
**Gandhian Values in Colonial and Post-Colonial Indian English
Literature**

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Abstract

This paper explores the impact of Gandhian thoughts on the Indian English Fiction, and how the annunciation of Minutes on Education (1835) established the hegemony of the Western education and knowledge system over the prevailing system of Indian education. Consequently, India witnessed a new class of English-speaking gentlemen, produced by the English missionary schools to assist the Empire to achieve the much-cherished objectives of Macaulay. They were offered important positions in the Imperial set up of government, expediting British rule in India. Though the first-generation Indian writers writing in English imitated the Western authors as their role model and tailored their writing pattern accordingly, they paved way for their literary successors to embody unjust power dynamics originated with the idea of imperialism. The paper also investigates how the incorporation of Gandhian ideas in corpus of illustrious Indian authors provides a plausible picture of constructive influence on masses across all sections of Indian society.

Keywords: Gandhian, Anglo-Indian, hegemony, patriotic, fiction

Minutes on Education (1835) by Macaulay paved the way for legally subsidizing the Indian languages from academics and administration by giving privilege to English as a desirable mode of instruction in Indian educational institutions. The aim was to establish the hegemony of western knowledge as emancipating, and to internalize in the minds of natives its value system as superior to their (native's) own value system. Colonisation was a 'lucrative enterprise' assuring influx of tremendous treasure from the east to the west giving rise to the unbreakable power structure sustained by the body of literature produced by the colonisers. The new class of English speaking gentlemen emerged to assist the much cherished objectives of the Minutes by Macaulay. Their elevation to the level of

important posts in imperial set up of government made it easy to rule India. The first generation Indian writers writing in English imitated the Western authors' as their role model and fashioned their writing pattern accordingly. The latter half of the 18th century saw an iniquitous design of Britain when Queen Victoria became empress of India by ruthlessly repressing Indians. With the beginning of the twentieth century, the Indian subcontinent witnessed much concentrated anti-colonial stance, giving birth to revolutionary leaders who laid down their lives for freedom. Gandhiji emerged on Indian political horizon in 1915 and remained till his assassination in 1947. He understood the need of the hour and mobilised every section of Indian society. Gandhiji experienced the horribleness of imperialism during his stay in South Africa, which instilled patriotism in his heart. In the beginning of 20th century India was imbued with the spirit of patriotism. The people were coming out of their houses; even the women were taking active part in struggle for freedom under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi. He was a man of action. He practiced what he preached. When he asked the people to speak the truth, he himself became the embodiment of truth. He acknowledged his weakness by writing "My Experiments with Truth". He believed in The Bhagwat Gita. He led a simple life and tried to purge the Indian society of the evil of caste system. His dress was minimal, his requirements were the bare necessities and he preferred spiritual poise over materialism. He bore no ill will towards Britishers and advocated the path of 'Ahimsa' for freedom struggle. His 'Quit India' movement was mainly responsible for the ouster of the British. He had a charismatic personality and he influenced the masses. Whatever he said, people were ready to do. The Indian literati were deeply influenced by Gandhian philosophy which encompassed economic, social, political and religious aspects of Indian life.

The famous Anglo-Indian authors who incorporated Gandhi's philosophy in their works were Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R. K. Narayanan. These authors explored the impact of Gandhian thought on all sections of Indian society. Gandhi's emphasised on empowering people in rural India by making them self-reliant which enabled the folk to sustain the struggle for freedom. . Raja Rao's *Kanthpura* is testimony to this and R.K. Narayan's novels *Waiting for the Mahatma*, *Untouchable*, *The Financial Expert*, *The Vender of Sweet* and *The Guide* and clearly delineate the influence of Gandhian values, in the first the influence is seen clearly while in the last the influence is subtle.

The writer as well as the common man could not escape the social, cultural, religious and political reality of his time. There is a dynamic relationship between author and culture. The native culture was diminished and suppressed by the western culture. During freedom struggle, restoring the native culture to its original state

became imperative to destabilise the unjust dominant western culture, which justified the necessity of its own for upliftment of Indians. Literature, being a powerful means of approaching people, contributed immensely to galvanise populace into patriotic fervour. The literature during the period provided various dimensions of the personality of Gandhiji. Some social scientists used the term “Gandhian engineering” to reflect the strategy adopted by Gandhiji in bringing everyone together to fight Britishers.

Unlike the 19th century writing, the literary works of the twentieth century were distinct in theme and structure on account of Gandhian thoughts. He was very clear that India could not achieve freedom without unanimity of its masses, which was only possible by transcending the socio-economic and linguistic boundaries and overpowering discordant forces such as oppression, poverty and unjust caste hierarchy, though these ideals have still not been achieved even after seventy years of his assassination.

When R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao were writing, the struggle for freedom was at its peak. The people were participating in this struggle regardless of the consequences. To be imprisoned was no cause of the insult. It was rather a matter of pride. Women, children, old persons all participated in this “Mahayajaya”. The story of *Waiting For The Mahatma* delineates the struggle for freedom and through the heroine Bharti and Sriram, Narayan depicts the common persons taking part in freedom struggle which forms the backdrop of romance between the two. Bharti is involved in Mahatma Gandhi’s Movement. Sri Ram loves her and join the movement. In the course of time he comes in contact with anti-British extremists and lands in jail, after coming out of the prison Bharti and Sriram are reunited. The revolutionary ideas of Mahatma Gandhi are contrasted with the conservative ideas of the locals. The locale is the same like his other novels i.e. Malgudi, the fictional town.

The influence of Gandhiji is quiet noticeable as Shiriram believes in the sanctity of Khadi and at salour, he purchases two plantain and a bottle of soda instead of biscuits. He was traveling in connection with Quit India Movement. When a shopkeeper says:

Purely English biscuits which you cannot get for miles around. In these days no one else can get them” .

“have you no sense of shame?” Shriram asked

“Why ,why what is the matter?” the other said taken aback and then said,

“Hey, give me the money for what you took and get out of here. You are a fellow in khadi, are you?” Oh! Oh! I didn’t notice. And so you think you can do what you like, take as you like, and behave like a rowdy”.

“You may say anything about me but don’t talk of this dress-it is – too sacred to be spoken about in that way”.

Mulk Raj Anand’s works reveal the deep influence of Gandhian philosophy. He has emphasized more and more on social problems of poor, downtrodden, oppressed, low caste of the Hindu society and their inhuman exploitation. For Anand literature should be an interpretation of truth of people’s lives and it should be written from felt experience not from books and other sources. His novel *Untouchable*, published in the year 1935, shows impact of Gandhi and his thoughts in marvellous way. It was based on Gandhian voice against untouchability. It covers the time of pre-independence era when poverty, casteism, superstition and exploitation of untouchables were predominated. Anand has taken the theme of inhuman exploitation of the lower class by the higher section of the society. He started the new trend of realism and social protest in Indian English fiction. The influence of Gandhi on Anand was remarkable. He was drawn towards Gandhi for his sincerity, love of truth, humanity, especially his great love for poor and the suffering and his tireless efforts to uplift them materially and spiritually. Anand has dealt with the various aspects of Gandhian thoughts. Both Gandhi and Anand were against caste system and class distinction. Gandhi was against untouchability on political, social and humanitarian grounds. He said that the age old untouchability is a curse and a kind of disease to Hindu society.

Anand had personal contact with Gandhi which made him aware of Gandhian principles. He got a chance to stay in Sabarmati Ashram; where he came closer to Gandhian philosophy. His stay in Ashram also gave him a chance to come closer to the exploited- particularly the untouchables. He also gained a closer and sympathetic understanding of the social and economically exploited poor Indians. In this novel Gandhiji makes a cameo appearance and he inspired many people, while some other characters work and think under his influence. It is a realistic novel, a story of a socially crushed protagonist Bakha a sweeper boy. It shows Bakha’s suffering and various processes of social determination and religious orthodoxies. Through the character of Bakha Anand depicts the poignant condition of untouchables, their inevitable hardships and physical and mental tortures. Bakha is forced into the traditional profession of sweeper. His chief duty is to keep the three rows of public

latrines clean. He hates his job and society. His day starts with his father's voice who always shouts on him; "Get up, oh you Bakhiya, oh the son of pig! Sure as the daylight, from the midst of a broken, jarring, interrupted, snore get up and attend to the latrines or the spays will be angry". (*Untouchable* 15) The people of his caste were not allowed to go to temple and other public places. If they touch anything even unintentionally that thing gets polluted. They have to stop or change their direction if someone from high class is coming or going from the same way. The series of incidents troubled, reminded as bitter experiences, made Bakha consider himself as an untouchable. Bakha felt hurt and became violent when he heard about molestation of his sister. She was denigrated by the temple priest who shamelessly tried to molest her while she was cleaning the lavatory of his house. The priest not only disgraced her but also accused Bakha of having polluted him. The sweeper has to keep physical distance from Hindu and has to shout: Posh, Posh, sweeper coming so that they save themselves from his touch. Bakha was once slapped by a high caste Hindu because he touched him and polluted him. He shouted on Bakha: "Why don't you call, you swine and announce your approach! Do you know you have touched me and defiled me, now I will have to go to take bath to purify myself?" (*Untouchable* 53) Everyone whom Bakha meets- the sweet vendor, the soldier, the temple priest, the teacher, and the bullock-cart driver- sees him in relation to the ritually polluting profession that he has inherited from his forefathers.

Bakha hears a poet- Iqbal Sarshar's remark about a proper drainage system which simply would eliminate the whole problem of untouchability. The poet says that we must destroy caste system; we should destroy inequality of birth. We all should believe in equality of rights and opportunities for everyone. Mahatma Gandhi is presented in this novel to establish a transformation in human rights. Gandhi was not presented much in the novel. He arrived to Golbagh in this novel to address a meeting. He delivered a speech on the need of ending untouchability from India. He is very keen for uplifting the untouchables. He calls them 'Harijans' (men of god). He regards untouchability as greatest evil for Hinduism. He also prays that he gets to reborn as an out-caste untouchable. In his speech Gandhiji says:

As you all know, while we are asking for freedom from the grip of a foreign nation, we have ourselves, for centuries, trampled underfoot millions of human beings without feeling the slightest remorse of our iniquity. For me the question of these people is moral and religious.... (*Untouchable* 136)

Bakha also went to that place to listen Gandhi's speech. He finds the Hindu, Lallas, the Kashmiri Muslims and many more people from outcaste colony together in the crowd. This reflects Anand's consciousness towards Gandhi's principles of equality, love for helpless. Bakha realizes that it is only Mahatma Gandhi who could bring unity among all classes and castes. He gets peace of mind when he hears Gandhi talking about the welfare of untouchables. His speech gives him a hope for the better future. Gandhi says; "I regard untouchability as the greatest blot on Hinduism" (*Untouchable* 137). Bakha feels that at least someone is there for him and his class. He finds relief in Gandhi's words. He dares to hope, his chosen route to emancipation lies in the sphere of dress. Gandhi's announcement that he regards 'untouchability as a sin' gives a new sense of hope to the whole text and a hope that Indian will build up as a nation of humanity and fraternity. Gandhi finished his speech by declaring that all public wells, temples, schools, roads and sanatoriums must be made open to the untouchables. Bakha notifies that through Gandhi's presence he is given a real possibility of recognizing himself a human being in his own society. These novel expresses immense influence of Gandhi on Mulk Raj Anand and his thought provocation to pen his view of equality. According to Anand adoption of the modern technology of the flush toilets, offered as a solution to the problem of untouchability. He also expresses the right to education through Bakha's impulse for paying a boy an anna per lesson because he always wished to learn how to read and write. The sun sets and Bakha emerges from the grassy area that housed the tree he sat on during the Mahatma's speech onto the dusty road. As the Indian twilight flashes through the sky Bakha comes to a decision. He says that he will tell his father what Gandhi and the poet said about untouchables. The novel ends with the hope of the better life of the untouchables.

Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* is one of the finest depictions of the Freedom Movement commenced in the early twentieth century by Mahatma Gandhi to lead India towards freedom from the colonial British rule. The central thrust of the novel is India's freedom struggle which exerted considerable influence on Indian population. *Kanthapura* illustrates how Gandhian ideals and struggle for freedom against the British arrived to a characteristic South Indian village *Kanthapura*. The novel is a landmark example of the impact of Gandhian leadership and value that affected even the distant Indian villages. *Kanthapura*, the "dynamo" (Kumar 19) of the Gandhian ideals communicates the fresh impetus that propelled the freedom struggle against the British. Iyengar identifies, in *Kanthapura*, the "veritable grammar of the Gandhian myth." The novel illustrates two faces of Gandhian vision: the political and the social.

There is no village in India, however mean, that does not have a rich sthalapurana, or legendary history of its own. Some god or godlike hero has passed by the village – Ram might have rested under this papal-tree, Sita might have dried her clothes, after her bath, on this yellow stone, or the Mahatma himself, might have slept in this hut, the low one, by the village gate... One such story from the contemporary annals of my village I have tried to tell (Rao VI). Sing notes that, “Kanthapura can very easily be placed at centre of Gandhian literature for depicting truthfully and artistically the upsurge of Gandhian movement” (qtd. in Raizada 38). Dayal observes that the novel is “predominantly political in inspiration” which is uncharacteristic of Rao’s novels which is rich in “metaphysical preoccupations” (Dayal 10). Gandhi was, Nehru acknowledges, “like a powerful current of fresh air...like beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes; like a whirlwind that upset many things, but most of all the working of people’s minds” (qtd. in Dayal 10). He kindled the national awakening within the Indian minds through non-cooperation and disobedience movement. Besides the political freedom, Gandhi also strived for economic sovereignty and a spiritual renaissance. Raja Rao demonstrates Gandhian ideals of non-violence, eradication of untouchability and love for one’s enemies in a graphic manner. Woven within these bounds is Raja Rao’s Gandhian quest for truth. He strengthened patriotism across the nation through his radiant ideas more than his presence. However, the influence that Gandhi instilled even without his presence in this village is massive and almost divine. The villagers believed that Brahma has delegated Gandhi with the task of freeing Brahma’s daughter, India from the clutches of Imperial rule. The weapon that Gandhi wielded against the British is mind power.

Kanthapura depicts the novelist’s deeper understanding of swaraj struggle and its implications that affected the Indian citizens. Gandhi elaborates on the importance of the spinning yarn stressing that the money that is given to the colonizer will be preserved to nourish and clothe the naked. Gandhi’s Hind Swaraj propels a conscious progression on a counter culture as a response to machination culture. Though diverse meanings are attached to Gandhi’s concept of Swaraj, fundamentally he implied swaraj in terms of autonomy, individual economic and political freedom, self-realization, self-rule and freedom from the oppressors.

Gandhi prefers Swaraj for independence as it essentially emphasizes the self-rule. “Self-government requires transformation of the self, which includes not only the refusal to use violence and coercion but also adopting virtues like temperance, justice, charity, truthfulness, courage, fearlessness and freedom from greed, which would reinforce political ethics” (Bahl 17). Kanthapura is a compelling narrative that

illustrates Gandhian self- governance through Moorthy and other Gandhians. Moorthy, the protagonist in Kanthapura, endeavors to propagate the Gandhian notion of swaraj in traditional caste based Brahmanic society. His attempt to proliferate the Gandhian ideal of swaraj is a characteristic ratification of the Harijanodharana. Self-discipline is necessary for self-rule in the wake of freedom struggle. Moreover, Gandhi consciously appropriates the significance of religion to convey his ideals and also to revolutionize the traditionalist society.

“Gandhi became a polysemic text, enabling marginalized groups, in society to undertake ‘distinctly independent interpretations’ of his message” (Gopal 49). The purversive schemes authorized by Gandhi combated the manipulative landlords and the caste-ridden society on the basis of looming swaraj. Untouchability was a blemish on the visage of the Indian society. Kanthapura depicts a radical gusto in countering the malevolent practices prevalent in the society.

Gandhi writes:

...I want to say something about untouchability. If you want to do some real service, and want to save your Hindu dharma, you must remove this. If you fail to get rid of this, be sure that Hinduism itself will be rid of you. That religion cannot be a holy religion in which hatred is taught against even one man. Let a man be a very great criminal; the least you can do is to reform him and not to hate him (Gandhi 69). He wanted to remove artificially created human barriers. In opposition to the divinely ordained caste system, Gandhi bestows divine status to the untouchables, names them Harijans. Gandhi being highly critical of the tradition, he considered untouchability as a blot to Hinduism.

Raja Rao, in Kanthapura, skillfully gets into the depth of nationalistic cause not in the urban set up but in a remote South Indian village, Kanthapura. Kanthapura is beforehand instilled with profound religious essence which is quickly taken over by Gandhi’s ideological squall. The circuit of collusion is, however, shown to be short-circuited by Gandhian nationalism, at first in conflict with orthodoxy and latterly in conflict with colonialism. By this point, the orthodox space of the village has been replaced by an incipient Gandhian space, a process initiated at the moment of the Swami’s exposure. The new era is consummated by the villagers’ commitment to Gandhism (Mondal 112). Thomas observes that, “The introduction of Gandhian nationalism upsets the apple carts of the Brahmin orthodoxy and the British colonialism” (1551). While the “great act of self-sacrifice,” of discarding the age-old

Brahmanic elitist legacy of purity and pollution is personified in the character of Moorthy, young, rebellious and forward looking, the textualization and narration of this complicit and precarious social transformation is recorded and rendered through the mature voice of an old Brahmaic female subject who lends the weight of hegemonic and hierarchical worldview to the process” (Sekhar 151).

The reformist step that is appropriated by Moorthy against the conventional and the hegemonic objectives of the Brahmanic elite presents the radical erasure between the traditional and the dissident. The conflict between the young Moorthy and the hierarchically drenched society is an archetype of Indian society that Gandhi attempted to revolutionise. The discourse of rural in Kanthapura calls for an ontological and existential appropriation that can be contextualized through the ambience of Gandhian antagonistic vision at Brahmanic hegemony that is carried out in the name of Gram swaraj and Harijanodharana. “The narrative deliberately develops a discourse of rural naiveté to whitewash and subdue the material conflicts and the inhuman suppression of caste and gender issues from within the boundary of this Brahmanic caste-swaraj village” (Sekhar 151).

Raja Rao, in Kanthapura, promotes Gandhian struggle for freedom offering a mythological portico by incorporating Indian myths. Raja Rao notes, “The subtlety of the Gandhian thought and the complex political situation of Pre-independence could be explained to the unlettered villagers only through legends and religious stories of gods” (Kanthapura 104). The tussle between Gandhi and the colonial masters is looked upon as the battle between Rama and Ravana symbolizing the encounter between good and evil. India is likened to Sita, Mahatma to Rama and Nehru to Bharata. “It is not for nothing the Mahatma is a Mahatma and he would not be Mahatma if the gods were not with him” (Kanthapura 125).

Srinivasa Iyengar notes that, set into two camps Raja Rao’s effort to mythologize the freedom struggle provides an amplification of reality “by way of achieving eternity in space surpassing the dialectics of history” (qtd. in Dayal 11). Gandhi, in Kanthapura, assumes “a vast symbol of ideal life-code, of a holy and noble person” (Sharma 25). The divine power that Gandhi symbolizes is anticipated to eliminate the people of India from all sufferings. The villagers believed: “Oh, no, the Mahatma need not go as far as the sea, like Harish Chandra before has finished his vow, the gods will come down and dissolve his vow, and the Britishers will leave India, and we shall be free, and we shall pay less taxes, and there will be no policemen” (Kanthapura 172).

Religion plays a significant role in Kanthapura suggesting the energizing power that it had among the people. The villagers who are newly enrolled as members of the Congress appear in the oath-taking ceremony that is performed in the sanctuary at the presence of God. Moorthy requests the newly enlisted members to stand before the sanctum to vow that they will never breach the law. Moreover, they vow to spin the yarn, perform ahimsa and involve themselves in the quest for truth. The villagers call upon the Goddess to set Moorthy free when he was arrested and believe that the Goddess would lend a hand to them and free Moorthy from the British: “The Goddess will never fail us—she will free him from the clutches of the Red-man”(Kanthapura134). The villagers readily vow not to drink at the Government-run toddy booths in the name of the Goddess Kenchamma. When the people are involved with picketing the toddy trees and are battered brutally by the policemen, the people turn to Kenchemma Hill to draw strength for renewed confrontation.

Moorthy, the protagonist of Kanthapura, is a replica of Raja Rao’s Gandhian self. He is “a pebble among the pebbles of the river, and when the floods came, rock by rock may lie buried under” (Kanthapura180). Rangamma remarks him as “Moorthy the good, Moorthy the religious and Moorthy the noble” (Kanthapura144). Meenakshi Mukherjee notes Moorthy as an “idealized character who like Christ takes all the sins of the people upon himself and undergoes a penance for purification, a young man who conquers physical desire and self- interest” (Mukherjee 141). Achakka, the narrator of Kanthapura, is the chief testimony to how Kanthapura reacted to the Gandhian ideology and how the people responded to the visionary call of Gandhi. Meenakshi Mukerjee observes, “The characteristically concrete imagination of the uneducated mind pictures the Mahatma as large and blue like the Sahyadri Mountain on whose slopes the pilgrims climb to the top, while Moorthy is seen as Small Mountain. To her the Satyagraha becomes a religious ceremony to which she devotes her sacred ardour” (141).

Moorthy’s first ever encounter, though not personal, with Gandhi becomes a potential self-changer. Gandhi acknowledges: “Self-purification therefore must mean purification in all walks of life. And purification being highly infectious, purification of oneself necessarily leads to the purification of one’s surroundings” (420). “Moorthy shines with a rare radiance in his face. He utters truth is God and God is truth just echoing Gandhi” (Patil 114).His encounter with “God-bearing Mahatma” gave him lessons of Gandhian political ideology full of spiritual revelation. Moorthy’s rendezvous with Gandhi is the initiation into a quest for truth. Moorthy realizes, “There is but one force in life and that is Truth, and there is but one love in

life and that is love of mankind, and there is but one God in life and that is the God of all” (Kanthapura 52-3). Moorthy slips into the journey of self-realization: “closing his eyes tighter, he slips back into the foldless sheath of the Soul and sends out rays of love to the east, rays of love to the west, rays of love to the north, rays of love to the south, and love to the earth below and to the sky above” (Kanthapura 29). Moorthy follows Gandhian assertion that, it is purity of the soul that leads a human being towards victory. It is the eternal consciousness that pervades all jivas irrespective of whether one is a friend or foe. Jaramachar explains: “Fight, says he, but harm no soul. Love all, says he, Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian or Paraiyah, for all are equal before God. Don’t be attached to riches, says he, for riches create passions, and passions create attachment and attachment hides the face of Truth. Truth must you tell, he says, for Truth is God, and verily, it is the only God I know” (Kanthapura 22). “The road to the City of Love is hard, brother, it’s hard, Take care, take care, as you walk along it” (Kanthapura 89).

Moorthy carries Gandhian values of non-violence, elimination of untouchability and love for all into his village. He was determined to face and resist violence only through non-violent means and therefore he goes on to fast. Seetharamu’s willing compliance to the violent persecution of the British is an illustration of how far Gandhian teachings on ahimsa have influenced the local villagers. Non-Violence implies purging every form of hatred towards others from the heart. Moorthy discourages Range Gowda advocating violent meanest counter Bade Khan. Moorthy stresses Gandhian principles of ahimsa upon Gowda when he communicates his wish to teach Puttaya a lesson for unfairly drawing the canal-water to his fields.

Raja Rao creates a young eccentric Brahmin boy, Moorthy, the mouth piece and practitioner of Gandhian ideologies. Moorthy is a university dropout who returns home, influenced by the Gandhian struggle for freedom. Moorthy discards his city clothes and adopts khadi clothing which is a symbolic renitence to colonialism. He convinces the women in Kanthapura to maintain the national cause by spinning their own clothes as advocated by Gandhi.

We should do our duty. If not, it is no use belonging to the Gandhi-group. Rangamma says, ‘That is right, sister,’ and we say, ‘We shall not forget our children and our husbands.’ But how can we be like we used to be? Now we hear this story and that story, and we say we too shall organize a foreign-cloth boycott like at Sholapur, we too, shall go picketing cigarette shops and today ships, and we say our

Kanthapura, too, shall fight for the Mother (Kanthapura110). Moorthy emphasized that in order to follow Gandhian ideal British goods is to be boycotted which is traded in India to exploit the villagers.

Moorthy's resistance and struggle against the Brahmanic society is another struggle against structural violence. Bhatta, for Moorthy, is the symbol of Brahmanic structural violence which attempts to mute the subjugated untouchables of Kanthapura. The Brahmins looked down upon the Gandhian movement: "What is this Gandhi business? Nothing but weaving coarse, handmade cloth, not fit for a mop, and bellowing out bhajans and bhajans and mixing with the pariahs?" (Kanthapura 28). Moorthy breaks the superfluous boundaries of caste to enter into Paraiyah quarters to make harijan boys his friends.

The Swami is worried over this Pariah movement and he wants to crush it in its seed, before its cactus roots have spread far and wide. You are a Bhatta and your voice is not a sparrow voice in your village, and you should speak to your people and organize a Brahman party. Otherwise Brahmanism is as good as kitchen ashes. The Mahatma is good man and a simple man. But he is making too much of these carcass eating Paraiyah (Kanthapura 44). Human welfare takes precedence over caste for Moorthy and he recognizes caste as human made frontier. Therefore, he works hard to empower the lives of harijans. The villagers counter the Brahmin subjugation: "Why should not Pariah, Ranchamma and Sampanna learn to read and write? They shall, And Bade Khan can wave his beard and twist his moustache. What is a policeman before Gandhi's man? Does a boar stand before a lion or a jackal before an elephant?" (Kanthapura 37). Moorthy's associates warn about the repercussions Moorthy might face for breaching the Brahmin statutes but he pays no heed to stop his Pariah business. Moorthy's mother Narasaama feared a possible excommunication of her son by the Swami. Narasamma says, "He is mixing with the Pariahs as a veritable Mohammedan, and the Swami has sent word through Bhatta to say that the whole of Kanthapura will be excommunicated...he can go sleep with these Paraiyah whores...but let him not call himself a Brahman" (Kanthapura 57-8).

Gandhi's vision of life finds an outlet in Kanthapura. Moorthy forms the Panchayat Congress Committee and keeps in touch with the City Congress Committee. The villagers acknowledge the efforts of Moorthy and the enthused woman sing:

There is one Government, sister,
There is one Government, sister,

And that is the Government of the Mahatma (Kanthapura 207)

Moorthy, Patel Rgegouda, Rangamma, Rachanna and Seenu are all members of it. Moorthy is not carried away by the shallow politics of Shankar, the Secretary of the Karwar Congress Committee. Range Gowda names Moorthy “our Gandhi.” More like Gandhi, he stimulates the national feeling and the fighting spirit in the villagers that emanates from Gandhian visions like the realization of truth, the significance of love and the presence of God of all. Moorthy embodies Gandhian consciousness that renovates the political, social and religious life of the village. Mohit Ray observes in Moorthy as “the confluence of the three strands of experience that make up the action of Kanthapura— the political, the social, and the religious” (285). Gandhi believed that politics and religion are inevitably bonded to each other. Kanthapura demonstrates the Gandhian rejection of Hindu caste system. The motivation induced by Gandhi permeated even the remote villages which discarded the artificial and hierarchical distinction perpetrated in the name of caste system. The novel illustrates the temple being opened to the paraiyahs mirroring Gandhian principle of equality of human beings before God. The radical event of the paraiyahs worshipping in par with other villagers is an event of historical importance. Raja Rao demonstrates the divine reality and the innate legitimacy of the human status in the society. “Fight says he [Gandhi], but harm no soul. Love all, says he, Hindu, Mahomedan, Christian or Pariah, for all are equal before God” (Kanthapura 12).

The Vender of Sweets depicts Jagan leading his life in accordance with Gandhian principles. Jagan is a man of high principles. He is proud of his son, Mali. He recites The Bhagwad Gita to his minions, spins the wheel. He goes by the word but not by the spirit. He thinks he is leading his life according to Gandhian principles. Later, he becomes aware of his shortcomings and tries to live by the message of The Bhagwad Gita. He says to his cousin “conquer taste and you will have conquered the self”, said Jagan to his listener, who asked, “why conquer the self?” Jagan said, “I do not know but all our sages advise us so.”(7). He tries to influence Mali to lead his life according to Gandhian philosophy but to no avail. He has to bear the consequences of his karma and he lands himself in jail for drunk driving. Jagan realizes that all his life he had been chasing false ideals. He realizes that his salvation lies in realizing the ultimate truth. Jayant.K. Biswal thinks that it echoes Rosie’s idea of karma and he must suffer for his Karma (27). Jagan may not be successful in his goal but he starts his quest for the truth. The theme of attachment and its consequences is prevalent throughout the story. To spin, to wear Khadi, to use swdeshi things and to read The Bhagwad Gita all had become a part of Gandhian Philosophy and to take part in kirtan

to participate in social reform activities, parbhat pheries all had become a part of struggle for freedom. Jagan firmly believes in all these things and practices these in his daily routine which his son Mali does not like. Jagan is living embodiment of Gandhian principles. The Vender of Sweets and Waiting for the Mahatma are steeped in Gandhian values. Even Jagan's appearance and his procuring hide for his shoes described by the author clearly demonstrate the influence of Gandhiji.

He wore a loose jibba over his dhoti ,both made of material spun with his own hands; everyday he spun for an hour, retained enough yarn for his sartorial requirements (he never possessed more than two sets of cloths at a time), and delivered all the excess in neat bundle to the local handloom committee in exchange for cash. Although the cash he thus earned was less than five rupees a month he felt a sentimental thrill in receiving it, as he had begun the habit when Gandhi visited the town over twenty years ago, and he had been commended for it (page 9).

And the process of procuring hide is described in following lines; He draped his shoulders in a khaddar shawl... and shod his feet with thick sandals made out of the leather of an animal which had died of old age. Being a follower of Gandhi, he explained, "I don't like to think that a living creature should have its throat cut for the comfort of my feet (Page 9).

Conclusion

Indian history never saw such an upsurge of faith, unity in action, united will, community feeling and social development, without any expensive spending as in the Gandhian Age from the grass root level. He himself was a means of communication for the people between the British and the Indians, as he had a well formed conception about the motherland and her people, their needs and their mind set which helped him to attain millions of disciples and act as a positive social worker with the help of traditional ways of communication. Scopes for further research lies in the fact whether Gandhiji's motives, ideals, teachings etc. and their consequences were right or not but it must be undoubtedly concluded that nothing but such tactful means of communication through the Folk media and myth was the only way to foster revolutionary feelings in the ignorant poor villagers thereby making them realize the need for change and self-development. It was my sincere effort to unveil the logic behind Gandhiji's use of myths, puranas, harinaam-keertans and padayatras as primary tools behind his freedom campaigns and what effects they produced in the minds of the people together with how he could bring certain social and ideological betterment in the villages, their social life and attitude towards life, at least as portrayed by the the-then literary writers. With the passage of time, Gandhian

thoughts become more relevant as the world has understood the essentiality of his thoughts and ideals to defeat terrorism, sectarianism, war and violence

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