



Man-Woman Relationship in Bhabani Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers*-A Study

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Abstract

Bhabani Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers* portrays the central obsession of the sex between man and woman in the society. On one occasion Kajoli begs a soldier for some food. He conciliates her hunger readily and in turn expects her to indulge his sexual hunger. Other than when she falls insensible the soldier repents for his fleeting weakness. The good-natured soldier admits Kajoli in a hospital and sees to her needs. Bhattacharya does not judge the soldier here. Rather he enables the readers to sympathies with him as he creates compensation for the incorrect done to her.

Bhattacharya portrays the elements of man-woman relationship together in the families and also in the society in an optimistic approach. Bhattacharya describes at length the better understanding between Rahoul and Monju, about the help rendered to the destitute. Furthermore bravery, faithfulness and manliness other qualities often emphasized in the novel are remorse at wrong-doing, selflessness, sympathy, dignity, self-respect, thankfulness and hard labour. The author depicts man as lustrous as the sun, and personification of truth, strength and deathlessness.

Key Words: Man-Woman Relationship, Relationship between the Husband and Wife Human Qualities, Wrong-doing, Selflessness, Sympathy, Dignity, Self-Respect, Thankfulness.

Bhabani Bhattacharya's first novel, *So Many Hungers* (1947), is one of the supreme pieces of original writing. It is an authentic proof of the Bengal hunger 1943 and the Quit India Movement of 1942. The plot of the story is wicker out of two main strands-the story of the young scientist, Rahoul and his family and so as to of the

peasant girl Kajoli and her family. The two families are connected by their contact through the good figure of an aged nationalist leader, Devash Basu. Rahoul's tale is a representation in little of the move violently for freedom and that of Kajoli is a representation in miniature of what has happened to more than two million men and women who became fatalities of 'man-made' lack of food and famine. In this novel, all the characters, Devata, Kajoli, Onu, Mother, Rahoul and Monju are connected in the human strength in matters of go forward circumstances and sufferings.

Rahoul and his younger brother Kunal is the son of Samarendra Basu, a prosperous lawyer, who lives in Calcutta. The Basu family of Calcutta has six members in all. There are four males and two female members. Everyone expects one live together under the similar roof. The male as well as the female members of the family are, more or less, totally opposite to one another by means of the exception of Rahoul and Devata. Up till now they live silently and gladly together.

Devesh Basu is the eldest member of this family. He is an optimist and a experienced person liberty fighter. Over seventy in age, he lives in a village through these people who are very dear to him, and he thinks of them as "the core of his being, his blood and bone" (64).The villagers, too, hold him in high regard and call him "Devata" out of love and esteem. But not any expect Rahoul in his own family understands the aged man.

Samarendra Basu is the son of Devata. He is too antagonistic to his father for the reason that of his participation in the countrywide moves violently for freedom. He is a materialist and hard-core realist. He is middle-aged and has determined for money and fame like any other normal man. "The end justifies means," is his motto of life. He does not like his father's patriotic thoughts. He is exploit and hoarder. Hankering subsequent to appealing honorary titles and buildup of riches are his most goal of life. While Devata has enthusiastically loyal himself to the reason of national independence, the extremely thought of India's liberty appears to Samarendra make sacred idea and "a crazy dream "that can never materialize. Rahoul has no kindness for his father's uncertain and dishonest ways to build up money in the critical times of World War II and the Bengal famine. He does not like Samarendra's sightless trust in the British Empire and the British habits of life.

Rahoul, Samarendra's eldest son, is a scientist and an idealist, who has a deep faith in the ethical principles of human life. Rather opposing to his father, Rahoul loves his fellow beings. He has a soft corner far the anguish masses. Throughout the Bengal food shortage, he still runs a free kitchen for the destitute, while his

father goes on hoarding rice in order to sell it in the black market. Rahoul has a keen desire to thrust into the freedom move violently, though for the time being he keeps himself full of activity in his scientific researches. He is a staunch rationalist who lastly throws in his lot with the under pressure masses. His burning spirit is made obvious by his keen speech to the students: With bitter on fire rage he had been speaking to the like students, a widening circle. The anger was warm in his voice, and he had paused till his speech was call again. “Quit” cried all India. “You have done you have been paid in full. The accounts have been settled. Now, for God’s sake, “Quit!”(202) from this speech, the reader could understand Rahoul’s passion for his country and his authority of speech.

Kunal, Rahoul’s younger brother, is a forceful young man. He does not bother concerning idealism or patriotic fervor. He is a realist who takes life as it comes his way. But he is not a realist in Samarendra’s sense of the term. Totally unlike from all the members of the family, he prefers an army career. Though calm by idealism, Kunal, too, has faith in certain moral values and helps a disadvantaged young man in solving his food-problem by vacating the location he held.

Moreover the male members, the female members of the Basu family, that is Rahoul’s mother and his wife Monju, also have dissimilar nature and outlooks on life. While Rahoul’s mother is a middle-aged lady of worldly wisdom, Monju is hardly on top of twenty-five and a beginner in domestic affairs. Bhattacharya describes Rahoul’s mother as a sensible minded lady. As soon as she comes to know of World War II, she is worried: Mother felt worry. “War? It has started, then? Why, we must buy rice and mustard oil, a half-year Supply, before the grocer has inkling. Prices will touch the sky? Sugar, too. Clothing.I must get white English drill for the father and you two boys. And tinned Butter, tinned fish. Strange tongues you children have. The rivers of Bengal choked with fish-every kind, large and small-still you fancy the year-old shapes packed in tins, both you and Kunal. The strong smell” (6) this statement brings out the sensible mind-set of the lady. Further it reveals the attentiveness of her in facing the war condition.

Monju can see the loveliness in her husband that she has missed all these years. She sees her husband’s true strength, his lack of food for a better-off life for the common man. Monju, though, lacks levelheaded knowledge. She likes to visit hotels and restaurants, and loves to dance on a ballroom floor. She is a lady of the modern times and a difference to her mother-in-law who has an old-worldview.

On analyzing the man-woman relationship of Samarendra's family, one gets a clear feeling that they have in total varying temperaments, attitudes and ways and modes of life. And yet one does not see any obvious fight between them. Leaving Devata aside, they all lead a pleasant-sounding life. In fact, Bhattacharya succeeds extremely in describe them as an incorporated family. There is a surprising merger of the old and the young, the idealist and the materialist, and the imperialist and the democrat in the Basu family.

The story of Kajoli's family in Baruni also exemplifies Bhattacharya's practice of amalgamation the rudiments of the man-woman relationship in the novel. Both, Devata and Kishore are outsiders belonging to the city of Calcutta. Their ways and attitudes are dissimilar from those of the peasant family they live with. Even though Devata is extremely educated, progressive and an idealist, having a completely different family backdrop, he has recognized such harmonious relationship with Kajoli's family that it is something likes not possible to think of these people without him. The novelist describes his men and women as true fighters, brave and fearless. Kajoli and her mother are incarnations of faith in the dignity and richness of life. They have inherited the basic values of India, unchanged and undefiled by modern approach and notions. The old mother shows her hospitality and compassion to Kishore by cooking a pumpkin and the author says: That pumpkin had been in the house for a month, the Last fruit of their old vine, Kajoli has longed to make it into a curry, but the mother had saved the good vegetable, so big and yellow, green, keeping it preserved. For a lean-day. What had come upon her that she had sliced it and cooked it for a mere stranger? (81)

By means of that pumpkin they have prepared a good curry for Kishore who is being sent by Kajoli's father for an alliance. Kajoli and Onu are talking to Kishore and they are concerned about the adversity but they do not lose faith in life. They are arrogant to say that their father and brother have gone to jail for the country's sake, even though the country could not give them with good food and clothing.

A love of faith and its verification are the characteristic features of Bhattacharya's female characters and this kind of love and confidence in life become the ethical support for them to develop as grown-up persons with a strong sense of personality, from sufferings. Kajoli, even in the middle of her misery, is still able to recapture the moments of "Sky-blueness" that she has shared with her husband Kishore. Her irresistible demand is not for heaven but to be born once more on earth and she can have him once again as her husband and this is her prayer too.

Likewise Kishore's happy union with Kajoli and their mutual change with each other testify to Bhattacharya's opinions of amalgamation the rudiments of the man-woman relationship in his novel. Kishore is a modern young man, educated and enlighten. He has progressive views and has been a famous labour leader of a cotton mill at Calcutta. He has served five months imprisonment for most important the striking workers of the mill. The peasant's work of sowing, rising and reaping paddy is unfamiliar to him. On the contrary, Kajoli is a peasant-girl of Baruni. She has never been to a school nor is she complicated like a city-bred girl. She is a conventional Indian girl, "With a legacy of manners as old as India" (25).Kajoli's marriage with Kishore, symbolizes a greater and mutual understanding of the man-woman relationship in the novel.

Bhattacharya presents the love and affection that live between husband and wife. At the instant of parting, Kajoli sheds big drops of tears. But she realizes that the tears are ill-omen and her lips make the appearance of a smile as she murmurs: "You will write a letter every week? A long one?"(103).Then she takes his hand in hers and lays it for a moment on her stomach, where the child is nestling, invoking the father's endorsement on the innate one. The author reproduces the real love of two hearts. After two hours of her husband's leaving, she sits down to take her meal, she feels her heart breaking. At that instant Kishore lay dead across the steel track, a bullet in his spine. When he is mountaineering the embankment on the track by way of a short cut, a police guard, challenged him. Kishore starts to run. The protector follows him and fires him. Bhattacharya reflects on the real love that exists in a good relationship between husband and wife in the subsequent words:As he sat down to her noon meal two hours later, suddenly she gave a aggressive start. She set vary still, frozen, eyes flicker less, as though listening with all. Her soul, and then slumped on the mud floor, buried her face in her arm and burst into broken-hearted sobbing. Ceaseless floods of tears came streaming down her face. (103)

Another instance where Bhattacharya shows that encounter of the woman with man in this novel is the episode in which a poor girl bares herself in order to save not only her but also a number of other destitute from starvation. She is ordinary and uncommon, traditional and yet modern, perfect and yet real girl of modern India. This girl appears to be eccentric and diverse to the reader when he finds her yielding to the animal passion of the unknown soldiers. But she becomes one of the strange ones when she spends all her hard earned money to nourish the starving destitute, her fellow brethren in misery. Whereas embarrassing herself on physical level, she exalts herself on the human level. The destitute in the passage acknowledge her innocent sacrifice and see the

mother-image in her. She, however, sheds her strange boldness when she sits down in the middle of the destitute and eats her own share of bread.

The episode where Rahoul addresses the peasant woman (Kajoli's mother) as "Mother" is also symbolic of the mixture of the feelings of mother and son relationship. Rahoul, a complicated man of the town, mixes up with a woman of common clay, and though an educated and city-bred man, he establishes his relationship with the simple and unqualified village woman.

The writer in addition stresses some of the necessary human qualities in order to bring out the magnificence of life. When Kajoli is lying unconscious with abortion resulting from rape and a jackal is about to eat her body. Onu her brother afraid of the animal, bravely fights against it. This scene illustrates the love and love of the brother for his sister.

Moreover bravery, authenticity and manliness other qualities often emphasized in the novel are remorse at wrong-doing, selflessness, sympathy, dignity, self-respect, thankfulness and hard labour. The author portrays man as lustrous as the sun, an personification of truth, strength and deathlessness.

Bhattacharya depicts at length the better understanding between Rahoul and Monju, concerning the help rendered to the destitute. He observes: Out of the flame of travail that had consumed one woman a glow quickened in another, and understanding, a humanizing tenderness, so that the creatures of misery were no longer a race apart, soulless and dead-men and women all. (168)

The story portrays the central obsession of the sex between man and woman in the society. On one occasion Kajoli begs a soldier for some food. He appeases her hunger readily and in turn expects her to satisfy his sexual hunger. Other than when she falls comatose the warrior repents for his fleeting weakness. The good-natured soldier admits Kajoli in a hospital as well as sees to her needs. Bhattacharya does not judge the soldier here. Bhattacharya depicts the rudiments of man-woman relationship both in the families and also in the society in an optimistic approach.

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