



## Ajneya's Novel 'Nadi Ke Dweep' from the Perspective of Modern and Open Novel

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### Abstract

*'Nadi Ke Dweep' is an individualist novel wherein the central characters Rekha and Bhuban are shown to go through the streams of a river which flows in their life and struggle for existence. The characters in the novel as they exist in the superficial level are found to be highly intellectual with internal conflicts and inner thoughts of modern ideology having multidimensional complexities such as the characters of Bhuban, Rekha, Gaura etc. spearheading in the novel. Though river and island are co-existential, they have their own identities as like as individuals have their own entities in spite of being in the midst of the society to which they belong and hence the title of the novel 'Nadi Ke Dweep' has been quite appropriate and justified in this context. To be honest it is one of the finest piece of work among all the creations of the author concerned in the form of modern and open novel.*

### Limitation of sphere of study

*The prolong journey towards traditional novel starting from Epic is really interesting one. Though we have no intention to go through the entire development and the journey, we would like to pay a glimpse of it. It is a well-known fact that the Mediaeval period replaced the literary importance of Epic which was a recurrent type of literature in the Ancient period by extensively following the literary genre, i.e., Romance; a narrative of the experiences of knights, squires or any travelers of aristocratic class which were symbolic representations of feudal system during that period. Likewise novels began occupying a room of prominence as a genre in the modern age and certainly it is the novel which could attract the attention of the readers by replacing the one way traffic of representation of the expression which became lethargic and monotonous, for which the readers took to reading novels as their best choice in the modern period. Whatever it may be our attempt is not to make a look into the rapid transition of taste and colour of readers' choice and likewise our endeavor is not to go in details regarding the nature of novels and its related philosophy. While delivering a lecture on modern novels in the University of Cambridge, Virginia Woolf started her speech with a pin pointed idea that the human character has changed on about December 1910. Our million-worth question is as to why Virginia Woolf mentioned the month of December of 1910 as the border line in her speech at the very beginning. Perhaps Virginia Woolf was immensely moved by the demonstration of pictures of post-impressionist movement held in the city of London and without doubt she could realise the reactions of viewers of that art and it was she who could penetrate in to the outstanding as well as extra-ordinary responses of the people whose mental set-up started changing in the year 1910. That is why the literary persons did not give stress on the superficial aspects of incidents that we witnessed in our day-to-day life; but instead they took to picking up the indistinct shape of any circumstances that could arrest the readers inner psychology and so they basically focused on that point of human aspects. On the basis of our studies at the perspective, we can boldly take up a notion that in the expression and outburst of feelings of modern novelist there has been tremendous influence of post-impressionist movement. That is why the modern novels are occasionally named as post-impressionist novels. It is to be seen in those novels of the modern era that out pouring of thoughts, the elemental expression of philosophy represented by the characters and at the same time in the dialectic outburst of the inner psychology, the unending imprints of post-impressionist can never be overlooked.*

*In the traditional novels we often see the addition of a certain kind of narratives and so in between there must be a beginning, middle and end which are basic requirements of that kind of novels. But especially in modern novels instead of some certain set rules such as inclusion of narratives, there is a continuous flow of psychological insights in to the characters. It is generally seen that the modern novelists take forward the plotline with amalgamation of actions and reactions of the characters as they appeared in course of time as well as the inflow of the inner working of the conscience of the characters. In this connection Allan*



*Fritmann can be quoted wherein he opined that as there is certain narrative in the traditional novels, so with the end of the narrative, the inflow of the inner psychology comes to an end. That is why Fritmann termed traditional novels as close novels. On the other hand as modern novels are free from such set regulations, so there is no end to the outburst of inner conflicts or inflow of workings of conscience of characters whatever may be. In simple words the stream of consciousness of the characters continues to flow even though apparently the novel ends. All materials brought together to give a shape of a novel stretch out to the unending horizon from finite to infinite. Therefore, Fritmann is of the opinion that modern novels are open novels. In this piece of work we will make an attempt to label a signature of elements of openness in Ajneya's novel 'Nadi Ke Dweep.'*

*Keywords: Individualist novel, Stream of Consciousness, Post-Impressionist novel, Internal conflict of mind*

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## Introduction

At the outset although it seems to be unacceptable but it is a real fact that a traditional novelist spent his entire time and energy in order to develop the plotline of the novel and obviously during this process somehow he used to lose his freedom in a number of directions. As a result of which a traditional novelist becomes aloof and he discover himself alienated from the crude reality. As a matter of fact, the credibility of a traditional novel entirely depends on the quality of the plotline which has been chosen for a certain piece of work and its smooth progress without any interruption till the end. That is why a traditional novelist has to pay his rapt attention on the aforesaid parameters for the sake of the success of his novel. In order to express such a hopeless situation of a traditional novelist, Virginia Woolf explains :

“The writer seems constrained, not by his own free will but by some powerful and unscrupulous tyrant who has him in thrall, to provide a plot, to provide comedy, tragedy, love interest...”<sup>(1)</sup>

However a modern novel is generally presented on the basis of stream of consciousness of the characters concerned and naturally a modern novel is always subjective. Such a modern novel never emphasizes on the happenings in the real world, instead the main attention as well intention of a modern novelist is to portray the internal mental conflicts of the characters concerned. That is why in comparison to a traditional novelist, perhaps a modern novelist enjoys more freedom of expression, more realistic attitude as well as having a bold outlook to their subject-matter chosen for any of their artistic piece of creations. May be under the influence of such circumstances Ajneya was inspired himself to begin the novel 'Nadi Ke Dweep' through a few lines of Shelley's poem. Through the lines of the poem, the author, Ajneya has been able to summarize the incidents of the novel 'Nadi Ke Dweep' very carefully.

We never come across any sort of resistance initiated from the part of Ajneya towards the activities of Bhuban, Rekha, Goura etc. in their entire journey of life, even though occasionally some of the activities of Bhuban and Rekha breaks down the existing rules and regulations, rituals of the so called society. Ajneya never took any single step which may stand as an obstruction on the infinite line of freedom of his characters. To be honest a common reader will witness him not as a novelist, but as one, who happens to be a very simple and silent observer in the entire journey of the characters during the course of time.

The kindness of Ajneya towards the characters portrayed in his novel can easily be understood through the following dialogue of Rekha in the novel 'Nadi Ke Dweep':

“I am fulfilled - ab agar main mar jau to paramatma ke prati-prakriti ke prati yah ankrosh lekar nahi jaungi ki maine koi bhi fulfillment nahi jana-kuch bhav hi lekar jaungi-paramatma ke prati aur Bhuban, tumhare prati.”<sup>(2)</sup>

The above dialogue was the outburst of Rekha's mental agony and acute sufferings as she has been neglected by her husband Hemendra who reside abroad with a foreign lady. This is why the cold wind of Tuliyan Sarovar was not able to disturb Rekha who was sitting on a rock watching the moonlit night. When the cold wind made Rekha shiver, Bhuban brought her into



the tent, gave her some warm cloths and requested her to take rest on the bed. Refusing Bhuban's request, Rekha sits down on the bed with her frost-bitten body. In such a situation while neglecting about dignity and the society's discipline etc., Bhuban feels that Rekha's body needs sexual warm. After Bhuban hugs Rekha with open arms and fulfills her sexual desire, Rekha says in that manner.

If we have a pipe-line view of the activities of a modern novelist during the course of his creation, it will be clear that a modern novelist never ever have any prefixed work-plan to complete a perfect piece of his creation. A modern novelist will never possess any fixed idea about the end point of his novel or intentionally he never tries to overburden himself under the shadow of additional pressure to conclude his propose piece of work. Instead, the stream of consciousness of the characters portrayed by the novelist will automatically conclude according to the demand of the plotline. Perhaps this added an extra dimension in the freedom of a modern novelist. According to one of the modern and open novelists Antony Trollope a modern author never ever care about when and how the plotline of the novel will end, instead he left it to the plotline itself to make an end according to its choice.

### Methodology

During our research work on the topic, Novels of Ajneya and Praphulladatta Goswami : A Comparative Study; one specific question regarding the openness of the novels of the authors concerned always hunting in our mind. As a result of which we have carried out this piece of work, though we could not include all the novels of the authors concerned into the preview of our discussion. No stone has been left un-thrown in order to achieve cent percent authenticity in the conclusion of this piece of work. In fact a good number of suggestions, critics were received from learned Professors, students of Colleges and Universities in response to our quarry for which we do have no words to express our gratitude towards them. We always acknowledge their suggestions and due respect has been paid towards their suggestions while drawing the conclusion of this piece of work. To justify the sprite of the entire piece of work occasionally we discussed all the matters included here with a number of persons having commanding authority on the subject matter chosen here.

### Findings

Evaluation of the novel 'Nadi Ke Dweep' from the perspective of open novel :

The main flow of the plotline of the novel 'Nadi Ke dweep' revolves around the stream of consciousness and internal conflicts in the mind of its central characters Bhuban, Rekha and Gaura who hails from some simple middle class Indian families. Here we have not witnessed any pre-fixed plotline as in case of a traditional and close novel. Instead, a reader will discover him among some pictures confronted by the central characters together with some supporting characters in the journey of their life as if these were displayed in a distorting mirror. One will certainly be disheartened if he or she expects the flow of these pictures in a synchronized manner, because nothing has been presented here in a sequential way. The entire plotline of the novel flows according to the flow of the stream of consciousness in the minds of the central characters as it appears in the journey of their life and some supporting characters like Chandramadhab, parents of Gaura, Dr. Ramesh Chandra etc. occasionally appears whenever it reflects in the stream of consciousness of the central characters. From the view point of the presentation one must agree to the fact that the very way of the presentation in the novel is really dramatic in nature. In order to add more to that Ajneya perhaps started the plotline of the novel with a few lines of a poem of Shelley. This is the mirror or rather a record of personal feelings that starts scripting in the lives of the central characters in entire journey.

### Final Conclusion

Before the process of evaluation of the novel 'Nadi Ke Dweep' authored by Ajneya from the view point of modern and open novel, we shall make an attempt to have an overview of a



successful novel which could earn much repute by touching readers soft corner by which the novel became a milestone in the realm of modern literature by the same way as the novel under discussion in this write-up drew the elemental characteristics of the genre in question. In this regard Virginia Woolf's novel Mrs. Dalloway is brought into our purview of discourse mainly because the novel concerned was written in line with the same colour and literary style which was followed by Ajneya in the novel in question.

A very sweet and beautiful morning of one Wednesday in the month of June... No sooner did Mrs. Dalloway get up from her sleep in her own residence in the city of London than her consciousness becomes active and it goes on without interruption for a single moment. The consciousness that appears in her mindset, it starts drawing Mrs. Dalloway to various chapters of her past life. The past melancholic childhood memories related to her birth place starts haunting her like anything which brings lots of colourful incidents that had happened in her life during said period. At the same time the heavily laden memories of her past life full of bitterness and sourness drew her to various experiences that she had in her childhood. Sometimes, the moments that she spent with her husband Richard Dalloway, the only daughter Elizabeth that she occupied in her life as daughter, again those moments sweetened by the warm association with her shy and extreme nervous lover Peter Woyalesh ..., those never forgettable moments appear and reappear in her cycle of flow of thoughts evaporating the symbolic witness of stream of consciousness which was the prominent feature in Virginia Woolf's novel. At this very moment we discover Mrs. Dalloway in a street in the city of London when she was on her way to purchase flowers. This very scene is presented so as to let a reader know that she is having her birthday today which was never ever disclosed to the readers beforehand in the novel. At the behest of purchasing flowers in the name of having a fresh look at her birthdays in the past, she happened to meet a couple Lukrachia (a Jewish girl) and her mad husband Septimash on a bench in the Resent Park. Mrs. Dalloway was burdened with the shouting of war-torn Septimash who declared to commit suicide. In the evening all the well-wishers of Dalloway family met in the get-together held on the occasion of her birthday. To the utter surprise of all present the childhood lover of Mrs. Dalloway, Peter Woyalesh happened to arrive at the spot on the occasion. Mrs. Dalloway was pre-occupied with the thoughts of her husband's negligence towards her and again she was over-burdened at the news of committing suicide by Septimash. All of a sudden Mrs. Dalloway disappeared from her birthday party to get relieved from mental agony which has creped-up on her due to the very professional outlook of the so called gentlemen in the party towards the existing society, humanity etc. The author makes an end of this piece of work with the reappearance of Mrs. Dalloway at her birthday party with simple but very tricky information to the readers that she is a completely transformed Mrs. Dalloway. The reappeared, transformed Mrs. Dalloway may have bow-down in front of the so called aristocratic society, she may change her outlook towards the artificial behaviour of the existing people surrounding her etc. etc. It has been left in the court of judgment of the readers to decide what transformation they would like to view within the character of Mrs. Dalloway. The reader has sufficient freedom to make a conclusion at their own will. This is why the Novel Mrs. Dalloway stands as one of the mile stone in the field of infinite horizons of open Novels.

The same trend can be observed in the novels A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses authored by James Joyce's. Here we can cite the name of one more novel Remembrance of Things Past authored by Marcel Proust which has been presented in the same line.

Of course, on the eve of the end of the novel Ajneya has allowed one of the central character Rekha to settle down her life with Dr. Ramesh Chandra as her life partner. At the end of the novel 'Nadi Ke Dweep' the author is running away from the readers very silently without any proper information regarding the positions of the central characters Bhuban and Gaura. For



instance, in the novel 'Nadi Ke Dweep', the protagonist Bhuban and his counterpart-turned beloved Gaura could have been united into one thread at the end of the novel; but the novelist concerned made a plea not to do so and let them float in the river of time. To make an end of the plotline through mental conflicts that has occurred in the stream of consciousness in the mind of one of the central character Bhuban engaged as an officer in Second World War the author left out a sequence of dialogues through him which naturally express the mental agony and his personal sufferings. Bhuban is spending an uncertain life in a dense forest of frontiers of Burma which has been destructed by the smoke of the bombs and equipments of War. Even after being uncertain of Gaura receiving or not receiving Bhuban's letters, he still does not forget to send one or two letters to Gaura. Even in between this uncertainty, as a token of patriotism for the country, Bhuban alongwith his two other mates concentrates to discover a technique which will help the soldiers to transform invisible objects into a visible one, a house made of bamboos is the only place for Bhuban's research and also their office at the time of War. When two of his mates went to the nearby camp for some important work, do not come back in time, it makes Bhuban depressed. In such an uncertain situation, an anxious Bhuban makes himself ready to write a letter to Gaura. Bhuban readily accepts in the letter that if some day he gets relieved of the cold dead hammer of the War, then he will definitely marry Gaura. Remembering about the moments that he spent with Gaura for one week in Mussoorie, he himself starts explaining to him regarding his relation with her. While again starting to write, he mentions about his life experience in this manner :

"Woh rupak mera nahi hain, par bar-bar mujhe yad ata hai aur main pata hun ki usase naya abhipray hai, ham sab 'Nadi Ke Dweep' hai, dweep se dweep ek setu hain." <sup>(3)</sup>

Bhuban opens both his hands while comparing both Gaura and himself to one of the islands of the river. Bhuban hopes that Gaura, being too on the face of the island of the river will bring forward her two hands. Bhuban remains still, while he was going to include a line from a Bengali song in the letter. At the time of keeping already written letter on the tray, Bhuban ask himself that, if Gaura has true love for him, then she will definitely realize things herself which he had written. Hence he tried to convince himself that there is no need to write a letter to Gaura in order to express the inner conflicts in his mind relating to Gaura.

In the deep forest of Burma while nature was confused about wearing or not wearing the blanket of the evening, Bhuban who was peeping from the window of the bamboo hut, gets himself into the labyrinth of questions. What a valuable moment ? What a moment of relationship ? Is it the relationship with whom ? Is it satisfaction? For whom is this satisfaction ? This satisfaction of life is only for the one who can keep on waiting. It does not depend on the length of the waiting period. The waiting period may be infinite. May be that is why, Ajneya has allowed Bhuban and Gaura to wait in order to achieve their mental satisfaction, because waiting too is an island which is situated in the river of time.

In the last episode of the novel 'Nadi Ke Dweep', normally the novel ends in this episode itself. After going through this last episode, even a normal reader will ask himself, did the plotline of the novel really end? In reality Ajneya has left the end of the plotline of the novel in the court of judgment of the readers. One reader coming together and trying to cross the river of life by living a happy life at the end of the novel, while another reader may end the novel by simply completing Bhuban's last rite in the forests of frontiers of Burma. All these depend on the reader's interest, his sense of viewing things surrounding him, knowledge, etc. Ajneya himself poses as neutral critique and asks Bhuban and Gaura to wait while leaving the wishes and expectations of their great meeting in the hands of time and then he moves away without any comment. After seeing how Ajneya poses different open questions in front of the readers and makes their mind anxious and gives the responsibility to the readers for completing the plotline



after searching the answer for the questions etc., we can decide that from every side of Ajneya's novel 'Nadi Ke Dweep' which is a successful modern and open novel.

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