

In Rabindra-fiction: Endemic and Pandemic

Dr. Bibhuti Bhusan Biswas

Assistant Professor

T.P.M. Mahavidyalaya

Cooch Behar

West Bengal

Pin- 736101

Ipsita Nandi

Assistant Professor

T.P.M. Mahavidyalaya

Cooch Behar

West Bengal

Pin- 736101

Literature is the mirror of society. When the apparent image is created in the progression of life, and the tune or unturned that awakens in the visibility- all are merged with form-juice in the field of literature. It continues to move on in the running speed of time along with the stream. Destructive pandemics are the noteworthy incidents of the past. Many famous writers of all over the world has selected pandemic as a subject of their writings frequently. At present the whole world is affected by the dangerous prey of deadly Corona Virus. So it is very natural that we must read their relevance in the present time. The novel 'Ananda Math' written by the emperor of Bengali literature Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay snatches my vision while researching the pandemic in the inner court of Bengali-Fiction. Here is a description of the pandemic Seventy Six Manvantara:

“The disease gets time. Fever, rash, erosion, smallpox are there. Smallpox spreads massively. People begin to die by smallpox in various houses. Who gives water to whom, who touches whom. No one treats anyone; No one cares about anybody; none takes the responsibility when someone dies. Very attractive Bopu is being rotten in the palace alone. If smallpox enters into the house, the members of the family fly away leaving the affected patient.”

Swami Vivekananda set out on a second voyage to the West in 1899 and regularly wrote his travelogues to Swami Trigunatitan. These travelogues began to be published in the journal Udbhodhan from the January issue of 1899 (1 Magh, 1305 BS). This magazine is published in 15-23 issues of the first year, 3-5 issues of the second year and 1-3 issues of the third year (14 issues in total). These were later published in book form under the title "Bilatyatrir Patra". These travelogues of Swamiji were later published together in his book Paribrajak (1905) after his death. (1905) Swamiji writes in the 61st paragraph of this book "Paribrajak "-

"On July 14, the ship crossed the Red Sea and reached Suez. Suez Canal in front. The ship has Nawab's goods in Suez. On top of that came the plague in Egypt, and the plague we are bringing is probably that, so the fear of two-sided touch. Where is our direction chhutchhanta near the chhutchhantera natara! The goods will be unloaded, but the Suez porter will not be able to touch the ship. What is the danger of the poor rescued on the ship! They are the porters, carrying the goods by crane, dropping them into the Siege boat below Altapka they are going ashore. The company's agent is coming to the ship in a small launch, there is no order to get up. Talking to the captain on the boat. This is not India, the white man — the plague law \forall everyone is fine — here is the beginning of Europe. The rat-carrying plague is over in heaven, that's why it's so expensive. Plague-poison \forall come out in ten days; So detained for ten days. But it has been ten days since we lost that gap. But after touching the Egyptian man, he was detained again for ten days — then Naples (a large port city in Italy, now called 'Napoli') will no longer be inhabited, nor Marseille (a large port city in France); So whatever is going on, everything is in order; So it will take a whole day to move the goods slowly. At night the ship can cross the canal effortlessly, if it gets lightning in front; But if he goes to light, the Suez man will have to touch the ship, Bass - ten days quarantine. So you don't have to go at night, stay here for twenty-four hours in that port of Suez." [Article 71 of the book "The Traveler"]

Now let's come to Rabindra-Sahitya Bhandar. The two branches of this collection are novels and short stories. Epidemic-related story novels in Rabindra-kotha literature are-

Novel: 1. Chaturanga-1914

Short story:

1. 'Postmaster' (Published in Hitabadi in 1296 BS.)
2. 'Madhyavartini' (Senior of 1321 BS, published in Sadhana)
3. 'Drishtidan' (1305 BS in Poush issue, published in Bharati)
4. 'Haimanti' (1321 BS in senior issue, published in Sabujpatra)
5. 'Vaifota' (published in Bhadre, Sabujpatra in 1321 BS)
6. 'The Last Night' (1321 BS in Ashwin issue, published in Sabujpatra)

Rabindra's novel Chaturanga was published in 1914. The famous character of this novel Jathamshai Jagmohan died in the epidemic. Found in the description of Rabindranath

"There was a plague in the neighborhood. People did not want to call a doctor lest he be taken to the hospital. Jagmohan himself came to see the plague hospital and said, "People have not committed a crime just because they have become paralyzed."

Jagmohan then opened a private hospital on his own initiative. Shachisha, Srivilas, these were the nurses, along with a doctor. Although their fate was not pleased. In the words of Srivilas we find-

"The first patient in our hospital was a Muslim, he died. The second patient was Jagmohan himself, who also did not survive. He said to Shachisha, "I have paid the last bounty of the religion I have practiced so far, there is no regret."

Shachisha's father Harimohan's statement about his grandfather's death was very brief: "This is how an atheist dies."

In the Short story 'Postmaster', the postmaster was ill one day. He has a high fever. Heena Balika Ratan has to take care of her parents. This is not a common fever. Ratan worked as a postmaster for a long time. The narrator said "After a long time, the postmaster left the bed with weak body." He wrote a letter to the authorities by mentioning specifically "local ill health." It is believed that the postmaster was contracted with malaria.

"I want to remember that my mother and sister are sitting next to me in the form of a loving woman in this agony of exile, and at this point the desire of the mind of the expatriate has failed."

The girl Ratan then

"The girl is no more. At that moment, she took the position of mother, called the doctor, fed her batika at the right time, stayed awake all night, cooked the food and asked a hundred times, "Hango grandpa, do you feel a little better?"

Then, citing the risk of local epidemics, our urban 'gentleman' cut off all affection and responsibility, leaving Ratan in the dark woods of the countryside and moving to a new workplace, as we all know.

Harsundari also has a fever in the story 'Madhyavartini' (published in Sadhana, 1321)

"The fever doesn't want to go away. The more quinine the doctor prescribes, the higher the fever, like a blocked current. The disease lasted for twenty days, twenty-two days, forty days. "

Harasundari got better at one point, but the beauty of her youth vanished forever. There were also problems with childbearing. Harsundari's husband Nibaran got married for the second time. But his second wife, Shailabala, also died - not in an epidemic, but in a complicated pregnancy problem.

In the story 'Drishtidan' (Poush, 1305, published in Bharati), Drishtihara Kumu hears that an old Muslim has come to her doctor husband to treat her granddaughter.

The plague is directly related to the story of 'Malyadan'. Rabindranath says-

"Jatin made a special effort to become a doctor at Seba Plague Hospital. One day at noon, Ahar Saria came to the hospital and heard that a new patient had come to the hospital's gynecology department. The police picked him up from the road. Jatin went to see him. Most of the girl was covered in sheets. Jatin first raised his hand and saw the pulse. There is not much fever in the veins, but the weakness is very high. "

Jatin recognized the girl as 'Kurani' after picking up a friend of cousin Patal. The reason behind the name Kurani is that her parents died in the famine, and the family of Patal brought up the girl. The city of Kolkata was affected by plague while writing the story.

The author says-

"Patal's husband, Harkumar Babu, a deputy magistrate rented a garden house in Bali in fear of the plague and traveled from there to Calcutta. "

However, after a long time, Jatin was surprised to see Kurani in the hospital bed. Jatin thought,

"Why did Bidhata make this one girl so delicate like a flower and float her in Mari from famine. Today, this pelvic soul is lying on the bed in a state of distress. In its short life span, it has suffered so much danger, so much pain.

In the end, Kurani was abandoned by the deadly plague, yet before his death Jatin and Kurani exchanged greetings.

Haimanti's serious illness in the story 'Haimanti' (published in Sabujpatra, 1321). Yet she could not reach her father's house. Haimanti's father has to return from his father-in-law's house.

The author states-

"Boomer's body is not good! Such a big unjust slander! Aniya, a good doctor, had her father-in-law examine her. The doctor said, "It is necessary to change the air, otherwise there may be a sudden stiffness."

Dad laughed and said, "Suddenly everyone can have a hard time. Is that another thing? " My father-in-law said, "You know he's a famous doctor, what does he mean?"

Dad said,

"I have seen so many doctors. In the south, all the scholars have all the provisions and all the doctors have the certificates of all the diseases. "

The narrator talks about a deadly virus in the short story 'Vaifota' which has come from the relationship with childhood friend Anusuya. The narrator was supposed to be engage in a marriage relationship with her. But Anusuya married someone else. After few days the narrator comes to know that her former lover Anusuya became widow and she has a son. Her husband left some property for her before his death. The author didn't want to spoil this scope and as a result after the death of Anusuya's husband he comes to meet her as a husband. He wanted to increase his business capital.

The issue of pandemic and disease can be concluded with the text 'The Last Night'. Narrator Jatin is bedridden with the hope of getting care from his wife Moni. But she has gone to meet her younger sister at her father's house. In this situation the only hope of Jatin is his aunt who can take care of him alone. But she didn't want to hurt him so she informed Jatin that her wife actually cooked all the foods and she was not able to come here as she took all the responsibility of household works. The author didn't mention properly what kind of disease was the cause of Jatin's suffering. The disease was terrible which has been highlighted by various dialogues.

"Auntie!"

"Sleep Jatin, it's night."

"No matter, night, I don't have much day."

Or, "Listen once! Why would a wife want to leave you in this situation and go to her father's house?"

Or, " The still night in the window sill stood silently at the patient's door like a pilgrim on an eternal pilgrimage. Witnessing how many ages and how many deaths, those stars kept staring at Jatin's face.

At the end of the story, Jatin dies of an incurable disease, but before that, his wife returned from her father's house to see her dying husband for a moment.

The epidemic means the great apocalypse. The world has witnessed this great event many times. One pandemic may come out with the hand of another pandemic. Sometimes it has been come after a long period of time. The efforts of mankind to be free from the affect of all previous pandemics have taken place in the world literature many times. Bengali literature is no exception. The devastation of the epidemic has appeared like a mirror in the pen of Bengali writers. So my little effort is to highlight how the wave of pandemics has come in the Rabindra fiction.

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*** Translated by, **Koustav Neogi** M.phil Scholar, CBPBU Cooch Behar, West Bengal.

(The translation of the lines from Rabindra Upanyas, Chhotogalpo is done by me only for the sake of pure academic purpose)