

A STUDY ON LIFE HISTORY OF HARA PRASAD SHASTRI AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO BENGALI LITERATURE

MONSURUL ISLAM

Research scholar Sunrise University

Alwar Rajasthan

Abstract

The reign of Hara Prasad Shastri was short yet intense. To study Hara Prasad Shastri's short story and novels and his contribution to Bengali literature, we used old books, documents, and other sources. Bengali literature and language benefited from Harprasad Shastri. He was moved by Vidyasagar's eloquent teachings. With the aid of his piece, he has rendered ancient Bengal. And he established Bengali literary criticism. Harprasad supported Bengali grammar that followed rules. Bengali literature and language underwent transformation thanks to Harprasad Shastri.

Key words:- Hara Prasad Shastri, Bengali literature, contribution, short story and novels.

Introduction :-

Hara Prasad Bhattacharya was an alias for the Indian scholar, Sanskrit scholar, archivist, and historian of Bengali literature Hara Prasad Shastri. He is well recognised as the pioneer who brought attention to the discovery of the Charyapada, the oldest extant works of Bengali literature

Birth and ancestry :-

On December 6, 1853, in Naihati, North 24 Parganas District, West Bengal, the future Mahamahopaddhay Haraprasad Shastri was born. This illustrious Bengali academic ancestry may be traced back to the town of Kumira in the former Jessore district (now Khulna) in undivided Bengal. Rajendra Vidyalankar, the seventh in his family's line, served as the royal pandit to the king of Naldanga in the late seventeenth century. Since then, this group of individuals has made the toll booth their regular study spot for Sanskrit. For better opportunities, Mahamahopaddhay Hariprasad Shastri's ancestors moved from Kumira to Naihati, where Pandit Manikya Tarkabhushan (1707-1806) established his household. Wealthy individuals began migrating there at that time in anticipation of a cultural and economic renaissance.

Pandit Manikya Tarkabhushan was already a well-known scholar before he opened a toll and began teaching Sanskrit and logic. The zamindar of Hali Shahar, Sabarna Santosh Roy Choudhury, and the Maharaja of Nadia, Krishnachandra, both bestowed upon him land grants. Manikya Pundit's notoriety subsequently spread to the nearby cities of Naihati and Bhatpara. When East India Company judges and officials needed clarification of Hindu law and legislation, they would often contact Pandit Manikya Tarkabhushan. Supreme Court Justice Sir William Jones agreed with Manikya Tarkabhushan's explanations (the founder of the Asiatic Society of Bengal). The news quickly travelled throughout Bengal, establishing Tarkabhushan as a local hero. Haraprasad was born into a scholarly and respected Bengali family that has a long history of holding high administrative positions.(STATE 2000)

Education:-

Hara Prasad Shastri started off his education at the local primary school, before moving on to higher education at the Sanskrit College and Presidency College in Calcutta (now Kolkata). It turns out that Shastri's older brother Nandakumar Nyayachunchu and the famous Bengali scholar and social reformer Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar shared a buddy in Calcutta.

Shastri passed the school leaving examination in 1871, received his First Arts degree in 1873, his Bachelor of Arts in 1876, and his Honours in Sanskrit in 1877. After completing his graduate studies, he was dubbed a Shastri for his illustrious knowledge. He was the first member of his cohort to ever earn the title of "Shastri," which is granted solely to students who graduate at the top of their class. The year was 1878 when he first showed up to teach at Hare School.(Addya 1989)

Professional career:-

Hara Prasad Shastri has a wide range of careers throughout his life. His appointment as a professor at the Sanskrit College came about in 1883. At the same time, he worked as a translator for the government of Bengal. In addition to his work at the Sanskrit College, he was the Librarian of the Bengal Library from 1886 to 1894. For the academic year 1895–1896, he directed the Sanskrit course at Presidency College. Information about the private Durbar Library of the Rana Prime Minister Bir Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana was compiled by Cecil Bendall and published in A Catalogue of Palm-Leaf and selected Paper Manuscripts Belonging to the Durbar Library, Nepal (Calcutta, 1905) with a Historical Introduction. (This includes the background on Gopal Raj Vamshavali).

He became the headmaster of Sanskrit College in the year 1900 and stayed in that role until 1908, when he moved on to work for the Bureau of Information. From 1921 until 1924, he was the head of the Department of Bengali and Sanskrit Studies at Dhaka University, where he also taught. Shastri held several positions within the Asiatic Society, the most prominent of which was president for two consecutive years. For a total of twelve

years, he presided over the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad as its President, and he was also a member of the Royal Asiatic Society of London. **(Gurubhai Aranya 2015)**

Literary works :

Bener Meye (1920), by Haraprasad Shastri, is written in an approachable, conversational tone. Reconstituting the domestic and social climate of eleventh-century West Bengal, it succeeds both in believability and brilliance. He also wrote the excellent historical novel Kancanmala. When it was first released, it was in Bangadarshan (1883). While Shastri was a first-rate Sanskritist, he did not feel the need to bog down his literary style with erudition and Sanskritisms, despite the fact that he wrote better Bengali than many of his contemporaries, both old and young.

Haraprasad Shastri's first research work, titled "Bharat Mahila," was published in the student magazine Bangadarshan while he was still a student there. Shastri wrote almost thirty articles and book reviews for it at the time that it was edited by the great Bengali author Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay. To obtain his academic footing, he read the renowned Indologist Rajendralal Mitra's The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal and then translated the Buddhist Puranas that Sir Mitra included in it. **(Shastri 1956)**

The Charyageeti or Charyapada writings were discovered in Nepal in 1907 by Haraprasad Shastri, who had developed an interest in collecting ancient Bengali manuscripts and had travelled to Nepal numerous times to do so. As a result of his extensive research, he concluded that the Charyapada manuscript was the first written evidence of the Bengali language. In 1916, Shastri released an article named Hajar Bachharer Purana Bangala Bhasay Rachita Baudha Gan O Doha based on his investigation (Buddhist songs and verses composed in Bengali a thousand years ago).

The prolific historian, author, and researcher Haraprasad Shastri amassed and made available a vast library of historical works. Two of his most well-known works are the Balmikir Jai and the Panch Chheler Galpo. The books Bamuner Durgotsab, Ekjan Bangali Governorer Adbhut Beeratwa, Meghdoot Byakhya, Bener Meye, and Kanchanmala; the plays Bouddha Dharma and Sachitra Ramayan; and the collection of short stories known as Prachin Banglar Gourab. English editions of Magadhan Literature, Sanskrit Culture in Modern India, and The Discovery of Living Buddhism in Bengal are among his works. **(Bijali Sarkar 2002)**

Objectives:-

- To study the contribution of Haraprasad Shastri in Bengali short stories, Novels etc.
- To study the biography of Haraprasad Shastri and the writings and literature written by him.
- To study the contribution of Haraprasad Shastri to Bengali literature.

Methodology

I largely used inductive and deductive reasoning to get my conclusions because this is a creative writing essay, so that's how I came to them. We collected and analysed data from a range of sources that were linked to the article in order to come up with research questions and establish the scope of the project at hand. To develop the article, this was done. The dossier on Haraprasad Shastri's life in Bengali was created using a variety of sources, many of which could only be found in a small number of specialized online and offline sources. Despite this, the dossier is thorough and accurate. This is true even though many of the sources that were used to compile the dossier could only be found in Bengali.

Examples of Haraprasad Shastri short stories, Novels etc.

Kanchanmala:-

His first novel, Kanchanmala, was serialised in Bangadarshana during the Bengali era of 1289 from the months of Asadha to Magha. Asadha saw the release of the first episode, Shravana saw the release of the second and third, and Bhadra saw the release of the fourth. The fifth and sixth episodes appeared in Ashvina, the seventh episode in Kartika, the eighth and ninth episodes in Agrahayana, the 10 and eleventh episodes in Pausa, and the final three episodes appeared in Bangadarshana's subsequent Magha issue.

The editor of the Bangadarshana at the time was renowned novelist and essayist Sri Sanjib Chandra Chattopaddhay. The novel was published as a book 33 years after its Bangadarshana debut. Kanchanmala, the book's author, claims that the following circumstances contributed to the delay in the publication of the book's first edition:

“Kanchanmala was published in 1290 Bengali era when Sri Sanjib Chandra Chattopaddhay was the editor of Bangadarshana. After that for a long time I did not write in Bengali, so, did not try to publish Kanchanmala. Why, what was the reason, no need to mention.”(Asitkumar Bandyopaddhay 1955)

In Kanchanmala, Shastri tried to clarify a specific historical event in India. Other Bengali authors included the socio-historical context of Islamic India in their writings. But Haraprasad Shastri choose to examine the narrative from the perspective of when Buddhism originally appeared and prospered in India.

In Pataliputra, a city with a 2000-year history, the novel Kanchanmala is set. Buddhism's spread by Kunal and Kanchanmala, the son of Emperor Ashok, is the book's main topic. The history of India was significantly influenced by the Buddhist era, claims Haraprasad. In a number of academic publications, he has discussed these problems and voiced his opinions. But many of his contemporaries were reluctant to embrace some of his views.(Shrikumar Bandyopaddhay 1967)

Kanchanmala is the name of a historical chapter. They include Kalhan's Raja Tarangini, Xuan Tsang's travelogues (see annexure-II), the Ceylonese Buddhist texts Mahabangsha and Deepbangsha, Divyabadan, the Parisista Parban of Jain scholar Hemchandra, and the historian Taranath's History of Buddhism in India. Inscriptions from the reign of Emperor Ashok, including those describing his coronation, the expansion of the empire, and various aspects of his governance, have all been discovered.

Haraprasad Shastri used historical details that are depicted in numerous stories, particularly Bodhisatwabadan Kalpalata, in addition to the dates and information acquired from the sources already mentioned, because Kanchanmala serves a specific purpose.

Bener Meye:-

The second and final book by Haraprasad, Bener Meye, was published 36 years after Kanchanmala. Before becoming a book, it was first published in serial form in Narayana beginning in Kartik 1325 B.E. In Bengali literature, the novel Bener Meye is a highlight. This historically grounded book is essentially a live history of prehistoric Bengal. Even though Haraprasad's two novels were written far apart from one another, there is a sense of unity between them.

In his Bener Meye, Haraprasad accelerated the plot's development by focusing on the conflict between Brahmins and Buddhists. Along the "Beng" river, battles between Brahminists and Rupa Raja took place (Rupa, the king). The rules of history were occasionally broken by Haraprasad, but not always. **(Achintya Biswas 2008)**

The eulogy for Satgaon's King Rupa Bagdi appears in the first sentence of the book Bener Meye's first chapter. It was a busy day at Satgaon since the Buddhist Vihara was supposed to be constructed there and because the Gajan festival was the next day. The Rupa king was given permission to build the Vihara and take part in the Gajan festival as the chief Sannyasi by Lui Siddha, his spiritual advisor or Guru (ascetic). The next group was a sizable gathering. Fishing was taking place in the Tarapukur pond. The king's spiritual advisor Lui Siddha enjoys eating fish heart. Consequently, attempts were undertaken to catch big fish. The arrival of Siddhas and other Buddhist authorities. Additionally present are Nad Pandit and his wife. They are equally as academic. Following the Gajan, Bihari Dutta's gorgeous daughter is introduced at the conclusion of the first chapter. The second chapter tells how Lui Siddha, the king's guru, erected the Vihara and details the thriving state of Buddhism at the time with a few allusions to the social structure of the time. The Buddhist religion and Lui Pada are highly revered among the Benes (smiths). However, the Brahmins are reluctant to meet with the Buddhist acharyas.

The vihara's establishment and the appointing of the Guru's son as the head of the Dharmapur Mahavihara are both covered in depth in the third chapter. Bihari Dutta's introduction is followed by a description of his naval journey. The excursion is best described by its unparalleled beauty. The fourth chapter describes Maya, the daughter of Datta, and Bihari's eventual marriage when Maya is saved by Bihari, son of

Sadhudhani. After Maya's husband's demise and her subsequent widowhood, the fifth chapter of the book introduces the primary conflict. During that time, the Buddhists made an effort to welcome Maya into the Sangha. Because the Sangha would then become the only owner of all of Maya's property, in accordance with Buddhist principles, this is why. However, the Brahminists tried to thwart this scheme. (Dey, n.d.)

In the fifth chapter, Harprasad offers a comprehensive examination of this social conflict. In the sixth chapter, the Hindu opposition is portrayed. In addition to these two, it is clear from the seventh to the ninth chapter that Bachaspati Mishra, the minister of Haribarmadeva, and Siddal Muskari, also known as Bhabataran Pishak Khandi, had all anticipated it. Bihari Dutta has made efforts to avert the danger facing the nation. All of these individuals are historical figures. Harprasad has skillfully portrayed them as anti-Buddhist Hindu elements. Maya disappears in the eleventh chapter as part of Muscari's plan, increasing the likelihood of sectarian conflict between Buddhists and Hindus. For the overall meaning of the book, this chapter is crucial. The tension that was starting to develop in the sixth chapter actually materialises in the tenth chapter. The eleventh chapter details the altercation in which Ranashur assassinated the Rupa monarch. Megha, a general of King Rupa, runs away and finds safety in a Buddhist monastery in Bihar.

Short Story

When Harprasad entered the literary world, the Bengali short story could not even cross boundaries. However, attempts were made to replicate them. A specific relationship between the author's intelligence and societal ideals has given rise to the short story in various cultures. The Bengali short narrative has not yet arrived at that stage. A process of preparing for that mental pain and social self-examination was under way due to the growing complexity of politics. Bankimchandra's signature may be seen in his Kamala Kanter Daptar. Rabindranath is the author of the famous Bengali short story. He had not thought of writing short stories yet. But he was able to heed the call of time, and at the right time, he announced himself as a master of the short story form. In this period of transition between Bankim and Tagore, Harprasad attempted to write two short stories, Bamuner Durgotsab and Panch Chheler Galpo.

In the publication, Bengali Era 1326 marked the debut of his Bamuner Durgotsab. In spite of his financial struggles, the Brahmin's son was nevertheless able to continue the annual Durga Puja ritual, as is described in the story. Panch Chheler Galpo, on the other hand, describes how one might prosper and establish himself via the cultivation of many human qualities. A lively living room vibe throughout the story. The story serves as an example of how one can exploit a

person's traits to further their goals. The Brahmin's knowledge and the revelations attained through a careful examination of Buddhist literature are combined in the two stories.

Conclusion :-

Harprasad Shastri helped Bengali language and literature. He was from a learned and successful Bengali family. He was a top Sanskrit and Presidency student. Vidyasagar's influential teachings impressed him. His lecturers taught him Sanskrit. Ganguly inspired modern Bengali as his successors helped to find the old Indian culture and civilization. Based on the earlier chapters, his contribution to the Bengali novel is noteworthy. Bengali classics Kanchanmala and Bener Maye. This story portrays ancient Bengal. Bener May is ripe. His habits and experiences shaped his outlook. He researched the social and environmental context of each verse to determine its importance. Harprasad founded the Bengali literary criticism. Harprasad was in favor of rule-based Bengali grammar. Harprasad sought to write easy to understand, colloquial Bengali. Harprasad suggests preserving the foreign word as a loan-word if no equivalent exists. His ideas were not in later dictionaries. His concepts were incomplete. Many Bengali words are still being debated. Harprasad Shastri reformed Bengali literature and language. Harprasad added a thousand years to the Indo-Aryan languages of eastern India, for which he will always be remembered.

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