

Projection of Social Realism in the Novels of Upamanyu Chatterjee

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UpamanyuChatterjeeis not a social reformer. He does not want intentionally to write about social abuses and rectify them. He does not suggest any cure for social exploitation. He is not interested in presenting the contemporary political picture of India. He concentrates only on disclosing robbery of bureaucracy by the dishonest leaders. His novels English August and The Mammaries of the Welfare State treat the blindness of Indian administration to the moral bankruptcy. His novels expose the inherent collapse of the noble concept of the welfare state. The last burden is the saga of an Indian family which is on the threshold of dissolution. Weight loss is about the consequences of negligence of child and the unregulated sexual desires. Way to go which is sequel to the last burden tells us that in the toil and turmoil of life it is the family which gives us shelter. All his novels reveal the same fact that Chatterjee's major intention is the representation of social realism and the mental aspects of the characters who are selected from real life.

Being an IAS officer himself Chatterjee chooses to expose the mal practices of Indian administrative services in English August. Exposure of the emptiness of administrative services is the first target of Chatterjee. Secondly he loves to discuss the displacement of the young educated amid the atmosphere of besmirched politics and corrupted politician and officers. The conflict between metropolitan culture and traditions of regional India is the major theme of Chatterjee's novels. Agastya is habitual to foreign and metropolitan culture and it is beyond his knowledge to understand the class conflict. There is struggle too, between the individual and his inner being caused by the social economic dissimilarities in the society. His failure to understand the intricacies of contemporary life results into his attachment to a comfortable world of fantasy in the government rest house at Madana. Away from the world of realities he takes shelter into fantasy, marijuana and masturbation. He accepts as truth the trivial and false values of life. Agastya runs away from the dark realities of life which create commotion in his mind. He encounters the duplicity of world and starts trusting the fake values of life. But Agstya does not try to find the answer and be happy with the comfortable world of reveries. He stays away from his accountability to the fraud and insincerity in Indian bureaucracy.

Chatterjee likes to pose some significant questions about English education and language in India through the Western culture which effects on Agasty's psyche. The young educated of India has the particular fascination for English that is " any Indian who speaks English more fluently than his speaks any Indian language, " defines has become the characteristic of new generation". Agastya has the charge of speaking English in its fucked up mongrelness". Sathe's comment brings actuality before us when he says that most of the Indian writers in English write about India they don't know. They are just" absurd full with one mixed up culture and writing about another what kind of audience they are aiming at".Chatterjeeis of the view that modified English is the need of time that's why he has written his first novel in Hinglish i.e. mixture of



English and regional languages. He has made use of contemporary vernacular in English August. Hinglish is the language of Agastya and his friends. Mammaries of the Welfare State is a fine attempt to bring together Bengali and English. Sen's head of the department Dr. Upadhyay says "English in India is burlesque".

The requirement of good teachers in English is the cause of srivastava's disappointment. But this is a irony of situation that his wife is a lecturer in English in Janta College. In this way Chatterjee laughs at the state of English and English education in India. Manikkadu's view is important in this regards when he says," my granddaughter is twenty now doing her MA in English in Kolkata. A very fine subject, Keats and Tennyson very good for girls specially". The deplorable state of higher education is exposed by Mohan Gandhi when he tales that two ruffians claim to be the principal of the college of Uttarkashi.

In the last burden Chatterjee supports the education in English. Shyamanand is against the teaching of Hindi and Sanskrit in schools. When the Jesuit school plans to change the medium of teaching to Hindi, he becomes quite upset and write a letter to the principal expressing his disappointment. In this way Chatterjee has purposefully dealt with the contemporary burning issue of unfortunate condition of higher education and English language in India. According to Dhrubo, English is the language of the parasitical colonizers. Dhrubo comments on the poor state of education in India are really praiseworthy . He says to Agastya , " But here in Delhi all over India education is bidding time , a meaning English accumulation of degrees, B.A., M. A. , And then an M.Phil. Why you join the millions in trying your luck at the civil services".

The theme of Chatterjee's first novel English August it's purely the malfunction of bureaucracy. Though the setting of the novel is tribal area of Madana, he has avoided the commonplace life in Madana and challenges before ordinary people in the tribal belt. The arrogance dishonesty, duplicity, misuse and corruption in administrative life of the civil servants is the main theme of this novel. Even the readers of novel do not take seriously the tribal problems. The problems like scarcity of water and hygiene of tribal are only the references to support the main theme. The novel is ironical comment on field of Indian civil services. The novelist does not pay heed at the burning social problems but stresses on emotional actuality of the life of civil servants. Chatterjee laments over the tradition of the officers to employ peons and the government servants for their individual works. The subordinate cannot maintain their self respect under their superiors. The misuse of power is done by many officers by doing favour to their peons. This type of favoritism has become serious problem in civil services of country. Another example of dark reality of civil services is shown when the wife of Srivastava acquires degrees from diverse institutions and wants the job of lectureship to support her husband. Chatterjee ridicules the selection method of school teachers women who answers that 20% of 80 is 25. This is very hard reality that the pressure of the education officer is exercise to sick admissions in educational institutes. The whole administrative system is hallow with the corruption which has taken the nation into the deep valley of degradation. Chatterjee consistently brings out the shameless



corruption of officer such as the infringement of piece of land by tahsildar, adulteration in kerosene by kerosene dealer, the suppression of the act of murder in village by police Patil, manipulation in the panchayat of labours by the contractors.

The degradation of Indian bureaucracy does not prevail only in interior parts like Madana and Jompanna . It has its upper hands in the metropolitan cities like Delhi and Kolkata. At Jompanna Agastya sees people releasing the waste on the roadside. Illiteracy , poor sanitation are the basic challenges in villages like Jompanna. The problem of scarcity of water is too severe that small children run to wells instead of schools. Agastya is ignorant about the fact that this is the real India which lives in villages and not in Delhi and Calcutta. Exploiting bureaucracy and filthy politics are accountable for this slow development. The programs for rural development, social welfare and family welfare are nothing but opportunities for exploitation of poor. The Mammaries of the Welfare State is the vivid projection of political and administrative realities of India. Agastya is told by Shankar, the engineer in minor irrigation from Kiltanga that most of the engineers do not like working there and wants to be transferred to district place. They have given the bribe to minister for their transfer. He talks about minister," they say that all engineers are corrupt. They make money." Collectors , district development officer, superintendence of police and other bureaucrats make lots of money out of corruption. Kumar tales Agastya that most of the engineers earned corers of rupees from the grand sanctioned by the government for the Magna river dam project. These are astonishing and shameless acts of the civil servants.

Chatterjee has also projected the stunning problems of women . But this could see through some comments by characters and their acts that are just seems to be aware of women and their problems. Chatterjee has touched the inner heart of women by representation of women characters like Mrs. Malati Srivastava, Mrs. Rajan, the English woman Sita , the tribal woman Para. Neera, Renu, Rohini Gandhi. Augusta always likes to mix with the anglo Indian boys who are always after Tibetan college girls to seek sexual pleasure. Agastya is the graduate from Saint Stephen College. This college is only for male student. This fact has outlined August attitude towards women. That's why Agastya could not satisfy his sexual urge in Madana and has to take shelter in masturbation. In college life Augusta does not spare even his female teacher when he comes under the influence of Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel. Narsimha his friend confuses her by asking her some senseless questions. He writes to Agastya, " August tell her, yes, my lovely bitch, when my hands are full of her flat buttocks, my mouth on either breast. This is the very good example of lustful psychology of highly educated youth. Agstya has got lustful mind. He sees every woman from the sexual point of view. Even Mrs Srivastava who is wife of his boss could not escape his lust full eyes. He observes her thighs her inner wears, under pink blouse. Every woman appears to him sexy weather she is Dhruvo's mother, pregnant Rohini, or Vasant's wife having so many children. He does not hesitate to know that Neera, his girlfriend is no more virgin. Renu the Punjaban pursuing her PhD in America and who is



Dhrubo's girlfriend denies the bond of love for 'Independence and discovery' of self. This is the picture of new women but one of them surrenders to male supremacy while the others too reject the bondage of it.

Agastya becomes the member of the group of civil servants who are ready to debase every woman by treating her as Sex object. They have no good judgment of decorum and pamper in the world of foiled imagination. The day dreams of Shankar are very funny. He indulges in imagination that Nurana, the lady block development officer ended her life by committing suicide on the ground of failure of the collector to marry her after divorcing his wife. On the other hand Shankar's brother Shiv says, "when he was away, I sleep with his wife". GovindSathe exploits GeettiBhabhi who is his as his sister in law. A officer harasses a tribal women. Mohan Gandhi gets his hands chopped for seducing a village woman. The naxalitePrakash looks upon Para the village women as his own possession. Bhatia comments on Gandhi's wife' his wife's really sexy, too ruler, wish I could fuck her' is unworthy of a civil servant. Even Sathe falls up pray to prostitution. These all stories reveals the fact that sexual exploitation is a part of ruler life. This happens not only in Madina or Jompanna but in entire rural India. For Agastya woman is not serious object TO care of. He talks ill of his mother that his father colonized his Goan mother. He constantly keeps speaking lie about his wife. He tells Kumar that his father is opposite of his marriage with his girlfriend because she is Muslim. He lies to Agrawal that his wife is a Norwegian Muslim. She has the breast cancer and is having treatment in England. Manikkaku wants to get his granddaughter married with Agastya is really astonishing.

Chatterjee's main aim is hitting corruption and he does the same in English August and The Mammaries of the Welfare State. He is not interested in history and politics of India. Moreover, he likes dealing with the emotional reality of the metropolitan educated young like AgastyaSen and bureaucracy spoiled and destroyed by the omnipresent corruption. He reveals that the economic structure of the Welfare State is on the verge of destruction. The black picture of administrative and education fields are frightening.

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