

The Power, Corruption and Insurgency reflected in the novel of Dhruba Hazarika's Sons of Brahma.

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Abstract

In the novel, the Sons of Brahma of Dhruba Hazarika, we find the reflection of power, corruption and insurgency in the backdrop of the critical period Assam. Here we find about some insurgents and their activities and their link with a university research scholar named Jongam Hanse and a PG student named Anjan Phukan. The IPS officer, Nilim Kumar comes and takes them with them and finally a police officer encounters the young person named Anjan Phukan. The prominent insurgent group here is named as The Revolutionary Army. The violence done by the rebels are also not acceptable. There are many ways to protest without violence. The act of the police officer is harsh, ruthless as he fulfils his grudge, and here we find many things about the insurgent problem, corruption issue and also, we see how power corrupt people.

Abbreviation- SOB- Sons of Brahma

Key Notes- Insurgency, power, corruption, violence

Main Article:

When we read the novel, we become aware that this novel is about the insurgency problem which is prevailed in Assam. Here we find some characters like Anjan Phukan, the secretary of the Revolutionary Army, Jongam Hanse, the research scholar, who is given to write articles for the insurgent group. Arms and ammunitions are trafficked through rivers and the insurgent groups collect them. The boatman works for the rebel group. During this period there are ample evidence of violence by the insurgent groups while struggling against the government. And the police force of the government also does the terror like activities in order to kill or catch them. We find instances of many people who are killed mercilessly during this period by the rebel groups. There are many ambushes from the rebel side. The police officer, Nilim Kumar saves his life somehow from such ambushes. Thereafter, he becomes more furious and kills many rebels. His own sister is also shot dead by unknown person. So, he becomes revengeful. Many people are kidnapped by the Revolutionary Army and they thereafter demand huge amount of money to release that person from their clutches. They kill many persons violently and throughout Assam there is gloomy environment. Killing of person for any cause is not justifiable. Many youths of the state loss their lives and this becomes a tragedy to their relatives.

There are many secret killings, people only know that people are killed but those who have killed them, it is never identified.

“...Members of rebels killed by persons whom no one has been able to identified”. (*SOB*, P-115)

As if the author tries to identify the secret killer through the dialogues of various characters. In the society many people tell many things but nobody is sure about it. It is duty of the govt. to identify the secret killer. But the govt. is not able to do it. Many people want to say the administration is involved with it. Such type of conversation which people usually hear without sufficient prove is reflected in the novel. The police officer is blamed for it. In a dialogue between a person named Robin Saika who is Area Commander of the Revolutionary Army and Nilim kumar, the police officer, it is revealed that the police officer is the secret killer. When Robin blames him to be the secret killer, he only laughs.

The dialogue between Robin Saikia and Nilim Kumar is briefly given below:

“...Sala, we know you are behind the secret killings.

Nilim Kumar laughed.” (*SOB*, P-253)

Why they are not identified, that is really a great question. This may happen that some powerful persons are behind it or the killers are super expert so that they can leave the place too quickly before other persons catch or identify them. However, many of them are surrendered. Perhaps they want to take the advantages offered by the government. Or maybe they are disillusioned by the ideology by which they were attracted. They may find the goal of the underground organisation unrealistic to be realised.

In the novel, *SOB* we also find a character, named Nilim Kumar, who is an IPS officer whose parents are also well-educated person. The officer does such actions which are sometimes legally justified and sometimes are not according to other characters of the novel. When we see his revenge motif and the style of killing rebels then we can say that he is an honest person who tries to save the govt. But when we see from the humanitarian ground then we can say that he should be less ruthless and can at least arrest them or at least can shot at the legs so that that the rebel youth can survive or he can be reformed. There is also another way of dominating the rebels by talking with their chief. The novel is written in such a time of Assam when people live in tension. The tension not only from one side, but from both sides- from the rebel side and from the administrative side. Every killing or kidnaping makes the people terrify live a timid life. However, he is presented as an honest and ruthless office and better than his seniors like Numal Deka and the Commissioner, Mr. Chaliha. It is clearly written that he has killed four rebels. He is also pointed by the other characters as the master-mind of secret-killing.

But as Nilim Kumar or any other police officer is a powerful officer, he can easily hide his activities or covers it as an encounter although he kills such person. There is another controversial senior police officer in the novel whose name is Numal Deka, who has link with the rebels and has his link in killing Nilim Kumar's sister. It is revealed that he kills Anjan Phukan from back while he lets him run to escape although everyone thinks that Nilim Kumar has killed him. So, for him we can say that power corrupts him. There are some lines spoken by the narrator about Nilim Kumar like this:

“Thinks he owns the universe because he commands through fear, through terror.” (*SOB*, P-117)

~~When he has the power with him, he should use it in some other way, not directly by killing~~

rebels. They may be arrested by the police, or giving them long term imprisonment or the govt. should negotiate with them by solving the issues they raise. Still, we cannot blame him completely as he follows the order of his senior officer or minister. So, his senior, Numal Deka, Inspector General of Police is also equally responsible for the such act of cruelty. Whether mercy for rebels is permissible it is also a matter of discussion. But with some section the govt. is trying to negotiate and they are given the opportunity to come to the main stream. This is a way to peace without violence. So, this way should be emphasised. It is reflected in the dialogue between the characters when they blame Nilim Kumar, the police officer, for his ruthlessness.

Here, we find many instances which show corruption in many ways in the novel. The guards get low salary which is unable to run their families. But they work really hard. So, they take bribe whenever they get chance. This is manifested in the line of the novel:

“Only a few of us Guards are loyal.” (*SOB*, P-80).

But taking bribe is not justified. The govt. should give sufficient salary to the employees. Only the high officer should not get high salary. The lower category employees also should get such salary which may be enough for their requirements to run their family.

In other place, Pranab, one of the university students tells like this:

“When members of the educated class, like us, resort to large-scale corruption, what else can you expect?” (*SOB*, P-12)

Yes, corruption is a menace. It has deep root in the society. Therefore, some educated employees even uneducated employees also cannot free themselves from the greed of bribe. But there should be a start against it. The presentation of the evil of society in the novel is itself a way to make the people aware. But here we do not get any solution or a way to it. But the voices of the characters show that they want to solve such problems.

Conclusion: To conclude the article, it can be said that the novel expresses some harsh social realities that prevail in the society of Assam, though now it lessens its earlier force but it was in vogue in some decades ago and the novel, *SOB* very truly paints a picture of that time. People fear to talk openly about the activities of the insurgents but they witness it or hear it or find it through medias many through print medias. The cause of such underground organisation is a matter of discussion rather than only the activity of the insurgent groups or the counter dominant activities by the administration. The state of Assam, is a backward state in comparison to the other states of the country. There are many issues, unemployment problems, poverty, illegal migrants’ issue, flood, poverty etc. So, some youths think differently and formed the under-ground organisation and some think that by making Assam an independent country itself will solve all the problems. Although initially they get support from the society but their activities and the suppression by the administration which follows a series of violent acts, shrink them as they find it safe by keeping quiet. Common people do not want violence from any side. But whether any one wants it or not it happens in Assam and so there is a true reflection of that period. On such an issue the novel is written and through the dialogues of the characters many things are expressed. Such novels will open a path of discussion in future. In conclusion, we can say that peace should prevail in Assam and no-violence should be guidance for all.

End Note:

- a) Hazarika Dhruba, *Sons of Brahma*, p-253.
- b) Ibid, p-117
- c) Ibid, p-80
- d) Ibid, p-12

Bibliography: Hazarika Dhruba, *Sons of Brahma*. Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2014