

Sensitive Issues Flowed in Manohar Malagonkar's 'A Bend in the Ganges'

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Abstract: *The present paper tried to discuss sensitive issues depicted in Manohar Malagaonkar's 'A Bend in the Ganges'. It is learnt that Indian freedom struggle became a historical event in the Indian socio-polity but also on the world map. During Indian freedom movement partition took place. The consequences of partition, Hindu-Muslim communal riots, loss of lives to get freedom have been discussed in the paper.*

Key Words: : Sensitive issues, Partition, Freedom Movement, Sepoy Mutiny, British reign, Colonial rule

1. INTRODUCTION:

Manohar Malgaonkar, a versatile writer put a strong impression in Indian Writing in English. He is known for his novels which depict issues like struggle for freedom, sepoy mutiny, partition and non-violence etc. 'A Bend in the Ganges' is one of his most discussed novels and Manohar Malagaonkar depicted sensitive issues of Hindu-Muslim and partition in it. It is a story of Indian freedom struggle and love towards nationalism. The novel deals with why and how the freedom movement turned into a terrorist movement which was not predicted and not expected in India during British reign. With imagery characters, the whole novel has been interwoven with episodes and characterization. Indians achieved their goal and got freedom by sacrificing uncountable lives who struggled for freedom of the nation. It is the real victory against colonial rule. Ultimately British turned back towards their motherland-England. After a close study, Indira Bhatt realised as, "The novel is, in fact, a testament of 'The tangle of feelings and relationship' against the background of the freedom movement and partition holocaust".¹ (Bhatt, Indira, 1993-94)

Basically Manohar Malgaonkar was a Marathi and versatile writer in English. As he served in Indian Military as Lieutenant colonel saw swadeshi movement as well as freedom movement. To implement Swadeshi people of India already started to hate British and boycotted foreign goods. The novel opens with the slogan of "Boycott British goods", in the whole country on the call of Mahatma Gandhi. Another powerful slogan, "Bharat Mata Ki Jai", gives expression to the fire of freedom that was burning in the heart of the Indian masses "just one of the hundreds of thousands of similar fires all over the country".² (Manohar Malgonkar, 1967) Gian Talwar, Brahmin fellow support swadeshi and remove his valuable cloth prepared in foreign and throw in to fire. The opening lines tell us all about movement against British in India.

With his imaginary characters Malagaonkar created interest among readers to read till the last page of his 'A Bend in the Ganges'. "This non-violence, there seems to be due mainly to our helplessness. It almost appears as if we are nursing in our bosoms the desire to take revenge the first time we get the opportunity. Can true, voluntary non-violence come out of this seeming forced non-violence of the weak? Is it not a futile experiment I am conducting? What if, when the fury bursts, not a man, woman, or child is safe and every man's hand is raised against his neighbour?" ("A Bend in the Ganges, Author's note)

One has to appreciate Manohar Malagaonkar's fluency and flair writing skill as well as a disciplined man of the Indian military. "Malgaonkar is a creative writer and wrote a number of novels, some books of history and collection of short stories. Malgaonkar was a novelist with an accomplished technique. Malgaonkar's novels are well constructed. His novels are much closed to Indian History which provides information and knowledge about incredible India. Malgaonkar raises the fundamental issues of the meaning of violence and Non-Violence through his novels".³

The author elucidates on the issues like humanity, Non-Violence, Violence, disintegration and communal disharmony in the present novel. Shakti Batra opines as "unlike Khushwant Singh, Malgaonkar...presents the political side of the Partition from the point of view of Gain, the ardent disciple of Gandhi and his creed of nonviolence; Debidayal, the terrorist, and Hafiz Khan and Shafi Usaman, the

communalists. Malgaonkar's account takes ...than something which emerges out of the characters themselves and their convictions. This 'detachment' also marks his narration of the partition riots, when they are compared to similar descriptions by Khushwant Singh."⁴

Malagaonkar says common man's opinion with his characters. "He nurses the popular Muslim beliefs that they are the superior race and that in the absence of the British regime they will become the second rate citizens amidst the Hindu dominated administration. His disguise as a Sikh is now disgusting to him, Shafi also hates the Congress, and Independence through the Congress is unacceptable to him. He believes along with the millions of other Muslims: 'The Congress had been desperate to grab power and create an India ruled only by the Hindus so that they could ride roughshod over the Muslims who once ruled them. It was the vengeance of sheep The Muslims would never agree. To them, independence was worth nothing unless it also ensured freedom from the domination of the Hindus. They would never live in an India where they were only a tolerated minority'".⁵

Some of them think that Gandhi's message of non-violence has lost its deeper significance and that as an ideology it is ineffective in practical situations. G.S. Amur accuses "Malgonkar of ignoring the non-violence of the strong which demands a greater heroism than violence itself".⁶(Amur) Asnani agrees with Amur in accusing the novelist of focusing only on the superficial aspects of non-violence when it is commented that Malgonkar is "...biased and influenced by his own personal predilections".⁷

Much discussed subject nonviolence flowed around the novel. If Manohar Malgonkar gives such an impression that he discredits non-violence, according to James Y. Dayananda, it is mainly because he wants to tell the whole story from the point of view of his revolutionary characters who condemn non- violence as "the philosophy of sheep".⁸

It has been seen in our country that people try to use the same weapon to curb violence in our society. Mahatma Gandhi appealed to use weapon nonviolence but it is almost rare in our country. Malgonkar, at no stage, has rejected the philosophy of non- violence. On the other hand, the novel demonstrates that violence is self- consuming and self-destructive. N.S.Gundar is of the view that "...violence only breeds violence..."⁹ To Ambuj Kumar Sharma, the novel "...is not the refutation of Mahatma's ideology of non-violence".¹⁰ Pradhan agrees with him when he says A Bend in the Ganges is a powerful indictment of violence"¹¹.

People did struggle for a safe homeland away from the India-the partition. All these form the contents of the novel. The novel is open with the chapter echoes the words of freedom 'Boycott British good', 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai', 'Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai'.¹² Meenakshi Mukherjee remarks: ...are shaped by two factors: the forces of history, and the elements of their personalities. Gian who adopts his policy to suit every circumstance, by cringing, deceiving, humiliating himself, bending with every wind, finally 102 withstands the storm, while Debi Dayal is broken because he refuses to make a compromise with circumstances".¹³ Whereas M. Rajagopalachari strongly believes that the novelist does not favour violence in any way when he says "Mahohar Malgonkar, does not, however, uphold violence as a way of life. In the death of Debidayal, Malgonkar discards violence by revealing its self-consuming nature".¹⁴

Manohar Malagaonkar left a strong foot print by writing this novel which related to many sensitive issues. Rituparna Roy says, "This novel is not just one of the most popular novels written on the Partition, but it is also one of the best-known texts in the whole canon of Indian English Fiction".¹⁵ He also feels the demand of a safe borne land for the Muslims a great necessity. He now fully agrees with the Hafiz's earlier statements. The Hindus have to be eliminated: "Now the fight was no longer against the British, but against the Hindus who were aspiring to rule over them. It was Jihad a war sanctioned by religion, a sacred duty of every true believer."¹⁶ "By raising this question at the end of the novel, Malgonkar hinted that the achievement of freedom through militant action would have been a better and honest way than the path of non- violence".¹⁷

2. CONCLUSION:

'A Bend in the Ganges' novel written by Manohar Malagaonkar is really flowed in the minds of Indian reader. He discussed communal and nationalism and tried to depict ten current situation of India during partition. People misguided and misunderstood situation. They left their belongings and crossed the border with age old memories who lived with Hindus as bhai bhai. Politics made them to leave the land and invisible wall constructed between two nations. Non violence and love for motherland are sacred things.

Manohar Malagaonkar succeeded in his effort to depict most sensitive issues in his novel 'A Bend in the Ganges'.

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