



Sajano Bagan by Manoj Mitra: A Socio-Political Exploration of Environmental Consciousness and Human Relationships

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Abstract: *The present study explores the socio-political aspects of Manoj Mitra's play "Sajano Bagan" through an analysis of the play's depiction of environmental consciousness and its consequences for interpersonal relationships. This study uses a critical perspective to examine how the play challenges established power structures, confronts urgent socio-environmental issues, and encourages a reevaluation of human-nature connections in the context of modern civilization. Examining the play's socio-political critique—which centers on the power relationships between various social strata and the exploitation of natural resources—is essential to this research. The study looks at how "Sajano Bagan" opposes prevailing narratives and promotes environmental justice and equity by emphasizing the problems of underprivileged groups and their symbiotic relationship with nature. In summary, this study highlights the importance of Manoj Mitra's "Sajano Bagan" as a socio-political work that broadens our comprehension of human interactions, environmental consciousness, and the interdependence of society and environment. It draws attention to the transformative potential of literature in promoting empathy, increasing consciousness, and upending established power hierarchies, all of which lead to the eventual promotion of more responsible and mindful interactions with the environment and one another.*

Keywords: *Drama, Sajano Bagan, Social, Political, Play.*

Drama is one of the literary and artistic mediums. One of the few Bengali dramatists who has contributed to the theater scene in united Bengal for nearly fifty years is Manoj Mitra (1936). Manoj Mitra gained prominence in the drama industry as an actor, director, and playwright. His name is pronounced similarly to that of Bijan Bhattacharya (1917–1988) and Utpal Dutt (1929–1993) in contemporary Bengali play. The struggle of rural people to survive is the primary subject of Bijan Bhattacharya's writing. Playwright Utpal Dutt has established himself as a political figure. Furthermore, Manoj Mitra has gained notoriety for writing modern problem plays. Artist Manoj Mitra is socially aware. His plays portray the inner and outer struggles, pleasures, and sorrows, exploitation by the ruling class, and protests of the modern common man. His plays are examined in a range of topics as well as in relation to both social reality and the individual's thinking. Every play written by Manoj Mitra is unique in its atmosphere, genre, and multifaceted nature.

Manoj Mitra shows the suffering of common people and goes beyond romance. In a similar spirit, he has brilliantly brought attention to the revolutionary mindset of those under power. Manoj Mitra's remark in "Krishti" is noteworthy in this regard. He stated:

...one thing I want to write right now is that the poor man, the weak man, the neglected and defeated man is rising up like a man, overcoming his inferiority, his weakness, his fear, his hesitation, his doubt. I search this man in any event of this country, I want to capture this struggle of the people.¹

Manoj Mitra's 1959 play "Tears in the Eyes of Death" is a handcuff. He has penned over 75 plays, ranging in length from one-act to full-length. But among readers, his "Chak Bhanga Madhu," "Naishyabhoj," and "Sajano Bagan" have become more well-known. "Sajano Bagan" resembles Manoj Mitra's theatrical career's corps of the afternoon. The zamindar Naw Kodi in this drama is avaricious toward Bancharam's well-kept garden. Not just Naw Kodi, but also his father Chhaw Kodi, who came before Naw Kodi, was drawn to this garden. One may say that the son is now finishing up the father's unfinished business. This is the so-called exploitative class's inherent nature. He has therefore used to devious means to obtain Naw Kodi's. The name of Bancharam is Naw Kodi,

...every month, on the first day of the month, I will make a big deal." As long as you are alive, I will go through two hundred months. I have only one condition. When you pass away, all the land in this land is mine.²

¹ Mitra, Manoj: Maner Kotha Natyakatha, Aajkal, Cole-91, January-2006, p.349.



In order to enjoy a peaceful and contented retirement, Bancharam, as a representative of the ordinary people, accepted the terms of the arrangement. However, Bancharam is unaware that this arrangement is part of a scheme. Nope, Kodi wants to eat Bancharam's entire stash. After Bancharam passes away, this fascinating Naw Kodi would take everything from him, provided that food is provided to keep him alive. The ironic thing is that greed is still rampant among society's common folk. The dominated class's greed and that of the dominating class, however, differ greatly. They never desire wealth or extravagance, nor do they desire a lovely, well-kept family. They want to somehow save the family and make it through on the meager amount of food they get twice a day. And they want to create this brilliance through a relationship between them in order to survive. In the play, Nayantara begs Chhawkadi to assist in healing his brother, who is disabled. The eyes utter,

“Give it?” How much money will you give me? I can get treatment in Vider. At this age, he still can't stand on two legs. I'll tell you the truth! ³

In this sense, Padma and Badami both want her child to grow up in the open, in the fresh air and light of the world. All of them—Matla, Jata, Chhaku, Tustu, Gupi, Chor, and Bancharam—want to lead regular lives. It is quite natural to want power. “Where did you find all these people?” ‘Decorated garden’ piques the interest of Goddess Arundhati. As we discussed the different scenes from the recently screened performance, he asked if I had ever seen an elderly man whose plants were so close to the water. He had to tell us about the village in O-Par Bengal where the Khulna district was deserted at a young age once all restrictions were lifted. The entire hamlet would be hushed in grief over their separation as the storm destroyed the village's fruit tamarind tree. I was terrified and grasped my guardian's region in the village's Chshipara around noon when I observed an elderly man spitting. This is how the man's body looked; the village was a pale white color, like an egg that had just hatched. He was a cultivator of betel. We made a drink purchase.

...Koi go, o banchada, koi go, we have come to buy drink ... There was no other animal in the house. After a lot of shouting, I couldn't understand from which side the answer came like the sound of a whistle: ‘Come on!’ How long I have been standing, no one has seen. Suddenly I saw the old man crawling out of the darkness of Panmachantala. Bancharam Kapali. The name ‘Bancharam’ was found that day! The old man heard my identity on the face of the old woman and said, ‘Is that so? But sit down, let me give you a penny. ‘Truly, I can't forget the moment when the stem was torn in this birth. The stubborn old man shouted indistinctly and covered his head with both hands so that the fruit would not burst his brahmatalu! Whatever the reason, I wanted to keep that moment in the play as well. After a couple of nights, I realized that the feeling of what seemed like lightning in my childhood was not even noticeable to the audience. The opposite is happening. Is there an end to the number of ways that memory controls us, knowingly or unknowingly?⁴

This middleman's trait is seen in the persona of Moktar, the zamindar Naw Kodi's companion in the planned garden. Nine crore zamindars in the drama want to inherit the garden that the impoverished Bancharam created. He tricked Bancharam with a contract, claiming the garden as his own. But part of the cash Masohara gives Bancharam ends up in his own pockets. The zamindar knows everything, but he says nothing. This is how social economies work. Not only does Moktar pursue the wealthy, but so do the middle class, fortune tellers, doctors, and the play's companions. The wealthy labor for pay when necessary. If the work is unfair or hurts someone, it doesn't matter to them. All they want is money, money, money. For them, money is everything.

The regular people only rebel against torture when their lot in life is at its worst, as a result of the tyranny of these landowners, moneylenders, and zamindars. The oppressed classes have banded together and revolted against social development whenever tyrannical exploiters have stood in the way of it throughout history. The general public has come to recognize that we need to demonstrate against the values that impede societal advancement. Subsequent playwrights have sown the seeds of dissent in different circumstances, thanks to the purposeful efforts of Michael and Deenbandhumitra. The play by Manoj Mitra depicts this protest in an artistic manner. Even he says this:

...no one else has captured this urgent problem of life as our drama has shown. The drama of persecution, lawlessness, injustice, hypocrisy has been torn to shreds. Another name for our drama is protest, attack.⁵

The drama in the organized garden is protesting. Bancharam, an elderly farmer in his eighties, appears in the drama. She is unable to walk. He is still attempting to defend his well-planned garden. Even after his death, the zamindar could not give up the garden's

² Mitra, Manoj: Bancharam: In Cinema Theater, Mitra & Ghosh Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata-63, p.219.

³ Mitra, Manoj and Amar Mitra: I floated the dove in the water - Dej Publishing-Cole-63, 2011, p.129.

⁴ Mitra, Manoj: Bancharam: In Cinema Theater, Mitra & Ghosh Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata-63, p.159.

⁵ Ghosh, Jagannath: History of post-Rabindranath Bangla drama, Prajnakash, Col-09, 2009, p.56.



greed; he turned into a ghost and followed Bancharam. He isn't scared of it, though. "Leave me alone, even if you are weak and weak," he pleaded to Gupi. Today, I'm going to kill him in the hallway. Here he is, a man full of confidence, a defendant. In the same way that the financial assistance has deceived the exploiting section of society, the industrious working class has also grown cautious. For this reason, Bancharam knocked on Dutt's door with a stick and begged for the money he was due. At this point, he had risen much off the ground. The oppression that has long been the source of injustice has evolved. The zamindars now have to pay the tenants, after previously robbing the lower classes of their money like vampires. For this reason, Bancharam told Naw Kadi,

...You will pay the money! Hey, hey, what an injustice! What an injustice! You have been begging for money at people's doors all the time, you have given it to the people, you have taken it - today you will give it to us - we will take it!⁶

Those who desire to work hard in today's world yet end up dominating every aspect should raise their heads high. They take up arms against the governing class as militants. The character Bancharam has emerged from the oppressive and torturous class amid the backdrop of an independent life in the life-or-death fight. Today the secret protestant awareness of Bancharam has come to light. Gupi's newborn baby's cries have signaled a new chapter in her life. Consequently, Bancharam tells Na Kari, "I can't die if I talk like this." The youngster had fallen after Badd Maya. In Desalai, Bancharam is raging like a stick on fire. Bancharam-like sticks abound in this social box. Now they are all burning together. Now, their vitality is incalculable. The six cows (ghosts) vanished out of fear of that energy, and the exploiter Na Kori Dutt perished in horror.

Bancharam Manavik: The figure of Bancharam represents mankind in the drama set in an ordered garden. The common folk here are gopis, padmas, and thieves. The planned garden of Bancharam is their only hope for survival. The burglar steals fruits from Bancharam's garden to support himself. "What's the use of eating rice, all of us?" the thief grumbled. Theft workers who are afraid of more harm claim,

...there is no rice in the pot...so I left...I saved a bunch of bananas! What a blissful arrangement!...barbed wire fence...gardener will sit. Put the watchman! The rich man's goods are like a thief like me? Then the class conflict became clear. The 'main farmer' wants, the more stupid is his grandson Gupi, the homeless lotus and the 'gher' thief seem to stand in the same straight line. Standing in the opposite corner are the zamindar's six kari, nine kari and his ginni, two sons, a moktar, a doctor, a gantkar, a priest and so on.⁷

Those who seek death do so in order to uphold the zamindar's interests. In addition to having self-interest. But despite all of their transgressions, Bancharam remained powerful and did not perish. Bancharam, who had previously walked on the ground, stood on his knees at the play's conclusion. Now he plants trees, digs water, and works in the garden. Wearing a Kashmiri shawl and reading silk Punjabi, the zamindar stops by the house to request masohara. Like an old one turned inside out. It is evident from the language of desire that this cannot continue indefinitely; we will give and you will take. I'll grasp your hand and you'll give this time. These days, there is a growing desire to work nonstop and to be defeated from all angles. He used a stick to stand up. The thong that followed him is far more powerful than his own life, even though he managed to survive on it. Even in the event of his death, the man behind him will always be immortal. Thus, as Bancharam states,

...what should I do? How many times do I go to die. They don't give up on anything. My plants...grandchildren...puipona...all shake their heads...say old man, everything has happened to me since you ...Then, in the pull of greater duty, the words of the mind of desire come out in Rabindranath language- I do not want to die in a beautiful world. I want to live among human beings.⁸

However, this garden also serves as an indirect source of support for Gopi and Padma. However, Naw Kodi executed a cunning plan that will give him control of the garden in Bancharam's absence. Bancharam has thus emerged from the midst of a battle for life and death in order to lead these people into a just and lovely life of freedom. We are really touched by this poor old man Bancharam's charity. He remarked to the landlord, "I can't die without talking like this."

"Decorated garden" has become deeply ingrained in the metaphor's social awareness. Manoj Mitra, the playwright, aims to delve deeply into the intricacies of the interaction between the individual and society in order to arrive at a profound truth. That's the key to surviving. This is life's receipt. Bancharam, then, desired to live. In addition to surviving, he wished to uphold the rights of

⁶ Ghosh, Ajit Kumar: Drama and Playwright, DeJ Publishing, Col-63, 1401, p.34.

⁷ Ghosh, Ajit Kumar: History of Bengali Drama, General, Cole-13, June-1999, p.113.

⁸ Mitra, Manoj: Bancharam: In Cinema Theater, Mitra & Ghosh Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata-63, p.99.



his ancestors. For as long as he has life in him, he will stop at nothing to rid the world of trash and lawlessness and turn this lovely earth, his well-kept garden, into a child-friendly environment. The play's conclusion establishes this reality. Bancha had to live for this newborn, as Puti, the human son, discovered when he went to the home of 'Century Buro' Bancharam. It's been a while since the garden was ornamented with the hopes of bearing fruit. However, he is going to design a fresh garden with blossoming new flowers for his grandfather today. Bancha will never, ever allow his garden to dry up. Rather, it will get more verdant and fresh. Increased edema will fill the outcome. When the voice is raised to a high pitch and the spine straightened, the play succeeds.

...Don't cry grandpa...how many birds there are...yes yes...wandering around the branches...yes yes...see you tomorrow morning...how many mango bowls...The earthen moon spreads like pearls...humming...the bees swarm in swarms...yes yes see...Yes, yes, I will give it all to you...I have arranged it for you...Yes, yes...⁹

Based on his personal experiences, he realized that the enemy has no boundaries. Thus, the zamindar's folidol pushed him to consume it. Despite Zamindar Na Kori Dutt passing away before him, he sought solace in his deceased father's arms. The children's lives are becoming brighter, and nature's embrace is becoming more radiant. The joyful face of Bancharam came out in the morning light. a life-filled desire.

The playwright kept the flame of desire burning brightly. Bancha did not allow it to finish, even after it did. These kids are born to death. Common people like Gupi, Padma, and Chor will live as long as they do. The dramatist has demonstrated that the following generation will likewise endure. Even while death is wonderful, life is much more than that. So, Manoj Mitra gave Bancha fresh life rather than allowing him to perish. The playwright has unintentionally veered toward desire by doing this. Yes, it is correct—this tendency's meaning is that it is a tendency toward life. This is timeless, yet it is ever fresh. The play name's consonant does not blossom otherwise. The playwright's work makes the dialogue in "Sajano Bagan" come to life and seem natural. It appears that the conversation in the ornamented garden has evolved into a contemporary poetry. When Padma, the country woman, remarks, "Such plants...empty yard...water of the lake...wind...I will not leave it."¹⁰ Then we find this poetic exchange fascinating. There are plenty of these beautiful exchanges in the play. It is for this reason that the play's title is also upheld. The play's conclusion, akin to the planned garden, overwhelms us with Bancharam's dialogue's poetic elegance, rhythm, and melody.

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⁹ Gupta, Devnarayan: Evolution of Natyasanglap, M. C. Sarkar & Sons Pvt. Ltd.-Cole-63, p.89.

¹⁰ Mitra, Manoj: Bancharam: In Cinema Theater, Mitra & Ghosh Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata-63, p.221.