



Indian Freedom Movement and Bengali Literature

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Abstract:

It is well accepted that literature played a vital role in any kind of movement in the world. India is not an exception in this respect. The Indian literature also played an important role in the freedom movement of India. As we know that India is a land of diversity, whether it is race-cast-colour or language etc. Bengali is also a recognized Indian language which has also great contribution towards Indian freedom movement. Bengali literature has sown the seeds of patriotism in the minds and hearts of every Indian. Madhusudan Dutta, Rongolal Bandyopadhyay, Dinobondhu Mitra, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Girish Chandra Ghosh, D.L. Roy, Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islameach of their creations have greatly influence the Indian freedom movement. The influence of some novels and dramas was so severe that the British Government was bound to ban these. The aim of this paper is to highlight how the Bengali literature accelerated Indian freedom movement. The study is based on secondary data sources.

Keywords: Literature, Freedom movement, Diversity, etc.

1. Introduction:

We are aware of the proverb that “Pen is mightier than sword” which is proved by the Bengali writer by their writings. And for that they had to suffer both physical and mental torture. Despite living in this independent India we have to seen many artist, writers being arrested by the British Ruler. Thus it is only natural that they should be subjected to more severe torture in subjugated India. In this context how Bengali literature played an important role in the freedom movement of subjugated India will be our topic of discussion. We know that multidimensional Bengali literature has been created from the poisonous sting of subjugation which was more terrible than bullets. Almost all the major Bengali Writers have settled in subjugated India and have ignited a fire in literature and given impetus to the freedom movement. However, whatever the approach of the movement, the artist and writers think that revolution in inevitable in this crisis of the nation. It is from this thought that the Writers have instilled a revolutionary attitude in their literature.

2. Objective:

The objective of this paper is to highlight how Bengali literature played an important role in the Indian freedom movement.

3. Methodology:

The Paper is purely descriptive and based on secondary sources.

Discussion:

4. Madhusudan Dutta (25th January 1824 – 29th June 1873) in his Epic ‘Meghnadbadh’ compares Rama to Englishman and Ravana to the children of patriotic heroes. He compares Vibhishan with traitorous Indians. So this Epic influences the freedom movement of India. Rangalal Bondopadhyay (21st December 1827 – 13th May 1887) conveyed the spirit of patriotism in Bengali poetry through historical stories. Patriotism is the main motivation of his poetry. Rangalal embodied in his poetry the patriotic sentiments that arose in the mid-nineteenth century centering on the ugliness of subjugation. The famous quote: -

“Swadhinota Hinotay Ke Banchite Chay Hey
Ke Banchite Chay
Dasotto Sringkhol Bolo Ke Poribe Pay Hey
Ke Poribe Pay.”

From his poem ‘Swadhinota Sangeet’ gives impetus to the freedom movement of India. Dinabandhu Mitra’s (10th April 1830 – 1st November 1873) ‘Nildarpan’ exerted tremendous influence on the Indians to form a solid basis of anti – colonial feeling and native resistance. The Drama clearly captured the suffering and pain of the indigo planters who were systematically oppressed by the white British Officers. The play played a major role to strengthen the Indian mass against the Ruler British and ushered in a new language in theatre that showed that resistant voices could never be throttled. The Great Novelist Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay (26th June 1838 – 8th April 1894) wrote the first novel centering on the Swadeshi movement. In this context he established himself as the organizer of the nation by constructing the Novel ‘Ananda math’. The song ‘vande Mataram’ in this novel is especially noteworthy. Because in the song the country is addressed as mother which became the main mantra of revolutionaries. Girish Ghosh (28th February 1844 – 8th February 1912) the famous playwright in Bengali literature. He was a good Actor also. During the lifetime of Girish Ghosh, the British ruled India. One day Vidyasagar went to watch a performance at Girish Ghosh’s Star Theatre. The play was about the actions of the British. In this play one particular captain was notorious. He instigated others to be cruel to the Indians because Indians were fighting for the freedom of their motherland. Many of these British Soldiers used to ruthlessly beat and punish the Indians. When it came to a certain point in the play where this captain was behaving most cruelly, Vidyasagar became furious. He stood up, took off his slippers and threw them at the actor, who happened to be Girish Ghosh. This is an example how Bengali literature influenced the Indian freedom fighter. Nabin Chandra Sen (1849 – 1909) also played a special role in instilling a sense of nationalism in Indians. Nabin Chandra’s “Palashir Yuddho” is a patriotic narrative poetry. In this poetry the poet has expressed the pain of subjugation based on the story of the fate of Nawab Sirajdaulla of Bengal. The influence of contemporary movements and events deeply influenced Satyendranath Dutta’s (1882 – 1922) poetic mind. He did not join the Swadeshi movement, but his patriotism was pure. He has beautifully highlighted the aspect of boycotting foreign goods in his poem ‘Sandhikshan. He wrote: -

“Pathsale Chatro Kore Bideshi Borjon
Chomotkar! Drisyo Chomotkar!
Bilasborjone Heroo Toruni Chatrira
Agrogami Aji Sobakar.”

Kazi Nazrul Islam (1898 – 1976) also a famous poet of Bengali literature. His ‘Agniveena’, ‘Bisher Banshi’, ‘Bhangar Gaan’ these three poems gave impetus to the freedom movement of India. He did not turn away from the partition of Bengal movement, revolutionary movement, non-cooperation movement etc. Nazrul’s rebellion against torture, exploitation and injustice. Through revolt, he wanted to awaken the masculinity of the subjugated and exploited Indians. His poem ‘Bidrohii’, ‘Kandari Husiyar’ gave impetus to the freedom movement and it remained in the face of every revolutionary. Nazrul’s poems have played a sharper role than the atomic bomb in inspiring the anti-British movement. Feeling the devastating effect of Nazrul’s poem, the British Government arrested and tortured him. He inspired the students in the freedom movement by composing ‘Chatroder Gaan’ to save the independence of India. The genre of literature that has the most and most rapid influence in any social or state movement is play. Because it is possible to stage the plays well as read it. In this case, Bengali play made an important contribution to the freedom movement of India. The Playwright Amritlal Basu (1853 – 1929) joined the Swadeshi movement directly. In this context of this movement, he also wrote a play called ‘Sabas Bangali’ which gave impetus to the freedom movement of India. In this play, an attempt is made to make the people of the country self-reliant through boycott of indigenous products. Dwijendralal Roy (19th July 1863 – 17th May 1913) has also given impetus to the freedom movement through his dramas. His two notable Dramas written in the context of the swadeshi movement are ‘Pratap Singha’ and ‘Durgadas’. The Playwright Dwijendralal has portrayed both Pratap Singha and Durgadas as national hero characters. During the Swadeshi movement Dwijendralal was inspired by the sentiments of nationalism and this was reflected in his compositions. At that time he composed so many songs including Bongo amar Jononi amar and Oi moha sindhur opar thekey. The Dramatist Khirud Prasad Vidyabinod (12th April 1863 – 4th July 1927) has become popular for awakening patriotism and sense of nationalism among the people. His plays like ‘Banger Pratapaditya’, ‘Polashir Prayashcitta’ and ‘Nandakumar’ written in the context of Swadeshi Movement have made important contribution in the freedom movement. Because through these plays he has inspired the countrymen with the mantra of strong nationalism. Manmotha Roy’s (1899–1988) ‘Karagar’ play is set in the context of lawlessness movement. The play depicts how the prison of a foreign ruler became a meeting place for patriots on that day as a result of breaking the law. The play had such an impact on Indian freedom movement that the British Government was forced to stop acting. Besides, Rabindranath Tagore’s (7th May 1861 – 7th August 1941) ‘Ghore Baire’, Sharatchandra Chattopadhyay’s (15th September 1876 – 16th January 1938) ‘Pother Daabi’ gave impetus to the freedom movement of India.

Conclusion:

Bengali Poetry, Plays, novels, etc. have made more or less important contribution in the freedom movement of India. However, play and verse have played the most important role than novels. Because poetry and songs are small in size, the feeling of patriotism can be

easily instilled in people through these. And the play is called a visual poem; it is very easy to awaken the feeling of patriotism in people. In conclusion, it is undeniable that the various genres of Bengali literature have made significant contributions to the Indian freedom movement in various ways.

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