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Sahitya Akademi

meet the author

Dibyendu Palit





**D**ibyendu Palit was born on 5 March 1939 to Bagalacharan Palit and Niharbala Palit in Bhagalpur of Bihar. He was one of the eleven siblings and was sensitive from the very beginning. Due to partition communal riot outbreak around his locality when he was only seven. Neighbours got killed. Slaughtered dead body was dragged before his innocent eyes. Days of riot passed. The literary atmosphere of Bhagalpur attracted him. When he was in college, Bangiya Sahitya Parishad organized a literary competition. Banaful was the president of jury committee. Palit's story stood first. Banaful met him and inspired him to go on writing. Years passed by. "Chhandapatan" got published in the first page of the souvenir of Sunday Anandabazar. It was 1958 when Bagalacharan died. Dibyendu Palit came to Kolkata. Poverty marked his initial years in Kolkata. But the journey of his literary self never stopped. He came in close association of Buddhadeva Basu, Sudhindranath Dutta and others in Jadavpur University. In 1961, Palit joined English daily "Hindustan Standard" as a sub-editor and in 1965, his career in marketing and advertising started as he became associated with Adart's Advertising, Clarion-Makan Advertising Service

Limited, "Anandabazar Patrika", "The Statesman", "Yugantar Patrika" and "Amritabazar". In 1987 he once again joined "Anandabazar Patrika" as a senior assistant-editor. After retiring in 2000, he had the responsibility of editing the literary and cultural section of "Sambad Pratidin" for a few days.

In his varied literary career, he had around forty novels, twenty-five collections of short stories, ten collections of poems, four collections of essays and belles lettres, two books of children's literature and one edited book.

'Experience doesn't remain standstill in a place with what we see, hear or know. Its flow is endless like water coming to water. Topic changes along with the style as well. The distance between I and we fades. In this way, writing continuously changes even with its faith in the main tradition', said Dibyendu Palit in "Kichhu Smriti, Dukkhabodh, Kichhu Apaman" in *Sanga O Prasanga*. Really, novels of Palit are attached with mainstream literature in such a way which reminds us of waves which strikes the shore continuously one after another. Just like Camus, one of the favourites of Palit, the journey and search for identity as well as ideal pervade Palit's writing. The tale of this journey is narrated in *Amra, Charitra* and *Swapner Bhit* as well as in other works of him. Every road speaks of turnings which enriches life. Palit's *Anubhav* marks a turning in the Bengali literary tradition. It's the story of evolution of a woman. Its protagonist Atreyi left her husband's home and joined a research project of UNESCO. The pitiful life-style of prostitutes was her subject of research. Her life found a new meaning in close attachment of so many wretched women. Palit himself confessed: 'Through her narration, I tried to get at the international reality. I had to break away from the narrative form, I intermingled the story with history, research findings and case studies and other facts'

("Writing: My Experience", Dibyendu Palit, Sahitya Akademi Writer's Meet: New Delhi, 24 February 1999). He also said: 'My novel may fail to impress some, but the truth of the subject cannot fail. This could have been written in any Indian languages or for that matter in any language the world over. I have mentioned the global dimensions of regional literature. My novel, successful or not, is one example of just that.' (ibid)

Most of the novels of Dibyendu Palit reflect the conflict between power and right, particularly, the evolving dynamic structure of social stature of male and female for the last few decades. Palit's novels *Amra* (1973), *Urochithi* (1978), *Sahayoddha* (1984) and *Grihabandi* (1991) can be realized better if we compare them with novels like *Jagari* of Satinath Bhaduri, *Ekada* of Gopal Halder, *Shekal Chhenra Hater Khonje* and *Tinpurush* of Samaresh Basu or even with *Kuhelika* of Kazi Nazrul Islam. Characters like Priyanath Mazumdar, Rajat, Aditya, Ranajay, Sutapa protagonists of Palit's novels are like pages of the diary of turbulent by-gone days when ideologies clashed with powers. When Rajat, a student, was arrested from the school premises, the helplessness and frustration of the headmaster of the school was expressed before other teachers and students: "Who am I to protest? It's the order of Police... Snatched an innocent boy like this! Is the Justice in my hand?" The presence of Subodh Ghosh, Narayan Gangopadhyay, Narendranath Mitra and Bimal Kar was there in Palit's novels like *Sedin Chaitramas*, *Bhebechhilam*, *Madhyarat* and short stories like "Niyam". But later individuality took possession of his works. Though he himself said that 'Whatever I have written since the very first day, may be clearly divided into two phases before 1964-65 and after that' ("Kichhu Smriti,

Dukkhobodh, Kichhu Apaman": Desh Sahitya Sankhya, 1383 bongabdo). Different dimensions of love, family-life and betrayal found place in Palit's stories like "Kolkata", "Premik", "Chabi", "Swabhaber Chhayay", "Vivek", "Osudh", "Jhalmuri", "Chithi", "Kuchi Kuchi Kagaj", "Chhotto Ekta Khobor", "Dhorshoner Pore" and many others. While, strange workings of human psychology and feelings of guilt marked his short stories like "Pratinayak", "Sinri", "Ghrina", "Mariye Jaoa", "Sadhucharan", "Bhubaner Atmahatya" etc., poverty peeped from his "Trespassers", "Gandher Abirbhab", "Yuddho", "Chashma", "Khela", "TV", etc.

Collections of essays by Dibyendu Palit help us to locate another dimension of his creative consciousness. *Sanga O Prasanga*, *Cinema Theatre* and *Rome ar Ramya* inform us of his likes and dislikes of films along with analysis, his social consciousness and his opinion of his predecessors. Essays like "Sir" (on Buddhadeva Basu), "Adwitiya Premendra Mitra", "Dehamaner Baitalik" (on Narendranath Mitra), "Nirendranath Chakrabartyr Kavita", "Kavita O Krittivas" stands for his literary insight.

If we want to trace the depth of Palit's poetry, we should start with a few lines of a poem published in his first collection of poems: "Snanarthira sobai mape jol/Keu jhunke, keu gobhirotor koste, aro niche./Protibimbo nizeke dekhe swochho, obikol./Sarata din mithye ghuri pichhe" ("Jalatanka"). Symbols abound in poems of Palit. The unconscious life is reflected in many of his poems like "Tin Rakamer Ichhe". Journalism influenced his poems as well. Pokhran blast found place in his "Kalobristi". Restrained emotion, witty feelings, humanism, satire and open confrontation marked his collections of

poems like *Rajar Bari Onek Dure*, *Ahata Arjun*, *Kichhu Smriti Kichhu Apaman*, *Shabda Chai*, *Dao*, *Nirbasan*, *Noy Nirbachan*, *Boro Chhele Chhoto Chhele*, *Amrita Harin* etc.

He is recipient of so many awards including Sahitya Akademi Award, Bankimchandra Smriti Puraskar, Ramkumar Bhualka Puraskar, Ananda Puraskar, Banaful Puraskar, Tarashankar Puraskar, Ultorath Puraskar, B.F.J.A Puraskar, Ritwik Kumar Ghatak Smriti Puraskar etc.



With his family

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*Mukhguli*, directed by Raja Dasgupta  
*Antardhan*, directed by Tapan Sinha  
*Cinemay Jemon Hoy*, directed by Mrinmoy Chakraborty  
*Sanghat*, directed by Pinaki Choudhuri  
*Khelaghar*, directed by Prabhat Ray  
*Kaach*, directed by Tapan Sinha  
*Anubhav*, directed by Bimal Ray  
*Shoksabha*, directed by Raja Dasgupta  
*Schoole Jabar Raasta*, directed by Raja Dasgupta  
*Phire Asa*, directed by Raja Dasgupta  
*Garha Niruddeshe*, directed by Raja Dasgupta  
*Traine*, directed by Nirmalya Sengupta  
*Sukre Shoni*  
*Dheu*, directed by Shyamananda Jalan  
*Swapner Bhitari*, directed by Biswajit Prasad/Asim Seth  
*Naamte naamte*, directed by Rana Basu

### Films & Tele-films (in Hindi)

Andhigali, directed by Buddhadeva Dasgupta

Aajnabi, directed by Mrinal Sen

Soneke Gharian, directed by Anup Guhathakurata

Mukabhinoy, directed by Shyamananda Jalan

### Dramatization

Pantomime, directed by Nabhendu Sen

Traata, directed by Ramaprasad Banik

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### A Chronology

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1339: Born in Bhagalpur of Bihar on 5 March to Bagalacharan Palit and Niharbala Palit

1955: First story entitled "Chhanda-Patan" got published in Rabibasariya Anandabazar Patrika on 30 January

1959: First novel entitled *Sindhubaroan* got published by Abhenir Publishers

1960: First book of short stories entitled

*Shit-Grishmer Smriti* got published by Surabhi Publishers

1961: Passed MA in Comparative Literature from Jadavpur University; joined English daily "Hindustan Standard" as a sub-editor

1964: Married to Kalyani Palit on 12 December

1970: First book of poems entitled *Rajar Bari Onek Dure* got published by Aruna Publishers

1978: Went to USA and other European countries

1984: Received Ananda Puraskar

1986: Received Ramkumar Bhualka Puraskar for his novel entitled *Sahayoddha*

1987: Joined "Anandabazar Patrika" as a senior editor

1990: Received Bankimchandra Smriti Puraskar for his novel entitled *Dheu*

1998: Received Sahitya Akademi Award for his novel entitled *Anubhav*

*Receiving Sahitya Akademi Award*

