



A Glimpse on the Responses to India's Mass Movement for Independence as Incorporated in the Creative Literature of Rupkonwar

Mridul Das

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Pandu College
Guwahati, Assam, India.

ABSTRACT : *Jyotiprasad Agarwala, a truly multifaceted genius has been considered to be an indispensable source of inspiration and incessant glory in the socio-cultural milieu of Greater Assam. His versatile and voluminous contribution towards the formulation and growth of a new horizon in the modern socio-cultural setting of Assam can never-ever be denied. Similarly his resourceful gifts and endowments towards the literary domain of Assam are also highly laudable. Further, his sincere devotion to the mother land Assam, and also to the entire nation—India-- has really been astounding. Most of his creative works prove this fact without any doubt. Inspired by true patriotic zeal, Agarwala could appropriately be considered as one of the worthy sons of Assam and India. The present paper through descriptive methodology attempts to analyze Agarwala's responses as reflected in his creative writings towards the national movement of India for freedom.*

Keywords: *Literary realm, patriotic zeal, national freedom movement, Rupkonwar, socio-cultural milieu.*

I. Introduction:

Jyotiprasad Agarwala, widely known as Rupkonwar had been constantly an *individualistic*, a commendable progeny of *Assam*, and a truly committed *Indian*. While his individualistic attitude made him an ideal worshiper of fascinating art and culture, his radiant sense of belongingness to Assam had confirmed his original identity as a faithful lover and devotee of *Ai Axomi*. Next, Agarwala's sturdy sense of Indianness has also been quite evident in his enduring activities, and is thus widely acclaimed to be a genuinely genius and positive nationalist. Almost all his creative literary works including his bold public speeches firmly assert the idea as stated above. The sense of self-consciousness and the love and patriotism for the nation that he bore have truly and more vividly been represented in his creative works. A devoted patriot, Agarwala's philosophy of life had been inspired by the thought of cultural development in almost all fields



of human sphere through the process of non-violent ideology as propagated by Gandhian ethics.

Through a wide variety of creative cultural materials like- paintings, and also through his active participation, Agarwala really made a notable contribution towards the success of independence movement for motherland India. His public speeches, creative works etc. genuinely encouraged the exploited people and the youths of the North-eastern geographical area of our nation in a very positive order. He himself obeyed and even showed others to follow the true path of *Ahimsa* principles as guided by Mahatma Gandhi.

II. Objectives and Methodology :

Through an analytical perception the present paper attempts to make a sincere endeavour to scrutinize the responses of Jyotiprasad Agarwala, the landmark of Assamese art, culture, and literature, towards the national movement for freedom of India by studying some of his notable creative works. As far as methodology is concerned the present study is conducted relying on the data collected from both primary and secondary sources. While Agarwala's creative works—specifically the play "*Labhita*", and some of his *poems, lyrics, songs*, and selective *public speech* like—"Silpir Prithivi"—are considered as primary material; other books, references, and journals containing critical analysis on Agarwala's works have been studied as secondary source for data collection and exploration. The methodology applied here is descriptive and analytical one.

III. Result and Discussion:

Labhita and the revolutionary zeal:

Agarwala had to his credit many plays and filmographic representations which really attracted public attention. *Labhita* is undoubtedly a very interesting play with immense suspense and thrilling sensation. The play in its actual sense glorifies the heroic deeds of the Indians living in greater Assam province sustaining a real revolutionary zeal and immense love for country in their characters and attitude. It is to be noted here that the present paper does not intend to study anything regarding the success of the play among the past and present audience and readers; rather, the paper tries to examine and focus on people's attitude of love for the country India along with their sacrifice for the



independence of the country from the slavery of colonialism and exploitation as reflected throughout the play. Further, it also tries to have a glimpse on the socio-political condition of the state as represented in the play during the mass movement for freedom. Needless to say that Agarwala, without portraying a hero or heroine in the play, delineates a very befitting plot that strongly deals with the national independence struggle of India. In the play, the character Labhita emerges as a very tactful, smart, matured, patriotic young and energetic girl having truly modern outlook and sincere readiness and presence of mind. Though not a theoretically framed heroine, perhaps Labhita could safely be regarded in certain sense as the hero of the play. In this connection, the character of Millamant in William Congreve's best comedy of manners play '*The Way of the World*' could somehow be referred. All through the play Labhita appears as strong prototype of the female community, who, even after losing everything of her life and family, does not lose hope. Bearing all pains and pangs of life she is again motivated by herself to work for the welfare of the country and its people. She, with the support of another character—*Ilahi* epitomizes the true instance of communal harmony between Hindu and Muslims in India. Finally, her tragic life comes to the ultimate end with the symbolical depiction of her incredible love for her country. In other words, she sacrifices her life for the greater cause of her nation. She speaks boldly against the evil forces of the country and tries hard to sustain brotherhood and strong bond of love among the people of her motherland. It is significant that even after taking bullets on her chest she encourages the fellow Assamese soldiers of Azad Hind Fouz through the following speech---

“Gat Etupa Tez Thake Mane—Ushash Thake Mane—Juz Kora—Aji Gotei Axomiar, Gotei Hindustanor Sanman Tumalokor Hatot—Agbarha...”

(Act-V, Concluding part, *Labhita*,
Jyotiprasad Rachanawali, p-228:1986)

English Gist:

Fight till the last drop of blood and the last breath is exhausted. The dignity of Assamese and Hindustan is in your hands – march forward...



In Act IV of the play also the volunteers, a group of dramatic characters, of Indian mass movement sings –

*“Biswa Bijoyee Nava Jowan
Biswa Bijoyee Nava Jowan*

*Sakti Sali Bharatar
Olai aha Olai aha*

Santan Tumi Biplabar.....”

*(Jyotiprasad Rachanawali,
P-216 : 1986)*

English Gist:

Victorious Youthful Soldiers of Strong Bharat (India);
The gallant offspring of India, Come out, let's march for revolution

The brief illustration stated above prove that Agarwala was a real devotee of the country which he had represented through his writings along with his active participation in the national movement for freedom of India. Further, a few other characters of the cited play also demonstrate the revolutionary enthusiasm and dedicated love for the country. A good number of legendary figures of Assam like – *Kushal Kunwar, Kaanaklata, Makunda, Madan Rauta, Ratan Kachary* – who sacrificed their lives for the dignity of the nation are also suitably referred to in the play. Last but not the least; it is mention worthy that the idea of secularism and Gandhian philosophy is extensively spread out all through the play.

Dealing with Agarwala's Poetry and songs:

It goes without saying that Agarwala's multidimensional talent and splendorous creativity have plentifully been expressed in his magnificent compositions of poetry and songs. It seems that Agarwala was a person who believed in the outlook of viewing worldwide but working locally. Thus, though travelled many countries for his studies and all, he spent most of his lifetime to



glorify Assam with a noble Indian mindset. Even in his frustrated and ailing period of life too Agarwala had been able to create number of literary compositions bearing nationalistic thoughts and feelings, along with the creations of other features and magnitude. Thus, his poetry and songs clearly demonstrate the vivid response to the national independence struggle of India. In this respect mention may be made of such poems like – *Volunteeror Dukh* (Grief of Volunteers), *Kanaklata, Axomia Sowalir Ukti* (Proclamation of Assamese Girl), *Poharar Gan* (Songs of Light), *Na-Jowan-E-Hind* (Youths of Hindustan), *Cheera Bidrohee* (Vigorous Rebel), including a few other poems. In the beginning stanza of the poem *Na-Jowan-E-Hind* Agarwala’s philosophy and vision of a promising new India could obviously be traced and that attitude really refers to the National Independence Movement of India. Thus He writes –

“*Na-Jowan-E-Hind*
Moi Bharat Na-Jowan
Jogao Prithivee
Jogalo Hindustan;
Na-Jowan-E-Hind
Moi Bharat Na-Jowan.”

(*Jyotiprasad Rachanawali,*
P-759 : 1986)

English Gist:

As indomitable youth of Hindustan, I awaken the world – and the Hindustan. I am the devoted young soldier of India.

Agarwala was a person of genuine humanitarian values. He moved around the world, educated himself, and gathered tremendous knowledge of life, society, art, culture, and politics. However, he never forgot to worship his homeland *Ai Axomi* as much as his bigger motherland *India*. Thus, Agarwala in his poem *Axomia Sowalir Ukti* states: --



*“Pragjyotika Moi
Kamrupika Moi*

Nijara Lashyamayee

*Moie Axomir
Moie Bharatir
Sowali Kabitamayee”*

*(Jyotiprasad Rachanawali,
P-741 : 1986)*

English Gist:

I am the *Pragjyotika*, I am the *Kamrupika*, the graceful fountain. I’m the poetic lass of Assam and India.

Indian National movement for independence and the poet’s strong sense of nationalism has been best expressed even in agarwala’s most cited poem *Volunteeror Dukh* (Grief of Volunteers):

“Gandhir kotha sunibole sadai husiar

Moi volunteer

.....

Swarajor Jui

Jwalise Bhamak Bhamak,

Swadhinata Aniboloi

Desot Logao khalok.”

*(Jyotiprasad Rachanawali,
P-733 : 1986)*

English Gist:

I’m the volunteer, always sincere to obey Gandhi....., blazing commotion of liberty everywhere; let’s agitate countrywide to fetch independence.

The reference of M.K. Gandhi including his wide-ranging principles and bold activities in the freedom movement of India has highly been praised in the



aforementioned poem. Further, the poet concludes the poem with sincere dedication to Gandhian philosophy of truth and non-violence. Thus, Agarwala in the same poem states –

“*Bukur Bhitarat Hingsha-Baghe*

.....
Ahibo khoje olai
Ahingsha Banire Tak khusi khusi
Thou Bhitaraloi Sumai,
.....”

(*Jyotiprasad Rachanawali,*
P-735 : 1986)

English Gist:

Aggressive fury forces to outburst from inside spirit
Yet often hide by the morals of non-violence

Apart from above cited ones there prevails many more poems by Agarwala in which he deliberately inculcated his views, admiration, regrets and some other feelings associated with the independence struggle of India. However, in almost all his poetic opus, patriotism and national movement for freedom of India finds a prominent place. Ofcourse, Agarwala’s lyrical experience is multifaceted one.

Agarwala had to his credit many lucid songs that really reflect the vigor of national freedom movement. One such example is already stated in the discussion part on the play *Labhita*. As a singer-composer also Agarwala was tremendously inspired by the non-violent movement of India. His song *Tiranga Nichan* could be mentioned as one such instance. In the song Agarwala writes --

“.....
Namo Namu Namu
Nava Manabar
Nava Bharatar Pran
Tiranga Nichan
Bijoyee Nichan.”

(*Jyotiprasad Rachanawali,*
P-674 : 1986)



English Gist:

I salute and pray to the victorious Tricolour Flag, the spirit of the free people of independent India

Other Writings: a brief overview:

Apart from plays, poems, and songs Agarwala had contributed many other writings such as – biographies, cinema-scripts, children's literature and so on and so forth. He was also an orator of immense caliber. Many of his public speeches are preserved owing to the issues of contemporary relevance. Even in those speeches also Agarwala had many times referred to the national mass movement for Indian independence and its later impact on the public at large. One instance of such speech is *Silpir Prithivee*, published by publication Board of Assam. It was infact a lecture on art and culture delivered by agarwala in Sivsagar, Assam. Though not directly, yet we find in the speech a typical reference to Indian national movement and its later impact on the mass people. Here, Agarwala is seemed to have been discouraged by some of the policies of the new democracy and government. Be what it may, Indian national movement for independence has been conferred a remarkable tone by Agarwala in his speech with many potential queries to himself and also to the mass. However, the answers to those universal questions are perhaps not properly addressed till date. And that perhaps is the irony of the present governance and democracy. There prevails a satirical tone in this speech that compels us to ponder over several issues in the post-independent era of Indian situation.

IV.Conclusion:

It is really difficult to assess the contribution and responses of Agarwala towards the national struggle for independence of India as reflected in his writings in such a brief paper like this. However, his literary contributions demonstrate that Agarwala was undoubtedly a man of potential revolutionary zeal inspired by the ardent love and patriotic feelings for the country. He perceived that *Swaraj* is indispensable; and to achieve that swaraj, self-sacrifice might also be essential. So, being an active member of freedom movement he moved in the different places of Assam by drawing paintings to prevent the habit



of *kani* among Assamese people. Agarwala felt that mass awareness is the sole way to make Indians really free from the bondage of slavery and exploitation. Hence, his writings are repeatedly read, recited and also staged even in this century also with a view to awaken, revitalize and motivate the present generation to do something good for the cause of the motherland, for the integrity and welfare of the independent nation. Therefore, Rupkunwor Jyotiprasad Agarwala is undoubtedly an indispensable figure in the literary arena and socio-cultural set up of Assam and India as a whole.

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GLOSSARY

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Ai Axomi: | Mother Assam |
| Ahimsa: | non-violence |
| Pragjyotika: | woman of old Assam (Known as Pragjyotishpura) |
| Kamrupika: | Female of old Assam (Kamrupa) |
| Kani: | Tobacco/ poppy related intoxicating items of old Assam |