



Sukanti Dutta: An Unyielding Voice of Social Conscience in Contemporary Bengali Literature

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Abstract - Sukanti Dutta is a renowned Bengali writer of India in the modern times. He was born in the year 1965 in New Barrakpore, West Bengal. He is a prolific writer. For his enormous contribution in Bengali Literature he has been awarded The Somen Chandra Memorial award by the West Bengal Bengali Academy, Nillohit award, Bhasha-Shahid Barkat Memorial award etc. From the very early age he is profoundly interested in writing. His father has inspired him for writing and has fueled the fire of imagination in him. Sukanti Dutta is highly interested in music and performing arts. His lucid and simple language with the grave understanding of contemporary issues makes his literary works more acceptable to the readers. His deep insight of the facts makes people aware of the various societal themes. His writing presents the vivid pragmatic themes of the contemporary society. He deals with numerous topics of the present time. His realistic approach and reflective knowledge of the themes enrich the wisdom of his readers. His bold and fearless voice has raised against the evil practices of the society. He keenly observes the merits and demerits of modernization, industrialization and globalization and the consecutive impact on human lives and on the physical world. He expresses his genuine concern on the sustainability of the ecosphere, the perfect balance of ecosystem and the most vital theme of ecocriticism and urges humanity for the proper treatment of the Mother Nature who with utmost care nurtures the world. Nature and humanity are inseparable and interdependent so the modern anthropocentric actions must have reverence to the protecting shield of Natural world, disregarding which will ultimately cause calamities to the biodiversity and human civilization and the existences of lives in the world. So only for commercial profit people should not mercilessly exploit the natural surroundings for the sake of modernization, urbanization and industrialization.

Key Words: social, contemporary, awareness, ecocentrism, anthropocentrism, nature, pollution, globalization, modernization, urbanization, Bengali, realistic

Methodology

This paper follows close textual, analytical and interpretative research methodology which helps in the deeper understanding

of the themes of the literary works of the author Sukanti Dutta. This paper uses Ecocentrism, Trauma theory, Postcolonial Theory, Psychoanalytic theory, Feminist Theory, and Marxism- theoretical approaches which help in the deeper analysis of the topics. The secondary sources, scholarly articles and writings have greatly assisted in the enrichment and clarity of the topics.

Yudhan Katha(2001): This is the debut novel of the well – known Bengali novelist Sukanti Dutta. This novel depicts the gradual transformation of Nalhati village of Yudhan and specially the Badu area due to the rapid urbanization and industrialization. The author shares a profound connection with this area as he spent his cheerful childhood days there. The novelist here expresses his genuine concern for the conservation of the environment and the natural resources. The dense population, pollution, egotistic anthropocentric approaches, unplanned urbanization and specially globalization are causing exploitation and tremendous harm to the environment. Civilization and preservation of nature can go simultaneously. Human beings should have regards for the natural world who is acting as a protecting shield of the world.

Hanan Sandhya: This novel also expresses his ecocritical view and how materialism, excessive lust for wealth of people and globalization affects nature and sustainability, degrading bio-diversity and causing imbalance in the eco-system and social decay.

Angshumaner Ganga: is another popular novel of the author. Here in this novel the novelist urges for the purification of the water of the Ganges, the most holy river of India. He through his writing make people aware of the environment and to keep the river Ganges pollution free for the sake of the eco-sphere and for the healthy and hygienic usage of its water by all the humanity and living creatures, flora and fauna of the eco-system to have a healthy co-existence of everything. The river Ganges is associated with the religious sentiment, emotion and reverence of humanity, so people must keep its water clean which is regarded as the most pious and precious religious object. From time immemorial it is been worshipped by the ancestors.



Bristi Abristi: This novel dealt with the conditions of the immigrants from Bangladesh during Indian partition. The author is willing to expand this topic and this theme in the near future as he expressed his wish in an interview with Sathi Nandi.

MayaUran(2007) and Keyar Smritimoy Sakal :These novels deal with the leftist ideology and the dominance of the leftist political parties in West Bengal for 34 years. The author is not a strict follower of any specific political ideology. He is the admirer of nature. The emergences of several political parties and their distinct ideologies and his own experiences of life have formed his own individual ideology.

Feriwali: This is a short story exposing the crude reality of the world where sex tourism is a highly demanding and dominating commercial project. There is a strong network of this business and the whole world is the market. This scheme is spreading very rapidly through Thailand, India, Manila, Mumbai, and Kolkata and all over the globe. For the lust for wealth and power people have disregarded the ethical values and engaged in unethical practices. In the flats of Baguihati, SaltLake, Behala, Jadavpur, Tullygunge etc illegal sensual activities are going on uncontrollably. This is a lucrative project for the business men, for the girls who are gaining money for some limited hours of physical intimacies with the customers and for the owner of the flats who are willingly providing their rooms for these limited hours in every week. These types of immoral activities are running under the masks of massage parlors. Sharbori is the protagonist of this realistic literary work. She is a girl who has just completed her graduation. She is a girl of moderate academic talent, and has never thought to pursue a job. She is a decent and simple girl. She is pretty. Due to the sudden change of the destiny her father has to experience financial downfall and as a consequence he had undergone a massive stroke and hospitalized thereafter. Her mother is also of a feeble health condition with high blood sugar disease. Her younger sister is a brilliant student whose academic life is still ongoing. Now due to such familial condition Sharbori is compelled to pursue a job in Sorola Trading Centre. The owner of this company, Fonibabu is an acquaintance of her father. Her family is indebted to him as her father has taken 30,000 rupees loan from him. Fonibabu used to pressurize her for the services in his message parlours. Due to severe economical crisis Sharbori is obliged to join in this trap unknowingly. Her name is changed to Juhi after entering in this dark world. Fonibabu, Miss Nisha, Punam are all involved in this malicious business. They advised her to get rid of the traditional ethics and leave the notion of virginity. To gain monetary comfort she must forsake age old values and here she herself must be the commodity to entertain and satisfy the physical gratifications

of her clients. One day in one Baguihati flat when reluctant Sharbori protests against the unlawful approaches of her powerful client she is warned by him. Finally she is forcefully raped by the previous angry client along with two other men and has been murdered mercilessly. This gloomy world of illegal physical proximity and commodifying women physiques filled her life and the future of her poor, helpless family to complete darkness, anxiety, agony and hopelessness. The only earning member of the family is cruelly assassinated by some savage customers and their brutal and insatiable physical urges. This is a vivid picturization of the pathetic culmination of Sharbori, the Feriwali or the salesgirl who instead of selling products has sold her own body to this hellish global trade.

Masland Madur- Here in this short story the writer Sukanti Dutta has emphasized the necessity and empowerment of the small-scale businesses. Here the writer is describing the benefits of using the eco-friendly Masland mats. In modern times due to the vast spread of plastic mats this small- scale business is obliterating day by day. For the artificial commodities natural eco-friendly products and the producers are experiencing societal subjugation and huge economical decline. These natural products are made with utmost sincerity and these items will never cause any harm to their users and the physical world. Unfortunately the emergence of the artificial objects is wiping out their existence from the market quickly. Here in this story Sushanta, the protagonist, is a retired Accounts officer, becomes nostalgic after using the mat and hallucinates his conversation with his ancestors and contrasts the difference between the lifestyles of past days and modern times. Due to rapid urbanization and luxurious, comfortable life style now in the modern time people have created a huge distance from the natural world.

Kumir Raj: This is another short story which fearlessly exposes the unethical and violent activities of the political parties. Kalachand, a poor, slum dweller, is the central figure of this story, is entangled with such a corrupted party under the dominance of Mintuda and when he disobeyed his instructions, he is illegally imprisoned and in this entrapment one can hardly escape from such horrible situations.

Neché Uthe Akkhar(2025): This work is subjective writing. This writing expresses his various autobiographical events- his childhood days, his parents' inspirations, his mother's excellent story telling skill, his moments with his siblings, his perceptions of the world, involvement in politics etc. This work also discusses about his numerous literary works and his individual outlook and views about the society and the contemporary events.

Theoretical Approaches:

- **Trauma Theory:** Tremendous repression, unexpressed and suppressed trauma is shown in the characters.
- **Ecocriticism:** The writer makes people aware of the environmental sustainability and protests against any kind of anthropocentric activities that causes degradation of biodiversity.
- **Marxism:** Capitalism, class consciousness and labor are discussed in the novels.
- **Psychoanalytic:** Repression, anxiety, death drive and depression are the common mental states of the post-war generation. Mental unrest pervaded their psyches.
- **Postcolonial Theory** –National identity, immigration, partition and colonial power dynamics are demonstrated.
- **Feminist Theory:** The marginalization, silencing and objectification of women take place in the novels.

Conclusion

Sukanti Dutta is truly a brilliant Bengali writer of the present time. His writing expresses his genuine and heartfelt concern for the environment, humanity and his simple reality based writing command readers' absolute attention. He has gain popularity and acceptance as an author. His uniqueness and originality of writing is discernible and highly praiseworthy. His views make people aware of the contemporary social issues and therefore enhancing the perception and social consciousness of the readers.

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