

THE PORTRAYAL OF INDIA AS NATION IN CRISIS IN ANANDMATH

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Abstract

*The present research paper aims at to study the Portrayal of India as Nation in crisis in selected novel **Anandmath** by Bankim Chandra Chatterji. The paper deals with the concept of Nation, India's history, and Background of the novel. It speaks about famine, freedom struggle, feudal system, Patriotism, nationalism, violence, sacrifice viz. It is found that India as described as a country of green and fruit bearing trees, a rivers, and oceans of corn fields. Here, it is an appealing to study the Portaryal of India as Nation in crisis for readers.*

Key-words: *Famine, Freedom Struggle, Santans, Feudal System, Patriotism, Nationalism, Violence, Sacrifice.*

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The depiction of India has always provided an outstanding fertile ground for the development of Indian Fiction. We study, the concept of Nation to make our ideas more clearly. The life of Nation has been shaped by writers and philosophers like Shri Aurobindo, Mulk Raj Anand, Kushwant Singh, Swami Vivekanand, Rabindranath Tagore viz. It is observed that there is a link between the novel and nation. The interaction between national events and private life reflected in Indian English Fiction. Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines Nation, "A large body of people united by common descent, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular state or territory." (952).

Nations are cultural entities of people. They are bound together by shared values and traditions, race and culture, common language, religion and history, occupying same geographical area. It is essential to know the India's history. So, we study about India's history. India's old recorded history dates back to at least 2500-2000 BCE. India was cultural idea and vision of vast wealth. It appealed foreign conquerors and travelers like The Aryans, Central Asian tribes, Mughals, Persians and Iranians, Arabs and Chinese, Portuguese, French, Dutch and British. India was never a single cultural or political entity. There was no single theory of Indian Nationalism. Before Britishers came, India was home to numerous kingdoms and principalities. The nationalists sought to unite Indian across all divisions and construct one Indian nation. British rule formally established in 1857. After 1857, Revolt with an increase in anti-British nationalist activities during the twenties, thirties and forties, Indian novels began to be increasingly pre-occupied with Indian aspirations for freedom and freedom struggle.

The novelists of Pre-Independence era highlighted the spirit of Nationalism by depicting the national movements, the freedom struggle for Independence and patriotic favour. The novelists themes revolve around social realities that try to capture real India. To study this, I selected the novel *Anandmath* written by Bankim Chandra Chatterji. Bankim Chandra Chatterji is the key figure in literary Renaissance of Bengal as well as India. To understand the Portrayal of India as Nation in crisis, we study about Bengal's political, social, and economic background.

Bengal was one of the most economically developed regions of the Mughal empire before the victory of eighteenth century. This region had not been directly involved in the political struggle of the feudal lords surrounding the Mughal throne. The peasants of this region cultivated various sorts of rice, cotton and sugarcane. The Zamindars began to give their power with no thought for principles and legal norms. They collected taxes and administered justice. They measure out punishment to the local population who bribed the Government officials. The zamindars and farmers depend on Murshid Quli Khan, the first Nawab of Bengal. They began to pay sums in the Nawab's treasury. The Peasant's rebellions prevailed during the early years of British rule in India. The Sepoy Mutiny in 1857 regarded as the first war of Indian Independence. The hungry peasants of Bihar and Bengal revolted against East India Company. They were victims of Bengal famine in 1770.

The selected novel, *Anandmath* is set in eighteenth century Bengal, ruled by Muslim Nawab with political backing of the British. The effects of terrible drought and consequent famine are stalking the land in the year 1770. The rich and poor, city and village people are afflicted by famine. The plot of the novel based on Sanyasi rebellion that occurred in North Bengal in 1773. The song Vande Matram used in the background of the novel. The novel is dedicated to the memory of his dead friend Deenabandhu Mitra. Here, novelist transforms the insurrection beyond recognition with an imaginary characters introduced in the novel. The idealization of the country has been one of the grandest concept in the novel.

We study the novel *Anandmath*, how the portrayal of India as Nation in crisis depicted. We study crisis like famine, freedom struggle, nationalism, patriotism, violence, sacrifice etc in present novel. The word crisis means a difficult or dangerous situation that needs serious attention. The projection of Nation as mother creates a specific identity for India. It worked as focal motif in the freedom struggle with British. The *Anandmath* commences with the descriptions of Padachina village. The effects of terrible drought and consequent famine are stalking the land in the year 1770. Mahendra and his wife were at house facing famine and deeply absorbed in thought. The land revenue was increased by Government Collector. We observed the impact of famine on the lives of Padachina villagers. They were attacked by diseases. The starvation is observed in these lines. "So people began to starve again. At first they lived on one meal a day. Soon, even that became scarce, and they began to go without any food at all. The crop was too scanty, but the government revenue collector sought to advance his personal prestige by increasing the land revenue by ten per cent. And in dire misery Bengal shed bitter tears." (P.24). The impact of famine was also on the lives of beggars in Bengal. It is horrifying condition reflected by Chatterji. "Beggars increased in such numbers that charity soon became the most difficult thing practice." (P.24). Here, at the time of famine in the novel, Mahendra and Kayani, a rich couple are forced to run away their mansion along with their daughter in search of a home in the Calcutta. Kalyani was kidnapped by robbers. The condition of the robbers quoted here. One of the robber said, "What can we do with gold and silver? Will

someone here give me a handful of rice for this jewel? I am hungry-I'm about to die of hunger! For the last few days I have eaten only leaves from the trees." (P.28). Bankim painted the life of robbers who killed their leader and ready to eat meat. People used to eat meat of jackles and dogs at the time of famine.

The depiction of freedom struggle presented by Mahatma Satya and his Santans (Children). Kalyani and Sukumari rescued by Mahatma. Mahatma said Kalyan , "This is the temple, the mosque, The vihara, and the gurudwara of Mother India. Cast aside all fear from your heart." (P.30). These lines are very significant talks about not only recognized all the inhabitants of India as the true children but points out crucial dimensions of Indian history. The song *Bande Matram* creates a spirit of Nationalism and Patriotism towards Mother India. It is repeated in the novel. The song makes this book special which had become the national song during Indian freedom struggle. The scene of showing three pictures of Mother India to Mahendra by Mahatma plays an important role in the novel. It talks about portrayal of India in past (prosperity), present (famine, disease, death, humiliation, destruction) and future (full of glory and dignity). The characters like Mahatma Satya, Bhavan, Jiban, Dhiran, Mahendra, Shanti, Gowardhan fought against Britishers to get freedom. Mahendra decided to serve for nation (Mother India). The Santans have renounced their families tries to devote themselves fully to Mother India. Bhavan shows his feeling about Mother India, "The Mother land is our only mother. Our motherland is higher than heaven Mother India is our Mother." (P.38). Shanti disguised as holy man to dedicate to nation. She played role of detective to bring out information from the Britishers. Mahatma leads Mahendra to build a fort at Padachina. Mahatma was on expedition to collect workers to make artillery. At the end of the novel, Bhavan's rage against Britishers focused here. Bhavan said, "Kill the enemy, Kill the English soldier." (P.111). The victory was celebrated by children on the banks of Ajai river against Britishers.

It is found in *Anandmath* that there was feudal system. The landlords were exploiting farmers, workers and common man. They were taking taxes and revenues from people. The result is that the economic valley created between rich and poor. Its impact was on the life of Mahendra, Kalyani, Santans, robbers, farmers, workers. Bhavan's anger Britishers repeated here. Bhavan said, "Victory, victory! Kill the sepoys, kill sepoys." (P.36). Jiban looted the treasure of Britishers. The rage of Santans against Nawab and Britishers presented in the novel. The third part of the novel speaks about farmers could not pay taxes to the landlords holdings. The owners of the land became poor. People began poverty stricken. People became poverty stricken. Men lived by looting. Thieves and bandits were active again. Children began to loot English treasuries.

Bankim's *Anandmath* fulfilled with the spirit of Patriotism and Nationalism with the use of portraying characters like Mahatma, Bhavan, Jiban, Shanti, Mahendra, Gowardhan.

Mahendra was escaped by Bhavan who explained the philosophy of militant organization of the children of the Mother. The Santans have renounced families tries to devote themselves fully to the Mother. The life of Mahendra transformed by Bhavan and understood real meaning of song. The scene of showing picture of Mother India in past, present, future creates feelings of Nationalism and Patriotism. Bhavan said to assembled children, "Let us now get together to crush the British rule in India under our feet. Let us burn their scepter into ashes, and then scatter the ashes to the winds. Brothers sing Bande Matram again." (P.64). It shows spirit of Patriotism and Nationalism. Shanti plays role of detective to bring out information from Britishers. Shanti said Mahatma, "Is it a sin for a wife to join her husband in order to help him in his nation duties." (P.81). Mahatma and Santans made plan to kill Captain Thomas of England. The children were chanting Bande Matram after victory.

The violence is important part of *Anandmath*. The novelist sketched the life of robberers who killed the leader and ready to eat meat. People used to eat meat of jackles and dogs at the time of famine in the first part of the novel. The Children attacked city jail, killing guards and triumphantly freeing Mahatma and Mahendra. They were defeated by British soldiers. It was violence against Indian Santans. The Santans were surrendered by Hey and Watson. They attacked by two directions. The children want to cross the bridge. The hundreds of children died. Bhavan, Jiban, Dhiran captured cannon to kill Britishrs.

Bankim is successful to present how a life is sacrificed by Jiban, Shanti, Mahendra, Kalyani and Santans for Mother India. At the beginning of the novel, Mahendra and Kalyani left home. Mahendra dedicated his life for Mother India who lived away from family. Jiban's main aim was the freedom. Shanti also sacrificed her marriage life and took active participation in freedom struggle against Britishers. The Santans have renounced families tries to devote themselves fully to Mother India.

In a short, we have studied the concept of Nation, India's history, Background of the *Anandmath*, The Portrayal of India as Nation in crisis. It speaks about the depiction of India in famine, freedom struggle, feudal system, patriotism, nationalism, violence, sacrifice. That's why? Bankim Chandra Chatterji is called as prophet of Modern India who steeped back to grounding in the past in order to take great strides towards the future.

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