

Quest: The Genesis Of Literature**Dr.Vartika Raj****Associate Professor****Department of English****JDVM PG College****Kanpur**

(Received:26August2020/Revised:10September2020/Accepted:16September2020/Published:26September2020)

Abstract

Right from the inception of an embryo in the mother's womb of a human being, its birth till the end of the individual's life, there are innumerable changes and developments. The changes can be categorized into physical, mental and emotional changes. All these factors form an individual's personality. With the growth in mental age, there are various changes in emotions and feelings, which in turn give rise to curiosity for one thing or the other. This curiosity develops into some kind of Quest. This paper deals with the various kinds of Quests and how they are related to Literature.

Introduction

Since time immortal when Adam ate the apple from the tree of knowledge, the quest by humanity began. The term 'Quest' is not a new term in Indian literature and culture. It is this quest, which converted Prince Siddhartha to Lord Buddha. In his quest for the 'Self' and the quest for 'the cycle of life', he left his kingdom to attain enlightenment and salvation. It was the quest to overcome the pain, sorrow, sickness, materialism and the imbalance in the society that led the Prince to leave all the comforts and materialistic pursuits of his kingly life to live a life of a saint who roamed across in the search of enlightenment. His thoughts and preaching gave him the title of Lord Gautam Buddha and found followers all across the world. Buddhism became a religion, which shows its presence in different parts of the world.

Another example of 'Quest' which deals with almost every kind of quest that the civilization can think of can be found in *ŚhrimadBhagavadgītā* like:

1. **Quest for the 'Divine'**: Man has always been curious to know about the powers that control the Sun, the Moon, the Earth and the rest of the Universe. The human civilization has worshipped these powers as God. Different civilizations have different ways and methods to worship these powers in the form of different Gods such as God of Fire,

Wind, Sun, Moon, Seas and Oceans, Rivers, Seasons, etc. These divine powers have always been matter of the Unknown and hence there has been a perpetual Quest for the Divine. Such quests have resulted into the establishment of different religions, beliefs, and their respective preaching. The Quest for the Divine in the Sanatan Dharma gave rise to great preachers and saints. Tirthankars gave rise to Jainism and the Jain Literature. In the same way Prince Siddhartha's Quest for the Divine converted him to Lord Buddha and Buddhism. There are many learning and literary centers of Buddhism. The Holy books like Rig Veda, the Upanishads and the Puranas are full of Knowledge still to be explored. The Sangam Literature is the result of convocation of Literary people and their literary works.

2. **Quest for the 'Existence of the Universe'**: This has led to the development of subjects like astrology, astronomy and given rise to explorations and development of modern science. The theory of relative motion, Newton's laws of gravitation have changed the lives of the people in various ways. The Modern Space Science, satellites, and modern methods of communication have revolutionized the World. These changes have resulted in the growth of modern Literature. Emails have replaced letters. Literary works and books are transformed into blogs.
3. **Quest for the 'Origin of the World'**: Mankind has always wondered regarding the origin of the World. In Indian mythology, it is believed that everything originated from Lord Bramha and the place of origin was water. Likewise, different religions and beliefs have their own concept of the origin of the World. The Indians have always searched Bramha and given rise to different theories, preaching to the society in the form of stories, narrations, songs and poems. The discovery of cell, atom and the latest the God particle (the tiniest particle in the Universe) or the Bramha particle establishes the Indian mythology of Bramha. These effects have always made impact on the human behaviour and thinking process resulting in various kind of Literature.
4. **Quest for the 'Cycle of Life'**: It is with the birth of a child that the cycle of life begins. As soon as the child is born, it brings a spring of emotions not only among the parents but also among the relatives. As the child grows these emotions of happiness, sorrow etc. are expressed in form of lullaby, fairy tales, mythological stories etc. As the child attains adulthood his habitat and environment play important role in the various emotions resulting into different kind of Literature. As the cycle of life moves forward to instances

like separations, conjugation, sickness, these become an integral part of the individual's life. Thus, we find the literary artists writing differently in the various stages of their life.

5. **Quest for the 'Belongingness':** According to **Dictionary.com** and **Thesaurus.com**, **Belongingness** (noun) is "the quality or state of being an essential or important part of something." For example, "The Company has developed social programs to give employees a sense of belongingness." They also are of the opinion that the term was "First recorded in 1930-35; belonging + -ness".ⁱ

The **OxfordDictionary** defines the term **Belongingness** as "the state or feeling of belonging to a particular group" for example "disruptions in the social relationships evoke threats to children's sense of belongingness."

The **CollinsDictionary** describes it as a noun referring to "the human state of being an essential part of something."

Belongingness is a strong and an inevitable emotional need that is a part of the human nature. The psychologists have established that one or the other motive drives human behaviour and these driving and pulling forces are termed as motivations. According to Sigmund Freud, two basic motives drive the human behaviour viz. sex and aggression. Later, however, psychologists like Abraham Maslow (1954) developed a new theory suggesting that there are five human *needs* or *motives*. He arranged these needs or motives in the following hierarchy:

- a. Physiological needs like hunger, thirst, sex, etc.
- b. Safety needs such as security, stability and order.
- c. Belongingness and love needs. They include need for affection, affiliation and identification.
- d. Esteem needs are motives for prestige, success and self-respect.
- e. Need for Self-actualization is the motivation to make maximum use of one's capabilities.

Maslow was of the opinion that an individual would satisfy his needs in the same order as mentioned in his motivational hierarchy. These factors play a vital role not only in an individual's personality development but also in his career, life style, and status in the society. The satisfaction or dissatisfaction of any of these motives becomes visible in the acts

of the individual including his personality, writing, speech, behaviour and other related human traits.

In the late 20th century, Roy Baumeister and Mark Leary proposed a Belongingness Hypothesis according to which all human beings need a minimum social interaction, which, if not fulfilled, an individual would suffer from loneliness and mental distress; such individuals have a strong desire to form new relationships. Baumeister and Leary further say that need for power, affiliation, achievement, intimacy and approval develop because of belongingness. Belongingness is one of the strongest factors among various other factors as far as psychological motivations are concerned. In their article, “The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation”, they point out:

A hypothesized need to form and maintain strong, stable interpersonal relationships is evaluated in light of the empirical literature. The need is for frequent, nonaversive interactions within an ongoing relational bond. Consistent with the belongingness hypothesis, people form social attachments readily under most conditions and resist the dissolution of existing bonds. Belongingness appears to have multiple and strong effects on emotional patterns and on cognitive processes. Lack of attachments is linked to a variety of ill effects on health, adjustment, and well-being. Other evidence, such as that concerning satiation, substitution, and behavioral consequences, is likewise consistent with the hypothesized motivation. Several seeming counterexamples turned out not to disconfirm the hypothesis. Existing evidence supports the hypothesis that the need to belong is a powerful, fundamental, and extremely pervasive motivation.¹

In order to understand the Belongingness hypothesis in a better way one can take into consideration an individual who has been geographically removed from his existing society. It makes the individual homesick because his belongingness needs remain dissatisfied. He, therefore, indulges in a Quest for Belongingness in things, people, and the surrounding environment he comes across. Many a time such quest for belongingness not only becomes

¹Baumeister, Roy F., Leary, Mark R. **The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation.** (Psychological Bulletin, Vol. 117(3), May 1995) p. 497.

evident in his meeting an old acquaintance or places he visits, objects he finds familiar but also in his acts, writings and behaviour.

The above-mentioned Quest for Belongingness finds place in Literature because it is an important aspect of the diaspora writings.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that Quest is an integral part of human nature. Literary people all across the world have been effected by one of these quests. For example poets like W.B. Yeats, in his poem ‘The Second Coming’ writes.

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

The above example is the outcome of Quest for self and Quest for Existence. In the same way Chinua Achebe’s novel “Things Fall Apart” (title taken from the above-mentioned poem of Yeats) is influenced events and conditions of the African society. Achebe seems to be in his Quest for belongingness. Therefore, it is not wrong to suggest that Quest is the genesis of all forms of Literature.

References

1. Sastri, Pt. Haragovinda ed. *Kullukabhata’s Manusmirti*. (Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Bhawan, 2012.)
2. Sharma, Rajnath ed. *Tulsidas: Vinay-Patrika*. (Agra: VinodPustakMandir, 1970.)
3. ŚhrimadBhagavadgītā. (Gorakhpur: Gita Press, 2007.)
4. Sharma, Shri Ram. *Atharvaveda*. (Bareilly: Sanskriti sansthan, 1993)
5. <https://swarajyamag.com>
6. <https://www.freepressjournal.in>