

# Impact of Religion and Politics in Bhabani Bhattacharya's Goddess Named Gold

Devendra Singh

Research Scholar, C M P Degree College, University of Allahabad Prayagraj.

## Abstract:

The paper explores the factors and impact of caste, religion, and politics in the fourth novel of Bhabani Bhattacharya's *Goddess Named Gold* (1960), in which multi-factors of the consequence caused due to the corrupt system of caste, religion, and misuse of political powers on the hands of corrupt politicians of their personal gains is depicted through the different characters who represent both the standard and privileged man of both rural and urban people of other places, regions, and sections of the society. In this research paper, various types of injustices and discrimination based on caste, class, region, language, and religion in different situations and places are put into light through the other characters in the period between the assassinations of M. K. Gandhi. The lower caste, class, and unprivileged tried to break the laws of the evil caste system existing in society. The division of the people on the bases of their caste and religion is used as a powerful weapon by corrupt politicians to secure their vote bank to come to and or remain in power for their personal and political gains. Many poor and low caste people are used by the politicians during the elections to get votes but when they won the elections, these poor people were not given their due share in the party but instead kicked out of mainstream politics. This research paper emphasized Bhattacharya's concept of social reality in post-independence India depicted in his renowned novels and his honest efforts to bring about the desired changes in society through his characters.

**Keywords:** Caste system, Religion, Politics, Injustice, corruption, etc.

## Introduction:

While looking at the history of Indian literature in English it has been observed that the themes of nationalism and socialism mainly emerged from the novels of the 1930s and 1940s. The Indo-Anglican writers used the language of the British colonizers as a tool to reach the West and presented the real India to them; they tried to portray their nationalism and the changes they need to implement to make their nation better. G. N. Saibaba in his essay, "Colonialist Nationalism in the Critical Practice of Indian Writing in English: A Critique" remarks that "English literature has been a powerful enterprise towards constructing a kind of Indian nationalism mediated through the interpretation of the literary works in particular ways". Saibaba is of the view that "English literature is the authentic tool that can represent India as a nation more than any literature of the native political and cultural changes that have occurred in India along with Indian tradition and culture.

Culture, country, and language serve as a mirror for human beings and it is this mirror in which one finds himself or herself. It is the identity of a person and it becomes our duty to invest and participate more and more in things like these. Nationalism on the other hand, is not only fighting for the freedom of the country

from a dominant class, nor does it end when one attains freedom, rather, it is such a continuing process which requires more voluntary actions and social works from its citizens so that the country may prosper and remain free from all the evils.

As earlier said fighting wars is not the only way to prove your nationalism, there are people who used their pens to fight the evils in society. There are writers who become the voice of people to tell the tale of a beautiful culture and to let the whole world know about the richness of the culture of their country. There are writers whose works reflect their culture and society and Bhabani Bhattacharya is one such writer whose works are full of this Indian sensibility or Indianness more precisely. By Indianness, it means the culture and unique identity of Indians. He reflects himself on a rich culture and tries to enlighten everyone with its richness. Bhabani Bhattacharya thinks that if only a few individuals from society come forward with determination to work for the exploited and to guide them in the right direction, there can be hope for the salvation of the country. It is the reason why the novelist has created some ideal characters in his novels, who belong to the educated class of society and share common features. They fight against injustice and cruelty to remove such elements from society and make it a better place for people to pursue an honest living, free from suppression and oppression of all types, in an atmosphere of freedom and goodwill. On one side these protagonists inspire the exploited to stand up for their rights, on the other hand, they try to convince the exploiters against their inhuman acts by arousing their conscience. The artist in Bhattacharya is committed to bringing back to the human mind the possibility of happiness “the path to fullness of life” as envisioned by Tagore.

### **Impact of politics and religion:**

In Bhabani Bhattacharya’s fiction, the theme of political independence is closely related to the theme of social, economic, and religious issues. According to Bhattacharya if the common man enjoys economic, social, and cultural freedom then only political freedom can be meaningful. Gandhi’s concern for the exploitation of the common man and his endeavor to wipe, “every tear from every eye” highly attracted Bhattacharya (GNG, 75). He was very much fascinated by Gandhi for his practical approach to the problems afflicting the lowest castes of society. He admired Gandhi for his works like abolishing untouchability and banning the dowry system. It is in this context that a social novelist steps in to depict reality by choice. He shows the true image of the society to its people so that it may correct its follies and foibles. His fiction gives an account of the Indian way of life, like Mulk Raj Anand, he believes that “an artist should delineate contemporary reality rather than recreate the historical or legendary theme.” (Srivastava,5)

Bhabani Bhattacharya’s concept of freedom is unique and he uses it more realistically. While other writers regard the idea of freedom as political freedom only, for Bhattacharya it refers to economic, cultural, intellectual, and above all social freedom. The following lines from Tagore’s *Gitanjali*, later translated into English describe Bhattacharya’s attitude towards India more realistically. He like Tagore wants his country to be like this:

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high,  
Where knowledge is free,  
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;  
(*Gitanjali* 35)

Bhattacharya as a novelist makes a further attempt to bring about the desired change in social attitudes. The social theme taken by the novelist gives him plenty of scope to draw our attention to the exploitation of man by man, leading to untold misery and suffering. The author hopes that the conscience of the persons who are exploiting the weak will be awakened. And he also appeals to the exploited to stand for their rights. He knows that these changes will take time but he is confident that they will ultimately come. He is of the opinion that man has to change himself first and only then can he change society. Only a man of good moral and civic sense can build a society based on justice and goodwill.

In *A Goddess Named Gold*, Bhattacharya describes Seth Samsunder's lust for wealth power, and gold. This greedy exploiter concerned not only mill-made saris but even those made by the local weaver and raises the prices to such an extent as to make it impossible for anyone in the village to buy from him. Bhattacharya tries to show that if the wrong men are allowed to grab power; freedom will mean nothing to the people. He uses the Minstrel as a mouthpiece to voice some of his own views on the use of freedom and the conditions in which freedom can be of value. Bhattacharya gives a glimpse of his vision of the future of India and also expressed his views on the dangers facing the country and the duties of the citizen. He gives the advice through Sohanlal that no one in a free country should contend to live on charity. Sohanlal tells Meera, "We must demand what should be ours, the right to live as human beings." (AGNG,176). He gives a warning through Meera's grandma that there is no "easy end to our woes" (p. 270), and one should not expect that freedom will act like magic and solve all our problems for us. Bhattacharya's optimism about the ultimate liquidation of all exploiters by the people is conveyed through the following lines: "The days of the Seths were numbered. Soon would the people, vested with their new power, fully waken and their thunderous wrath would make every tyrant whine for mercy" (AGNG, 224).

### Conclusion:

In this research paper, Bhattacharya is more at ease with the world that surrounds us. It is this reality which is his constant source of reference and it is this which he is striving to change. So his novel is not just a fanciful and romantic boy and girl affair, but a realistic and imaginative depiction of the social, economic, cultural, and political conditions. His artistic creations are not an end in themselves but a means to touch the minds of his fellow citizens with a desire to provide them with a better vision of life. It is through art and literature that men are made conscious of their destinies and the higher values of their souls. It is the task of the writer to make the average man understand himself and the conditions of his life and this is exactly what Bhattacharya tries to do.

### Works Cited:

1. Abbas, K. A., *Social Realism and Change in Aspects of Indian Literature*. Vikas Publishing, 1975.
2. Bhattacharya, Bhabani. *A Goddess Named Gold*. Hind Pocket Books, 1967.
3. Saibaba, G. N. *Colonialist Nationalism in the Critical Practice of Indian Writing in English: A Critique*. JSTOR. N. P, 13 July 2008. Web. 20 March 2017.
4. Srivastava, Ramesh. *Literature and Social Reality. Perspective on Bhabani Bhattacharya*. Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1982.
5. Tagore, Rabindranath. *Gitanjali*. Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1913.