



**REPRESENTATION OF INDIAN CULTURE IN
AMITH CHAUDHURI'S *A STRANGE AND SUBLIME ADDRESS***



Jagadeesh S. Kittur

Ph. D. Research scholar

P.G. Department of Studies in English
Karnatak University, Dharwad-580003

Karnataka state, India

Email: kitturjagadeesh@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This Paper highlights a representation of Indian Culture in *A Strange and Sublime Address*. The novel starts with Sandeep's visit to Calcutta, after a long time Sandeep is a ten year old boy, He was a resident of Bombay, he visits his uncle's house with his mother. Here Chaudhuri narrates how the Calcutta city is different from Bombay .

Amith Chaudhuri narrates his own experiences through his novel *A Strange and Sublime Address*. Here we come across how his aunt welcomes him and his mother. How his aunt treats them, he narrates his experiences through the character of Sandeep. Amith Chaudhuri represents the Bengali tradition, culture and the life of the Calcutta people. *A Strange and Sublime Address* is a novel which shows the narrative technique of Amith Chaudhuri. It narrates the richness of Bengali culture, the relations between various members of a migrated families, the flower and fragrance of Bengali food prayer times and visits of relatives.

Amit Chaudhuri is a multitalented writer of the Contemporary Indian English literature. He is a novelist, short story writer, essayist and literary critic and also a good singer. He has been acclaimed worldwide for his novels. He has written numerous novels, short stories, poems and critical essays in English. His novels have won several major awards. *A New World* won, between them, the commonwealth Writers' Prize, the Betty Trask Prize, the Encore Prize, the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, for Fiction and the Sahitya Akademi Award. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and Professor of the Contemporary Literature at the University of East Anglia. Amit Chaudhuri lives in Calcutta and Norwich.

RESEARCH PAPER

The novel begins with Sandeep's visit to Calcutta, after a long time. Sandeep is a resident of Bombay and here he visits his uncle's house with his mother. Amith Chaudhuri narrates how the Calcutta city is different from Bombay. The novel's characters exist in a different manner; they are not affected by the modernity and they are full of sentiments. They believed in "Atiti Devobhav" guest is god. When Sandeep and his mother entered the house his aunt well comed with great pleasure;

"How you have been, Mona?"

When she saw Sandeep's mother, she went down the stairs and grasped her hand in a relaxed way , all the excitement shone in her eyes.

Didi.....' she said

They went up in a procession, Abhi, Babla Sandeep his mother his uncle his aunt as if they were going up to a shrine on pilgrimage. Later they sat on a wide bed beneath an ancient fan which, as if rotated, moved unreliably from side to side , like a great bird trying to fly the holiday mood transported them with its poetry they could have been anywhere ---on a hillside on the Western Ghats or in a cave in kanheri. Sandeeps mother now opened a suitcase and distributed gifts she had brought from bombay (Chaudhuri 4).

In this paragraph, we come across how the Indian people welcomes and honoured the guests and relatives in India. Indians will happy when the relatives and friends came to meet them and lived one or two days with them.

In this above paragraph the Western Ghats or Kanheri place is mentioned, the Kanheri is a place where we find a group of caves and rockcut monuments formed from a massive basalt outcrop in the forests of Sanjay Gandhi National Park on the western outskirts of Mumbai.

One day Sandeep was reading Abhi's book in the first page he found the name written on that page it was very strange and quiet different. He had written his name and address. It was,

Abhijit Das,

17 Vivekanad road, Culutta (South) ,

West Bengal,

India,

Earth,

The Solar System

The Universe (Chaudhuri 101).

Vivekanand Road is very common name in India but he continued his address and written his state name, Country, The Earth, The Solar system and The Universe this is the strange address because usually we will write the name the name of the street and finally the city, but here Sandeep found a different address, that is a strange and sublime address.

Sandeep's father was working in Bombay city. Since after the visit of Culcatta, his father had been promoted to a higher position. They had moved from their big Apartment to a bigger one; from the twenty third storeys, they had moved to the twenty fifth storey of a twenty five storey building. Standing in one of the balconies or looking out from the windows in the hall, one could see almost all Bombay, the swarms of lights in the evening, the hoods of tiny cars shining and vanishing and vanishing in the sunlight during the daytime a view marginally more breathtaking and marginally more unreal than the one seen from the balcony of the twenty third floor.

No sounds, no smells, only a pure, perpetually moving picture.

Here Amith Chaudhuri described about Bombay, it is one of the biggest and busiest city of India. Here Amith Chaudhuri described how the Bombay city is different from other cities of India. In Bombay people were struggling to live in that busy city all the busses and trains were full of people, people will struggle even to cross the roads and to get the seats in buses and trains sometimes they will wait for many hours to get the bus or train. In Bombay its very difficult to get the house on rent, Amith Chaudhuri explained all these facts about Bombay in his novel *A Strange and Sublime Address*.

Amit Chaudhuri describes both cities Bombay and Calcutta. One and a half years after the last holidays, Sandeep and his parents visited Calcutta in the winter. Sandeep felt very cold in Calcutta people swathed themselves in shawls, mufflers, sweaters, coats and several kinds of woolen garments. The first time when one came to Calcutta in December it was a Walter of warm clothes. As usual, the people of Calcutta did everything to excess: the streets had the air of a fancy dress party as shawls and cardigans and jackets floated by solemnly. In the nights, when it become really cold, beggars set fire to old rubber tyres, and sat around the circles of slow flame to warm their hands:

Amith Chaudhuri put light on the weather

Sandeep nudged his aunt, who lifted an arm and placed it on her forehead, making her bangles sing as she did so.

'Mamima', he asked, 'When were you married?'

'Why are you interested in our marriages today?' she said without turning her head. No, tell me, Mamima tell me when you got married.'

'I've forgotten.'

'You've not forgotten, 'Mamima! How can you got married.'

'All right, then tell me *Where* you got married.'

'I was married here in Calcutta. Your Chhotomama came in a car. He was wearing a white Dhuti and a silk Panjabi with gold buttons, and a topor on his head. I, of course didn't see him till later, But my cousin, Beena saw them coming and she rushed into our room and told me. She said: the bridegroom's come.'

'What did you say?'

'I couldn't say anything, because they were putting chandan and sindoor on my face, and kaajal around my eyes. I wasn't allowed to move.'

'Not even talk?'

'Well, I could talk, but since they were drawing such beautiful patterns on my forehead, I did not want to spoil it by talking about bride groom. Who want to know about the bride groom?'

'Were n't you interested?'

'Not in the bridegroom'

'Had you ever seen him before?' in Sandeep's mind it was no longer Chhotomama, but some other man who was about to get married to Mamima, who was no longer Mamima, but some other man.

'Only enough photograph'

'Did you like him?'

Not a bit (Choudhari 108).

In India, girls are hesitate to speak about her marriage even after so many years, marriages are like rituals, the costumes are given more importance like Chhotomama was wearing a white doti and silk Panjabi with gold buttons and girls with the beautiful silk sarees. They put Chandan and Sindhur (Kunkum) and Kaajal around there eyes.

The story ends with the scene of a hospital. The next day, Chhotomama had a heart attack. When they took Chhotomama to a hospital, the Doctors clarified that it was not an attack but a spam a minor distinction. But all the plans would have to be changed now, because Chhotomama was hospitalized.

In the hospital bed Quite unexpectedly Chhotomama was, rolling on the bed, making an odd grunting sound, and desperately trying to tear his shirt off. The buttons were coming apart, exploding like peas and falling to the floor. He was jumping up, falling back, rolling from side to side, like an acrobat doing a bizarre act to impress the

children. Any moment, perhaps, he would rise and touch the ceiling. The children were staring rise and touch the ceiling. The children were staring with open mouths, and Saraswati, smiling like an infant watching a tiger at the zoo, was still combing their hair. Her hands were trembling as if they alone understood the terror of what was happening. When anyone hospitalized in the family its quiet common that the children, elders and all the family members will stay in the hospital.

‘Dada ...’ she whispered. Dada...’ (Chaudhuri 129).

Chhotomama did not want to go to hospital. Saraswati took the company car to fetch the doctor because the telephones were not working in the area. There was a Power-cut, and Sandeep’s mother began to fan her brother with a news paper. A Power-cut is very common thing, in India sometimes people use the news papers to fan themselves.

In the hospital, they put Chhotomama on oxygen in the Intense Care Unit. The relatives arrived in rickshaws, trains, taxis; some people walked, some came by bus: some came alone, some in families, some with their friends. Some came unshaven with stubble on their cheeks; some came in newly pressed clothes; a few came in clothes they had slept in,

“How is he?” someone asked. “Does he have chance?” (Chaudhuri 132).

It shows how the Indian people think about hospitalized one. They never think about the diseases, what kind of diseases it was but simply if any person hospitalized the very next question they think of is, any chance of living or not.

Here Amith Chaudhuri represents both the culture of Calcutta and Mumbai. Amith Chaudhuri saw the Calcutta culture when he was a small kid and he saw the culture of Mumbai when he was grown up. He pictures the culture of both cities very well he narrates whatever he had seen in Calcutta as well as Mumbai. He represents the Indian culture and even how the Indian culture is differing from one place to another place. Amith Chaudhuri represented the Indian culture with the character Sandeep. We come across how is the Bengali tradition and culture is different from other cultures of India. Both the cities Culcutta and Mumbai are in India but both have different cultures.

WORK CITED

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