

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU : THE MOULDING OF THE MIND

Jawaharlal Nehru, a literary versatile with a multi-dimensional personality, bestrode the Indian scene like a colossus for many years. A great democrat, a creative thinker, a leader of the masses, the messiah of the poor and the underprivileged, Jawaharlal involved his social consciousness in his literary art. His contributions to literature and politics have been widely hailed by the academic circle all throughout the world. Thus, Jawaharlal's eminence as a prolific writer has been a matter of interest to the concerned as he chose to reflect the socio-political ethos in his literary works. Of late, it has appeared that Jawaharlal's well-acclaimed statesmanship has sometimes seemed to overshadow his standing and achievement as a writer.

Jawaharlal's interests as revealed in his creative oeuvre are many and varied in nature, and they may be taken in their totality to make an interpretation of the two equally famous recognitions he is entitled to. Through diverse genres of literature Jawaharlal's concern for humanity has been ably depicted. The attention he paid to creativity has resulted in the literary works that celebrate his humanitarian ideologies. In fact, the dexterous manifestation of 'literature' and 'politics' is a particular dimension of Jawaharlal's creativity that recognizes his strength as a man of letters. It strongly determines the merit of his writings and speeches as

important social documents comprising his literary works. The 'literary oeuvre' of Jawaharlal, it is believed, has essentially clarified his status as both: 'litterateur' and 'statesman', while at the same time, it reveals his potentiality as a modern thinker. It may be stated that his variegated thoughts were transformed into a language which is sensitive and at the same time, adequate in carrying his message to the reader. As such, some tend to view him as a 'statesman' while some tend to designate him as 'a man of letters'. Keeping this perspective in mind, an attempt has been made to explore the literary height of this intellectual of the twentieth century in this thesis entitled, *Jawaharlal Nehru As A Man of Letters: A Critical Study* wherein the main emphasis has been put on Jawaharlal's creativity for which he has continued to receive critical attention from the intelligentsia. Further, it has been kept in mind that had Jawaharlal devoted himself completely to a creative career only, he, devoid of his acknowledged statesmanship, would have enjoyed equal recognition. As Pearl S. Buck has maintained :

I know that had our times been more peaceful [Jawaharlal] could have found a high career as a creative writer, for his style of writing is distinguished and his imagination is alive and quick...¹

Jawaharlal has drawn the critics to his camp sustaining their interest in his literary works. The following works on Jawaharlal exhibit the appeal of his creative side to the reader and the critic alike. K. R. S. Iyenger, the pioneer of criticism on Indian writing in English, has denoted Jawaharlal as a creative artist who is in some measure a maker of history. In his book, *Indian Writing in English (1962)* Iyenger has devoted a

chapter to the writings and speeches of Jawaharlal wherein he has critically examined the latter as a 'phoenix' whose primary goal is 'humanity'. In a 'Foreword' to C. D. Narasimhaiah's book, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Study of his Writings and Speeches (1960)*, Iyenger again has identified the impact of man, society and Nature on Jawaharlal. Narasimhaiah has viewed Jawaharlal as the 'human idiom' in his work, *The Human Idiom(1967)* while the literary facet of his personality has been taken into account. Devoting two chapters to Jawaharlal's literary works in the book, *The Swan and the Eagle (1968)*, the same critic has analysed his literary acumen. Besides, Jawaharlal's scientific spirit has been recognized as a rare trait by Narasimhaiah. *Jawaharlal Nehru: The Statesman as Writer (2000)* is another seminal work of Narasimhaiah wherein he has thrown his insight into the creativity of Jawaharlal. Specific concern has been shown to Jawaharlal's art of prose as revealed in *An Autobiography (1936)*, *The Discovery of India (1946)* and the occasional writings as a literary weapon by the critics. Another critic of eminence, M. K. Naik in his two equally famous books, *A History of Indian English Literature (1982)* and *Dimensions of Indian English Literature (1984)* has evaluated Jawaharlal's contributions to the development of English prose in the annals of Indian writing. V. N. Chibber in his work, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Man of Letters (1979)* has attempted to captivate the vision, insight, anguish and thoughts of this great humanist. Chaman Nahal in *Jawaharlal Nehru As A Man of Letters (1990)* has directed our attention to the synthesis in Jawaharlal's thoughts that got reflected in his writings. William Walsh has devoted

some pages to Jawaharlal in his book, *Indian Literature in English* (1990) attempting to record the passionate and sharp expression of Jawaharlal as an autobiographer. In a very recent book, *Makers of Indian English Literature* (2001), Narasimhaiah has apprehended Jawaharlal as the most sensitive and effective Indian writer in English. Another work, *Indian English Literature 1980-2000 : A Critical Study* (2001) reveals Jawaharlal's letters as rich source of biographical information. Nayantara Sahgal in the *Introduction to Before Freedom: Nehru's Letters to His Sister* (2000) has tried to analyse the letters of Jawaharlal as the illumination of the ideas which grew in the face of a troublesome period of India's history. M. J. Akbar in his book, *Nehru: The Making of India* (1998) has appraised the life and achievement of Jawaharlal from his own critical point of view. Sarvepalli Gopal in *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography, Vol. I & II* (1979) has fathomed the depth of Jawaharlal's capability not only as a statesman but also as a creative artist. Apart from the serious attention from these literary critics in their respective works on Jawaharlal, it is his credit to have received encomium from the biographers also. Walter Crocker in *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Contemporary's Estimate* (1965) and Michael Breecher in *Nehru: A Political Biography* (1959) have praised this genius behind the vast range of creative oeuvre he created during the Nationalist Movement. Judith M. Brown, in her book, *Nehru : A Political Life* (2004) has recorded Jawaharlal's legacy with reference to different socio-political ethos to which he showed a strong inclination. In *Nehru and The Modern World* (1966), people from different walks of life like Octavio Paz, Valerian Gracias and others have

estimated Jawaharlal as a thinker in the modernist tradition. Uma Iyenger in the *Preface* to the book, *Essential Writings of Jawaharlal Nehru Vol. I & II (2005)* has identified the literary sensibility and various thoughts of Jawaharlal including his 'socialist philosophy of society' and 'love for Nature'. Apart from the books written by Jawaharlal, the letters, speeches, the articles and the statements included in *Jawaharlal Nehru : Selected Works*, in twenty two volumes edited by S. Gopal suggests the enormous task, Jawaharlal performed. The vast array of subjects, on which Jawaharlal threw light, unfolds his narrative art contributing to his standing and achievement as a man of letters. S. Gopal has commented :

Jawaharlal Nehru was able to tease out of a busy schedule the time to reflect upon the larger issues which engaged mankind in India, and elsewhere, in the middle decades of the twentieth century.²

Critical assessments from diverse perspectives have been made by many critics in literary journals like *The Literary Half Yearly*, *Literary Criterion*, and the *Journal of Indian Writing in English*. Perceptive accolades from Marjorie Boulton, K. D. Verma, Gangadhar Gadgil and many more are sure affirmations of Jawaharlal's creative side. Nonetheless, it has occurred to us that more insight can be thrown into his literary works from non-analytical perspectives. Keeping this in mind, an attempt has been made to do justice to the literary works of this intellectual statesman in this thesis while due emphasis has been laid on his prose which is enriched with poetic sensibility and imagination. In our endeavour, the treatment of Nature too, as mirrored in his writings, has been taken into consideration as

an added dimension of his standing as a man of letters. Besides, taking the egalitarian views of Jawaharlal into account as revealed in his writings and speeches, an attempt has been made to assess his socialistic goal both as a statesman and as a literary icon.

Our passionate interest in Jawaharlal as a “man of both the East and the West” arises from the accounts in his *Autobiography (1936)* narrating his encounter with both. This man holding the post of the Prime Minister of India for seventeen years continuously, could also tap the resources of literature despite his engagements with the political activities. However, his modernistic attitude to life, society and humanity may be viewed as a specific trait of his individuality. It is indeed, necessary to discuss his ‘ancestry’, ‘birth’, and ‘upbringing’ to know him better. Besides, it has also been felt essential to observe Jawaharlal’s line of thoughts believing in his wide knowledge that stems from his profuse reading. They are vast and diversified, and for incorporation of those ideals into his works he has been recognised as a visionary. In moulding a person like Jawaharlal, various influences, luminaries and events worked powerfully, shaping him as a man with scientific spirit.

It has been felt necessary at present to record the whole corpus of literary works created by Jawaharlal. To his credit the following works have been published till date : *Soviet Russia (1928)*; *Letters From a Father to His Daughter (1930)*; *Glimpses of World History (1933)*; *An Autobiography (1936)*; *The Discovery of India (1946)*; *Mahatma Gandhi (1949)*; *A Bunch of Old Letters (1958)*; *Nehru’s Letters to His Sister (1963)*; *Selected Works*

of Jawaharlal Nehru (1970); *Jawaharlal Nehru: Selected Speeches*, (Vol. I, II, III, IV & V) (1982); *Letters to the Chief Ministers of India* (1985); *Jawaharlal Nehru : Selected Works*, (1998); *Before Freedom : Nehru's Letters to His Sister* (2000); *Two Alone : Two Together* (2005); *Essential Writings of Jawaharlal Nehru, (Vol. I & II)* (2005). Besides, a host of articles published in various magazines and newspapers reveal his concern with the target audience illuminating the socio-political ideologies like 'Socialism', 'Marxism', 'Gandhism' and 'humanism'. Besides, Jawaharlal's preoccupation with 'science and technology', 'planning' and the like involves his awareness of man and society as a whole. This instantly helped him envisage a modern India wherein no religious bigotry, superstition etc. would enter. To quote Jawaharlal :

The modern mind that is to say the better type of the modern mind is practical and pragmatic, ethical and social, altruistic and humanitarian. It is governed by a practical idealism for social betterment...³

The above passage is a case in point showing his modernistic attitude to man and society. And encompassing his vision and mission in passages like this, the literary works of Jawaharlal are, in fact, expressive of his philosophy based again, on humanity. Aiming at a modern India backed up by science and technology, Jawaharlal wanted to change her, putting emphasis on the removal of age-old superstition, religious bigotry and narrow nationalism.

We can understand Jawaharlal as a writer on the basis of his contribution made to diverse genres of literature: autobiography, history, epistles, oratory; all in the form of narrative in prose. The colossal range of literary oeuvre, thus, is suggestive of his enthusiasm for creativity. Looking for fresh avenues as a committed writer he has slowly carved a niche in the realm of Indian English literature. Each of the distinctive genres has been adopted by Jawaharlal to reveal his emotion resulting from his alienation owing to his frequent imprisonment for taking part in India's Nationalist Movement. Exhibiting his sensible interest in literary art, all the works are set to project his versatility. Jawaharlal's idea on "scientific humanism"⁴, an amalgamation of 'science' and 'humanity', may be viewed as a rarity in other thinkers. Well-grounded thoughts like this obviously spring from a mind wherein the ideas are broadened in limitless manner. They have been translated into a language that is undeniably characterized by lucidity, simplicity and grace in style enriched with the writer's 'poetic imagination'. The absolute manner of unfaltering style of Jawaharlal's prose reminds us of his expertise in formulating and employing the words according to the need of expression which is an envy to many. The unparalleled communication Jawaharlal could do as a prose writer arrests our attention as there is an unobstructed, free-flow of narrative expression. Needless to state that for all these, the style of his prose easily captivates the reader, while it is believed that the above phenomenon makes his writings interesting.

Another aspect of Jawaharlal as a man of letters, it is believed, is his exposure to humanity's concern. Narasimhaiah has observed in his book, *Jawaharlal Nehru – A Study of His Writings and Speeches* (1960) thus :

[Jawaharlal was]... a statesman who assures us that in spite of all the ills that befall man and the world, we can always admire its beauty and through art exercise the god-like function of creation... who hardly fail to notice the poetic turn of expression and the artistic bent of mind and the inner harmony he has ceaselessly striven to achieve all of which make us think that some new classics have been added to the English language...⁵

The above passage rightly applauds the enduring quality of the Jawaharlal's texts. It has been observed that as a writer Jawaharlal has synthesized his 'inner-harmony' of peace with a 'poetic' bent of mind. However, mention must be made here that Jawaharlal as a follower of Gandhiji put his faith in the strategy of 'non-co-operation' and 'non-violence'. Thus, his creative works may be hailed as the appropriate reflection of those traits of the freedom struggle which add reality as a particular dimension to his creative entity. In fact, Jawaharlal is a veritable contributor to the making of Indian history. The literary works of Jawaharlal, thus, are supposed to be invaluable social documents since they chronicle a period so important in national life. As such, they drive the reader to make a creative interaction with the authentic portrayal of the events and experiences in the context of the freedom movement of India. As a rule, then, the direct bearing of socio-political reality in Jawaharlal's literary oeuvre presents a saga of nationalistic consciousness

which at that particular time swept the milieu. Further, it may be kept in mind that the works put on a specific weight of being social documents and going through them the reader in future would definitely be able to recreate India's history. The reality of a changing time is echoed and re-echoed in Jawaharlal's artistic prose that maps a new periphery of Indian English literature which till then, saw a kind of 'religio – philosophical' prose.

The novelty introduced by Jawaharlal is the depiction of a whirlpool created in the political field centering on the newly awakened social consciousness of a nation which strove to retain their lost identity, undoing the chain of subjugation. It is, thus, in our opinion Jawaharlal flourishes as a man of letters in his attempt to arrest that crisis of identity during a particular period of India's momentous change. One can neither ignore the literary beauty of Jawaharlal's works nor can forget the social implications they are strongly endowed with. A need, hence, would remain central in the area of criticism even in the years to come to justify the literary quality of Jawaharlal's writings and speeches. It should, however, be kept in mind that all his literary works enlist a spirit to energize a nation in crisis.

Most of the literary works produced by Jawaharlal are the able treatises that involve a creative interaction between him and the reader. They record Jawaharlal's literary acumen as well as his concern for active politics that aimed at the liberation of India. In fact, political liberation of India synchronizes with his idea of freedom of humanity. It is really

interesting to note that after independence Jawaharlal could transcend his long-standing thoughts regarding the vision of modern India into reality introducing the Five Year Plan to boost up the economy. Again, setting up institutes for the advancement of science and technology, he initiated a revolution in the true sense to give a definite momentum to the identity of India. It has been observed that as a statesman Jawaharlal successfully implemented his plans even after facing a lot of hardship while as a writer he recorded his approach to these. Thus, the claim of 'politics' could never impair his impetus for creativity. Firmly depicting Jawaharlal's notion of man and society the literary works delve deep into his socialistic goal.

It has been seen that during a 'particularly distressful period' of his life he started writing. It may be safely argued that the literary works produced by Jawaharlal is the outcome of this time when the nation was trying to be free from the rule of the British. A logical view may be offered at this moment: had he not been an active nationalist, he would not have gone to jail and there would not have been any occasion to express his inner urge as he does now taking pen and paper to write about the lonely, dull existence in the solitary confinement of a jail. Obviously, then, Jawaharlal's ideas associated with two different worlds: 'literature' and 'politics', have carved their places in his works. It is true that his creative impulse was conditioned by the two objectives: 'freedom from colonial rule' and 'freedom to express' the passionate thoughts resulting from his patriotic endeavour. However, the 'socialistic objective'

of Jawaharlal as reflected in his writings and speeches is a reminder of his inherent passion for the well being of society. Since Jawaharlal's writings cocoon a historical period exhibiting the urge of the Indians it is also believed that he aspired to arrest it as a new creative involvement. It may be stated thus, that his commitment to humanity has been appropriated in the area wherein he has thrown the light of his engagement as a writer. That 'changing trend' of social consciousness may thus, become the decisive theme of the many literary discussions Jawaharlal has done. M. K. Naik views Jawaharlal as the writer of 'vigorous yet graceful prose'⁶ of the time as against the 'religio-cultural prose' written by Bankim Chandra, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sri Aurobindo and others.

Jawaharlal ingrained the 'Gandhian whirlpool' of Indian politics into his works from a detached onlooker's angle making them a rich paradigm of literature bearing 'colonial legacy'. In the realm of Indian writing in English, it has been seen that the creativity of Jawaharlal engineered by that socio-political change drives home the reader's interest to the newly awakened nation showing profoundly their trend of thought. Thus, the creative arena during Jawaharlal's time became an exhaustive supply of the passion for liberty, identifying a nation's urge to resume its old glory. The Indians as the subjugated nation looked forward with determination to attaining the much sought after new status even at the cost of everything they owed. In the process, humiliation and suffering, alienation and the like indescribably became their lot followed by frequent imprisonments. In his literary works, Jawaharlal has

attempted to recount those experiences. However, for the sheer delineation of the events of a nation Jawaharlal may be categorized as a realistic writer and his works may be labelled as authentic 'social documents'. Meanwhile, it may be recorded that all the diverse genres to which Jawaharlal has contributed, inevitably show the setting up of a milestone on the circuit of his journey as a man of letters. It is formidable on Jawaharlal's part that his potential to adopt and adapt a specific genre as a means of literary vehicle that harmonizes with his objective to express his inner need. Naik has viewed the prose of Jawaharlal's times in the following language :

...The prose was prompted by the twofold impulses of the re-discovery of the Indian past and a strong awareness of the problems of the day. Biography, autobiography, belles-letters and criticism still remain areas comparatively sparsely cultivated ...⁷

Corroborating the social implications the prose carried to the reader Naik has enabled us to understand the message of 'rediscovery' of India's glory as reflected in them. Further, the strong awareness of the condition of the country is noted as a dominating aspect of the prose. Thus, it may be believed that Jawaharlal's writings too bear his timely and humane expressions. Of course, the 'changes' incorporated into Indian English literature regarding 'theme', 'style', 'technique' of the prose narrative are also caught in them. In the art of writing prose, Jawaharlal has initiated a novelty marked by imagination, while it was mainly related to the issue of politics. In our assumption, the skill he has

shown in the agglomeration of 'politics' and 'literature' impresses us to call him a committed writer. Earlier, too, the subject of freedom from the Raj was taken up by the writers, yet there was a lack of 'imagination' and 'spirit' to move the milieu against the coloniser. But Jawaharlal's works brought in a new manner into Indian English literature interweaving patriotic feelings and strong poetic imagination. Rightly do the literary works of Jawaharlal, pregnant with nationalism, captivate the aspiration of a freedom-loving nation where the social consciousness as the functional element has been faithfully registered. In this light, Jawaharlal may be easily hailed as an advocate for the cause of humanity whose voice has been heard against the atrocities the Indians faced at the hands of the colonizers.

Not only the writer in Jawaharlal was motivated by the ideologies followed by the nationalists under the leadership of Gandhiji but the statesman in him too was deeply influenced by them. Thus, the introduction and assimilation of the patriotic fervour as literary elements enhance the merit of Jawaharlal's works and in the following chapters an attempt has been made to study them closely. In our assumption, by doing so, one may have a true understanding of the same man behind the creative works who faced the alien rulers and mirrored truly the 'problems' the Indians encountered in this standing as freedom lovers.

There is, then, a need to study the potential area where Jawaharlal can be illuminated as a man of letters with reference to his literature. Meanwhile, it is to be recalled that as a writer Jawaharlal mainly wrote on

historical and political themes, and so, they require to be evaluated from both the perspectives : as works of literature and political documents. The close affinity of both, however, is a strong merit of Jawaharlal's works, as the reader gets 'quality literature' even if they are considered as 'historical political prose', compelling us to judge them as social documents. It has been presumed that by dint of his literary works, Jawaharlal has served two purposes equally : on the one hand, he has enriched Indian English literature with his creativity; on the other, through his works he has raised his 'voice' echoing and re-echoing the needs of the Indians. Doing so, he has taken a due step to depict 'human predicament' which, in our consideration, is an inevitable part of a society and its inclusion gives a distinctive identity to Jawaharlal's literary works. As an individual, 'sensitive' to human suffering, thrilled by the 'sound' and sight of nature in her magnificence and glory, at home in both lovely hills and among the crowds, passionate in his expression, Jawaharlal's writings may, hence, be considered to be some new 'classics' added to Indian English literature.

As a rule, then, in the succeeding chapters an attempt has been made to search for the area wherein Jawaharlal has certainly recorded some newer perspectives offering us an insight into his creativity. It is hoped that this study would also reveal the crisis of identity of a nation in his writings and speeches.

As a leader Jawaharlal could understand the agony of the masses. As such, he impels them to adhere to their objective of liberty by dint of his fiery speeches, and to a great extent, he has achieved success. His

achievement as a man of letters is assumed to be solidly grounded on the reception of the people, who, to know about the movement, would always go through *Glimpses of World History*, *An Autobiography*, *The Discovery of India*, and many of his speeches characterized by poetic imagination. His letters, vibrant with patriotic musings connote a distinguished taste to the works as social documents. Besides, the literary value they are clothed in, cannot be dismissed as it exhibits his pattern of thoughts. Once Jawaharlal put his standing in the following words :

... I am not a man of letters, and I am not prepared to say that the many years I have spent in gaol have been the sweetest in my life, but I must say that reading and writing have helped one wonderfully to get through them. I am not a literary man, and I am not a historian, what indeed am I? I find it difficult to answer that question...⁸

This question of Jawaharlal leads thoughts to us also to illumine his position as a writer who was geared up by his faith in humanity. His 'strength' and 'weakness' as a man of letters may be justified on the basis of the 'literary outputs' he created. They, indeed, immortalize the identity of the nation and hence, may be viewed as the record of a notable period. As the noted writer, Prabhakar Machway has recommended the writings of Jawaharlal in the *Preface* to the book, *Jawaharlal Nehru As a Man of Letters* (1970) thus :

...Nehru, the writer, is not a self-occupied, detached intellectual only engaged in analysis. He never loses right of the common man...⁹

The above view establishes Jawaharlal's preoccupation with humanity. Meanwhile, as a visionary, Jawaharlal immediately put his attention to the milieu. M. V. Rama Sarma has stated in the following language :

Nehru's books, including *The Discovery*, were mostly written while he was in prison. They have a universality of their own and they reveal Nehru, the man with his catholicity of outlook and deep learning. Nehru's discovery of his country does not have him a bigoted nationalist... He is 'a world citizen' transcending the limitations of narrow nationalism... He is statesman not only in politics but also in his writings. ¹⁰

To know the catholicity of outlook of Jawaharlal, or to know him as a 'world-citizen' one must be familiar with his birth, upbringing and education as well to denote the formative influences that moulded him.

Jawaharlal was born on 14 November, 1889 to Motilal and Swaruprani Nehru in Allahabad. Father Motilal was a descendent of the 'Kaul' family belonging to the valley of Kashmir whose forefathers came to the plain in search of better employment. They lived nearby a 'Nahar' meaning canal from which the title 'Nehru' came to be associated with 'Kaul' making 'Kaul-Nehru' and later, it became only 'Nehru'. The family encountered many ups and downs in their new settlement and after some generations while it was the turn of Motilal to be the bread earner, he studied law with the sole aim to be an advocate. When Jawaharlal was born, Motilal was an advocate of great fame in the Allahabad High

Court. As a hard-working person by nature, he did well in the profession earning enough to live a life comfortably. That particular time, however, was a witness to the uprise of the feelings of the Indians who were infused with nationalistic fervour. Of course, Motilal was a nationalist in the vague sense of the world, but he had admired Englishmen and their ways in uncountable ways. Besides, Motilal's love for the western 'culture', 'habit', 'education' was known to all and it was a surprise for everyone concerned that a man belonging to a subjugated nation was admired and attended by many Englishmen. Amongst them, Motilal was iconic in many ways: particularly for his uncommon attitude to life characterized by his wealth and aptitude to mix up in a high class society formed by the Englishmen specifically. However, it is quite understandable that because of his unconventional attitude to everything from religion to other traditions of society, he was an 'iconoclast', showing his preference for a westernized way of living. Motilal was considered a person of the 'elite section', consisting of the rich, the aristocrat, and mainly the Englishman living in India. Thus, being deeply influenced by the western mode of everything, he spent a good amount of income to live a kind of western style of life. As such, 'ever increasing income' of that prosperous advocate meant 'increasing expenditure' incorporating many changes in the lives of the Nehrus making their "ways and habits more and more westernized"¹¹ day by day. And, in that atmosphere Jawaharlal's care was put in the hands of governesses and private tutors, so that, to the utter relief of Motilal, his son, too, may attain a suitable disposition to mix up in western society. Judith M.

Brown has explained the circumstances under which the subject grew, in her book, *Nehru: A Political Life (2004)* thus :

...The young Jawaharlal was born at a time when and in an environment where Indians were clearly experiencing unprecedented and often disturbing change. In many respects British rule offered them opportunities as well as profound changes...¹²

Referring to the significantly disturbing period in India's political life, Brown has made a sharp distinction between the deprived people and the elite group of society represented by the Nehrus, who by dint of their command over the English language could enjoy certain privileges in the British dominated country. This is the kind of situation when the Indians were fired up by urge for liberty. Jawaharlal, in that sense, became a witness to this crucial juncture of changes that dominated the whole scenario. The dilemma and conflict resulting from that historical trajectory, however, compelled Motilal to reconsider the advantages he was enjoying : he was destined either to join the nationalists for the cause of the motherland or to continue to avail himself the privileges he enjoyed in the British social circle. However, this conflict was unknown to Jawaharlal, who had already finished the part of elementary schooling at home under the tutelage of the private tutors, a privilege which was contrary to the existing system of education in India.

Needless to say, father Motilal with a modern outlook was an influencing luminary on Jawaharlal who was 'admired' tremendously by

the son. Jawaharlal fostered faith on father Motilal and he was constantly motivated by the 'strong' and 'iron will' of the father who seemed to the former as "the embodiment of strength and courage". Mother Swaruprani with her beautiful Kashmiri feature showered her love and care on the 'only son'. Jawaharlal's love and admiration for the mother have been registered in his Autobiography and from it we know her influence in shaping him. Thus, Swaruprani, after Motilal, was another luminary whose influence on moulding Jawaharlal's personality is remarkable. Amidst the members of the family, an aunt, the widow of Nandlal, used to narrate Jawaharlal the old tales from *the Ramayana*, *the Mahabharata* and *the Puranas* and they left indelible impressions in the mind of young Jawaharlal. Munshi Muḃarak Ali, the Munshi of his father, narrated him stories from the *Arabian Nights*, putting him in the flight of fancy. Both the story-tellers became close to Jawaharlal and he, too, cherished their memory in his *Autobiography*.

In the meantime, a new resident tutor, F. T. Brooks was employed to take care of Jawaharlal's overall development. Brooks initiated Jawaharlal into the 'mysteries of science' and together they set up a small laboratory to do some elementary experiments of the subject. Besides, Jawaharlal's interest in reading, too, was cultured by Brooks. Both the interests were sustained throughout the life of Jawaharlal, and they helped him to be a man of 'scientific attitude' and 'an avid reader' in later years. Brooks, thus, after the parents and the members of the family, may be called an influential person in moulding Jawaharlal's personality.

Notwithstanding the education provided by Brooks, some lessons in Hindi and Sanskrit were taught to Jawaharlal by a pandit employed by Motilal. In May, 1905 Jawaharlal, along with his parents and sister Swarup, better known as Vijayalaxmi Pandit, sailed to England and he was admitted into Harrow Public School, London. A new phase, away from the comfort of 'Anand Bhawan', his home, thus, began in far away England, the land of the alien rulers of India.

Encountering different situations in a foreign land Jawaharlal grew and learnt to grow. Earlier, at home, he was attended by a big family, consisting of many a kith and kin of Motilal. 'Anand Bhawan', as the name suggests, was truly the 'abode of happiness', sheltering a huge number of inmates. So, Jawaharlal acquired the art of living in harmony among many people. From the grown up cousins he learned about the alien rulers. His resentment was directed at them as an intruding nation but no individual Englishman was the target of that repulsive kind of feeling. Thus, during his childhood, the seeds of patriotism were implanted while it culminated in his intense nationalistic endeavour.

Coming to Harrow, Jawaharlal felt himself 'out of place', but sooner or later he could well grip the new situation as powerfully as he attempted. After two years at Harrow, he left for Trinity College, Cambridge University in 1907 to pursue his science Tripos. After passing the B. Sc. from this college he enrolled himself as a student of Law in the Inner Temple, London, in the footsteps of his father to be an advocate.

Jawaharlal's time at Cambridge University was indisputably a remarkable one, as this transition from a school life to a wider atmosphere of a university provided him opportunities to widen up his 'mental horizon'. Since he came to terms with western intellectual thoughts, his diverse interests grew on the ideologies of Oscar Wilde, Walter Pater, George Bernard Shaw and others. Jawaharlal's new found interest, however, rested on the concept of 'Fabian Socialism' as propounded by Shaw, which taught him to generate some thoughts contributing to India's social and economic structure. It has been observed that though he was not a propagandist of any specific socio-political doctrine, yet his inclination to Shaw's 'socialism' helped him attain a clear concept of 'democratic socialism' which he assumed to be suitable for the economy of India. Meanwhile, the 'Sinn Fien Movement' of Ireland also inspired him enough to think about India's liberation. He tried to follow some strategies adopted by the people of Ireland to continue their fight for freedom. As such, it is believed that Jawaharlal's nationalist endeavour, though started in India, was immediately fired up by the free climate of a university life at Cambridge. Many propositions were made by him during that time to come to a resolution about India's freedom, but it was not possible for him to take active part in the nationalist movement from abroad.

The period Jawaharlal spent in England as a student is essentially an important part of his life, as it is often said that youth is the period when one learns to develop one's ideas. As such, Jawaharlal's growth and

development as an intellectual may rightly be attributed to this period while 'fresh reading' and 'discussion' with fellow students helped him open up his intellectual horizon. In 1912, after passing the Law Examination from the Inner Temple he was called back to India and in the same year, the young man with a charming personality arrived in India to join as a junior advocate to his father Motilal in Allahabad High Court.

Enriched with these encounters, Jawaharlal tried to focus his attention on the ongoing liberation movement. In the month of December, 1916, Jawaharlal met Mahatma Gandhi for the first time but the simple man, clad in Khadi, did not impress him. Later, taking the decision to give up every luxury and comfort, Jawaharlal began to follow the lessons taught by Gandhiji. A new life emerged, thus, in India's political horizon.

In the month of February (on the Vasanta Panchami Day), 1916, Jawaharlal married Kamala Kaul, a Kashmiri girl whose ancestors came to live in Delhi only two generations ago. On 19th November, 1917 their daughter Indira Priyadarshini (later Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India) was born, adding joy and charm to the couple and to the inmates of Anand Bhawan.

Apart from the vital influences as narrated above, Kamala too, was one who moulded Jawaharlal in diverse ways. But his conjugal life did not last more than nineteen years as Kamala died of tuberculosis in 1936. The beginning of *The Discovery of India* records Jawaharlal's nostalgic

accounts of the relationship between them wherein Kamala's position and impact on his life can be easily traced. Among the women whose authority he could never deny, and which continued to direct him, were mother Swaruparani, sister Vijayalaxmi and Krishna, wife Kamala, daughter Indira and later, Kasturba. Dr Anne Besant, too, may be viewed as one of those who moved him powerfully not only as a theosophist but also as an ardent patriot.

Examining the roles played by the luminaries who directly or sometimes indirectly influenced Jawaharlal, it may be safely stated that after Motilal, Gandhiji was the most powerful influence bringing radical changes into his life. Following this transformation, he wrote a letter to the editor of *The Leader* (21 June, 1917) that it was a time for resolution to fight against the Raj, for "ours has been the politics of cowards and opium eaters, and it is time we thought and acted like men and women". This feeling was reinforced, further, by the Jalianwalal Bagh massacre perpetrated by the British police under the direction of General Dyer.

Needless to state that for taking part in the Nationalist Movement frequent 'jail goings' became his destiny. This was another change in his life when he was much needed by his family and by the people of India. However, the years in jail helped him observe the 'past' and 'present' conditions of India while the *Autobiography* and *The Discovery of India* offer his insight into them. As Naik puts in *Dimensions of Indian English Literature* (1984) in the following words :

Of Nehru's political philosophy [here] the attainment of complete Independence forms the corner-stone, as is obvious from the fact, that he was the chief architect of the Congress resolution demanding complete Independence in 1930...¹³

Naik also believes and points out further that Jawaharlal's "social and political thoughts in the *Autobiography* are intimately connected with his belief in science".¹⁴ His praise for Marxism may be seen as a trait of his thoughts as he considered it to be an elemental force that changed the face of Soviet Russia.

It is Jawaharlal's narrative power to reconstruct the 'past' of the world in the *Glimpses of World History*, and of India in *The Discovery of India*, that urges us to explore his keen awareness of history. The pluralities of Indian culture drew him closely and being enlightened with the European intellectual thoughts he approached India as 'a friendly westerner would do'.

In fact, the creative works of Jawaharlal exhibit this East-west encounter. In the narrow confines of the prison cell, his mind travelled through the centuries. Uma Iyenger has recorded in the *Preface to The Essential Writings of Jawaharlal Nehru Vol. I (2005)* thus :

... Partly to occupy himself with a definite task, a disciplined method of alleviating the long hours of solitude, and partly out of the desire to educate his daughter to grow up to be a cultured individual with an awareness and an understanding of the world [Jawaharlal] wrote the *Glimpses of World History* and *The Discovery of India*.¹⁵

The rest of the life of Jawaharlal who, after the liberation of India became the first Prime Minister of the country and shouldered that responsibility till his death 29 May, 1964, is itself a history. Closely studying his writings and speeches we can see his visions of nation-building engineered by his interest in humanity and science and technology. All these may be attributed to his socialistic concerns.

Jawaharlal's cosmopolitan, rather secular, outlook developed during his childhood years in Allahabad, as he got to observe different celebrations: 'Holi', 'Dussehra', 'Muhhram', 'Diwali', 'Eid', and the 'Naw-roz', the beginning of the new year according to the Samvat Calendar followed by the Kashmiris. All these celebrations were holy occasions symbolizing the pluralities of India's indigenous culture.

The implications of the title *Jawaharlal Nehru as a Man of Letters – A Critical Study* may now be examined. It asserts the need for taking this crucial issue of Jawaharlal's standing as much as a 'politician' as a 'man of letters'.

Jawaharlal's contribution to India and the world continues to be a matter of controversy. He was, by his own admission, a 'practising politician' who loved 'mountains, glaciers in the hills, lettuce salad, and good conversation, animals and flowers, swimming and riding'. This is a challenging task to situate the statesman as a man of letters in the context of the literary qualities his books contain. Nonetheless studying the constant creative interaction between him and the reader, it may be presumed that his seat as a writer is safe and well-acknowledged.

A brief survey of Jawaharlal's creative works suggests that he is primarily a humanist whose interest in human kind has been reflected in his creative oeuvre. As P. Marudanayagam has rightly observed in *The Journal of Indian Writing in English* :

No other humanist would have cherished so much of faith in science. Nehru's attitude to life was essentially scientific...¹⁶

It reveals that Jawaharlal's humanism is essentially a celebration of his views on man and society. "The desire to transcend the prison of consciousness into the freedom of spirit is the impelling force of his history,"¹⁷ observes K. Challappan. A. L. Mcleod has commented on the literary works of Jawaharlal in the following words:

The *Autobiography* of Jawaharlal is a truthful account of his life that merged with the lives of the Indians mirroring their need. The letters help us to apprehend his strength as an epistolarian...¹⁸

The letters addressed by Jawaharlal to various persons aptly reveal his personality that shows his passion for liberty and humanity as well. The speeches of Jawaharlal, enlisted under the category of 'oral prose' certainly celebrates him as an 'orator' of distinguished quality who fired up the nation with his poetic addresses. Important speeches : *Tryst with Destiny...*, *The Light has gone out of our lives...* etc. are examples of his emotional outbursts which are grounded on the themes of 'love for the motherland' and 'love for Gandhiji'. Charged with sublime thoughts, verged on poetic expression, those speeches adequately suggest his

'oratorical disquisitions' which are comparable to those of Edmund Burke. Governed by the impulse for the cause of India, Jawaharlal, the writer affirms that his creative works are anchored on reality. Walter Crocker, in his book, *Nehru : A Contemporary's Estimate* (1965), has thus observed:

... Nehru's writings illustrate a cerebral life, and a power of self-discipline, altogether out of the ordinary. Words by the millions bubbled up out of his fullness of mind and spirit. Had he never been the Prime Minister of India he would have been famous as the author of the *Autobiography* and the autobiographical parts of *The Discovery of India*.¹⁹

It has been noticed that Crocker has put more emphasis on the creative side of Jawaharlal than on his political life. In tune with Crocker, Michael Breecher in his work, *Nehru : A Political Biography* (1959) has echoed the same idea in the following words :

... Jawaharlal's words flow as in a stream of consciousness and therefore has endless side channels...²⁰

The above view of Breecher enables us to assess the technique of Jawaharlal's writings wherein the 'stream of consciousness' mode of narrative can be seen. B. R. Nanda in his book, *Jawaharlal Nehru : Rebel and Statesman* (1998) has commented that "without his passionate commitment to politics it is doubtful if Jawaharlal would ever have become an author".²¹ In fact, the 'conflict of ideas, desires and loyalties' made Jawaharlal a battleground and to achieve a harmony in heart he took to writing that brought him 'peace and psychic satisfaction',²² opines Narasimhaiah, in his attempt to present Jawaharlal as a humanist. He states :

Indeed, it is his sympathy for the downtrodden and oppressed humanity that lends unusual power and pathos to his utterances and makes him a modern Prometheus to the Indian people. It is this humanity among other things which distinguishes Nehru from other politicians and statesmen and thinkers who are also writers of great renown...²³

Narasimhaiah has also seen Jawaharlal as "...the most sensitive writer..."²⁴ who by the sheer power of his pen made the nation mightier than ever still. Constant denial on Jawaharlal's part of his own standing as a writer compels us to pose a question – if he is not a writer how can he inspire many a minds to consider his literary works :

... I do not know what other authors feel about their writings, but always I have a strong sensation when I read something that I had written previously. That sensation is heightened when the writing had been done in the close and abnormal atmosphere of prison and the subsequent reading has taken place outside...²⁵

It appears that Jawaharlal was humble enough not to claim any status accorded to a creative writer. It may be inferred by his assumption that if his writings would have been done in the normal atmosphere, the structure and texture would obviously have been different. However, in the present thesis, this aspect has been considered to show that despite the recognition that the works of Jawaharlal receive as 'political', they never lack in literary worth. It is, however, true that presenting contemporary India in a truthful manner, Jawaharlal has provided the reader some 'texts' on which they can build up newer ideas. Thus, the

creativity of Jawaharlal has helped in waking up a nation. Among writers of English, Jawaharlal is undoubtedly one of the most outstanding as his literary sensibility has been noticed at its height in his addresses.

'Imagination' and 'reality' are the two key concepts that rule Jawaharlal's creativity. K. R. S. Iyenger has observed in a *Preface* in the following way :

Jawaharlal's writings and speeches give us some measure of the man, give us too an easy means of knowing him intimately...
Jawaharlal, the hope of millions here and everywhere this power and this personality is what we dearly cherish and admire.²⁶

This view of Iyenger synchronizes well with another of his observations made in his book, *Indian Writing in English* (1962) :

...The history of Jawaharlal Nehru's writings and speeches merges with his life, and his life likewise merges with the life of the nation-the history of Indian during the last forty years...²⁷

It appears to us that the 'statesmanship' and the 'creativity' of Jawaharlal are like the two sides of a coin and one is closely attached with the other. So to address him as a man of letters, it is essential to shed light on his preoccupation with 'politics' that provides a new perspective. It may be assumed that as a statesman, he serves literature incorporating the contemporary scenario into it while as a litterateur he reflects politics.

Jawaharlal's prose is spontaneous in his deliberation of thought. A free flowing, unaffected, ever-fresh, unhindered and enlivening style is

the literary forte of Jawaharlal. His 'style', maintains V. N. Chibber, 'springs from a soul who is transparent and true to himself.'²⁸ The employment of language according to the need of expression is another criterion of Jawaharlal's prose that arrests the serious attention of the critic. Marjorie Boulton has rightly observed in her book, *The Anatomy of Prose* (1989) thus :

... English people who will not trouble to write their own language well ought to be shamed by reading the English of such Indian writers as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, his sister Krishna Nehru, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Mulk Raj Anand ... and a number of obscure Indians to be met in British Universities...²⁹

The above statement of Boulton is more than an accolade sustaining our interest in the prose of Jawaharlal. Chaman Nahal has cited, "Because of Jawaharlal Nehru's public and political status one is likely to overlook that he was also a distinguished man of letters"³⁰. K. D. Verma has remarked that the creative works are the mirrors wherein the "reflection of the historical and psychological process of a cultural and ideological confrontation and synthesis of the East and the West"³¹ occurs. This observation of Verma compels the reader to consider the East-West encounter in the writings of Jawaharlal. In the book, *The Swan and The Eagle* (1968), two chapters have been devoted to Jawaharlal's creative works wherein Narasimhaiah has observed thus :

It is much in evidence whether he is dealing with nations of the world or his own, now or through centuries of history... Consider his writing of history or science or his dealings with human

beings, and one finds the same pervasive spirit of inquiry, the same interaction of the mind and the heart, of thought and feeling...³²

In the view of Iyenger, "A study of Nehru the writer becomes by necessary implication a study also of the man and of modern India awakening from the stupor of the centuries..."³³. It is to the credit of Jawaharlal that only because of his "exploratory creative approach"³⁴, the reader gets essential details of 'politics' and 'literature' of his times.

It is often lamented that in gaining Jawaharlal, the statesman, the writer in him has been lost. But in this thesis, an attempt has been made to reject this comment emphasizing on his creativity that has been mirrored in his writings and speeches. In doing so, the treatment of nature also, as a part of his prose, has been taken into consideration. It appears that it is an area that designs the periphery of his 'oeuvre'.

All these perceptive accolades confirm to Jawaharlal's creativity. They, however, are of immense help asserting, as they do, his position as a man of letters. Jawaharlal's speeches, mainly political, form an important part of his writings, and they show much of his ideas and insights. Reading them, the reader gets a glimpse of the manner in which his mind was working. Naturally, this, too, has been made a part of the present work.

Notes and References

1. Pearl. S. Buck wrote an article in *The Tribune*, 5th July, 1964 commemorating Jawaharlal's contributions to literature. It has been collected from the rare material section of Nehru Memorial Museum and library, Allahabad.
2. S. Gopal has written these lines in the editorial note in *Jawaharlal Nehru : Selected Works*, 1998 in twenty two volumes. His insight into Jawaharlal's position as a writer is clearly seen in this comment.
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4. Ibid.
5. Narasimhaiah, C. D., *Jawaharlal Nehru : A Study of His Writings and Speeches*, Rao and Raghavan, Mysore, 1958, vii.
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22. Nehru, As in note 11, 207.
23. Narasimhaiah, C. D., *Jawaharlal Nehru : The Statesman and Writer*, Pencraft International, New Delhi, 2001, 150.
24. Ibid.
25. Nehru, As in note 8.
26. K.R.S. Iyenger in a *Preface* to C. D. Narasimhaiah's book as cited in note no. 5, vii, has acclaimed Jawaharlal in this way.
27. Iyenger, K. R. S., *Indian Writing in English*, Sterling Publications, New Delhi, 5th edition, 1985, 295.
28. Chibber, V. N., *Jawaharlal Nehru As A Man of Letters*, Viaks Publications, New Delhi, 1970, 43.
29. Boulton, Marjorie, *The Anatomy of Prose*, Kalyani Publishers, Delhi, 1979, 91.
30. Nahal, Chaman, *Jawaharlal Nehru As A Man of Letters*, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1990, 15.

31. Verma, K. D., *The Indian Imagination*, Macmillan, New Delhi, 2001, 2.
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33. Iyenger, K. R. S., As in note 5, i.
34. Narasimhaiah, C. D. (ed.), *Makers of Indian English Literature*, Pencraft International, New Delhi, 2000, 30.