CONCLUSION

Bhattacharya portrays a wide spectrum of contemporary Indian men and women representing the average urban Indians of the time. His fiction depicts a variety of characters. He shows a steady and constant development in the growing cannon of his works. His works present the North Indian especially the Bengali upper middle and middle class life. His mild and gentle irony probes and reveals some of the common foibles of Indian middle class. His characters are memorable. His works have Indian setting and are redolent of Hindu culture. His fascinating themes, living characters, narration and simplicity of language are some of the most outstanding features in his fiction. Bhattacharya’s fiction is distinguished by its sociological and literary merits. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar appreciates Bhattacharya as:

“The Sahitya Academi award to him in 1967 was fitting recognition of his standing achievement in the field of Indian fiction in English”

Bhattacharya is one of the few Indian writers who have a close acquaintance with the life in the east and the west. The west appears in his novels some times as a character, sometimes as an attitude or a set of values. Bhattacharya shows an unabating interest in the interaction of the two sets of values that exist side by side. He is more seriously and consistently involved with the East-West theme. He does not compromise to render his vision into a public language. There are some characters representing aspects of the western culture, and reacting differently to their encounter with the Indian culture. The conflict between the two modes of being appears on different levels i.e. the individual level, the group level, the political level, and the cultural level, and on industrial and agrarian levels. Bhattacharya advocates a compromise between two ways of life.
Bhattacharya’s first novel *So Many Hungers* portrays the repercussions of the East-West political encounter in so far as it affected the attitudes of the people and ----their values, the decadence that set in even in the rural society of India, and the perversity, inhumanity and exploitation that were practiced by the government police and selfish money minded tradesman like Samarendra Basu and the consequent changes in the traditions and customs of the people and in their attitudes and values. One finds a steady decadence in society in all walks of life.

Western influences thus creep slowly into the habits and attitudes of the Indians and modernization in the external aspects of life inevitably sets in. These symbols of Westernization in society speak of the internal change in the attitudes and outlook of the people of India which clearly shows that the influence of the west is so strong that even a gentleman like Rahoul cannot escape from it. Although Rahoul has been living in England for a time, he is not separated with ‘The soul of India’. His relation with the people is strong. He helps them with food and shelter during the Bengal famine. He fights for their sake and goes to jail.

Bhattacharya’s second novel *Music for Mohini* (1952) portrays the opposite characteristics of the Indian heritage and Western culture. The novel is a combination of opposite cultures of the city Calcutta and the village Behula in Bengal. It is a mixture of two cultures. Bhattacharya shows the family system ties traditional loyalties and relationships. He also shows how the social institutions like marriage and observance of festivals. The novel is a biography of the heroine, the only daughter of a professor, a widower and a man of western concepts of reason. He does not support the defects of age old culture. He is not only educated but a man of modern views. He desires to bring up his daughter to a good position by providing her English education. But his old mother who is an orthodox woman does not allow him to send his daughter out door for studies. Bhattacharya focuses light on the social evils
which became common and deep rooted in Indian society. All those social evils are decried and attacked by Bhattacharya. He boldly rejects the practices of Sati, Polygamy. The professor stands for Western concepts of liberty of thought, reason and innovation. Bhattacharya shows us how western educated people start to think in modern way. Bhattacharya exposes how the new attitudes of people on social institutions like marriage undergo a change. In this novel Bhattacharya deals with the theme of cultural pollution. The novelist describes the results of a clash between cultures. The Western influences and practices are shown as new tendencies in lives of Indians. Bhattacharya also points out hypocrisy in the age old traditions and malpractices under the customs. He reveals about the glorious past in which woman was honoured and given an equal position along with men. Bhattacharya brings the quite opposite characters Mohini and Jaydev’s mother under the same roof. Mohini stands for the west and Jaydev’s mother stands for orthodox and age old traditions.

Jaydev, the protagonist of the novel stands for the encounter of the East and West. He is scholar of Sanskrit. He dedicates his life to the cause of social reform. He protests against polygamy and child marriages. He encourages inter-caste marriages and inter-dining, marriages of widows. He opens a school for adults and women and he runs it on his expense. Harindra is another who stands for the East-West encounter. He studies in a western-style medical school and takes degree. He comes to the village and starts his practice for the people. There is a controversy between Harindra, an English trained doctor and his father Kabiraj, a country side Ayurvedic doctor who does not have faith in English medicine and always criticizes against his son’s practice. But Harindra does not put aside the ayurvedic system. He accepts only a systematic medicine made in laboratories. He says as:
“There are many good drugs in our Ayurveda system, we know them, we them, not the home products but those made in modern laboratories. What’s wrong in using in the fight against disease the best that East and West have to offer? Medicine knows no race or nationality, father! No greater blessing for our people than the sulfa drugs.”

He modifies the negative opinion of his father on English medicine by curing his mother’s disease. Harindra not only operates the health of the country people even he mends the society by leading a group people of his kind.

Through another character Rooplekha, sister of Jaydev is shown the East-West encounter. She is brought-up in the village and married to a city doctor. She is not aware of western life in city till her marriage but after her marriage she alters her life style according to city culture. Once she consoles Mohini by advising as:

“You are city-bred, village-wed. I am village-bred, city wed. We share one common lot:

It’s as though we made a bridge between two banks of a river. We connect culture with culture, Mohini, our old Eastern view of life with the new semi western outlook.”

The novel reveals the feeling of Bhattacharya that Indian culture was great and it could grow and could face the challenge of the western culture.

In his third novel “He who rides a Tiger”, Bhattacharya declares a crusade over caste system which became a deep rooted problem in India. Bhattacharya reflects the atmosphere of the late twenties and the early thirties, the air filled with the dust of politics and infected with the fumes of man’s
inhumanity to man. He shows how the traditional Indian economy is completely polluted and blasted by the western economic policies. We can see how the people lose work, earning, starve and think to go to city for food and work. Bhattacharya advocates the down trodden and under privileged. He is mainly preoccupied with the problems of oppression and exploitation of the lowest classes by the upper castes of the Hindu society.

Bikas Mukherji in the novel is well educated. He always protests against the age old, orthodox, blind faiths in the Hindu society. The death of his affectionate sister Poornima makes him bitter. Poornima is a typical Indian girl. She falls in love with a boy of lower caste. Her orthodox parents object to her lover and search a groom who is a widower with children and grand children to whom they give her in marriage. But after a few days she dies by committing suicide. This incident moved very much. After this incident Bikas starts to revolt against the meaningless Brahmin rituals. Bhattacharya satirizes the many weaknesses and meaningless customs in the Hindu religion. The novelist points out the orthodoxy with which people forget even the basic principles of humanity and compassion in the Hindu religion. Bhattacharya intends to show how the orthodox people blindly follow the cheats and deceptive people under disguise of religion. It is only an example to indicate foolishness of people who blindly believe and follow the babas and sadhus to fulfill their greediness. It reveals us the novelist’s declaration of crusade against the deep rooted age old meaningless traditions in the Hindu religion. Bhattacharya’s fight is not with an individual, but with the system.

He focuses light over a curious contradiction of the times. While men die of hunger, wealth grows, and while kindliness dries up, religion is more in demand. He thinks it is only the outward form of religion, the shell of ritual, empty within. The deceivers like Kalo utilize the weaknesses in the society. The temple becomes popular and Kalo becomes a rich man with all comforts. The novelist points out that people fear about their committed sins so they
spend money and participate in the rituals mechanically with less interest and dedication toward god. Bhattacharya shows how men of wealth with no time or heart for prayer and penance give willingly for ritual, the easier way for than to gain merit.

Bhattacharya points out the blindness of the man who fails to discover the divinity in the world. He reveals the ignorance of man who always gives priority to the worship of idols, stone images and to follow the meaningless rituals and fails to know true Hinduism which always says that the only God to worship is the human soul in the human body. Bhattacharya reminds us the true religion which tells us that we must be pure and help anyone who comes to us, as much as lies in our power. Bhattacharya expresses his desire if that people come out from the dark chambers of their hearts, differences among people will disappear. Bhattacharya shows us the conditions of lower caste people who are treated as mean as insects during his time. Here Bhattacharya resembles us as Mulk Raj Anand’s western and revolutionary ideas.

Bhattacharya’s fourth Novel, *Goddess Named Gold* presents an interesting accounts of the East-West encounter. Atmaram in the novel combines spiritual faith with the modern outlook. He combines in him the past of the past as well the present at a time. We can notice that the past is brought into focus even in the present through this character. Atmaram wants to take change in his people who have lot of evils like beliefs in devils, spirits, horoscopes and miracles said in epics and folktales in them. Bhattacharya points out the ignorance of the Indians who believe blindly in the non-scientific and on reasonable things like miracles or wonders or super natural things in the 20th century. Bhattacharya illustrates two opposite western views in the characters of the Seth and Meera. The set stands for the narrow minded conventional and undemocratic and wolfish exploiters of the poor and the profiteers making money at the cost of poverty stricken people. Whereas Meera stands for the west as she thinks for the dignity of labour and liberty.
Bhattacharya is apprehensive of the bright future and his ray of hope in the ultimate triumph of the democratic values are embodied in the vision of Meera as advocated by the minstrel in a midnight stroll, just before the magical amulet is thrown away by the girl. Atmaram in the novel combines spiritual faith with the modern western outlook.

Bhattacharya’s fifth novel, *Shadow from Ladkh* deals in detail with conflict and compromise between two distinct modes of life represented by Gandhigram and Steeltown. In the beginning, the towns of two poles seem to be incapable of meeting each other. Bhaskar, the young chief engineer of the factory, with his American training, he is highly westernized outlook. We will find that he represents a three dimensional opposition to Satyajit. Bhaskar believes that steel, standing for mass production, is the only solution to India’s growing population. Bhaskar’s fight with Gandhigram is the fight of modern industrialism and campaign for a new way of life. The Chinese invasion justifies Bhaskar’s standpoint and gives added urgency to the execution of his plan. Bhaskar is intelligent and imaginative enough to understand that he may not succeed through mere force. In fact Bhaskar has no personal rancor against Satyajit and he has reverence for him. Satyajit stands for the East but not orthodox. He is wise and experienced. He is a man of objective views. He believes in a harmonious blending of the old and the new. He believes that for a healthy and happy mode of life, there must be an adjustment between the old and the new. Bhaskar is also not a narrow minded man. The success of his plan is indicated by the fact that many of the people of Gandhigram including Sumita.

Bhattacharya mainly concerns with the integration of the traditional and modern values. His concern stresses the conflicts that arise due to the industrialization of an Indian village. The East-West encounter can be studied through the disintegrating impact of western science and technology on the Indian rural community. Bhattacharya deals with two distinct modes of life
represented by steel town and Gandhigram. Steeltown stands for modern western civilization while the second represents the old Eastern values of life.

This novel becomes the study of a rural community in the agony of transition from the traditional agrarian mode of life to the modern industrial way. This encounter does not entail a simple conflict between the East and the West. The East in the preset study is associated with simple rural living while the West is associated with industrialization and modernity. Thus we find a dramatic effect of this encounter on social, economical and political life at the place.

Satyajit and Bhaskar stand for the East and the West. Satyajit is deeply rooted in tradition. From the beginning he is dead against the construction of Steeltown. Therefore, he himself presents before us a graphic account of the sordidness of industrialization. Gandhigram stands for a traditional Indian village. It follows the ideal of selfless service and self help and thus it is called Sevagram which mainly trains people through action alone.

Bhattacharya’s last novel *A Dream in Hawaii* (1978) is an absorbing encounter of the East and West, two sets of values, cultures and life styles. It treats the theme of integration of values more fully. The locale of the novel presents a blending of the old and new values of the East and the West. It examines the clash of values between the East and the West. Bhattacharya synthesizes the spiritual values of India with those of the permissive society in the United States. The novel presents an interesting account of the East-West encounter with a special emphasis on the impact of oriental culture on America. The novelist mainly focuses on the growing sense of disillusionment of the people with materialistic values and culture and their desperate search for inner peace.
Bhattacharya analyses the cultural ethos of the two countries India and America. He exhorts the importance and relevance of amalgamating these two cultures for enjoying the benefits of both the cultures rather than wavering between them. He also exhorts the necessity for blending the old and the new values, the spiritualism of the East and the materialism of the West, for attaining fulfillment. In between birth and death as man oscillates between materialism and mysticism, myth and reality, mortality and immortality, desire and disillusionment in life. Bhattacharya deals with the two opposing poles of physical desire and spiritual bliss.

Bhattacharya depicts two methods of living that are poles apart. He writes about Americans who hope to derive some kind of satisfaction through sex but fail in their attempts and become disillusioned, like Walt Gregson and his counterpart, Naomi who are considered symbols of the sex-obsessed youth of America by Bhattacharya. On reading Kamasutra Naomi experiments with various sexual postures cited there for experiencing the thrills of sex.

Swami Yogananda’s experiences in Hawaii show how the two different ideals could be balanced for bringing about change for the better in the society. Not specifically supporting any one of these two ideals, Hawaii becomes the best meeting ground for the orient and the occident. To get over the difficult situation, Swami Yogananda contemplates on the exigency of Vedanta that could make human life better. Swami Yogananda is also like Swami Vivekananda, in recognizing and propagating India’s significant role as a spiritual guide to the world. Bhattacharya advocates the ideas of Swami Vivekananda through his portrayal of the characters of Devjani and Nishi. There are references to the Indian heritage and culture contrasts between India and America on grounds of their cultures and civilizations. There is also a reference to Kamasutra, the ancient classic of India. *A Dream in Hawaii* establishes a synthesis between the two different worlds.
Bhattacharya is in favour of social and economic justice to women. The female for him is not a weaker sex. According to him, the initial form of life is female. He projects his Indian sensibility and attitude through his women characters in his novels. He combats injustice and ill-treatment meted out to simple, sober, innocent house wives. He focuses on the tragedy of unsuccessful maiden, marital life and of widowhood. He advocates the freedom, liberty, and emancipation of women in order to extricate them from obsequious servitude and inhuman torture to which they were subjected by male sex. His novels voice the need of emancipation of Indian women. His reformist objective is fore grounded in his novels. He champions the causes of Indian women and exposes the deep mental agony of the married and unmarried women in his works. S. I. Hemenway recognizes Bhabani Bhattacharya as writer East-West encounter and compares him with Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan.

“Bhabani Bhattacharya inherits forster’s sharp eye for East-West dichotomies, Anand’s concern with social, economic and political problems, and Naryan’s playfulness and exaggeration”.4

Bhattacharya’s novels evoke pity and sympathy for the socially and sexually tortured women who dare not raise their voice for deliverance from persecution. He attempts to explore into the deeper chamber of the mind that reacts passively and timidly to various forms of oppression. Bhattacharya depicts the Indian women living in an orthodox and conservative family feel inhibited to raise their voice against the society due to their inferiority and the rigid code of conduct imposed on them.

Bhattacharya wondered about the ancestral women like Maitreyi and Gargi who used to stand parallel to their husband on the intellectual part. He wishes that modern women should prove their talents as in the way of ancestral women intellectuals. He depicts the image of the new women for emancipation
and liberation in a fast changing world in his works. In view of women’s miseries Bhattacharya fictionalizes women’s cause with a view to ameliorating their position and releasing them from the state of traditional servitude. He portrays the evils and abuses of customs and traditions that had enslaved married women that rendered them practically helpless and voiceless. He upholds the reaction of women and shows how women endure physical and psychological suffering simply by virtue of their womanliness.

He champions the causes of Indian women and exposes in his works the deep mental agony of married and unmarried women. His *Music for Mohini* is the story that focuses realistically on the inner mind of suppressed women. The novel is seeking to evoke pity and sympathy for the socially and sexually tortured women who dare not raise their voice for deliverance from persecution. He depicts the defects of the Hindu marriage system which depends on asters and horoscopes and leads to utter failure in Indian society. He too depicts the tragedy of child marriage, early widowhood and sterility in marital life of women.

Bhattacharya depicts the image of new women waiting for emancipation and liberation in a fast changing world. In his second novel *Music for Mohini*, Bhattacharya depicts how Mohini—a city bred girl of Calcutta well to do and educated has to marry a young scholar, Jaydev of Behula and live in a tradition bound Big-House. She struggles much to carve out her own identity in the orthodox family. In defiance of many impositions she grapples to introduce the modern concept of values.

Bhattacharya reveals the revolutionary sentiment of an unusual woman character through Mohini. Mohini refuses to accept old and conventional things in the Big-house. Bhattacharya is not a complete anti-traditionalist. He honors the valuable heritage in Indian life at the same time he protests against the absurdities and unwanted customs in the society regarding women.
Rooplekha is another girl like Mohini in the novel, the only sister of Jaydev. This village bred becomes a city wed. She adapts herself for her doctor husband. She alters her habits, dressing and lifestyle. She turns herself to a non-vegetarian from a pure vegetarian stage for sake of her husband.

Sudha is a victimized woman in the novel of “Music for Mohini”. She is crushed by the rigid customs of the Hindu society. She becomes a prey to the meaningless faiths of horoscopes and remains an unmarried. She is an orphan, and brought up by her great-uncle who believes blindly in astrology. This old man rejects a good match for her as the stars of the groom and bride are not matched each other. So Sudha remains unmarried and comes to be nick named in the village as “Saturn he eye sore”. So she remains Saturn’s eyesore, doomed to heart break for no fault of her own. She sobs in the night for her fate.

This neglected girl falls in love with a lower caste boy. But her lover is considered serious by the elders in the village and they do not allow Sudha, blacksmith, a lower caste boy. So the girl grows lopsidedly, scornful of human values. Bhattacharya gives a clear picture of the mental agony of a typical Indian maid who is tortured by the meaningless customs. Bhattacharya gives a clear picture of the mental agony of a typical Indian maid who is tortured by the meaningless customs in the traditional bound society. He points out the evils in the society. He revolts against hypocrisy under age-old-traditions which suppress women for centuries.

Bhattacharya points the out system of polygamy, one of the deep rooted evils in the Indian society to which Paru and Seeta become victims. He points out that women are trapped more and more in the web of myth and lose their sense of self and will and how they are praised as goddesses and are robbed of their glory even though they are still seated on a high pedestal. He satirizes man’s obsession which is to pull them down to earth by having the women sing
their praises and do their will only when the women please them and satisfy their ego-needs.

In his *Goddess Named Gold*, Bhattacharya points out the dual culture in the country where women have been mythically placed upon a high pinnacle while at the same time pulled down to dust in reality. In the novel “Goddess Named Gold”, Lakshmi is a traditional and Hindu wife who always obeys to her husband. The Seth is an opportunist and hypocrite. He always tries to bend his wife by telling her traditions and conventions. Lakshmi turns against her husband for his rude and immoral tendency. She revolts against him for the sake of fellow women who are needy.

Bhattacharya highlights the views of Mahatma Gandhi who always stressed to ensure status of equality for women in the society. He emphasizes the involvement of women in the village development. Bhattacharya reflects Gandhi’s belief in the fundamental equality of man and woman in the sense that both have immortal souls and same intellectual and spiritual potential. Bhattacharya also exposes expectations of Gandhi all around development in a woman and he wants them to grow physically, mentally, spiritually and morally. Bhattacharya reveals Gandhi’s aspiration that women should come forward voluntarily to serve the nation involving them in the public life. He stresses on Gandhi’s opinion of the need for compulsory and free education for girls along with the men.

Bhattacharya denies the general opinion that the men are more independent, ambitious or achievement oriented than women or that women are more nurturing, sociable or suggestible than men are. He opines that male and female are much more similar to one another than they are different, and they share the same fundamental needs, emotions and abilities. Bhattacharya points out that customs, traditions, rituals and values and attitudes which view and
treat women as inferior beings and less desirable than men are discarded and changed, the status and position of the Indian women are not going to improve.

Bhattacharya has identified that Indian society as a very stratified one. The women belonging to upper lower castes, rich and poor classes in Hindu society have their own specific problems and suffer from all those limitations. In his novels Bhattacharya has paid special attention to the problems of women of all classes. Bhattacharya focuses light on the problems of Dalit women for all those women who are either put in the category of Harijans or schedule castes. These women suffer from many types of social disadvantages. Some of them were considered, untouchables. Bhattacharya says that one of the important reasons for this state of affairs is the woeful neglect of their education. Their ignorance is the major threat to their existence.

This situation has been shown through the school scene of Chandralekha in *He who Rides a Tiger*, which explains that the Dalits were constantly reminded that they were the objects of hatred and their salvation lay in the service of the upper castes. He shows in the novel how the higher castes did not allow the dalit children to sit with their own children in the schools and there were no schools exclusively set up for Dalit children.

Chandralekha is the only daughter of Kalo, a blacksmith. Kalo sends her to the local English convent school. She becomes the first student in the school by her performance. But as girl of lower caste she faces insults from the students of higher castes. Her presence is frowned upon. But Chandralekha moves up from one class to another at school. Bhattacharya points out that education of lower castes in India have very much neglected.

Lekha’s story reveals that Bhattacharya is great supporter of the downtrodden. The novel also reveals Bhattacharya’s emphasis on the wish of Gandhi who wants woman to contribute to the communal unity. Bhattacharya
exploits his skill in projecting convincingly the agonized mind of the persecuted women. His portrayal of women characters in the novels invariably bears authenticity to his feminine sensibility, outlook and perspective. His keen observation of life Indian women and their interest in the study of their inner mind is evidenced his vivid panoramic portrayal of their plight. He reached deep into inner mind of the repressed women by virtue of his feminine sensibility and psychological insight and brings to light issues which are the outcome of Indian women’s psychological and emotional imbalances. Bhattacharya’s typical attitude, sentiment and observation which are characteristically Indian in all respects, manifest in the characters of his heroines.

Bhattacharya combats wild justice and ill-treatment meted out to soft, sober and innocent women. He focused particularly on the tragedy of victimized woman hood of the war time. He shows us how the young girls were sexually tortured by soldiers. Kajoli the heroine of So Many Hungers is raped by a soldier in her unconsciousness and left alone to the wild animals in a forest moves the hearts of the readers.

Bhattacharya’s *Music for Mohini* is the story of an Indian woman who undergoes traumatic experiences obsessed by forebodings and mental tension. Bhattacharya explores the turbulent emotional world of the heroine Mohini who constantly suffers from mental conflict to which she is subjected to by strange conditions which are completely different from her previous life under shelter of parentage. She suffers not only from the odd behavior of the orthodox people at in-law’s house; she too suffers from passive behavior of her husband.

In the novel of *Goddess Named Gold* Bhattacharya realistically depicts the glaring evils against women. He artistically depicts the evils of dowry and castes deeply rooted in the system, and they become hurdles in the way of
women’s development. It is the dowry which causes difficulty and distress to girls and their parents. There is an unfortunate old woman who suffers abominably as she is unable to manage to pay dowry for her daughter in *Goddess Named Gold*.

Bhattacharya advocates the freedom, liberty and emancipation of women in order to extricate them from obsequious servitude. He echoes the need of emancipation and education of Indian women. His reformist objective is fore grounded in all of his novels, especially in his *Shadow from Ladakh*. Suruchi is a woman of great vitality, adorned with beauty. She is wife of Satyajit. Through the character of suruchi, Bhattacharya tries to show how an Indian women living in an orthodox and conservative family feels inhibited to raise her voice against dominance of her husband. Bhattacharya shows how such a woman even though highly educated undergoes psychological suffering due to inferiority complex and deep sense of inhibitions.

The portrayal of Suruchi reveals that Bhattacharya is the painter of the inner world. He is not so much interested in registering the surface realities as in the probing of inner truths lying under the surface level. His heroines – Mohini and Suruchi are lonely and alienated in such a dark world. They are hopeless and full of despair. They revolt against existing patterns of life. They reveal bleak and sinister vision of life. Bhattacharya presents marital disharmonies as they exist in Indian male dominated traditional families.

Sometimes his women go through the emotional predicament, mental and spiritual conflict, and domination of the male community, suffering at the hands of their in-laws, marital disharmony and what not. His heroines believe that in spite of disillusionment, disharmony, unfavorable circumstances, life is worth to be lived. They face the realities of life, understand and compromise with it. Mohini and Suruchi accept the thorns of life willingly and try to
overcome them and reach sweet smelling rose. Bhattacharya presents an important reality of life through his women.

Sumita is another important woman character in *Shadow from Ladakh*. She is highly modest and symbol of austerity, for all appearances she is a disciplined. Bhaskar, a young engineer is progressively fascinated by the simple girl and her sterling ualities of head and heart. Bhaskar does not agree with the views of Sumita’s father, Satyajit. He rebels against many aspects of the convention bound life of the average Indian. He is interested in striking at the village Gandhigram which is built and loved by Satyajit, because it is a symbol of conservative reaction and it stands for values which he desires to destroy. But finally Bhaskar is convinced by his beloved Sumita that love can conquer hatred. Symbolic of the reconciliation is the marriage of Sumita and Bhaskar. Sumita becomes bridge. She becomes a link connection between the East and the West.

Bhabani Bhattacharya is one of the Indo-Anglian novelists and short story writers of the period who were witness to dramatic events of the period and had felt the spirit of those times in their own veins have depicted these movements in their writings.

His first novel *So Many Hungers* (1947) reflects an aspect of the freedom movement under the leadership of Gandhi. It deals with the Gandhian ideal of rural reconstruction as a step towards winning Swaraj. The novel presents Bengali life both in its traditional, conservative and its dynamic aspects with convincing sincerity and fascinating power. It portrays so simply and realistically the life and manners of Bengalis. It also affords the author with ample scope for description of scenery for delineation of national types and characters, for reflections of social, political, and economic problems.
There is no doubt that the novel contains many descriptions of Indian life and manners. The picture of life and manners in the novel expound the main theme more markedly. The main theme reflects the national movement for political freedom under leadership of Gandhi. There are also themes of hunger for food and rural reconstruction of India after the ideal of Gandhi. Devesh is introduced here as a character with the ideals of Gandhi and the novelist seems to have done it with a purpose. He wants to show how every village or town during that period had one Gandhi of its own to lead the people by staying in their mist.

The pictures of life and manners in the novel expound the main theme more markedly. The Quit India movement of 1942, The Bengal Famine of 1943 is described in the novel. But Hunger for freedom becomes the main theme in the novel. Mainly the story moves round the two incidents of National Movement and impact of Bengal famine in the history. Bhattacharya presents realistically agonies and frustrations of The Bengal people during famine. Again he succeeds to show the unshivered determination, hard work, active participation and dedication of people in the National Movement.

Devesh Basu in *So Many Hungers* is shown as a great patriot and freedom fighter. He is man of simplicity with full of Gandhian principles. He detaches from his son and family and lives simple life with the village people. The people of Barini love him and honour him by calling him ‘Devata’ (God). Devata becomes philosopher, and guide to the people. He educates them, and trains them as freedom fighters.

Devesh acts as master to the peasant’s family, he refers to Kajoli as his grand-daughter. He educates them, and preaches patriotism. He cultivates moral strength in the country people. He inspires and guides their lives. He shares their joys and supports them in their adversities. He makes them
partners in the national movement and suggests them to be non-violent. He encourages nationalism in his people by saying

“Friends and comrades do not betray the flag. Do not betray yourselves. The supreme test has come. Be strong. Be true. Be deathless. Bandematram!”

Devesh is a Gandhian Character; he inspires the people of Baruni by his speeches and actions. Inspired by his speeches people join voluntarily in national movement. The peasant (whose name is not mentioned) and his son Kanu join in the national movement and go to prison, is just an example to tell the range of influence of Devesh on people of Baruni. It also reveals the novelist’s desire to show how every village had one Gandhi of its own to lead people by staying in their midst.

Bhattacharya shows the realistic pictures that have happened in India during the National Movement. The novel reveals the happenings of the time when everyman voluntarily prepares to go jail so that the country may be free. All classes i.e., poor, middle, and upper classes, old, young, male and female join in the national movement. The theme of hunger for freedom occupies the first place among the other hungers for food, money, etc. in the novel. Bhattacharya has shown the importance of Spiritual strength, if people are spiritually stronger they can defeat any kind of enemy. Devesh like leaders cultivate spiritual strength in the hearts of people. Inspired by Devesh people become stronger and they are ready to die in fasting for the sake of noble aim of Independence. Here Devesh stands as Gandhi and it reveals Bhattacharya’s admiration for Gandhi who leads the nation during freedom struggle with his noble principles and strong will power.
Bhattacharya is imbued with the new spirit of Nationalism. He feels the need of giving expression of glorious age long Indian traditions, peculiar manners and customs in English, so that the foreign readers may learn the distinct identity of India. Bhattacharya is preoccupied with the things that are Indian – Indian themes, Indian characters, Indian life, Indian manners, Indian totem and taboos and all that. His novels have turned out to be propaganda novels of topical interest. His works reveal a search for national identity of Indians.

Bhattacharya writes his works with the purpose of purging society of its harmful practices. His attempt at a reformation is not only an attempt at bringing happiness to individual members of society but also an endeavor to make society like the Indian which is ridden by caste and religious differences, this Endeavour also means an Endeavour for consolidation and integration of various peoples into one race or nation.

Bhattacharya’s novels are social reformative and nationalistic in purpose and spirit. His novels *Music for Mohini, He Who Rides a Tiger, A Goddess Named Gold* and *A Shadow from Ladakh* reveal Bhattacharya’s reformative and nationalistic views. His heroes strive towards political freedom and social emancipation of the weaker sections. Bhattacharya writes for the transformation of modern values into its ancient structure through his works. He desires to change certain aspects which prevent the full development of an individual. He believes in the conviction of Gandhi, that an integrated community can be achieved only through integrated individuals.

Bhattacharya projects his reformative and nationalistic ideas through his second novel *Music for Mohini*. Jaydev, the protagonist of the novel strives for political freedom and social emancipation of the weaker sections. He dedicates his life for the development of his village, Behula. In spite of taking his higher education in city, he stays at home for sake of his village. He always adheres
to his aim. As a master of the village he feels that even married life will be secondary. He always adheres to his aim of development of the village and even he hides his feelings of romance from his wife and keeps himself away from married life for a while and concentrates on his goal. He adulates his wife, Mohini and convinces her by explaining his aim and concept and makes her partner of his ambition. He employs her in the job of eradication of illiteracy in village women.

Jaydev protests against his mother who blindly believes in horoscopes and unwanted age old customs and forces Mohini to follow them. Harindra the young medical man accompanies Jaydev in his reformative tasks. Jaydev and Harindra challenge orthodox custom in the village. Against the orthodox views of the village people Harindra marries Sudha who is forbidden for marriage as her stars are not in favour for her marriage and she is called Saturn’s eye sour.

K.R. Chandrsekharan says –

“One of the major concerns of Bhattacharya in this novel (Music for Mohini) is the need for a change of social outlook and reorientation of social values in India.”

G.P. Sarma says –

“With such a story, the novelist stresses the need for eradicating social evils that are practiced in the name of custom and tradition.”

The life story of Jaydev shows the author’s nationalistic pre-occupation. The story is social and is reformative in spirit especially in regard to the reformative and emancipation of weaker sections in Indian society.
Bhattacharya is preoccupied mainly with three problems of society – the problems of oppression and exploitation of the lowest classes by the upper classes; tyranny and torture by the higher caste of the lower castes of Hindu society; and the ignorance and superstition of the people caused by illiteracy and orthodoxy that are hurdles to the progress of society. In his third novel, *He who rides a tiger* (1955), Bhattacharya has depicted the problems of the poor and backward classes, suggesting the magnitude of the harm it has done by impeding the harmonious growth and development of society as a whole while violating the sense of humanity in a most brutal manner. The oppression and tyranny of high-caste Hindus are all vividly shown here – there ruthlessness, their cruelty, their hypocrisy and their love for mastery and dominance over the low castes. Again this is shown the sad and passive suffering of the low castes with all their agony and pain.

Bhattacharya points out the hypocrisy of the rich in the society who deceive and dominate on the poor. Under disguise of gentlemen and social workers, the hypocrites degrade the values in the society and even they resist the growth of the conditions of the poor in the nation. They cash the weaknesses of hunger and poverty of the weaker sections and even they seduce young women and drag them into loathsome jobs of prostitution. Poor girl Chandra Lekha is deceived and dragged forcefully by the hypocritic class under disguise of gentlemen into prostitution. Bhattacharya protests against capitalism. He supports political and economical equality. He has shown sufferings of the poor at the hands of capitalists and tradesmen. This division of men into two classes and showing the need of a revolution against the monopolies of the rich by the author’s most radical character Kalo in the novel is very significant.

Through the character of B10 Bhattacharya protests and revolts against selfish and orthodox communities who drag always the civilization in the backward direction and they remain as hurdles in the growth of the nation.
Bhattacharya’s *A Goddess Named Gold* deals with happenings in a village during the period immediately preceding India’s attainment of freedom. The novel opens exactly a hundred days before 15th August, 1947. The scene is a village called Sonamitti. The main object of the novelist in the novel is with the way in which a country should use freedom and what benefits may be derived from it. Bhattacharya is looking back on the decade or so which has passed after their attainment of Independence and representing through the medium of his art his assessment of what they have achieved and what they have failed to achieve. Freedom is the golden key which can open magic doors and admit us into a realm in which men think noble thoughts and do kind deeds so that happiness may be the portion of all.

The minstrel is an unusual character and he plays a vital part in this novel which deals with India’s freedom. He is a homeless wanderer at home with large crowds. He is a man among men but deified by a grateful and admiring people. K. R. Chandra Sekharan opines as:

“It may very well be that he is a veiled representation of the father of the Nation.”

Reference to the freedom struggle and Mahatama Gandhi became very common in the works of Bhattacharya. The arrival of the minstrel in the village is the starting pint of important developments. The novel contains a warning that freedom is not an automatic passport to greatness or plenty. It provides an essential climate in which the endeavour of the people will fructify. The minstrel warns as:

“Freedom is the beginning of the road where there was no road. But the new road swarms with robbers.”
The Minstrel assures the people of Sonamitti that freedom is capable of bringing about miracles. No Miracle can happen without effort. The Minstrel stands for Gandhi. The amulet presented to Meera is only a symbol of freedom. What the old man had told Meera about its properties was not meant to be taken literally. It was only a figurative way of indicating that freedom will enable use to make of lives golden provided we are capable of right feeling and right action. While the Minstrel stands for Gandhi and his principles and he becomes a mouthpiece of Bhattacharya. K. R. Chandrasekharan points as:

“Bhattacharya uses the minstrel as a Mouthpiece to voice some of his own views on the use of freedom and the conditions in which freedom can be of value.”

Bhattacharya emphasizes the views of Gandhi that the freedom is not merely political freedom or economic freedom, but freedom of the mind. The minstrel refers to Gandhi’s definition of freedom as ‘a state of the mind’; this phrase is used by the novelist repeatedly in his works.

Bhattacharya’s Shadow from Ladakh reflects the Gandhian thought. The novelist reveals the India’s condition which needs new strategies for its development according to the changing conditions in the contemporary situations. Industrialization is inevitable in the competitive context along with the neighbor countries. The Industrial Revolution, ought not to transform Indian life into a mechanical life in the west. Bhattacharya hopes the amalgamation of ideological views with Western thought of industrialization. The two opposite ideologies, the novelist expects as complementary parts, they can play in the building up of the nation. This theme became the central part of the novel.
Gandhism is represented by the simple rural community of Gandhigram, established by the veteran Gandhian, Satyajit Sen, while industrialization is represented by a young engineer, Bhaskar who is in charge Steeltown, which in the process of its growth to swallow up Gandhigram. The confrontation between Gandhigram and industrialism takes on a political colouring owing to Chinese invasion. The exigencies of war production make the steel town engineers anxious to take over the adjoin Gandhigram. Gandhigram presents a model of rural India as envisaged by Gandhi. Satyajit has been selected by the founder to guide the destinies of this ideal village and to regulate its life so that it may become an example and a source of inspiration to the rest of the country. The growth of Satyajit till almost the end of the novel is a growth in the direction of asceticism and Gandhian idealism.

For all appearances Satyajit is a disciplined Gandhian applying the principles of Gandhian economics and ethics in the regulation of life of Gandhigram and the conduct of his own life. A testing time comes with the launching of Chinese aggression against India. One point of view in the country is that strength can be met only with strength, but Satyajit represents the opposite point of view, namely that physical force may be conquered by spiritual force. He, therefore, uses a weapon from the armory of the opponent himself, the weapon of non-violence. Gandhigram to be won over gradually to the new way symbolized Steeltown. The crisis in the novel comes with Satyajit’s commencement of a fast to death to protest against the Government’s decision to let Steeltown swallow the village. Bhaskar has, in the meantime, unconsciously undergone a profound change.

The novel makes numerous references to Gandhiji’s teachings and his work. Satyajit is a character who tries to mould him and others according to the principles lay down by Gandhi. Gandhi’s championship of celibacy or continence is a doctrine that figures prominently in the novel. Even in the
social life of Gandhigram, the creed finds an echo. The major teaching of Gandhiji that figures in the novel is non-violence.

Bhattacharya has written quite a large number of short stories which have been collected and published in multiple volumes. His short stories fascinate the readers with the universality of their appeal, authenticity of felt experience and in particular their inexhaustible comedy. Bhattacharya has clear preference for the short story as an asset form. He enjoys writing a short story because, unlike the novel, it does not require a long consistent effort. He was indeed, not only a prolific writer but a versatile one. In his profound literary career he has produced many short stories and translations besides the six novels.

Bhattacharya proved himself to be one of the greatest prose writers in Indian writing in English. He spoke for millions; and in age of very great men he was recognized as one of the most outstanding. Certainly he excelled all of them in his restless, almost fierce energy. His energy was, indeed, boundless. His works have been translated into almost all the important Indian, European, and non-European languages.

Bhattacharya relied on the sources of history and for Gandhi’s work, he appears to have relied completely on the original works of Gandhiji, and was much benefited by the meaningful discussions with the most distinguished novelist Ethel Manning and Prof. George Catlin and Prof. Geoffrey Ashe. He received valuable suggestions and considerable help from individuals like Louis Fisher, Tendulkar, K.M.Munshi and Pyarelal. Bhattacharya shows us the simplicity of Gandhi’s style is unique in the annals of Indo-Anglian literature, more than the impact of his style, his impact of the theme and aspects of his life is profound on his contemporaries.
Bhattacharya’s technique as a novelist is based on the traditional novel of a number of English, American, Scottish and the Indian predecessors. Bhattacharya never fails to captivate the subtleties and surrounding nuances that light up the facts of life. He not only describes and explains but also dramatizes incidents and creates characters which are very vivid and realistic. Bhattacharya is a conscientious artist and he is most methodical in his work. His capacity for creative writing is surprisingly tremendous.

Bhattacharya has proved himself a consummate artist in his novels and his contribution in this respect to Indo-Anglian fiction is remarkable and cannot be denied. As a portrayer of the life of the Indians, he is unique. Bhattacharya has managed to pierce through the political and ethical attitudes of the people to the human depths beyond. He generally concentrates on a small upper-class; the qualities on which he emphasizes have a universal significance. Though a lover of tradition, he is not against every modernity, progress and development.

Within his limited sphere he has achieved a vision of simple, normal human relations. There are many scenes in his novels which are very sensitive and touching. His heroes are larger than themselves as they are both individuals and types Bhattacharya does not lead his reader to an interest in character for its own sake like some extreme realities and psychological novelists, nor does he neglect to deal at sufficient length with the motivation of characters and working of their minds. He is not an allegorist to fill his characters with ideas and attitudes drawn from philosophy and theology.

The titles of the novels of Bhattacharya show how conscious he is of his art and technique. They are not causal or simple or plain. But they are highly suggestive and deeply symbolical and throw light on the direction and meaning of the novels. Whatever he writes about be it war, army, rural life, city life, bureaucrats, criminals, the English and Indians, he writes it most authentically and authoritatively. His style is characterized by lucidity, precision and
control; quickness, confidence, eagerness and masterly control over vocabulary. His main concern is with humanity, but not the average and democratic but unusual and exceptional in human experience and tradition and the disintegration of these values is disheartening to him. In keeping with his choice of subject and vision Bhattacharya chooses his own form and style.

Bhattacharya has achieved a style which is special. He manages to avoid monotony by not having a long succession of too many short sentences and saves the reader from bogging down in a quagmire of extremely long sentences running to several lines. The variety is secured sometimes by an alternation of short and long sentences and sometimes by varying the structure of the sentence. There are loose sentences, period sentences, and balanced sentences in his works. His sentence or paragraph hours the claims exerted upon it by the total composition.

Bhattacharya has a pronounced preference for simple and effective words which make his style very distinctive and at the same time he does not ignore the utility of abstract the general words. He makes a judicious use of both. His passages of description and narration thrive on the specific and concrete words; his passages of exposition and argument find a use for abstract and general words. His economy and control over his medium is admirable.

His ability to use the English language with subtlety and sensitivity, his story telling skill, his deeply particularizing quality of imagination, his capacity to embody Indian experience and sensibility make his talent a rare and significant sort. His wide and varied experiences of life in Indian life, his fiction is Indian in the deepest sense; it shows Indians experiencing mysticism. Indian culture free or take profundity and mysticism.
Bhattacharya’s works reveal that his style is not only indisputable personal and distinctive, but often rise to high literary achievement. The success of a novel, or indeed of any other form of literature, is a success of any other form of literature, is a success of the language used, the success of the manipulation and exploitation of the resources of style, because it is through style that the plot and character and the point of view come alive and impinge on the consciousness of the reader.

His style is richly Indian. He draws his similes from Sanskrit literature, and mostly from vernacular speech and folk-lore. Even the sentence patterns are molded on the basis of the regional language so that they are far from idiomatic English expressions. His style carries an exotic flavor to the Western reader. Being an Indian to the core and adopting English as his medium of expression, he contributes not a little to the English style. His style has an ambitious motto behind it. He wishes to capture the grandeur and sublimity. There is little occurrence of word juggling in his style. While expressing the inexpressible truth, Bhattacharya employs such a style which seems to partake of the intricate nature of the thought.

Each of his works brings out a profound truth and the narration is done in the typical Indian way of storytelling. His works apart from giving a taste of Indian stories and story-telling have a definite purpose and are deliberately woven in to perfect shape. Clarifications and comments on the profound philosophical disquisitions are found in his works. A complete picture of the Indian marriage is given when Mohini is married in the novel Music for Mohini. His narrative technique may not reveal the charm of a well-pruned and artificially laid garden but they certainly possess the awesome splendor of a forest, cultivation lands and Sheppard’s farm with their beauty that is natural, wholesome and bewildering.
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