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THE REAL PICTURE OF INDIAN SOCIETY IN BHABANI BHATTACHARYA'S 'SO MANY HUNGERS!'

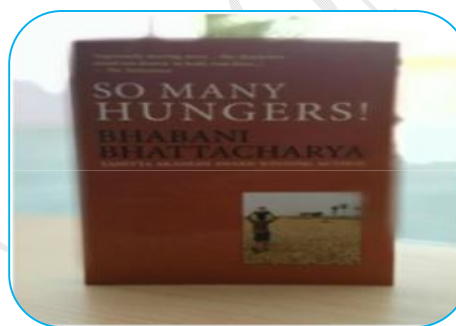
B. Valliammal¹ and Dr. M. Kannadhasan²

¹ Ph.D scholar, Dept of English, Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India.

² Assistant Professor, Dept of English, Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore, Tami Nadu, India.

ABSTRACT:

Bhattacharya's first novel, 'So Many Hungers!' was published in October 1947, soon after India achieved independence. The effort of the individual for independence completes in an understanding, in a declaration and a statement of the right to live. The richness of the individual despite all miseries lends a historical dimension to the self, Rahoul. Bhattacharya shows the tragic predicament of Bengal by portraying the ups and downs in the life of two groups of families - one of Samarendra Bose, an affluent lawyer and businessman of Calcutta and the other of a peasant Kajoli family of village Baruni, whose soul has given to song and wandering. The two families are joined by their meeting with the saintly figure of an old nationalist leader, Devesh Bose. His characters act against the social crisis and human changes.



KEYWORDS: hunger, self and society, famine, culture.

INTRODUCTION :

So many Hungers! is a sentimental novel. It explains the social problem which prevailed in our society such as gender, human race, hunger for all, exploitation, desire, child labor, and violence against women. The novel displays the tale of a broadly man-made desire that took a charge of two million innocent men, women and children in Calcutta and Bengal. While the hoarders, profiters, and black-marketers used a thundering position, self-assurance was apathetic. The beginnings of social pity seemed to have almost dried up, and only the Jackals and the vultures

were in hardy and celebrating action. As a faithful author, he shows the evil of man bravely and ruthlessly in the nation. He explains touching some of the views, and they almost imagine an environment of awe.

So Many Hungers! is set against the backdrop of the Quit India Movement and the Bengal Famine of 1942-43. It deals with the theme of hunger. B. Syamala Rao says as: The So Many Hungers! of the title mentions at different kinds of hunger- "hunger for food, hunger for affection, hunger for love, hunger for lust, hunger for money, hunger for sacrifice and hunger for the general welfare of

all"(Rao, 46). Its central theme is hunger for food and Bhattacharya gives a detailed, graphic and moving picture of hunger and heavy loss of human lives resulting for it.

Bhattacharya says that there is no higher moral assessment than the lives of fellow human beings. When a person is in a serious condition, the person must clear that the ethical responsibility of every person to protect them from serious conditions is a spiritual gift. Kajoli has no quick interchange except to allow the opportunity offered by the beetle-woman. Even though she has become a harlot, she can stand away from the critic of the

humiliated woman. K.R. Chandrasekharan correctly says as: "The story of Kajoli is thus not a story of redemption from sin but of providential escape from moral fall." (Chandrasekaran, 23)

Kajoli develops her pathway as she recalls the good preaching of Devesh. Moreover, she accepts moral power to face as a pure pearl. She is inexperienced and emotional, but she is a compelling responsibility at the soul. She accepts this power from the instruction of Devesh Basu and imagines as follows: "And she, dadu's granddaughter? Hunger trapped, she had sold herself. What if Dadu knew? What if Dadu knew one day? This, the final gesture of her life, would hurt him more than all the oppressions he suffered in jail-house and all the pangs of his hunger battle -Kajoli you have made your pronam to the flag, you are a fighter, sol father had said as the Red turbans handcuffed him and took him away. And no one had cried, not she, not mother, not Kanu, nor even Onu, all having made their pronam to the flag; fighters all." (195)

Bhattacharya appears to believe that life supports itself by creating man express his natural self through his activities, including liberal ideals and values. No surprise, then, if Kunal, Rahoul's younger brother, resists even the most positive pressure of his mother opposite his going to war. He is set to play his character in the excellent story that has burst upon life. He thinks that the characters of England, more than the politicians of that country, will die for the high models and values, and will not let them overwhelm below. A brave soldier who is not a thoughtful and idealists like Rahoul and Devata, he is highly intelligent of the essential human values. He speaks to his brother about rendering the army to a fellow being. With happiness and satisfaction, he says him that one of the best scenes a man can do and which really count is serving to resolve a member's food problem.

The novel depicts the struggle of the peasantry of Bengal against the man-made famine of 1943. It also presents Bengal during the opening stages of the Second World War. During the war years, some black-marketers started hoarding rice. The hunger, which was the consequence of famine, cost more than two million lives. The work shows the two disruptive forces-war and famine. The story presents a harrowing picture of famine in Bengal and the joy of the exploiters and black-marketers, who hoarded rice illegally, are very emotionally projected, though a bit exaggerated and emotional. The struggle of man against hunger imagines two kinds of images are man at his best and at his worst. A hungry peasant struggles with a dog to take the leftovers in a dustbin. He breaks the dog, the lesser animal instinct, outer to relieve the animal inside him-the hunger. K.H.Kunjo Singh rightly says as: "At times hunger people eat what the animals refuse to take. In this struggle for crumbs of food or dirt animals often prove stringer than the suffering folk. On one occasion Onu is defeated in his fight with a god for possession of a jam-tin dug out from the rubbish. Boys fight with boys for scrap of food."(Singh, 82)

Kajoli is an honorable girl of fourteen when the story begins. She lives in a thatched house with her family. Her father and her elder brother Kanu are jailed for having taken the character in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Her father's plans married to Kishore, a patriot. But she has a short time of enjoyment after the marriage. Devesh Basu, reverentially called 'Devata', is the bridge between the two groups in this novel. As K.H.Kunjo Singh says: Kajoli, sprightly and innocent girl of 14 lives with her unnamed mother and younger brother Onu. Devata adopts this family and shares their plain meal."(Singh, 81)

The nation is not all wrong. There are true parts in it who do not hesitate, to arrive at the achievement of the hungry and the sad. The soldier who commits abuse upon Kajoli and the army doctor who uses whole keeping of her are representations of the societal oneself. They are gifted with morals. He thinks strongly for his wrongdoing and apologizes for it. He blasphemes himself for the evil he has committed to this hungry pregnant lady. Though, he thinks a bit removed and rested when he can keep her by placing her in the hands of Army doctor. Therefore ideal understandings with, and the particular character arranges with the societal character. The character presents itself from gross everyday values and issues above to show its natural greatness and honesty, its power and strength. Kajoli's mother thinks that "she and her son would surely find a roof for their heads -they would work hard and earn their keep, for they were no beggars, she and her son -the people had great kindness in their hearts, like the young khaki-clad military doctor. There would be food. Onu would go to school"(152). Hence it is obvious from this that the individual in an opposed and an unfavorable milieu

as described by Bhattacharya does not lose soul but takes more thought to live. It is not bogged down by the monstrous views of death and desolation. It transforms all these to support its benefit to living and to live with character and self-respect. Hence the novelist remarks: "Out of the flame of travail that had consumed one woman a glow quickened in another, an understanding, a humanizing tenderness, so that the creatures of misery were no longer a race apart, soulless and dead - men and women all."(168)

The universe of Bhattacharya's "So Many Hungers!" declares an exciting conflict between the individual's self and nation. It describes the character in the show-down and its odyssey for self-transcendence and self-ennoblement. The story postulates and new conflict between oneself and society. The character in the novel is keen sensitivity struggling for sociopathic liberation from a physico-moral life. Bhattacharya doesn't get the conflict difficult, rather the conflict is socio-religious. Furthermore, the cultural life in the novel is a time-space making of intellectual and ethical values. Bhattacharya's novel attempts a study of the nature of the conflict between individual's self and society, and it proposes to explain that the conflict, in the end, becomes a compromise and adjustment, Self-transcendence beginning to self-elevation and self-ennoblement. It gives a sociological path with importance on the psycho-moral base of the lacerated and weakened person.

Bhattacharya is intensely committed to a social view. Hence, he ridicules art for art's sake. He includes 'a novel must have a social purpose,' and that art should 'preach but unobtrusively, by the vivid interpretation of life.' Catalysts of human difference, his stories limn out the nature of the modern man position. The opening of *So Many Hungers!* symbolically describes a very moving and sad image of the hungry self: "A meek, measured voice, wingless. A voice too bleak for passion, fire" (5). The birth of Rahoul's child besides symbolizing the starved self slowly coming into being also symbolizes the birth of modern society, a modern culture, the Indian Community. A socio-political novel, it describes the constant belief of the self in man values even in the teeth of all sufferings and destitution. Misery does not steal them away from values which they like high. The Grandfather speaks to Rahoul: "I have scores of daughters and sons in Baruni. I am proud of my people-they are good people. Centuries of hardship and strain have not destroyed their faith in human values."(24)

The various thematic patterns of the novel have taken together neither by the socio-political compulsions at war with one different nor the sensitive, poetic attraction of Rahoul but by the own plight of the starving self on the one hand and the socio-historical strengths on the other. The two major beaches of the Indian culture the material and the westernized current society of the city folk and the old and simple society of the country folk are at conflict within the nature of the particular generation the difficulty of existence. Whether to cling to this or to that, to do this or that is the dilemma. However, the cases are not confused and upset in the face of such human odds. Rather, they appear out of such a problem triumphantly.

"So many Hungers!" describes the lacerated feelings of the injured person that triumphs over the bitter miseries of humankind and views beyond it to life as spiritual support and happiness. It is a tour de compulsion of self-realization and self-assertion. The characters like Rahoul and explain the internal powerful energy of their life by self-transcendence. "There was a streak of light in" Rahoul's "inward gloom" (183). It was not all darkness with him. He had constant belief in life, its invincibility, and immortality. The idea that Bhattacharya shows in the story is horrible and harsh. Its depressing sights of social distress and misery leave us to tears, but at the same period, it carries to us the assertion of life amidst hunger, the flickering of light in the ashes. See at the terrible situation of the fishers at the huge hands of the boat-wreckers who are deputed by "the Government" (55) which uses their ships and give them cash. The resistant fisherfolk keep on crying "My boat! My boat!" but the boat - wreckers pay no heed and steal away their ships to make a fire: But all is not wasted. Still, there is support. Still, the light blazes: "the end of one tale was the beginning of another. For, like a quenchless heritage of hate, the bonfire of boats was prisoned and ever-alive in each fistful of ash" (58). Rahoul thinks that the loss of millions of person will but usher in a new universe system. Two interesting points had passed to him this fall day. The Prime Minister of Britain had announced war on the Swastika. Manju had provided birth to a newborn girl. Either event was an intense experiences that made his sensations sound, as though he had accomplished some individual achievement.

Srinivasan Iyaengar notes about the characters of the story that though they have been individualized, they are emptiness more than 'algebraic symbols.' This is really of some of the roles but surely not of all. Some roles reach out prominently such as Rahoul, Samarendra, and Devata. At the finishing of the story, the unique characters are carefully forced apart in satisfaction of the fictionist's design, but after we lay down the novel, they are impressed on our mind. It is especially genuine of Rahoul whose scientist, courageous man, honesty and he supported the poor family. Every character has not improved to the same area for the notable reason that proper balance should be kept between the tale of mass change and the tale of some people.

CONCLUSION

Bhattacharya explains the beginning deter of opposition which is not simply to live but to live courageously and psychologically. He has insisted on the very sanctity of individual self and its traditional dimension, which cannot be destroyed and defeated by evil teams. The person remains to live unmoved by the miseries of life, quietly and vigorously. His story is going social novel inform against the setting of a traditional position. He does not say the novel with cool indifference; his senses are very much interested, and he does not hesitate to distribute blame for the tragedy where it is due. The story is a harsh statement both of the alien government for its unconcern and neglect. The writer's honest anger, his justice, and his kindness are in proof all through the novel.

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B.Valliammal

Ph.D scholar, Dept of English, Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India.