

Contribution of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay on the Development of Bengali Literature

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Abstract: Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was one of the prominent writer and Novelist in the 19th Century. During this period, Bengali literature broke the all barriers of medieval complexities and superstition and came into the light of Modern literature. He was highly educated and influenced by oriental thoughts and ideas. In this writings, he focuses on the simple life of Bengali rural class society. 'Anandamath' is his greatest achievement. In 1875, he wrote 'Bande Mataram' Song. This song works as a fuel in fire in National Movement. In this Article, I have discussed the contribution of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay on Bengali literature.

Key Words: National Movement, Bengali Literature, oriental thoughts, Anandamath, BandeMataram.

1. INTRODUCTION:

At the beginning of Bengali Modern literature novelist Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was the first person who started a new era in the history of Bengali literature. He was born on the 27th June, 1838 in the Kathalpara Village of 24thParganas District. He belonged from an orthodox Brahmin family. His father Yadav Chandra Chattopadhyay was a deputy collector in the Midnapure District. The word Bankim Chandra in Bengali means- 'The Moon on the second day of the Bright fortnight'. Bankim Chandra was especially interested in Sanskrit language. In earlier times, he was influenced by the ideology of Voltaire, Hume, Rousseau and John Locke etc. For his contribution in the Bengali literature he is known as 'sahitya-samrat' or the emperor of literature. (1)

In Kathalpara Village, Vishwambhar Bhattacharya was appointed as his first teacher. He gave him the idea of basic education. After that he went to Midnapure District and took admission in an English School. He completed his graduate degree from Presidency College in Arts. Bankim Chandra and Jadunath Bose were the first generation graduated from the University of Calcutta. After complete the education life, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was appointed for the post of deputy Collector, just like his father, of Jessore. British Government honoured him with the titles of 'Rai Bahadur' in 1891 and 'Companion of the Most Eminent order of the Indian Empire' (CMEOIE) in 1894.

Nineteenth century was the age of creation in that time many social reformer, prominent writers and leaders started their activities. Western education was spread among the Bengali middle class families. People could be inspired by nationalism. Many leaders were published their newspapers in their vernacular language. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was the first person who brought a new way in the history of modern Bengali literature. His writings were the inspiration of millions, they pushed themselves to nationalism. His first writings were 'Lalita', 'Manas', but these were not the successful works. He wrote his first novel in English 'Rajmohan's Wife' (1864), in this novel, a beautiful and passionate girl Matangini, she fall in love with her sister's husband, represent the validity of women who remain strong in the face of brutality and the confining expectations of middle class society. BankimChandra's vivid description of the routine of Bengali household provide a revealing portrait of life in the 19th century.

Bankim Chandra wrote 14 novels and many essays. We can divide these novels into three categories. His first step of writing was started from 1865 and it continues to 1873 AD. In this time, he wrote Durgeshnandini (1865), Kopalkundala (1866), Mrinalini (1869). After that the second step started from 1873 with the hands of 'Vrishabiksha' (1873) and continued till 1878 AD. Other major works of this time were Indira (1873), Yugalangariya (1874), Chandrasekhar (1875), Rajani (1877), Krishnakanter will (1878). The last step was started from 1882 and continued till 1887. Rajsinho (1882), Anandmath (1882), Debi Choudhurani (1884), Radharani (1886), Sitaram (1887) are the best from this period.

'**Durgeshnandini**' is the first Bengali novel which he wrote, published in 1865. It was the triangle love story occurred between Jagatsingh (a Mughal General), Tillotoma (a daughter of Bengali feudal lords) and Ayesha (a daughter of Bengal Pathan), this story was based on Mughal – Pathan conflict during the time of Akbar in Bengal region. This novel was the first famous work of Bankim Chandra. It is attracted by people's mind. Sukumar Sen wrote, "...the tale was something that was wholly new and entirely delightful. The pseudo-Historical background was a justification for a pure love romance intended for readers who knew only married love". **Kopalkundala**' is another famous Bengali novel, written by him and published in 1866, it was based on the love between Kapalkundala, a forest dwelling girl who fell in love with Nabakumar, who lived in Saptagram (modern day PachimMidanapur district, West Bengal). After that they married and came in Saptagram, but here kapalkundala survive many family problems. Bankim Chandra exposed the condition of social life of women and conflict between 'Two Satin'.

Though Durgeshnandini and Kapalkundola highlight on the condition of society but the time period of these stories are from ancient and medieval time. But '**Vrishabiksha**' (1873) is totally separated from these two novels, it exposed the conservative society of 19th century Bengal. With this novel stated a new style in the history of modern Bengali literature. Bankim Chandra mentioned the last line of 'Vrishabiksha' (The Poison Tree) as---

'Amra Vrishabiksha somapto korilam vorosha Grihe Grihe Amrita Folibe'.(2)

Bankim Chandra's greatest achievement was '**Anandamath**' which was published in 1882 and later it was published in Bangodarshan Paper (1883). Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay said that he collected the sources for this particular novel from 'Annals of Rural Bengal' written by W. W. Hunter, 'Memoirs of the life of Warren Hastings' of George Gleig. It brought a new revolution in the history of Bengali literature. This novel was inspired by national youth leaders. Bankim Chandra explain the conditions of society, Sanyasi Revolt of 1760, the Bengal famine (1770) etc. Anandamath played a crucial role of concretising and strengthen of the national identity of the people. In this novel, He tried to abolish the Caste system and encouraged all the people for Independence. Here, in this novel, Satyananda Said

*'Tomra Jatityag korite paribe? Sokol santan
E jatiyo mohabrote Brahman, Sudro vicharnai' (3)*

The patriotic song of '**Bande Mataram**' was originated from this Novel. According to Isha Tirky, The song is a reiteration of the original bounty and nurture of motherland in the image of Durga the demon flying goddess asking her soul to bring back strength.(4) During the time of Swadeshi Movement (1905), this song became very popular, every people sung this song for their motherland's freedom. Rabindranath Tagore was sang this song in the Calcutta (Modern Day – Kolkata) session of Indian National Congress in 1896. National leader and Philosopher Sri Aurobinda Ghose referred it 'as a National Antham'. This song was one of the protest song of Indian Independence Movement. Sarala devi Chowdhurani sang this song in Banaras session of National Congress in 1905. Lala Lajpat Ray, Matangini Hazra, Vikhajikama, Horilal Sen and most of the prominent leaders were sang this song. They tried to saw the holy land as their mother and worshiped as 'Mata' or 'Bharat Mata'. During this time British Government became afraid to see these national activities. They banned the song. In 1884, Bankim Chandra wrote in 'Devi Choudhurani' that 'Bhabanipathak's accomplishments to build profullo's personal character. Bankim explain here Devi Choudhurani's establishment in front of public, we can understand it from this line -

*'Eso Eso Profullo, Ekbar Lokaloye Darao
Amra tomaydekhi' (5)*

Bankim Chandra's essays are divided into four categories. These are – (1) Literature, (2) Personal, (3) History and Economic, (4) Philosophy and literature. These essays were republished in two parts, first part in 1887 and second part in 1892. The first part was based on literature. Here, we can see the historical values of the Bengali literature. The second part was based on society, religion, and history.

In 1875, He wrote '**Kamala Kanter Daptar**', it was his personal essay. In this essay, Kamalakanta was an opium addicted Person. He got his poetic energy after take opium. Kamalakanta was highly educated person but he didn't got a good Job, that's why society look him as an unsuccessful person. Bankim Chandra explains here his poetical, patriotic and philosophical ideology and the condition of society. It was a wonderful example for his prose Style. His essay was '**Krishnacharitro**' (1886) where he explains Krishna was the ideal person. He also discusses about Hinduism

and believes the existence of God. 'Uttaramcharita', 'Gitikavya', 'Vidyapatiabong Joyadeva' etc. are important works written by him. One side Iswar Gupta criticized his creative minds of poem writings. He wrote about real life related literature.

During the time of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's writings in Bengali literature came to touch the light of modern literature. Here I discuss about his writing features---Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's era was self-liberation and self-establishment. It was exposed in his novel writings.

- Bankim Chandra explained the woman character play a different typesrole in his novels. Sometimes they complete their duties, sometimes the woman character being politely and educated. Some of the portion in his novels, we can see women became more powerful and they took arm for their land.
- Bankim Chandra was influenced by Voltaire, Hume, Rousseau, Locke etc. Western philosopher. Western English education was spread in India in 18th century. Another side he was deeply influenced by Sanskrit language and literature. That's why in his writings, we can find many similarities between the mixture of Orientalist and Anglicist.
- In the contemporary time, we saw the conservative people who believe some superstitions; Bankim Chandra was the first person who wrote against it. He always protests against unethical rituals practised in Bengal.
- Bankim Chandra's novel writings are a wonderful work. He wanted to find the Society through Depiction.
- He is the first writer who wrote about patriotism Song, inspired all the people for nationalism.
- He explains in novel where some love has been moderated by ideals.
- The language of his novel is the result of very conscious thinking.

2. CONCLUSION:

Bankim Chandra brings a new way on Bengali literature in his writings. Since then, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, Manik Banerjee and many other poets, novelists and writers appeared one by one, under whose hands a new era of Bengali literature grown. Sri Aurobindo wrote in his memory – "The Earlier Bankim was only the poet and stylist and later Bankim was a seer and nation builder". Bankim Chandra's writings first shake the people's mind and changed their thinking. From childhood time, He wrote many poem and prose in 'SambhatPravakar'. In alias of Kamalakanta, He wrote his books. During 42 years he continued his literary practice. According to Rabindranath Tagore, "*Bankim Chandra Anlen Sat – Somudro parer Rajputroke Amader Sahitye Kanyar Palonker Siyore. Tini Jemoni Thekalen Sonar Kathi, Omoni Sei Bijoy Basonto. Laila Maznur Hatir Date Badhano Palonker Upornore Uthlo. Chaltikaler Songe Tar Malabodol Hoyegelo. Tarpore Theke Take Er Ke Thekiye Rakheke??*"

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