

# The Picture of New India's Development Model in *Burial at the Sea* by Khushwant Singh

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**Abstract – The major theme of the novel named *Burial at the Sea* is to represent the conflicting and problematic situation under which India has to undergo. The principal question is related to what modal of development India should follow. The question is related to whether India should an industrialized country or an agrarian country after the partition of India. But both the modal have its own problems and loopholes in its structure. No Single of development can be advocated in India. The novel also shows the negative aspects of development s ranging from industrial and agrarian. By and large, the novel advocates the mix of development ranging from industrialist and agrarian country.**

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## INTRODUCTION

The true representation of New India's development regarding economic, social, moral, politics, religious and etc. has been a pressing and mind-boggling issue for the Indian writer because it is not an easy task to represent whole picture of India during the partition and after the partition in their creative literary works because India was witnessing and facing worst and troubling time during the struggle for independence and after its independence. There is no doubt that various famous and learned Indian as well as foreign writers have attempted to present the whole scenario and circumstances in which India had to undergo in their literary works such as *Ice-Candy-Man* by Bapsi Sidhwa, *Train To Pakistan* by Kushwant Singh, *Azadi* (1975) by Chaman Nahal and etc..

As far as Khushwant Singh is concerned, he is master of presenting true picture of India's troubling and confusing time. Being an Indian, he has undoubtedly experienced and witnessed complete picture of India which is not possible for any foreign writer to represent. The most important aspect of his writer is that Khushwant Sing does not show any biasness in presenting the picture of real India. It does not matter for him that which country he longs to. He presents what he observes and feels about the perplexing situation of India's development. The novel ostensibly shows what is going to happening with the uncertain future of India after the partition. This confusing and problematic condition of India is clearly presented in *Burial at Sea*.

It will be helpful and beneficial to know about the problems under which India undergoes before and

after partition of India. The main obstacle before India is the question regarding what kind of development and economic India should have to follow to raise the socio-economic circumstances of common masses living below the poverty line. Being an agrarian country, it was not possible to India to uplift impoverished Indian people who were not educated and skilled in particular profession. On the other hand, Indian agriculture sector was not in position to provide and meet the demand of Indians because nothing substantial policy and initiative were taken to upend the bad condition of agriculture. Moreover, India was not in a condition which could transform India into industrialized country to improve the lives of Indian. India was unable to decide and choose the path of development which could lead India to socio-economic development.

There are some leaders as well as entrepreneurs who was demanding and advocating that it was important for India to be an industrialized country to uplift the condition of India from poverty. They said that if India decided to opt for the industrial modal of India, it would be feasible and possible to provide jobs to millions of unemployed people. On the hand, there is other section of society which was no not in favour of industrialization of India because industrialization would create different type of problems. They believed that industrialization meant the end of Indian cultural history. India would lose its civilization and brotherhood which were not existed in industrialized country. But the irony was that agricultural of development was crushed and handicapped by the industrialisation. It can be said that India was not in position to choose one of

development. Both modal of developments had its own loopholes and drawbacks. Such kind of chaotic and confusing condition has beautifully been presented in the present novel.

The ideologies of industrialization and agrarian India are represented by Jai Bhagwan and Mahatama Gandhi respectively in the *Burial at the Sea*. The novel shows that being opponents of each other in their ideologies regarding the development of India, there are not antagonists of each other just because of their ideological differences. Both Gandhi ji and Jai Bhagwan want to see India a developed country in different way. The narrator of the novel shows this difference in the following line by saying:

“He contradicted everything Gandhi stood for: handspun cloth, self-sufficient villages, very basic education. Victor wanted to see an India which had modern textile mills, steel plants, automobile factories, huge dams and thousands of miles of canals, every village connected by road more schools, colleges and hospitals. In short, the most prosperous country in the world, free of religious and caste prejudices,” (Singh 21)

Gandhi believes that India should not follows the path of industrialization because such development would bring different kinds of issues such slums, poverty, child labour, environmental concern, disappearance of villages, family disintegration and so on. Such development does not fit in the Indian context. Gandhi feels hesitation and anxieties after knowing the thoughts of Jai Bhagwan. He says if we follow the path of western countries for development, we would not be able to sustain the essence of Indian civilization which is the best civilization of the world's civilization. Gandhi also says in a letter to Jai Bhagwan:

“You don't seem to approve of my India of what we should make of India. You want to see India become westernized and full of material goods, You may ave a point there most Indian might want to become rich, live in big houses, have motor cars, wear fancy clothes. I am sure they will achieve these material ambitions but in the process lose their souls and their Indianness” (Singh 26)

These lines clearly show the intention of Gandhi Ji who does not want India to quite its own Indianness. It is very sympathetic situation that he very well knows that perhaps he would not able to dissuade Indian from becoming westernized in their living style.

Gandhi is also aware of the fact that if India endeavours to accept the industrialization of India, millions of Indian would lose their jobs leading the destruction of handicraft. Industrialization cannot provide jobs to every Indian because such a is based on the capitalization. Capitalization means

earning money only. Capitalistic people would not care of common people who are indulged in the handicraft for their living. Not oblivious of such troubling facts, Gandhi Ji asks Jai Bhgwan in a letter by saying: “You still believe in industrialization India? Steel mills, textile mills and all that kind of thing? What will happen to the millions of weavers who make a living spinning and weaving cloth?” (Singh 64).

Contrary to Gandhi's developmental ideology, Jai Bhagwan, the protagonist of the novel, thinks differently from Gandhi. He out and out believes in the concept of industrialization of India. He always says that it is prerequisite for India to lift common masses from poverty. Industrialization does not mean only setting up plants and factory of textile in India. Jai Bhagan wants to see India developed in every aspect including facility of electricity, road connectivity, water supply, poverty alleviation, job creation, availability of basic needs and self-sufficient country which does not depend upon imports from alien country. India needs to become a producer country rather than importing country. Contary to his ideology, the ground reality of India tells something depressing condition in which India is undergoing. Being an agrarian country, India's seventy percent population depends upon agricultural sector for their survival. So the idea of making India an industrialized country is too far from reality and feasibility.

The novel ostensibly shows that Jai Bhagwan is determined character who does not want to bend and yield before the adverse circumstances of India. He is a son of lawyer named Krishan Lal Mattoo who wants her to become a laywer in his life so as to extend his family business. But Jai Bhagwan Mattoo has some else in his mind for his future life. He does not want to limit his latent talent of entrepreneurship. It is extremely strange thing regarding Jai Bhagwan's character that in the age of thirteen he decides to become an entrepreneur and wants to provide job. It is clear that he wants to become a job creator rather than a job seeker. When he meets the governor with his father, he tells him that “My father would like me to take over his practice but I want to make thinks like railway engines, cars, and trucks. I think India needs those things more than lawyers” (Singh 18).

After completing his study, he comes back to India and plans to set up factory. He is oblivious of the fact that it is not easy to set up textile mills and factories in India because setting up factory requires a large amount of money and large area of land which he does not have. But he is clear in idea. He tells his plan to his father: “I want to set up the biggest and the most modern textile factory in India, either here or in Bombay or Ahmedabad. I will have to raise the money to buy land and import machinery from England. I have brought the details

of what I will need with me” (Singh 77). With the passage of time, he gets successful in his plans and sets up factories. With the help of his factory, he increases the value of barren lands which have remained unused for many years. If we look from the different aspect, the decision of setting up mills on the barren land is right decision because it does not only bring the unused land into use but also provides job the jobless villagers. It is unfortunate for the people of village that they have land but can use the land. Jai Bhagwan’s decision brings rays of hope in their lives. The villagers readily accept the overture offered by him and say: “give us what you think is reasonable. Your coming will bring light to our village. Our generations to come will bless you” (Singh 78). These lines show that the villagers do not need land but need job to sustain their live. Moreover, it can be said that creation of jobs is the demand of time.

Within a few years, he sets up his empire of factories and textile mills in India. The narrator of the novel tells the readers that “Modernize or perish” (Singh 80) is the ultimate objective of Jai Bhagwan’s life in the field of making India industrialized country. New colonies and towns begin to grow around his factories. The conditions of his employees is out and out clear in the following line when the narrator of the novel says: “He paid his workers unheard of salaries, built housing, colonies for them and make sure all his products were priced low... his true ambition was to make prosperity possible for every Indian” (Singh 81). One the other, if the development modal of Gandhi is followed in India, it would not feasible to provide millions of job to unemployed Indian masses. It can be observed and felt that the villages of India have been indulged in the practice of agriculture from the ancient time but the sector has only met the basic needs of population of India. In the present condition the only modal of agrarian as development modal is not possible in the India, which has been presented in the novel.

Like the agriculture, the industrialized modal of development is not without any loophole and drawbacks. This modal has its own problems. The novel also makes clear that the industrialized modal has created thousand of job but the bitter truth cannot ignored that it has also brought numerous social issues and problems ranging from environment degradation, establishment of slum area, child labour, increase of population density, alienation, disintegration of family relationship, increase in the rate of crimes and so on. Due to the increasing influence of Jai Bhagwan in commercial sector as well as in politics, he is murdered by his enemy. Undoubtedly, it can be said that Gandhi Ji is right when he opposes the industrialization in India. The tragic and traumatic condition of the labourers can be observed when the leader of the labourers of different mills shows his aggression by saying: “You know the slums and hovels we live in. Have you

seen the palatial mansions these people live in with hordes off servants? Your proprietor even has a ship of his own where he spends his days and nights so he does not hav to see how the poor of Bombay live” (Singh 180). These lines show the anger and rage amongst the labourers when their condition becomes inhuman and unbearable in their life

To sum up, the novel named *Burial at the Sea* has clearly presented the true and precise condition of India in which India had to undergo before and after the partition. Khushwant Singh shows that neither the agricultural modal nor the industrialized modal of development has fitted in the India because both the modal have its own problems and loopholes. But there is no other alternate modal for India to adopt. But one has to be followed to upend the adverse economic and social condition of India. The main question is related to what modal of development should be followed and supported. Perhaps, the best option for India is to adopt a mix economy in which both the modals should be supported and advocated so as to uplift the level of living standard of common people.

## REFERENCES

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