CHAPTER-5

THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL NOVEL ‘SHRIMATI CAFE’
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In fact the Bengali literature especially in stories and fictions of the Second World War. There had been a purification that took place implicitly. No body could be freed out of this time, that was inevitable in society, life and human psyche. Because this feelings, from around everywhere has grasped the society and lives, when it was punctuated into the society at large like cancer. Only then there came the freedom over the latest battle.

But, the common people remained same. We are being down traden due to the lack of their livlihood. From then on those havenots who were class less, were more poor, came to take steps in political terms.

To depict those societal strata that belongs to the forties, came Samaresh Basu, Nani Bhowmik, Satinath Bhaduri, Adayita Mallabarman etc. They were moved by their experience and tried to grasp them enmass into their own writing.

The inetnational communism the seed of the first world war. The Second World War had blossomed it as a full flower, as their subject matter.

Samaresh has given voice to those havenots who had no leader. Samaresh Basu himself was associated with the communist party at his youth. He was, like Manik Bandyopadhyay a communist party worker.

His political consciousness was ripened with his personal experience to working class movement. He was jailed. At the same time Subhash Mukhapadhyay and Saroj Bandyopadhyay too was confined to imprisonment. His knowledge of communist party gave birth to 'Srimati Cafe' depicted people's pain and pleasure, emotion and helplessness, love and hate of a significant area that belonged to the working class.

What Samaresh has written, can be quoted, "firstly 'Srimati Cafe' was not a restaurant. But it none the less 'Srimati Cafe' has some significance
It is bearing tradition. This tradition is an inter-play between light and shade of National life.¹

Samaresh also wanted that nobody should look at the 'Srimati Cafe' as his own reflection. It was specially build out of the poor-area of Naihati around Basanti Cabin of 40's. Samaresh only altered, the entire texture with exclusion and inclusion.

About 'Srimati Cafe', Samaresh also wrote " at that very time the patrika 'Chatuskun' was published and Samaresh was commissioned by Prodyot Guha to write a full length Novel. "I wrote 'Srimati Cafe' my first one though it was published in book later on, but for that Novel, he was also paid one hundred rupees."²

'Srimati Cafe' is nothing. It is the biography of a tea stall owner Bhajan, a B.A pass near Barakpur. How life moves how life goes through the path high and low....

'Srimati Cafe' is extended to 1922-1948. The Novel begins thus "It was the end of spring in 1920's. it seems that whole country has become rotten with the ashes, huddled. The heap of ashes of foreign clothes to speak more clearly."³

The novel ends thus, "it was the end of 1948 . Many days are over. Many years gone. In between them many all devouring war and pestilence. People died in lakhs, many became martyred in the battle of 46's in the Azad Hind Day. But in this time, 'Srimati Cafe' stood straight. No not that a little differently

But 'Srimati Cafe', is still inspiring readers, with a little difference. There is a signboard. But a little bit stating on one side. It has become indistinct. The doors have been necknayed chains too, has become antique stylistic. Bhajan's much loved picture of Rabindranath, Marry, Sirajudullah and the mother of Rafals. But the picture of Narayan is absent. Lines and curves of the house is broken. Below the house is written, 'liquor strictly prohibited'."⁴
Samaresh, in between the 1920 and 1948 - into span of 28 years has portrayed the middle class, who can be identified as the middle class? Let us discuss a little over it. Who belongs to that class? This middle class is not middle class according to the marxian concept of classification. If seen in terms of production, relation can’t be properly identified. Small capitalist seen from marxican angle who are known as petty-bourgeois who is recognised as a gentleman, only they can be considered middle class. On the otherhand, those who are small man is not recognised as middle class. On the otherhand those who sell their labour and earn money, also belongs to that middle class. Though our definition towards the classification may not sound marxists but for that we are not worried.

Almost all ism Gandhism, Terrorism and Marxism - these concepts has been condensed into the picturisation of characters like Bhajulat at the creations of 'Srimati Cafe'. Infact, he was the owner of Cabin, Harilal.

The new middle class began to take shape - as the emergence of new politics, trough limited to a small groups of people as a feeling or a matter in bad resistance - Bhajan the proprietor is the representative of the addaas if 'Srimati Cafe' began vitalised as an effect of tripad conflict. Sometimes brought optimism, sometimes the gray pessimistic, sometimes lively upliftment, sometime the silence apathy - with all these above mentioned concept, man is built in 'Srimati Cafe'.

Mahatma Ghandi the one and only leader after 1920's at those wink. Whole country was ready to his back and call. He withdrew the non-cooperation movement because he saw that for whom he was struggling does not understand non violence. They are supressed violent lions.

Writer Samaresh has bridged the gap between the history of the social upheavel and his readership. Alongwith this is also associated, the characters and facts.

We observe that both of his brother are different two each other. Narayan is a freedom fighter, Bhaju was the scanty. Infact this Bhajan is the
central character of this novel, who had education had capability, yet he will not do any job. His appearance is similar to his character and mood. "The young son of Mr. Halder is not that younger, rather he is like a sword made up of steel. He has a white complexion. The lips are redish."  

Ultimately giving way to a tea stall 'Srimati Cafe'. Upon what heart of the desert. The unbelievable lived on happiness. This happiness is all sought after by Bhajan. He is more negligent and disrespectful. But he has full faith and respect in his relationship with Narayan. He is not born to serve his country - but he loves those who loves their motherland.

To him Narayan seems to be guided by a fruitless act. Just as he would not be a Sadhu, for the same reasons Narayan would not be a Rebel. He has full respect upon them. In consequence, Bhaju opens a tea stall. Bhaju writes poems in 'Bharatbarsha'. A face appears in his front of his eyes. He wants to deliver himself. After his marriage to Jui, he seemed that he got what he sought after, but not that 'Srimati Cafe' became his everything. In his 'Cafe' we see the representative Hiren, the Gandhist a congress like Kripal, a communist like Priyanath. And an anarchist like Suraj Singh. They all gather to exchange their views.

Samaresh has characterised this political plot. He gave a clear picture about this in brief. "Everybody has turned out of congress. Hiren is now living in Kolkata. Kripal is now a congress M.L.A. When he passes through the road, he does not remember 'Srimati Cafe'."  

Here we remember, Tarasankar, "always remember one thing. Each and every individual is mixed up in both right and wrong. Only brightness only blackness is not anything. Sketch him, even though it is of Mauzapphar Ahmed. Sketch all in him, both right and wrong. Otherwise all your creativity will be turned into naught."  

We want liberation, but how it will come is not known to him. all conflicts belong to that. Charan is repeatedly heared speaking. Charan pray
for liberation. But what is that liberation? He does not know the meaning of liberation.

Liberation, who knows where is that liberation. If you speak that freedom is the symbol of liberation? Then we must say 1934, that means from then on this liberation has become state. A type of fatigue has took place like the year of 1922. "

Bhajan does not empty himself to serve his country. To him all the oration is empty. But this did not move him to detest his country. From a few years since 'Srimati Cafe' has become the trading ground, sometimes of Gandhian, sometimes terrorists and sometimes of Marxists. All of them have been the witness of the ups and downs of this period. During that long years Bhajan has turned himself into an alcoholic person. Though he was moved by that time, yet he was not inclined to any ideology. Because he could not associate himself, felt one, with the country. So he came to take up happiness at the installment of cafe.

'Srimati Cafe' is Samaresh Bosu's first successful novel. Here he understood the world of characters, their class, and their society and societal space, he has found serious voice into Samaresh Basu's defects treatment, Samaresh has carefully picturised the indomitable urge of their characters with all their capabilities weakness and limitation.

On an individual plane, 'Srimati Cafe' was repeatedly purterbed by the policeman but without any result. In course of time, this cafe become the gossiping centre of the communist party. We got glimpses of terrorist as they were converted from Gandhian act. Here we can follow the dialogue between Bhagu and Khanu.

"Bhaju said, did you know the name of Narayan Haldar.

Kanu with the stroke of stick at his swelled eyesight said. I know he is your Dada

And yours?

Kanu said, Rathinda has told. He is our Gurudev.
Gurudev. He boughtout a picture from his wardrobe. He told him do you know him?

At the corner was written 'Rishi Karl Marx'

Kanu said, A Rishi wherefrom.

Bhaju said, off all the world – this book was kept at your Gurudev's Knapsack. It came to me, you read? beware, that no body could see this.

Telling he sent kanu, after offering him milk. To his home and came to stand infront or Mother by Rafael, Sirajuddullah and the statue of Tagore."

Actually 'Srimati Cafe' is a novel of a few moments sparkling glimpses of Indian freedom movement. The termoil of Indian political movement between 1920 to 1948 has been grasped here. Samaresh said, "there must be a down, that is why this darkness is aching, but to day the ownership of 'Srimati Cafe' has been changed. The attendant here is the son of Bhojan one legged Nitai, like his father he is a moody individual. The young officer wanted to help Nitai after knowing him, he, the officer is now at the end of his professional carrier. He told Nitai "Come to Kolkata and meet me. I know that this is your last resort.""10

Police ransacked the cafe on a false information that it belongs to the terrorists, with no result. Yet the police officer locked the cafe. The government could not take up any risks. To speak more of the communist party, by then has been banned. Priyanath has gone to the underground Kanu, Bangali, Manahar, Bhagon all of them an imprisoned. 'Srimati Cafe' the political hub is closed - "the coarse winter, all around leafless trees, dust and smoke.

Everything on a slanty sky, dust, soil. Yet gentle breez from the southern ocean have been blowing in cacophony. The winter gave way to the spring."11
NOTES


6. Congreser sabai amnitai takhan sare giyeche. Hiren ekhan kolkabasi Kripal congressi MLA. Se yakhon ekhan diye motare kare yay takhan ekbaro tar smitipathaii Srimati Cafer katha mane hay na. Ibid Page - 433


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10. তুমি একদিন কলকাতা আমার সাঙ্গে দেখা করো। বুঝতে পার্চি, এতাই তোমার শেষ সম্বল।

11. শিতে রংশাতা, চার্ডিকে ন্যেদা গাছ। দ্বূলো আর ধনুয়া। সব যেন কুকদে আধে।

শিতে অদোমা বেঙ্গে অস্চে বসান্তে। হোয়ায় একটা দক্ষিণের সমুদ্র হোয়ার বেগ তেকে তেকে হুশুস করে অস্চে। শিতে অদোমা বেঙ্গে অস্চে বসান্তে হোয়া।