Emergency* and writes:

These acts of suppression and torture including the blinding of the Headman remind us not only of the Emergency but also of incidents like Jallianwalla Bagh, the French Revolution and the communist rule in the erstwhile Soviet Union and in China.(90)

Besides Emergency our country has bravely faced wars also be it the India-Pakistan war or the India-China war. These wars also find a great place in Indian English fiction and in this series Bhabani Bhattacharya's *Shadow From Ladakh* is an important document. Bhattacharya's themes basically deal with

social dogmas, freedom and hunger. Gandhi died in 1948 but many Indians still believe in his principles and ideals. The story of the novel focuses on traditional vs. modern values. It stresses the need for the synthesis of various visions for the growth of the country. We have to synthesise the modern weapons and technology denoted by Steeltown with the traditional small industries of Gandhigram.

Scholar Satyajit is the epitome of Gandhi and his principles while Bhaskar, the American trained chief engineer advocates the modern outlook and symbolizes Nehru. The modern thoughts shake the pillars of traditional Gandhigram so Satyajit has adopted the Gandhian way of fast unto death however their different attitudes gradually synthesized and ultimately the wall of differences falls down as Bhaskar got married Sumita, the daughter of Satyajit.

Ladakh is a much discussed topic among the characters. Even the novel starts with the Peace Congress organized for World Peace. It has focused on China's history and the role of Mao-Tse-Tung has also been described. India has not only to secure its hard earned political freedom at any cost but also to preserve the sovereignty of Tibet. The Indian leaders know the truth of Aksai-Chin border but they try to solve it with their old weapons of non-violence and negotiation.

Satyajit and Bhaskar are both fighting for a same goal i.e. to safeguard the Indian Territory but Bhaskar thinks that he can do this only by producing more steel for weapons while Satyajit, following the Gandhian way thinks of conducting a peace march

in Ladakh to generate the feelings of love and brotherhood in the hearts of Chinese people.

The characterization of Bhattacharya is beautiful and the title is also very apt and suggestive because both the main characters are the shadows of two great leaders and their thinking. Ladakh too creates a shadow in the personal life of the fictional characters. The synthesis between the incidents and characters is also appreciable. There are two different persons representing two different attitudes of life but Sumita connects them and paves the gap of their differences. Thus the character Sumita is the symbol of positive hope that will connect the two persons and their attitudes regarding the India-China War of Ladakh. Bhattacharya's approach to life is optimistic and his characters are very simple and successfully portrayed.

The Gandhi Quartet covers the whole history of our freedom struggle; it's like a fictional journey from Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in 1919 to Gandhi's death in 1948. The first book of *The Gandhi Quartet* (1981), deals with the story of Gandhi's life in South Africa and his experiments with truth and non-violence. The fictional characters and the historical personages go simultaneously. Sunil, the son of Thakur Shanti Nath and his wife Kusum are the followers of Gandhi and the main characters of the volume and like many Indian they also give up the pleasures of their life for the freedom of their motherland.

The novel covers the period from 1915-1922. In the title the term crown denotes the British Empire while the Loincloth symbolizes Gandhi and the national movement. The Non-

Cooperation Movement, the burning of foreign goods and clothes, the popularity of homespun khadi and the journey of the Prince of Wales are the main events discussed in this volume. Nahal has beautifully mingled the fictional characters in these historical events as Sunil sacrificed his life to save the life of the prince. Gandhi is an omnipresent figure in all of his books.

As a sequel to *The Crown and the Loincloth*, the second volume *The Salt of Life* was published in 1990. The story begins where *The Crown and the Loincloth* ends. In historical perspective it covers the period between 1922 to 1939 i.e. when Gandhi was arrested and the beginning of Second World War. This volume also covers some historical incidents like the Salt Satyagrah, the Dandi March, the Civil-Disobedience Movement, the hanging of Bhagat Singh, the formation of Muslim League, the failures of the Round Table conferences in 1930, the formation of Forward Block Party by Bose and the conception of Pakistan by Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

Here Sunil was replaced by Vikram, his son and Kusum, his widow. Kusum got married with Vishal Chand but unfortunately he also died. In this part through the character of Kusum the writer has highlighted the role of women in the Indian independence struggle. In Kusum we find the glimpses of Kasturba, Gandhi's wife who had sacrificed her life and dreams for Gandhi and his idealistic principles.

In the next volume *The Triumph of The Tri-Colour*, the story moves with the third generation of Thakur Shanti Nath. It is the continuation of *The Salt of Life*; here in the historical panorama

the incidents started from 1939 and continued upto 1947. Gandhi's Quit India Movement of 1942, Cripps Mission, Cabinet Plan, formation of Interim Government, Burma War, formation of INA by Bose with POWs released by Japanese are the chief historical events dealt with in his novels. When Cripps Mission failed in solving the situation Gandhi gave the slogan 'do or die.' In this novel Nahal highlighted not only Gandhi but focused on the revolutionaries also. The circumstances of the revolutionaries and the brutal killing have been depicted very lively.

Nahal's characterization is also historical and the large scale characters of Gandhi, Nehru, Bose and Jinnah are the requirement of the story. It is the narrative skill of Nahal that the reader feels as if watching a live film instead of reading a novel. The plot, the correlation of fiction with history, the suppression of Indians and the butchery of the British has been presented beautifully. The character and activities of General Dyer make the readers furious; the helpful nature of Kenneth Ashby also touches the reader.

The hanging of innocent youth, the patriotic feelings of the revolutionaries and the role of women is also appreciable. There is ample scope to research in his novels on the topics Gandhian perspective and the comparative study of fictional and historical personages. The autobiographical element in his novels can also be a great topic to research his works.

I find out that though Nahal made Politics and the Freedom Struggle his themes for most of his novels. He has also dealt with a lot of historical facts and incidents but when we read

his novels we certainly don't feel like merely reading a history book. It is his imagination and creativity that makes his literature a perfect combination of history and fiction. The dialogue delivery as well as the action of time and place shows the genius of the novelist. Like music and painting novels also generate feelings of patriotism in readers. We should be grateful to Chaman Nahal for recreating our freedom struggle through his books. We can learn from our history how we can maintain communal harmony, secularism and respect for our motherland and martyrs.

In my present work I have basically touched the political part but when I read his works I came across his vast knowledge of Indian epics. His child psychology and his mythical excellence can be traced by his short story collections. Through the detailed study of all of his works one cannot categorise him because he touched the political, the social and the traditional parts of India. He appears to have assimilated the qualities of many writers. As in *The English Queens* and the story collection *Akela* we find the humorous touch of R.K.Narayan's works while in *My True Faces* he presents the qualities of Arun Joshi's existentialism. When we read *Azadi* we feel the presence of Khushwant Singh and his novel *Train To Pakistan*. In the same way he reflects the qualities of Manohar Malgonkar also. His mighty pen with his narrating skills sometimes makes us cry and sometimes creates humourous for us.

To sum up I find out that Nahal is a true disciple of Gandhi and follows his principles; though in personal life he paid a lot

for *Azadi* but still loves his country. Through his works he gives a message of positive attitude, communal harmony and brotherhood. His immense knowledge of history and respect for the freedom struggle inspires the readers to respect their country and its freedom. He is one of the torchbearers of the Indian English fiction. Our literary world is highly grateful to him for his beautiful works.

Estelara

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