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Anna Bhau Sathe: A Rebellious Writer

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Abstract:

The present paper entitled Anna Bhau Sathe: A Rebellious Writer is an attempt to analyze and interpret Annabhau as a writer of rebel and protest against social, economic, sexual and cultural exploitation of the downtrodden with special reference to some of his select novels. Annabhau was born on 01 August 1920 in a small village called Wategaon of Sangli District in Maharashtra. He has been considered as one of the prolific and significant writers of Modern Indian Marathi Literature today. The major thematic concern of Annabhau is social, economic, cultural and sexual exploitation of the weaker section of society. His novels, therefore throw light on the rebel and protest of the downtrodden, honour of men and women, patriotic spirit and love for the country and common people etc. It shows the writers commitment and longing for the poor people. He wrote 35 novels, 3 plays, 21 collections of short stories, 10 ballads, 13 loknattya, a travelogue and many lavanis and songs. Some of his major novels such as *Warnechya Khoryat* (1951), *Chitra* (1951), *Fakira* (1959), *Vaijayanta* (1959), *Chandan* (1962), *Aawadi* (1963), *Vair* (1964), and many others made him the prominent writer of the downtrodden amongst his contemporaries. His masterpiece, *Fakira* got the Maharashtra State Award for best literary work in 1961. His work uncovered the exploitation and miseries of the downtrodden communities. In fact, he is interested in exploring the discriminative Indian society with some of his well-dignified rebellious characters such as Fakira, Ranoji, Sattu Bhosale, Hindurao, Dhanaj, Sawala, Chitra, Waijayanta, Aawadi, Sona, Chandan, Guna etc. These prominent characters oppose social, economic and cultural exploitation and prove the novelist as the first Marathi writer who devoted his literary career for the voice of the downtrodden. The present paper is divided into the following sections such as 1) Introduction 2) *Chitra*: a protest against patriarchy 3) *Fakira*: protest against the capitalism and the colonialism 4) *Aawadi*: protest against honour killing and 5) Conclusion.

Keywords: Exploitation, Downtrodden, Protest, Rebel, Patriotism, Martyrdom, Patriarchal, Lokshahir etc.

The second half of the nineteenth century proves to be the milestone for the Indian Marathi writers who depicted the real picture of the discriminative Indian society. The Indian Marathi socialist writers such as Annabhau Sathé, Tukaram Purohit, N. R. Shende, H. G. Bansode, Sudhakar Gaikwad, Laxman Manne, Daya Pawar, Uttam Tupe and others have brought a revolutionary change in the Modern Marathi literature. Amongst all Indian Marathi Novelists, Annabhau stands to be the prominent one in the movement of Dalit writers. He not only wrote for the downtrodden but acted as the lokshahir, social reformer and a philosopher for them as well. His works; especially, novels, short stories, plays, ballads examined the status of the downtrodden community in India. His works comprises principles of the great philosophers and social reformers such as Shri Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Mahatma Phule, Rajashri Shahu Maharaj, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil, Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak and others. Annabhau's work gave emphasis on democratic principles such as liberty, equality and fraternity. His characters largely belong to the indigent class which has no social, cultural or educational base. All characters of Annabhau seem to be enough sensitive and rebellious to establish equality in the discriminative society. His men and women struggle for abolishment of the caste, class and religious crisis in India. His characters use their strength for the rebel against the capitalists and tend to bring out equality, harmony and stability in everybody's life. His women characters do not lose their chastity but oppose the discrimination and patriarchy. In fact, Annabhau's novels emphasize the exploitation and suffering of outcasts, dalits, labours, farmers etc. The select novels of Annabhau such as *Chitra*, *Fakira*, and *Aawadi* prove him to be the devoted writer of the downtrodden. Dr. B. S. Korde writes:

With Lal Bawata Kalapathak (Red Flag Artise Troupe), the triumvirate artists- Shahir Anna Bhau, Shahir Amar Shaikh and Shahir, D. N. Gavhankar-made the masses conscious about, economic, political and social realities that they were surrounded by. (p.10)²

Chitra: The Protest Against Patriarchy:

In the present novel, *Chitra*, Annabhau explores strength and revolt of the female character of the downtrodden community. It deals with the feminist approach and shows how women get the secondary place in the patriarchal society. *Chitra* is the story of a young and beautiful village girl. *Chitra's* father died when she was in the womb of her mother. *Chaitra* and *Sona* are the two young and beautiful daughters of *Sakhubai*. They have a devilish and wicked maternal uncle called *Krishna* who tries to dominate and deceive them. *Krishna*

cunningly arranges *Sona's* marriage with *Kisna* of *Ghungarubandiwada*. *Kisna*, a diseased person, after his marriage to *Sona* reveals his severe disease to *Police Patil* of *Pargaon* and leaves *Sona* forever. *Krishna*, obviously a cunning man sells *Sona* at the whorehouse in *Mumbai*. Further, *Krishna* gets *Chitra* married to the one *Chandu*. But, unfortunately, he dies a premature death within fifteen days of his marriage with *Chitra*. Soon after the sudden death of *Chandu*, *Krishna* intensively takes *Chitra* to *Mumbai*. He makes futile effort to sell *Chitra* at the same whorehouse where *Sona* was leading a tragic life. *Chitra*, an intelligent and sensitive girl realizes the recklessness of *Krishna*. She revolts against *Krishna* and some of the lustful people such as *General* and *Laliya*. Even, She escapes herself from a rich and wicked person *Kantilal*. Finally, she happens to meet her childhood friend *Jaya* who has a patriotic spirit in himself. Moreover, the present novel, *Chitra* depicts the pathetic life of the helpless mother *Sakhubai* who lives an isolated life without her daughters. *Sakhubai* speaks out her pathetic life:

Who is mine in this village now? How can I make flour of the grain? Who will bring water for me now? Who is to look after me now? My heart has broken into two pieces now... *Sakhubai* came back home... But there was no *Chitra*. *Sakhubai* started crying. Could I be able to see my daughters again? She murmured. Her eyes began to shed tears and...(p.325)¹

Thus, Annabhau, a committed writer of the downtrodden highlights on the rebel of a strong intelligent girl called who fights against the humiliation and injustice of the patriarchal society. It is the true spirit of the feminist movement which opposed the lustful, selfish and greedy patriarchal society. It's, in fact, a search of women for self-realization and establishment of the platonic society.

Fakira: The Protest Against the Capitalism and Colonialism:

Annabhau's masterpiece, *Fakira* deals with the protest and rebel of the patriotic hero *Fakira*, who fights against the capitalism and the colonialism. His rebel is against the tyrannical British Government, the capitalists and the upper class community. He dedicates his whole life for the justice of the downtrodden. *Fakira* does not hesitate to support *Sattu Bhosale* who killed *Mathaji Chaughule*, a tyrannical and wealthy person when the later was beating a pregnant woman to death. Further he saves *Sattu Bhosale*, a patriotic young boy from the clutches of devilish *Dada Patil* of *Bahaddurwadi*. He loots the priest of *Maalwadi* who was having a big godown of grains and saves people dying of drought, disease and hunger. Even he loots the wealth of British Government at *Bedasgaon*, protected by *Raghu Baman* and distributes against the common people. Moreover, *Fakira* surrenders himself to the tyrannical British Government for

the escape of the downtrodden. Fakira, the protagonist, represents the downtrodden community and its revolt. The prominent themes such as the poverty, hunger, exploitation and suffering show the pathetic life of the oppressed community. It shows how the downtrodden communities faced many problems in the colonial and post colonial era. Annabhau's Fakira breaks off the concept of concept of the traditional heroes who were victimized by the aristocratic society. Before Annabhau, the heroes of the downtrodden community were depicted as submissive, meek and of secondary rank in the capitalist society. He projected them more stronger than ever before. He pointed out that the downtrodden community is the major part of any developing society and not the thing of exploitation. Naturally, Annabhau's Fakira upholds the dignity of the common man, chastity of women and patriotic spirit amongst all. He regards the common man as the prime subject of study, and not any single caste, class, region or religion. He believes in the abolishment of suffering, pain and exploitation of the downtrodden. In fact, with the publication of Annabhau's *Fakira*, all discriminations based on caste, class and religion began to change radically. The protagonist, Fakira fights for the social change. He revolts for the equality amongst the poor and the rich. Fakira is assisted in his revolt by some of his devoted companions such as Isha, Kisha, Sattu Bgosale, Sadhu, Bali, Murari, Ishwara, Dhanya, Shiva, Chincharikar, Chiraji, Ghonchikar and others. Fakira says to himself:

We are the humans. Why this much injustice to us! We have to give our presence thrice and Patil has to notify it! If we have to go somewhere, we need to get written order from the Police Patil. He got the right to pass it or he can deny it. And even if, the Police Patil gives the written order, we need to show it to the Police Patil of the village we visit. And if we disobey it, there is the provision of three months of imprisonment or else...(p.176)¹

Aawadi: The Protest Against Honour Killing:

In *Aawadi*, Annabhau has explored the protest and revolt of a young and beautiful girl of upper-class community. She opposes the patriarchal society and the honour killing psychology of the upper class community. The present novel takes us beyond the boundaries of caste, class or religion of any society. Aawadi, a daughter of Tatyba Chaugule, is the central character in the novel. She is born and brought up in such an upper caste family which has nothing to do with the lower caste people and can do any harm to anybody for their honour and social status. Aawadi, a young girl of atheistic mind did not believe in caste or religious conflicts. She falls in love with a lower caste wrestler named

Aawadi and Dhanaji, gets Aawadi married to a diseased person named Uttam Patil of Borgaon. Aawadi, soon after the realization of her husband's epilepsy and domination of her mother in law, rebels the patriarchy and goes to stay with a lower caste dignified man Dhanaji. She gives birth to a beautiful male child of Dhanaji. Nagu, gets furious with Aawadi's stay with a lower caste Dhanaji and plans to kill her. Nagu, with his sister Sarja intrigues to kill Aawadi. It's at the festival of Gauri festival, Sarja, makes false promises to Aawadi and brings her back home. Nagu in the fit of anger kills Aawadi with an axe. Nagu and Sarja, for their crime; the murder of Aawadi get the imprisonment for fourteen and eight years respectively. Dhanaji, waits for Nagu for fourteen years to come out from the prison. Just after Nagu's release from the jail, Dhanaji kills him with the axe and takes revenge of the murder of his wife Aawadi.

Rebellious Aawadi speaks to Danaji of Ramoshi caste for her woman wish of liberty:

I want to be alive.

How?

Like You...

Sure?

Sure...(p.443)¹

The above dialogue between Aawadi and Dhanaji shows Annabhau's attempt and desire to destroy the caste barriers and honour killing psychology of the society. It deals with the ideal man-woman relationship of Utopian society. Aawadi sets out to revolt against traditional marriage system in India. She is such a great young girl who sacrifices herself for her true love for the lower caste young boy Dhanaji. Aawadi, in fact, serves as the bridge between the upper and lower caste system in India. She affirms again and again that a woman need not be a victim of honor killing. Thus, Aawadi, stands out for the quest of self-realization and self-assertion of women.

Conclusion:

Thus, the above discussion proves Annabhau as one of the prominent fictional writers in Marathi literature who for the first time in his novels introduced rebellious heroes and heroines from the downtrodden community. He uncovered injustice, exploitation and miseries of discriminative society. He emphasized social, economic, cultural and political exploitation of the downtrodden. His major characters such as Ranoji, Fakira, Sawala, Sattu Bhosale, Hindurao, Chitra, Sona, Aawadi show their protest against odds of discrimination. Due to such rebellious and humanistic approach, Annbhau becomes the major writer, lokshahir and philosopher amongst his contemporaries such as Haribhau Aapate, Shree M. Mate, V. S. Khandekar, N. S. Phadke, etc. He started

trend of focusing on rebellious people. His characters do not lead the life of the coward but live the life of the brave men and women. In fact, Annabhau's philosophical works reminds us the principles and teachings of the great philosophers and social reformers such as Karl Marx, Mahatma Gandhi, Maxim Gorky, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Mahatma Phule, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar etc. In Fact, Annabhau deeply shows his protest and rebel against the patriarchy, capitalism, colonialism and honor killing psychology of the discriminative Indian society.

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