



Importance of Literature in the Freedom Struggle of India With Reference to the Selected Literary Figure of Bengal

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Abstract:

No matter how the movement approaches the situation, the artists and authors believe change is necessary. It is from this perspective that a revolutionary spirit has been infused into the writing. Artists and writers play a crucial part in society. It has been stated that the pen is mightier than the sword. In this article the researcher has attempted to study the importance of Literature in the freedom struggle of India. This article also discusses the role of famous Bengali Literary figure Bankim Chandra and Rabindra Nath Tagore in the freedom struggle of India. Literature was so influential that the British were compelled to arrest literary artists because of their work's influence in sparking the revolution. The common humanity and fraternity of all peoples are recognised. Literature from a country becomes really international when its principles, social justice, universality, and brotherhood are reflected in its works.

Keywords: Bengali Literary, Universal Humanity, Revolution, Independence, Regional Languages.

Introduction:

Every significant upheaval in history may trace its roots back to the written word. That's how significant it was to Indian history. The importance of pre-independence literature to the fight for independence should be commemorated on this day of celebration, Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. Modern authors often utilise their works to promote patriotism and national debate. Literature, poetry, and discourse were used as weapons against the brutal rule of Britishers by authors and poets like Rabindranath Tagor, Subramanya Bharathi, Josh Malihabali Mohammed Iqbal, Bakim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Mohammed Ali, Johar, and the Kazi Nazrul Islam. Women's rights activists and political activists alike have been galvanised by the leadership of women like Sarojini Naidu Begum Rokeya (*Chatopadhyaya, 2014*).

Many things work together to give a country its freedom. The colonised country must use a variety of strategies to defeat the imperialist power and reclaim its freedom. In a continuous motion, culminating in a display of arms. But if the national ethos cannot be permeated with the chant of independence, none of this will matter. This is precisely where creative thinkers like authors and painters shine. The pen, they say, is mightier than the sword. Artists and authors of Bengali descent in colonial India have accomplished this. But the torment they endured from the dictator was worth it. Despite the fact that we are citizens of a sovereign nation, we have seen the imprisonment of several creative types. As a result, it stands to reason that those in a colonised India would be subjected to worse forms of torture. (*Bandyopadhyay, Saroj, 2012*.) Here, we'll

talk about the importance that Bengali literature and music had in the struggle for freedom in colonial India. We know that the venomous pain of subjection, worse than bullets, has spawned multifaceted Bengali literature. Almost all of Bengali literature's most prominent authors have made India their permanent home, where they have stoked a literary revolution and bolstered the independence fight. The fight for freedom in colonised India, however, had many supporters. There have been peaceful and violent shifts. The works of Bengali authors provide proof of this. However, artists and authors generally agree that revolution is necessary to solve the current national predicament. It is from this perspective that a revolutionary spirit has been infused into the writing. To add insult to injury, the reader no longer needed the standard literary work. The literature that explodes like fireworks to free the homeland is the literature that readers and viewers want (*Mukhopadhyay, Arunkumar, 2004.*)

Statement of the Problem:

Literature written before independence often focuses on the fight for independence. Despite their lack of education and intelligence, the protagonists of pre-independence literature are ordinary people who make heroic sacrifices in the sake of the liberation movement. They speak a variety of regional languages and come from various social strata and cultural backgrounds. However, they devote their life to fighting the British for India's independence. The works written by Indians during the independence movement challenge us to abandon easy categorizations. What we have observed about the liberation movement—that opposing forces are always at work—is also true of the development of contemporary Indian culture. It's not as simple as saying that certain people or some groups are communal and others are progressive and secular. People and their interactions in society are much too nuanced to be easily categorized. (*Narwade, S. 2022*) This is a lesson that literature teaches us best. In this regard the problem stated here is “**Importance of Literature in the Freedom Struggle of India with Reference to the Selected Literary figure of Bengal**”

Objectives:

The current study has been undertaken with the following objectives-

- ✓ To study the role of Literature in the freedom struggle of India.
- ✓ To discuss the importance of Bengali Literature with reference to Bankim Chandra and Rabindra Nath Tagore in the freedom struggle of India.

Methodology:

The researcher's use of a suitable methodology was crucial to the success of his investigation. It's a methodical approach to researching a topic. This is a descriptive paper built entirely on secondary sources.

Discussion:

Role of art and literature in India's freedom struggle:

1. Evoking emotions: Art helped nationalist in their struggle by evoking emotions related to oppression or kind of injustice to people that they had been facing for a long time. It helped to increase the sensitivity among elite and bourgeoisie class towards the suffering of the common man by depicting their poor living condition and atrocities.

2. Raising nationalist sentiments: The nationalistic sentiment replaced what was earlier widely dominated by the portraits and songs or bhajans based on gods and goddesses only. It influenced people through painting battle scenes between Indian and British soldiers and portraying brutalities, to people singing and writing nationalistic poetries, plays, and stories. Fiction and poetry was used for a patriotic purpose and to create a nationalist discourse.

3. Overcoming linguistic barriers: Art helped break down barriers between people of different languages in India. This was especially true of visual and performing arts. In addition, the availability of nationalist literature in vernacular languages encouraged many commoners to join the fight for independence in India.

4. Spreading awareness: Writers and poets like Rabindranath Tagore, Josh Malihabadi, Muhammad Iqbal, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Mohammad Ali Jouhar, and Kazi Nazrul Islam used literature, poetry, and speech to raise awareness of the atrocities committed by the British against Indians and to inspire people to fight for independence.

5. Women participation: Women leaders like Begum Rokeya and Sarojini Naidu promoted the emancipation of Indian women and to encourage their participation in national politics. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's *Devi Chaudharani*, became an inspiration to women to take up the cause of independence. In this novel, he made a woman the protagonist and leader of the struggle. Anandamath also featured a strong woman character, and in both books, while women do take up arms, they fight while embodying the values of love.

6. Revival of cultural identities: When the Swadeshi movement started gaining momentum, Indian artists attempted to revive their cultural identities which were suppressed by the British. This led to the creation of the Bengal School of Art, led by the reworked Indian styles with a focus on nationalism of Abanindranath Tagore. An example of this is the painting of 'The Passing of Shah Jahan' by Abanindranath Tagore which evoked the recent past of Indian history which was being seen to be glorious. Many other artists like Jamini Roy and later SH Raza took inspiration from folk traditions.

7. A tool of propaganda: Literature played an important role and was used as a tool of propaganda. Newspapers like *Bande Mataram*, *Jungantar Patrika*, and *Harijansought* to make Indian citizens not only socially and politically aware but also unite them for one common cause. Pamphlets written and distributed across India provided critical information and served as propaganda against the British.

8. Spread patriotic feelings: Art and literature was used to spread the message of patriotism and expose atrocities of British. In *Anandamath*, set during the famine in Bengal, Chattopadhyay highlighted various patriotic acts of and sacrifices made by his characters, ordinary people who left their homes and families to fight against subjection, and in service of the Mother. National song, *Bande Mataram*, was first published as a poem in this novel as the rallying cry of the characters who used it to give themselves courage and to urge people to fight against the British.

Bankim Chandra:

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, using literature, spread the message of Patriotism. he highlighted number of Patriotic act and sacrifices made by his characters, common people who lost homes and families to fight for freedom and to serve "The Mother" in *Anandamath*(1882). He pictured revolution against Britishers by untrained soldiers who succeeded in beating the trained British soldiers with sheer pebbles and determination representing a sense of Patriotism and nationalism. This novel was banned by the British Empire and it was lifted after independence by the Indian government. Our National song Vande Mataram was first published as a poem in the novel 'Anandamath'. The characters encourage and urge people to fight against the British Empire. Despite being banned, common people would relate the poem in front of British officers and many were arrested and sent to jail for this act. The first two verses of Vande Mataram were adopted as national song by Indian National Congress in 1937 due to its tradition of sacrifice and its success in bringing a country together against the British Britishers Ghosh, (*Ajitkumar,2005.*)

Bankim Chandra published his Novel *Devi Chaudhurani* in 1884 .This novel became an inspiration for women to participate in the freedom struggle. The woman is the protagonist in this novel like in *Anandamath*. In both the novels, women took up weapons to fight for independence and also expressed the values of love. Chattopadhyay had the inside to understand that to make the freedom struggle a successful, the nation needed

cooperation of women as Shanti says in Anandmath, “which hero ever became a hero without the cooperation of his wife?”

Rabindra nath Tagore:

Another world celebrated name in both English and Bengali literature is Rabindranath Tagore. He is novelist, dramatist, short story writer, musician, philosopher, painter, educationalist, reformer and a critic in every field and had earned accolade for himself. He won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913 for his immortal great work Gitanjali. Rabindranath Tagore proved in front of the world that Indian writers are capable of expressing their literary aspiration in a foreign language with accomplished effortless. The Western influence in Indian literature was just under the label so that Indian English literature during the British empire had acquired its generic name. The setting of Tagore’s novels is reflective and representative. He painted friendly and effortfully in Bengali and English. He wrote thirteen novels and translated his nine novels into English in India during the British empire. His translated works are Gora, The Home and The World, The Wreck, Binodini etc. The characters in his novels are realistic and natural. He portrayed socio religious culture of Bengal in his novels and also brought out the problems of women. He portrayed and analysed different human relationships through different social settings. He first wrote Valmiki Pratibha at the age of 20. His work sought to articulate ‘the play of feeling and not of action’. He used philosophical and allegorical themes in English and Bengali work (*Roy, Rabindranath, 2012.*).

Conclusion:

Literature awakens people’s sense of life and sense of humanity, Honesty and beauty make literature more beautiful. Writing is self-evident only if it is presented in the way of truth. Rabindranath says that, the subject of literature is human character and human heart is not really socially neutral in any literature. Where the reflection of society can be noticed directly or indirectly, it can be said that, the mirror of literary society, humanity, individual consciousness, social consciousness, nationalism, romanticism, originality, free will, citizenship, etc. are some of the special features of modern Bengali literature.

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