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NATIONAL AWAKENING IN BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTERJI'S *ANANDAMATH*



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RESEARCH PAPER

Bankim Chandra Chatterji is one of the pioneers of historical novels in Bengal; indeed he called as 'Scot of Bengal'. His all major works has written originally in Bengal, later translated into English. Bankim arose during the light of Renaissance in Bengal, his significant contributions as a novelist to inspire the youth and produced stupendous novels in Bengali. His *Anandamath* has written in 1882, based on the sanyasis rebellion against the British rule, who was the enemy of the country. It also contained *Bande Mataram* 'Hail Motherland' which is the national song of India and also inspirational song for youths in the national freedom movement. Bankim is generally recognized as a prolific writer of Bengali literature. His major works are *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) in English, *Durgesh Nandini* (1865), *Kapal Kundala* (1866), *Krishnakanter Will* (1878), and

Anandamath (1882). *Anandamath* originally has written in Bengali, translated by Basant Koomar Roy was first published in 1941; first it translated as *Abbey of Bliss*.

Anandamath encourages an idea and principle of nationalism in late eighteenth century. He was the creator and originator of Hindu nationalism. Mulk Raj Anand remarks in his conversation with Rabindranath Tagore that; 'this novel is a legend of the struggle for freedom and the passion behind it seems to reflect Bankim's vision of free India.' (15) It provokes the truths of political slavery, of social exploitation and of economic bondages, indeed it re-awakening of India from all these atrocities of the society. This book has been hailed the title as the first patriotic novel ever written in Bengali as well as in English. *Anandamath* essentially has divided into four parts in a creative narration. The story of this novel deals with the sanyasi rebellion against Mir Jafar, the ruler of Bengal and the struggle for independence which claimed in 1770 the starting years of British rule in Bengal for their tax collections during Warren Hastings was the Governor-General of Bengal. Bankim Chandra elaborates the story with his idea and concept of Hindu rastra or Hindu nationalism at the first time in Indian literature. The tale begins with the description of the landlord of Padachina village, Mahendra Singh and his wife Kalyani. They have been starving, it takes them to disease, destruction and finally to death.

Bankim's urged to create a story of heroism and bravery based on the historical evidences which found in Bengal. This fact could be attained when Mahendra Singh and Bhavan have being gone in the dense forest; Bhavan is a sanyasi who sings a song on mother India 'Mother, hail! Thou with sweet springs flowing, Thou fair fruits bestowing, Cool with zephyrs blowing, green with corn-crops growing, Mother, hail.' (48) Often, Mahendra asks Bhavan about song, 'this song refers to a country and not to a mortal mother' (49) in the beautiful manner Bhavan replies that 'we recognize no other mother; the Motherland is our only mother. Our Motherland is higher than heaven. Mother India is our mother, we have no other mother, no father, no brother, no sister, no wife, no children, no home, no hearth-all we have is the Mother India.' (49) This attitude shows how the sanyasi Bhavan eventually captivated to the patriotism. His voice purely understands the meaning and transformed into nationalism. Every line of this song creates the image of free India. This conversation between both of them was going then 'who are you all' asked by Mahendra about sanyasis intention and future plan for nation, Bhavan responds him that 'we are children of Mother India.' (51) it reluctantly summarizes the duty of every person in India to protect the nation from the robbery and atrocities from

British rule. Here the word 'children' indicates the whole nation's people; they must join their hands to struggle against outsiders.

The novel encounters the battle between the British officers and natives of Bengal, mainly involved by sanyasis, which happened in the year 1770. The sanyasis of those days were very different, while they were completely educated, well knowledge in science and very strong by physically, they are basically made for fight against British occupation in India. Mahendra expels from his family and joins to Mahatma Satya, who was also a sanyasi leader, a good human being. Mahatma takes Mahendra to the dark room where nobody could there, that room symbolizes the landscape or map of India. Mahatma says to Mahendra addressing the dark room that 'this is our Mother India as she was before the British conquest' and he continues 'this is what our Mother India is today, she is in the gloom of famine, disease, death, humiliation and destruction.'(55) This dialogue between them goes like endless, but there inner meaning emphasizes clear picture of Mother India. According to Mahatma the British carry on India with sword, so we the people of India also pick up sword then only our Mother India will be freed. Bankim's intention clearly understands that he won't try to develop non-violent action or peaceful action because that particular period was only hailed for warfare and bloodshed, therefore there is no place for peace in that time.

The story of the novel clears some hidden elements of Bankim's principles and ideas, because, when Mahendra and his wife Kalyani re-unite at the ashrama where the Mahatma Satya united them, that conversation between both of them is contrast among the moral duty and family commitment, Kalyani says Mahendra as soldiers wife wishes to their husband who is going to warfare that 'fight for India's freedom with all the forces at your command. This is your path of duty-your dharma. Solely through this path salvation awaits you. And in fullness of time, and by virtue of your noble and unselfish deeds, we shall meet again in that kingdom of Light and live there together till eternity.' (63) Bankim's technique of art and narration is closely associated with historical facts which had happened in the late eighteenth century Bengal. This incident took place at near Calcutta, which was the first capital of British India. The topic chosen by Bankim was the burning issue of that particular time, all it based on the fight between the British soldiers and native people of Bengal.

The novel emphasizes frequently *Bande Mataram*, a national song of India chants and provokes the idea of Hindu nationalism among the people. Its meaning and significance is stupendous, it seems like addressing every citizen of the country. This motivating national

song is an embodiment and inspirational song for the patriots, especially youths who were under the influence of national movement of country. *Bande Mataram* is a song of courage, bravery, and heroism of national movement. Jiban, one of the major characters of the novels, who is also a sanyasi, addressed thousands of children who gathered at the ashrama, he says that;

For a long time we have been thinking of destroying with root and branch the British rule in India, and then of drowning it in the depths of the seas, and thus purifying Mother India from the pollution of this alien domination. Brothers, that day is there today! Our leader, Mahatma Satya is of infinite wisdom. He is pure. He is a humanitarian. He is a patriot. We all follow his leadership. And today he languishes as a prisoner in a British jail! (81)

In the novel how the Jiban's speech motivated and inspired the whole youth community and his astounding character rebels and protest against the British rule, and imprisonment of Mahatma Satya and Mahendra Singh. The children community had been followed by Mahatma Satya, who was also an inspirational icon of Hindu nationalism. Basically Mahatma was also a sanyasi, the novel indicates the reformation of Hinduism with some changes within it. Bankim preached moral and ethical duties of every citizen of the country and he was deeply influenced by noted social and religious reformer Raja Rammohan Roy. Instantly all the major characters of the novel seek and fight to pretend Mother India from the darkness of British rule. Progressively, there is continuation of *Bande Mataram* song, which chanted by a sanyasi;

Maiden, where dost thou go,
Thus trotting on horseback?
To battle I go, please stand not in my way,
Please stand not in my way.
So I sing *Bande Mataram, Bande Mataram, Bande Mataram*.
And today I plunge right into the waves of warfare;
Who art thou and who is thine and why dost thou
Follow me? (92)

This song favorably attracted and followed by many sanyasis of ashrama, hence they were waiting for the release of Mahatma Satya, who was their inspirational soul. Shanti is another female character and wife of Bhavan, who also involved with sanyasis fighting against British. When Shanti met the captain of the British army in the battlefield, she snatched the rifle away from that captain, and said;

Look here, Englishman, I am a woman. To say nothing of a human being. I do not hurt even a creeper. So do not be afraid of your life. But I want to tell you that this country belongs to us. This is our Motherland. We are the children of this soil. You have no moral or legal right to rule over this country than we have to rule over your England. Why don't you Englishmen, like true Christians, return peacefully to your own homeland? (114)

The novel successfully marked out a period of time when orthodox and traditional customs of Hinduism are the basic needs and deeds of spiritual and philosophic attitudes towards the nation. To conclude, the novel may also have been inspired by some historical evidences during Muslim rule in 1770s. Bankim keeps in view that the powerful British rulers of that time defeated only by the violent actions. The positive image of *Anandamath* is revolves around the Hindu nationalism, British rule, and traditional values of viashnavasa in Bengal, it reflects the cultural and historical heritage of India what Bankim had eventually worked to bring out in his writing career. Indian nationalism and national movement was as broad as the landscape of the nation, it pronounced ethical and moral duties of children of the nation.

REFERENCE

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