



ISSN 2349-638X

REVIEWED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

**AAYUSHI
INTERNATIONAL
INTERDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH JOURNAL
(AIIRJ)**

MONTHLY PUBLISH JOURNAL

VOL-I

ISSUE-VI

Nov.

2014

Address

- Vikram Nagar, Boudhi Chouk, Latur.
- Tq. Latur, Dis. Latur 413512
- (+91) 9922455749, (+91) 9158387437

Email

- editor@aiirjournal.com
- aiirjpramod@gmail.com

Website

- www.aiirjournal.com

CHIEF EDITOR – PRAMOD PRAKASHRAO TANDALE

Bhabani Bhattacharya's Concept Of Social Realism In His Novels

Mr.B. N. Hiramani

S. P. K. Mahavidyalaya,

Sawantwadi.

Dist. Sindhudurg (M.S.)

Abstract:

Bhabani Bhattacharya is one of the leading Indian novelists in English. He has both fictional and nonfictional works to his credit. His novels have received much critical attention in India and abroad. Bhattacharya is a conscious writer who has sensitive understanding of the problems of contemporary Indian society. He is a humanist who has used realism to communicate his humanistic vision of life. The novels of Bhattacharya appeared at intervals between 1947 and 1978. So many Hungers (1947), Music for Mohini (1952), He who Rides a Tiger (1955), A Goddess Named Gold (1960), Shadow from Ladakh (1966) A dream in Hawaii (1978), are his novels, Steel Hawk and other stories (1968) is a collection of his short stories. Gandhi the Writer: the Image as it Grew (1969) is a literary biography. Bhattacharya won the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award for his novel Shadow from Ladakh.

Key Words: Traditions, Casteism, Orthodoxy, Social Realism, Fiction.

Dr. Bhattacharya is a novelist who is much interested in the problem of social change. His novels explore the realities of life in the country. His sensitive understanding of the problems of contemporary Indian society is an outcome of his minute observation of the common folks. A careful observation of the life of the people is necessary for writing social novels. Bhattacharya himself was a man of keen observation of the life and behavior of the masses of the people. "Unless a writer has keen observation and an eye for details of general behaviour of folks, he cannot write a social novel. I have developed this habit and I have not missed a single opportunity of observing incidents, happenings where I can gain something for the writer in me" says Bhattacharya. Art should convey truth, "a truth of emotion, which is the ultimate realism". According to him, "the creative writer's final business is to reveal the truth". The writer portrays the reality of life through the devices of dramatization. Bhattacharya is a creative writer who renders and faithfully picture of various aspects of life in the country. His novels are not merely photographic records of social, political and economic life of the people but an imaginative picture of life.

Bhattacharya is a novelist with a humanistic vision of life. He upholds humanism both in principle and practice. In an interview, he clarifies his stand as a novelist: " I hold that a novel must have a social purpose. It must place before the reader something from the society's point of view. Art is not necessary for art's sake. Purposeless art and literature which is much in vogue does not appear to me a sound judgement." The novels of Bhattacharya embody, as K.K. Sharma has rightly pointed out, "a transparently positive vision of life". Which is obviously humanistic. One comes across moving scenes of poverty and suffering of the people and the heartlessness of the rich in his novels. Bhattacharya is full of indignation for the parasites of society. His novels explore the causes of human suffering and their possible remedies. He feels sympathy for the poor and the downtrodden and suggests ways and means for the improvement of human life in general.

So Many Hungers was inspired by the 1943 famine of Bengal. Dr. Bhattacharya recalls. "The great famine swept down upon Bengal. The emotional strings I felt (more than two million men, women and children died of slow starvation amid a man-made scarcity, were a sheer compulsion to creativity. The result was the novel *So Many Hungers*". A real picture of the contemporary national and international scene is presented here. The novel offers graphic details of the man-made tragedy and the struggle for freedom during the Quit India Movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. One finds a very rich description of both the trivial and the sublime aspects of human life.

The suffering of the people migrating to Calcutta, the misery of the Indian farmer living in poverty, various phases of national movement, the works of rural reconstruction find real description in the novel.

Bhattacharya's second novel, *Music for Mohini*, deals with the problems of India after independence. The action of the novel covers the period after 1948. The social problems that is treated here is relevant even today. The conflict between orthodoxy and modernity receives emphatic treatment here. Mohini is the central character. The novel is a psychological study of her intellectual and emotional growth. Mohini is a modern, sophisticated girl who has absorbed in her personality the time-honoured values of Indian culture. Her mother-in-law is an orthodox woman. The absurd beliefs and practices of our society are nicely exploded in the novel. The novelist pleads for a change. Social problems like casteism, untouchability, Widow – remarriage and prevention of child marriages are sought to be wiped out. Jayadev, a social reformer, is bent upon seeing his village an ideal one. It is believed that political freedom without social freedom has no meaning. : Our political freedom is worth little without social freedom". The worn-out practices which obstruct the progress of the country are severely attacked.

He who Rides a Tiger, the third novel by Bhattacharya, presents a true picture of pre-independent Indian Society. The Bengal famine and the Quit-India Movement are the inspiring sources behind the novel. Like so many Hungers, the novel describes the sufferings of the homeless destitute. The two novels deal with the painful effect of the famine on the lives of individuals. People grudge to feed the destitute, but fill the bowls of the Sadhus in saffron lion-cloth, do not care for the cries of the children dying of hunger"... While men died of hunger, wealth grew, and while kindness dried up, religion was more in demand, it was only the outward form of religion, the shall of ritual, empty within, That suited Kalo's purpose". The novel is primarily a story of protest against the ill-treatment of the poor by the rich. The protest is against two prevalent evils – the evil of exploitation and the evil of caste. Kalo and Bitten protest against exploitation and caste respectively. Kalo, a dark-skinned blacksmith, is full of revenge. The erection of fake God and fake temple and the role of a dud Brahmin priest and the humiliation of the highcaste people are the measures of his revenge. Kalo strives for social emancipation and abolition of age-old caste barriers. He invests himself with Brahmin hood, and uses society's own strength against it. The novel states how the struggle for independence assumes the dimension of mass struggle. The whole country is prepared to go to jail. "Great demonstrations were to be seen in the streets everyday. They were not composed of down and outs, among the hunger-marchers", as Bitten called them, "were men from workshops, students from colleges, clerks from offices ... Those men were drawn from all social levels down to the blunderer. K.R.S. Iyengar remarks on the main features of the novel: The tempo of life in this most populous of Indian cities – the complex of urban vices and the thin veneer of urban sophistication, the pressure of mass movements and mass- hysteria, the reign of superstition and mumbo-jumbo gives the novel and eerie and piquant quality all its own.

A Goddess Named Gold is Bhattacharya's next novel which narrates the happenings in a village during a period of hundred days preceding independence. The Freedom Movement forms the back ground of the novel. It presents an interesting picture of rural India. It is a satire on man's greed for wealth and shows how spiritual values like sympathy and kindness are used for earning gold. It is a modern fable, presenting as it does a real picture of tremendous awakening among the people who crave for social and economic equality. The novelist exposes people's belief in superstitions and miracles.

Shadow from Ladakh portrays India during the Chinese invasion in 1962. The theme is based on a contrast between rural and urban life, between steel town and Gandhigram, between Satyajit and Bhasjkar. The novel pleads for a synthesis between the spinning wheel and the spindle. The novel shows people's concern to preserve the freedom of the country. It also examines the question of Tibet's freedom and reflects the Indian national character. Indians as a race believe in the universal

brotherhood. An integration of values of the old and the new world is necessary. The industrialization of the country is needed but the preservation of the spiritual values enshrined in Gandhism is also equally needed. A re-adjustment of values is emphasized in the novel. Satyajit and Bhaskar represent the two modes of life. The novelist pleads for an acceptance of life and vehemently opposes a denial of it. A life of joy and hope is possible through the ideal of synthesis in human life. One of the characters makes a very clear statement: "Integration of the simple and the sophisticated and the ancient and the modern, city and village, East and West".

A Dream in Hawaii is a satire on the life in the West and the East. The Western Society is in peril on account of its self-induced venom called progress. People take tranquilizers to overcome tension and turn to the East with high expectations. The novelist is critical of life in India too which is marked by superstitions and hypocrisy. The novel deals with the tension and falsehood of the modern world. It brings out the importance of the Indian philosophy of action free from desire for fruit. Action without the desire for its results is the testament of Indian faith.

Thus it is evident that the novels of Bhattacharya explore the social and political realities of life in the country. They examine the social and economic problems of the people arising out of hunger, poverty, famine, exploitation, war and peace, imperialism and nationalism. Bhattacharya is least interested in philosophical abstractions and is largely devoted to the depiction of various aspects of social reality. A staunch humanist in Bhattacharya is at work throughout his novels. His approach to the problems of life is always positive. There is always an affirmation of life amidst suffering. The various types of hunger and his plea for different kinds of freedom are essentially an outcome of his humanistic attitude.

Reference:

1. B. Bhattacharya, The Sunday Standard (April 27, 1969),
2. B. Bhattacharya, "Literature and Social Reality", The Aryan Path, XXVI, No.9 (September 27, 1955)
3. Sudhakar Joshi, "An Evening with Bhabani", The Sunday Standard (April 27, 1969),
4. Bhabani Bhattacharya, So Many Hungers (1947, Orient paper backs, 1978),
5. Bhabani Bhattacharya, Music For Mohini (1952, Orient paper backs, 1984)
6. K.R.S. Iyengar, Indian Writing in English (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1984)

ISSN 2349-638X

www.aiirjournal.com