



# THE THIRST FOR THE FREEDOM DRENCHED BY THE SOCIO-CULTURAL AND THE SPIRITUAL VALUES DISPLACED THE PUPIL FROM ROUTE TO EN-ROUTE: A CRITICAL STUDY OF RAJA RAO'S “KANTHAPURA” IN THE POST-COLONIAL ERA.

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**Abstract:** Freedom is an essential component in the human life which determines self-awareness of an individual and thereby realizes the potentialities of life. The Physical freedom can be achieved by proper socialization process and stable social contracts based on the humanitarian values. On the other hand, cognitive freedom is a sensitive issue where it requires the harmonious balance between one's individual and social life. The strained human relationships often create cognitive dissonance which can be seen throughout the history of colonialism. The British in India imprisoned the psyche of Indians by creating hierarchies, mental complexities, verbal abuse and they disguised it in the form of white-man's burden. Raja Rao's Kanthapura unleashed such trivialities by exploring the socio-cultural and spiritual values embedded in the Indian way of life. The villagers of Kanthapura might sacrifice their space and root but the level of complacency they attained will be a model for decolonizing process in the post-colonial era. The research paper has used historical, textual and ethnographic method to answer the pondering questions on the aspects like values, space and time, language in relation to the decolonization process.

**Key words:** Cognitive freedom, post-colonialism, glocalization, ethnicity, social contract, decolonization.

“Man is born free but everywhere in chains” (Rousseau,1).

The birth of an individual in the civil society conform the socialization process without his/her assent. It's inevitable for an Individual to adjust, cope and to train one's mind as per the contemporary milieu. Hence, an individual enters into the common contract with others. Thereby the adjustment with the society will be at ease along with he/she can enjoy considerable freedom. But the freedom is not unlimited and in the case of the physical freedom it's always been restricted unless the social contract. On the other hand, the cognitive freedom has unlimited scope unless allowing someone to access to the thoughts and taking domineering position on it. The colonizers, throughout the history, physically restrained the colonized and in disguise, blocked the psychological freedom too. In this sense, the research paper focuses on how the freedom of an individual is determined and affected by the socio-cultural and spiritual realm. In further, the paper argues for the role of humanitarian values, moral principles and language in the promotion of the cognitive freedom thereby the physical freedom as well. Raja Rao's

*Kanthapura* gives ample scope for such analysis. As the matter of fact, the post-colonial era deeply affected by the disguised form of colonization and it could be termed as the neo-colonialism.

knowledge system considered as integrated and complete only when the research gaps are adequately filled with effective research methods and thereby gives new solutions.

At first, the question ‘how the cognitive freedom in an individual can be taken out’ arises. It’s relevant because the freedom plays an important role in ascertaining one’s level of self-awareness, self-esteem and finally the self-actualization. Without the component, an individual will become superstitious as well as ignorant about the facets of both existence and essence thereby the own life will be in mental and emotional vacuum. Secondly, the prominent role played by the humanitarian values as the morale booster to attain freedom in life. Communities with the higher social, political and cultural values like equality, justice, inclusion, compassion, trust have attained the higher human development and the greater standard of living. Since a decade, the Scandinavian countries securing the top position in the human development index is the best example. Thirdly, the quest for freedom can impact the space and time of a pupil that they attached with. The question arises where the diaspora population is increasing, the migration and displacements are the common phenomena of the present decade. In between the political and the economic forces are cautiously persuading the people to expand their presence either by positive or negative means. Fourthly, the role played by the language in promoting human values and decolonizing the human mind is important too. Raja Rao’s use of English clearly shows how the grace of the locale, ethnicity and the co-related dialects can be a tool for demanding the self-rule.

To address the research gap, the paper used the historical method that involves archival reports, recommendation of committees and books. The ethnographic method used in the paper in order to show the multiplicity of Indian society and its secular humanitarian values for the general will that helped to draw common good in the midst of emergency. The novel *Kanthapura* is critically evaluated with the help of textual analysis. Such attempt gives the psycho-physical and emotional insight into its characters.

Cognition means ‘the mental process of understanding through thought, experience and senses’(www.merriam-webster.com). It possesses the schemas which discriminate information and makes the cognition very basis of human instructions. Such cognition has phenomenal acquaintance with the spirit or energy which embedded with the consciousness. The flow of the spirit whether in positive or negative way decides how the psyche of an individual works and impacts one’s behavior.

Swami Vivekananda said, “strength is life, weakness is death. Expansion is life, contraction is death”(Vivekananda,12). His definition connotes the very foundation of cognitive freedom. The Weaknesses in Individuals like ignorance on one’s self, superstitious beliefs, unscientific life styles had made the colonized ‘the populace of null among the full’; Rudyard Kipling utilized it as the white men’s burden. Raja Ram Mohan Roy’s *the letter to Amherst* complained that the vernacular pedagogy made Indians the frogs in the well. And the need of the time was scientific education to train the mind in scientific way. He caused for the ban on the system of Sati, which used as the patriarchal means for violence on the women. Such weaknesses rooted in the mind of the Indians made them mentally imprisoned so that the imperial tactics of the colonization continued for more than 250 years without.

The Macaulay’s report stated, “A single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia”(India Today). The colonizers were able to induce the sense of hierarchy within the knowledge system. That was the foundation for blocking the cognitive freedom of the colonized. In “Kanthapura” too the narrator Achchakka started the story by explaining, “.....across the seven oceans and into the countries where our rulers live”. (Rao.Raja,1). It shows the phobia in the sub-consciousness of the narrator. It’s like the pop up ads in the appearing while navigating a useful info in the internet. Such pop up ideas break the chain of thoughts and create the cognitive hindrances for bringing the clarity in ideas. This was a glimpse of colonizer ideology that restricted not only the physical but also the psychological freedom.

In “*Kanthapura*” Raja Rao solved the question, ‘can the cognitive freedom be curtailed’. When Moorthy, the major character in the novel, started to distribute the spinning wheel to the pariah quarter, it’s inevitable for him to present in the habitats and convince the pupil to use it. The red eyed orthodox Brahmins like Bhatta and Swami, ex-communicated Moorthy and prohibited him from the village affairs. Raja Rao distinctly emphasized the one on the psyche of Moorthy since the post-

excommunication. Moorthy was relentless in promoting and practicing the Indian principles without bothering about the social ostracism and the open defamations. Such was the cognitive freedom achieved by the character, in the form of meditative way of life. Later Moorthy showed his cognitive courage and gave a visionary outlook on the future of India in the form of equity and inclusion under the principles of socialism.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the cognitive freedom is much emphasized through constitutional governance and the Universal declaration of human rights. The constitution of India, under the article 19 and 25 to 28 gave its citizens the right to express and practice of one's religion respectively. So the citizens should aware of such fundamental rights and use them with proper responsibility. In the era of data mining and crony capitalism the colonization happens in its disguised form like data mining, data trading, and crony capitalism and so on. Ultimately the protection of ones cognitive freedom depended on their self-awareness' and how much they update and rationale about the contemporary world.

Values are the belief of people about what is right and wrong. For example compassion, empathy, peace, non-violence, non-partisanship an etc. The value system of an individual decides the mode of behavior and set the standards for personality. The strict practice of high humanitarian values creates a happy, harmonious conduct along with integrity. Such value system is facilitative in nature by inducting the cognitive freedom based on the self-awareness and guilt free mindset. This helps an individual to expand the socialization process.

Gandhi is like an 'unseen God' in "*Kanthapura*" where his persona felt throughout the novel. The villagers had considered Gandhiji as the force multiplier for their efforts during the clouds of emergency wraps over them. For example, before the events like toddy-picketing, the strike against the tax-collection by the local congress committee the bhajan was used as the common tool to raise up one's spirit for the common cause, as Gandhiji did in his own way; Moorthy's dream on Gandhiji who directed him to "work among dumb millions of villagers".(167). In "my experiment with truth" Gandhiji clearly stated how he practiced the humanitarian practice there by upheld humanity throughout the life. Whenever the society condemned Gandhiji he used to reflect back on his behavior and correct it with positive attitude. The villagers of Kanthapura followed such virtuous path laid down by Gandhiji. It rewarded both of them in terms of cognitive freedom which facilitated them to set the model of principles for the generations to come.

Interestingly, the unlimited cognitive freedom based on the secular human values facilitates the physical freedom more than the orthodox, ideology based values. For example, the character Advocate Shankar helped the people in their litigation without pay heed to their gender, caste as creed. In case of Ratna, who was a widow at an early age, didn't stopped by anyone from dedicating herself to the activities if the local congress committee. Later she went to Karwar regarding the litigation of Moorthy and thereby proved her liberty to expand the psycho physical horizons. Raja Rao crafted these characters as unconventional of the time yet their vigor and prudence to assert their self-surpassed all the odds in the way.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the role of secular, humanitarian values holds greater relevance and importance too. It's because ether dual-use technologies at the hands of non-state actors increase the vulnerability for the violence in the society. A mere lapse in the ethical and moral conduct among the users of the technological advances will have huge impacts on the entire humankind. Even today one can witness the poet world war impact on the psycho somatic well-being of the Japanese, especially in Nagasaki and Hiroshima. So its clear that's the practice of humanitarian values are essential for over all betterment and in-between such conduct will give psycho- physical freedom to the greater extent. Thomas Hobbes in "*Leviathan*" rightly said, "Natural power is the eminence of the faculties of mind and body: as extra-ordinary strength from eloquence, liberality, nobility..." (Hobbes ,258). Such qualities will make human relationships more harmonious, happier and contribute to the decisive general will.

The freedom, as a force, is essential for a man to realize his/her true potentialities in life. Without the freedom the human faculties are succumbed to narrowness ice psychic stagnation and physical inertia. The inherent question is whether the force for freedom leads to sacrifice of one's space and time (i.e. past). The answer has wider different dimensions.

The tendency of humans to think and thereby to act depended on how they perceive phenomena. The Gestalt psychology puts it as, 'the whole is some of its parts'. So the men who are in continuous efforts to maintain the inherent freedom will be acute about how their faculties work in specific space and time. Such conscious and sensitive observations trigger the discriminative power of the human mind. In Amite Ghost's "*Shadow Lines*" the narrator tells, "something those lines started to upset me". The narrator is particular about the national borders that no on demarcate her regions but her mind too. In case of time too, Amite Ghost used the stream of consciousness to explore individual perceptions about the past. He writes, "For her the time resembles the toothbrush. It went mildew covered on the off chance that it was not used". Such is the psychic attachment of humans with the time and space.

Individuality is a factor which determines the uniqueness of a man in relation to others. To cultivate effective individual traits the time and space acts as the motivating factors. In "Kanthapura" the character Moorthy started to practice the Gandhi an principles of truth, non-violence and up-lifting the untouchables as his breath irrespective of time and space. His imprisonment by the British made him morally strong and established his identity as the true Gandhian. Raja Rao writes, "Moorthy never turns back to "Kanthapura". (357). Thus the time and space was not a limiting factor for Moorthy.

The glocalization effect in the 21<sup>st</sup> century created a marked different cue in promotion of the liberty over space and time. The global village makes men nearer virtually and surpasses the notions of borders between them. At the same time, the localization effect which bonded with its historical and cultural aspirations. So the people strive to balance the past and the present in the form of acculturation. The question of freedom over space and time is blurred to the extent that a man can be free out of acculturated and updated life style.

So the question of space and time over the cognitive freedom depends on the individuals and their way of perceiving the world. And no longer the space and time a blockade for human freedom unless the imprisonment, political asylum, refugee camps and other forms of objective captivity in the era of fourth industrial revolution.

Language is a structured system of communication based on vocabulary and grammar. It's the primary means for humans to convey meaning. Here, the prominent t question is whether the language as an institution decolonizes the human mind through the promotion of values and righteousness. The research paper had found the answers based on the few concrete evidences.

The language is bonded with emotional and cognitive expressions. During the freedom struggle bhajan and hartal were the way to show unity and stability to withstand any. The absence of language induced community actions would hamper the consistency and perseverance of the freedom fighters against the colonizers. T. S Eliot rightly expressed in the poem, "the love song of J. Alfred Prufrock", a man could observer and perceive what's going on in -around but right response to the condition decides the emotional and mental equilibrium. So the language is an essential as well as an easy way for such response. So was the case with the freedom fighters in Indian who used the vernacular as well as the English language to effectively response to the imperial autocracy.

On the individual level, the language the language helps to ascertain one's identity with self-esteem. Raja Rao, through "*Kanthapura*" got the global recognition by using the English language as a creative tool to fuse originality with the regional grace in literature. The novel published in 1938 where the British and the American literature in English dominated the whole world. At the time, Raja Rao attempts created a unique position for the Indian writing in English at the global platform.

The language is an essential component while using ethnographic method for any research. Ethnicity, as a form of identity, gave ample scope for the people to use language for their selfish gains. An also it united the people by sharing common values and general will for different purposes. The colonizers in India used the ethnicity as a form of creating superior and inferior complexity and thereby implemented the divide and duel policy. Apart from the religion, the language helped them the most. For example, in "Kanthapura" the use] age of words by Bade khan and Bhatta supported imperial mentality of superior and inferior complexity. The new Sahib of the Skeffington estate never used the abusive words for the local Brahmins but the vulgar and disgusting phrases aware commonly thrown on the

coolies. This power politics had created the self-imposed guilt among the ethnic groups which reflected on their efforts to fight against the colonizers.

It's clear that the language played huge role in determining one's physical and cognitive freedom thereby over all status of value promotion in a society. Raja Rao through Kanthapura artistically presented it. The displaced villagers expressed their self-satisfaction raised out of hard work, sacrifice and patriotic bravery through the language that resembles a liberated mind.

The blind belief and the superstitious attachment to the values will lead to the 'the veil of ignorance'. It's because the society is a dynamic institution that evolve over the time based on the collective consciousness of the members. Without understanding the practical implications of such dynamism, an individual will be subjected to someone's cognitive and emotional dominance. The humanitarian values are sacrosanct but their application in the real world requires intelligence and right attitude. The best example was the moderates in Indian freedom struggle. The research paper has the limitation on exploring such attitude in the post-colonial era.

The post-colonial era is witnessing the effects of glocalization and acculturated social fabric. The center no longer holds its centrality rather free-play in the periphery is taking place. So the oppression too, may manifest in the form of injustice, bias, partisanship, inequality, polarization and many other forms. In the political leadership the money and muscle power surpassing the ethical and moral competence. The research paper finds limitation in the study of value and ethics as a competence in glocalization era.

Overall, every human being has the right to freedom both physically and psychologically. If such freedom is based on the positive social contract compounded with the humanitarian values no longer the colonial mentality persist in the society in any form. In case the people are unaware of the available rights, privileges and value the decolonization of the mind will be an uphill task. In the era of knowledge economy the free flow of information will be a panacea for such ignorance. But essentially the efforts to acquire the knowledge should be directed towards, as Mahatma Gandhiji says, "the good of an Individual lies in the good of all". The model had been established by the villagers of Kanthapura where the collective efforts based on indomitable spirit and sacrifice should replicate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century too, to decolonize the minds from the disguised oppressions.

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