



Influence of Gandhi's Freedom Struggle in the Works of R.K.Narayan

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Abstract: *The history of India's freedom struggle is incredible in the world. India is world famous for its historical places, remarkable history, unforgettable natural landscapes and incredible traditions and customs. The contribution of Mahatma Gandhi has expressed superbly in the novels of R. K. Narayan. Influence of Gandhian's thought on the Indian National Movement will be studied in the famous novels such as Waiting for the Mahatma (1976), Swami and Friends (1935). The research will examine the influence of Mahatma Gandhi on Sriram, Bharati, Swami and others.*

Keywords: *Narayan, Gandhiji, Character, Influence.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

R.K.Narayan is a versatile writer of Indian English literature. He is a famous writer of the pre-colonial period. Indian freedom was addressed in novels. He expressed the true temperament of Mahatma Gandhi through living examples. Mahatma Gandhi is the leader of the country. His life experiences, contributions, achievements and struggles in the freedom struggle are technically presented in the story of the novels. Swami and Friends (1935) and Waiting for the Mahatma (1976) are the most popular patriotic novels of R.K. Narayan. Sriram, Bharati, Swami and common people were influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's Khaddar, white caps, Charkha, truth and non-violence.

Gandhiji seemed to be an integral part of the literary genre and appeared in many dramas, novels, stories and poems. His social activities and idealism were democratic, primitive and homogeneous. He insisted on high thinking and a simple way of life, which was reflected and emphasized by the English writers of the time. R.K. Narayan's "Waiting for Mahatma" reflects Gandhi's ideology and influence on the people of the country. Sriram, the hero of the novel, is a blind follower of Gandhiji. He joins the freedom movement, but without realizing it. Narayan goes further with Gandhi's concept of non-violence.

"Before you aspire to drive the British from the country, you must drive every vestige of violence from your system... you must train yourself to become a hundred percent ahimsa soldier."

It shows Sriram's process of transformation in search of truth and self-realization. He is introduced at the beginning of the novel as a carefree boy who lives with his grandmother in Malgudi. His life takes on meaning when he first sees Bharti, Gandhi's disciple. He falls in love with her and goes to Gandhi's camp to meet her. However, when she enters the camp, her main motive, which was to spend time with Bharti, turns into a new relationship. K.R.S., Iyenger writes:

In Waiting for the Mahatma, the theme is apparently Bharti and Sriram's romance which, however, gains a new dimension in the background of their common allegiance to Mahatma (372).

Jagan, hero R.K. Narayani, a sweet seller, considers himself a loyal Satyagrah, regularly spins Charkha and realizes that he will attain nirvana like the Buddha by following the principles of Gandhianism. R.K. Narayani Swami and friends are a systematic attack on Indian cultural values. Swaminathan is the protagonist of the novel. He was educated at the Albert Missionary School, where Hindu gods and their rituals were ridiculed. Swami hates this attitude, so he wants to leave the school in protest. Swaminathan and his friends show distaste for Western culture. They fought to protect Indian



culture. Gandhi wrote in Young India, “My resistance to Western civilization is really a resistance to its indiscriminate and thoughtless imitation based on the assumption that Asians are fit only to copy everything that comes from the West.” (Gandhi 1928).

Gandhi was in favor of wearing khaddar clothes, so Narayan takes advantage of the situation to keep the spirit of that novel alive. If Swaminathan wears a foreign hat, someone will say so “Young man, do you want our country to remain in eternal slavery?” (Swami 97) Hearing this, he felt ashamed and removed the cap and throws it into the fire with a thought of saving his country. Burning of “foreign cloth” in the novel is the representation of Gandhian ideology and the friendship of Swaminathan with a Muslim boy Akbar Ali “a nice Mohammedan” (Swami 108) is symptomatic of communal harmony.

Krishnan is the English teacher hero of the novel. The person who rebelled against the English education system is Krishnan. He is the enemy of those interested in westernization. The western education system in India eventually leads to alienation of the individual from his cultural roots. Michel Pousse has pointed out that “Narayan has stressed three points which stand out in Gandhi’s philosophy, namely, life is a never ending quest for truth, and secondly, individual peace can only be achieved within a well-defined social context and thirdly the reasons for the use of English language by Gandhi as means of communication” (Pousse 4)

Like Gandhi, he emphasizes the importance of mother tongue teaching. He believes he has been attacked by the British colonial education system for a century of false education, which is why he wants to resign. Instead of nurturing a wrong upbringing, he wants to explore his inner soul like Gandhi's philosophy of self-realization and love his motherland like a true Indian citizen.

There is a character in “The Vendor of Sweets” Jagan, a protagonist of the novel represents Mahatma Gandhi. In the opening of the novel he says to his nephew, “Conquer taste and you will have conquered the self.” (The Vendor of Sweets 31). He is a vendor of pure ghee sweets. He is a man who gives importance to purity, thus he said, “Purity that is important” (The Vendor of Sweets 96).

He never compromises quality for money. He is portrayed as a Gandhian in post-independence India and follows the Gandhian lifestyle to the last detail. She eats natural salt, wears khadi and shoes made only from the skin of dead animals, spins charkhas, reads Bhagwad Gita, writes a book on conservation, renounces the caste system, which is well evident from her son's marriage, Mali was married to Kristana an american lady grace - all these things show that she is a staunch follower of gandhaism. Dorai Swami gradually transforms Jagan, like Sriram in Waiting for the Mahatma, from a pseudo-Gandhian spirit to a Gandhian spirit. Dorai Swami inspired him just like Bharati Sriram in "Waiting for the Mahatma".

2. CONCLUSION:

This study shows that Gandhian ideas and nationalism played an important role in the novels of R. K. Narayan. They also played some role in creating political awareness. Narayan's novels raised concerns about nationalism among English-reading people and groups, including the administrative hierarchy serving the British Empire. Novels were written in English in India, which was the language of the educated and high officials of India.

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