

# Issues of Gandhism in *A Bend in the Ganges*

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**Abstract:** This study has been undertaken to investigate the issues of Gandhism in Manohar Malgonkar's novel *A Bend in the Ganges*. It shows the effects of surroundings in the focusing of Gandhian thoughts. The values of Gandhism and his important tools are including the truth and non-violence. It deals with the philosophy of Gandhiji. The effects of Gandhian amplitude over the common people and against the polity of British are the finding arena of the paper. The study is held with the examples and references from the novel. The novel of Malgonkar deals with Gandhism and anti-Gandhism through its characters Debi Dayal and Gian. The advocacy of Gandhism is transformed its nature by time and situation is the main arc of this novel. First, Gandhism favored by Gian with strictness and then his brother's murder transformed his views about his follow. Another character of Debi Dayal rejects Gandhism in the beginning and accepts it to see the lots of mascaras in communal riots.

*A Bend in the Ganges* published in 1964 by Manohar Malgonkar. He was born on 12 July, 1913. He was born rich and had the powerful prosperous background. Throughout his life, he engaged into the various types of works and activities like game hunter, government servant, mine owner, farmer and he nominated himself in the list of Parliamentary candidates. His civil work had taken a place through Maratha Light Infantry. His literature is gone through the Indian Independence events and the events after the Independence and the partition of India-Pakistan. It easily struck to the communal affairs between Sikh-Muslims and Hindu-Muslims. The socio-political factors of the time and economic aspects are more hilarious sometimes and touching with the theme of communalism most of times. His works are mostly published into the magazines and news papers periodically like – *The Statesman* and *Deccan Herald*. His dwelling in Burbusa Bungalow is very far from the crowd areas, which is situated in Joida Taluk in Uttar Kannada District in Karnataka.

Gandhism is a philosophy of highly great motifs of humanity. It relies on the truth and non-violence. Many of the Indian writers of different languages including English have combined the views of Gandhi in their works through different incidents. They continuously try to spread the awesome thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi in their writing for the welfare of humanity. Malgonkar also tries to justify the Gandhism and Gandhian thoughts in his novel, *A Bend in the Ganges*.

The novel is an important chronicle record of Indian national struggle before freedom and its aftermath like – Civil Disobedience Movement. Swadeshi Movement, the struggling attempts of freedom fighters, the picture of World War – II and the retreat of British form it. Further, it depicts the Bombay Dock Explosion, partition of India-Pakistan and the dreadful consequences of communal riots. It opens with the national incident of 1930s Civil Disobedience and gradually goes ahead with the series of various incidents and consideration on the freedom fighters' contributions for freedom. The novel has some special features of Malgonkar's writing such as it is full of adventurous journey of characters, the love and romance also knitted with the difficult moments, the historical glances and perturbed events are composed into the this text with the fusion of history and awesome fiction. The truth of the Indian freedom struggle and its factual elements are rendered by the writer.

Prof. G. S. Amur says that –

“*A Bend in the Ganges* is a highly satisfied account of an individual's attempt at survival and search for moral identity and read as such offers but critical problems. The novel is not content to operate on a purely personal level. It is intended to be a political and philosophical allegory as well.” (Book 1)

Under the consideration of Aligarh Movement, Muslims were ready to take their revenge and they had the chance in 1905 in form of the division of Bengal. At this time Hindus were against British while Muslims were supported British to do so. It was the apparent cardiogram of their thinking that they were

never fought for the nationalism or they never burned under the feelings of patriotism, their goal was only to take the superiority than Hindus. The dragon of throne was stung them. The subordinate cause became the main cause to them. The devaluation of India by British was their goal so they had withdrawn their participation from the fight. According to their cruel thinking, they had brought the new thought in light that the Muslims were ruled over India before the British in form of Mughals. So the India would be the slave of Muslims after the British left. This notion terrified the freedom fighters like Mahatma who was ever advocated the humanity in front than any other aspects of superiority. Indirectly, Malgonkar tries to say that although Gandhi's philosophy of truth and non-violence was false or futile but his decision to divide India into two nations was right, because he had known better that the rule of British is the best than those of orthodox monarch who were spread their inhuman monarchy. It is also fact that if Gandhi had become indecisive about the partition, India must become the slave of Muslims. The fruit of freedom might be become bitterer than the present situation. Gandhi's deep study marked that the arrival of British in India was the renaissance of India but the slavery is slavery in its all form so he had formed the campaign to move out British from India. His thoughts were something different than other revolutionary freedom fighters but his vision was pure and deserve to acclamation. Malgonkar also praise Gandhi in the words of Debi-dayal that – "We may not hold with his (Gandhian) philosophy but no one can doubt his sincerity personally. I do not think he would retaliate with violence."

It is also considerable point that Gandhi had tried hard to re-establish the unity and brotherhood between these communities but British were the Machiavellians, they ever tried to perform the conflicting role between them. They permitted the separate voting authority to Muslims; the All India Muslim League was in enthusiasm by this decision. The separate election policy had been adhered more controversies in the relations of two communities. However, as the rule of nature, the difficulties bring closer to men, the scandal of Jaliawala Bagh brought them close mutually in 1919. Another notable incident of brotherhood had taken a place when Gandhiji had supported to Khilafat Movement. Then after there were many incidents had taken a place when they committed together against British rule in Civil Disobedience Movement, Home Rule Movement, Non Co-Operation Movement etc. Although Gandhi had tried hard but this unity could not last long, again the notion of Muslims spur out and staunchly attacks on the Hindus in form of riots, the riots were the product of Muslim League, the configuration rule of them to establishment of new Muslim state Pakistan. The apparent plurality of omniscient reached its culmination with the demand of separate land. The rise of British Empire was better than its end for India because the mascaras and inhumanity of Indian was not fired in such a terrifying way as it had sprout out at the time partition in form of Communalism. So the Gandhism was not futile. As Malgonkar says –

"If Gandhism is a failure, it is not because of Gandhian imperfections but because people who are not committed and who are power-hungry and corrupt. But people who surrounded Gandhi caused the foul atmosphere, defaming the whole Gandhian values." (Book 2)

The word communalism in Indian context has its gloomy history of bloodsheds and killings of humanity. As the word Indian communalism is the grand history of inhumanity and assassination of innocent people of both of the communities for the few benefits of their rulers. The thought of Gandhi was really not futile or purposeless but the hatred proved powerful against it. The homelessness and feelings of lost is occurred by their own account, perhaps Gandhi was wrong but hid idealism and way of fighting was not wrong. The late understood Gandhi's purpose is shinning now into the heart of both of the countries. As Malgonkar writes that–

"Only the violence in this story happens to be true; it came in the wake of the bloodiest upheavals of history: twelve million people had to flee, leaving their homes; nearly half million were killed; over a hundred thousand women, young and old, were abducted, raped, Mutilated." (Book 3)

Another communal bend of the novel is that the story starts with the motifs of Gandhism and gradually takes it bend into disastrous separation and scandal. The novel presents with two protagonists. One of them is Gian Singh. He is a young man with a view to Gandhian path of truth and non-violence but the situation changed him into the criminal and his all wishes come to an end. His education becomes useless and he falls into the path of revenge and murdered. He becomes the victim of family feudal and lost his property. The incident makes upset his parents and the legal procedure through judiciary acts has been taken a place for the property and it forces Gian to come back from Lahore and dropped the study where he would be worked as a farmer. The table turns when he becomes eager to takes revenge of his brother's murder, Hari was his brother who is murdered by Vishnu Dutt and confesses it openly. In this way, he enters in the dark side of his life and takes away into the prison as a murderer, the goals and manifestation of life gets curse and he does not prevent this disastrous bend of his life. His destiny and cognizable step brings

him into the prison. The notion of Mahatma Gandhi is proved handicap here in case of Gian. As Malgonkar points out in the epigraph of the novel that –

“This non-violence, therefore, seems to be due mainly to our helplessness. It almost appears as if we are nursing in our bosoms the desire to take revenge the first time we get the opportunity. Can true, voluntary non-violence come out of this seeming forced non-violence of the weak? Is it not a futile experiment I am conducting? What if, when the fury bursts, not a man, woman, or child is safe and every man’s hand is raised against his neighbor?” (Book epigraph 4)

The principles of truth and non-violence are placated and his follower becomes the victim of originality of human nature. His pursuance is come to an end due to the assassination of his brother. The implication of murder and the rapid change in his action is the symbol of great fatality of humiliation to his side. He breaks the peripherals of false principles and acts beyond these archives of Gandhism, so these motifs are not much coherent to him. The practice of nonviolence and peace are not adjust in every situation is the advocacy of Gian’s action. So without taking care of result and his educational perspectives, he fulfilled the domestic duty. However it is also true to say that Gian is coward and pompous person, his poverty and practice of non-violence made him coward. He seemed to shiver before Patrick Mulligan, he compulsively murdered Vishnu Dutt, however, he had changed himself after murder and himself confessed his crime before Daroga that – “I have just killed Vishnu-Dutt, Gian told him. ‘Killed him with the same axe with which he murdered my brother’... ‘I had to find the axe,’ Gian was telling him. ‘You see, it was important that he should be killed with the same axe’.” (Book 5) he became becomes bold to save Sundari’s parents, sometimes he presents as a thief who steals the gold coins form dead body of Ramoshi. These various sides of human nature involved into the action of Gian who is presented as a strict supporter of Gandhian philosophy. However, all these factors say that he was symbolizes that the Gandhian path of truth and non-violence was not worked properly over the people because every man behaves into the flow of situations. Gian is the great example of failure of Gandhian terminology to live a life.

Thus, the Gandhism is presented as a contemporary issue of that time. Malgonkar justifies Gandhi’s values and his dictum to live a life against the criticism of Gandhi’s philosophy. at many occasions in the novel, the writer favours Gandhi’s value in freedom fighting and about the moral values of the humanistic filament of survival through truth and non-violence. Debi and Gian are the symbol of Gandhian issues of the particular time. However, the issue of Gandhian philosophy is still debatable so it is obviously the most powerful operandi of Gandhi.

#### References:

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