Jogendra Chandra Basu's *Maḍel Bhaginī* in its Historical Context

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Contents

Notes and Abbreviations

Notes

Conventional anglicised forms are used in the text for proper names. For the actual pronunciation of the Bengali names an appendix has been added using diacritics. These have been used in the text only for the names of Bengali books and newspapers and for Indian mythological names.

Most Bengali terms are originally given in footnotes in diacritics, while a corresponding translation of the same is given in the text for a better understanding. In case the translation is not given in the text, it is given in the footnotes. In the bibliography diacritics have been used for the names of Bengali books and their authors.

In section 4.2 'Development of Magazines and Newspapers', I have conciously concentrated more on Bengali newspapers, periodicals and magazines, although mention has also been made of some of the very significant similar enterprises in English like Rammohan Roy's 'Brahmanical Magazine', 'Bengal Spectator' etc.

In the second half of the 19th century, the so-called Hindu Revival movement had two clear groupings. While the first group, represented by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Bhudev Mukhopadhyay, Nabin Chandra Sen etc., propagated the cause of orthodox but reasoned Hinduism, the second was an extremist defence of the popular Hindu practices. In our discussion we will refer to the first group as Hindu revivalists and the second as populist neo-Hindus.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the text:

MB	*Maḍel Bhaginī.*
YCBR	*Yogendra Candra Basu Racanābalī*; Granthamela, *Kalikātā*, Vol.I 1976, Vol.II 1982 and Vol.III 1986.
YS	*Yogendra Smaraṇī*; Granthamela, *Kalikātā*, Vol.I 1976, Vol.II 1982 and Vol.III 1986.

1 Introduction

The socio-political, religious and economic conditions of a society always determine the characteristics of its art and literature. The works of authors and poets are influenced, if not necessarily directed, by the contemporary social struggle, political standpoint, moral obligation and economic development of their environments. Common people build up a society, and the task of a writer is to transfer their inner feelings, hopes and aspirations, joys and sorrows into written words. Asit Sinha (Asit Sinha; 1983, 10-13) opines that different ideologies play their role in determining the stream of consciousness of a writer, but that at a general level his work should always concern people, and that the novelty of literature is only achieved when a writer transgresses all ideological inclinations and class-based boundaries.

19th century Bengal was swayed by many rapid developments, English education being the most profound of them all, leaving no corner of the society untouched. Many tried to abandon apart the age-old mode of thinking and change their norms of living. In a way, European commercialism gave birth to a new social class. This wealthy class flourished as mediators of British commerce and trade in India and gradually became a determining social factor. But in the early phase of their opulence, many of its members, having neither the taste nor the education for a proper use of their newly acquired money, engaged themselves in practices like womanising, excessive drinking and exuberant show of wealth. They were the direct products of a degenerated social structure.

The new middle class male was termed as the *bābu*, the most written about contemporary figure in 19th century Bengali literature, in which common people seldom had the opportunity of taking centre-stage. Conscious about the loop-holes of their own society, many writers tried to reveal their contempt about the *bābu* society, using satire with a highly sarcastic undertone as a suitable medium.

A part of this middle class, acquiring Western education, constituted the Bengali intelligentsia, while their 'degenerated' counterpart came to be harshly criticised by the popular press. The term *bābu* became identified chiefly with this counterpart. Specially the intellegentsia was gradually becoming conscious of the inherent evils and weaknesses of their society, and in their attempt to make the larger section aware of these, took recourse to the most effective literary form, satire. It was effective for mirroring their own selves and fulfilled the purpose of self-critique of the fast emerging middle class society, which flourished in its role of mediator between the colonial power and their fellow countrymen[1]. This mode of self-reflection became a deciding feature of the narrative prose of early novels, *prahasan*s[2] and *nak/śā*s[3], which saw probably their most fertile phase in 19th century Bengali literature[4].

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[1]'The colonial middle class in Calcutta, no less than in other centres of colonial power, was simultaneously placed in a position of sub-ordination in one relation and a position of dominance in another.' (Partha Chaterjee; 1992 (1995), 41).

[2]Theatrical farce.

[3]Satirical sketch.

[4]'The mode of self-ridicule became a major literary form of expressing the *bhadralok*'s view of himself.' (Partha Chatterjee; 1992 (1995), 63).

Jogendra Chandra Basu (1854-1905) was the founder of the popular newspaper *Baṅga-bāsī* and the *Baṅgabāsī* Press in the last decades of the 19th century. Shamita Basu[5] categorizes him as the 'well-known writer', who belonged to 'the core group of the so-called orthodox Hindu revivalists' (Shamita Basu; 2002, 134). His first novel *Maḍel Bhaginī* criticises the modern Brahmos for their uncoventional and liberated way of life. When Jogendra Chandra stepped into the Bengali literary field, the Brahmo Samaj had lost much of its initial organizational strength and ideological determination[6]. On the other hand, Hinduism also became 'an upsurge of customary Hindu social practices'. (Pradip Sinha; 1965, 95). Jogendra Chandra criticised not only the inconsistencies of the Brahmos, but also questioned some of the Hindu religious customs. Thus his works functioned as social critiques and also as ways of self-reflection and self-criticism.

This text attempts to discuss briefly the developments in various fields of Bengali society from the 19th century onwards, especially the educational and religious spheres. It also tries to mark the literary conditions which made the production of satirical novels such as *Maḍel Bhaginī* possible and contributed to its popularity. The development of Bengali literature and the Bengali novel occupies special importance for our area of discussion, as it serves as the immediate background to *Maḍel Bhaginī*. All of Jogendra Chandra's novels call for a better understanding of the late 19th century socio-cultural and literary background, especially as most of his attacks were directed either against the Brahmos or the anglicised reformist Hindus. Himself a part of the late 19th century so-called Hindu Revivalism, which ultimately became an aggressive movement at the end of the century[7], Jogendra Chandra catered to the more orthodox group of the Hindu reformers and always expressed his firm belief in traditional Hinduism even though it made his name synonymous with extreme conservatism and detached him from the other progressive Hindu reformers of the age like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (1838-1894) and Bhudev Mukhopadhyay (1825-1894). 'It's [*Baṅgabāsī*'s] editor, Jogindranath [sic] Basu and his friend Indranath Bandyopadhyay, a highly talented satirist, reduced Brahmoism to an object of ridicule through their often scurrilous writings. No writer of the period could ignore the phenomenon. Its bizarre and often extremely tasteless manifestations soon had a sobering effect on the enthusiasts. All major thinkers and publicists distanced themselves from it. Yet, some of them, Bhudeb and Bankim included, had tenuous and short-lived links with Sasadhar[8] ....Rabindranath ridiculed the false glorification of the Hindu past, but his portrayal of individuals caught up in the throes of Hindu chauvinism in two of his best known novels—*Caturaṅga* and *Gorā*—is remarkable for its quality of empathy. The anxious and neurotic effort at cultural self-assertion was a major trait of the milieu in late nineteenth century Bengal.' (Tapan Raychaudhuri; 1988, 11).

A short analysis of the novel stresses its various aspects like the structure, plot, characters, style, language, and satire. The conclusion tries to determine the position of Jogendra Chandra and his novels in Bengali literary historiography during his own time and includes some more recent evaluations.

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[5]Jogendra Chandra's name appears in her book as 'Jogesh Chandra Basu'.

[6]'The Brahmo Samaj itself fast began to lose its vitality'. (Pradip Sinha; 1965, 123).

[7]'An aggressive Hinduism replaced the shy passive creed that used formerly to be ashamed of itself and stand ever on the defensive against growing foes and a diminishing number of adherents.' (Kamal Kumar Ghatak; 1991, 1. quoting Jadunath Sarkar: from *India Through the Ages*; Sarkar; Calcutta, 1928, 121).

[8]Pandit Sasadhar Tarkachuramani, one of the leading figures of populist neo-Hinduism.

2 Social Scenario

One of the main foundations of Indian society is undoubtedly religion[1]. In the perception of many Bengalis of the new middle class of the 19th century, Hindu society had not made any progressive development, and medieval beliefs lingered in religious and social practices. It seemed that before the 19th century Hindu religion had become synonymous with 'an unending series of rituals and ceremonies performed in strict accordance with the scriptural rules' (R. C. Majumdar; 1965, 21). On the other hand, many 'obnoxious' (ibid.) practices like witchcraft, tantric rites and sorcery were openly exercised by common people and tantric beliefs and practices flourished in Bengal. Adherence to a strict caste system and restrictions in food and marriage, preference for vegetarianism as a symbol of higher status, child marriage and strict prohibition of widow-remarriage, *satī*[2], prohibition of women education, the *Kulīn* system[3] and untouchability dominated everyday life. A 'general deterioration' (ibid.) was seen as dominating Hindu social life.

This began to be seen as a mark of moral degeneration, as reflected in the writings of contemporary Englishmen and early Indian writers. Most of these accounts do not show any positive picture of Indian society, and in particular Bengalis were the most damned class. As Lord Cornwallis stated, "Every native of Hindustan, I verily believe, is corrupt" (R. C. Majumdar; 1965, 23). Bengalis were believed to be a class of cowardly people and the very term 'Bengali' was used as an abuse to mean everything "cowardly and roguish" (ibid.). But at a later date the same author, Bishop Heber (Lord Bishop of Kolkata in 1824-25) states that, "On the whole they are a lively, intelligent and interesting people....... . They are sober, industrious, dutiful to their parents and affectionate to their children....... ." He defines their vices as, "arising from slavery, from an unsettled state of society, and immoral and erroneous systems of religion" (ibid.). Reverend James Long throws some more light on this issue in his discussion on the observations of Bishop Heber, quoting the latter as commenting that, "They are a nation, with whom whatever their faults, I for one, shall think it impossible to live long without loving them – a race of gentle and temperate habits, with a natural talent and acuteness beyond the ordinary level of mankind, and with a thirst of general knowledge....... . " (ibid.).

On the whole, however, as projected in contemporary records and literature, the life of Bengal in general in the late 18th and early 19th centuries was dominated by, what appears in R. C. Majumder's account (1965, 21-24), a degraded moral standard. Specially 'the upper class or aristocracy was rotten to the core and the masses were poor and ignorant' (ibid.); sexual immorality was predominant everywhere, among the rich and the poor. Wine, women, vulgar merriments observed through dramatic performances, dancing girls, poets' contests etc. were seen as trademarks of the wealthy section. Huge amounts of money were spent in dolls' marriages, bird-flying, kite-flying, gambling and

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[1] 'The term "religion", of course, derives from the Latin "religio"....... Primarily "religio" involved performing ancient ritual practices and paying homage to the gods.' (Richard King; 1999, 35).

[2] Burning of a widow beside her dead husband.

[3] Taking numerous wives by high class Hindu males.

on the occasions of religious festivals[4]. Degrading mental character was seen as reflected in a callousness and apathy towards human sufferings. A habit of imitating everything English was in fact evident among the wealthy section of the Indian society as a status symbol. The perfect example of this class often found expression in the persona of the *bābu* in contemporary society and literature.

As a counter-effect to this widely percived state of degeneration, two clear trends were observable. Inspired by Western rationalism, an effort was seen to break away from the existing codes of Hindu society. Attempting to free it from the clutches of age-old rigid customs and ritualism, the reformist trend found expression in the development of many *Samāj*s that fostered separate religious ideas without really going against mainstream Hinduism. Specially in Bengal the Brahmo Samaj movement created such a stir, that no social and literary discourse is possible without a detailed study of it. The second trend came out as a reaction against the first and was used as a defence mechanism to protect Hinduism from Western influence by invoking a supposedly 'revival' of Indian religion. Among them the populist neo-Hinduism glorified the Hindu religion and society as it existed and attacked the reformist Hindus, Brahmos and Christian missionaries in public meetings, seminars, oral debates and in literary publications. Jogendra Chandra was a representative of this 'revivalist' group and his novel *Maḍel Bhaginī*, with which the present text deals, is also written as a part of this movement, to criticize the Hindu and Brahmo reformers and to sing the praise of traditional faiths and values.

A part of the educated middle class at the beginning of the 19th century was much influenced by the Western philosophy and some took to Christianity. Acoording to many of this section, a corrupted form of Hinduism flourished among the rank and file, giving great importance to baseless rituals and unjustified superstitions. They therefore looked for a re-discovery and re-interpretation of the original form of Indian religion, detaching it from all unnecessary corruptions. Rammohan Roy, through his studies on Vedanta (*Bedānta Grantha* and *Bedānta Sār*, 1815) and later with the founding of the Brahmo Samaj (1828) was, to some extent, able to diminish the influence of the Christian missionaries among the educated people. In a similar way, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's novels portrayed traditional Hinduism in a glorified light and contributed to build up a sense of patriotism among the Bengali readers. Under the influence of Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1836-1886) many became again respectful of Hinduism and started to discover a new meaninig of their own religion. Then Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay's essays in his *Pāribārik Prabandha* (Essays on Family, 1882), *Sāmājik Prabandha* (Essays on Society, 1892) and *Ācār Prabandha* (Essays on Scriptural or Religious Rites, 1894) analysed the excellence and superiority of the Hindu civilization, society and religion and called for attention not only from the Hindus but also from many Brahmo scholars. Under the new trend, many learned and qualified Sanskrit scholars felt interested to interpret the essence of Hinduism in a simple language so that even the general readers should have no difficulty in understanding it.

At the same time, many revolutionary social reform movements were started by prominent Hindu thinkers like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891), Raja Radhakanta Deb (1784-1867), Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay etc. They all received or at least came in contact with the Western enlightenment ans and were influenced by its rational philosophy. Unlike the 'Young Bengal'[5] or the 'false' radical reformists, they remained

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[4]Sumanta Banerjee; 1989 and 1998.

[5]A radical student group led by Henry Louis Vivian Derozio.

rooted to their own social, cultural and religious tradition and tried to change their own society from within. They started the so-called 'Hindu Revival' by re-discovering and re-interpreting the original Vedic scriptures to the common people. They faced, no doubt, loads of harsh criticism from the orthodox society, specially as they fought for the cause of abolishing age-old dogmatic rituals like *satī* and child-marriage, and tried to start women's education, widow-remarriage etc. Populist neo-Hindu sections of the leadership were always opposed to the very idea of changing the traditional customs and instead stuck to their traditonal rituals and beliefs. Jogendra Chandra's popular newspaper, *Baṅgabāsī*, was one of the main representatives of this orthodox neo-Hindu attitude.

2.1 The Brahmo Samaj

Rammohan Roy started the *Ātmīya Sabhā*, a small association of like-minded people, in 1815. They engaged themselves with the recitation of the Vedic texts and theistic hymns. This association changed its name to Brahmo Samaj (*Brāhma Samāj*) in 1828. Their theory of monotheism, as opposed to traditional Hindu idolatry, encountered strong opposition. Rammohan tried to prove through his publications and discussions that polytheism and idolatry were degraded forms of Hinduism and thus were opposed to the higher teachings of the *Veda*s and *Upaniṣad*s. He translated many *Upaniṣad*s into Bengali, Hindi and English in order to prove that Hindu religion is essentially monotheistic. Rammohan's reformed principles of monotheism as found in the ancient *Upaniṣad*s and *Veda*s were reflected in the religious belief and the purposes of the Brahmo Samaj for quite some time.

The Samaj was conceived as a meeting-place of people without any distinction, who will behave and conduct themselves in an orderly, sober, religious and devout manner, for the worship and adoration of the eternal and immutable Being who is the Author and Preserver of the universe. He has no given name, designation or title or any graven image, statue or sculpture, carving, painting, picture, portrait or the like. He will accept no sacrifice, offering or oblation of any kind or thing, will permit no eating or drinking, feasting or rioting during worship. In conducting the said worship or adoration, no object, animate or inanimate, can be recognized as an object of worship. No sermon, preaching, discourse, prayer or hymns will be delivered, made or used in such worship. But the intention is contemplation of the Author and Preserver of the universe or to the promotion of charity, morality, piety, benevolence, virtue and the strengthening of the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds.

Rammohan's Brahmo Samaj believed that repentance is the only way to salvation. Their God was the all loving father-figure. Elevation and purification of the mind was the way towards attaining holiness. Not believers in rites, ceremonies or penances, they declared that moral righteousness, gaining of wisdom, divine contemplation, charity and the cultivation of devotional feelings were their rites and ceremonies. They attempted to govern and regulate feelings, purify the heart, cultivate devotion and discharge duties to God and to man to gain everlasting blessedness. Theoretically there was no distinction of caste among the Brahmos. They believed themselves to be all children of God, and therefore considered themselves as brothers and sisters[6].

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[6]David Kopf; 1988, 42-85, 249-310 and R. C. Majumder; 1965, 97-101.

After the death of Rammohan in 1833 in England, the Brahmo Samaj maintained a bare existence till 1841, when Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905) of the famous and wealthy Tagore family devoted himself to it. At that time traditional scholars in Bengal were more interested with the *Smṛti-Śāstra*s and ritual-based religious practices than with studies of the *Veda*s and *Upaniṣad*s. Debendranath rescued and revived Brahmoism. His Adi Brahmo Samaj (*Ādi Brāhma Samāj*) established itself as a spiritual fraternity when in 1843 he took formal initiation and signed the covenant modelled after it's founder Rammohan (R. C. Majumder; 1965, 101). He modified the Brahmo Samaj from its founder Rammohan's idea of keeping a strong belief in the scriptural authority of the *Veda*s and *Upaniṣad*s. About 1850 some of the followers of the new religion discovered that a greater part of the *Veda*s is polytheistic, so Debendranath based his ideas on nature and intuition, which was ruled more by European rationalism. A new convenant consisting of certain fundamental principles of Natural and Universal Theism was established in place of the Vedantic one. The new theory refused to accept the *Veda*s as the scriptural authority, as they did not support the idea of a formless *Brahman.* The non-dualistic relationship between God and his creations was also denied. Debendranath accepted the *Vedānta*s as the fundamental basis of his Adi Brahmo Samaj. His God was intensely personal and devoid of any human attributes and therefore not to be perceived by ordinary human sense-perceptions (Amiya P. Sen; 1993, 32).

All these radical theories were like hard blows to the Brahmo as well as to the Hindu society. But they failed to evoke any fresh controversy as at the same time Debendranth's open hostility towards the group of Young Bengal and towards Christian missionaries saved him from the harsh criticism of the orthodox Hindu press (ibid.). Under his supervision a printing press was made specially for the Samaj, and a monthly journal called the *Tattbabodhinī Patrikā* was established[7]. Bengali language owes much of its strength and elegance to this journal. The excessive puritanism, prudishness and the obsessive concern for guilt, repentance, sin and redemption among the members of the Brahmo Samaj at the time of Debendranath was inherited from the strong Victorian outlook (ibid.). Surprisingly, it was not the social heterodoxy of the Brahmos, but the religious non-conformism which was the main point of attack by the orthodox Hindu press. Between 1847 and 1858 branch societies were formed in different parts of India, especially in Bengal, and the new society made rapid progress, for which it was largely indebted to the spread of English education and the work of the Christian missionaries. In fact, the whole Samaj movement is a distinct product of the contest of Hinduism with Christianity in the 19th century.

In the later half of the 19th century many members of the Bramho Samaj itself started to question the righteousness of Debendranath's decision. The need was felt again to base religion on some scriptural authority. But, more or less, the standard norms of the Samaj remained unchanged. For a long time the Brahmos did not attempt any reform. But from 1865 onwards began a trend of infusing newly defined ideals like 'intuition', *Gurubād*[8] and *Bhakti*[9] into Brahmo faith (Amiya P. Sen; 1993, 57). A split became evident on the issues concerning dependency on Hinduism and a total disregard of idolatry and the caste system. The new reforms in 1866 were made by

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[7]Manamohan Ghosh; 1955, 259-266.

[8]The succession of the guru in the guru-disciple tradition.

[9]'......*bhakti*, devotion or love of God.' (Tapan Raychaudhuri; 1988, 146).

Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884), with demands for the abandonment of any external signs of caste distinction, much opposed by the older section. In fact Sen's *Nababidhān* which was based on some God-ordained purpose or *bidhān*s differed greatly from the older traditions. The new group made the Bramho Samaj with its manifold social reforms immensely popular even outside Bengal. Female education, education of the working class, cheap literature, temperance and charity were the five main pillars of Keshab Chandra's Bharatbarshiya Brahmo Samaj (*Bhārat¹barṣīya Brāhma Samāj*). The idea of providing people with cheap literature became a new trend and Jogendra Chandra, with the same conviction, was a follower of this trend when he ventured into the world of publication.

The new ethics of Keshab Chandra were also riddled with problems, ambiguities and debates. The new opportunities of female education started by him were in direct contrast with the traditional Hindu social and moral values. The controversy regarding a separate Marriage Bill (1868-1872) exclusively for the Brahmos made Keshab's group unpopular. It acted as a catalyst to merge the Adi Samaj with the larger Hindu section of the society. It can be taken as the starting point of so-called Hindu Revivalism as well. Keshab Chandra himself later turned towards merging his ideals with Hinduism under the influence of Ramakrishna. He recognised Hindu forms of worship by attributing the quality of motherhood to his God (Amiya P. Sen; 1993, 58). Keshab Chandra's theory of *Nababidhān* was selective and syncretic and was confined mainly among the elite society in its attempt to internalise the Renaissance Universality of Europe.

Problems cropped up again in 1878 when a section of the Bharatbarshiya Brahmo Samaj, with a number of most prominent followers, led by Ananda Mohan Bose, protested at Sen's leadership and at his disregard of the society's regulations concerning child marriage. This led to the formation of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj (*Sādhāraṇ Brāhma Samāj*) by Pandit Shibnath Shashtri (1847-1919). The beginning of the decline of the Samaj started roughly in 1894, when the Marriage Bill controversy died down and Vivekananda (1863-1902) emerged with his eloquent views on the excellence of Hinduism. Eventually all the branches of the Brahmo Samaj later united to form a Brahmo Sammilan Samaj (*Brāhma Sammilan Samāj*) in 1897 which celebrated its centenary at Bhawanipur in Kolkata a few years back[10].

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[10]This information is mentioned in a website http://www.chanda.freeserve.co.uk.

3 Development of the Education System under British Rule

Four types of academic institutions were found in India before the British introduced English education:

1) Hindu primary schools or *Pāṭh¹śālā*s,
2) Schools for studying Hindu philosophy etc. or *Ṭol*s,
3) Elementary Persian schools or *Maktab*s and
4) *Madrāsā*s or Muslim schools of learning (Nylund; 1991, 22-33)[1].

In the primary institutions mostly reading, writing and some knowledge of arithmetic were taught. The higher schools for the Hindus put more importance on the teachings of *Nyāya, Smṛti*, law, logic, mythology, Sanskrit grammar and literature, lexicology, poetry, drama and rhetoric etc. Some specialized schools were famous for their discourses on *Tantra, Alaṃkāraśāstra*, astronomy, astrology, medicine and Vedic knowledge. The Muslim educational institutions provided scope for Persian and Arabic studies. While in Persian schools various forms of correspondence, legal procedures and works of many famous poets and readings from the Quran were taught, the Arabic studies were confined to grammar, logic, law, religion, works of ancient Greek and Latin thinkers like Euclid's Geometry, Ptolemy's Astronomy, extracts from Aristotle and Plato etc (R. C. Majumder; 1965, 17-20). Although faced with much difficulty in their commercial and administrative intercourse, the East India Company at first made no conscious attempt to spread English education among the Indians. Some of the Indian aristocracy acquired a fair amount of English education through their own initiatives. Indians, who by their commercial intercourse came in contact with the modern European civilization, seem to have felt tired of their own old education system and have been looking for its change or revision. The more Indians came into contact with the British, the more did they begin to appreciate the neccessity of English education, and the urge grew considerably to educate themselves in the same modern system as their rulers[2]. Nevertheless, the East India Company at first took almost no interest in spreading English education in India[3]. It was more partial to the promotion of oriental education[4].

At the end of the 18th century Charles Grant took the lead of the movement for giving permission to allow Christian missionaries into India in order to spread education everywhere by the medium of English language. They thought that by English schools the conversion of Indians to Christianity would be more effective. Some of the prominent

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[1]A detailed account of the education situation in Bengal before the British period can be found in Arabella Wennerström Nylund; 1991.

[2]Ramesh Chandra Majumder; 1972, 128-31.

[3]'Formidable other forces, including psychological ones, were in operation, which transformed early apprehension and fear into wild love and appreciation, not withstanding the indifference or lack of policy of the East India Company as reagards education' .... 'English education was neither encouraged nor adopted as a matter of policy by the Government in the early decades of the century. Influential members of the Home authorities were in favour of supporting the evangelical work of missionaries, and succeeded, towards that end in passing a resolution in 1813.......' (Arabinda Poddar; 1970, 88).

[4]A detailed account of the East India Company's lack of educational policy at the early stage and a gradual change in its position can be found in N. K. Sinha; Calcutta; 1967.

Indian personalities of the day also nurtured this very hope of converting Indians. They argued that English education enables one to attain knowledge needed for a sound public life by removing the darkness of ignorance, specially religious and social prejudices and superstitions. In 1784 with the India Act[5] the administration of India went out of the direct control of the East India Company and was handed over to the Board of Control. In this Act also nothing was said regarding the educative mission of Christian missionaries. But the native education system was also suffering. For the betterment of native education and for creating a friendly relation among the British and the Indians, Governor-General Warren Hastings (1731-1818, in India) founded an Arabic Madrasa in Kolkata in 1781. But most of the early educational institutions came up by the efforts of either private individuals or organisations. The interest in English education expressed by the Indians was more supported by missionaries and broad-minded Englishmen (R. C. Majumdar; 1965, 31). With the Charter Act of 1793 the establishment of a paid board was initiated in place of the voluntary one, set up earlier in 1784. By the Charter Act of 1813 the East India Company lost the right of business monopoly in India. Section 43 of this Act empowered the Government to expend a part of the Indian revenue 'for the encouragement of the learned natives of India and for the introduction of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British Territories in India'[6]. It also gave the missionaries the permission to reside in India.

Until 1835, there were no active initiatives taken from the part of the British Government to introduce English education. The Government of India set up a General Committee of Public Instruction in 1823 for the promotion of education. But in the next ten years not a single Rupee was spent from the granted sum of one lakh Rupees for that purpose. Instead the money was spent only for the promotion of Sanskrit and Arabic-Persian education, though very few students were available. From the beginning of the 19th century the Bengalis, specially the Bengali Hindus, felt the need of English education. Rammohan Roy in much of his correspondence stressed the importance of a liberal education system. In the meantime a conflict was arising among the 'Orientalists'[7] and 'Anglicists'[8] regarding the expenditure of the grants (R. C. Majumder; 1965, 81-85). Macaulay and David Hare also seemed to share the same view as Grant on spreading English education in India to some extent (R. C. Majumdar; 1965, 32). In the famous Macaulay Minute (B. D. Bhatt and J. C. Aggarwal; 1969, 2-3) of the 2nd February 1835 Macaulay expressed his clear opinion in favour of English education. The Minute was finally announced by the Government on the 7th March 1835. It put all its efforts in promoting European literature and science among the Indians through English; the Education Fund was to be spent only for English education.

The very first school for teaching English was established in 1800 in Bhawanipur in Kolkata, and another in Chinsura in 1814 (R. C. Majumdar; 1965, 31). Lord Wellesley (1769-1852, in India 1789-1805) took interest in founding the Fort William College in Kolkata on the 4th May 1800. The main aim of this college was to educate the British civilians in Indian languages and literatures. Wellesley believed that it was not

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[5]See Henry Herbart Dodwell (ed.); 1929, 200.

[6]Harald Fischer-Tiné; 2004, 29 quoting from S. C. Ghosh: *The History of Education in Modern India, 1757-1986*; Hyderabad, 1995, 18.

[7]Those in favour of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian learning.

[8]Those in favour of English education.

possible to conduct the administrative work smoothly without a proper knowledge of the native Indian literature and language along with European science and knowledge. The British servicemen in India suffered a lot at the beginning for their lack of linguistic and literary skills about India. They always had to depend on the local natives. It was then made compulsory to pass a test in Bengali, Persian[9] and Hindustani (Urdu) to be eligible for certain posts. The Fort William College opened its Bengali and Sanskrit department in 1801 under William Carey (1761-1834). This department published a lot of Bengali books, which helped the development of Bengali prose to a great extent. In 1854 the Fort William College was closed down as the very reason of its existence was no longer valid. It had lost its importance when in 1806 provision was made to learn Indian languages in England itself.

The first efforts to spread education among the masses were made by the Christian missionaries. William Carey set up the Srirampur Mission on the 10th January 1800[10]. He set up a free daily school for boys and then in 1803, the first Sunday School for enlightening them about religion. In 1817, the School Book Society was founded in Kolkata for the publication and free distribution of English and native-language books. Then in 1818, the Calcutta School Society was set up with the aim of helping and developing more schools in Kolkata according to necessity. On the 17th August 1818, the Calcutta Diocesan Committee opened another school branch. The Dhaka School Society was born on the 11th November 1818 and the Murshidabad School Society on the 16th June 1819. In 1821, the Srirampur College was set up with Carey as the principal. Apart from these efforts, many private and institutional initiatives gave birth to many primary and higher schools during this period in and around Kolkata and in other parts of Bengal. Rammohan Roy started a school called the Anglo-Hindu School in 1822 on his own expense near Hedua. One of the prominent students of this school was Debendranath Tagore. The Sanskrit College was established near Goldighi on the 22nd February 1824.

The plan for the Hindu College was roughly made first by David Hare (1775-1842). The Anglo-Hindu Committee, comprising of ten prominent European and twenty prominent Hindu members, made the plan into a reality. It was started on the 20th January 1817. The Hindu College was the centre of English as well as of Western knowledge and education in the 19th century. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1808-1831) and David Lister Richardson were the two main figures, who not only contributed to the spread of English education in Bengal, but also influenced a whole generation with their knowledge and introduced them to radical and free thoughts. Derozio joined the Hindu College in 1826 as the professor of literature and history at the tender age of eighteen[11]. His followers were mostly his students of the Hindu College, who were deeply influenced by his personality, knowledge and idealism. They developed a keen interest in the world of Western literature and philosophy. They called themselves 'Young Bengal', a much controversial group of that time, disreputed for being extremely radical in their attempts of social reforms and also for their inclination towards European habits and culture, extremely shocking for the traditional Hindu society. Derozio taught them to regard many traditonal Hindu customs, rituals, polytheism and idolatry as false superstitions. Instead he discussed the writings of Locke, Hume, Reed, and Stuart with them. He told

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[9]Till then the language for official and administrative works in India since the Mughal era.

[10]See M. A. Laird; 1972, for more details on the educational efforts of the missionaries in Bengal.

[11]Ramesh Chandra Majumdar; 1972, 137-38.

them to search for the ultimate truth in every action. But the followers misinterpreted many of his ideas and indulged in free beef-eating and drinking as a symbols of being free from superstitions. Some of them went really wild and threatened to break almost every law of traditional Hindu society. As a result, Derozio faced extreme opposition from the orthodox section of Hindu society and was removed from the Hindu College.

In 1843, Motilal Seal established a new college in Kolkata, for the free education of five hundred students. In 1851, Gurucharan Dutta founded the David Hare Academy. When a bitter controversy took place in the Hindu College regarding the admission of a prostitute's son[12], Rajendranath Dutta established the Hindu Metropolitan College on the 2nd May 1853, which was soon joined by Motilal Seal's free School and David Hare Academy. Because of this admission controversy, the Hindu College was divided into two separate institutions on the 13th May 1854, the Hindu School, meant only for Hindus, and the Presidency College, open to everyone irrespective of caste or creed (R. C. Majumdar; 1960, 48).

With the Educational Despatch of 1854 (B. D. Bhatt and J. C. Aggarwal; 1969, 6-11), a historic decision was made with far-reaching consequences for the development of education in India. The following recommendations were made, i) constitution of a separate department of the administration of education, ii) setting up universities at the presidency towns, iii) establishing institutions for teachers' training for all classes and schools, iv) maintenance of the existing Government colleges and high schools and increasing their numbers whenever necessary, v) setting up new Middle Schools, vi) paying special attention to vernacular schools, indigenous or others, for elementary education, and vii) introducing the system of grants-in-aid. It was also recommended to give special attention to "………the improvement and far wider extension of education, both English and vernacular."[13]. The Government's attention was "specially directed to the importance of placing the means of acquiring useful and practical knowledge within reach of the great mass of the people. The English language is to be the medium of instruction in the higher branches, and the vernacular in the lower…….. The system of grants-in-aid is to be based on the principle of perfect religious neutrality…….. A comprehensive system of scholarships is to be instituted so as to connect lower schools with higher, and higher schools with colleges. Female education is to receive the frank and cordial support of Government." (ibid.). Within three years of this Despatch, in the turbulent year of 1857, three Acts were passed with proposals of establishing universities in Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai. A decisive increase in the numbers of schools and colleges was observed in the following years as also many engineering, medical and law colleges were established all over India.

With the spread of English education, came the plea from the Bengalis themselves to make English the court language, thereby making English a main criterion of getting a Government job, instead of Persian, as was expressed in the pages of contemporary newspapers and periodicals[14]. Governor-General Lord Hardinge (1844-48, in India) made English education compulsory in order to attain higher Government posts. This stance was very much welcomed by the Bengalis, who by then were to be most privileged from such a decision. All these methods acted as catalysts to popularise English education, but gradually more and more emphasis was put upon its materialistic and

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[12]Ramesh Chandra Majumder; 1972, 144-46.

[13]R. C. Majumdar 1965, 50, quoting from *Report of the Education Commission 1882*.

[14]R. C. Majumdar; 1960, 48-49 and Ramesh Chandra Majumdar; 1972, 162-63.

economic values in place of liberal and cultural ideas, and exactly there lay the point of criticism faced by the newly educated Bengalis from the orthodox section of society.

It became a matter of pride to be well-versed in the culture and life-style of the ruler race in those days. But as reflected in much of the 19th century popular *bābu* literature, sometimes a part of the educated society overdid it to an extreme. The orthodox society reacted adversely and saw Western education as an instrument of the Christian missionaries to convert the Hindus. In the latter half of the 19th century, an adverse attitude, populist neo-Hinduism, was developed against the Brahmos, reformist Hindus and the Christian missionaries. The most common feature of this new movement was a glorification of everything connected with the traditional Hindu religion and society. Extreme sensitivity about religion and a vehement defence to save it from the criticism of Brahmo reformists and from the missionaries were characteristic of it. As a result, most of the Western educated urban classes were mercilessly ridiculed in all forms of popular orthodox literature of the day without any discrimination. In many cases, the attacks reached a personal level. Sometimes it landed both sides in court for defamation cases, which often ended in bitter controversies (Amiya P. Sen; 1993, 240-41).

3.1   Female Education

Another important aspect of this period was the spread of female education. Female education was not so much neglected in Bengal as it is popularly imagined[15]. Women from rich upper class Zamindar families and from the Vaishnava families[16] had a good literacy rate as education was greatly valued among them, though the purposes were different. It was a practical necessity for the Zamindar family women to have a basic elementary education for running the estate in future in case the need arose. On the other hand, the Vaishnava women were expected to be well-versed in Vaishnava scriptures (Amiya P. Sen; 1993, 30). But the female section of society in general was deprived of the opportunity of having a systematic education. The general fear was that education would attract them towards the outside world and that that would cause an imbalance in society. Also, the popular belief went that if women became educated, they would be widowed.

The very first initiative for female education was also taken by the Christian missionaries[17]. In 1816-17 they attempted to make provision for girls in one of their schools separating them from the boys by a partition of mats (Laird; 1972, 134). They established a girls' school in Chinsurah in 1818 attended by fourteen girls (ibid.). In the following year the Calcutta Baptists founded the Calcutta Female Juvenile Society for the purpose of opening schools for Hindu girls. This Society was helped by many British ladies and wives of the missionnaries. The Calcutta School Society tried to open schools for women at the end of 1821. They invited a British lady, Miss Mary Ann Cook (later Mrs. Wilson), to help them in that purpose. She established many schools for women with the help of the Church Missionary Society. In March 1824, her schools came under the Calcutta Female Juvenile Society, which was newly come to be known

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[15]Sen mentions the names of such educated women as, Anandamoyee Devi, Gangamani Devi (song writer from Vikrampur), Sundari Devi (Pandit in *Nyāy Śāstra*s from Faridpur), Drabamoyee Devi and the famous Hati Vidyalankar. (Dinesh Ch. Sen; 1950, 380).

[16]Nylund; 1991, 133.

[17]Nylund; 1991, 131-40.

as the Ladies Society for Native Female Education. This society laid the foundation stone of the Central School at Cornwallis Square in Simulia in 1828. Some very prominent Hindus, like Raja Radhakanta Deb, realised the importance of female education and contributed whole-heartedly to this cause. Interestingly, some progressive and reformist Hindu scholars of this period tried to prove by quoting and explaining from the *Śāstra*s, that female education had not been prohibited in ancient times. Many rich and aristocrat Hindus appointed European lady teachers for the education of their women. On the 7th May 1849, John Elliot Drinkwater Bethune (1762-1844) founded a female school in Kolkata with the active support and help of Ramgopal Ghosh, Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar etc. Raja Radhakanta Deb started another female school on the 29th May 1849 in his own house-premise. Though Wood's Despatch of 1854 remaked that 'The importance of female education in India cannot be over-rated; and we have observed with pleasure the evidence which is now afforded of an increased desire on the part of many of the natives of India to give a good education for their daughters' (R. C. Majumdar; 1965, 66), yet the Government's policy regading native female education was 'still one of caution' (ibid.).

But still a part of the orthodox Hindu leadership opposed the spread of female education. Other leaders like Motilal Seal and Haladhar Mullick, though in favour of it, did not openly support female education only for the fear of being out-casted. Female education was at that time much ridiculed in popular literature and in society in general. Not only the female students and teachers but also its supporters and sympathizers were not spared.

4 Literary Developments

Maḍel Bhaginī appeared at such a time (1886) when the new genre of the novel, after its first arrival in the mid 19th century, started to become one of the most read forms of Bengali literature. After primary initiations in the hands of Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay and Pyarichand Mitra, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay explored and exhibited the vast and manifold possibilities of the new form. In the preface of his own novel, Jogendra Chandra also admits its overwhelming popularity (MB; 156). It is really remarkable, how in such a small span of time, this new genre invented for itself a new mode of language and prose structure. The next section tries roughly to indicate the birth of Bengali literary prose and the consequent boom of Bengali newspapers and periodicals. It also attempts to underline journey of Bengali novel and its gradual evolution till the end of the 19th century.

The main literary tradition of Bengal till the beginning of the 19th century dealt mainly with numerous stories from the two great Indian Epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, and with various exploits of the god Kṛṣṇa and others, with stories based on the *Purāṇa*s, Vaishnava *Pada*s[1], and with historical and mythological stories. Besides this tradition, the folk culture survived through the old tradition of *Kheür* [2], *Tarjā* [3], *Ākh¹ṙāï* [4], *Kabigān* [5], *Pãcāli* [6], *Yātrā* [7], *Bāül¹gān* [8] etc.[9]. This old tradition was mainly manifested in the form of *Kābya* or *Padya* [10], while the new literary tradition of the 19th century was more prose oriented (Dinesh Ch. Sen; 1950, 173 and Sukumar Sen; 1960). The old literary tradition of Bengal also found expression in a very special form of *Maṅgal¹kābya*, in praise of the various exploits of gods and goddesses expressed through a story with a local background in long lyrical poems, Vaishnava lyrics, Tantric literature etc.

4.1   The new tradition

Themes: The other tradition that entered into Bengali literary tradition from the 19th century onwards was the modern prose-tradition of dramas, satires, novels etc., which was born as a result of the fast-spreading educational developments. Access to Western literature and philosophy made people conscious of the lack of having

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[1]Lyrics sung in praise of the god Kṛṣṇa.

[2]Songs consisting of arguments and counter-arguments in rustic colloquial language mostly full of slang.

[3]Question and answer in riddled rhymes in colloquial Bengali, sung during religious festivals.

[4]Kului Chandra Sen transformed *Kheür* into a more refined classical form by applying various Ragas, to be sung with different instruments. Instead of its original form of arguments and counter-arguments, it dealt with the subject of love.

[5]Poets used to compose spontaneous poems to be recited or sung.

[6]Songs on religious themes, to be sung and acted.

[7]Indigenous dramas on various exploits of the god Kṛṣṇa.

[8]Songs on religious and philosophical subjects sung by certain religious sects.

[9]See Sumanta Banerjee; 1989 and 1998.

[10]Poem.

their own prose literature. New genres of the new age marked the arrival of prose-literature in India, more specifically in Bengal[11]. European models were freely adopted in essays, novels, dramas, blank verses and in Italian sonnet-like verse structures. The very distinct feature of the literature of this early modern (i.e. beginning of the 19th. century) age was that most of the writings were either translations or compilations, or in most parts strongly influenced by Western literature. Examples of original works were comparatively few to find. A growing consciousness in literary forms of expression was one of the most determining features of the new literature. It contributed to a great extent to the development of a new social consciousness and secularism with less inclination towards religious and mythological themes. The outlook became 'less primitive and language more polite' (J. C. Ghosh; 1948, 98). Gradually with the coming of the Bengali *bhadralok*[12] society, topicality became another determining factor. The new class wanted to see their own reflection in literature. As a rapidly developing new class they needed to establish a separate identity for themselves and thereby assert their new dominant role in society. Their very own images, problems and controversies started to concern them. This concern found expression in various sketches about social and moral subjects. The topicality brought a completely new dimension in Bengali literature and infused in it a much desired freshness. Another important aspect of this new tradition was a strong sense of nationalism and pride in ancient Indian life and culture. Such a sense made people aware of the problems and pains of being under a foreign rule and ignited in them a desire for freedom, which in the later years of the 19th century culminated in the development of Indian nationalism.

Language and the New Form of Prose: Since the 15th or 16th century Bengali had came to be recognized as the state language in Tripura. In Bengal the use of Bengali prose was found mostly in official documents, records and letters of correspondence of the East India Company with other local Bengali rulers from the end of the 18th century. A translation of the Sanskrit *Bhāṣā-Pariccheda* can also be found around the same time. Written in an easy colloquial style, devoid of any great literary sophistication or proper punctuation system, the language is riddled with foreign words.

Before the 19th century, we find mention of a Bengali book, 'Crepar Xaxtrer Orth, bhed' (*Kṛpār Śāstrer Artha, Bhed*)[13] by Fr. Manuel da Assumpsão, printed in Roman script, published by the Portuguese missionaries in 1734 from Lisbon. This trend was followed by more such efforts. But these books were for personal use of the missionaries and not for the general readers[14]. The very first prose-book in Bengali was a translation of the 'Gospel of St. Mathew' from the original Greek printed by the Srirampur missionaries in August 1800[15]. In 1801 came out the translation of the 'New Testament' (*Dharmapustak*) in Bengali by William Carey. Carey took much effort to publish many

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[11]See for more detail Shashibushan Dasgupta; 1992 and Dinesh Chandra Sen; 1954, 715-840.

[12]In 19th century Bengal the small landlords intermingeled with the professionals and clerical classes were known as *bhadralok*s. Primarily the members of the three higher castes (Brahman, Kayastha and Baidya) were the *bhadralok*s. With the surge of Western education, many lower castes also came to be recognised as *bhadralok*s. The *hadralok*'s interest for Western education made the establishment of many schools and colleges possible. Young students thronged to Calcutta University, as a higher education often secured the possibility of a successful profession and a satisfactory marriage. The *bhadralok* class gradually acquired the most dominant position in the 19th century Bengali society.

[13]For the comma in the name of this book, an explanation is found in Sukumar Sen; 1956(1362), 4.

[14]Ramesh Chandra Majumder; 1972, 406-7.

[15]Sushil Kumar Gupta; 1959, 151.

original and translated Bengali books from the Srirampur Press (Dinesh Chandra Sen; 1911, 845-912). He himself contributed to various Bengali-English dictionaries and text books. Ramram Basu (1757-1813), whose contribution to early Bengali literature is immense, wrote *Jñānodaẏ* ('Rising of Knowledge') at the end of 1800. He wrote *Lipimālā* ('Garland of Alphabets') in 1802 and *Rājā Pratāpāditya Caritra* in 1801. Apart from him, Mrityunjay Vidyalanker's (1762-1819) *Batriś Siṃhāsan* (1802), Golak Sharma's *Hitopadeś* (1802) etc. were among the much discussed works published by William Carey. But the price of the books of the Fort William College was high. So the Calcutta School Book Society (1817) started publishing books with a low price, so that, even the poorer section of the populace could afford them. Among the important books published by the Society were *Nīti Kathā* (1818) compiled and translated by Ramkamal Sen (1783-1844), Tarinicharan Mitra and Radhakanta Deb, *Manorañjanetihas* (1819) by Tarachand Dutta, *Hitopadeś* by Ramkamal Sen, and *Śabdakalpadruma* (1822-1852), a Sanskrit encyclopaedia in eight volumes compiled and published by the efforts of Raja Radhakanta Deb.

The sign of a radical change in Bengali prose was first noticed in Rammohan Roy's *Bedānta Grantha* (1815), *Bedānta Sār* (1815), *Pathya Pradān* (1823), *Gaurīẏa Byākaraṇ* (1833) and his books on the *Satī*-Debate in 1818 and 1819. He did not follow the traditional Sanskrit prose-style, and set the first example of the culture of practicing and discussing philosophical studies in Bengali. Many of his essays on political and social problems, like on various social malpractices such as *satī* and child-marriage, on the freedom of the press, against the Tenancy Act, for changing the prevailing jury-system, and against the change of the law about the succession of property based on inheritance, were published in many English and Bengali newspapers and periodicals.

Bhabani Charan Bandyopadhyay (1787-1848), was one of the most prominent writers at the beginning of the century. He was an important name among the orthodox Hindu writers, sometimes also using a pseudonym for his writings[16]. *Nababābubilās* (1823) was written both in verse and prose styles under the pseudonym of Pramathnath Sharman. *Nababibibilās* (1831) was written under the pseudonym Bholanath Bandyopadhyay. He also wrote *Kalikātā Kamalālaẏ* (1823) and *Hitopadeś* (1823). Though his writings had double-meanings and he sometimes overdid the social criticism, the strong satire, tinted with a keen comic sense, made his works thoroughly enjoyable to read, though for today's readers the language may seem old-fashioned and therefore against the modern literary taste. Akshay Kumar Dutta's (1820-1886) books like *Cāru Pāṭh* part I, II and III, (1853, 1854 and 1859 respectively), *Dharma Nīti* (1853) etc. started successfully for the first time the tradition of discussion on scientific topics in Bengali.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar can truly be called the father of the modern Bengali language, which is to this day written and known as *Sādhu Bhāṣā*. His prose style was very individualistic due to simple day-to-day language and the use of specific punctuation marks. He wrote many books including *Betāl Pañcabiṃśati* (1847), *Bāṅgālār Itihās*

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[16]'Let us now come to some of the oblique novels written either directly or under the cover of pseudonyms for satirical purpose. It was an age, we should remember, when everything was in the melting pot. The old values were challenged by different sets of new values. The English educated youngmen, the members of Brahmo Samaj, particularly the educated women became the target of attack by the conservative Hindu Society. It was a time when the Brāhma Samāj was breaking up and revival of neo-Hinduism was slowly taking place under the leadership of Bankimchahndra.' (Asit K. Bandopadhyay; 1986, 105).

(1848), *Jīban Carit* (1849), *Śiśu-Śikṣā: Caturtha Bhāg* or *Bodhodaj* (1851), *Śakuntalā* (1854), *Kathāmālā* (1856), *Caritābalī* (1856), *Sītār Banabās* (1860) and many others.

Among the other forms of literature, dramas and satires flourished during this period. One of the first original dramas in Bengali was *Kīrtibilās* (1852). Taracharan Sikdar's *Bhadrārjun* (1852) was an attempt to combine the Sanskrit and English drama styles. The other dramas worth mentioning were Nanda Kumar Roy's *Abhijñān-Śakuntalā Nāṭak* (1855), Kaliprasanna Sinha's (1830-1870) *Bikramorbaśī Nāṭak* (1857), *Sābitrī-Satyabān Nāṭak* (1858) and *Mālatī-Mādhab Nāṭak* (1859). Ramnarayan Tarkaratna's (1822-1886) *Kulīn-Kul-Sarbasba* (1854), *Ratnābalī* (1858), Umesh Chandra Mitra's *Bidhabā-Bibāha Nāṭak* (1858), Michael Madhusudan Dutta's (1824-1873) romantic dramas *Śarmiṣṭhā* (1859), and *Padmābatī* (1860), and satires *Ekeï Ki Bale Sabhyatā ?* (1860), and *Buṙo Śāliker Ghāṙe Rõ* (1860), and Dinabandhu Mitra's (1830-1873) *Nīl-Darpaṇ* (1860), based on the famous Indigo-revolution of 1850-60 that broke out in many parts of Bengal; they met with immense popularity with the readers and also on stage[17].

4.2 Development of Magazines and Newspapers

The first Bengali monthly magazine, *Digᶦdarśan*, was published in April 1818 from the Srirampur Baptist Mission. After barely one month of its publication, they brought out another weekly newspaper, *Samācār-Darpaṇ*, on the 23rd May 1818. Although the official editor was J. C. Marshman (1794-1877), the original work was done by the Indian scholars, specially by Jaygopal Tarkalankar and Tarinicharan Mitra. Around the same time the 'Bengal Gazette' was published from Kolkata by Gangakishore Bhattacharya. It ran for almost a year. Rammohan Roy brought out a magazine 'Brahmunical Magazine: The Missionary & the Brahmun No.1' in September 1821. Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay started the popular *Samācār Candrikā* on the 5th March 1822, which remained for a long time the main representative of orthodox Hindus. Within a year, the number of its subscribers reached 800, quite an outstanding achievement at that time. Ishwar Gupta (1812-1859), more or less in the same line of orthodox idealism, started *Saṃbād Prabhākar* on the 28th January 1831. Many famous personalities like Raja Radhakanta Deb, Jaygopal Tarkalankar, Akshay Kumar Dutta, Rangalal Bandyopadhyay, Dwarakanath Roy etc. regularly contributed to it. The early works of Bankim Chandra Chattapadhyay and Dinabandhu Mitra were first published in *Saṃbād Prabhākar*. Another magazine worth mention was the bi-lingual weekly *Jñānānbeṣaṇ* (1831-1840), which was first published on the 18th June 1831. It was the representative of the radical reformism of 'Young Bengal' ideals. *Saṃbād Bhāṣkar* was started in March 1839 under the editorship of Shreenath Roy by Gaurishankar Tarkabagish. Another important newspaper of this time was 'Bengal Spectator' (April 1842-November 1843). The much popular *Tattbabodhinī Patrikā*, started by Debendranath Tagore on the 16th August 1843, was another monthly that gave birth to a literary movement centered around it. The famous writers Akshay Kumar Dutta (1843-1855), Nabin Chandra Bandyopadhyay (1855-1859) and Satyendranath Tagore (1859-1862) were its editors till 1862[18]. Many valuable essays on Bengali literature were published in this magazine. Bengali language owes much of the development of

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[17]Mohammad Jaynal Abedin; 1985.
[18]Ramesh Chandra Majumder; 1972, 476.

its linguistic elegance to it. Many of Rajendralal Mitra's essays and the first part of Michael Madhusudan Dutta's *Tilottamāsambhab Kābya* (1860) were first published in the illustrated monthly *Bibidhārtha Saṃgraha* (1851-1862)[19].

On the 16th August, Pyarichand Mitra and Radhanath Sikdar launched *Māsik Patrikā*, targetted specially at women. Pyarichand's famous novel *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl* (1855-1857) was published in instalments in this magazine. The first magazine which chose political discussions as the main subject-matter was the weekly *Som'prakāś*. Edited by Dwarakanath Bidyabhushan (1820-1886), it first came out on the 15th November 1858. Another leading newspaper was 'Hindoo Patriot', founded in 1862 under the editorship of Harish Chandra Mukherjee and later continued under the editorship of Krishtodas Pal. The monthly *Śikṣādarpan O Saṃbād'sār* (1864) was devoted mainly to educational and political issues and was edited by Bhudev Mukhopadhyay. *Amṛta Bājār Patrikā*, edited by Shishir Kumar Ghosh, was first published on Februray 20, 1868; later (March 21, 1878) it was turned into an English weekly to avoid the restrictions of the Vernacular Press Act (1878), and on February 19, 1891, it became a daily newspaper. The publication of *Baṅgadarśan* by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in 1873, was a historical event not only in the development of Bengali newspapers but also in the development of Bengali literature. Many of the most famous novels and essays of Bankim Chandra and other prominent writers' were published in the monthly *Baṅgadarśan*. Akshay Chandra Sarkar started the weekly *Sādhāraṇī* in 1874; both these papers contributed a lot to the development of nationalism and political consciousness among the Bengalis. *Āryadarśan* (1875) by Jogendranath Bidyabhushan (1845-1904), *Sahacar* and *Hindu-Hitaiṣiṇī* of Dhaka and *Bhārat-Mihir* of Mymensing were among the other newspapers that deserve special mention in building up a critique of the British Government. Keshab Chandra's *Sulabh Samācār* (1870) was the first cheap newspaper, aimed at the common masses to popularise his ideas on radical Brahmoism. The same method was later adopted by many newspapers[20] as the second half of the 19th century witnessed a boom in newspaper publication.

It was such a scenario of rapid educational, social, literary and cultural change in which Jogendra Chandra brought out his newspaper *Baṅgabāsī* in 1881. It was no doubt a hard time, but his business sense guided him towards establishing a successful publishing house. In fact, his *Baṅgabāsī* Press became synonymous with orthodox Hinduism to such an extent that the *Baṅgabāsī* group of writers had great influence on the contemporary society and became the main protagonists of the populist neo-Hindu movement in the 19th century Bengal.

4.3   Literary Trends in Novels

Bengali literary prose in the early phase of the modern age was clumsy and ridden with very complex terms and loan-words mostly derived from Sanskrit. It had an artificiality in its style of expression, devoid of the natural flow and flexibility of the spoken form. The main development in the prose style in the later half of the 19th century was observed first in 'the replaccement of the Sādhu-bhāṣā (literary language) by the Calit-bhāṣā (colloquial language)........' (J. C. Ghosh; 1948, 120) and in the

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[19]'Calcutta Period' in J. C. Ghosh; 1948, 98-132 and Manamohan Ghosh; 1955, 360-65.

[20]Like Jogendra Chandra's weeklies and periodicals.

formation of a 'standard' Bengali prose[21]. The new prose-writers all received a certain amount of English education in schools and colleges and all grew up bilingually. As a result, they consciously or unconsciously followed the characteristics of the English language while writing Bengali. Even today the same system of punctuation as in English is followed by Bengali (ibid.). Vidyasagar is mentioned by J. C. Ghosh as 'the artificier of standard literary form' (ibid.). He gave the earlier 'uncouth and unshaped and in confusion' Bengali language 'order and system, clear meaning and correct form' (ibid.). Vidyasasgar freed it from the earlier complexity that it suffered in the hands of Sanskrit pandits or Christian missionaries. He tried to bridge the gap between *Sādhu-* and *Calit-bhāṣā* and 'fused a happy unity between the vernacular and classical elements of the language' (ibid.), and gave Bengali prose its 'distinctive music' (ibid.). The later writers of the late 19th century mostly modelled their works on Vidyasagar and were greatly inspired by him.

With the arrival of social novels, the importance of simple colloquial language became integral as the target readers were mostly from the educated upper and middle classes, who took more interest in reading the English journals and newspapers. A highly rhetorical Bengali with a vocabulary of heavily sanskritized words would have been inappropriate for this new form. The prose was mainly self-referential, which questioned some of the seemingly superfluous traditional rituals, and criticied a few aspects of the modern life-style as well. This form dealt mainly with themes like the negative effects of an improper upbringing of children in the new modern age, or the bad influence of English education and the moral downfall etc. This mode of self-critique found its favourite target in the *bābu*, the fast-growing economically sound middle-class male with his English education and desire for a modern life-style. His follies and vices, manners and behaviour were all harshly critisised with a true ironical sense, though often the crude fun marred the humour.

Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay's *Nababābubilās* (1825) and *Nababibibilās* started for the first time the tradition of satirical narrative prose, which can be said to be the first examples of the Bengali novel. Though the language is not at all refined, often intermingles prose and verse and does not follow any proper punctuation system, yet the contribution of his novels in the development of the modern Bengali novel can not be denied.

Pyarichand Mitra alias Tek Chand Thakur's *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl* was the first Bengali novel proper[22], in which *Calit bhāṣā* was used in its dialogues and paved the way for adopting the spoken language in Bengali novels. Though his style remained mostly experimental, as it too often intermingled literary and spoken language, yet it influenced many eminent writers of his time.

Bankim Chandra arrived with the path-breaking *Durgeś|nandinī* in 1865, with a tale based on a medieval legend fashioned in a modern European style. In the next twenty-

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[21]'What is nevertheless intriguing is the quite rapid "standardization" of this [modern Bengali] prose. The 1850s is still a time when a "standard" form has not appeared; by the 1880's the "standard" form has come to stay. It is worth specualting whether the sheer proximity of European discursive models.......had something to do with the astonoshing speed with which the entirely new form of narrative form came to be accepted as "normal" by the English-educated Bengali middle class.' (Partha Chatterjee; 1992 (1995), 43).

[22]See Saroj Bandyopadhyay's arguments for not considering Miss Mallence's *Phulmaṇi O Karuṇār Upākhyān* (1852) as the first Bengali novel (1971, 81-85).

three years the contribution of his novels, essays, dissertations and sketches were un-paralleled in the development of Bengali literature, and his works enjoy the prestige of being classics. To this day, Bankim Chandra remains one of the most-read Indian writers.

Kaliprasanna Sinha wrote the famous *Hutom Pyā̃cār Nak⟩śā* (1862); a series of sketches about the social life in contemporary Kolkata, exposing the extravagant and licentious life of the Bengali *bābu*. Inspite of some crude caricatures and lampooning, vivid passages dominate and a good command over the colloquial tongue is evident. In the second half of the 19th century, Bengali prose thus slowly inched towards vitality, freshness, variety and modernity.

The development in Bengali prose was mainly observed in the novels and later in newspaper journalism. We find names of both many famous novelists and essayists as the contributors to periodicals and newspapers. Another trend was observed in the writings of religious philosophy expressed mostly among Brahmo leaders like Debendranath Tagore, Dwijendranath Tagore (1840-1926) and Keshab Chandra Sen. The most inspiring among the Hindu religious preachers was Vivekananda with his famous expositions on Yoga philosophy. The more popular among the literary trends were the humorous sketches and essays on social issues[23].

At another level, a new trend was slowly emerging and found an instant but short-lived popularity in the second half of the 19th century. These novels appeared to be inspired by conventional emotions producing the potboilers. The increase in the number of their readership also encouraged the production of such novels as the readers were mainly the little educated lower-middle class, who received a minimal education for vocational purposes but were yet to develop a literary taste. The writers of this type of literature sought refuge mainly in sentimentalism, escapism and mysticism in search of instant popularity. At a lower level, Bengali literature suffered from the widespread influence of lesser Western literature, which was brought along by the European military and commercial class. This class of literature attained a great popularity not only in Europe but also in India. It was regarded among the common mass as the prime example of 'European modernity and intellectuality'(J. C. Ghosh; 1948, 167) and greatly influenced their taste[24]. The higher quality of literature was not unknown, but it could not compete with the influence of the inferior class of writers in terms of popularity and the mass-produced European literature often found the best market in India. In many cases, Bengali writers borrowed ideas from European literature and suffered from alienation, rootlessness and unreal presentation. Many novels dealt with problems totally divorced from Bengali social life. Such meeting of the Western and Eastern cultures resulted only in 'anomalies and incongruities' (ibid.).

4.4   The *bābu* in Literature

In Bengali social life, the term *bābu* is generally ascribed to the members of certain

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[23]Bankim Chandra's *Lok Rahasya* (1874), *Kamalākānter Daptar* (1875), Shibnath Shastri's *Rāmtanu Lāhiṙī O Tat·kālīn Baṅga Samāj* (1897) and several essays by Akshay Chandra Sarkar, Chandranath Basu, Rajnarayan Basu etc.

[24]'The Indian universities try to improve taste, but they cater for only about one out of every three thosand Indians, and their influence hardly touches the fringe of the living, creative literature.' (J. C. Ghosh; 1948, 167).

social groups, including various strata of the upper and middle classes, though the term can hardly be appropriately applied to all its members[25]. The term itself has oscillated from time to time in a changing social context. What constitutes a *bābu* was a problem for the middle class society of the 19th century and it haunted them in search of a separate identity for a long time. It does not necessarily denote a specific caste or class in the traditional sense but invented for itself a completely new class structure. As Hans Harder puts it, 'it is rather a doubling of meaning which remains productive in the determination of identity of this very Bengali middle class, *bhadralok* society throughout the century' (Hans Harder; 2004, 365). In fact this term is still in use today in Bengal for the *bhadralok* and the middle class Bengalis, and does not have a specified area of use. It can be used for attaching honour and respect and even to denote an insult when used with a sarcastic undertone.

In the 19th century the newly written Bengali prose centred round the persona of the *bābu*, the middle class gentry, who became almost the legendary anti-hero figure in the contemporary Bengali literature. It projects a somewhat exaggerated account of the so-called follies of these people. In the early works like Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay's *Nababābubilās* (Merry-Making of the *Bābu*s, 1825), the *bābu* 'indicates the perception of a new role model' (Hans Harder; 2004, 366). In Payrichand Mitra's *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl* (Spoilt Son of the Rich, 1858), he is a figure dipped in sin and evil, who finally gets a chance of redemption at the end. The *bābu* in Kaliprasanna Sinha's *Hutom Pyãcār Nakˡśā* (Naksha of the Owl, 1861-62) is a totally hypocrite character whose oral doctrines are in direct contrast with his actions. The *bābu* mirrors the rapidly growing metropolitan mentality representing the arrival of new norms in social, moral and behavioural ethics.

As the picture emerges from the first half of the 19th century *bābu* literature, sons of rich landlords were characterised by the acquisition of special aristocratic qualities like the exuberant display of money and power. The main traits of this class were manifold: spending money in kite-flying, bird-fights, liberal donations, singing, drinking and other merry-making. The *bābu* often displayed signs of physical violence and mental decadence like beating, shouting and compulsive lying etc[26]. Innumerable flatterers surrounded him and invented for him new concepts for displaying *bābugiri*[27]. The existing rules of an orthodox society were turned upside down by him. In the 19th century, the economy of Bengal was also changing its character. It was was moving from an agrarian society to a more merchantile one. And the *bābu* was a typical product of this changing time, giving a new dimension to all social and moral norms. He acquired a bourgeois character with the emergence of the middle class Bengali, who availed of English education and prospered in the services of the East India Company, or in the services of rich businessmen or landlords. The typical characteristic which we observe in the new *bābu*s (*nababābu*) of the mid 19th century literature is that, they have became a constant source of trouble not only for themselves but cause problems for all others

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[25]'Membership of the class was not ascriptive, and had to be acquired by virtue of a lifestyle that was marked by education, abstinence from physical labour – and not indispensably but frequently – a high caste status.' (Anindita Ghosh; 2000, 167).

[26]For the gradual change in the figure of the *bābu* in 19th century Bengali literature see Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay's *Bābur Upākhyān*, 1821; *Kalikātā Kamalālaẏ*, 1823; *Nababābubilās*, 1825; *Nababibibilās*, 1831; Payrichand Mitra's *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl* as a book in 1858 and Kaliprasanna Sinha's *Hutom Pyãcār Nakˡśā*, 1862.

[27]Art of being a *bābu*.

around them. Their new quality of cunning and ability provided them with prosperous jobs, and they flourished economically. They were not respectful of anyone or anything, had a complete negation of all existing moral values, but covered this up by mouthing refined words of noble taste.

One of the main characters of Jogendra Chandra's *Maḍel Bhaginī*, Ramchandra, is the personification of the *bābu* class, In his character, actually lies the origin of all the events of the novel. It is under his guardianship and training that his daughter, the title character, Kamalini, grows up and brings the ultimate diseaster not only for herself but also for many others.

5 Short Biography of Jogendra Chandra Basu

Jogendra Chandra Basu was born on 30th December 1854 in the village Ilsaba near Memari in the Burdwan (now Bardhaman) district of Bengal. His father Madhab Chandra Basu was based in Berugram in Burdwan. His family history, as found in *Yogendra Smaraṇī*[1], is very illustrating and interesting. Madhab Chandra had two sons, Jogendra Chandra and Ashutosh, and a daughter, Harisundari. The founder of Bangabasi College in Kolkata, Girish Chandra, was his elder cousin.

Jogendra Chandra was brought up in a very big joint family, full of relatives, both distant and close. Along with his brother and cousin he was admitted to Hoogly Branch School. He was a student of average intelligence; failing to pass the Intermediate Examination[2] from Hoogly College he went to Allahabad for studying law. At that time (the later half of 19th century) the successful completion of the Law Entrance Examination at Allahabad enabled one to practice law in Kolkata without a formal B.A. degree. After appearing in the examination he came back home but nothing is known about his results. Soon he got married with an 8 years old girl, Charumati, and later started teaching in Janai Minor School as a temporary teacher. During this time he managed to save 100 Rupees from the salary; this was later his only capital in starting the immensely popular newspaper *Baṅgabāsī*. After two years, when he came back to his native house, he met with an unexpected blow of fate. It was being rumoured that Charumati had leucoderma, a sort of skin disease, which was considered to be a social stigma. Due to familial and social pressures he was compelled to abandon his wife.

Losing all interest in family life after that, he started engaging himself more and more with his passion, writing. As a student in Hoogly College he had started writing in Akshay Chandra Sarkar's *Sādhāraṇī*, a popular Bengali magazine. Gradually he became the assistant editor of that magazine. But his hard criticism of a local court case in which a Hindu widow was made to appear before the court much against her will, was in direct conflict with the moderate line of politics adopted by *Sādhāraṇī*, and he left.

During his apprenticeship, Jogendra Chandra noticed that most of the newspapers in Bengal were in English and the very few Bengali newspapers like *Baṅgadarśan* and *Sādhāraṇī* catered mostly to the educated upper class society. The term 'educated class' generally meant the English educated section of the Bengali society. A section of this class was gradually becoming aware of the power of their own language and started to take interest in reading Bengali literature. But reading newspapers was yet to become a necessity for the mass. It was more of a luxury of the rich upper class. The vast majority of the general population had no newspaper which would cater to their taste and demand. They needed something cheap, in simple colloquial

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[1]According to Jogendra Chandra Baus's son Mahendra Kumar Basu's probably legendary account, the main ancestor of the Basu family was Dasharath Basu, one of the five *Kṣatriya*s who migrated from Kanyakubja or Kanauj (Kanpur) during the time of King *Ādiśūra* (who ruled Bengal probably any time between 671 A.D. and 942 A.D. as found in Tamonash Chandra Dasgupta; 1951, 717).

[2]Then known as F.A. Examination.

Bengali, to project their own aims and aspirations. Seeing this, he utilized his learning to start a newspaper to satisfy the curiosity of the village and small-town people about the contemporary happenings in their very own language. The call of the day was in favour of such an enterprise, and like most of the middle-class entrepreneurs, he took the opportunity of instrumentalising the best that circumstance was providing for him. So Jogendra Chandra wasted no time and came to Kolkata with the aim of starting his own newspaper with the help of his old friend Upendra Nath Sinharoy. With the intervention of the orientalist Pandit Haraprasad Shastri, they managed to get their newspaper printed on an easy credit. *Baṅgabāsī* was first published on the 10th. December 1881, with a surprisingly low price of 2 Paisa per copy and 2 Rupees for an annual subscription. With such a low price and articles on popular topics written in simple language, it soon attracted the attention of many readers. Owing much to Jogendra Chandra's good business sense, the circulation went up to 2000 within two weeks. Conservative in its outlook and critical of the Brahmos and the social reformers and their writings, it gained immense popularity among the lower strata of Bengal, especially in small towns and villages. By the second half of 1882, the circulation came to an astounding 6000 copies and soon reached the 10,000 copies mark.

In 1883, Indranath Bandyopadhyay (1849-1912) joined *Baṅgabāsī*. The paper owed much of its notorious conservatism to him rather than to Jogendra Chandra himself. In 1885, Jogendra Chandra started a new one-Paisa daily *Dainik* to highlight the Anglo-Russian conflict. It was published for more than a decade. The *Hindī Baṅgabāsī*, launched in 1889 (untill 1940), was one of the important achievements of the editor-publisher. Later in 1890 he launched the first illustrated Bengali periodical *Jamna-bhūmi*[3], which was also popular for quite some time before he finally sold its rights in 1898. The English monthly 'Illustrated Indian News', started in 1898, provided him with the opportunity to step into political journalism. But it met with an unfortunate end with the end of the Boer War. He realised his dream of starting an English daily with the launching of the 'Telegraph' in 1904. During its peak period it sold 8000-10000 copies per day.

The (in)famous incident of the State Prosecution of the *Baṅgabāsī* in 1891 was very much highlighted not only in *Baṅgabāsī*, but in all the popular newspapers of that time. The case was made according to Articles 124 and 500 of the Law. The main allegation was made against five articles published in the editorial column, among them *Āmāder Abasthā* ('Our Condition'; 28th March 1891) penned by Jogendra Chandra himself, *Iṃrejer Prakaṭ Mūrti* ('The revealed from of the English'; 28th March 1891) by Akshay Chandra Sarkar, and *Pariṇām Ki?* ('What is the end to be?'; 6th June 1891) by Bihari Lal Sarkar (1855-1921). The authorship of the two other articles is not quite certain, *Asabhyer Pakṣe Akapaṭ Nīti Bhālo* ('For the uncivilised, the undisguised policy is good'; 16th May 1891) and *Asabhya Hindur Pradhān o Pratham Dhāraṇā* ('The most important and the first idea of the uncivilised Hindu'; 16th May 1891) were probably written (YS, Vol.II; 29) by Krishna Chandra Bandyopadhyay and Chandranath Basu (1844-1910)[4]. After the warrant came out, Jogendra Chandra and the others took the advice of dramatist Girish Chandra Ghosh (1844-1912) and went underground to avoid the humiliation of being arrested in public. On the 6th August 1891 police searched the *Baṅgabāsī* office but could arrest only Arunoday Roy, the printer. In the meantime,

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[3]It was probably published till the beginning of the 2nd World War.
[4]The English interpretation of the names of the essays are taken from Amiya P. Sen; 1993, 250.

Girish Chandra took care of the legal procedures and arranged for a very good lawyer, Mr. Jackson, to defend their case. The others, Jogendra Chandra, Krishna Chandra Bandyopadhyay and Brajaraj Bandyopadhyay surrendered the very next day to court. They were held for four days in prison as the magistrate could not grant bails on the ground that the Government Standing Council raised objections to it (YS, Vol.II; 32). In the face of immense opposition from all strata of Bengali society, the case was withdrawn on the 17th September 1891[5]. It was the first ever case of State prosecution against an Indian newspaper. Later in 1897 the second State Prosecution was made against the editor of the Marathi periodical *Keśⁱrī*, Bal Gangadhar Tilak (ibid.).

Jogendra Chandra managed to capture the readers' attention with an emotionally charged rhetoric, expressed in simple and easily understandable colloquial language, on various contemporary issues. Very often the language was swayed by sentimentalism leaving no room for rational thinking. But this very sentimentalism was the secret of his popularity. We should not forget that at that time no regular readership was assured, and newspapers were like luxuries for most small-town readers. He had to perpetually compel and convince his readers to buy his newspaper. The satirical tone of the writings and the beautiful illustrations added more charm to the magazines and newspapers of the *Baṅgabāsī* Press. Jogendra Chandra knew the pulse of his readers and realised that they would not be satisfied with reports of drab day-to-day happenings. They needed something to be excited about, something sensational and extra-ordinary. The daily happenings transformed into a very special interpretation in his exaggerated illustrations. Many buyers bought *Baṅgabāsī* or Jogendra Chandra's other magazines only for the beautiful pictorial illustrations. So profound was the impact of his papers that their reporting on some particular social event made him print more issues than normally planned to meet the demand[6], like in the cases of the Presidency College fourth-year student Satya Mukhopadhyay's fist-fight with his European teacher[7], the rape of a pregnant coolie woman by a drunken English planter on a steamer on its way to Cachar[8], a molestation case against an employee of the rival newspaper *Sañjībanī*[9], the Tarakeshwar Mohanta case[10] etc. As Amiya Sen comments 'This notoriety that the paper acquired also explains why before 1889-90 the *Baṅgabāsī* had more casual buyers than regular subscribers.' (Amiya P. Sen; 1993, 241).

Jogendra Chandra was the life force behind most of his newspapers and magazines. Although he was supposed to personally look after all the departments, surprisingly his name seldom appeared as the official editor. But without his supervision, his enterprises would not have become as successful as they were. Moreover his enterprises were not only meant for business, but for social welfare as well, especially for the general mass, which was mostly ignored at that time by the intellectual society in their papers.

Baṅgabāsī tried to make the general people aware of the importance of newspapers and books. Sometimes, it over-glorified the ancient Indian past to make the people conscious of their own rich heritage. This method of countering the influence of the so-called Christian-minded people by an extreme exaggeration of everything Indian

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[5]A detailed account of this case can be found in YS, Vol.II; 25-37.
[6]YCBR; YS, Vol.II; 8 and Amiya P. Sen; 1993, 241.
[7]YCBR; YS, Vol.II; 7-11.
[8]ibid.
[9]ibid.
[10]Mohammad Jaynal Abedin; 1985, 120-21 and Tanika Sarkar; 2001, 56-58.

almost became a trend. *Baṅgabāsī* was not particularly a representative of the ortho-
dox group from its beginning[11]. In fact, two Brahmo leaders, Krishna Kumar Mitra
and Dwarikanath Gangopadhyay, used to write in *Baṅgabāsī* in its early days. Khirod
Chandra Roychaudhuri, another Bramho thinker, was Jogendra Chandra's advisor, and
himself wrote an obituary on the death of Keshab Chandra Sen, the most prominent of
the Brahmo leaders of that time. But at the end of the first year of *Baṅgabāsī*'s publica-
tion, an article called 'Women's Independence' (*Strī Sbādhīnatā*) was published, which
critisized the Brahmos. Annoyed by this, Krishna Kumar and Dwarikanath proposed
that *Baṅgabāsī* should not publish any sectarian article and demanded to have a share
of *Baṅgabāsī*. Jogendra Chandra refused to pay heed to their demands and Krishna Ku-
mar and Dwarikanath left *Baṅgabāsī* to launch *Sañjībanī*, which represented the Hindu
reformist and Brahmo ideals attacking traditional Hinduism. In retaliation, *Baṅgabāsī*
started to reply to those attacks and in course of time became 'the most popular organ
of reactionary orthodoxy' (Sukumar Sen; 1971, 221). The later conservatism adopted
by Indranath Bandyopadhyay and Pandit Shashadhar Tarkachuramani, the leading
figures of the populist neo-Hindu movement, was another planned stroke of Jogendra
Chandra, who through his publishing enterprises encouraged and nourished this trend.
In fact, *Baṅgabāsī* was during its time about the only loyal representative of orthodox
Hinduism, while the others mouthed either the position of Brahmo ideals or belonged
to reformist Hindus.

When Ramesh Chandra Dutta published his translation of the *Veda*s in 1886-88,
Baṅgabāsī criticised it as being influenced by Western idealism. From this time Jogen-
dra Chandra started thinking of publishing translations of Indian *Śāstra*s by famous
shastric scholars and publishing them at cheap prices. Accordingly, his publishing house
adopted a clear policy of spreading ideals of the populist trend of conservative Hin-
duism. As his readers were mostly the lower middle class people who dwelled in the
small towns and villages and were quite tradition-bound in their own endeavour, the
new policy suited their taste and proved to be a sure method of winning their favour.
To evoke the lost traditional Indian culture and values in the mind of the people, Jo-
gendra Chandra printed books on Indian mythology, Indian philosophy and on cultural
traditions of Bengal from his *Baṅgabāsī* Press and sold them at an amazingly low price
for the common people. He also provided them with knowledge about ancient Indian
philosophy and religion by interpreting the stories on Puranic and Shastric subjects
in simple Bengali (YS, Vol.II; 47, 50). The moderate amount of money that Jogendra
Chandra had made was re-invested into his various publishing enterprises or in building
social and religious institutions (ibid.). He had dreamt of publishing the huge *Skanda-
purāṇa*, which had 81 thousand Sanskrit *Śloka*s, and also the four *Veda*s, the age-old
fundamentals of Hindu philosophy, in original Sanskrit with Bengali interpretations.
But all his big plans remained incomplete. He died untimely in 1905 at the age of 50.

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[11]'Jogendra Chandra's first editor Jnanendra Lal Roy, the brother of the dramatist D. L. Roy, was
a man with fairly obvious liberal-Brahmo leanings.' (Amiya P. Sen; 1993, 205).

6 Works of Jogendra Chandra Basu

Jogendra Chandra wrote many articles for his various publications. His *nakʲśās Kālācã̄d* (1880-90), *Cinibās Caritāmṛta* (1890), *Mahirābaṇer Ātmakathā* (1889, the Bengali year 1295), *Bāṅgālī Carit* (1886-87, the Bengali years 1292-93,) *Neṙā Haridās* (1902, the Bengali year 1308) were published regularly in his newspapers and magazines and found popularity among certain sections of rural Bengali society.

Two of Jogendra Chandra's works, *Maḍel Bhaginī* (1886-89) and *Śrīśrīrājʲlakṣmī* (1902-1906) were the most popular novels of the late 19th century. The first ten chapters of the latter were published in a serialised form in the periodical *Janmabhūmi* from the Bengali year 1302 till 1305 (1895-96 – 1898-99). Jogendra Chandra completed it in 1903 to publish it as a full-fledged novel. *Maḍel Bhaginī*, on the other hand, was conceived and published as a novel in the Bengali year 1310 (1904-05). At that time it was immensely popular specially among Jogendra Chandra's target-groups, the mofussil and small town readers. The Brahmo men, the so-called *bābu*s and their female counterparts, the *bibi*s, enlightened women with a liberated and romantic world-view derived from the world of novels and poems of European writers and poets, were often mercilessly criticised and ridiculed by the orthodox press, as was also the case in *Maḍel Bhaginī*. Such stereotypes were easy targets of ridicule not only for the literary intelligentsia, but also served the popular taste, specially when they were directly contrasted with men of traditional Shastric or orthodox Vedic learning. It presented a contrasting picture of the morally corrupt *bābu*s or *bibi*s, pitted against the high moral values of Indian orthodox religion, where the latter always came out as the winner or as better. Chapter 11 of this novel carries an autobiographical touch[1]; here Jogendra Chandra describes a particular teacher and his way of punishing the disobedient students deriving from his own childhood school experiences (MB; 230-241). This particular scene has many humorous touches of the student-teacher relation. It also carries a realistic depiction of hard disciplinary measures maintained in schools.

Even in his most popular novel *Śrīśrīrājʲlakṣmī* [2], Jogendra Chandra attempts to tear apart the masks of the so-called religious leaders who practice false religiosity and exploit the plight of the ordinary people for their own benefit. This novel also praises the virtuousness of the ideal wife of a Hindu aristocratic family, who even in the face of complete adversity of fate protects her dignity and maintains a high moral value. According to the author, the novel is based on a real event. Bengali social life inside and outside Bengal is realistically presented. Although the highly moralistic picture of the model Hindu woman seems a bit monotonous, some lively characterisations add to the attraction of this huge novel.

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[1]YS, Vol.I; 12.

[2]A detailed discussion of this novel takes place in Shrikumar Bandyopadhyay; 1996, 384-388.

7 Publications from the Baṅgabāsī Press

Though more or less 250 books were published by the *Baṅgabāsī* Press, the actual list of books is now hard to get. The list below is given as in *Yogendra Smaraṇī* by Jogendra Chandra's son Mahendra Kumar Basu (YCBR; 41-44, 62-63).

Śāstra : Originals and different interpretations of the *Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, Śrīmad Bhagabat·gītā* and the *Purāṇa*s.

Bengali ancient texts : Various *Rāmāyaṇa*s and *Mahābhārata*s in Bengali, *Rām Rasāyan, Kabi Kaṅkan Caṇḍī, Śrīdharma Maṅgal, Manasā Maṅgal, Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Caitanyabhāgabat, Śrīśrīkṛṣṇa Maṅgal, Śrīkṛṣṇa Premtaraṅgiṇī, Baiṣṇab Padalaharī, Gobinda Maṅgal*, the *Pā̃cālī*s and complete sixty-four *Pālā*s of *Dāśarathi Rāẏ, Pā̃cālī*s and *Yātrā Pālā*s of *Brajamohan Rāẏ*, the complete works of Michael Madhusudan Dutta, *Bāṅgālīr Gān, Rāmprsāder Gān, Śrīdhar Kathaker Gān, Nidhubābur Tappā, Kamalākānter Gān, Bidyāsundarer Tappā* etc.

Medical books : *Carakᶦsaṃhitā, Suśruta Saṃhitā, Cakradatta* (Original and Bengali translation).

Astrology books : *Jyotiṣtattvam, Bṛhat·saṃhitā* (Original and Bengali translation).

Tantra : *Mahānirvaṇatantram, Tantra Sāraḥ* (Original and Bengali translation).

Smṛti : *Tithi Tattvam, Śuddhi Tattvam, Śrāddha Tattvam, Malamās Tattvam, Prāyaścitta Tattvam.*

Saṃhita : *Manu Saṃhitā, Ūnaviṃśa Saṃhitā.*

Philosophy : *Sāṃkhya Darśanam, Vaiśeyik* [sic] *Darśanam.*

Nīti : *Kāma Sūtram.*

Bengali books : All works of Jogendra Chandra Basu, Indranath Bandyopadhyay and Trailokya Nath Mukhopadhyay, Durgadas Lahiri's *Rāṇī Bhabānī* and *Sbādhīnatār Itihās, Baṅgabhāṣār Lekhak.*

English books : 'Ratnavali' by Madhusudan Dutta; 'Burke's speech on impeachment of Warren Hastings'; 'Bernier's Travels in Hindusthan'; 'Travernier's Travels'; 'Autobiography of Jahangir'; 'Cunningham's History of Shikhs'; 'Stewert's History of Bengal' 'Disaster in Afganisthan by Lady Sale' 'Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire by Robert Orme'; 'Thirty five years in the East by Honigberger'; 'A Visit To Europe by T. N. Mukherjee'; 'Indian Tracts by Major John Scott and Warren Hastings'; 'History of Haidar Shah and his son Tipoo Sultan' and 'The general History of the Mugul Empire by Manuchi'; 'The pilgrimage of Fa-Hian'; 'Transactions in Bengal by Francis Gladuein'; 'Two months in Arrah in 1857 by John James Halls' etc.[1].

Re-printing : Pyarichand Mitra's (Tek Chand Thakur) *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl*; Mrityunjay Tarkalankar's *Kādambarī, Prabodh Candrikā, Rājābalī, Baṅgādhip Parājaẏ* and *Batriś Siṃhāsan*; Ramnarayan Tarkaratna's drama *Kulīn-Kul-Sarbasba* etc.

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[1]The names of the English books are presented exactly as they are printed in YCBR Vol.I; YS, 43-44.

The list of the following books has been found from the advertisement pages in an old and torn issue of *Hindī Baṅgabāsī*.

Hindi books : *Tul'sī Granthāvalī, Hind Tirth, Dõhāvalī, Sur Saṅgīt Sār, Bhīṣan Pāp, Mis Rojā* (Novel), *Ruṣ-Jāpān Yuddh, Braj'bilās and Nāsiruddin* (historical novel).

Translations from Bengali to Hindi : *Maḍel Bhaginī, Śrīśrīrāj'lakṣmī, Neṛā Haridās* (Jogendra Chandra Basu); *Rānī Bhavānī* (Historical novel by Durgadas Lahiri); *Kṣudirām yā Garīb'dās* (Indranath Bandopadhyay).

Translations from Sanskrit to Hindi : *Samagra Mahābhārat* and *Samagra Rāmāyaṇ, Kalki Purāṇa, Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Parāśara Saṃhitā*.

Translations from English to Hindi : *Baṅg'deś kī* [sic] *Itihās* (from Charles Stewert's 'History of Bengal'); *Śikh Itihās* (from Cunningham's 'History of Shikhs').

8 The Novel

Maḍel Bhaginī is the first novel by Jogendra Chandra Basu and was originally concieved in four volumes. But mention has been made (MB; 563) of only three volumes and the fourth volume is printed as the second part of the third volume. The first volume was first published in the Bengali year 1292, 4th *Śrābaṇ* (1886) and the last in the Bengali year 1295 (1889). The popularity of the novel led to many further editions. It can easily be measured from the fact that an old copy of its twelfth edition, published in the Bengali year 1312 (1906) by Natabar Chakrabarty from the *Baṅgabāsī* Elektromachine Press at 38/2 Bhabani Dutta Lane, Kolkata, was found in the Uttarpara Jaykrishna Granthagar. Personally, I have used the eleventh edition published in 1904 (the Bengali year 1370) printed in YCBR Vol.I[1].

The present text attempts to interpret the novel and its various themes expressed at different levels. The preface provides us with some very important clues, which help us to understand the author's intentions in writing it. A synopsis of the story is given in the next few pages. An analysis of the novel, with comments on its structure, formation of ideas, presentation of characters and on some of the social and historical happenings of the contemporary time is also given. A brief section discusses the use of language, as it seems important to trace the advancement of the prose in that developing phase of the Bengali novel. A note is given on the sarcastic use of the terms *maḍel* and *bhaginī*. The text also tries to mark the position of Jogendra Chandra and this novel in the history of Bengali literature, as judged and evaluated by eminent Bengali historiographers. In the conclusion a brief note is added analysing the reason of Jogendra Chandra's popularity and on his purpose in writing the novel.

8.1 Preface

In the preface Jogendra Chandra describes his work not as a novel proper; saying that it is only to satisfy the readers[2] that he terms it a novel. The work is, in reality, an early follower of the newly developed genre of the novel (). It has the span of a standard novel, with a basic plot, which is simplistic in structure involving the story of good versus evil. All the incidents arise out of this basic conflict. The characters are also numerous, and while many remain static, sticking either to their individual characteristic traits, some, like Kailas, undergo a gradual change of personality. Others, like Radhashyam and Annapurna, though conceived as stereotypes, in certain situations show flickers of being true to life. Maybe by denying to acknowledge his work as a novel Jogendra Chandra attempts only to distinguish himself from the breed of other novelists also catering to the popular taste. He calls his work 'a history of new Bengal'[3] and tries to present it both as a history and as a 'biography of the new Bengali'[4] i.e. of the 'enlightened' and

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[1]YCBR Vol.I; 563.

[2]The readers, according to his opinion, were only willing to read when a literary work was termed a novel.

[3]*nabya baṅger itihās* (MB; Preface, 156).

[4]*nabya bāṅgālīr jīban carit* (ibid.).

'modern' section of society. His intention in writing the novel becomes clear from these statements. He is out to make the people aware of the textquoteleft condemnable' ways of the so-called 'civilized' people, and thereby warn the society. At the same time he expresses ironically his fear that the third part of the novel might not find popularity among certain sections of society: 'How many have learnt to appreciate good things?'[5] He also expresses his apprehension that the naked 'reality' of the contemporary time might irritate the readers and could even put them off from reading his book. But he nurtures the hope that for the future readers, and especially for the archaeologists[6] the novel might prove to be of great use. He also asserts to his readers that his novel has all the popular ingredients to satisfy their taste. He refers to the first part of *Maḍel Bhaginī* as 'the secure stairway to ascend to heaven'[7], the second part as 'pure enjoyment of heaven'[8] and the third part as 'attainment of salvation'[9]. These announcements by Jogendra Chandra prepare the reader's mind for what he is going to depict in his novel. It is in a real sense a social farce, which in Jogendra Chandra's own words warns all to beware in life and to be concious of the existance of evil people[10].

8.2 Story

After the death of his first wife, Radhashyam Roy, a middle-aged (30 years) Hindu Brahmin gets married to eight years old Kamalini. The match is arranged by Kamalini's grandfather, Narahari Ghosal, who is much delighted by the familial aristocracy, religiosity, shastric learning and much-praised wisdom of the groom. But Kamalini's father Ramchandra, does not consent full-heartedly to the match. The influence of his character indirectly effects the course of the novel as well as the lives of his other family members, specially the main character, his daughter Kamalini, the *maḍel bhaginī*. His interesting life story covers most of the second part of the novel.

As the only son of a fairly rich landlord (Narahari) of old age, Ramchandra was pampered from childhood. After finishing primary education in a village primary school[11] he comes to Kolkata for getting himself better acquainted with higher English education. Failing to shine as a great student, he learns to imitate the life style of the Western educated *bābu*s who are well-trained in the noble ideals of Victorian English society, like proper manners, amiable conversation, good morals and good taste[12], and love to maintain a lavish outward grandeur. But the acquisition of such morals could not land him a Government job so desired by the English educated gentry at that time. At last, thanks to the efforts of his 'uneducated'[13] but rich and influential father, the 'educated'[14] Ramchandra becomes a deputy magistrate and is transferred to Hoogly as desired by him.

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[5] *sādhur samādar kaẏ'jan karite śikhiẏāche?* (ibid.).

[6] *pratnatattbabid* (ibid.).

[7] *sbarge uṭhibār pākā siṙi* (ibid.).

[8] *kebal sbarga bhog* (ibid.).

[9] *mokṣalābh* (ibid.).

[10] *strī-puruṣ, yubak-yubatī, bālak-bālikā—maḍel bhaginī pāṭhe param jñān lābh karun, dibyacakṣu prāpta haün, saṃsāre sābdhān haün—ihāï granthakārer prārthanā* (ibid.).

[11] *pāṭh'śālā* (MB; 203).

[12] *sahabat, sadālāp, sunīti, suruci* (MB; 199).

[13] *mūrkha* (ibid.).

[14] *paṇḍit* (ibid.).

He was little inclined towards Brahmo faith in his student life. In Hoogly, however, he becomes a devout follower of the Brahmo leader Keshab Chandra Sen. But he never has the courage to practice Brahmoism openly for fear of his orthodox father's outrage – especially as he is still depending on his father's money for leading a lavish life-style. After his father's death he brings his family to Hoogly and starts educating them with the Brahmo values. Gradually they become well-trained in the ways and manners of the Brahmo society. Kamalini, his only daughter, is by then already married to Radhashyam. As a social rule, the child-brides then lived with their parents even after their marriage, and only after reaching puberty went to their husband's house. Kamalini also lives in her parent's house, and under the guidance of her father, soon becomes quite well-versed in modern education and in the Brahmo ideals.

The enlightened, young and beautiful Kamalini soon becomes the centre of attraction of the Hoogly *bhadralok* society and has numerous male admirers. But her parents always treat her as a child and dote on her, and she takes full advantage of their blind affection. On his death-bed, Radhashyam's father wants to see his daughter-in-law. But Kamalini refuses to be parted with the group of her ardent admirers to be confined in the cage-like conjugal life with her husband. So, faking illness, she manages to postpone her impending journey to her in-laws' house. Thanks to her acquaintance with the romantic novels and poems of the European writers she is obsessed with romantic escapades. She masters the art of faking fainting at every suitable occasion, and always becomes indisposed even at the very mention of her going to her husband's house. After her father-in-law's death, when it becomes absolutely necessary for her to go to her husband's house, she pretends falling 'extremely' ill and instead goes for a change to restore her health with her younger brother Bipin, an old grandmother and two admirers – her doctor and advisor in all her schemes, Mahendra, and her private butler Kapil. In fact it is Mahendra's medical advice that his 'patient' must go for a change for the improvement of health, and so they first go to Kolkata and then travel to various places of North-West India[15].

As the story rolls, we meet many of her admirers. The main among them is Kailas, who goes through a complete mental and spiritual change after a chance meeting with Radhashyam in a train-compartment. In deep repentance he leaves the train without telling anybody and Radhashyam becomes anxious for him. The other admirers, Nagendra and Nabaghanashyam, are introduced in the course of their own secret escapades with Kamalini in various chapters of the novel[16]. In the meantime Radhashyam comes to Baidyanathdham in search of Kailas. Kamalini, Nagendra, Mahendra and Kapil become aware of Radhashyam's presence; in their effort to get rid of him, they, with the help of the police, accuse him falsely as the leader of a gang of robbers and he is put into prison. But he is saved by the timely intervention of Kailas, who has accepted Radhashyam as his *guru*, and with the help of another on of Radhashyam's disciples, an influential feudal king of Bihar. Kailas is repenting for his past love-relation with Kamalini, now his *gurupatnī* [17], whom he should actually respect as his own mother. Comparing the lustful, dark life of Kamalini with the pure and holy life of Radhashyam, he now starts hating her.

After four long years, Radhashyam comes to Kolkata for the first time to meet his

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[15]Kashi (now Varanasi), Baidyanathdham, Rohini and lastly Vrindavan (MB; 331, 332).

[16]MB; 169-176, 224-230.

[17]Wife of the spiritual guide (ibid.).

wife. Kamalini with the help of her group of admirers tortures him almost to death. Here also, thanks to Kailas, he is again saved just in time. After meeting her this time Radhashyam realises the true nature of his wife and becomes disillusioned. He takes to the advice of Kailas, who, in the meantime, becomes Radhashyam's anonymous well-wisher, and travels through many places of India for fourteen long years as a sage. After this, Kailas, now in his death-bed, writes a letter to Radhashyam disclosing his identity, and informs him of Kamalini's miserable life in Kolkata. All her admirers and family members have left her as she gradually lost all her beauty, charm and money, and now she lives the life of a beggar on the streets of Kolkata. At the end, both Kailas and Kamalini die by the side of the holy river Ganga after a short meeting with Radhashyam, who forgives both of them.

8.3   Analysis

8.3.1   Structure

The novel strating with a Prefacr, is roughly divided into three volumes, the last into two further parts, with each volume containing several chapters. The first volume consists of seven chapters, the second of twelve; the two parts of the third contain thirty-two and eleven chapters respectively. The interconnections between these volumes are interesting. The first volume introduces the main characters and shows the events as they are happening. The next volume discloses the true nature of the characters, narrates their past histories and illuminates their backgrounds. The last volume has two parts; the first part throws more light on the main characters and their intentions and actions through several incidents. In the last part, actions arise out of the incidents that have already taken place in the first volume. In other words, it can be said that volume II and the first part of volume III serve as the background of the characters and are situated on one level of narrated time. The last three chapters at the end of the novel move on to a posterior time level.

8.3.2   Plot

Maḍel Bhaginī, as the name suggests, deals with a woman-oriented theme. But the focal point is not really the 'ideal' (*maḍel*) woman or 'sister' (*bhaginī*), but the degeneration of woman through the 'immoral' influence of English education, which has crept into modern Bengali society. To quote from Sukumar Sen 'It (*Maḍel Bhaginī*) is pratically a lampoon against a very well-known family noted for enlightenment and culture' (Sukumar Sen; 1971, 221). The dominating notion here is that corruption among the male pollutes the society, but when the same happens among women it brings utter destruction for the family and society. For Jogendra Chandra's orthodox society woman was the stability factor[18], and a fall from this position was supposedly a bad omen for everyone[19]. He seems to basing his view on the *Bhagabadgītā*, which warns that corrupt women are likely to bring about a mixture of castes[20]. The sarcasm is obvious in the use

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[18] *Śrīśrīrāj'lakṣmī*, YCBR Vol.II and *Ṭhakur'mār Kathā* in *Bāṅgālī Carit*, YCBR Vol.I; 141-43.

[19] *Maḍel Bhaginī* and several other sketches in *Bāṅgālī Carit*, YCBR Vol.I; 1-154.

[20] *adharmābhibhavāt kṛṣṇa praduṣyanti kulastriyaḥ*
  strīṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya jāyate varṇasaṃkaraḥ (1.40)

of words like 'model' in the depiction of such a character, who, in the view of its author, personifies everything the very opposite of an ideal woman. Kamalini is conceived and presented as a perfect 'anti-model'. Jogendra Chandra's heroine is everything that a model woman should not be and becomes the epitome of evil. He hereby attempts to warn his readers to be conscious of the constituents of evilness, and his heroine mirrors this image perfectly. '........... the novels of ....Jogendra Chandra .... revel in the uninhibited, often ungenerous 'exposure' of the 'morally suspect' Brahmo and the even more ludicrous Brahmika' (Amiya P. Sen; 1993, 207). Kamalini has acquired English education, dresses and behaves like a European lady, has numerous boyfriends, eats foods prohibited in Hindu households, drinks alcohol and moves around freely without any restriction anywhere she wants. Instead of love and respect, she shows deepest hatred and contempt for her husband, whom she should actually serve and worship as the supreme god. For its author, nothing can be more immoral, impious and sinful than her attempt to kill Radhashyam, and she is duly punished at the end. Besides, a few other charceters with their own individual chracteristics, like the changed-hearted Kailas, the naive Bipin and the motherly Annapurna, a frightened and heart-broken Radhashyam towards the end, the deceitful Kamalini and her admirers, and the liar Kapil, become lively and real in places through brief strokes expressing flickers of real-life emotions.

Maḍel Bhaginī is clearly written to showcase the vices of the modern and educated Brahmo and even the modern Hindu women, who in those days showed enough courage to break the barrier of traditional conservatism. Every line of the novel underlines how these women were having a 'negative' and 'demoralising' effect on the society. The novel is clearly an effort to highlight the dark sides of the modern society and the adverse effects of English education among the young generation. On the other hand, it highly praises the conservative image of the ideal Hindu woman, whose life revolves round her husband and his family, and whose only duty is to look after the family, she herself being cut off from the outside world altogether. Conservative writers like Jogendra Chandra warn the women aspiring to break the tradition-bound social norms by showing the fatal end of the villainous heroine. The male members are also thereby warned not to allow their women to follow their own will in case they are interested in education and in leading a liberal life. The efforts of those women were shown in an adverse light, with a dark image. This type of writing met with a certain amount of success among the loyal readership of the new type of literature, whose cause Jogendra Chandra championed.

The various levels of the novel can be interpreted from different view-points. At the first level, it is a simple story of good versus evil. On the second, it is a satire on various conservative social ill-practices like child-marriage, despite the fact that Jogendra Chandra was believed to be one of the most orthodox Hindu writers. On the next, it is a cautious warning on the vices of Western education. It can also be taken as a religious sermon sung on the eternal virtues of traditional Hinduism, but at the same time it condemns the false religiosity, much practiced by and popular among the common people. On another level, it is a critique of the boom of the cheap imitations of the Western potboilers produced in the name of the popular Bengali novel. It also criticises

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'O Kṛṣṇa, by being overcome by *adharma*, the women of the family become corrupt; and once the women have been spoiled, O Vārṣṇeya, the mixture of *varṇas* arises'; (Hans Harder; 2001, 32).

the method of sensationalising reporting in the name of popular journalism[21].

8.3.3   Characters

Narrator: One of the most important features of *Maḍel Bhaginī* is the presentation of the character of the narrator. From the beginning, a direct communication is established between the readers and the narrator through active and direct narration. The basic plot fluctuates between the past and the present through narrations either presented by the narrator himself or by some characters of the novel and by the author himself. Except the last part of volume-III, the other volumes always either end or start with a direct communication between the narrator and the readers or with a direct question aimed at them (MB; 198, 199, 221, 378, 379, 413 etc.). This pattern is repeated in many places in the novel. It is as if the narrator just states incidents as they are and then asks for the opinion of his readers, though it is obvious that he presents and twists the situations and characters from his own stand-point and interprets them exactly the way he finds the best in order to fulfil his purpose. The narrator communicates directly with the readers from the very beginning of the story and continues to do so till the end. In places, the novel is transformed into a level of discourse between the readers and the narrator about the evil sides of the modern society.

He makes it clear that he is narrating a story about a certain class of people without himself belonging to this class. After a few pages, it becomes evident that he cannot really detach himself from his own class background to narrate the story from a neutral standpoint. Rather, he consciously allows his own class identity of a commoner to influence his viewpoint. What appears, from this perspective, is an overt exhibitionism of the educated upper class as reflected in the description of the house in which Kamalini's family lives, and at the same time the narrator's complete lack of knowledge of such a modern life-style. The author consciously tries to distance his own self from the character of the narrator. Jogendra Chandra, we should not forget, was far too intelligent a man to be confused by such simplistic problems. Also, this naivety is intentional to establish an easy identification of the narrator with Jogendra Chandra's target readers, i.e. the small town people. His description of the house and introduction of the characters are full of ironical references. The author makes his narrator point out the hollowness of such an exuberant show. The ground floor is described as 'hell'[22] with its dark, damp, watery and stinky rooms, while the upper floors reflect signs of a modern and luxurious life. The rooms are decorated with valuable European furniture, portraits and carpets. He first describes the living room as 'paradise'[23], and in the next moment dismisses it in a tone of fun-full mockery as of no use for a simple commoner like him because it is too manners-bound and complicated. As a simple man, only simple ways and things suit him best[24]. Especially the interesting description of the living room with its strange European furniture and the poor narrator's confusion about them is indeed comical (MB; 158-59). He seems to appear too innocent a character for the 'refined' ways of the 'civilised' world.

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[21] In a sense, these sensationalized reportings can be said to be the true predecessor of today's popular yellow journalism.

[22] *narak* MB; 158.

[23] *sbarga* MB, 159.

[24] *bhālamānuṣer cheler sojāsuji cāl kār⸍bārï bhāla*; 'For a son of a good person, straight manners and business are better' (MB; 159).

Towards the end (MB; 413-14), the narrator advises his readers to pray to god that Hindu society should always retain its purity and that the influence of 'the Western non-believers'[25] would go back soon. The same tone of moral preaching is observed earlier when he regrets the degrading characteristics of the corrupt age and says that only mourning will get one nowhere. Only those who have done some virtuous deed in a previous birth, can escape such evil characteristics of the immoral time to proceed forward towards their aim. He laments at the loss of moral values as everything is turned upside down, and expresses his fear of a 'mythical apocalyptic doom' (Anindita Ghosh; 2000, 168) in this *kali*[26] age. The demon Rāvaṇa shines in his full glory instead of god Rāmacandra. The 'goddess of the house'[27], Sītā, is dethroned and the 'unchaste', 'sinister' women[28] are taking her place. People disrespect the holy water of the Ganga and hold water from the well in high esteem. Knowledge, wisdom and learning have no value, while luxury, superficial show and ignorance reign supreme. *Śāstra*s are trampled and *aśāstra*s are much appreciated. The novel presents such a biased and one-sided account of the high values of traditional and pious Indian life and the narrator keeps himself so busy with the ideas of religious tradition and purity of customs that any scope of a sponteneous narrative style and the natural flow of the novel are lost. Towards the end, a changed Kailas acts almost as the narrator by voicing the same ideas, and we can hardly differntiate between them.

Radhashyam Roy: The introduction of the hero Radhashyam in a casual manner catches the readers almost unaware of the fact that he **is** the hero. He is first seen bargaining with a coolie on the way to his first visit to Kolkata to his wife. This unassuming casualness also establishes the fact that this hero is also a simple man just like the narrator himself, and a point of identification between the two is established, which at the same time acts as a criterion of distinguishing the heroine and other characters from themselves. Again in a mock tone, he relates this rural simplicity of common men like themselves as a 'humiliation against the rules of a civilized society'[29]. Reference is made much later in the next volumes of the novel to the extraordinary knowledge and wisdom of Radhashyam, who is also a scholar in Shashtric and Vaishnavite learning (MB; 221-22).

Radhashyam is nothing but an instrument to project the good moral of traditional religious beliefs and customs by the author. It had became typical for some novelists like Jogendra Chandra to present a direct confrontation between the corrupt *bābu* and an ideal character (in most cases he is an upper-caste Brahman)[30]. They incorporate completely opposite social, educational, moral and ethical ideas, like the noble mental

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[25] *mleccha.*

[26] The last age of four according to Hindu cosmology.

[27] *gṛhalakṣmī* (ibid.).

[28] *asatī, alakṣmī* (ibid.).

[29] *sabhya samājer apamān* (MB; 161).

[30] 'The central theme in nearly every important novel of Jogendra Chandra is the tragic but temporary subjection of the virtues to greatly adverse circumstances. In some cases he is a heroic figure battling against severe odds and finally preferring death to the ignomity of a false indictment. In some others, he is the author of long sermons and the "divine" instrument through which sinners are ultimately redeemed. In fact an overwhelming sense of guilt and retribution is very often the touching finale to the novels of Jogendra Chandra and Trailokyanath wherein the tormentor (invariably an anglicized, pro-Brahmo Babu or his wife) ends up being the tormented.' (Amiya P. Sen; 1993, 257-58 citing examples from *Maḍel Bhaginī* and *Cinibās Caritāmṛta*).

cultivation with firm belief in the gods and 'devotion'[31] in heart, on the one hand and a fancy for a modern and westernised way of life, discarding the traditions, on the other. This faith constitutes the point of contrast between the two classes the characters represent.

Though sometimes Radhashyam displays human emotions like childish joy in happiness and helplessness in the face of direct adversity (MB; 379-86, 397-99, 405-13), he does not have any real scope to develop his own individual characteristics. He does not betray his creator's intention. He is conceived as and remains more or less a stereotype to illustrate the writer's own words on religious and moral ideas till the end.

Kamalini: The exposition of Kamalini's character (MB; 181) leaves no room for doubt about the author's intention of exaggerating and ridiculing some popular practices of the Bengali urban society, which were considered to be the parameters of contemporary modernity. The use of passive narration and personal commentaries between the descriptions of the course of events, intensifies the irony of the situations. The way Kamalini looks, dresses, behaves and talks is evidence enough to realise how the author is slowly proceeding on his way to criticise the pitfalls of so-called 'civilized' society and its members; and this is what he does throughout the novel mercilessly. Many a times he overdoes it to a great extent as a conscious literary technique, as it had just the expected effect on his readers. They were certainly happy to see an exaggerated and perverted version of the modern upper class society and felt satisfied to see their condemnation at the end. Kamalini does all kinds of things that an educated and civilized modern woman is supposed to do, and sometimes all these seem to be a play of the author's method of exaggerations. Kamalini's '........... foppishness, snobbery, romantic affection and her idly busy philandering' (Dinesh Chandra Sen; 1911, 455) characterise the very essence of many fictional modern and liberated women in popular literature of the late 19th century. She is shown as being used to receive and answering a lot of love letters (MB; 163-69) from her numerous boyfriends from a very tender age (MB; 220-23). Interstingly, in most of the letters she is referred to not as a lover but either as a *bhaginī*, i.e sister or as a 'dear friend'. In answering these love-letters, Kamalini adds to her own name such pitiful adjectives as, 'one distressed for ever', 'distressed', 'one without any worldly happiness' and 'one who is a beggar of knowledge'[32] etc. In her interaction with her 'friends', Nagendra, Mahendra etc. we become acquainted with the ways of the love-game practiced by the contemporary 'civilized' men and women. Her knowledge of the European literature[33] and popular romantic ideals has taught her that the easiest way to attract the male attention is by arousing their sympathy by projecting herself as a helpless, sad but beautiful object, and she has practiced this art and has reached the height of perfection. Kamalini's love-act with her admirers is overall composed in an intensive mock tone.

Thanks to her modern-minded father, she becomes a true *bibi*. Married off at eight years of age, upon the wish of her old grand-father, to the traditional, orthodox and religious Radhashyam (MB; 221-22), she never gets a chance to know her husband or his family. She does not have any wish either. Excessive affection of her parents have made

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[31] *bhakti.*

[32] *ciraduḥkhinī, duḥkhinī, saṃsār⎮sukh-birahitā, bijñān-bhikhāriṇī* respectively (MB; 167).

[33] She is seen reading Shelley's romantic poems (MB; 162), and attempts to translate Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' (MB; 168-69).

her aware of their weakness for her, and she makes full use of it. Everytime a critical moment arrives, she pretends to fall sick (MB; 229, 245-48) and her parents become extremely concerned and forget everything else. She avoids going to her in-laws' house and instead goes for a change for the improvement of her health (MB; 247-48). When Radhashyam comes to Kolkata to take his wife home, she leaves no stones unturned to torture him (MB; 193-98, 405-13). The hilarious scene where Kamalini goes to serve her husband as an ideal Hindu wife is Jogendra Chandra's attempt to show how the modern men and women make a parody of the Hindu traditions[34]. Her attire when she proceeds to serve her allegedly 'mad' husband is also not spared from the author's sarcastic words. She wears a black dress with black gloves as a sign of mourning. Only her powdered face shines white. The narrator sarcastically comments that perhaps she is only waiting for her husband's death to blacken her face as well (MB; 391). At the pretext of serving her husband, she attempts to kill him with the help of her friends. For the second time Jogendra Chandra uses the word 'hell'[35] in describing Radhashyam's plight at the hands of his wife. When, unable to bear the torture anymore, Radhashyam loses consciousness, Kamalini eagerly asks her friends if he has really died, as it would provide her a perfect opportunity to compose a tragic poem on the sorrowful occasion of the death of her husband (MB; 413). But, to her misfortune, Radhashyam escapes and Kamalini enjoys a good time with her lovers for a short while (MB; 417). As she falls to bad times, she realises her sin, but a chance of redemption is not provided for her (MB; 421).

Kamalini aspires to be 'model' in every respect. She is shown as 'mastering' all aspects of modernism; modern education, music, manners, life-style and above all the modern idea of romantic love. She never directly confronts her parents but acts as an obedient and lovable daughter. When her family gets the news of the death of Radhshyam's father, Kamalini's mother Annapurna tells her daughter that now she has to go to her husband's house to perform the traditional after-death rituals. Kamalini agrees immediately but as she eats the ritualistic food of boiled sunned rice and clarified butter[36] for the first time, she again pretends to have an epileptic fit in front of everyone. Her doctor and 'friend' Mahendra advises her to eat normal food instead of the ritualistic simple food as 'to live is more important than adherence to *dharma*'[37]. Kamalini is an ideal of modernity to all her friends: educated, leading a liberated life, mixing freely with other males even after having a husband; she is praised as a 'model woman' by them. She tries to prove herself as an ideal wife as well, but in reality she only mimics the traditional customs and makes fun of them. Her refined literary language is easily forgotten whenever she is irritated or anything goes against her plan, and then her use of words reflects her low niveau (MB; 173-74, 340-41, etc.).

The ironical and flattering superlatives that the narrator uses in praise of Kamalini are very interesting for their choice of words: 'killer of the educated men', 'a life full of brothers in this world', 'the ideal woman',[38] all of which have strong ironical undertones. After such high praise, in the next paragraph, the narrator repents to take the name of such a sinner like Kamalini together with the name of the holy place Vr̥ndāvan,

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[34] *sbāmī sebā* (MB; 392-93).

[35] *narak* (MB; 413).

[36] *habiṣyānna* (MB; 247).

[37] *dharma āge nā śarīr āge?*; '*dharma* first or the body first?' (MB; 247).

[38] *śikṣita-puruṣ prāṇˡhāriṇī, bhabadhāme bhrātāmaẏ-jībanī, ādarśa ramaṇī* (MB; 329).

the place of god Kṛṣṇa, as Kamalini was then residing in that very place. At the very end, Kamalini is compared to a prostitute by none other than Kailas, one of her ex-admirers. What becomes obvious from her character is her 'sinful acts', 'unchastity' and 'coquetry'[39].

Ramchandra Ghosal: The contemporary social situation of Bengal is presented in the life of Kamalini's father Ramchandra. Extreme westernisation had heavily influenced the minds of certain young and educated Bengalis and given birth to many progressive groups, the most famous among them being the 'Young Bengal'[40]. Interestingly enough, this process also gave birth to a belief that being modern meant being free from all the tradtional Hindu rites, like throwing away the sacred thread (*paitā*) and indulging in drinking and beef-eating[41]. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar writes that many were attracted towards these idealisms as it provided them with a means to avoid the rigidity of many Hindu social practices (1972, 191).

Through Kamalini's father deputy magistrate Ramchandra, Jogendra Chandra tries to mock the educated middle class society. He is shown being happy in aping the 'civilized' ways and manners of the British as a symbol of modernity. Ramchandra obtains a high rank in the Government Service not on his own merit but for the name, fame and money his father and forefathers had acquired on their own strength. He is surrounded by flatterers, who always keep in with his moods and fancies. He is not only 'modern' and 'civilized', but also an opportunist and vain. Cunningly, he uses sweet words of love to manipulate the feelings of his simple, naive wife, and convince her to shake off her traditional lifestyle. By the turn of fate, his own daughter becomes so skillful in such deceits that afterwrds she uses the very same method to deceive her parents. Ramchandra's blind affection and love for modern life are responsible for making Kamalini such an 'ideal' (*maḍel*) woman to some extent.

Kailas Chandra Bandyopadhyay and Nagendra Nath Mukhopadhyay: Modern, civilized and educated, Kailas and Nagendra are two sides of the same coin. They meet Radhashyam during a train-journey (MB; 249-316). His company spiritually inspires Kailas to change the course of his life (MB; 259). The narrator states that 'good company is heaven'[42]. Kailas resembles the character of Motilal in Pyarichand Mitra's *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl* who, in the face of utter destruction, finds a spiritual guide. The

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[39]'*pāpācaraṇ*', '*asatītba*', '*chalanā*' (Shrikumar Bandyopadhyay; 1996, 384).

[40]Sushil Kumar Gupta opines that the 'Young Bengal' group was also later divided into many small sections. Many of them became disrespectful of the Hindu idolatry and other rituals and became sceptical about the exsistance of God, while many others became atheists. Rajnarayan Basu, Ramtanu Lahiri etc. took shelter in Brahmoism. Many of the 'Young Bengal' leaders like Krishnamohan Bandyopadhyay and Madhusudan Dutta, under the influence of the Christian missionaries, like Rev. Duff, took to Christianity. Other leaders, though not converted to any other religion, lost faith in the prevailing forms of ritual-based Hinduism and revolted against them. It was mainly in order to counter the influence of the 'Young Bengal', eminent personalities like Radhakanta Deb, Ramkamal Sen, Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay, Ishwar Gupta, Bhudev Mukhopadhyay etc. attempted to restore the conservative Hindu society with its age-old rituals and customs, while another part of the Hindu society, under the leadership of Vidyasagar, tried to change some of the old social customs like *satī*, child-marriage etc., and was amply supported by the 'Young Bengal' in all their attempts at reform. Even a part of the conservative Hindu society consented full-heartedly to these movements. (1959, 205).

[41]Sushil Kumar Gupta; 1959, 96-97, 109, 127, 204-6.

[42]*sat·saṅgaï sbarga* (MB; 259).

same happens to Kailas, who is then able to turn a new leaf in his life. A spoilt son of a rich family, he is the archetype of the *bābu* class of a decadent late 19th century; spoilt, extravagant, quarrelsome and a lover of Kamalini. Kailas also shows all the dominant signs of a *bābu*, but interestingly the narrator describes him not as a *bābu* but as a *sāheb* (MB; 251-253). As fair and handsome as any European, dressed in a suit, fluent in English, he expresses contempt for the native fellow travellers. In order to get more respect and facilities, he dresses as a European, but he fears that anytime his disguise may be disclosed. Although he does not hesitate to approach the Anglo-Indian guard, this fear stops him from approaching the European stationmaster to request him for a 'For Europeans only' label put on his coach (ibid.). He is the only character capable of receiving an early penance. Kailas accepts Radhashyam as his *guru*. After he comes to know that Radhashyam is Kamalini's husband, he compares the religious, virtuous and honest Radhashyam with Kamalini's character; full of deceit, insincerity, hypocrisy, artfulness and dishonesty. He starts hating Kamalini from the core of his heart and repents for his one-time involvement with her. In his mind he addresses Kamalini as a 'sinful woman', 'a ghost', 'an evil spirit'[43]. He considers himself as being rescued by Radhashyam from the dangerous sin he has committed before. Without telling anybody anything he leaves the train at Madhupur. From this time onwards he begins to repent for whatever he has done in his previous life and never shows his face again to Radhashyam in shame except before his death. He is present at all the crucial junctures of the novel and helps Radhashyam as an anonymous well-wisher whenever he senses any danger for him. At the end, he discloses his identity to Radhashyam and reveals to him Kamalini's real character and her sinful, horrible life (MB; 416-421). He expresses his wish not to live any longer as the world is being inhabited by more and more 'unchaste women and abominable natured men'[44]. He says these people cause and nurture sin but are respected in the society as 'civilized' people inspite of their licentiousness and hypocrisy. He admits that there are prostitutes in every society, but they live in a separate section of the locality. In this age of moral corruption, however, one cannot differentiate between chaste women and prostitutes anymore (ibid.). Thus Jogendra Chandra assimilates the voice of his narrator and Kailas into one in condemning Kamalini. In the last chapters (ibid.) we hardly find the voice of the narrator, as in most places it merges with that of Kailas.

But Nagendra feels no effect of Radhashyam's long preachings on philosophical, moral and spiritual discourse. He is part of Jogendra Chandra's ever-condemnable corrupt modern society, deprived of having any chance of moral elevation. For him, only those in this society can be saved who still have managed to retain some inner goodness hidden in themselves. Nagendra is from the very beginning addressed as a *bābu*, and fully justifies this role. A new *bābu* from a middle class family with moderate knowledge of English, he pursues his own pleasure and scoffs at anything else, even his own father. The objects of his affection change along with time. He takes full advantage of any given opportunity or person when it suits his interest, but afterwards does not hesitate to disown them. The other admirers of Kamalini also fall in this very category of opportunists.

Nagendra's life in incognito as a fake sage in Baidyanathdham obviously means to show how false *sādhu*s took advantage of the mental weakness and religious inclination of the

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[43]*pāpīyasī, pret¹nī, piśācī* (MB; 310).
[44]*kalaṅkinī kāminī ebaṃ piśāc prakṛtir puruṣ* (MB; 418).

common people, and many false 'God-men' arrived on the scence[45]. As Amiya P. Sen writes, '...one reason for the change in editorship of *Baṅgabāsī* in 1895 was the distaste that Jogendra Chandra developed for Krishna Chandra's Bandyopadhyay's spending far too much time with Godmen to the detriment of his editorial resposibilities. In *Model Bhagini* where he also expounds some of his basic ideas about religion and society, Jogendra Chandra shows an open scepticism at the rapid proliferation of dubious religious organizations and itinerant preachers of Hinduism.' (Amiya P. Sen; 1993, 262). Nagendra's *sādhu*-guise and breaching the vow of ascetic austerities at the persuasion of Kamalini, reveals their hypocrisy and moral fragility. Nagendra even dares to redefine the great Indian epics (MB; 334), the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, in his own way. This section attracts our attention for the intersting interpretation that Nagendra formulates. He expresses his suspicion whether Rāma and Sītā as well as Yudhiṣṭhira and Draupadī really led an ascetic life at all during their 'exile in forest'[46]. He opines that the five ideal Hindu women, Ahalyā, Draupadī, Kuntī, Tārā and Mandodarī, were all honestly devoted to their own husbands while being attracted to others' husbands at the same time. He argues that even the great philosopher Mill has not written in any of his books that there is any harm in being attracted to another man even when a woman has a husband at home. Referring to a Frenchman, he says that 'the husband in the house is a house-deity, the husband outside is an outside-deity and the husband in the jungle is a jungle-deity'[47]. It is noteworthy, that most of the parallels are drawn from European models and are then manipulated to suit his own interest. In order to prove his point people like Nagendra even do not hesitate to present false informations about Hindu mythology, or possibly they do not even care to have a proper knowledge of it.

Annapurna and Bipin: The simplicity of Kamailini's mother Annapurna is a typical example of a lovable, dutiful and caring *antaḥpur* (Anindita Ghosh; 2004, 10) woman. This simple village woman is lured by the sweet words of her modern husband into casting off her age-old beliefs and traditional life-style. Though full of care and motherly love for her only daughter, she is neither loved nor respected by her. Poor Annapurna wins our full sympathy, but her inability to have a stronghold in her own household makes her a somewhat weak, meek and passive character. More or less the same image is highly upheld and projected by the author as a perfect motherly figure in many of his works[48]. In most of these works, inspite of all their selfless love and affection for their children, they are often tricked by the cunning of the younger generation and suffer.

The naivety of Kamainli's younger brother Bipin is also well-exploited by Kamalini and her friends (MB; 181). Bipin and Annapurna are the two honest characters, who constantly fall prey to the beguilement of others. They have full sympathy and liking for Radhashyam but their emotions are constantly manipulated by the others. But at

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[45] *yekhāne dekhᵈbe eta chokᵈrā baṃase sannisī, seᵢkhāneᵢ bujhᵈbe, er bhitar meᵢe mānuṣ āche* (MB; 322). Also see Jogendra Chandra's open criticism of such *sādhu*s in MB; 316-327 and *Bāṅgālī Carit* in YCBR Vol.I; 118-124.

[46] *banabās.*

[47] *gharer pati gṛhadebatā; bāhirer pati bāhir-debatā, araṇyer pati banadebatā* (MB; 334).

[48] *Ṭhakurᵈmār Kathā* in *Bāṅgālī Carit*, in YCBR Vol.I; 141-43, *Kauśalyā* in *Cinibās Caritāmṛta* in YCBR Vol.I; 423-99, *Karuṇāmoyī* in *Kālācãd* in YCBR Vol.II and *Annapūrṇā* in *Śrīśrīrājᵈlakṣmī* in YCBR Vol.III.

last a grown-up Bipin protests against the distasteful life of Kamalini and she leaves the house. This proves the author's point that there can never be any place for the evil forces when good sense prevails.

Rājā: The Rājā is Radhashyam's disciple and a royal nobleman from Bihar. Jogendra Chandra tries to present a picture of the elite class of India through the character of the Rājā. His Rājā is wise, if not necessarily educated in the Western system, and full of respect for his own country, culture and people. In turn, he is also shown as respected by all, even his lack of English knowledge does not prevent the British Government from holding him in high esteem. The Rājā is described by the narrator as a humble and pious man, full of respect for his *guru*, and is seen taking to various religious pilgrimages (MB; 295). Even when he finds that his employee Nagendra has ignored his order, he forgives him immediately and arranges for his medical treatment in Burdwan (MB; 301). Later, when Nagendra runs away from there, he does everything to search for him. He writes a letter to Nagendra's father telling him not to worry and consoles him that everything will be alright soon (MB; 328-29). All these show his sense of right judgement and responsibility, and his noble-heartedness. Clearly, Jogendra Chandra's respect and admiration for the Indian royalty is conveyed in this charater.

Kapil: The butler Kapil assists whole-heartedly in the dark endeavours of his master's daughter, Kamalini, as it enables him to win her favour. He is a typical low-caste household helper of the new age, duly got his training from the modern generation (MB; 248), and has inherited many of their vices; a compulsive liar and drunkard, he steals off his master[49], exaggerates facts, tries to pass the hard jobs to others but never forgets to take the credit, and manipulates things when the occasion arises. By his clever intuition he understands the tide of time, and changes his loyalty along with it. He is one of the most favourite servants of Kamalini, and yet is the first to flee as soon as she falls into hard times. His total disregard for the caste hierarchy, as he secretly smokes from the same hookah as Radhashyam, stands in direct contrast with Radhashyam's regard for a poor coolie's higher caste despite his lowly occupation, at the outset of the novel (MB; 184-85).

Characteristics of the contemporary popular novel: The second chapter of the first volume is perhaps the most engrossing as it provides us, in a sarcastic language, a picture of the contemporary Bengali novel that was being produced in the name of popular literature. The narrator asserts that his novel also has all the main ingredients of an ideal novel. Here we get a glimpse of the features of popular novels written in those days of early Bengali prose. The amusing descriptions of the 'model' heroine, hero and other characters make *Maḍel Bhaginī* very much relevant even today for understanding the popular taste of the late 19th century. If not for displaying any superior literary grace, the novel is worth a mention for these descriptions. In a mock tone, Jogendra Chandra criticises the romantic novels produced in masses. This type of novel was written mostly in imitation of the mass-produced popular European ideals. Jogendra Chandra's special target of attack being the 'liberated'[50], 'over-romantic'[51]

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[49]His shopping scene at the Municipal Market gives ample proof of this (MB; 387-89).

[50]Amiya P. Sen (1993, 30) uses this term from *Jyotirindranāther Nāṭya Saṃgraha*; Visva-Bharati; 1969, 235, 236-37.

[51]ibid.

novel-reading female, he himself describes the heroine of the popular novels as 'educated, liberated .... estranged'[52]. These types of romantic and liberated portrayals of the heroine became a trade-mark of Jogendra Chandra's works[53].

Satire: The basic plot is laid on a very simplistic plane, which, if not for the comical incongruities of the modern[54] characters, could have otherwise made the novel a much less popular piece of literary work. The sarcasm lies not in the author's handling of the plot and situations, but in their ambiguities. The characters are better exposed in their incongruities and in the inconsistencies of situations in which they are trapped.

The beginning easily catches the readers' attention, in its description of the city of Kolkata on a hot summer noon in a very witty language. Satirical presentation of every 'modern' character and their actions adds to the value of the novel as a representative of popular but cheap satire.

Jogendra Chandra's claim to popularity was mainly confined to the rural towns and villages, and owed mostly to the social farces written by caricaturing the upper and middle class urban societies. These classes were perhaps the first to welcome the new changes towards building up a modern society and were in turn aptly rewarded by much condemnation from their own people. Interestingly Jogendra Chandra did not spare his own class as well. His method of self-redicule mocked the position of the so-called leaders of the new cheap literary movement in Bengal in many of his sketches[55], inspite of the fact that he himself was a part of them. Some of Jogendra Chandra's popular collection of sketches like *Bāṅgālī Carit* explore the world and psyche of such contemporary literary entrepreneurs. His two novels also condemned such people and their enterprises. As the trend became popular, social novels ridiculed the modern society, the special target being the Brahmo *bābus*[56].

To set his story in the corrupt society of such 'modern' characters and to criticise them by the process of self-projection, Jogendra Chandra's choice of satire as the literary genre seems to be perfect. All his criticisms are expressed in paragraphs full of satirical remarks. Writing about the contemporary decadent society in a comical tone, satire provides him with just the appropriate form[57]. In places the satire also exhibits signs of a gloomy sadness on the moral degradation. It becomes even more effective with Jogendra Chandra's narrative method of direct communication with his readers.

Amiya P. Sen comments on Jogendra Chandra's satire that it 'is not merely a replenishment of an older literary tradition but also a more indignant and courageous exposure

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[52]*śikṣitā, sbādhīnatāprāptā.............birahinī* (MB; 160).

[53]Several sketches in *Bāṅgālī Carit*, YCBR Vol.I; 82-6, 107-12, 138-41,143-52 etc.

[54]Those who take modernity at its face-value.

[55]*Bāṅgālī Carit* YCBR Vol.I; 96-8 and *Pañcānanda*, YCBR Vol.II; 18-37.

[56]'The resentment against Brahmos – expressed, *inter alia*, in a scurrilous and highly popular novel, Jogindrachandra Basu's *Model bhagini* (The Ideal Sister) – was partly provoked by their overt contempt for traditional practices. Parodies of westernized Bengalis – whose life-style implied an unfavourable comment on "unreformd" Hinduism – recur continually in the popular literature of the period.' (Tapan Raychaudhuri; 1988, 8).

[57]'In beginning their bitter warfare against the Brahmos, the *Bangabasi* writers may be said to have given birth to a new genre of Bengali satirical literature. In the age of Bhabani Charan Bandopadhyay or Peary Chand Mitra, criticism of Brahmo heterodoxy had rarely been so bitter and practically never went beyond journalistic exchanges. By the 1880s however, particularly as reflected in the writings of Indranath and Jogendra Chandra, it seems to have become an integral part of popular literature.' (Amiya P. Sen; 1993, 260).

of the confused identities and moral travails of their social world......The humour of
Jogendra Chandra may often appear, on the one hand, as being a trifle tendentious;
on the other hand it is also humour delicately touched with melancholy'(Amiya P. Sen;
1993, 268).

Critique of modern people: The writer describes how these 'civilized' men and
women, who speak words of high moral and ethical values, look upon their own parents.
When her mother Annapurna requests Kamalini to take some food and rest in the
afternoon, she dismisses her as intruding into her freedom. Afterwards when she again
calls her daughter for some snacks in the evening, an 'exasperated' Kamalini refers to
her aside as an 'old haggard'[58].

Nagendra is not only utterly irresponsible towards his own father, but for his Kamalini
he ignores even the order of his employer, the Rājā. His father is described as in a
terrible state after receiving the news of Nagendra's running away from the royal house.
It seems to the author that 'in the age of *kali* people like fathers are born only to cry'[59].
The overall negation and snide remarks about their parents that the 'civilized' persons
mouth, make the readers wonder what sort of 'civilization' they represent! Jogendra
Chandra brings out the carelessness, ignorance and moral corruptness of these 'civilized'
people.

The narrator describes Radhashyam as 'uncivilized' and 'barbaric' and Kamalini as
'civilized' and 'modern' (MB; 199). Then he asks the readers which way they would
like to follow, the way to barbarism, superstitions of the Hindu Brahman[60], or the way
towards civilization and good morals of educated modern women[61]. Finally he advises
them to take a straight middle path as the best solution in this critical situation[62].

It is perhaps his own way of making a compromise between the two extreme ideologies
of two extreme ends; one of the extreme Western modernity and the other of extreme
conservative and orthodox Hinduism[63]. Bankim Chandra in his own effort to strike a
balance between the two seemed to voice this very idea as well. This idealism can not
really be termed as conservative, but as an endeavour towards reform. Surprisingly,
Jogendra Chandra was never equated with or elevated to the level of the great thinker,
but was always considered to belong to the popular conservative literary circle, with an
eye on the small-town readers. But he has never shown any strong bias in his publishing
enterprises as was shown by Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay earlier. Bhabanicharan
was a man of sufficient English knowledge and also had worked under many Englishmen.
But in his attempt to protect the traditionl religion from the attacks of the Christian

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[58]*burī māgī* (MB; 173).

[59]*Kalikāle pitā-jātīya lok|gulār kãditeï janma haïÿāche* (MB; 329).

[60]*asabhyatā, kusaṃskār* (MB; 199).

[61]*sabhyatā, susaṃskār* (ibid.).

[62]*e saṅkaṭ|kāle, ek|ṭā mājhāmājhi sojā patheï jāoÿā bhāla*; 'In this critical situation it is better to
go a middle and straight way' (ibid.).

[63]'Nonetheless, in so far as broad grouping of idealogues or idealogies are possible, one ought to
make some distinction between the orthodox but also the reasoned defence of Hinduism on the one
hand, and more inflexible attitudes on the other......Bankim Chandra, Bhudeb and Akshay Sarkar tend
to constitute a group which is marked by a fairly high degree of social conservatism but significatnly
enough, also showing overtones of liberal-rationalist philosophy.... Pandit Sasadhar on the other hand,
appears to argue that since all postulates of reason and utility had sufficiently been incorporated
within Hinduism, there was actually no scope for reform.' (Amiya P. Sen; 1993, 205-06).

missionaries and the Brahmos he was only defensive and never tried to criticise any fault of Hinduism. His rigidity reached such an extreme that he published the translations of the *Śāstra*s in the exact measure of the old *Pũthi*s and used the traditional cotton-pulp paper (*tulaṭ*), and, in order to avoid Western influence [64], took help of only Brahman workers (YCBR Vol.I; *Yogendra Candra Basu: Samaẏ O Jīban, ḍa* and *ḍha*). But Jogendra Chandra criticises not only the artificial manners of the Brahmos, but also the inconsistencies of contemporary Hinduism. He also availed of all the facilities of the new printing technology imported from the West to make his publishing house more successful and prosperous. But his presentation of the Brahmanic world of the Hindus as *asabhyatā* and *kusaṃskār* is indeed an ironical reference, as he was a firm believer in the Hindu caste hierarchy with the Brahmans occupying the central role[65].

The 19th century is ironically presented as the 'age of friendship'[66]. At the time of the highest ideal of civilization, friendship flourishes between women and men. It is regarded as the 'epitome of civilization'[67]. Everyone becomes everyone's friend. Class and caste difference play no role in this relationship. Even the butler Kapil is not deprived of the loving company of his master's daughter. The way he takes care of her when she becomes senseless, driving out her own mother, stresses the intimate relation they share with each other (MB; 198). Sometimes, the author's description of their relation borders on the limits of decency (ibid.). A satirical discourse on the term 'friend'[68] by Jogendra Chandra is given in the description of Kamalini's friends. She has innumerable friends from all strata of society. In Kolkata itself, she has one hundred and eight regular friends. A remarkable parallel is therefore drawn between the number of boyfriends of Kamalini and the holy names of the Hindu gods[69]. It seems, as if instead of uttering the hundred and eight holy names of God, this modern woman utters the names of her male friends for attaining salvation. Modern men and women hold no other relation in so much importance. Nagendra, Kamalini and the others are seen as placing friendship above all other relations. But they are not honest even in this relation and the mutual respect among themselves is often missing. The friends hold each other not in very high esteem, and speak ill of each other behind their backs. In their world of show and artificiality, friendship is more interest-oriented and materialistic, depending on reciprocal gains. Kamalini criticises doctor Mahendra, another beloved of hers, in his absence to Nagendra as lacking in proper moral sense and good education. He takes her to all the places where god Kṛṣṇa performed his *rās^llīlā*[70], as they are very pious places to the Hindus. But these very holy places and godly exploits are in the modern age seen as 'vulgar'[71] by the new educated society.

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[64]*mlecchadoṣa.*

[65]'The roots of social philosophy in respect of the Bangabasi writers especially so in the case of Jogendra Chandra and Indranath lie in their unflinching belief in the rigid, hierarchical ordering of Hindu society in which obviously the supremacy of the Brahman assumes a pivotal importance.' (Amiya P. Sen; 1993, 257)

[66]*ūnabiṃśa śatābdī – bandhutber kāl; – prīti; pabitrapraṇaẏ, bhāb-bhālabāsār yug*; 'Nineteenth century – age of friendship; – affection; holy attachment, era of acquaintance and love' (MB; 389).

[67]*caram sabhyatā* (ibid.).

[68]*bandhu* (ibid.)

[69]The number itself has a layer of deep significance. In Hindu *Purāṇa*s 108 is an auspicious numeral, and gods, e.g. Kṛṣṇa, are supposed to have one hundred and eight different names in various *avatāra*s down the ages. These names are very holy for the Hindus and to be recited during prayers.

[70]The festival of love where god Kṛṣṇa danced with his beloved Rādhā and other milk women.

[71]*kuruci* (MB; 338-39).

Therefore, it is impossible for Kamalini to stay there for long, as everything about the place is of perverted taste.

It is not at all surprising that as Kamalini loses her beauty and wealth, the 'friends' detach themselves from her. She exploits not only her own family, but also her friends for fulfilling her own interests. In order to avoid going to her husband's house, she uses doctor Mahendra, who convinces her parents that Kamalini is terribly ill and, instead of going to her husband's house, must got for a change. But as soon as the other friend Nagendra arrives on the scene, she changes sides, as now she needs Nagendra's help. The friends are also aware that they do not have any real claim on Kamalini's affection, but only to enjoy her company do not mind sharing her among themselves. So, when her husband appears to take his legally married wife along, they are much eager to drive him out. They unite together to conspire to get Kamalini rid of her husband, when she begs for their help. In fact, they themselves are aware of their own dishonest characters and know that theirs are only short-term friendships and that they will move on when the time comes.

Social Critique: The novel shows a terrible famine hitting most parts of India, but the well-to-do modern society is conveniently ignorant of it. The narrator comments sarcastically that the eyes of the modern people (i.e. Kamalini, Nagendra and Mahendra) are covered with so much education that they are unable to see all those earthly happenings[72]. Instead of helping the sufferers, they drive the beggars away and spray perfume and lavender to purify the atmosphere polluted by the body odour of these beggars. In stark contrast to this educated lot, he portrays his hero, the poor brahman Radhashyam, as living amongst the poor beggars and helping them as much as he can.

Jogendra Chandra tries to present not only a rosy picture of the prevailing social practices. He shows their evil sides too. At the insistence of her grand father, Kamalini gets married at a very young age. At that time, she herself is hardly able to understand the importance of such a union. According to the social rule, she stays with her parents and receives a totally different kind of upbringing, which makes her completely detached from her husband's world. They slowly become representatives of two different worlds, and any communication between them seems to be almost impossible. Also, Radhashyam himself does not show much active interest from his side to bring his bride home. Only after getting the anonymous letters, does he himself take some initiative to bring Kamalini to his house. But by then it is too late. Kamalini does not suffer alone, but Radhashyam and Kailas do so as well. This unhappy union does not bring pleasure for anyone at the end.

Keshab Chandra Sen, one of the famous reformist Brahmo leaders of that period, was one of the favourite targets of attack for the orthodox press like Jogendra Chandra's *Baṅgabāsī*. In this novel also, he appears as Ramchandra's *guru*, a comical figure, who is often ridiculed (MB; 207, 211, 213, 216, 219). This section also tells us how Ramchandra manipulates his simple uneducated wife to accept his own beliefs and later

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[72]*śikṣita nagendra bā śikṣitā kamalinī, suśikṣār suprabhābe e kaṣṭa ādau dekhite pān nāï. bṛhaspati-buddhi nagendra-kamalinīr cakṣu-catuṣṭaẏ agādh-bidyār ābaraṇe ācchādita haïẏāche:- sutarāṃ tãhārā pārthiba padārtha dekhite pāïben kena?*; 'Educated Nagendra or educated Kamalini, could not see this suffering at all under the good influence of good education. The four eyes of Jupiter-like intelligent Nagendra and Kamalini are covered with bottomless learning:- therefore how can they see worldly matters?' (MB; 345).

also to follow them to some extent (ibid.). Keshab Chandra's ideas against traditional Hinduism are presented with an ironical touch of exaggerated negativism. His ideas against idolatry, against unjustified superstitions, against the caste-system, nothing is spared. The narrator deals with all of them in an extremely sarcastic tone with an underlying note of mockery. The words of equality among men[73] are also ridiculed as Ramchandra, in order to show his disregard for the Hindu caste system, receives all who come to his house with the same geniality. Sometimes, it lands not only him into trouble, but also the others concerned. The moral obligation of such persons, who constantly utter words of high ethics, is also questioned when in the novel Ramchandra's *guru* Keshab Chandra compares Ramchandra's father with a dog[74]. Saying this much, the narrator defends himself in the next line, saying that he himself does not belong to such a class which teaches to compare one's own father with a dog[75]. Here again the inter-play of identification and detachment comes out very clear. The narrator always draws a clear line of distinction between his own class and the others, i.e. the modern educated Brahmo *bābu*s. This identification with 'us' and the distancing from the 'others' comes back as a leitmotif in the novel.

Jogendra Chandra tries to discuss some of the contemporary social issues that India faced in the late 19th century. Volume-III of the novel brings out the corruption in the police department. The award of one thousand Rupees, which the Rājā announces for capturing the thief, who has robbed him off some of his jewels, leads the police department into frenzy. Especially during the time of famine many thefts and robberies have taken place, but the police has been incapable of successfully investigating any of them. This has resulted in an embarrassing situation for them (MB; 355). As the police imprisons Radhashyam and the poor beggars on charges of theft, the narrator criticises the police and their action (MB; 358). He wonders about their intention of troubling the innocent poor people. Lastly, he draws the conclusion that only God knows their real characters[76]! The police tries to force Radhashyam to confess a crime he has not committed at all. In a sarcastic tone the narrator states that those who lie are receiving a good treatment from the police, while the honest people are being tremendously tortured in order to speak the 'truth' the police want them to say (MB; 358).

Jogendra Chandra criticises the legal system also when his hero wonders what type of justice is done in such a court, where he is awarded with freedom for telling the lie instead of the truth (MB; 363)! In the character of the British Magistrate, the author shows what sort of Englishmen came from England for running the administrative machinery in India. Many felt homesick and longed for their near and dear ones left back in England (MB; 365). The misuse of the legal system is revealed when the Magistrate is shown as full of prejudices against the convicted, even before the process begins, and is therefore himself unable to run the process (MB; 356-57, 366-71). And the corrupt, rich and powerful people like Kamalini and Nagendra make fun of the legal system by manipulating it the way they will (MB; 341).

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[73]*sāmya, sāmya, sāmya, – īśbarer sr̥ṣṭa mānuṣ sab samān, – param pitā pakṣapātī nahen ye, tini brāhmaṇ śūdra bhed kariÿāchen – sakaleï ek –*; 'Equality, equality, equality, – all God-created men are same, – the supreme Father is not partial that he differentiated between Brahman and Shudra – all are equal' (MB; 209).

[74]'Let the dog bark' (MB; 211).

[75]*pitāke kukurer sahit tulanā karā āmāder nijer nahe* (ibid.).

[76]*bhagabān jānen, pulis-ki?*; 'God knows, what the police is?' (ibid.).

The reports written in the local newspapers about the incidents of robbery and about the police's credit in capturing the gang are typical examples of how a simple incident is sensationalised in order to sell the stories well. The reporters let their imaginations run free with colourful exaggerations about the exploits of the captured and the capturer. They dramatise the simple incidents even more by infusing elements of some supernatural power into them (MB; 358-60). The lesser newspapers of that age, which catered mostly to the lower-middle class of the small towns, adopted indeed similar methods of sensationalised reporting and a low price in order to lure their readers[77]. Interestingly, Jogendra Chandra, here critical of this, himself adopted the same strategy to popularise his newspapers and magazines.

8.3.4   Style and Language

While discussing the style and language of *Maḍel Bhaginī*, we should keep in mind that Jogendra Chandra did not belong to the elite group of writers or intellectuals of the 19th century like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay or Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay. Although we observe an indirect criticism on some aspects of contemporary Hinduism in *Maḍel Bhaginī*, surprisingly this aspect of his writing was hardly any point of discussion with most of the historiographers of Bengali literature. His name is mentioned mainly as one of the main orthodox authors of the populist neo-Hindu movement. Jogendra Chandra was never univocally liberal in his social stance. In his letter to Khirod Chandra Roy dated December 1881 (12 *Agrahāyjan* of the Bengali year 1288), he expresses his intention of publishing a paper (*Baṅgabāsī*) and states that he will try to mix a radical tone with that of orthodox Hindu views (YCBR Vol.III; 593). It is obvious that Jogendra Chandra and the other *Baṅgabāsī* writers were characterised by their firm belief in the traditional social structure, where the Brahmanas are 'both the law-giver and the instrument of social change' (Amiya P. Sen; 1993, 258). Amiya P. Sen further comments that 'it was such dogmatism that distinguished them from the position of men like Bankim, by no means radical in his social views but liberal enough to rejoice at the important progressive changes occurring within traditional Indian society.' (ibid.).

Personalities like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay helped in develpoing a consciousness about India's 'golden' past as a great heritage. This 'cultural self-assertion' (Tapan Raychaudhuri; 1988, Preface, xi-xii) gave birth to the so-called Hindu Revivalism, as it fullfilled the purpose of 'the psychological need felt by a colonial elite to assert its superiority in relation to the ruling race' (ibid.). But the intelligentsia of the age catered more to the handful, educated lot. The common mass was still in want of the scholarship and understanding of either the indigenous or European literature. Jogendra Chandra turned to orthodox Hinduism, which went well with his readers. The tone of this populist ideal is evident in all his writings, essays, stories, novels and sketches, and the language remains on a simplistic plane.

In *Maḍel Bhaginī* the language of the narrator and the other characters offers nothing new and does not showcase any great literary merit. The interesting usage of the English terms in Bengali shows typical lower middle class Bengali pronunciations[78],

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[77]Newspapers like *Sañjībanī, Anusandhān, Sandhyā* etc. (YS; 32,33, 34) ans many more.

[78]Stocking, stethoscope, prescription etc. are pronounced as *esṭākin, sṭithis'kop, priṣkṛpsan* (MB; 161-62, 179, 181).

that of people acquainted with such English usage, but in an indianized form typical of their own dialects and pronunciations.

In places, the language spoken by the characters helps to establish their separate identities. The language of Radhashyam, Jogendra Chandra's virtuous hero, is overloaded with so much religious undertone, with discourses on *Śāstra*s and their various explanations, that the character ceases to be authentic. His language is commonplace, but always tinged with a religious and pious tone, full of holy associations mostly drawn from ancient Indian religious texts. Every now and then, he recites a *stotra* or a prayer that hinders the spontaneous flow of the narrative. The over-indulgence in religious prayers and recital of scriptural hymns by Radhashyam, as well as by other 'good' characters, and their subsequent explanatory discourse are part of the author's scheme of highlighting and putting emphasis on the supremacy of Hindu religious traditions. But it mars the literary merit of the novel. In places, use of *sādhu bhāṣā* in the spoken language also does not sound very realistic.

Kapil's dialect (especially in MB; 185) is indicative of his low caste[79]. Although well-trained by a famous Brahmo leader of Kolkata, his class identity remains the same. This is significant as the author thereby expresses his firm belief in the traditional Hindu caste structure[80]. Jogendra Chandra tries to prove his point that however much a low-class man is trained in the ways and manners of the educated and cultured society, his caste will play its unique role in determining his character. The proof of his unshakable conviction in the caste-system is evident in many other instances, e.g. in Ramchandra's interaction with his barber (MB; 209-11).

Only Annapurna speaks the typical *antaḥpur* language, commonly used by the women of urban Bengal households[81]. Her simple words, full of sincere concern for her children and their well-being, make the character somewhat more authentic than the others.

The simple language used by the honest shop-keeper and the beggars in Mathura comes out as very natural and true to life. As a direct contrast to them, the language used by the modern educated characters sounds too cultivated and too 'civilized' for their real persona. Their language is derived from the 'sublime' ideals of Western literature with 'references to European social and philosophical theories and literature' (Anindita Ghosh; 2000, 163). The use of high superlatives in praising each other's talent and beauty seems to be highly influenced by the romantic poems and novels. At places, it sounds almost like a competition in the use of profound and sublime adjectives! The whole conversation is thereby reduced into a pre-programmed artificial discourse. The same scheme is repeated again and again between Kamalini and her various admirers. Kamalini and her friends always speak in a very refined high Bengali in a polished tone. But whenever their masks of refined style slip off, we get a glimpse of their true selves. This becomes evident when Kamalini is talking about Radhashyam's presence in Vrindaban in search of Kailas. On being asked if they can give any information about Kailas, she vehemently denies anyone in her family being acquainted with his name in the last fourteen generations. The choicest adjectives like 'a swindler, an accursed, a wicked man, a drunkard and a sinful man'[82] etc. that his wife uses for Radhashyam

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[79]*sad^l gop*; milkman, belonging to a lower caste in Indian society.

[80]See again Amiya P. Sen; 1993, 257, quoting from various works of Jogendra Chandra Basu and Indranath Bandyopadhyay.

[81]Compare her language in MB; 163, 173-74 with Sukumar Sen; 1979, 62.

[82]*bāt^l pāṙ, poṙāṙ^l mukh, durācār, mad^l khor, pāpiṣṭha* (MB; 341).

reveal her lowly taste. In this particular scene Kamalini does not show any sign of a really cultivated, cultured woman. The juxtaposition of such low and high styles is again Jogendra Chandra's purposefully used machinery to bring out her hollowness.

Jogendra Chandra's style involves a solid narrative, bound together with sarcastic remarks. His novel evokes in our mind a sense of the 'comical grotesque' (Shrikumar Bandyopadhyay; 1996, 383) through satirical exaggerations. Although it reveals glimpses of a standard structure or form of a novel, with remarks of moral preaching and introduction of godly supernatural intervention thrown in, it also tries to show some amount of contemporary realism (albeit exaggerated) and character-analysis to some extent. Although *Maḍel Bhaginī*'s satire is in places devoid of refinement and shows signs of banality and vulgarity, yet at the age of the early Bengali satirical novel[83] it helps us to understand the popular taste of the late 19th century.

8.5   Satirical use of the term *bhaginī*

The brother-sister relation in Bengali as well as in the Indian society is much adored and respected. Many Hindu religious and social festivals[84] have evolved around this relation, which help to create a bond of love and affection between them.

The male and female members of the modern society of *Maḍel Bhaginī* address each other as *bhrātā* (brother) and *bhaginī* (sister), according to the fashion of the contemporary Brahmo society. Judged by the extreme puritan values of *sunīti* (good moral) *suruci* (good taste) etc. practiced by the Brahmos, any other relationship between

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[83]Shrikumar Bandyopadhyay; 1996, 382-88.

[84]*Bhāï phõṭā*: Every year on the 15th day of the dark fortnight of the Hindu month of *Kārtik* (October/November), the new moon day, the light fortnight begins. On the 2nd day of this light fortnight is *Dbitīẏā*, and on that auspicious day, *Bhāï Phõṭā* is celebrated. On that day, sisters fast, collect auspicious materials such as curd, sandalwood paste, morning dew, green grass and paddy seeds. They also cook the favourite dishes for their brothers, put a mark with a paste of curd and sandalwood on the forehead of the brothers with the little finger of the left hand and give blessings with green grass and paddy seeds. Thus sisters wish their brothers a long life and good health. And the brothers promise to love and protect their sisters throughout their lives. According to Hindu mythology, Yamunā marked on the forehead of her brother Yama (the God of death) in the same way to save him from any danger. This is believed to be a continuation of the same tradition.

Rākhi-Bandhan (Rakṣā-Bandhan): The festival of *Rākhi-Bandhan* or *Rakṣā-Bandhan* is celebrated generally in the month of August and sometimes in late July on the day of full moon (*Pūrṇimā*). There are many Hindu mythological names and legends linked to this auspicious festival of *Rākhi-Bandhan*, as Indra and Śacī, Goddess Lakṣmī and King Bāli, Draupadī and Kṛṣṇa, Rānī Karṇābatī and Humāẏūn etc. Owing to its various legends and significances, it is known by different names in different states of India among different communities. Their significance also varies with the region. *Rakṣā-Bandhan* is primarily a North and West Indian Festival but is celebrated in other parts like South and Eastern India as well. In Bengal, Rabindranath Tagore introduced this tradition in Śāntiniketan, an institution set up by the great poet. During India's freedom struggle in 1905, he used the occasion of the *Rakṣā-Bandhan* to rally people from all walks of life against the partition of Bengal. He suggested the use of *Rākhi-Bandhan*, the tying of the ancient ochre-coloured thread round the wrist in order to create a real sense of brotherhood among the people. This simple ceremony spread everywhere, and the poor and the rich joined together as a protest against authority. At this *Rākhi-Bandhan*, he received the *Rākhi* from his elder sister Barṇakumārī, and wrote the famous song: *Bāṅglār māṭi Bāṅglār jal.* Traditionally *Rākhi-Bandhan* symbolizes the love, honour and respect of a sister for her brother and binds them together in a bond of mutual love and good wishes for the safety and prosperity of the ones we love and care for.

male and female members was unimaginable and was termed as obscene. As a rule, one had to regard and respect the female members as sisters. But the modern *bhadralok*s like Mahendra, Nagendra, Kamalini etc. take full advantage of this and misuse the term to cover up their secret romantic liaisons. They commit the most unthinkable deed of developing a clandestine love-relationship under the cover of such a beautiful relationship.

In his extremely satirical novel, Jogendra Chandra has used the term to underline the moral corruption and falsehood that such people practiced in the name of following the Bramho faith. By the end of the 19th century Brahmoism was constantly ridden with crisis[85]. In the first place, it was divided into many groups with different value-systems on theories of social reform and progress. All these came as a self-critique in an effort at internal reform influenced by the rapid social and religious changes occurring in the later half of the century. Orthodox Hinduism played an important role in determining this criterion of self-criticism. But the attempt to bridge the gap with Hinduism and the problem among its different ideals made the Brahmo Samaj slowly fade into apparent oblivion, though it still exists without having any great social influence. Lack of any able and competent leadership accelerated this process at the far end of the 19th century.

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[85]'The seventies of the 19th century witnessed two major developments in the religious life of Bengal. The first was the gradual decline of the influence of the Brahmo Samaj on the educated Bengalis...... due to the two schisms in the Brahmo Samaj and the ultimate withdrawal of Keshab Chandra Sen from the main body of the Samaj. The second major development was a movement for return to Hinduism and a growing desire for political rights........ a new consciousness regarding the past heritage of the Hindus (Kamal K. Ghatak; 1991, 121).

9 Opinions on Jogendra Chandra Basu

Jogendra Chandra is mostly acknowledged in the history of Bengali literature as a writer of mediocre social satires of the populist neo-Hindu tradition. Among his works mention is mostly made of his novel *Śrīśrīrāj¹lakṣmī*, which was the most voluminous novel published in Bengali until then.

He is praised for his 'masterly critical and biographical sketch of Madhusudan Dutta', 'the best' among the number of small biographies written in the 19th century, by K. N. Das.[1]

Anil Biswas mentions him as a writer of satires: 'Jogendra Chandra Basu's satires on the new-Brahmos are very enjoyable. His *Maḍel Bhaginī* (1886-88),......... are memorable as examples of personal satire *(byakti byāṅga)*'. Biswas praises some of his lively characterisations.[2]

In *Bāṅglā Sāhityer Kathā* by Nityananda Binod Goswami, Jogendra Chandra's name is never directly mentioned. Only in the 'Miscellaneous' section, is he referred to as the 'director' *(paricālak)* of the *Baṅgabāsī*, who took interest in translating many *Śāstra*s into Bengali and paved the way for knowledge in the Bengali households by providing them with the works of many famous writers.[3]

Tripura Shankar Sen mentions Jogendra Chandra only as the biographer of Michael Madhusudan Dutta.[4]

His name is mentioned in Manamohan Ghosh's *Bāṅglā Sāhitya* as the founder of *Baṅgabāsī* and as a writer of some satirical novels. A general reference to *Maḍel Bhaginī* finds place in his account of Jogendra Chandra's writings, which found popularity among a 'certain class of people'. But his works are mentioned as to be full of indirect personal attacks in the name of satire.[5]

The popularity of *Maḍel Bhaginī* is asserted by Sukumar Sen, who calls it one of the most well-known satirical novels of its time, and states that many books were written either in imitation of it or as a reaction against it. Mention should be made of a ceratin novel named *Maḍel Bhrātā Bā Ādarśá Yubak* (1887) which was a direct attack on Jogendra Chandra's character and private life.[6] In a later edition of the book titled *Bāṅglā Sāhityer Kathā*, published from the University of Calcutta, Sen merely mentions *Maḍel Bhaginī*, as: 'Jogendra Chandra's Model Bhagini was once very popular. His novels and satiric sketches were targeted against some of the contemporary persons and communities'[7]. In *History of Bengali Literature* Sen praises him as 'a powerful writer and a good critic', who 'wrote half a dozen satirical novels and stories of which the most well-known is Model Bhagini.' But he is also criticised as suffering from

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[1]K. N. Das; 1926, 185.

[2]Anil Biswas; 1953, 21.

[3]Nityananda Binod Goswami; 1953, 115.

[4]T. S. Sen; 1954, 123,127,132.

[5]Manamohan Ghosh; 1955, 393.

[6]Sukumar Sen; 1956 (1362).

[7]Sukumar Sen; 1960, 225.

'unevenness, verbosity and tedious digressions'[8].

For Dušan Zbavitel Jogendra Chandra is a writer of 'satirical novels' and 'the editor of Bangbasi', who was 'a defender of the old tradition and a sworn enemy of everything modern and progressive, which he ridiculed in his novels'.[9]

Among the more recent evaluations by the historiographers of Bengali literature, the *Comparative Indian Literature*[10] mentions Jogendra Chandra as 'Yogindranath Basu' and his 'Michael Madhusūdan Datter Jīvancarit' (1896) and a few others as valuable specimens of 'standard biographies'.

Asit Kumar Bandyopadhyay puts him under the category of 'conservative Hindu writers' who 'disgrace [sic] their venom against the non-conformists and hold them to ridicule' (Asit K. Bandyopadhyay; 1986, 105). He portrays Jogendra Chandra as a reformer with a conservative inclination, '..........Jogendra Chandra Basu of Baṅgabāsī fame composed a few farcical novels to satirize some particular sects for their unholy practices with a view to reforming them' (ibid.). Particularly on his works, Bandyopadhyay comments that 'the ultra-modern followers of the English ways and the leaders of Brahmo Samaj whom he considered enemies of Hinduism were the objects of his systematic vilification. He was particularly harsh on the snobbish artificiality of the members of Brahmo Samaj. His novels Maḍel Bhaginī ....delighted the Hindu society but antagonized the Brahmo Samaj' (ibid.). Bandyopadhyay finds his writings 'marked by crude and coarse personal spite' (ibid.). Though 'Maḍel Bhaginī and Śrī Śrī Rājlakṣmī contain some stories and character portraits but these are marred by slanderous personal attacks' (ibid.). Bandyopadhyay holds Jogendra Chandra's persona as an, 'outspoken, cantankerous gentleman' (ibid.), who was a 'terror.........for his barbed tongue' (ibid.).

The *Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature*[11] mentions Jogendra Chandra as 'an editor and a novelist' whose 'satire pen-portraits and novels are largely inspired by the express intention of deriding anglicised ideals. Intolerant and aggressive in the criticism of everything Western, his particular targets of attack are .... enlightened women like Kamalini, heroine of Model Bhagini. Laughter, however, does not flow out of the interaction of incidents and situations (his plots are too simple and straightforward for novels), but is a product of the observed incongruities of characters'. It describes *Maḍel Bhaginī* as a 'widely read sarcastic novel' and also accuses him of having 'little sense of proportion and delighted in loud exaggeration'.

Only Shrikumar Bandyopadhyay discusses both of his novels *Maḍel Bhaginī* and *Śrīśrī-rāj'lakṣmī* in detail. But he also puts Jogendra Chandra under the category of 'writers of comedy and satire' (*hāsyaraser lekhak*)[12]. He terms *Maḍel Bhaginī* as 'mixed novel' and compares it with Fielding's *Tom Jones* and with Sterne's *The Sentimental Journey* and *Tristram Shandy* (ibid.).

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[8]Sukumer Sen; 1971, 221

[9]Zbavitel; 1976, 245.

[10]K. M. George (ed.); 1985, 970.

[11]Amaresh Dutta (ed.); 1987, 506.

[12]Shrikumar Bandyopadhyay; 1996, 382-84.

10 Conclusion

Though not a novel of great literary merit, the popularity of *Maḍel Bhaginī* is admitted by everyone. In its own time it was a much read work. The adherence to later Brahmo ideals of moral purity and spiritual sublimity were dragged to such an extreme by the late 19th century that a counter-reaction came out as an obvious social critique. Surprisingly the very first attack on this aspect of the Brahmos was made by one of the famous representatives of Brahmo Samaj itself. Jyotirindranath Tagore's (1849-1925) *Kiñcit· Jalayog* (1872) ushered in the trend of social satires on Brahmos, which was later adopted by the orthodox writers like Indranath Bandyopadhyay and Jogendra Chandra Basu.

The popularity of *Maḍel Bhaginī* lay in its explorations of the world of the rich, modern, Bengali *bhadralok* society and in the presentation of a bleak portrait of the 'false' morality which this was believed to possess. The *bhadralok* became an object of much despise by their poorer, small town, uneducated counterparts. The former class was not looked upon very appreciatively by the common mass for their progressive, free outlook and open negation of the old, orthodox Hinduism. The populist neo-Hindu press functioned as a perfect agent to fan the flame of dislike against them in the mind of the common people even more. The more 'ludicrous', 'absurd' and 'negative' the picture of the modern society they represented, the more popularity they gained. The effect was quite wide-spread. It even happened that when a Hindu was involved in some type of social interaction with a Brahmo, especially in dining, he was subjected to excommunication[1] and in some cases when a Hindu, inspired by the liberal ideals of Brahmoism, tried to spread its words among others, he was often excommunicated and was sometimes even physically tortured (Ramesh Chandra Majumdar; 1972, 181). On the other hand, the *bhadralok* psyche can be interpreted as a unique combination of Western culture and progressive thinking which, appalled by the condition of their own social surroundings, tried to infuse new ideas of humanism and rationalism into them. But their efforts were mostly confined within the peripheries of the city of Kolkata, which was becoming a big draw for all willing to earn money. A large part of the populace was yet to accept Kolkata as their home though many were, directly or indirectly, engaged in jobs in the city. They still used to live in their own ancestral houses in small towns or villages around and far away from the city. For earning a livelihood, they came to Kolkata and stayed in messes or in cheap hotels and by the weekends all returned to their village homes. Jogendra Chandra at the initial phase of his career explored this opportunity. He arranged to sell his newspapers at the main railway stations where the home-bound rush could buy the cheap newspapers, a good alternative for passing time on a long train-journey (YS, Vol.I; 28). Thus his publications gained a large readership in mufassil towns[2]. The reporters also made

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[1]David Kopf cites the example of a converted Brahmo, Protap Chandra Majumdar, from various sources like P. Niyogi: *Riṣi Pratāp Candra*; Art Press; Calcutta; 1936, 2. and P. C. Mazoomdar: 'Heart Beats'; Naba-bidhan Publication Committee; Calcutta; 1935, xxviii (David Kopf; 1988, 94-96.)

[2]'This catering to a largely mufassil crowd or among the gentry in smaller towns soon became an established feature of the *Bangabasi*; a letter of Jogendra Chandra written presumably in early 1882, reveals the existence of a network of agents at Krishnanagar, Burdwan and Hoogly.' (Amiya P. Sen;

good use of any opportunity to excite the readers' curiosity by sensationalising events in colourful language by applying ample imagination. This intuition to read the public mind and their demands and to cater to them accordingly was one of the main reasons behind the success of Jogendra Chandra.

Maḍel Bhaginī attracted the readers' instant attention as it provided them with what they wanted to read. The modern Kamalini showcases all the negative effects of women's education. It shows how the moral order of the upper middle class is turned upside down by an anglicised culture. And in sharp contrast the naivety and simplicity of the common people and their plight in the hands of the *bhadralok* middle class is presented. The fact that in this conflict between the 'good' commoners and 'bad' modern *bhadralok*, the former always comes out triumphant, is another decisive factor in determining its popularity. The mass was eager to read such wish-fulfilling stories, where they could easily sympathise and identify themselves with the simple, commoner characters. It also provided them with a way of realising their pent-up dislike for the rich and upper middle class. The simplistic yet comical language that Jogendra Chandra consciously chooses here perfectly conveys his message to his target readers. It is only in the description of the exploits of the modern class that he uses comical and ironical tones. In places where he describes the common people from the streets or the simple hero and other such characters, his tone is either grave or serious tinged with a sense of sadness. The method is not only of self-rediicule but also of self-irony, about the conflict between the old and the new orders in a changing society. We should not forget that proof has been found that *Maḍel Bhaginī* ran undoubtedly for a 12th edition until the year 1906 and presumably even afterwards. This fact alone is enough to assume the popularity of Jogendra Chandra's works. But at the advent of the 20th century, the Brahmo Samaj as well as the radical Western influence slowly started to dwindle and consequently the populist neo-Hindu reaction was also suffering a setback. Jogendra Chandra was one of the key figures in building up the popular neo-Hindu movment by his various publishing enterprises, and also by himself penning against the 'borrowed modernity' (Aninidita Ghosh; 2000, 172) of the Western-educated classes. He not only sang the praise of traditional Hinduism, but also critisised some of the existing social malpractices and contributed in building up the popular taste. His *Baṅgabāsī* became, no doubt, one of the main centres of this movement. *Maḍel Bhaginī* was also conceived and written as a part of the same. But the success of this type of populist literature was only short-lived. When, at the beginning of the 20th century, the very cause of their writing ceased to exist, the popularity of such novels also started to slip.

Speaking of *Maḍel Bhaginī* as a novel, it can be said that, written at such a transition period when the Bengali novel was evolving out of its embryonic stage, it provides us, as today's readers, with ceratin typicalities, which help us to understand the populist genre of 19th century Bengali novels. Jogendra Chandra consciously describes the populist trends in the late 19th century Bengali literature when he says in the preface that 'readers do not read a book unless it is termed a novel'[3]. This statement is indicative of the fast-growing popularity of the new genre. The characteristics of a popular novel were mostly modelled after the Victorian ideals of the West. Many of them exhibit the prevailing romantic preludes, but a conscious effort to break away from this standard mode is also observed. Though the later-day paradigms of a 'modern' novel cannot

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1993, 239)
   [3] *tabe upanyās nām nā dile, pāṭhak baï paṛen nā* (MB; 156).

be applicable to *Maḍel Bhaginī* in full, yet it can be said to be free from some of the contemporary traits of the day. On the other hand, the heavy moral tone makes the text tiresome and monotonous. The characters appear to be somewhat flat with hardly any scope for real human touches. The language is a mixture of *sādhu* and *calit bhāṣā* with lyrical and religious verses thrown in. Overall it can not be considered as a great literature. Even the satire cannot rise above the level of personal attacks and some snide remarks. But it reflects the rapid development of Bengali prose language and structure used in the contemporary Bengali novel, which had came a little step forward from the initial unstable condition of *Nababābubilās* or of *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl*, which can be better defined as early narrative prose than novels proper.

Maḍel Bhaginī is to be remembered in Bengali literature as a novel which met with an instant popularity in its immediate social context. The various social conflicts at work among the different interest groups in a rapidly changing Bengali middle class world were also at play. The novel evokes our curiosity, firstly, for the exaggerated depiction of the time, when the society, people and culture were at complex crossroads, and, secondly, for the intelligent use of the satire, not always very subtle, expressed in an easy coversational language, which aptly stresses the very points the author wants to highlight. *Maḍel Bhaginī* can be subjected to negative criticism for the constant preaching of a high moralist tone above other things, and secondly for the inferior quality of its literary style in the name of popular satire. The appeal of this novel can be fathomed only from the records of its huge readership. Jogendra Chandra and his *Maḍel Bhaginī* are thus important means of understanding the populist trend, not in the proper mainstream of 'classical' Bengali literature, but more in the sphere of semi-urbanised and rural Bengal. In his own workplace Jogendra Chandra could be termed an outcaste for the extreme negativism he maintained in his works regarding the modern *bhadralok*s, yet he enjoyed popularity where the so-called refined high literature found no easy entry. He thus played an important role in making the rural readers conscious of the happenings of the city, and thereby influenced their worlds by making them aware of their immediate political and social surroundings.

Appendix

Bengali personal names in anglicised and transliterated forms

Akshay Chandra Sarkar	Akṣaẏ Candra Sarˡkār
Akshay Kumar Dutta	Akṣaẏ Kumār Datta
Ananda Mohan Bose	Ānanda Mohan Bos
Anandamoyee Debi	Ānandamẏī Debī
Arunoday Roy	Aruṇodaẏ Rāẏ
Ashutosh Basu	Āśutoṣ Basu
Bal Gangadhar Tilak	Bāl Gaṅgādhar Tilak
Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay	Baṅkim Candra Caṭṭopādhyāẏ
Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay	Bhabānicaraṇ Bandyopādhyāẏ
Bholanath Bandyopadhyay	Bholānāth Bandyopādhyāẏ
Bhudev Mukhopadhyay	Bhūdeb Mukhopādhyāẏ
Bihari Lal Sarkar	Bihārī Lāl Sarˡkār
Brajaraj Bandyopadhyay	Brajarāj Bandyopādhyāẏ
Chandranath Basu	Candranāth Basu
Charumati	Cārumati
Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay	Dakṣinārañjan Mukhopādhyāẏ
Dasarath Basu	Daśarath Basu
Debendranath Tagore	Debendranāth Ṭhākur
Dinabandhu Mitra	Dīnabandhu Mitra
Drabamoyee Debi	Drabamaẏī Debī
Durgadas Lahiri	Dūrgādās Lāhiṟī
Dwarakanath Bidyabhushan	Dbārakānāth Bidyābhūṣaṇ
Dwarakanath Roy	Dbārakānāth Rāẏ
Dwarikanath Gangopadhyay	Dbārikānāth Gaṅgopādhyāẏ
Dwijendranath Tagore	Dbijendranāth Ṭhākur
Gangakishore Bhattacharya	Gaṅgākiśor Bhattācārya
Gangamani Debi	Gaṅgāmani Debī
Gaurishankar Tarkabagish	Gaurīśaṅkar Tarkabāgīś
Girish Chandra Basu	Giriś Candra Basu
Girish Chandra Ghosh	Giriś Candra Ghoṣ
Golok Sharma	Golak Śarmā
Gurucharan Dutta	Gurucaraṇ Datta
Haladhar Mullick	Haladhar Mallik
Harish Chandra Mukhopadhyay	Hariś Candra Mukhopādhyāẏ
Harisundari	Harisundarī
Hati Bidyalankar	Haṭi Bidyālaṅkār
Indranath Bandyopadhyay	Indranāth Bandyopādhyāẏ
Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar	Īśbar Candra Bidyāsāgar
Ishwar Gupta	Īśbar Gupta
Jadunath Sarkar	Yadunāth Sarˡkār
Jaygopal Tarkalankar	Jaẏgopāl Tarkālaṅkār
Jogendra Chandra Basu	Yogendra Candra Basu

Jogendranath Bidyabhushan	Yogendranāth Bidyābhūṣaṇ
Jyotirindranath Tagore	Jyotirindranāth Ṭhākur
Kaliprasanna Sinha	Kālīprasanna Siṃha
Keshab Chandra Sen	Keśab Candra Sen
Khirod Chandra Roychaudhuri	Kṣīrod Candra Rāẏcaudhurī
Krishna Chandra Bandyopadhyay	Kṛṣṇa Candra Bandyopādhyāẏ
Krishnakumar Mitra	Kṛṣṇa Kumār Mitra
Krishtodas Pal	Kṛṣṭadās Pāl
Kului Chandra Sen	Kuluï Candra Sen
Michael Madhusudan Dutta	Māïkel Madhusūdan Datta
Motilal Seal	Matilāl Śīl
Mrityunjay Vidyalankar	Mṛtyuñjaẏ Bidyālaṅkār
Nabin Chandra Bandyopadhyay	Nabīn Candra Bandyopādhyāẏ
Nabin Chandra Sen	Nabin Candra Sen
Nanda Kumar Roy	Nanda Kumār Rāẏ
Natabar Chakrabarty	Naṭabar Cakrabarti
Pandit Haraprasad Shastri	Paṇḍit Haraprasād Śāstrī
Pandit Sasadhar Tarkachuramani	Paṇḍit Śaśadhar Tarkacūṙāmaṇi
Pandit Shibnath Shastri	Paṇḍit Śibˌnāth Śāstrī
Pramathnath Sharman	Pramathanāth Śarmaṇ
Protap Chandra Majumdar	Pratāp Candra Majumˌdar
Pyarichand Mitra	Pyārīcãd Mitra
Rabindranath Tagore	Rabīndranāth Ṭhākur
Radhanath Sikdar	Rādhānāth Sikˌdār
Raja Radhakanta Deb	Rājā Rādhākānta Deb
Rajendralal Mitra	Rājendralāl Mitra
Rajendranath Dutta	Rājendranāth Datta
Ramakrishna Paramhansa	Rāmˌkṛṣṇa Paramˌhaṃsa
Ramesh Chandra Dutta	Rameś Candra Datta
Ramgopal Ghosh	Rāmˌgopāl Ghoṣ
Ramkamal Sen	Rāmˌkamal Sen
Rammohan Roy	Rāmˌmohan Rāẏ
Ramnarayan Tarkaratna	Rāmˌnārāẏaṇ Tarkaratna
Ramram Basu	Rāmˌrām Basu
Ramtanu Lahiri	Rāmˌtanu Lāhiṙī
Rangalal Bandyopadhyay	Raṅgalāl Bandyopādhyāẏ
Satya Mukhopadhyay	Satya Mukhopādhyāẏ
Satyendranath Tagore	Satyendranāth Ṭhākur
Shishir Kumar Ghosh	Śiśir Kumār Ghoṣ
Shreenath Roy	Śrīnāth Rāẏ
Sundari Debi	Sundarī Debī
Tarachand Dutta	Tārācãd Datta
Taracharan Sikdar	Tārācaraṇ Sikˌdār
Tarinicharan Mitra	Tāriṇīcaraṇ Mitra
Tek Chand Thakur	Tek Cãd Ṭhākur
Trailakyanath Mukhopadhyay	Trailokyanāth Mukhopādhyāẏ
Umesh Chandra Mitra	Umeś Candra Mitra
Upendra Nath Sinharoy	Upendra Nāth Siṃharāẏ
Vivekananda	Bibekānanda

Names of characters in diacritics

Annapurna	Annapūrṇā
Bipin Chandra	Bipin Candra
Kailas Chandra Bandyopadhyay	Kailās Candra Bandyopādhyāẏ
Kamalini	Kamalinī
Kapil	Kapil
Mahendra Nath Roy	Mahendra Nāth Rāẏ
Nabaghanashyam Nandi	Nabaghanaśyām Nandī
Nagendra Nath Mukhopadhyay	Nagendra Nāth Mukhopādhyāẏ
Narahari Ghosal	Narahari Ghoṣāl
Radhashyam Roy	Rādhāśyām Rāẏ
Ramchandra Ghosal	Rām'candra Ghoṣāl

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Jogendra Chandra Basu's Maḍel Bhaginī in its Historical Context
Deutschsprachige Zusammenfassung

Der Bengale Jogendra Chandra Basu (Yogendra Candra Basu) war Begründer des einflussreichen Verlages Baṅgabāsī Press und gleichzeitig Herausgeber und Verfasser vieler Artikel, in denen er kulturell-aktuelle Fragen in oftmals satirischer Form erörterte. Ebenso war er Autor von sozialkritischen Romanen, und seine Maḍel Bhaginī („Die ideale Schwester"; 1886-1889) und Śrīśrīrāj'lakṣmī (1902-1906) waren die meist gelesenen Romane im damaligen Bengalen. Weitere Werke, die er in seinen Zeitschriften herausbrachte, sind Kālācad (1880-1890), Cinibās Caritāmr̥ta („Die heilige Biographie von Chinibas"; 1890), Mahirābaṇer Ātmakathā („Mahirabans Autobiographie"; 1889), Bāṅgālī Carit („Das Leben der Bengalen"; 1886-1887) und Ner̄ā Haridās („Der kahlköpfige Haridas"; 1902). Viele dieser Romane waren Bestseller in Bengalen. Es gelang Jogendra Chandra Basu, durch seinen bewusst einfachen, allgemein verständlichen Schreibstil viele Menschen vor allem aus den unteren Schichten zu erreichen, und dieses verhalf ihm zu großer Popularität. In derber Sprache prangerte er Missstände in der zeitgenössischen Gesellschaft Kalkuttas an.

Jogendra Chandra Basu selbst war ein gläubiger Hindu und Vertreter eines populistischen Neohinduismus. Er wurde am 30. Dezember 1854 in einem kleinen Dorf im heutigen West-Bengalen geboren und wuchs in einer angesehenen Großfamilie auf. Schon frühzeitig zeigte er ein journalistisches Interesse, und während seines Studiums veröffentlichte er in einer bekannten lokalen Zeitschrift Artikel, in denen er u.a. die religiösen Rituale des Hinduismus in der damaligen Zeit verteidigte. Ob er sein Studium abgeschlossen hat, ist nicht bekannt. 1881 gründete er mit geringem Kapital den bengalischen Verlag Baṅgabāsī Press, und es gelang ihm, in nicht einmal zwei Jahren die Auflagenzahl seiner Zeitung auf 6000 Exemplaren zu steigern, eine unglaublich hohe Anzahl für die damalige Zeit.

Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts befand sich die bengalische Gesellschaft in einem dekadenten Zustand. Der Mangel an Eigenentwicklungen und Kontakten mit der übrigen Welt und deren teils progressiven Ideen und Gedanken reduzierten den Hinduismus in den Augen vieler Angehöriger der neu entstehenden Bildungsschicht auf eine ritualisierte Religion mit vielen abergläubischen Vorstellungen und rigiden Sitten. Für Reformen sorgte das englische Bildungssystem, das in Bengalen eingeführt wurde. Die britische Regierung allerdings legte zunächst keinen großen Wert darauf, das Bildungssystem der Inder zu verbessern; man fürchtete, dass eine moderne, fortschrittliche Bildung das Bewusstsein der kolonisierten Inder fördern und die freiheitliche Entwicklung Aufstände provozieren würde. Die ersten Versuche, die englische Bildung in Indien zu verbreiten, machten christliche Missionare. Der britische Missionar William Carey gründete im Jahr 1803 die erste englische Schule für kostenlose Bildung der indischen Jungen in Srirampur in der Nähe von Kalkutta. Das Hindu-College wurde 1817 aufgebaut

und existiert bis heute als Presidency College, eines der renommiertesten Colleges in Kalkutta.

Doch auch koloniale Bildungseinrichtungen waren von großer Bedeutung, so das Fort William College, welches im Jahre 1800 gegründet wurde, um britische Beamte und Offiziere, die in Indien lebten, in verschiedenen indischen Sprachen und Literaturen auszubilden. Macaulays Minute on Education hat im Jahre 1835 entschieden, dass für Inder eine Möglichkeit geschaffen werden sollte, eine englische Ausbildung zu erhalten. Im 19. Jh. wurden viele Schulen und Universitäten in ganz Indien aufgebaut. Rammohan Roy (Rām'mohan Rāẏ), Debendranath Tagore (Debendranāth Ṭhākur), Raja Radhakanta Deb (Rājā Rādhākānta Deb), Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (Īśbar Candra Bidyāsāgar) u.a. waren Fürsprecher und unterstützten finanziell und moralisch den Bau vieler Schulen für Jungen und Mädchen in Bengalen. Durch die Initiativen dieser charismatischen Denker und Persönlichkeiten verbesserte sich die soziale Lage. Rammohan gründete des weiteren den Brahmo Samaj (Brāhma Samāj), eine religiöse Institution mit reformatorischen Ideen. Rammohans Brahmo-Religion basierte auf den Veden und Upanischaden und versuchte, den „reinen" Hinduismus des alten Indiens wiederzubeleben. Der Brahmo Samaj lehnte das Kastensystem und die Verehrung von Götterbildern ab und lehrte den Glauben an einen formlosen Brahman (Gott). Gruppen wie diese, und besonders auch die Young Bengal genannte Bewegung um Derozio, einen Lehrer am Hindu College, wandten sich gegen die Normen der traditionellen hinduistischen Gesellschaft. Die zum Teil als Reaktion darauf entstandene populistische Neo-Hindu-Bewegung dagegen wollte den traditionell praktizierten Hinduismus beibehalten.

Jogendra Chandra war ein Anhänger dieses populistischen Neohinduismus, und er machte seine Vorstellungen durch seine literarischen Werke bekannt. Maḍel Bhaginī, einer seiner bekanntesten Romane, ist kein literarisches Meisterwerk, doch der Autor verstand es, durch seinen gewollt populären Schreibstil auch die Leser zu erreichen, die nur in einem begrenzten Maße gebildet waren. Er weckte ihr Interesse an Alltagsereignissen und politischen und sozialen Veränderungen. Es war für die Mehrzahl der bengalischen Bevölkerung schwierig, am öffentlichen Informationsfluss teilzuhaben, u.a. da die meisten Zeitungen zu teuer für den einfachen Bürger waren und darüber hinaus in englischer oder schwerverständlicher Schriftsprache gedruckt waren. Jogendra Chandra nutzte die Chance, preiswerte, in verständlicher Sprache gehaltene Zeitungen und Zeitschriften zu verfassen. Seine populären Berichte, Satiren, Sketche und Artikel erreichten besonders die unteren Schichten in Bengalen. Die elitäre Oberschicht Kalkuttas interessierte ihn nicht. Vor allem mit seiner ersten Zeitung Baṅgabāsī gelang es ihm, die Bevölkerung in Kleinstädten und Dörfern zu erreichen.

Sein Roman Maḍel Bhaginī ist bezeichnend für die damalige Zeit. Er erzählt die Geschichte einer Frau, die gegen traditionelle hinduistische Normen verstößt. Nicht nur die Frauen selbst wurden von den Orthodoxen kritisiert, sondern alle, die mit diesen Ideen sympathisierten. Jogendra Chandra warnt in seinem Roman, dass eine fehlgeleitete Bildung der Frauen langfristig zu einer gesellschaftlichen Katastrophe führen würde. Zugleich ist Maḍel Bhaginī ein Versuch, die Bābus, d.h. Teile der bengalischen (männlichen) Mittelschicht des 19. Jh., zu kritisieren. Die Bābus verdingten sich etwa bei der Kolonialregierung, indischen Geschäftsleuten oder Feudalherren, kamen zu Wohlstand und begannen, ihren Lohn mit sprichwörtlichem Drachenfliegen, Vogelkämpfen, liberalen Spenden, Singen, Weintrinken und anderen kostspieligen Lust-

barkeiten zu verprassen.

Jogendra Chandras Maḍel Bhaginī oder „Modellschwester" (Anspielung die im Brahmo Samaj übliche Anrede für Frauen) stellt ein weibliches Gegenstück des Bābus dar. Der „zivilisierte" Vater ermöglicht der Protagonistin Kamalini (Kamalinī), eine moderne Erziehung und Bildung zu genießen. Dank ihrer Begabung und Bildung wird sie zu einer „Meisterin" der europäischen Literatur und Wissenschaften. Ihr rebellischer Geist steht im Roman für die Ideale des Brahmo Samaj. Dank ihrer englischen Bildung kleidet sie sich wie eine europäische Dame, isst verbotene Speisen, trinkt Wein und tut alles, was nach hinduistischer Tradition verboten ist. Jogendra Chandra stellt Kamalini als Gegenpart ihren Ehemann, Radhashyam (Rādhāśyām), gegenüber, der als gläubiger, ehrlicher und tugendhafter Mensch im traditionell-hinduistischen Sinne beschrieben wird, und dem die Sympathie des Autors gehört. Die freiheitsdurstige, lebenshungrige Kamalini weigert sich hartnäckig, sich zu ihrem Mann zu bekennen, und lässt es nicht an (teilweise lebensbedrohlichen) Demütigungen fehlen; der verliert dadurch das Interesse am weltlichen Leben und wird zum wandernden Asketen.

Kamalini setzt ihr unstetes Leben fort, aber mit zunehmenden Alter muss sie den Preis dafür zahlen; Am Ende ihrer Tage finden wir sie mittellos, ihrer Schönheit beraubt. Langsam beginnt sie zu begreifen, dass sie falschen Lehren gefolgt ist, falsche Freundschaften geschlossen und ein Leben in Sünde geführt hatte. Sie erkennt die warmherzige, religiöse Gesinnung Radhashyams und bittet ihn um Vergebung, welche ihr mitleidsvoller und gnädiger Gatte sogleich gewährt; darauf stirbt sie am Ganges. Gerade die satirische Überzeichnung in diesem Portrait der dekadenten, leichtlebigen Mittelschicht Bengalens machten Jogendra Chandras literarische Werke in der Unterschicht populär. Immer wieder beschreibt der Autor auch die negativen Seiten der modernen englisch ausgebildeten Brahmos und preist die Vorzüge der orthodoxen Glaubensrichtung.

Jogendra Chandras Maḍel Bhaginī ist kein „Wortkunstwerk", und doch ist der Roman einer der meistgelesenen des 19. Jh. Historiker sprechen ihm literarische Qualität ab, aber er traf den populären Geschmack seiner Zeit. Er gilt als ein Beispiel des satirischen Romans. Jogendra Chandra legt in seinen Sketchen, Romanen und Satiren besonderen Wert darauf, die unteren Schichten Bengalens zu erreichen. Das Geheimnis seines Erfolges ist die betonte Einfachheit seiner Wortwahl und die populistische Art und Weise seiner Kritik an den privilegierten städtischen Schichten.