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Directorate of Research,
Uttarakhand Open University
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Detailed Progress Report for PhD research work (from July 2017 to January 2020)

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Enrolment Number: 3040486
Subject: English
School: School of Languages
Name of the Supervisor: Dr Suchitra Awasthi

Topic of Research: Underpinnings of Gandhian thought on Raja Rao' vision of India: A critical study of select texts

Progress Report from July 2017 to December 2017

As per the advice of my supervisor, I visited Sahitya Academy Library, New Delhi and Punjab University library, Chandigarh to collect some useful material for my research work. All the major texts of Raja Rao's novels, short stories and non-fiction and critical works on him were thoroughly studied. A few texts of Raja Rao's contemporary like M R Anand and R K Narayan were also studied intensively to make a comparative analysis. Raja Rao's metaphysical themes and innovative uses of Indian traditions and his exploring of spiritual essence of India while portraying Gandhi as a central figure were highlighted. With this the Introduction of the thesis was completed in every respect.

Progress Report from January 18 to June 18

First Chapter titled Philosophical Themes...was accomplished after sifting the philosophical elements from Raja Rao's texts. The philosophy of Advaita Vedanta, Vishistadvaita and Tantra were brought out in this chapter. Gandhian principles of truth, nonviolence, and his deeply religious leanings were also made use of. Rao's literary works intertwined Indian philosophy, myths, and spirituality. All the major texts were considered for this chapter.

Progress Report from July 18 to December 18

In this period, the chapter Social Themes...was brought out. Being an ardent admirer of Gandhi, Rao uses his persona to target major flaws in society, namely wretched condition of women and untouchability. Gandhi contributed a lot for the empowerment of women and for the upliftment of Pariahs. Focus remained in this chapter on *Kanthapura*, *The Serpent and the Rope*, *The Cat and Shakespeare* and works of Mulk Raj Anand and RK Narayan.

Progress Report from January 19 to June 19

In this period, the chapter Political Themes...was finalised. Gandhi's book *Hind Swaraj* proved to be a practical book to motivate Indians for their political rights and self-rule. *The*



Great Indian Way - a biography of Gandhi by Raja Rao - is a tribute to Gandhi for initiating a struggle for the rights of Indians in South Africa and afterwards for the freedom of India. *Kanthapura*, *Comrade Kirrilov* and *The Great Indian Way* were thoroughly examined from the perspective of Gandhian philosophy.

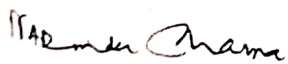
Progress Report from July 19 to December 19

This chapter is based on the narrative technique chosen by Raja Rao. For his philosophical, intellectual, critical and social content, Rao combines storytelling, Puranic, storytelling, symbols, myths and Indian cultural elements. *Kanthapura* uses traditional storytelling to portray Indian independence struggle, blending past and present and myth and reality. *The Serpent and the Rope* also continues this fusion of myths, legends and symbols to explore themes of spiritual quest, cultural identity and spiritual truth. *The Cat and Shakespeare* uses simpler, more everyday language. *Comrade Kirrilov* experiments with narrative technique by featuring non-linear text. Raja Rao indianizes English in his works and how he does so has been captured in this chapter.

Progress Report from January 2020 to June 2020

The study 'Underpinnings of Gandhian thought on Raja Rao's vision of India' examines Raja Rao's depiction of India as both a physical and conceptual entity influenced by Gandhian principles and Advait Philosophy. Gandhian principles, particularly truth, non-violence and satyagraha permeated Indian English literature and influenced Rao's works. Rao's narratives blend traditional Indian philosophy with contemporary social-political issues. *The Great Indian Way* underscores Gandhi's unwavering commitment to truth and non-violence. Raja Rao's treatment of Gandhi in his works reflects the deep philosophical and spiritual integration of Gandhian principles with the essence of India. All the works discussed earlier were briefly touched upon and with this completion of the thesis resulted.

Research Scholar



Narinder Sharma


Supervisor

Dr Suchitra Awasthi