

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Longing for Indian Sensibility in Raja Rao's *Kanthapura***

**A Thesis submitted to the Central Department of English  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master  
of Arts in English**

**By**

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**June, 2007**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This thesis wouldn't have been completed without constant encouragement and assistance of teachers' friends and well wishers. I am greatly indebted to my respected lecturer Mrs. Anju Gupta for her scholarly guidance, regular encouragement and suggestions. Her insightful comments have been of great help in bringing this dissertation to conclusion.

I would like to express my deep sense of respect to all my teachers for their help and suggestions during this research work. I am grateful to Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Head of the Central Department of English, Lecturer Saroj Ghimire, Lecturer Shankar Subedi and Lecturer Sadan Raj Adhikari, for their cordial support and ideas. I am thankful to all my lecturers at the central department of English for their direct and indirect help.

I extend my admiration to my friend Mr. Ramakanta Paudel for his valuable ideas. Also, I would like to express my thanks to my friends Suman Regmi, Gita Aryal, Bal Bahadur K.C., Ashish Aryal, Angal Babu Aryal, Narayan Paudel, Devendra Subedi, Jiban Paudel and excellent Computer typist and printer Ashok Kumar K.C. (Creative Computer Centre, Kirtipur, Kathmandu).

Finally, I am grateful to my parents for their inspiration, encouragement and economic support to meet upto this level.

**July, 2007**

**Narayan Prasad Aryal**

## **Abstract**

This research makes an intensive study of Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*. Set in Colonial India and written as a diasporic immigrant writer, Raja Rao faces a peculiar problem of creating an Indian consciousness. In the Novel, we find the religious reforms and social upliftment. The heroic struggle and self-sacrifice of the protagonist to eradicate social evils prevailing in Indian society is a persisting demand for "home rule" of a diasporic writer, like Rao. Moorthy, the protagonist in the novel, is a Gandhian man who preaches brotherhood, equality and abolition of untouchability for the glorious India. Through him Raja Rao expresses his deep concerns and desperate longing for his native land and culture. The persisting demand for a home rule that functions as a thematic component in the text is the manifestation of a diasporic writer's desire to subvert the hegemonic colonial rule.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Raja Rao was born in Hassan, Mysore, India at 5 November 1908. Educated at various colleges and universities, he has now emerged as a very prolific writer and has registered his name as one of the most important Indian writers of modern times. He has only three novels in his account, beside a number of short stories and essays. *Kanthapura* (1938), one of his most renowned novel, was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non- violence. *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) and *The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965) are metaphysical novels based on the vedantic concept of illusion and reality. These novels are for a proper appreciation of art of the novelist. His other famous stories are *The Cow of the Barricades* (1947), *Javni*, *Akkya*, *The little Gram Shop*, *Narasiga*, *Nimka*. *The policeman and the Rose and other stories*. He has written a couple of essays to express his love for his motherland and fascination for Indian culture and Vedic philosophy.

In 1950 Rao visited the U.S.A. and he was fascinated by American culture and way of life. He studied the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman. He has been a great admirer of these Americans because like him they too were deeply interested in Indian philosophy and Vedic philosophy. He has taken the Indo-Anglian novel to the fore of the world and achieved international fame and recognition. For his *The Serpent and the Rope* he won the *Sahitya Academic* award (1966), and *Padma Bhushan* ( 1969) was awarded to him by the President of India.

Santha Ramu Rao comments on Rao that " perhaps the most brilliant- and certainly the most interesting- writer of modern India (21).

Rao is the pride of India, though he is better known and appreciated abroad than in his own country. He writes slowly, revises frequently and his works have been published at intervals, because he wants to achieve perfection.

His works have brought the level of consciousness to the readers. The suitable medium for his work is renounced for timeless, temporal, metaphysical, local and international. So he is famous for his fictional form. This justifies him as the innovator in modern Indian fiction. He has uplifted the twentieth century literature.

Raja Rao wrote his second novel. *The Serpent and Rope*. It dramatized the relationship between India and the western culture. In the novel the serpent refers to illusion and the rope to reality. He expressed his love for motherland and his fascination for Indian culture and Vedic philosophy. He philosophized the Indo- Anglian novel, and recited glorious tributes for the work. His philosophical interests became obtrusive and he became tiresome and obscure. It is a new kind of prose fiction and enlarged the scope of the novel- form.

Rama was the hero as well as the narrator of the novel. His attempt for self-realization is the main theme of the novel. Rama's mother had died at his young age and his father re-married. After completing his study in India he went to France, there he married Madeleine, got a son who died in infancy. His marriage was failure. He returned India and fell in love with Savitri. Under Ram's advice, Savitri married Pratap Singh. He again went to France then to London. He fell ill there and flew to Paris after recovery. He completed his thesis and submitted there. Rama turned to philosophy.

Raja Rao's philosophical metaphysical and religious concerns become too obtrusive. Many readers find it tiresome and boring. He found a new genre- the philosophical novel- and has vividly and forcefully realized the confrontation of eastern and western cultures. *The Serpent and the Rope* is also regarded as the spiritual autobiography of the novelist. It provides the finest example of the synthesis of the borrowed western novel- form and Indianness. Rao has extended the scope of this western art form by giving it a new subject matter, by using it as a vehicle for the quest of metaphysical wisdom or meditation on the nature of existence from the Indian point of view. It is a projection of India in vivid fictional terms; and perhaps, it is the most impressive novel yet written by an Indian in English.

*The Cat and Shakespeare* is the third novel of Raja Rao and the novelist has subtitled it " a philosophical comedy". That answered philosophical questions posed in the earlier novels. It is a curious mixture of fantasy and realism. Rao has dealt with social and official corruption, particularly in the rationing department. It is a tale of two friends Govinda Nair and Rama Krishna Pai who have been working together at Trivandrum. Krishna loves Shantha a school teacher, and has immoral relations with her. Govinda Nair is charged with corruption and fraudulent practice. His boss, Boothalinga Iyer, dies of heart failure as a cat jumps suddenly on his bald head. When Govinda Nair is tried in the court, he brings the cat in the court of law. He throws the whole blame on Boothalinga Iyer by saying that what he did was under the orders of his boss who was then dead. This is how Govinda Nair defends himself. The cat creates a diversion in the court by jumping here and there and Boothalinga Iyer's signature is revealed under another signature. As the judge is handling the paper over, a sunbeam from the ceiling falls on the paper and that is how, under the light, the signature of Boothalinga Iyer is revealed. This proved Govinda Nair's innocence Shantha's life with him is normal. Pai in

the end lives with Shantha, his mistress, and his wife, Saroja, Lives in a village with her son.

The plot is zigzag rather than progressing straight on the speculation and is not so much analytical as a series of lightning flashes. The dialogue is dialectical rather than an exchange of confidence. Their true meaning is understood only when there is inner illumination, a flash of lightening illuminating the dark and unknown. Raja Rao has found in it the most adequate concrete equivalent of a profound vision of life which has its validity not only for the contemporary Indian situation.

*Kanthapura* is a landmark in Indian novel. It is at once a political social religious, rural and the first novel in English among young Indian writers. It has a richness of direct simplicity which gradually unfolds a creative complexity through the novel. The familiar smells, sights, sounds of an Indian village rooted in the tradition but alive and awakening to the contemporary realities of life are all brought out in a lingo that is ever new and self-shaping like the clay at the Porter's wheels.

The period when *Kanthapura* was written, British colonial system set up with the basic motive of economic exploitation and keeping India under control. The British were not the first invades of the Indian subcontinent when they were beginning to consolidate political control in India. British society was on the threshold of breaking through to a higher stage of development than the Indian subcontinent. British colonialism was bloomed by the exploitation of Indian economy and India became a dry land. India's problem is colonial rule of British. When such exploitation was known by the Indian they became aware and generated ideas of nationalism or against colonialism to resist from the colonial rule.

The British colonial ruler projected the Indian people as racially inferior, their institutions as backward and their religions as a set of superstitions. They pulled most of India under one umbrella which gave India an administrative unity which, it was commonly argued, gave India a sense of national unity. Instead it seemed that the consciousness of national unity was burned through the commonality of struggle against the alien rulers. Without such a struggle, the administrative unity could not lead to a sense of nationalism.

In the novel *Kanthapura* (1938), the Whiteman owner of the Skeffington coffee estate is a symbol of the imperialist ruler of India. British ruler employed paid agents like Bhatta and Swami to oppose the freedom movement. British ruler sent a police man, Bade Khan, to maintain law and order, and put down the Gandhi movement, and it may be said to his credit that he performs his duty loyally and sincerely. He is a loyal government servant performing his duty in very trying circumstances. He may be an instrument of the foreign government, but it would be wrong to dismiss him as a heartless monster of wickedness.

The heavy government repression of the activities of the Swadeshi movement, the increasing popularity of the home rule soon attracted the Government's wrath while the western educated youngmen copied the ways of the west also yearned to be the masters of their own destiny and to free their country from the British rule. Some enlightened English men were sympathetic to Indian aspirations and helped and supported the cause for Indian independence. The Indian people's demand for home rule in this country by themselves, reflects the people's own choice of vigorous campaign of Swadeshi and boycott. Gopal Krishna Gokhale in 1907 in this concern says,

The goal of the congress is that India should be governed in the interests of the Indians themselves and that, in course of time, form of government should be attained in this country similar to what exists in the Self-Governing colonies of British empire . . . That advance, moreover, can only be gradual, at each stage of the progress it may be necessary for us to pass through a brief course of apprenticeship before we are enable to go to the next one. (133)

At any time of trouble, literature and art becomes the medium to awaken people. The role of literature and its influence in the Indian struggle for freedom is a significant mode of cultural analysis. Indo-Anglian writer Raja Rao continues to write in English literature and has grown and flourished and attained higher and higher peaks to awaken India to revolt against the foreign rule. Patriotic writings grew almost spontaneously in different language as the resistance of a community against foreign rule. Such writings as spontaneous expression of the people against foreign domination has emerged in the nineteenth century much before organized political movements towards the independence of the country. Raja Rao suggests that the Indian writer in English must expose "Indian Sensibility", and learn to write Indian English not *Babu* English. This is not the English of the sophisticated Indians who meet in an exclusive club in Bombay, Calcutta or New Delhi. This is simply the natural speech of rural folk transmuted into English. The Indian idioms, phrases, proverbs, syntax or structure, Indian imagery has been profusely used to convey the awakening of Indian struggle for freedom.

Raja Rao has a unique literary character. He is symbolic, poetic and metaphysical in his novels and differs in this respect from the rest of the Indian writers of fiction in English. *Kanthapura* wakes the Indian freedom struggle movement using Mahatma

Gandhi's Satyagraha rule to resist the British oppression to encourage Indian people for awakening. It is a remarkable realistic and nationalistic village novel for impartial presentation of the impact of Gandhian movement.

The *Kanthapura* is a village in Mysore in the province of Kara. It is situated in the valley of Himavathy in south India. In this novel writer uses myth, legend, Indian history and linguistic proverbs which help to generate revolutionary spirit in them and show the longing of Indian people to rule their country by themselves, not from any foreign rules. In the novel the Indianness is prominent. Such Indian sensibility is the symbol of self govern and subvert the hegemonic colonial rule or to resist their country from the British empire. He uses allusions to revitalize the village people making them internalize the culture and the past from which they have emanted. Rao has injected power into people, which helps them to the oppression prepared by the British rule and resists and subverts against it and arouses the idea of nation's longing for nationalism.

*Kanthapura* is a great work of art presenting realistically, impartially and artistically the impact of the Gandhi movement on the masses of India. It is a great classic of the India's freedom struggle, it gives us more essential truth about the Gandhian era. It is a valuable document of abiding interest and significance of the total generation and resurgence of the masses of India. In this book the participation of small villagers of south India in the national struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi has been depicted.

Moorthy, the main character of *Kanthapura*, is an analyst who thinks to expose the loyal honest young boy presenting his precarious desire of nationalism in Indian culture and society. It is the first major Indian novel in English. It is the text of civil Disobedience Movement of the 1930's that takes for its central concern the participation of a small village of south India in the national struggle called for by Mahatma Gandhi.

Imbued with nationalism, the villagers sacrifice all their material possessions in a triumph of the spirit, showing how in the Gandhian movement people shed their narrow prejudices and unite in the common cause of the non-violent civil resistance to the British rule.

Gandhi launched non-violent, non-cooperation movement for the independence of the country from the British coloniality. Gandhi does not make a personal appearance in the novel, Moorthy is the representative of Gandhi. He has aimed at the total involvement of all sections of the Indian people and so launched a comprehensive programme of economic, social and religious upliftment and emancipation of the Indian people. His program of action is spinning of the *Charkha* weaving one's own cloth and boycotting foreign clothes and other goods. *Swadeshi* and *Khaddar* were necessary for *Swaraj*, eradication of untouchability and other social evils, so the women and so called lower caste may play their part in the freedom struggle. In the novel Moorthy places this very Gandhian programme of action before the people of Kanthapura. Gandhi's stress was on truth and non-violence and this message was carried to the remote parts of the country by devoted congress workers.

The role of Moorthy is the eradication of such social evils as child-marriage, untouchability and the exploitation and ill-treatment of widows, war against illiteracy, superstition, blindfaith and orthodox. Caste system is one of the dominant ideology among the people. In *Kanthapura* there are Brahman, weaver, Sudra and pariah quarters separately. Caste in Hindu society takes the hereditary social class members of different castes differently and infuses with different values and ideas but the villagers are mutually bound in various economic and social functions which maintain their social co-operation and unity, live and work unitedly without any distinction. Moorthy is a person

who repudiates many centuries of Hindu tradition by entering the house of an untouchable family and accepting a tumbler of milk to drink. He persuaded all men women and children of all castes and creeds to take part in non-violence activities. He tried his best to persuade that the village people should act according to the principles of love, simple life and Swadeshi. He asked the people to discard foreign clothes and wear only Khadi which he regarded as the sign of nationality or national pride, need for unity and self sacrifice in the country.

The protagonist's existence role is to enthuse the villagers into joining the political cause of India's struggle for freedom without reservation. Preaches and practices Ahimsa, the hallmark of Gandhi's appeal to the public evokes an overwhelming response from the villagers to unite soon cause ready to break the British law and fight against social evils like untouchable, child marriage, emancipation of the untouchables and resists against deep rooted orthodoxy remaining in Indian society. At the political level he has to fight the British authority symbolized by the Skeffington Coffee Estate and the police inspector Bade Khan who is out to suppress any undercurrent of Gandhian movement in *Kanthapura*.

The role of women is in the freedom movement and Rao highlights individually their contributions in *Kanthapura*. Rangama and Ratna form women's Volunteer groups despite opposition from the orthodox. Moorthy and his volunteers closely led the Mahatma's 'Dandi March' and enact their own satyagraha in *Kanthapura*. They picket toddy shop and are joined by more volunteers from the city, and by the coolies from the skeffington coffee state. Their march is opposed by the police who beat them mercilessly. The police tell them to be loyal to the British government, but the people say they know only the government of Mahatma. Moorthy and several others are arrested. As a result of

the police atrocities the entire village is desolated and, in the end " there remains neither man nor mosquito in *Kanthapura* "(184).

Nationalism is unquestionably one of the most important issues, if not the most important one of India. The country is facing external and internal dangers and pressures of recent events. He has underlined the need of nationalism to be much more way of internal dangers because they can cause greater harm. The author's aim is to view in a preliminary manner. Patriotism and nationalism, as they function inside patriots and nationalists how do people feel when they discharge their roles and why do they feel that way. The author does not maintain that other modes of analysis, history, political science, journalism literature are less important and different. The author has employed a psychological or behavioural approach, because such an approach has been more or less neglected.

Rao's involvement in the nationalist movement is reflected in his first two books. The novel *Kanthapura* and the short story collection *The Cow of the Bricades* (1947) was an account of the impact of Gandhi's teaching on non-violence resistance against British. The novel is seen from the perspective of a small Mysore village in south India. Rao borrows the style and structure from Indian vernacular tales and folk epic. The overall patterns of national and international politics in the modern era, are caused by sharp differences in social, economical and political modernization among and within nations. It is this differential modernization that in turn causes shifts in the distribution of national and world power among estates. These are those changes that underline the wars and other conflicts in our era. The immensely complex pattern creates shifts in power; the shifts themselves and their consequences are not easily defected by diplomacy or by

military power. *Kanthapura* is important to understand the foundations of nationalism through a patient analysis.

The main thesis has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents the introduction or outline of the thesis. It gives a brief gleam of the full thesis. It also tries to discuss Raja Rao as a nationalistic as well as post -colonial writer. The second chapter mentions and explains the longing of Indian sensibility, the desire of nationalism or national consciousness among the Indian people. The third chapter will be analysis of the text. This chapter will be the main focus of this research. The fourth chapter is the conclusion. Based on the textual analysis in the third chapter, it will conclude the explanations and arguments put forward in the preceding chapters.

### **Literature Review**

Raja Rao is a novelist and often disputed man of genius with praise and abuse. However his stand in the Indo-Anglian literature is immense and indisputable. As a prolific writer he has written many novels, stories and essays concerning with the Vedic concept of illusion and reality, human soul and native root. This early novel *Kanthapura* has been hailed by nearly all of his critics as one of the greatest novels that deals with the sense of nationality by Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence activities.

Numerous critics have diversely interpreted this novel since it's publication. In this connection William Walsh writes:

*Kanthapura* focuses on the intensity of Indian life, its physical immediacy, its traditional swaddling and its religious murmurations. Gandhi is the god as well as a the politician marching to the salt pans, Moorthy the God's manifestation as the non-violent frantic young leader, the policeman is the

whole negation and evil of life. The novel is dense with the actualities of village existence and brilliant with an impassioned light of spirituality.

(153)

M.K. Naik mentions "*Kanthapura* is the Indo-Anglian novel as Modern Indian *Sthalapurana*, or legendary history of a place" (259). *Kanthapura* is a regional novel in this larger sense. It is microcosm of the macrocosm, for what was happening in *Kanthapura* was happening all over the country during those days of the Gandhian freedom struggle. This book *Kanthapura* like, *Sthalapurana* deals with the brave struggle and self-sacrifice of the people of *Kanthapura* for the sake of the freedom of their mother *Bharat-Maata*.

E.M. Forster considers *Kanthapura* to be the best novel ever written in English by an Indian, and indeed it has great literary strength. He says "Raja Rao describes the daily activities, the religious observances, and the social structure of the Indian community and he brings to life a dozen or more unforgettable individual villagers. The novel traces the origins of the revolt to an awakening of the long dormant Indian soul" (69).

Srinivas Iyenger appreciates the novel by saying :

*Kanthapura* is thus remarkable in many ways: the theme is the impact of Gandhi's name and ideas on and obscure Indian village, anyway almost out of the seven lakhs of Indian villagers, the story-teller is a 'grandmother' (the most gifted of story-teller because the art of story-telling is second nature to the Indian grandmother!) who narrates for the identification of a newcomer the annuals of her village long after the actual events in which she had herself participated, and the manner of her telling too is

characteristically Indian fame with a spontaneity that is coupled with swiftness, vivid with a raciness suffused with native a vigour, and exciting with a rich sense of drama. (390)

Gita Krishnakutty mentions:

Educated in France and steeped in the literary and philosophical master piece of his own India as well as of the western civilization, Raja Rao, turned back to his country for the material to fashion a work that was wholly Indian in texture and spirit and which made use of Vedic utterances and the beast fable alike in a modern setting. (62)

Rao lived in foreign country and settled there but there is Indian culture and tradition in his mind forever. Indian always influenced his life and his writing style reflects the Indianness.

Raja Rao uses English like a master, as one would use one's own mother tongue. English syntax and structure are modified and broken to suit his purposes. S Nagarajan writes in this connection, "Raja Rao's aim is to create a style which will reflect the rhythms and sensibilities of the Indian psyche" (132).

Meenakshi writes, "*Kanthapura* trying to present the Indian vision character flavour on the whole the Indian experience, in a lingo and technique newly created to pulsate with the needs of the art' (72). She appreciates the new artistic technique used in *Kanthapura* as the work demanded.

H.Y. Sarada Prasad also comments, "A bold vernacular English like Raja Rao's in *Kanthapura* or amous tutuola's might even become a special attraction. But an

unconscious use of speech of page age or worse still, the mixture of several speeches irritates" (172).

Narasimhaih also comments Rao's writing style and technique he says:

The emotional upheaval that overtook *Kanthapura* could only find expression by breaking the formal English syntax to suit the sudden changes of mood and sharp contrasts in tone, by establishing a correspondence between perceptions and the images he could readily lay his hands on in the life around and by a fresh emphasis on old images and a completely different, in this case Kannada, intonation to English sentences. In other words it had to be a highly original style, a technical innovation indistinguishable from an essentially Indian sensibility. (133)

C.N. Srinath says that, "Linguistically by achieving an extra-ordinary novelty of expressing and yet all of them blossoming on the native root, Rao has the deep-rooted relationship with Indian culture and he has the new style of eastern writing in English" (201). Rao has a wide range of feelings and attitudes from the behaviour of an Indian crowd.

In *Kanthapura* by his skilful use of language, he has succeeded in conveying the distinctive modes of thinking, manners of observation and instinctive response of the Kanada people. According to Meenakshi Mukherji he has done it so effectively:

that even those who are not closely acquainted with the rigid social structure of a south Indian village will notice how a man's caste can be ascertained from his mode of speech. The evolving of an Indian - English which is adequate enough to express Indian, even regional flavour,

without ceasing to be English, is Raja Rao's most significant contribution.

(131)

H.M. Williams comments, "If Anand reflects Gandhi's humanism, Raja Rao reflects his conservatism and his charismatic religious consciousness, his essential Hinduism his novel suggests here and there a conflict between the conservatism of Gandhi and the socialist aspirations of many of his followers including Moorthy" (155). Mahatma Gandhi's spokesman is his disciple, Moorthy, who follows his master to the extent of fasting and preaching against caste in favour of universal brotherhood. Raja Rao's purpose is to make us see the conflict as a conflict of people and principles, not of individuals and to erect the village into a kind of corporate character.

According to K.R. srinivas Iyenger, "The adoption of Hindi or Hindustani as a national language was expected to raise our self-respect and promote a feeling of unity in country. But after almost forty years of the seeming reign of Gandhian thought Khadi has no more displaced mill-cloth than Hindi has displaced English" (11). Mahatma Gandhi was such an individual in this world who fought against evil. He revolted against injustice, cruelty, exploitation and oppression following the rule of non-violence.

## CHAPTER II

### **Ideas of Nationalism against Colonialism**

Nationalism has its various meanings. It is written in New Webster Encyclopedia Dictionary that, Nationalism, is "nationality, a national idiom or trait, advocacy of making one's own nation distinct and separate from others in social, cultural and political matters; a socialist program for national program for national control or ownership of industries and resources"(558). In other Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary defines the nationalism as, "one who favours or strives after the unity, independence interests or domination of a nation; a member of a political party specially so called, e.g. the Irish nationalist party who aimed at home rule: an advocate of nationalisation" (877). From these two definitions we can say that nationalism is the devotional interest of one's own nation, desire for national achievement or independence, in the arts based upon the folk idioms, history sensibility, home rule and longing for own nation's sensibility, arousal of national spirit, aspirations or great desire upon the country by the country people.

In this concern V.T. Patil says:

Nationalism was a political creed that brought about an underlying cohesion and unity to modern societies, protected them against national particularism and distribution and legitimised their claim to power and authority. It gave shape and sustance to the form of political origination and was an indispensable concomitant to all social, cultural and economic activities. Nationalism is in its wider meaning referred to psychological attitude which described to national identity and individuality a prominent place in the hierarchy of values. (44)

It is a natural and inevitable phenomenon of all national movements. It basically represents the tendency of subject national groups to achieve independence.

It is a phenomenon of the modern age. It was first manifested in the French Revolution. Nationalism began to play a significant role in the evolution of mankind. Due to the uneven growth of human civilization, nationalism is not the same in all lands and at all phases. It is a historical phenomenon. So, it is determined by the political thoughts and social structures of the various countries where it starts growing. The knowledge of historical development of nationalism and a parallel study of its various shapes help us in understanding the influence of nationalism. It is undeniable that objective forces are of great significance in shaping the nationalities. Nationalism gives the consciousness of their country about their own identity and love of nation to the people and arouse the revolutionary idea upon domination.

In the words of Hans Kohn, "nationalism is living and active corporate will. It asserts that the nation state is the ideal and the only legitimate form of political organization" (2). Nationalism is not in only the break of feudal past, it is not in any particular class and its interests. But the people resisting under a political unity made by their own support and goodwill. Kohn also adds:

Nationalism is inconceivable without the ideas of popular sovereignty preceding without a complete revision of ruler and ruled of classes and castes. The aspect of the universe had to be secularized with the help of a natural science and of natural law . . . The traditionalism of economic life had to be broken by the rise of the third estate, which was to turn the attention away from the royal courts and their civilization to the life, language and arts of the people . . . The growth of nationalism is the

process of integration of the masses of the people into a common political form. Nationalism therefore presupposes the existence in fact or as an ideal, of centralized form of government over a large and distinct territory . . . Nationalism is not a natural phenomenon, not a produce of 'eternal' or 'natural' laws; it is a product of the growth of social and intellectual factors at a certain stage of history . . . Nationalism is first and foremost a state of mind, an act of consciousness. (3)

Nationalism implied an activation of the people and the demand for a new ordering of society. In course of time it became the determining political and cultural forces among all the races and the geographical location of the society. Nationalism was traditional, social and culture oriented and it was closely connected to the religious and social attitude of the past.

In this way nationalism, in its broadest sense, is devotion to one nation's interests over those of all nations. The term can also refer to a doctrine or political movement. It is usually defined in terms of ethnicity and culture that has the right to constitute an independent or autonomous political community based on a shared history and common destiny. Extreme forms of nationalism hold that nationality is the most important aspect of one's identity and attempt to define the nation in terms of 'race' or genetics. The quest of national hegemony has inspired millennia of imperialism and colonization while struggles for national liberation have resulted in many revolutions. Historians use the term nationalism to refer to this historical transition and to the emergence and predominance of nationalist ideology.

Nationalism was a political creed that brought about an underlying cohesion and unity to modern societies, protected them against national particularism and disruption

and legitimised their claim to power and authority. It gave shape and substance to the form of political organization and was an indispensable concomitant to all social, cultural and economic activities. Nationalism in its wider meaning referred to a psychological attitude which ascribed to national identity and individuality a prominent place in the hierarchy of values. From this point of view it was a natural and inevitable phenomenon of all national movements. It basically represented the tendency of subject national groups to achieve independence. Therefore, nationalism and the national movement represented the continuation of a democratic movement which, after achieving the elimination of all privileges, distinctions and differentiations of every form of aristocracy within its own midst, set up its own nation as against the outside world.

The spirit of nationalism and patriotism and the epochal struggle for freedom also provided a healing balm to the society. The historic struggle, waged to break the shackles of bondage, deeply influenced the society. It at least inspired among the people a realization of the price that is paid for freedom and the sacrifices that are made to substantiate a nation's dream. In this connection C.P. Bhatnagar says:

The abiding memory of humiliation and misery shared in common by the people striving for a lofty purpose to pull together in times of difficulty and danger to hold another's hand when he flatters and fumbles to burn with a self-denying incandescence when darkness invades another's seething soul. The spirit of nationalism, as history testifies, is a great energiser, it is both the tonic and a whip, soothing the people's minds preparing them for greater ordeals to be endured and urging them to proceed with mounting acceleration towards the gleaming horizon of hope and fulfilment. (51-52)

The significance of the study of the rise and growth of Indian nationalism, from the standpoint of a general study of nationalism, is great. The process of the growth of Indian nationalism has been very complex and multi-faceted. This is due to a number of reasons. Pre-British Indian society had a social structure quite unique and perhaps without a parallel in history. It sharply differed in its economic base from the pre-capitalist medieval societies of European countries. Further, India was a vast country inhabited by a huge population, speaking many languages and professing different religions. Socially, the Hindus comprising two-thirds of the population were almost atomized in various castes and subcastes, a phenomenon peculiar to the Hindu society. Again Hinduism itself was not a homogeneous religion but a conglomeration of religious cults which divided the Hindu humanity into a number of sects. This extreme social and religious division of the Hindus in peculiar and the Indians in general presented a peculiar background to the growth of nationalism in India. India's peculiar social economic and political structure and religious history, together with its territorial vastness and a teeming population, make the study of the rise and growth of Indian nationalism more difficult, but more interesting and useful too. The self-preservative will of the past social economic and cultural structure has been strong in every Indian.

Another very striking thing about Indian nationalism is that it emerged under the conditions of political subjection of the Indian people by the British. The advanced British nation, for its won purpose, radically changed the economic structure of the Indian society, established a centralized state, and introduced modern education, modern means of communications, and other institutions. This resulted in the growth of new social classes and the unleashing of new social forces unique in themselves. These social

forces by their very nature came into conflict with British imperialism and became the basis of and provided motive power for the rise and development of Indian nationalism.

The imperial unity was determined almost entirely by the personality and power of the monarch. It was with the advent of British rule in India that political unity in India became a reality. It was the inevitable outcome of the introduction of a uniform currency system operating in all the social and economic groups, the operation of new judicial system drawing inspiration from the democratic conception of the equality of all citizens before the law and centralized political administration Dr. Sukhbir Chaudhary writes:

Indian nationalism came into existence during the rule of the alien British regime as a result of the action and interaction of innumerable subjective and objective forces which developed in the indigenous social set-up.

They were the result of alien rule and the influence of the powerful forces acting in the international field. (6)

Indian nationalism originated in the vision of those Indians who had learnt to look at Indian from a new point of view after experiencing the political, educational and missionary impact of the west. It was nurtured by the increasing opposition to the autocratic rule of the alien colonial power. With every generation nationalism gained more votaries, new regions of India and other strata of her complex society were drawn into the movement. In the course of this development there was much scope for generational and regional tensions due to the differentiated structure of India's subcultures which had been revenue settlement, Judicial administration and educational policy. The continuity of old traditions was interrupted but to no new continuity of life and thought could easily replace it. Individual reformers were often unable to transmit their aspirations to the next generation radical movements drifted into sectarian isolation,

new modes of thought were ever so often imported from outside rather than being developed within the country by means of a critical evaluation of the ideas of the previous generation. Only nationalism could serve as a common denominator. Even those nationalists who were opposed to each other in their own time were enshrined in a national pantheon after their contemporary controversies had been forgotten.

Hence Indian nationalism rooted in a peculiar soil was conditioned by the social fabric, the intellectual traditions and socio-cultural history of the people, and the geographical location of the society. It was traditional social, and cultural oriented, very closely connected to the religious and social attitudes of the past. Nationalism represented an effort by the people to imbibe and adopt western nationalism to their local scene without any radical departure from ancient traditions. Nationalism in India was the product of a reaction against foreign rule and a form of rebound against external domination and oppression.

Indian nationalism passed through various phases of development. As it advanced from one phase to another its social basis broadened, its objective became more clearly defined and bold, and its forms of expression more varied. As a result of the impact of forces of Indian and world development, increasing strata of the Indian people evolved a national consciousness and outlook and were drawn into the orbit of the nationalist movement. This national awakening found expression in varied spheres of national life, society, politics and culture.

In the first phase Indian nationalism had a very narrow social basis. The educated people who had studied in those educational institutions established by the British had studied western culture and greatly assimilated its democratic and nationalist ideas. They

formed the first stratum of the Indian society to develop a national consciousness and aspirations. Dietmar Rothermund mentions,

The intelligentsia initiated socio-reform and religio-reform movements which represented endeavours to remould the Indian society and religion in the spirit of the new principles of democracy, rationalism and nationalism. In fact, these movements were the expression of the rising national democratic consciousness among a section of the Indian people.

(221)

The founders and first fighters of Indian nationalism stood up for democratic rights, such as the freedom of the press, and put forth demands like the right of the nation to have a voice in the administration of the country. Nationalism was followed by lessening of the domination of religion, the gradual fading away of tribal or feudal loyalties, the spread of urbanization and industrialization and the growth of communications. The mass of less-skilled workers and peasants also led the movement for national independence. The emergence of a group which spruned western values but mastered organization and method gave the movement weight and depth.

Nationalism in India was not from the beginning a politically revolutionary movement. Initially, Indian nationalists did not want to overthrow an alien government with power concentrated on its own people. Consequently, it began as a movement for emancipation and constitutional rights. It was regarded as the political doctrine of the upper and middle classes. It was an elite movement, a bourgeoisie movement in the period of the ascent of the English educated middle classes. Historically, the middle class created the Indian national congress to act as a forum of expression for the political ambitions of the educated in the community. They developed a press and public opinion

in the country as potent weapons against British rule. They provided leadership for the socio-economic reform movements which grew alongside nationalism.

The demand for cultural self-determination preceded political self-determination and prepared the ground for the latter. This process began with the new emphasis on the regional languages, the stress on religious symbols as an integral element of native culture, folklore and folk traditions and the accessibility of culture to the non-learned class. Gradually nationalism manifested itself through a broad-based mass movement, with the people demanding an ever-widening participation in the political, social positions of the masses remained backward, they were keen to shed their age-old status of inferiority and exploitation. These well understood and well-articulated needs of the masses created the conditions for a social revolution. They started orienting towards the congress which adopted the programme of industrialization of the country and organized actively the *Swadeshi* campaign. It sets forth such democratic demand of those representative institutions and civil liberties.

Increasing unemployment among the educated middle class youth, economic misery among the people created favourable conditions for the growth of 'extremists'. They interpreted the British rule in India as the means of the British to keep the Indian people in a state of subjection and to economically exploit them. They turned back to India's past, idealized the ancient Hindu culture and desire to resuscitate it.

In spite, of the strong government repression, the nationalist movement registered in advance. The political propaganda of the Extremist instilled a feeling of national self-respect and self - confidence among the people. During the third phase the Indian nationalist movement became militant and challenging, and acquired a wider social basis

by the inclusion of sections of the lower-middle class. The agitation for 'Home Rule' during wartime further strengthened the political consciousness of the people.

Due to a number of reasons, the rising political consciousness of the Muslim upper class and educated middle classes took a communal form, and resulted in the formation of their organization on a communal basis.

The fourth phase in the evolution of the Indian nationalist movement extended roughly up to the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930. One striking development during this phase was that the nationalist movement gained a broad mass basis and added to its arsenal the weapon of direct mass action. The post-war economic crisis, the disillusionment about the government promises, and the increased repression by the state, had seriously affected the people including the peasantry and the working-class and they were in a state of great ferment. Outward condition of democratic revolution also encouraged Indian people to fight for independence. The Home Rule agitation during wartime also had the effect of intensifying and extending political consciousness among the Indian people.

The Indian capitalists who had become economically stronger during the war as a result of industrial expansion, also, more actively than before supported the Indian National Congress. The Swadeshi and Boycott slogans of the Gandhi objectively served the interests of industrialists who financially supported them. Gandhi's doctrine of class harmony and social peace and his support to the *Swadeshi* resolution made sections of the Indian bourgeoisie support Gandhi. Another development during this phase was the growth of socialist and communist groups in the country. These groups succeeded in initiating independent political and Trade Union Movements of the working class based on the doctrine of class struggle. Various youths and independence leagues which sprang

up in the country also adopted independence as their political goal. The phase culminated in the Civil Disobedience Movement organized by the Congress under the leadership of Gandhi.

The fifth phase is remarkable for the growth of the movement of the depressed classes, Muslim League, and the rapid growth of Communist Party. The rapid growth of the peasant movement was one of the striking development during this period. Larger and larger sections of peasantry developed national and class consciousness. Further, they began to evolve their own class organizations, class leadership, programmes slogans and flag. A large section of them followed its own leaders, put forth their own class demands including those of the abolition of landlordism and the repudiation of all debts.

The All-Indian Kisan Sabha organized independent struggles of the Kisans and joined the nationalist movement as an independent unit. The growth of the democratic struggle of the people demands for the abolition of estate monopoly, representative institutions, civil liberties and others. The state peoples' movement was mainly controlled by the merchant class of these states.

The national movement still remained essentially determined and dominated by the Gandhian outlook and Gandhi's political philosophy and leadership. The Gandhian era of Indian nationalism gave rise to a very different combination of the forces. He tried to use in India the method of passive resistance. In this connection A.R. Desai talks about Gandhi,

Gandhi's 'non-cooperation' campaign after the first world war was not very successful and his rash promise of 'Swaraj within one year', which gave a kind of chiliastic tinge to the movement, was not in keeping with his rigorous self discipline. But the general emotional effect of the

campaign was rather striking. For many who participated in it, the experience was something like a religious conversion, they changed their style of life, their mode of dress, their ways of speech, because Gandhi imparted to Indian nationalism the strong emphasis on individual commitment in action. (22)

Gandhi increases fund for his non-violent revolution with close contact to the Congress Organization.

The Civil Disobedience Campaign of 1930-32 which was inaugurated by Gandhi's famous Salt March recruited the younger generation of many groups who had not so far participated in nationalist politics. It also highlighted the problem of untouchability, and Gandhi's epic fast in 1932, demonstrated that nationalism and untouchability were incompatible. With the advent of Gandhi on the political scene of congress was transformed into a revolutionary force, combining the ideas of political freedom and social emancipation. The national movement released new and powerful forces, involving radical changes in social ideas, economic systems, political institutions and cultural values.

For Nehru, Nationalism also has its negative character. He says:

Nationalism is essentially an anti-feeling and it feeds and fattens on hatred and anger against other national groups, and especially against the foreign rulers of the country. It was a narrowing creed and aggressive nationalism in direct and open conflict with colonial rule led to all sorts of complexes and frustrations. It was a state of mental torpor inertia and despair that worked as a disintegrating, disorganizing and dissipating factor on the masses. The conflict of interests created bitter memories of

ceaseless struggle and suffering, which was inevitable and unavoidable.

(46)

V.T. Patil defines nationalism:

As the driving force today in the country of the east which suffers under foreign domination and seek freedom. To them it brings unity and vitality and a lifting of the burdens of the spirit which subjection entails. There is a virtue in it upto a certain stage; till then it is a progressive force adding to human freedom. But even then it is a narrowing creed, and a nation seeking-freedom like a person who is sick, can think of little besides its own struggle and its own misery. (270)

It is a unifying and driving force. It became a socially progressive movement, demanding equal opportunities for all people who are socially and economically under or lower classes. The pattern of nationalism is in many countries in their fight against exploitation of foreign political intervention, economic exploitation, labour exploitation etc. The Indian national movement was basically the product of the central contradiction between colonialism and the interests of the Indian people. The leadership of the movement gradually arrived at, and based itself on, a clear, scientific and firm understanding of colonialism, that the British were using their political control to subordinate the Indian economy and society to the needs of the British economy and society. It began to perceive that overall the country was regressing and under-developing. On this basis, it evolved an understanding of the Indian reality and gradually generated and formed a clear-cut anti-colonial ideology.

Indian nationalist movement gathered millions of all classes and ideologies into political action to oppose the mighty colonial empire. Gandhian national movement is

historical example of a semi-democratic type of political structure that became successful. Country power was not seized in a single historical movement of revolution but struggle on a moral, political and ideological level, counter hegemony was built up over the years through progressive stages. The Indian National Congress encouraged free expression of public view within the party and the important decision on the basis of voting.

The founding fathers of the national movement worked against the three modes of colonial exploitation: plunder, taxation and the employment of English men in India, free and unequal trade and the investment of British Capital. They also understood that the central contradiction would be resolved only by overthrowing the colonial economic relations. They accepted the need to develop India for the basis of industrialization which in turn to be independent of foreign capital and rely on the indigenous capital goods sector. During the Gandhian era this kind of anti-colonial world view was fully internalized among the common people in the urban as well as the rural areas. Bipan Chandra concludes:

The twin themes of the drain of wealth and the use of India as a market for Britain's manufactured goods and the consequent destruction of the Indian handicraft industries formed the very pith and marrow of their agitation. This agitation undermined the foundations of colonial rule in the minds of the Indian people—it destroyed the carefully inculcated colonial myth that the British ruled India for the benefit of Indians. Thus, if the primary contradiction provided the material or structural basis of the national movement, its grasping through the anti-colonial ideology provided its ideological basis. This opened the way to a firm and consistent anti-

imperialist movement, which could follow highly flexible tactics precisely because of its rootedness in and adherence to the anti-colonial principle.

(519)

The nationalist were fully committed to a larger goal of independent, self reliant, economic development to be based on independence from foreign capital, the creation of indigeneous capital goods and machine making sector and the foundation and development of independent science and technology. They evolved a policy of opposition to imperialism on a world wide scale and solidarity with anti-colonial movement in other parts of the world. Ray says, "Indians should hate British imperialism but not the British people" (16). The nationalists were supported by large number of English men, women and political groups. They took close links with progress, against colonial and against capitalist forces of the world. The growing national strength depended in par on the extent to which the people became conscious of their being part of the nation whose essential interests required a struggle for the overthrow of imperialism.

It is true that the national movement, as an anti-colonial movement in a colony in which the primary contradiction pitted the entire society against colonialism, was a popular people's movement. It was a multi class movement which represented the interest of different classes and starta of Indian society. Bipan Chandra extend the demand of Indian national movement as:

Compulsory primary education, the lowering of taxation on the poor and middle classes, the reduction of the salt tax, land revenue and rent, relief from indebtedness and the provision of cheap credit to peasants, the protection of tenants' rights, workers' right to a living wage and a shorter working day, higher wages for low-paid government servants, including

policemen, the defence of the right of workers' and peasants' to organize themselves, the protection and promotion of village industries, the promotion of modern science and technical education, the eradication of the drink evil, the improvement of the social position of women including their right to work and education and to equal political rights, the initiation of legal and social measures for the abolition of untouchability, and the reform of the machinery of law and order were some of the major reforms demanded by the Indian national movement. (524)

In the novel *Kanthapura* the British colonial rule oppressed Indian to be free from economical, social and educational perspective. Therefore nationalism and the national movement came in their mind by the Satyagraha movement of Mahatma Gandhi. It changes the continuation of a democratic movement which, after achieving the elimination of all privileges distinctions and differentiations of every form of aristocracy within its own midst, set up its own nationalist view against the British rule. The use of Khadi, national education, use of Kannada words, (in the novel) boycott of foreign cloth, the social upliftment of low caste and struggle against untouchability became important to arise nationalism. The non-violent strategy and economic consciousness played the vital role for this movement. Thus nationalism is a clear cut anti-colonial ideology and the vision of a civil libertarian, democratic, secular and socially radical society. It was this vision, combined with anti-colonial ideology and a pro-poor radical social-economic orientation that enabled the national movement to base itself on the politically active people and to acquire the character of a popular people's movement.

## CHAPTER III

### TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

#### **Indian sensibility in *Kanthapura***

Various Indo-Anglian novelists have experimented with the language they have used, and each has tried in his own way to evolve a suitable medium to express Indian sensibility, the very flavour of Indian life. But the most serious difficulties faced by them is the problem of a suitable medium of expression. They must use English in a way that is distinctively Indian and still remains English. They must so use, bend or break the language they use, as to convey through it the feel of Indian life, convey through it the attitudes and response that are characteristically Indian. In other words, they must evolve an Indian English. Raja Rao himself confesses this problem by writing in the preface of *Kanthapura* that:

The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one's own but in the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word alien, yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up- like Sanskrit or Persian was before-but not of our emotional make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We can not write like the English. We should not. We can write only an Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression, therefore, has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American.

Indo-Anglian novelists mainly use three directions to express their Indian sensibility.

First, there have been literal translations of Indian idioms, phrases, proverbs etc.

Secondly, changes have been introduced in the syntax or structure of the language. It has been modified, bent or broken according to need. Thirdly, Indian imagery has been profusely used to convey the flavour of Indian life. Raja Rao has used these devices with extraordinary success. In *Kanthapura* by his skillful use of language he has succeeded in conveying the distinctive modes of thinking, manner of observation and instinctive response of the Kannada people. According to Meenakshi Mukherji he has done it so effectively:

That even those who are not closely acquainted with the rigid social structure of a South Indian village will notice how a man's caste can be ascertained from his mode of speech. The evolving of an Indian-English which is adequate enough to express Indian, even regional flavour, without ceasing to be English, is Raja Rao's most significant contribution.

(131)

Raja Rao adopted English language and Indianised it. His style is so unconventional because of his attempt to adopt in English the idiom, the rhythm, the tone the total distinctness of the vernacular (Kannada) speech. This is not *Babu* English, this is not the English of the sophisticated Indians. This is simply the natural English speech of rural folk transmuted into English. Sometimes Rao uses direct literal translation of Indian or Kannada proverbs, idioms, and phrases in *Kanthapura* the village women speak with the cat that has, "taken to asceticism only to commit more sins" (68). Raja Rao's use of this device is always in character. Such proverbs used by the old narrator are entirely appropriate to her and do not sound artificial or unnatural in the context in which they

have been used. Sometimes he uses expression which is obviously not English and which also have no counterpart in Kannada. It is a falsification of language and is a serious fault. For example, "He gave her a very warmful bed" (22), "the old man is sitting on the verandha, his hand upon his nose, deep breathful of meditation" (32).

At other times he uses words form the Indian languages from the English without any translation or modification he uses only words like Kumkum, (119) Dharma Shastras (96) Prayaschitta (46) Arathi (110) (which are really Sanskrit and, therefore, intelligible to most readers) more for the sake of clarity than for any special effect nor does he use exclamation in Kannada. He has tried to adopt his English style to the movement of Sanskrit sentences. His style has a flavour of Kannada speech and its rhythms are almost incantatory to the rhythms of Sanskrit, a language which is the source of Indian languages. The evolution of a suitable style for the expression of Indian sensibility is Raja Rao's significant contribution to the Indo -Anglian fiction. Sometimes his sentences are not merely the literal translations but they serve their purpose in their context and they are more vivid than any other accepted English expressions that might have been used in their place. For example, "Postman Subbayya, who had no fire in his stomach, and was red with red and blue with blue" (118).

English syntax and structure are modified and broken to suit Rao's purposes. Only his words are English, their organization is Indian and entirely his own. Raja Rao's use of language is dramatic and truly creative. Narasimhaiah says:

The emotional upheaval that overtook *Kanthapura* could only find expression by breaking the formal English syntax to suit the sudden changes of mood and sharp contrast in tone, by establishing a correspondence between perception and the images he could readily lay

his hands on in the life around and by a fresh emphasis on old images and a completely different, in this case Kannada, Intonation to English sentences. In other words it had to be a highly original style, a technical innovation indistinguishable from an essentially Indian sensibility. (46)

His Indian use of English can be seen from these lines: Cartman's carrying- "Heho, cries the cartman and the bulls shiver and start" (7). Or the vigorous, musical counting of measures of rice or ragi in the village: "One, two, three four, five, and the superstition which forbids the mention of six, seven and so six becomes "God's extra Hm," (25).

Similarly, it would be absurd for a poor peasant to be known by his initials, but names become descriptive: 'The bent-legged chandrayya', 'waterfall Venkamma', 'Front house people', 'Fig House people', 'Nine-beamed House Ranga Gowda', etc. Rao also uses plastic use of English language to describe the ever enlarging spheres of our relationships. For example: "He is my wife's elder brother's wife's brother in law" (34) both because the word cousin doesn't convey the precise nature of the relationship and because our relationship do not stop with cousins or brothers and sisters-in-law. The vagueness of these extended relationships is offset by the terms of endearment used to qualify the near one, as in 'our Seetharamu', 'Our Moorthappa', in both cases, a literal translation of the Indian idiom.

Raja Rao's use of imagery is equally distinctive and creative. His use of images is functional and not merely decorative. His similes and metaphors are drawn from the common, everyday objects and phenomena hence they serve to clarify and elucidate. Writes Meenakshi Mukherji, "images and metaphors are his natural mode of expression, and very little influence of English literature is discernible" (48). We can see his use of simile and metaphor in the following lines: . . . and when Moorthoppa comes let the rice

be fine as filigree and the mangoes yellow as gold, and we shall go out, horn and trumpet going before us and break coconuts at his feet" (168). The imagery here touches upon objects and experiences that are distinctively Indian, and faithfully conveying Indian sensibility. His English seems to spring from the Indian scene, the Indian manner, gesture and speech absorbs it, and suffers no distortion.

*Kanthapura* is Indian both in theme and treatment. It is not to be judged with references to the western novel. It is an Indian novel and it expresses the Indian sensibility to perfection. Praver jhabvala has rightly said that "as yet unwritten ideal Indian novel . . . would be bits of prose-poetry, anecdotes, lots of philosophizing and musing and oblique kinds of wit, and an ultimate self-surrender, a sinking back into formlessness, into eternity . . . Raja Rao's novel comes nearest to this ideal" (116). Laws of the western novel cannot be applied to it. David McCutcheon, in his critique of the novel asks: "Is this a novel at all?. . . All the central concerns of the western novel are absent – social relations, psychological motivation, characterization, judgment, a passion for the concrete . . ." (39). The answer is in Raja Rao's foreword to *Kanthapura*. He says the Indo-English novel must use the traditional Indian form of story-telling where ". . . we have neither punctuation nor the treacherous ats and ons to bother us - we tell one interminable tale. Episode follows episode and when our thoughts stop our breath stops, and we move on to another thought" (204). Raja Rao has suitably modified a borrowed art - form to express Indian sensibility. He has in this way achieved a rare synthesis of the West and East.

The theme of oneness with nature in *Kanthapura* is essentially an Indian theme. The villagers are represented in realistic colours. Their name are made descriptive in a typically rural way. They like inclose intimacy with nature and are a part of it. For them

nature is a living thing and even hills, rivers, fields and animals have a distinct presence a personality of their own. They have not lost their sense of wonder, of the enchantment of nature and an intuitive wisdom to perceive natural phenomena in terms of man's place in the scheme of things:" "suddenly a shooting star sweeping across the sky between the house-roof and the byre-roof, and Ramakrishanyya say, some good soul has left the earth "(116). Here is a distinctive Indian sensibility, a peasant sensibility, to be precise, expressed in the English language.

Indian sensibility is essentially religious and even politics gets spiritualised. India's most important political leaders and social reformers have all been great religious figures and social and political ends have been attained through the guise of religion. This was also so in the case of Gandhi and his non-cooperation, non-violent movement says Narasimhaiah "There are at least three strands of experience in the novel: the political, the religious, the social" (116). To the ignorant poor and superstitious peasants, Kenchamma is a goddess, benign and bounteous. They have full faith in goddess Kenchamma, the presiding deity of the village. Right in the centre of the village is a temple dedicated to Kenchamma. They offer their prayers "O Kenchamma! protect us always like this through famine and disease, death and despair. O most high and bounteous!" (9). There is a folk song which evokes in us images and attitudes to what Kenchamma means to the people of *Kanthapura*.

    Kenchamma, Kenchamma,

    Goddess benign and bounteous,

    Mother of earth, blood of life,

    Harvest-Queen, rain-crowned,

Kenchamma, Kenchamma,

Goddess benign and bounteous (9).

Kenchamma is in the village forms the still-centre of their lives and makes everything meaningful. Marriage, funeral, Sickness, death, ploughing, harvesting, arrests, release-all are watched over by Kenchamma. The people have full faith in the legend that long ago the goddess fought with and killed, a demon which had laid waste the countryside. That is why they believe that, a part of the hill is still red.

All men, women, and children of *Kanthapura* village had deep and firm faith for the celebration of some of their religious festivals under Moorhy's inspiration, they started celebrating Rama festival Krishna festival and Ganesh festival. "Moorthy comes to us and says 'Aunt what do you think of having the Rama festival, the Krishna festival, the Ganesh festival? We shall have a month's bhajan every time and we shall keep the party going'" (14). There is frequent reference of Durga Puja in the novel. It is celebrated in the commemoration of the victory of Durga over a buffalo headed demon Mahisasur. Dussehra is one of the great Indian festivals it is celebrated in remembrance of the victory of Rama over Ravana. Similarly there is the reference of Ganapati Festival. The great feast of Ganesha is held on the fourth of Bhadra Sukla. It is one of the most moving of Hindu festivals, certainly the most popular. The reference of Shankar Jayanti is also in the novel. It so happened that one day Moorthy dug out a half-sunk Shiva-linga and suggested that it should be washed and consecrated in a temple built in its honour. The Postmaster Suryanarayana suggested that they should have a Shankara-Jayanti. It is natural that prayers and national songs are sung side by side. The objective of the people is to attain independence but the means adopted are religious: harikathas, bhajans, fasts, prayers and non-violent resistance. There is also an account of local rituals. There is ritual

of yoking the bulls to the plough under the Rohini star or of the traditional belief that at the beginning of Kartik, Gods can be seen passing by "blue gods and quiet gods and bright eyed gods" (87) or to the different modes of appeasing the goddess Kenchamma. Their conservatism was based on their illiteracy and backwardness.

Raja Rao has made effective use of myth in *Kanthapura* by using myths. The past is juxtaposed with the present and thus it serves as a criticism of the present and glorifies the present because of the fact that even the most illiterate Indian is well acquainted with mythological stories, myths play a significant part in Indian life. It is common for Indian preachers to give a mythological or spiritual significance to physical phenomenon. Indians at every level are extremely well acquainted with the stories in the Ramayana or in the Mahabharat. It is quite usual to compare two loving brothers or friends to Rama and Laxmana and the narrator does that in the case of her Seenu and Moorthy. In the myth that Jayaramachar invents about the divine birth of Gandhiji, he is held to be an incarnation of Shiva, but Achakka compares with Rama and India with Sita. Gandhi's going to England to participate in the Round Table Conference is compared to Rama's exile. And the Indians who participate in the process of Government are compared to Bharata who worshipped Rama's sandals in his absence. The foreign rulers are compared to Ravana and Gandhi is to kill this demon and bring back enslaved Sita i.e. India which under the domination of foreign rulers, back with him after liberating her. His return is expected to be like a triumphant return of Rama to Ayodhya when there was a shower of flowers from the sky.

And Rama will come back from exile, and Sita will be with him, for  
Ravana will be slain and Sita freed, and he will come back with Sita on his  
right in a chariot of the air, and brother Bharata will go to meet them with

the worshipped sandal of the master on his head. And as they enter Ayodhya there will be a rain of flowers. (183)

Raja Rao adheres to the Indian classical tradition by idealizing or mythicising the central character. Moorthy is an idealized character who, like Christ, takes all the sins of the people upon himself and undergoes a penance for purification, a young man who conquers physical desire and self-interest. Elsewhere, the narrator freely mixes up men and God, Gandhi is seen as Rama or Krishna and the Red-men as Ravana or Kali. In the same way 'Swaraj' mentioned in *Kanthapura* has three aspects, they are "self purification, Hindu-Muslim unity and Khaddar" (16). The reference of Lord Krishna's killing of Kali, a monstrous serpent is also brought in the novel. Krishna is an incarnation of God Vishnu according to Hindu mythology. Thus, the use of illusions makes Gandhi the God and the Moorthy the avatar. The reign of the Red-men becomes demonic rule and it is resisted by Devas, the Satyagrahis. The Harikatha man raises Gandhi to the level of a God by identifying his activities with one particular feat of Krishna, though it does not always mean fidelity to facts:

You remember how Krishna when he was but babe of four had begun to fight against demons and had killed the serpent Kali. So too our Mohandas began to fight against the enemies of the country . . . men followed him, as they did Krishna. The flute player; and so he goes from village to village to slay the serpent of the foreign rule. (138)

The use of the mythical technique is seen at its best in the strange kind of Harikathas recited by Jayaramachar, the Harikatha man. This unusual Harikatha dramatized Mahatma Gandhi's birth as a reincarnation of Siva, sent by Brahma to free Brahma's daughter, India, from its enslavement to the British summarizing part of the Harikatha,

Achakka says that Mohandas urged people to fight against India's enemies, but to "harm no soul: 'Love all', says he, 'Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian or pariah, for all are equal before God!" (12). The immediate consequences of this "Story of God" are a police officer's arrival in *Kanthapura*, the expulsion of the Harikatha performer from the village, and in reaction against these government moves-the decision by many villagers, at Moorthy's urging, to throw away "their foreign clothes" (12), and become "Gandhi's men" (12). Thus, within the context of a traditional Hindu religious ceremony, an iconoclastic Harikatha has initiated a direct challenge to the British Government of India.

The method of narration in *Kanthapura* is typically Indian. The Indian grandmother is the most ancient and most typical of story-teller. The narrator in the novel Achakka, is just such a grandmother narrating the story for the benefit of new comer. The narration is a breathless story illustrating the age old Indian tradition of story telling. As Rao says, in the forward of *Kanthapura*:

We, in India, think quickly, we talk quickly, and when we move we move quickly. There must be something in the sun of India that makes us rush and tumble and run on. And our paths are paths interminable. The Mahabharata has 214,778 verses and the Ramayana 48,000. Purans there are endless and innumerable.

Achakka's inordinately long, meandering sentences, use of blanks, digressions and expressions like 'this and that', 'here and there', are meaningful. The detailed accounts of Sankar, Rangamma and Bhatta are revealing essentials for the narrative. It is a long interminable tale, and its essentially Indianness is seen in its long interminable sentences, long paragraphs and the absence of division into chapters. Fact and fiction, poetry and reality, men and Gods mingle freely in her narrative and the reality of Gandhian freedom

movement is imparted legendary or puranic dimensions. The narration is chronological, the action moves steadily forward and there is no incoherency or confusion despite the too frequent digressions and episodes. Occasional touches of irony or racy, native humour enliven the narrative.

Shakti-worship is an essentially Indian theme and it runs through *Kanthapura*. The author presents woman as various forms of Shakti. Whereas Indian women as coy, delicate and submissive, she is also firm as rock, great in suffering. Shakti rises in them, and each of them is enthused at the proper time. It is to be noted that in the last phase of peaceful resistance it is Ratna, a woman, who takes Moorthy's place and led the satyagrahis. Shakti's indomitable spirit possesses them in their satyagraha against the British Government. When the police Inspector tries to arrest Moorthy, "There is pariah Rachanna and Madanna and Lingaiya's women, and they all gather at Rangamma's door and cry out, 'Hèlè' 'Hèlè!' What are you doing with our master?" (89). When the police ill treat them with their sticks and butts, the women think to move and act as one, for they are more distinct and pervasive in the devotional aspect. When "the policeman grows so wild that he waves his lathi and Rachanna comes forward and says, 'He', beat me if you have the courage" (89).

In order to convey an essentially Indian sensibility Raja Rao has saturated the language with Indian Idiom, Indian imagery and rural colour. Many words are imported from Indian languages and used as they are any translation; for example we get 'Ahimsa', 'Dhoti', 'Harikatha', 'Maistri', 'Mandap', 'Swaraj', 'Charkha', 'Gayatri', 'Zamindar', 'Khadi', 'Dharmawar Sari', 'linga', 'Hari-om', 'Rama-Rajya', 'Kurtha', 'Rama-Krishna', 'Rama Krishna!' to name a few. He frequently uses village proverbs, legends and concrete imagery in Indian context for instance, in his similes familiar animals and birds figure

most: "Our hearts beat like the wings of bats" (147); "every squirrel has his day" (77); the youngest is always the holy bull" (32); "and yet he was an honest as an elephant" (9); a rasping hiss as though a thousand porcupines have suddenly bristled up (168); does a boar stand before a lion or jackal before an elephant?" (56). Numerous proverbs find a natural place in the peasant speech: "The policeman are not your uncle's sons (158); "the first daughter milks the cow when the mother is ill" (126). "you can not straighten a dog's tail" (136); "there is neither man nor mosquito in *Kanthapura*" (184); "only a pariah looks at the teeth of dead cows" (166); land lust and wifely loyalty go badly together" (95).

Sometimes the peasants use abusive vulgar language, and Raja Rao also does-not hesitate to use such a language when the occasion demands it. Such language is an integral part of peasant speech, and so its use is essential to express peasant sensibility. At one time the peasants burst out when the wind or rain lets them down; "may your house be destroyed-may your wife die childless - I'll sleep with your mother" (163) outbursts like these are fully justified. This is indeed the natural speech of the rural folk transmuted into English. With the effective use of dialect and village material the novelist has succeeded in conveying, "in a language not one's own the spirit that is one's own" (vii).

### **Domination of British Government to Indian People**

Raja Rao depicted the large-scale economic exploitation of Indians by Britishers by taking Skeffington Coffee Estate as the representative of British owned states in India. Conditions of workers in this estate were far more worse. The coolies who worked on the estate were enticed to leave their hearth and home by false permissions. They were given one rupee as advance and were permitted "a four anna-bit for a man and a two-anna-bit

for a women" (51) as daily wages. They were also told that they would get plenty of white rice in that they would merely be required to "pick coffee seeds" (51). They would not be put to any hard labour. The foreman would speak to them kindly. He would smile with them. The simple, poverty stricken people were taken in by those premises and came in large number with their belonging to work on the estate. Their march to Skeffington Coffee Estate has been described by Rao at length in his usual graphic and picturesque style:

Armies of coolies marched past the Kenehamma Temple, half-naked, starving, spitting, weeping vomiting, coughing, shivering, squeaking, shouting, moaning coolies - coolies after coolies passed by the Kenchemma Temple, the Maistri before them, while the children clung to their mother's breasts, the old men to their son's arms, and bundles hung over shoulder and arm and arm and shoulder and head; and they marched on past the Kenchamma Temple and up to the Skeffington Coffee Estate-coolies from below the Ghates, coolies young men, old women, children, baskets, bundles, pots, coolies passed on - and winding through the twists of the Estate path -by the buxom-pipal bend, over the Devils' Ravine Bridge, by the Parvatiwell corner-they marched up the maistri before them. (50-51)

Once the coolies were brought to the coffee plantation, the manner of the foremen changed and he grew harsh and threatening. "If you work badly you will get beaten-that is the law of the place" (52). They were exploited in many ways. All promises were forgotten no wages were given. They were given wretched one room huts to live in, which they had to repair or thatch themselves. "each one began to put up a thatch for the

one that had no thatch, a wall for one that had no wall, a floor for the one that had not floor, and they spent the whole afternoon thatching and patching and plastering" (53). They were provided with a frugal diet and made to work hard from five in the morning till late in the night. If anybody took rest or was slow, he was severely whipped by the Maistri who was ever on the watch. No wages was paid and the old hands knew that one who came to the estate once, never went out of it again. He must work, suffer and die there. The workers were also exploited sexually. If the sahib takes a fancy to any of the workers' women, then she is sent to his house at night or he would even have her then and there in the plantation. If a women refused him, the husband's or father's wages were cut or he was given a whipping. Once when a brahmin workmen refused to sent his daughter, "the master got so furious that he come down with his revolver" (61) and shot the brahmin dead. Even the Red-man's court forgave him.

The workers were also exposed to dangers and diseases of various kinds. The estate was infested with snakes and many died up snake-bite while at work. "when Lakkamma cries out, Hè, Hè, Hè a Snake! a huge snake! a cobra! and rushes away to hide behind a tree" (53). Besides this, there were heavy rains and the workers would have to work in rain drenched to their very skin. With rains, there would come malaria and take a heavy toll of life. Men, women and children would die in large numbers. They also suffered from cough, vomiting and dysentery. "one by one in this house and that, in this line and that, fevers came, and when it was not fever it was stomach-ache and dysentery, and when it was not dysentery it was cough; and one thing or the other, such things as were never heard of in the plains" (59). Many would like to go back to their homes but they had no money and anybody who dared to ask for his wages was mercilessly beaten.

The work on the estate was not judged pecking coffee berries as it was permitted. Infact, it turned out to be back-breaking, drudgery. The men had to dig pits and hew wood and the women had to pluck weeds and to kill vermin. As the sun rose high, working with an axe or the spade become more and more difficult but even if they rested for a moment, they would find the Maistri before them or they would see the red face of the Sahib himself peeping at them, so that they would all begin to work vigorously.

Hence, the coolies of the Skeffington Coffee Estate were a miserable lot and had to suffer terrible heart sick. The arrival of bade Khan has further strengthened and encouraged to sahib. When Moorthy comes to the Skeffington Coffee Estate, Bade Khan does not permit him to enter. There was so much swearing and cursing and hurling of abuses. A fierce fight follows; there was whipping and pulling of hair and beards. "And at this the policemen grows so wild that he waves his lathi" (89). The following morning the foreman threw Rachanna and his wife with their two orphaned grand children out of the hut at the Skeefington Coffee Estate. It was Rachanna who objected against Moorthy being bound with ropes when the police came to arrest him. Orders for a lathi charge given and men, women and children are mercilessly beaten. "And the policeman twisted their arms and beat them on their Knuckles, and spat into their mouths, and when they had slapped and banged and kicked, they let them cut one by one" (91). A policeman flings his lathis at "her legs and down she falls and, smaking his lips and holding her breast, he says, "Take care, my dove, you know what I would do with you" (153).

To suppress the freedom movement, British Government sent many policeman in the village of *Kanthapura*. The whole village was full of policemen. The policemen picked the little boy up by his leg, turned him upside down and beat him so violently that when he threw the child down on the grass only blood and sobs came from his mouth.

When the policeman saw the women watching they chased them threw stones at them and whipped and kicked them. One policeman got hold of Puttamma and, "we heard her shout 'Ayoo-Ayoo' and jumped across the broken wall, and the sparrows rose like a tree from their booty of rice, and we asked ourselves, 'which way shall we go-which way?' and we hurried through the central hall" (154). They caught her but she shrieked, tore herself free and rushed to find the hiding place.

The policemen were getting the elephant to push down the door of Rangmma's house where many people were hiding. Up by the Temple corner, there was a group of about twelve women being whipped and kicked by policemen. Among them was pregnant Radhamma. One of the women, Vedamma had high fever and she trembled and moaned. The women decided to seal themselves up in the temple to save them from the police but the result was that by afternoon they were all hungry and thirsty. Outside they could hear only the sound of soldier's boot keeping watch outside the door. Many women fell ill and wailing. The policemen arrested many people and torched them in prison mercilessly.

### **Demand for 'Home Rule'**

To achieve the motto of self government, Tilak promoted the 'Home Rule' campaign with a tour of Maharastra and through his lectures clarified. And popularized the demand for home rule. He also linked up the question of 'Swaraj' with the demand for the formation of linguistic states and education in the vernacular. He said, "The principle that education should given through vernaculars is self evident and clear. Speak in Kannada to establish the right of Kannada language" (162). The main thrust of the activity was directed towards building up an agitation around the demand for home rule.

This was to be achieved by promoting political education and discussion. Arundale through new India says,

Advised members to promote political discussion, established libraries containing material on national politics, organize classes for students on politics, print and circulate pamphlets, collect funds, organize social work, take part in local government activities, arrange political meetings and lectures, present arguments to friends in favour of home rule and urge them to join the movement. (164)

In the home rule leagues also created organizational links between town and country, which were to prove invaluable in later years. And further, by popularizing the idea of home rule or self government and making it a commonplace thing. It generated a widespread pro-nationalist atmosphere in the country. Tilak said, "The Lord is with us, Home Rule will now spread like wildfire. Repression was sure to fan the fire of revolt" (163). He emphasised the unity of Indian people against British by saying "when we have to fight against the third party, it is very important thing that we stand on this platform United, unified in race, united in religion, United as regards all different shades of political creed" (166).

Indian nationalists began to collect signatures of a million peasants and workers on a petition for home rule. They worked tirelessly for the eradication of such social evils as untouchability, the exploitation and the ill-treatment of widows, child marriage, Sati. They waged constant war against illiteracy, superstition, blind faith and orthodoxy. They highlighted the grinding poverty of the Indian masses who were being rendered poorer and poorer as a result of economic exploitation on the part of their foreign rulers.

The increasing popularity of the home rule movement soon attracted the government's wrath. These early patriots paved the way for the Gandhian struggle for independence.

The novel *Kanthapura* presents the historical background of the freedom movement which Mahatma Gandhi was leading and conducting in the country with the clear aim of achieving freedom for his motherland. The invisible role of Mahatma Gandhi is very clearly seen in the novel. Moorthy who was the champion of the freedom movement in the village of *Kanthapura* led the freedom movement peacefully and non-violently under the full inspiration of Gandhiji. As the true disciple of Gandhi, Moorthy had true and firm faith in Gandhi's principles of love, peace, truth and non-violence. So he made his best efforts in the supreme task of national unity. He had inspired a large number of men, women, and children to take part in the freedom movement in the village of *Kanthapura*. He persuaded all men, women and children of castes and creeds to live and work unitedly without any distinction. Only with this motive, he gave a message of Gandhiji to the people of *Kanthapura* to live in peace and work hard for national unity. He tried his best to persuade the village people to act according to the principles of love, simple life and Swadeshi. He asked the people to discard foreign clothes and wear only 'Khadi' which he regarded as the sign of national pride, need for unity and self sufficiency in the country. "Some two years ago, when he had come back from Poona, he had given up his boots and hat and suit and had taken to dhoti and Khadi, and it was said he had even given up his city habit of smoking" (11).

Mother India was far dearer to Moorthy than his ideal mother Narsamma because he was a true patriot and devoted freedom fighter as Gandhi's true follower. All people including the women, taken equally part in the freedom struggle in the village of *Kanthapura*. They fight shoulder to shoulder under the leadership of Moorthy and under

the dominating influence and inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi. It is clear from their group song which is referred in these lines:

There's one government, sister,

There's one government, sister,

And that's the government of the Mahatma (148).

The aim was not only the freedom of the motherland but it is also created much awakening in the mind of all people. For example, the coolies and other workers of the Skeffington Coffee Estate came out to join the freedom movement under the leadership of Moorthy and under the inspiration of Gandhiji.

The coolies of the Skeffington Coffee Estate were marched bent-headed through our streets to show who our true masters were, and we knew they would be driven over the Bebbur Mound and the Bear's Hill and the Tippur stream, and two by two they would be pushed behind the gates, for the white master wanted them" (151).

They gave up the sense of fear from the British rule and fought shoulder to shoulder for a common aim. They love their motherland from the bottom of their heart and they were ever prepared to make even the maximum sacrifice in the service of their motherland. It was their enlightenment which gave them enough courage and solid willpower.

Then the police Inspector saunters up to the Skeffington gate and he opens it and one coolies and two coolies and three coolies come out, their faces dark and as mops and their blue skin black under the clouded heavens, and perspiration flows down their bodies and their eyes seem fixed to the earth-one collies and two coolies and three coolies and four and five come

out, eyes fixed to the earth, their stomachs black and clammy and bulging, and they march towards the toddy booth; and then suddenly more coolies come out, more and more and more like clogged bulls clattering down the byre steps they come out, and the women come behind them, their sari fringer drawn over their faces and their eyes fixed on the earth.

(141)

Moorthy continued to prepare the nation for the prolonged struggle which lay ahead before independence could be gained. He aimed at the total involvement of all sections of the Indian people and so launched a comprehensive program of economic, social and religious upliftment and emancipation of the Indian people. The main aim of the freedom movement in *Kanthapura* was to bring about socio-economic equality among the poor and common masses of the village. For self sufficiency in the economic field, Moorthy asked a large number of Pariahs and other poor people of *Kanthapura* village to start the use of the spinning wheel. Thus they could earn some money and they could make use of their free time. Moorthy says them:

You see, you have nothing to do in the afternoons after the vessels are washed and the water drawn, and if you spin just one hour a day, you can have a bodice-cloth of any colour or breadth you like, one bodice cloth per month, a sari every six months. And, during the first month, the cotton is given free. (23)

He made spinning wheel popular among the women of *Kanthapura* for economic equality. He distributed the spinning wheels among the Sudras, Potters, Weavers, and Pariah without making any distinction of caste and creed.

He told the women of the village that spinning was essential to avoid foreign exploitation. The village people became happy after getting free spinning wheels from Moorthy and his companions. In this way they could spin clothes and also earn some money. Moorthy popularized the Gandhiji's 'Swadeshi' movement in the village of *Kanthapura*.

Moorthy asked the village people to discard foreign cloth and start wearing 'Khadi' spun by their own hands. He asked the village Brahmin to give their taboo for spinning which, according to Moorthy was very useful and essential for the development of the village economy. "

Because millions and millions of yards of foreign cloth come to this country, and everything foreign makes us poor and polluted us. To wear cloth spun and woven with your own God-given hands is sacred, says the Mahatma. And it gives work to the workless and work to the lazy. And if you don't need the cloth, sister-well, you can say, 'give it away to the poor', and we will give it to the poor. Our country is being bled to death by foreigners. We have to protect our mother. (23)

Moorthy advised Nanjamma to increase her income by spinning more and more he asked the people to check the flow of their gold to England. Commented to those who buy foreign clothes as "they buy foreign yarn, and foreign yarn is bought with our money, and all this money goes across the oceans. Our gold should be in our country. And our cotton should be in our country" (24). He emphasized the importance of the spinning by saying, "If you spin, he says, the money that goes to the Red-man will stay within your country and the mother can feed the foodless and the milkless and the clothless" (18). "We all began to spin more and more and more, and Moorthy sent bundles and bundles of yarn,

and we got saris and bodice clothes and dhotis, and Moorthy said the Mahatam was very pleased. May be he would remember us!" (82).

The idea of Gandhiji of social equality and the removal of caste differences found full expression in the ideas and activities of Moorthy is leading and fighting for freedom. The evil of untouchability was prevalent about the low-caste men, women and children of the village of *Kanthapura*. The Brahmins of the village regarded themselves as persons belonging to the highest caste. They never mixed up with pariah who were kept at an arm's length because of the social evil of untouchability. Bhatta as a Brahmin refused to tie a holy thread round the shoulders of pariahs. Once he said, "you can offer me a kings daughter, but never will I sell my soul to a pariah" (49). There was a wide gap between the Brahmins and pariah of the village. Bhatta, the Brahmin priest did not like to perform the religious and last rites at the houses of pariahs.

One of the important planks of Gandhian movement was the eradication of untouchability. Moorthy gives a practical form to the Gandhian programme of Swadeshi and eradication of untouchability by going from door to door, even in the pariah quarters, and explaining to the people the economics of the charkha and swadeshi. He preaches brotherhood and equality and castelessness and abolition of untouchability. According to him, "All men are equal-every one equal to every other - and there were neither rich nor poor . . . pariah Ramakka, who hear of it one day, said, 'so in that country Pariahs and Brahmins are the same" (36). Moorthy visited the quarters of the weavers, potters and pariah more and more. He even ignored the reaction and anger of Bhatta who was an orthodox Brahmin. He says "Let the swami do what he likes. I will go and do more and more pariah work. I will go and eat with them if necessary. Why not? Are they not men like us?" (47). He emphasize the one caste system by saying, "men, women, children-and

the pariahs and the weavers and the potters all seems to feel they were of one caste, one breath" (129). For social equality, the novelist asks the village people to the caste differences and treat all men women and children on an equal level. To uplift the society Moorthy launched the Gandhi business -

Weaving coarse handmade cloth, not fit for a mop, and bellowing out bhajans and bhajans, and mixing with the pariahs. Pariahs now come to the temple door and tomorrow they would like to be in the heart of it. They will one day put themselves in the place of the Brahmins and begin to teach the Vedas. I heard only the other day that in the Mysore Sanskrit College some pariahs sought admission. Why, our Beadle Timmayya will come one of these days to ask my daughter in marriage! Why shouldn't he? (33)

Moorthy was also aware of the people against prohibition of marriage of widows. The widows lived in bad and pitiable condition in the village. A widow could not wear bangles, ear-rings, or coloured sari. She had to pass a life with a sad mood and isolated hatred. She was regarded an evil omen on all happy occasions. Ratna had violated all the social rules and regulations of the widows. She used to wear bangles, ear rings and a coloured sari. She was an educated young lady. So she regarded it totally futile to pass her life with sorrow and suffering. She fully supported Moorthy to uplift the prestige of widows in the society. The narrator supported Moorthy; "we said to ourselves, he is one of these Gandhi-men who say there is neither caste nor clan nor family, and yet they pray like us and they live like us only they say, too, one should not marry early, one should allow widows to take husbands, a Brahmin might marry a pariah and a pariah a Brahmin" (15). In this way, as a true representative of Gandhi, Moorthy united Hindu and Muslim,

Brahmin and Pariah and led all Indian people against the ill treatment of British and also made aware the people for eradication of social evils prevailing in the Indian society.

### **Nationalist Resistance Against the Hegemonic Colonial Rule**

All the freedom-loving persons took part in the Gandhian movement with great enthusiasm and without any fear of cruelties, beatings and tortures of the British rules. This atmosphere of tumult of a national upheaval under the impact of Gandhi has been successfully captured by the nationalist. There are dharnas, picketings and Satyagrahas. People even children and old men are injured and wounded in large numbers women, like Ratna, are beaten up and dishonoured but their spirit is not crushed. Shouts of "Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai" and 'Inquilab zindabad' resound in the air and boost the morale of the people. Large numbers are arrested and sent to jail. When Moorthy is arrested he says, "The Mahatma has often gone to jail, the mahatma has often gone to jail" (90). At this the Inspector slaps him on the face. This enrages the crowd and the police is attacked. Moorthy is sentenced to a long term imprisonment. In this absence Ratna looks after the congress work in the village, "come Satamma, come, we will go to Ratna; for Ratna is our chief now and she will lead us out of it" (162).

People of *Kanthapura* then begin their "Don't touch the government campaign" (73). For the Mahatma was already on a pilgrimage to Dandi beach with a small group of followers. He prepared salt there and thus broke the salt law. Thereafter people prepared cartloads of salt and carried it away. The taxes were not be paid a parallel government was established and Range Gowda was appointed as the peoples. "For the congress is the people and the Patel is the people's man and Ranga Gowda is our man, and if the new patel comes and says, "Give me the revenue dues", you will say - I do not know you-you are not our man and we will after you neither seat nor water" (129). It was decided to

organize today picketing at Boranna's Toddy Grove because Toddy was evil and it was the means for exploiting people.

Moorthy inspired the people of *Kanthapura* for starting toddy picketing and fighting against the ruling class on Friday. On the fixed day, sum total "one hundred thirty nine" (130). Men, women and children started their picketing at the "Bornna's Toddy Grove" (130). The police Inspector who was already there warned Moorthy and his men not to do so because it was fully "against Government law" (132). The people did not pay attention to his warning and Moorthy told him that they were doing so at all the call for the congress. As they marched, a large number of cartman joined them. The gates of the grove were opened by Moorthy and Range Gowda. While shouting "Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai" (133), Rachanna's foot slipped, the policemen rushed at him and beat him with *lathis*. More and more people entered grove and shouted "Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai" and "Vande Mataram" (132). "Many men climbed up trees" (132). The policemen were beating them with '*Lathis*' and continuous blows. Twigs were broken and branches were cut. Even women and children bore the blows bravely.

The novelist gives a graphic account of those tense moments in his usual inimitable rhythmic prose,

And we rush and we rush and we crawl, and swaying and bending and crouching and rising, we move on and on, and the lathis rain on us, and the cart men have come back again and they feel so angry that they, too, cry out Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai!' and they, too, rush behind us, and we feel a new force in us and we say we shall enter the today grove and tear out at least a toddy branch and break at least a today - pot. And there are shrieks and shouts and cries and sobs, and the more we are beaten the more we get

used to it and we say', 'After all it is not bad - after all it is not so bad; and our bangles break and our saris tear and yet we huddle and move on" (133).

It is the market-day on Tuesday in *Kanthapura* when Moorthy and his followers organized second picketing at the Toddy Booth twist of Coolies from evil of drinking wine. "Do not drink, do not drink, in the name of the Mahatma", (143). This day was selected for offering Satyagraha in front of the Toddy Booth. For that purpose the satyagrahis, seventy seven in number assembled in the temple and began their march to the Toddy Booth. As they reached the fair, a large crowd followed them and there were occasional shouts of 'Vande Mataram' and 'Mahatma 'Gandhi Ki Jai'.

There were already a large number of policemen along with their Inspector. As the coolies were driven out towards the Toddy Booth by the foreman, the satyagrahis stopped them. The rain began to fall heavily "along with the blows and lathis charge" (141) of the policemen over their body. Boranna shouts to the coolies to offer them toddy "free of cost" (142) and the satyagrahis called him by the name of a scorpion, or snake. The police Inspector was beating the people with his cane. The coolies tried to tread through the crowd but all in vain. They were chanting 'Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai' again and again. They were ringing bells and beating tins. The police Inspector whipped the coolies and pushed Rangamma so boldly with his kick that she fainted. As Moorthy was shouting 'Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai' he, too, was hit with a severe blow. He could not speak because he was very badly hurt. The people were very badly 'lathi' charged and ordered to disperse from there with grave beating; men and women began to fall on the ground and many of them became senseless. "The police Inspector gave her such a kick in the back that she fell down unconscious, and Ratna cried out, 'oh you dogs', and the police Inspector spat in her face and gave her a slap that brought blood out of her mouth" (142).

As the Satyagrahis returned to their senses, they found themselves in a lorry. The persons were arrested and taken to jail but Moorthy was not arrested. Many coolies of the Coffee Estate had been brought to live in the huts of the pariah street. Such picketing encouraged many more people to make satyagraha in the villages nearby. As a result of this, many toddy booths in the area of *Kanthapura* were closed. Moorthy's name and fame spread far and wide. It was the success of the freedom movement in India.

The people are directed not to pay land revenue to the unjust Red-men. The policemen surrounded *Kanthapura* from all sides and the roads and street were barricaded. The roads were blocked with heavy stones and piles of trees. With the beating of drum, it was announced everywhere in the village that all the people must pay taxes, otherwise more heavy punishment would be given to them.

The people were threatened to be taken to jail if they did not obey the government's orders. The next morning an army of armed policemen carried back the coolies from the pariah quarters to the Skeffington Coffee Estate. Even children were taken away to work at the Coffee Estate. The police also took away Moorthy and Rangamma whose house was locked and heavily guarded. The government decided to sale the peoples fields and other property. The police decided to have 'Satyanarayana Puja' and take out a religious procession. The government officers sold the fields and people felt sad and worried. Ratna told him that the congress would look after them. Later they felt that they were making their sacrifice in the service of their motherland. They were singing songs of patriotism as they were marching forward. As they reached the village gate, they were opposed by dozens of policemen with lathis in their hands. As the policemen started blowing their lathis over the people, they shouted 'Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai' and Vande 'Mataram'. The young men shouted 'Inquilab Zindabad' and sang the national song. Sometime suddenly hoisted the tri-colour-flag and sang out loudly:

Lift the flag high,

O, lift the flag high,

Brothers, sisters, friends and mothers,

This is the flag of the Revolution, (170)

The policemen attacked the people like mad beasts and pushed many men and women into the canal. Soon firing started to disperse the mob and many were badly hurt. The wounded were taken in a nambulance by the Congress Volunteers. Many coolies had joined the peoples movement out of their love for the motherland. Many men, women and children lay dead in the field. The cruel soldiers were crushing the freedom fighters, who were lying and dead.

Men grip men and men crush men and men bite men and men tear men,  
and moans on moans rise and groans on groans die out, while the  
ambulance men are still at work and men are bandaged, and shots after  
shots ring out and men after men falls like an empty sack, and the women  
take up the lamentation: 'He's gone-he's gone- he's gone sister!', they beat  
their mouths and shouts. (178)

There were many wounded and bleeding being carried on stretchers. They brought up, naked, half -covered, earth-covered are they brought up, with dangling legs, dangling hands and bleeding hands, and with bleeding mouths and bleeding foreheads and backs are they brought up" (179).

The freedom fighters' brave resistance has given a jolt to the government. The heroic struggle of the people of *Kanthapura* is thus a milestone in Indian's march towards independence.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

Raja Rao, as an Indo-Anglian great novelist of India, is reknowned far and wide. For him literature was his *Sadhana*. Through the use of Indian sensibility, he highlights the national movement, religion, history, myth, festivals and social reforms. The novelist efforts to remove caste differences, social inequality and religious rigidity. It also shows the need of equality, unity, mutual co-operation and courageous fight to get rid of all such social and religious evils of the country. *Kanthapura* shows how the individuals struggle in the wake of free-India movement of the 1930s under the guidance and leadership of Gandhi ji, It presents the brave struggle and self-sacrifice of the people of *Kanthapura* for the sake of freedom of their mother India. Raja Rao stressing the need of freedom for the people of *Kanthapura* as well as throughout India.

Rao depicts well the backward social life of all men, women and children of the village through his novel *Kanthapura*. The novel shows portrayal of poverty, hunger and disease, portrayal of widespread social evils and tensions, examination of the survival of the past, exploration of the hybrid culture of the dislocations and conflicts in a traditional-ridden society under the impact of an incipient, inter-racial relations, the Indian national movement, death, destruction and suffering, and the struggle for freedom.

For thousands of India's illiterate peasants Gandhi came to stand for a religious *avatar* or incarnation of God, and even many of the more city dwellers looked upon him as a prophet as well as a savior. In *Kanthapura*, we have more than a glimpse of the freedom movement in India under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. We see how the name of Gandhi acts like a charm in every part of India, and how the people in remote

and far away *Kanthapura* wait and baited breath and observe a fast in order to show their solidarity with Mahatma Gandhi as he sets out on his historic '*Dandi March*'. Moorthy the follower of Mahatma Gandhi spread his message to the people. Distribute charkas and yarn and an ambulance corps to take care of those who are wounded in the firing and *lathi* charges on Satyagrahis.

Students, lawyer, women, and old men's courage and sacrifice became important to get 'Swara'. Moorthy the leader or staunch fighter for the freedom of the country against the ruthless British rule in India. He was the true and faithful disciple of Gandhi ji because he followed his principles of truth, peace and non-violence in a practical way in his freedom struggle in the village of *Kanthapura*. Nationalism aroused in their mind by the Satyagraha movement of Mahatma Gandhi to oppose the British Colonial rule. To be self sufficient from economical social and educational perspective, they chose the Charkha spinning, using Khadi, untouchability, boycott of foreign clothes, national education, use of Kannada words etc. peasants refused to pay revenue and other taxes to the government. With the result that many of them were evicted from their lands and lost all means of earning a livelihood.

The Skeffington Coffee Estate was found by British to exploit the Indians. They employ agents like Bhatta and the swami to oppose the freedom movement. They send policemen Bade Khan to harass the patriots and cook up false cases against them. The British policy of divide and rule is seen in operation, for the loyal Swami is given a gift of twelve hundred acres of land, so that there is no chance of joining the patriotic movement. Coolies who came to work there from the downward areas of the Ghats led a miserable life because of their poverty and backwardness. They were taken in work on the false pretext they would get enough rice and good wages but the false was otherwise.

The Britishers used to exploit the poor and helpless workers economically as well as physically. Toddy Booth also established by them was used to exploit the Indians. Drink is great enemy of the poor because it never allows a person to spend his income on essential items or make a saving for a rainy day. The picketing of the toddy grove and the toddy booth has the immediate effect of making the coolies realize how evil toddy-drinking is, so that some of them even take a pledge that they would never touch the poisonous drink again.

To destroy the Toddy Booth, freedom loving person took part in the Gandhian movement with enthusiasm and without fear of cruelties, beating and touches of the British rule. They started toddy picketing and fighting against the ruling class. There were Dharnas, Picketings and Satyagrahas; people even old men, women and children are injured and wounded in large numbers. They shout of Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai and "Inquilab Zindabad". All the freedom fighters were beaten mercilessly; women like Ratna, are beaten up and dishonoured but their spirit is not crushed. So many people are arrested and sent to jail.

*Kanthapura* is in the western art form with an Indian theme and Indian way of treating it. Rao Follows, the oral Indian tradition of story telling to show the longing for Indian sensibility. He uses the Indian English suited for the expression of Indian or peasant sensibility. He has tried to adopt his English style in the Indian and Sanskrit sentence.

Moorthy is the local avatar while Gandhi is the great deity. The Harikatha man raises Gandhi to the level of a God by identifying his activities. He gave the message of Gandhiji to the people of *Kanthapura* to live in peace and work hard for national unity. He persuaded all men, women and children of all castes and creeds to live and work

unitedly without any distinction. Swadeshi, discard foreign clothes and wear only Khadi, using Kannada words, which he regarded as the sign of national unity and pride.

*Kanthapura* is a great regional novel for in it the novelist rises from the practical to the general, to the depiction of the universal human passion, sorrow and suffering.

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