CHAPTER-V

IMPACT OF GANDHISM ON ASSAMESE NOVELS:

THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

In every novel, the sensitive novelists depict the picture of their thinking, their problems and how these problems influenced their real life throughout the ages. Every novel is the expression of social condition, political environment and the attitude of the common man of that time. “The novel is concerned directly with life- with man and women and their relationships with the thoughts and feelings, the passing and motives by which they are governed and impelled, with their joys and sorrows, their struggles, successes, failures”, (Hudson, W.H. An Introduction to the Study of Literature, P- 163)

So, every novel is related with the lives and social conditions of that time. After the historical novels, Assamese novels got a tremendous change. It was because of the Second World War and the National Movement of India. At that time, many writers started to write their novels on social reformation and freedom movement led by Gandhi. Many writers of that period influenced by the ideals and principles of the father of the nation. In that time, the novelists mainly depicted in their novels Gandhi’s ideals of social reform and women education. Gandhi’s way of nationalistic struggle like- the boycott of foreign goods, give importance on handicrafts, establishment of schools in the rural area etc. Gandhi’s method of freedom movement vehemently influenced the common man of India and the literate persons, writers etc. Therefore, it can be said that just after the Second World War, many literate persons were influenced by the ideology of Gandhi.

In the pre-independent period many novelists wrote their novels on Gandhian ideology; especially Daiiba Chandra Talukdar’s novels- Tarun
Asom, Bidrohi, Apurna, Adarshpeeth, Kerketuwa, Joy Asom were influenced by the reformatory idea of Gandhi. The impact of the freedom movement was also found in their novels, Dandinath Kalita’s novels Sadhana and Avishkar are also Gandhian Novels. Both these novels are social. Bina Baruah’s novel Jiwanar Batat is another social novel.

These are the novels of the pre-independent period which are influenced by Gandhian Ideology. These novels are discussed in details as follows ----

5.01 SADHANA (1928) :

This novel got the award as a best social novel in 1928. The plot of this novel was the first part of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. The heroine of the novel Probhaboti involved herself in the spread of swadeshi movement and boycott of foreign goods in the Banga Bhanga movement of 1905. On the other hand, in this novel Gandhi’s ideology of women education and women welfare has been shown. The novelist artistically accumulated the first and the third decade’s political events of Assam. The main concern of this novel is to highlight the conflict between the selfish and uncivilized people and ideology of the social reformation and the women education. The hero of the novel Dinabandhu is the contemporary national leader and a social activist inspired by the ideology of National Congress Party. Dinabandhu as an active worker of the Congress party established a women education centre. He requested the people to spread Swadeshi and to boycott foreign goods by writing a book on national problems and public duty. He was sentenced to imprisonment for writing this book. The heroine Probhabati is also the symbol of national ideology, who came to a town with a hope to spread women education after studying the article “Women education and the national ideology” of Dinabandhu and joined in the women education centre to fulfill the dream of Dinabandhu.
The picture of the education and social life is depicted through the Dandi Nath Kalita’s novel Sadhana. A reformative sense and spirit is found in this novel. In this novel, the novelist tried to establish a new society by overcoming the narrow and limited ideology on the basis of native culture through the character of Dinabandhu and Probhabati. The hero of the novel Dinabandhu tried to raise the standard of women education in society when there were no standard of education. Child marriage was a social curse at that time. Moreover women were very backward in education. It was very rare to find out educated women in society. Basically women were confined within the four walls of the houses. In such a situation the hero of the novel Dinabandhu engaged himself to improve women education in society on native culture and tradition.

It has been depicted in this novel that one day Dinabandhu got a letter from a girl. This letter is written in this way – “I am a rural girl but I got education in spite of hardship by the grace of God. I engaged myself as a teacher for one year in a non-native place. But I could not adjust there with the Governing body of the school on some matters. Now I want to establish a school for raising the standard of women education. But learning only to read and write does not mean education. It cannot be said that we will get full benefit by setting up a school, if women are not given the education for domestic life. Therefore, I have been sitting at home for one year. But after studying your article, “Women education and national ideology” in a monthly magazine my old thinking became new. I belief myself that whatever you have written on the necessity of women education and National ideology is true.”

(Sadhana, Assam Prakashan Parisad, P- 84)

In the time of Freedom Movement Gandhi himself gave importance on women education. But he was in view that women education should be on native culture and tradition. Gandhi also gave importance on special kind of
education which help women to maintain a house. Because Gandhi believed that women have their own particular duties. They should have to take care of their children. So, their education should be suitable for their daily works. Another view was that at that time women’s condition was very backward both financially and educationally. So, Gandhi’s aim was to raise women education and make than financially sound. That can make women self sufficient and self reliant and this has been expressed clearly in the letter of the girl.

Again, in this novel the hero Dinabandhu replied to Probhabati in this way- “I got your letter. I have my intention to raise women education but I am not in favor of education on non-native ideology. I have seen that such education make the women indulge in materialistic life. This is not the fault of women; it is the fault of western education. There is no need such education which cannot make a man pure of heart and soul. We need such education which can make a man religious, self-dependent and a good house holder. The dress of teacher should be in native culture. In every where there should be ideology and restriction”. (Ibid, P- 85)

Gandhi was not in favour of western education. According to Gandhi such education can develop head and health but not the heart, mind and hand which is found only on the native education. Secondly Gandhi believed that western education can make a man and woman more materialistic but not spiritualistic. Therefore, Gandhi neglected non-native education. Even he wanted to give special types of education to women that can make women more perfect in household activities. Women should be given education according to their particular roles in life. They do not have to compete with men, but there should be no bar for them to any avenue. Women are lovable by nature and therefore, they are equipped by nature to play role of a mother and the caretaker of the home. So, therefore according to Gandhi women education should be special types of education. This ideology is found through the reply of the letter by Dinabandhu.
Gandhi emphasizes the importance of sexual control, but adds that Brahmacharya is more than that. It is putting a check and restraint over all the senses and the mind. According to him senses often delude us and misguide us. So, everybody should know how to control themselves. Even one day Dinabandhu writes to Probhabati, “This place is a place of deceivers. Therefore, we need training (Sadhana) to control ourselves as like as you.” (Ibid, P-160)

This is Gandhian philosophy. Gandhi always requested the people of India to be non-violent by controlling themselves. Self-restraint and Brahmacharya was his main weapon for Satyagraha which has been found through the character of Probhabati.

Moreover, it is shown that Dinabandhu as a freedom fighter, he fought against untouchability and caste system. Therefore, he tried to stand for inter-caste marriage by giving argument on caste system on the basis of Sastra (Holy book) “Caste system is found in every country and in every nation. Some caste system is on the basis of physical colour, some are on rich and poor, again some are on the basis of quality and karma. Caste system should be on the basis of karma and quality. It should not be by birth. It is changing. If a Sudra’s daughter can read and learn sastra, she can transform herself to the higher class.” (Ibid, P-227)

Gandhi was a believer of Karma. According to him a person can transforms himself on the basis of Karma. He makes this point very clear by saying that Varna prescribes duties and obligations only; it does not confer any privileges on any Varna or individual. The performance of hereditary function does not give an individual his position and status in the society. Karma will make his or her position in a society. Gandhi asserts that if a Brahmin born of Brahmin parents fails to reveal the attributes of a Brahmin, he ceases to be a Brahmin. This concept of Gandhi is found in his dialogue of this novel. This is a Gandhian ideology. Gandhi was not in favour of caste system. He was
against traditional existing caste system which is destroying the Indian Society. Therefore Gandhi requested to the Indian people to come out from such a tradition and explain the meaning of caste system. He said, “Varna does not mean that somebody is born high or low, Varna does not give superiority to anyone simply by birth. Varna is class not caste. The original Varna – distinction based not on the distinction of high or low but on the capacities, skill and power inherent in an individual and also on the principle of division of work.” (Sharma, B.S., Gandhi as a Political Thinker, 1956, P-121)

Even through the characters of Dinabandhu and Probhabati, it is shown that they believed in spiritual love not on physical love where there will be the relation of heart and soul, but not the physical relation.

Gandhi never believed in physical love. According to Gandhi marriage must also be a means for realizing a spiritual life. “The ideal that marriage aims at is that of spiritual union through the physical. The human love that it incarnates is intended to serve as a stepping stone to divine or to serve as a divine or universal love.” (Bose, N.K., Selections from Gandhi, P- 273). Therefore, according to Gandhi married life must be training in spiritual love, the husband and wife must cultivate a sense of companionship and a pattern for cooperative living. Gandhi always believed in self-control, tolerance, love, which is found in the character of Dinabandhu and Probhabati.

Thus, in this way through the character of Dinabandhu and Probhabati the novelist depicted the ideology of Gandhi in different ways. Therefore, it can be said that Sadhana is a Gandhian novel.

5.02 TARUN ASOM (1928-1929):

The novelist Daibachandra Talukdar was a real freedom fighter. He himself was a Gandhian. So, his aim was to grow national sentiment among the Assamese people. For the success of the national movement, he wanted to
awaken the love for the country in the mind of people. The novel Tarun Asom is published part by part in the magazine Milan. The hero of the novel is Kandarpa, a young patriot. He tried his best to arouse national sentiment and work enthusiasm in the country; especially for the Assamese people. For this he arranged meetings in different places of Assam and made the people understand about the country and tell Hema, a character of the novel, even he try to make aware of the common people.

Kandarpa tries to make India, especially Assam a developed country or a state in comparison to others. A senior and experienced man Gobardhan Baruah realized deeply the condition of the Assamese people. Patriot Gobardhan observed that the cause of such a pathetic condition of Assamese people is lack of unity, brotherhood and high thinking. Both the Gobardhan and Kandarpa sacrificed their lives for awakening the life of Assamese people. For this purpose, the hero Kandarpa created awareness programme among the Students Union and requested Hema to involve herself in crafts and cottage industry after completing their education. Kandarpa’s aim was to make the country rich and self-reliant.

In this way, Kandarpa and Govinda visited hither and thither in the villages and tried to create awareness among the Students Union, cultivators, and social servants. In that time Freedom movement started in Assam. Kandarpa, as an active freedom fighter took the responsibility to lead the Assamese people into the freedom movement. British Government became angry with him and later on, they arrested him and sent him to imprisonment. At that time, the movement was going on. After some days, he came out from the jail with written assurance to the British government that he would not take part in the freedom movement. Of course Kamala, the daughter of Govardhan criticized Kandarpa as a coward and a unpatriotic selfish man and refused to marry with him.
Thus, in this way, the novelist Daibachandra Talukdar through the novel Tarun Asom depicted the picture of India’s freedom movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. It has been shown through the character of Govardhan as a selfish and greedy man and Kandarpa as a man of patience and a follower of ahimsa and tolerance. It is shown that only patriotism is not enough for freedom of India but for this one should have patience, and belief on the values of non-violence, sacrifice, courage, pre-plan and firmness.

Through different characters of the novel Gandhian ideology has been reflected in different ways. In the beginning of the novel Kandarpa, a patriot discussed many things with Govardhan. Govardhan says, “Hello young star if you do not become conscious and alert Assam will be destroyed.” (Tarun Asom, Assam Prakashan Parishad, P-587)

Gandhi requested the people of India and Assam to come out for the sake of country. He told the people that if they do not aware about their rights then they would not be able to make India free. Everybody knows very well that Gandhi gave more importance on the development of village. Therefore he asked the people to return to villages. Gandhi knew that if rural economy is not develop, India can never be a developed country. This message of Gandhi is found through this dialogue.

It has been shown to arrange a student meeting where Dekhbbhakta is the president. All the students acknowledged openly that today’s Assam is not the earlier Assam. Assam is getting more and more underdeveloped day by day. The other problems of Assam are also going to be complicated. In the same time Kandarpa, the hero of the novel attended the meeting and said, “Nothing has happened, we have everything. Nothing has degraded. It is going to be developed. No need to be pessimistic. Just you be aware my brother. After completing education you start agricultural works by cutting down jungles. The food problems will be solved. Take the shelter on the philosophy of simple living and high thinking. Education problems will be solved. You
just leave fear of death. Political problem will not be more complicated rather it would be simple very soon.” (Ibid, P- 592).

This reflects Gandhi’s reformative ideology. In the real sense Gandhi was a social reformer, rather than a political leader. He never think himself as a leader. His aim was to develop India by different ways. He understood very well that India is a under developed country. Majority of the people of India live in the villages. So, he gave importance towards developing the rural economy. But he felt that without education no permanent development is possible. Therefore he gave importance to education.

Again it is said in the novel, “The freedom movement is spreading all over India. In Assam also the freedom movement started. All the Assamese men and women engaged themselves in the Swadeshi movement. They started making thing in the native way and avoided foreign goods. Spreading of Swadeshi goods has been shown through the character of Kandarpa. Even he himself started to do everything by own-self.” (Ibid, P- 595)

When Gandhi came to Assam during the time of non-cooperation movement he requested Assamese people to boycott foreign goods and give importance on native goods. Of course, Gandhi got overwhelming response and support for Swadeshi movement from the Assamese people. He would insist on the use of Swadeshi in every spheres of life. He was of the opinion that imported foreign goods would hamper the economic status of home industry. He requested people of India to use all home made things in place of foreign goods. This feeling is expressed by the novelist through the character of Kandarpa.

Further, Kamala came forward to join hands with Kandarpa in his mission. She said, “Kandarpa, today I am with you. You will get my help for reforming society and to spread Swadeshi (native) goods. You will get my help for cleaning our society of intoxicants. I will go after you in this regard.” (Ibid, P- 598).
Gandhi knew that majority of the Indians are illiterate and addicted to intoxicants. Therefore, he requested the Indian people to be abstaining from intoxicants and to give importance on native goods. Again when Kandarpa was caught by the police, he told with firm resolution, “My brothers, friends and respected people! You should not stand here just to have a look at me. Go and do your own duties for the sake of country. You should take full responsibility to boycott untouchability and intoxicants like – wine, etc. You are thousands here even without me. You are the thousands soldiers united to serve your mother. Your purpose would be successful immediately.” (Ibid, P-601)

This is direct concept of Gandhi. Gandhi himself requested all the Indians to come out and serve their motherland in the time of freedom movement. Even side by side he requested the Indians to give up untouchability in the name of religion and also appealed to Indian to boycott intoxicants.

In another place of the novel after regretting his fault, Kamala says, “Deshabhakta! I am in wrong. I have done blunder. There is no other way without being sacrifice my life. But I will not kill my life by sacrifice. I will sacrifice my life for the sake of the good of my country. Let me go Dekhbhakta, you take my proof.” After that Dekhbhakta replied to Kamala, “You have awakened my mind. I am remembering this great speech. The service of country and nationality is the service of humanity. The service of humanity is the service of God.” (Ibid, P-611).

Gandhi requested again and again to serve for the country. He said, God has sent me to this country to serve this country. If I don’t do my duty, I will be sinner in the eye of God. Gandhi believed that service to man is service to God.

Thus, in this way through the different character Gandhian ideology has been expressed by the novelist.
Daibachandra Talukdar’s novel Kerketuwa is written in 1930 and published in 1947. The hero of the novel Kerketuwa is an orphan from a village who stayed at Guwahati in a house as a servant at the age of eight. After staying some days, he changes his house from one to another. Kerketuwa’s character deteriorated within one year and he started to drink alcohol and such other non-social activities. In this way, he spent year to year from hither and thither. But he could not stay anywhere. In 1921, he again came back to Guwahati. The freedom movement started in Assam under the leadership of Gandhi. The young boys were giving sound by holding national flag. He emotionally joined with the young boys and begin to work as a volunteer. He boycotted foreign cloths, avoided intoxicants and able to advise other to avoid such types of intoxicants. But one day, he was imprisoned for serving as volunteers in the freedom movement. After coming back to his village he joined in a drummer’s group and he made school building from the income generated from it. He dug a pond for maintaining the schools and develop the village.

Thus, through the character of an orphan Kerketuwa Daibachandra Talukdar has been shown a revolutionary mind. Through this novel Talukdar depicts that only educated were not involve in the freedom movement. The poor, illiterate boy like Kerketuwa was also join their hand in the freedom movement. Gandhi’s aim was to make India free from the British rule and to develop the undeveloped Indian society in every field. For this, Gandhi established many social organizations in the villages to develop rural economy. The ideology of Gandhi is depicted through the character of Kerketuwa.

It has been depicted in this novel that in 1921, Kerketuwa went near to a volunteer’s camp with some young boys. One of them asked him why he was not wearing foreign cloths. Kerketuwa did not know the difference
between the Swadeshi and Bideshi (native and Non-native). The boy asked him, “Do you know what foreigners’ clothes are? Their clothes are not allowed to wear now-a-days? Foreign should not be worn”. *(Kerketuwa, Assam Prakashan Parishad, P-414)*

At that time in the freedom movement, especially in non-co-operation movement Gandhi requested all the Indian people to boycott foreign goods and give importance to our native goods. Even in this movement by the influence of Gandhi people of Assam also boycotted foreign goods and gave importance to their own crafts. Many congress workers collected foreign cloth and burned them together at Guwahati in front of Gandhi. So, through the character of Kerketuwa Talukdar directly explained the ideology of Gandhi.

Again it has been depicted in this novel, “If you want to be a volunteer then you may stay in volunteer’s camp?” said to Kerketuwa. Would you be a volunteer? If you don’t have anybody at home then you can join with us. You have to know how to do spinning and weaving. We have to stop any kind of alcoholic drinks from our society”. *(Ibid, P-215).*

In the time of freedom movement Gandhi requested all the householders, students, men and women to serve for the country and join as volunteers for freedom movement. In Assam also many men, women, students etc. came out as a volunteer. Gandhi’s swaraj was not mere independence. It was a economical swaraj. Gandhi said that independence of the country from the British rule would be meaningless, if we cannot make India economically developed. Therefore, Gandhi appealed to the workers to make Assam free from opium. This ideology of Gandhi is reflected in the novel.

Kerketuwa after being involved with the freedom movement realized the reality of life. One day he felt, “He will do such works which will be beneficial for the majority of the people. He will make poorest class more industrious by giving work facilities. He will make them self-reliant by spinning and weaving.” *(Ibid, P-416)*
Gandhi’s philosophy is fully focused here. He said that the end of all social and political activities is nothing but upliftment of the society. Gandhi said, that could be possible only when no individual would be neglected or overlooked. This would be possible only in the Panchayat system. Gandhi wanted to make a Sorvodaya Samaj (society) which means the betterment of all. According to Gandhi Sorvodaya is based on love. It proceeded on the faith that a Sorvodaya would be prepared for maximum possible self-sacrifice for the good of others.

Gandhi said, “Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestor who thought all land belong to Gopal, then where is the boundary line.’ Man is the maker of that line and he can therefore unmake it. Gopal, literally means shepherded. It also means God. In modern language it means the state, i.e. the people.” (Harijan, 2-1-1937, Vol- IV, P- 263). Gandhi always said, God has sent me to serve this society, if I don’t do my duties then I will be sinner in the eye of God. This ideology of Gandhi directly focused through this dialogue.

Moreover, it has been shown to spent earning money in some noble work by the character of Keretuwa. One day, keretuwa establish a school in his village to make literate the villagers and digging a pond near the school for maintaining.

This is the constructive work of Gandhi. Gandhi knew very well that in the India majority of the people are living in the villages. Therefore, without development of villages no development is possible. So, Gandhi gave importance on rural economy. According to Gandhi But the permanent development is possible only through education. Therefore, Gandhi requested the villagers to be educated and to establish schools and colleges for the village development.
Thus, in this way Gandhian ideology is advocated through the character of Kerketuwa in different ways. This novel is directly influenced by Gandhian thought and ideas. Therefore this novel is a Gandhian novel.

5.04 APURNA (1931-1932):

Gandhian ideology is reflected on the most of the novels of Daiba Chandra Talukdar. Premadhar, the hero of the novel was a student of a college, who loved intoxicant’s daughter Purnima. Purnima was an expert girl who engaged herself in weaving and grinding. On the other hand, a fourteen years girl Hema’s arrogance was reflected through the story of the novel. Through the character of Hema, it has been shown that she was very fond of education and an independent high thinker as well as mentally care taker. Premadhar came to Hema after Kartik’s visit to foreign country. Hema had to wear her cloths by weaving herself but she stood boldly against this. She told Premdhar that they (women) were always deprived from education by making them busy in household works and weaving. Hema’s speech is the speech of women’s freedom. But Gandhian Premadhar criticized her duties and he told Hema that she should engage herself in weaving and agriculture without thinking about future. He also told Hema that she should not forget her duty as an Assamese woman.

Premadhar’s stand was to construct a society on the basis of vocational ideology. Premadhar was in favour of boycotting foreign goods. But for the first time, Premadhar’s construction of society on the basis of Gandhian ideology was not supported by the educated girl like Hema. Purnima ignored politics but she liked spinning. Premadhar gifted her loom. In 1921, Premadhar decided to distribute looms among 20 lakhs of family all over India to implement the Gandhi’s constructive scheme. Even he decided to distribute nearly 26000 Looms in Brahmaputra valley and 19000 in Barak valley.
Thus, in this way, through different character the novelist depicted the Gandhian ideology. It is said in this novel, “This poison is surrounding Assam slowly. At present, it is going to be increased day by day. Whose wrong it is? It might be the fault of anyone but it is a curse of Assam.” (Apurna, Assam Prakashan Parishad, P- 82)

This is a Gandhian ideology. Gandhi knew very well that illiterate Indian society had been suffering from intoxicants. Therefore, he requested Indians to educate the people for sound living and advised to avoid intoxicating drinks or such other harmful smoking. Gandhi requested the Congress worker to make Assam free from opium or intoxicating drink.

Through the character of Purnima, it has been shown that though she was a poor girl yet she very much expert in spinning and weaving. So, one day Premadhar said to Purnima, “You can spend your day planning with silk worms. How much do you love spinning? Have available threads? But I have no time for weaving.” (Ibid, P- 68)

Through this novel, the ideology of Gandhi has been reflected. Gandhi requested Indian to avoid foreign goods and to wear homemade clothes by spinning and weaving. Whenever he came to Assam, he requested the Assamese men and women to join in non-cooperation movement and also to start works on handicraft like- spinning, weaving, sewing etc. Of course, Gandhi was surprised to see the expertise of Assamese women on handicraft works and he said, “This is the real Swaraj”. It has been shown through the character of Kartik.

One day Kartik said, “I have seen sweet picture of freedom. All are conscious. What a free man’s pleasure in free India! There are many things in education. The system of education should go different direction. But why will the Government not allow? The civilized Government never prevents to do any good things. Our Government should give importance on physical, mental and spiritual aspects. Government is the savior of all.” (Ibid, P- 128).
Gandhi always imagined a Ram Rajya in free India. He thought that education is the source of development. According to Gandhi, education means all round development of the society. The true meaning of education is to develop physically, mentally and spiritually.

Again, it is said in the novel, “In Assam, university should be established as like as Nalanda University. On the other hand, the ideal of the university should have been to do agricultural works; poultry, yarn making and acquiring knowledge (Jana yoga) should be the centre of education.” (Ibid, P- 1299)

Gandhi was not in favor of such an education which produced a student only job oriented. According to Gandhi, such education make a man labor less. He said university should have been vocationally oriented that might give economic independence to the youth. So, Gandhi’s aim was not only to make the student knowledge oriented but to make them vocational oriented. Therefore, he said that university should produce good engineers, medical doctors and expert in several human activities.

Moreover, Premadhar says, “Freedom and domination are only the feelings of man. Man should be under the boundary of society, Government and king or parliament. Therefore, we should try to find out our native things. We should give supreme position of peace and love by developing the foundation of education, literature and religion. Of course, for doing so we have to try to do which freedom is important.”  (Ibid, P- 129)

Gandhi’s freedom does not mean only to make India free from the British rule. Gandhi used the word Swaraj in a profounder sense. His meaning of Swaraj included its usual meaning and added something more. He said, “As every country is free to eat, to drink, as to breathe, even so is every nation free to manage its own affairs, no matter how badly.” (Young India, 15-10-31, Vol- III, P- 230). Along with this, he further intends the meaning of Swaraj by saying that the sense of Swaraj must be felt and realized by every individual of
the state. According to him there is a difference between Mere independence and Swaraj. He said, “The Swaraj of my dream is the poor man’s Swaraj. The necessities of life should be enjoyed by you in common with these enjoyed prices and rich man.” (Young India, 26-3-31, Vol- III, P- 365). The Swaraj of my dream recognizes no race, no religious destruction- Swaraj is to be for all. Thus, Gandhi’s Swaraj does not only mean mere independence but economic independence of the poor. He wanted such a country where poorest could feel that this is my country. This feeling of Gandhi is expressed by the novelist.

Thus, through the different character of the novel, the novelist has been depicted the Gandhian ideology. Therefore, Apurna is a Gandhian novel.

5. 05 ADARSHPEETH (1939):

The main subject matter of the novel Adarshpeeth is the reformative endeavor of the young ideal boy Sridhar and his painful result of his Reliance industry. The hero of the novel Sridhar was a B.A., a young inspiring boy. His father was a Mojumdar of a village who hoped that his son Sridhar would earn the name and fame of his family by doing a high rank government service. But Sridhar was not interested to do any service under the Government. So, he started an industry in Garo hills for making the village self-dependent after being influenced by Gandhian ideology. He imparted education to the villagers. He thought that it was impossible to make India free from British Rule only by doing hartal, protest, march, fasting etc. Indian freedom would depend on the economic freedom. Therefore, Sridhar gave importance to make the poor villagers economically developed. At that time, the British Government doubtfully sent him to the jail for his type of works. After coming back from the jail, Sridhar again went to the village and opened an Adharsa Pam. In this work some young boys helped Sridhar. But later on, he was insulted by the villagers for helping the widow Parvati to make her self-
independent. In this way, Sridhar had to suffer in different ways. At last, he gave-up the village and moved hither and thither.

Through this analytical discussion, it can be said that Gandhian ideology has been depicted in the characters of Sridhar and Parvati in different ways. Gandhi’s aim was to develop the village. Therefore, he asked people to go back to the village. According to him without the development of rural economy India can never be developed. Sridhar was influenced by Gandhi. Therefore, once Sridhar said, “Village should be reformed again. When shall my village be a developed village? There will be light everywhere. The life of villagers would be full of happiness; only then, my life would be meaningful” (Adarsapeeth, Assam Prakashan Parisad, P-488).

Sridhar said, “We should not compare between village and town.” He again said, “I have returned to the village. So, my aim is to develop my village. I think that on the basis of Karma Mandir, our village will be a happy village.” (Ibid, P-489).

Gandhi gave importance on the rural economy. Gandhi wanted a self-independent village where every villagers would enjoy a happy life. This ideology of Gandhi has been focused through the character of Sridhar.

Again, Sridhar said, “Education does not mean only to sit in the examination and to do the Government service. Education means to make self dependent. If our school becomes good performer then other will follow us.” He also said, “Some fishes should be given in to the new pond. Kathimusa! You have to take care of some goats and swam.” (Ibid, P-516)

Gandhi always believed that education does not mean only being able to read and write. Education means all-round development i.e. - physically, mentally and spiritually. Education means to make self-dependent. Therefore, Gandhi gave importance on vocational education. He tried to include some handicrafts in to the school and college curriculum, so that students can make
them self-independent. This ideology is expressed through the character of Sridhar.

Sridhar said about religion. According to him, “All religions are same.” So, he thought that all the holy books should be kept respectfully together. He also said, “My religion is universal religion. You may not like my feelings but I like it. The place of Quran and Bible are same as like as the Bhagavad Gita in my mind.” (Ibid, P-518)

Gandhi never neglected any particular religion. According to him every religion is same. No religion is higher or lower. Therefore, he read the Quran, Bible as like as the Bhagavad Gita. He said that religion is the way of life. Gandhi believed that every religion contains goods prospects and noble teachings. So, everybody should follow our religion according to our own way. The aim of fellowship should be to help a Hindu to become a better Hindu, a Muslim to become a better Muslim and a Christian to become a better Christian.

It has been depicted through the character of Sridhar, “One day, Sridhar’s farm Adharsha Pam became a well known and famous amongst all. Therefore, Sridhar became very famous and respective person in the eye of the villagers. Now, students are increased up to twenty. It is a full- flazed school now. But till today, it is not financially sound. Now, we have to do constructive works by our hand. We should have carpenter, goldsmith, potter, weaver, spinner and other handicrafts amongst us. By doing this our Assam will be more developed. If we can then we have to establish a school for girls.” (Ibid, P-522).

Gandhi’s aim was reform Indian society. At that time, Indian society was very backward and superstitious. Therefore, Gandhi thought that without rural development no development is possible. So, Gandhi gave more importance on education. Gandhi knew very well that without education no permanent development is possible. Therefore, when Gandhi was in
Champaran village of Bihar, he established schools for them and tried his best to make the villagers self-dependent. This ideology of Gandhi has been reflected in this novel.

The character of widow Parvati is a symbol of reformation who wanted to come out from such a binding life. Sridhar supported widow marriage. According to Sridhar formalism cannot be a religion. Sridhar said, “I never want to bind others freedom in the name of religion. I want simplicity and an open religion. The strict binding of Hindu religion has placed a big stone in the heart of men where there is no inspiration, no life.” (Ibid, P-530)

Gandhi supported widow marriage. According to Gandhi marriage is a matter of individual feelings. If anybody wanted to marry she or he should get marry. It should not be the matter of religion. It is a matter of individual wishes. Therefore, Gandhi requested Indians to come out from such kind of bindings. This feeling of Gandhi is expressed through the character of Parvati.

In this novel once Sridhar said to Parvati, “Sacrifice is the ideal of life. More you learn life, more you get power of sacrifice. To be sacrificed we need some condition for acquiring the power of Karma. Action is life. Karma is that which can make others benefits”. (Ibid, P-530)

Gandhi’s whole life is a life of sacrifice. He sacrificed his life for the sake of country. Gandhi believed that God sent us to this world with some duties. Our duties or actions are our life. God sent him to India to do some duties for the Indian society. If anyone does not do his duties properly then he will have to give answer to God. He will be the sinner in the eye of God. But Gandhi said about Niskama karma which means to do your Karma without thinking for its result. According to Gandhi we should do such Karma which makes others benefit.

Again Sridhar said, “We should not give up our society in the name of religion. We can lead a yogic life by leading a household life also which had
been the thought of Sankar Deva.” Again he said, “Temple should be for Karma. After establishing a woman temple, the skill of yarn making, weaving, endi, muga spinning, tending silk worn etc should be allowed to the women.”

Sridhar gave more importance on women. He said, “Sati Sita should be the symbol of women in our country but Sita knew nothing except Ram. Our women should know about our society and country as like as Sita knew her chastity and courage. We should try for the benefit our country by doing our own works” (Ibid, P-543)

The constructive work of Sridhar indicates the ideology of Gandhi. According to Gandhi in order to live men must work. It is essential for every man to realize the dignity of labor and to think that at least for earning his own bread one must do some manual works. Gandhi never accept to lead a yogic life. According to him one can lead such a life within the life of household also. Gandhi believed in the equality of men and women in every walk of life. Therefore, Gandhi requested all the men and women to come out for the sake of country in the time of freedom movement.

Thus, from the above discussion, it can be said that Adarshpeeth is one of the Gandhian novel. In this novel, Daiba Chandra Talukdar has directly depicted Gandhian ideology through the character of Sridhar.

5. 06 AVISKAR (1939):

The influence of Gandhism is found in the novel Aviskar. The plot of this novel is to establish idealism and schemes of social reformation programmes through the character of Madhava, the hero of the novel. The hero of the novel Madhava stands as a simple, idealistic and a man of character who involved himself for the welfare of women and expansion of education. Madhava believed that only by the law of Congress party, one cannot take back the social equality unless and until people cannot aware
about the ideology of Gandhi. So Madhava, the hero of the novel was influenced by Gandhism without being evolving in the contemporary excitement.

Some intellectual men took the responsibility of welfare and freedom of the women under the leadership of Gandhi during the time of national movement. The novelist Dandi Nath Kalita as an active member of freedom fighter was stood in favor of widow marriage. The hero of the novel Madhava was trying to solve the problems of widow by marrying widow Malabika against his family. So, Dandinath Kalita’s novel Aviskar is also one of the social reformative novel through which the novelist trying to reform women society by removing social evils. Several years ago, Indian society was suffering from castism, untouchability, and superstitions. Therefore, the author of the novel Dandinath Kalita wanted to reform the society; especially the society of women through the character of Madhava. His novel Sadhana and Aviskar is not different from each other. These are the two sides of the same coin. The aim of both the novels is to stop the prevailing ancient tradition of the society which is the drawbacks of our country to go ahead.

Madhab Chandra Bhuyan, the hero of the novel was a social reformer whose aim was to develop the village. He never hesitated to visit such a place where nobody wanted to go. He tried to make understand the villagers to go ahead on the basis of education by overcoming the prevailing superstitions and illiteracy. He wanted to stop untouchability by making organization in the village. He wanted to spread education and the idea of health consciousness among the villagers by printing some books. In this way, different villages of Assam were going to develop through the works of the social organization. Even the hero of the novel Madhab has taken the responsibility of Pratima as a guardian by saving her life. Later on, he brought Pratima before the society.

Thus through different characters of the novel, Gandhian ideology has been depicted. One day Madhab said to Pratima, “I am very satisfied at your
works. I have firm belief on you that my purpose would be succeed. You have heard that I am observing our social injustice, corruption, immorality from my childhood. I thought that one day I will make a new society by stopping all types of barriers from our society. It is supposed to accept some schemes of my reformation which are - to stop untouchability, develop the undeveloped, spread education, rural education, rural organization, stop child marriage and give women rights.”(Aviskar, Assam Prakashan Parishad, P- 450).

Gandhi was against of untouchability, child marriage but in favor of widow marriage. He said that untouchability is a disease which is destroying our society. Therefore, Gandhi visited all over India to stop untouchability in the name of religion, castes and creeds. Even Gandhi came to Assam in 1934 for Harijan upliftment and raised fund for the welfare of Harijan. Gandhi said about child marriage as dangerous events which should be stopped immediately as far as possible. It is torturing the girls and destroying their lives. Even he was in support of widow marriage. He said that marriage is depend on a person. If anybody wanted to marry he should be allowed. There should not be the restriction in this regards. Moreover, Gandhi gave importance on women education. He knew very well that majority of the Indian women are illiterate and backward. Therefore, Gandhi requested Indians to give importance on women education and let them to come out and as such they can be self- sufficient and self- dependent. This ideology has been followed by the character of Madhab.

It has been depicted in this novel that in everywhere activities of freedom movement is going on. All are busy with the movement. In such situation Sri Agrashan baruah has given an excited speech on the necessity of boycotting foreign goods. He says to develop the undeveloped villagers, to stop untouchability, to take the women from lower to higher and to teach them to sacrifices their lives for the sake of country. Women should take the same responsibility along with men by boycotting foreign goods etc.” (Avishkar, Assam Prakashan Parishad, P- 454)
Gandhi’s aim was to reform society in different aspects which was found in the speech of Sri Agrashan Baruah. Gandhi requested Indians (both men and women) to come out for making India free from the British rule and sacrificed their lives for the sake of country. In this regard, Gandhi requested both men and women equally for boycotting foreign goods and to use native cloths. Gandhi’s meaning of Swaraj was not only to make free India from the British rule but also to make India free from economic hardship. He said, “As every country is free to eat, to drink, and to breathe, even so is every nation free to manage its own affairs, no matter how badly.” (Young India, 15-10-31, Vol- II, P- 47). According to Gandhi, “Swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.” (Young India, 29-01-25, Vol- II, P- 62). Thus, for Gandhi real Swaraj means that every individual should have a feeling of freedom. Gandhi feels that no progress can ever be possible unless the individual is allowed to grow.

Moreover, Gandhi was in favor of widow marriage. This is found through the character of Madhab who married widow Malabika to lead a happy life.

Thus, Gandhian ideology is found in different characters of the novel. It is also said through the character of Madhab, “In my opinion, first we have to do such work which will uplift the lowest and downtrodden people of the society who are living animal’s life to a dignified position. These people are exploited by the so-called civilized people. Give them education so that they can realize that they are also human beings. They are to be made self-dependent every way. Thus, gradually social equality can be established. The elected representatives should bring changes by organizing Panchayats in every Villages, every Districts, every Mouzas and divisions. The local health, education and other development will be maintained by the panchayat.”(Ibid, P- 455)
Gandhi’s aim was to develop and to uplift the lowest and downtrodden people of the society who were exploited by the capitalists. He also gave importance on education; so that they could realize their lives. Gandhi recommended, “What can be called a village republic as the ideal form of decentralized political and social system which can give maximum opportunity for individual initiative and growth is the Panchayati system having self- contained village based primarily on agriculture and cottage industry.” (Sharma B.S, Gandhi as a Political Thinker, 1956, P-276).

This Panchayati system is a Gandhian ideology through which Gandhi wanted to decentralize the work method from the Central Government to the village panchayat; so that everybody can develop equally. This ideology has been found in this novel. The panchayat system is a Gandhian ideology.

5.07. JIWANAR BATAT (1944):

Jiwantar Batat is a social novel. The novelist Bina Baruah has depicted the social life of Assam through this novel. The plot of this novel is the pathetic life of Tagar who is very simple and sweet women. Dharani is the hero of this novel who is the husband of Tagar. Both of them are basically the symbol of agricultural revolution. Actually, this novel depicts the influence of Indian freedom movement in the villages of Assam. Dharani, the weaving master and the husband of Tagar suffered long spell of imprisonment for taking part in the non cooperation movement and other agitation programmes in the area. In this novel the novelist brings out very clearly how the rural people of Assam supported the freedom movement of India and for which they had to go to jail.

This novelist has been depicted Gandhian ideology through the character of Dharani, a weaving master. This novel has shown that Dharani himself participated in the national movement and suffered a long spell of
imprisonment. Later on, he became a leader of Roha region of Upper Assam and led the people of the Roha area in the freedom movement.

In this novel, it has been shown that Dharani along with some other villagers supplied food to the poorest class of people who were struggling for life. Dharani understood very well that scarcity of loom was the main cause of poverty. He understood that factory loom could not reduce the scarcity of the village. Therefore, he gave importance on traditional Assamese handloom. He argued, “You have to make some garments for the urban except your own.” Dharani supplied threads, cotton (kopah) etc. at low price among the villagers. A few numbers of women of the villages earned more than Six Kuri in a month with the help of Dharani. A number of women got relaxation in their economic hardship with the help of Dharani.” (Jiwanar Batat, P- 109).

Gandhi’s aim was to make self- dependent village. He gave importance on village economy. Gandhi knew very well that majority of Indians are villagers. Therefore, he thought that without the development of village, no development is possible. So, Gandhi called the people to return village. During the time of the Non- Coopération Movement Gandhi advised Indians to make them self-reliant and self-dependent by avoiding foreign goods. He specially requested the people of the villages to give importance on handicrafts. This ideology of Gandhi has been reflected through the character of Dharani.

Dharani became a popular leader in the Roha region. Every women of the village became self-dependent and their economic condition was going to improve day by day with the help of Dharani. He said, “The empowerment of the women is the beauty of women. The beauty of their daughters and daughter- in -laws of these villagers has been enlightened through their handloom activities.” (Ibid, P- 109).

During the time of the freedom movement, Gandhi requested women to come out from their four wall houses for making themselves self dependent.
At the time, the condition of women was very pathetic. So, Gandhi opened many social organizations like Ashrams especially for women.

It is said in the novel, “Dharani scarifies his life for sake of the country by keeping all the responsibilities on the shoulder of his wife. Nothing is impossible to do. Dharani himself was involved in the development of the villagers. At that time, the Non-Cooperation Movement started. Students were creating awareness among the villagers by leaving schools and colleges. Very frequently, the sounds of Vande Mataram! Mahatma Gandhi Ki Joy! Bharat Mata Ki Joy was heard in everywhere. The unaware people of the villages become aware by that sound. The villagers boycotted foreign goods and burned their clothes. Picketing started in every opium shop” (Ibid, P- 126)

This is a Gandhian ideology. Gandhi himself gave up foreign goods and requested Indian to do so.

It has been said in this novel, “opium sellers are going to increase in different shop. There is no scarcity of opium sellers. But we have to stop it as volunteers. Our duties to make aware society that how opium addicted is affected?” (Ibid, P- 127)

Gandhi’s idea of the Non-Cooperation Movement has been reflected in this novel. Moreover, Gandhi’s aim was to make Assam free from opium which was shown in the form of the works of the volunteers during the time of the National Movement. At that time, opium consumption in Assam became a cause of great concern and the addiction to the drug reached immense proportion. As a result, the price of the opium increased. Gandhi’s fervent appeal to the volunteers to make Assam free from opium had a stirring effect.

When Tagar, the wife of Dharani was tortured by police, the villagers and the volunteers of the National movement gathered in front of the police station and protested against it. When the general public was trying to break down the police station, the volunteers requested the common villagers and
said, “My dear friends! You should not forget the non-violence method of Gandhiji. There is no place of force in non-cooperation movement. Remember! We don’t come to punish the police man. We have come here to release one of our colleague’s wives. We have already requested the police man. All of you wait with patience to solve the problem.” (Ibid, P- 139).

This is Gandhi’s non violence method. Gandhi never allowed any kind of violence at the time of freedom movement. His aim was not to fight but tried to get his demand. His aim was to make India free from British rule and he wanted to do it with respect, not with bloodshed.

Again Dharani requested the people to go home back. “Dear friends! I have come to surrender myself. Please go home without being revengeful. I know you are very much hurt because of disrespect to my wife. But for the freedom of my country such humiliation should be regarded as blessings. We must be ready to make greater sacrifice than this”, Dharani said. (Ibid, P-141)

Again he said, “You should go home without delay; otherwise it might be the problem for all of you. You have already known the responsibilities of the movement. The freedom of the country is not possible by the jealousy of the wealth of the richest, power of the powerful people or jealousy of education of the educationists. Freedom of India is possible by the blood of heart of the poor, cultivations and illiterate villagers who can sacrifice their lives.” (Ibid, P- 181).

Gandhi knew very well that it is not easy to make India free from the British rule if every Indian was not involved in this movement. Gandhi thought that Indian economical power was only in the hands of cultivators who are involving in productive and agricultural works. Therefore, Gandhi gave more importance towards the villagers.
Moreover, Dharani was trying to make understand his wife that to make free Indian they must have to bear such disrespect without any hesitation. He tried to clean her mind as like as the air cleans the deep cloudy sky. Tagar’s life was full of tragedy. After the death of her husband, her life became more pathetic but with the help of Doctor Golap, the weaver Sangha was established in Roha region. Tagar also joined in this Sangha for Doctor’s request. She was an expert as a spinning weaver. Some workers of the organization of Dharani also joined in this Sangha. Some of them went in searching of cotton, donation from the public; selling their clothes in the market. They also sent their cloths to Abhay Ashram at Kolkata and Khadi Bhandar. Tagar got pleasure and peace in doing unfinished work of her husband (Ibid, P-200)

Gandhi believed that India’s salvation depends on the service and enlightenment of women. According to Gandhi women is the personification of self sacrifice. The novelist Bina Boruah has shown the ideology of Gandhi through the character of Tagar who devoted her whole life for her husband and children.

Thus, Gandhi’s ideology has been reflected through the character of Dharani and Tagar.

5.08 MUKTIR PATHEDI (1946):

Premnarayan Dutta’s novel Muktir Pathedi is one of the Gandhian novel. In this novel, the novelist Premnarayan Dutta depicted the National Movement through the character of Topendra, the hero of the novel. It has been shown in this novel that after coming back from the jail in 1942, Topendra engaged himself in a constructive work of Gandhi in Karmapur resign.
It has been shown in this novel that in 1942, Tapendra was thrown to imprisonment after his involvement in the freedom movement in Karmapur region and he was released from the jail on the day of freedom festival of India.

Tapendra not only engaged himself in the freedom movement but also worked for the growth of economic at Karmapur Resign. He wanted to make a self-dependent village; especially he gave importance on agricultural development. Tapendra tried to develop agriculture, irrigation system, and produce food through Samabaya method and to make a self-dependent village.

He tried to establish four hospitals for public health, twenty schools to spread education, night schools for old man, five women schools for spreading women education etc. Moreover, Tapendra established four Samabaya for helpless women and involved them in hand-spinning and weaving of Muga, Kopah etc. The responsibility of this work was given to his wife Sabita.

Thus, through the character of Tapendra, the novelist depicted Gandhian ideology in different ways. Gandhi’s aim was not only to make political freedom but also to make economic freedom. He wanted such type of country where everybody would come out from poverty. Gandhi used the word Sarvodaya for the betterment of the people of India and as such Gandhi’s Swadeshi Movement included the creative use of traditional festivals to grow Swadeshi sentiments. Gandhi’s Swadeshi movement placed great emphasis on self-dependence in various field. National education was introduced. Social organizations were also established. Social reforms adopted among villagers and cottage industries were set up.

Gandhi established Samabaya, Gaon Panchayat and Buniyadi Siksha to actualize his dream of Ram Rajya into reality. Even in this scientific age also, all the methods of Gandhi has relevant in our practical life. Therefore, it can be said that Premnarayan Dutta’s novel ‘Muktir Pathedi’ is a Gandhian novel.
Thus, in conclusion it can be said that all the above novels are Gandhian novels. The novelists have been depicted Gandhian ideology through the different characters of the pre-independence period of novels.