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ISSN No. 2394-5990

इतिहासाचार्य वि. का. राजवाडे संशोधन मंडळ, धुळे
या संस्थेचे त्रैमासिक
॥ संशोधक ॥

पुरवणी अंक १ - डिसेंबर २०२२

● शके १९४४ ● वर्ष : ९० ● पुरवणी अंक : १

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कार्याध्यक्ष, इ.वि.का. राजवाडे संशोधन मंडळ, धुळे ४२४००१.

दूरध्वनी (०२५६२) २३३८४८, ९४०४५७७०२०

कार्यालयीन वेळ

सकाळी ९.३० ते १.००, सायंकाळी ४.३० ते ८.०० (रविवार सुटी)

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महाराष्ट्र राज्य साहित्य आणि संस्कृती मंडळाने या नियतकालिकेच्या प्रकाशनार्थ अनुदान दिले आहे. या
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Anna Bhau Sathe's Fakira: A Voice of Marginalized Society

Dr. Rautrao Shivkumar Bhimrao

P.G. & Research Department of English, Dayanand College of Arts, Latur

Abstract :

Anna Bhau Sathe is a prolific writer and Shahir of Maharashtra. Being a social reformer he is known as a Voice of Marginalized Society, who worked for poor oppressed dalits and marginalized people. He plays very significant role in the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement. He has inspired and influenced by the writing of Maxim Gorky, Karl Marx, Lenin and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. He imprinted his mark on socio political, cultural and world literature as a social reformer and writer. Despite of lack of formal education due to penury he penned 32 novels, 11 short stories, 15 ballads and 1 travelogue that reflects experiential world of depressed common people. Most of his works have been translated into Indian and foreign languages. Though born in marginalized community, his work appears as a phenomenon that offers new perspectives on various issues. His writings created a new consciousness that proved to be a significant factor in framing the contemporary Socio-political and cultural movement in Maharashtra. He sacrificed his entire life for society in general and workers in particular. Thus, his literary work remains a source of inspiration for humankind. The present research paper attempts to explore how Anna Bhau Sathe's Fakira is a Voice of Marginalized Society.

Keywords : Dalit, Marginalized and Marxism

Introduction :

"Forge ahead! Change this world with a big blow. This was what Bhimrao said. You are as strong as an elephant. Why are you then trapped in the morass of slavery? Shun lethargy, shake up your body, come out and pounce (on your enemy)."

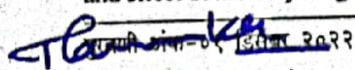
- Anna Bhau Sathe

In the Post-Independence literary phenomenon, Dalit Literature is mainly considered as a voice of marginalized society. The emergence of Dalit literature is mainly associated with the causes and effect of the very long struggle and oppression.

Dalit literature first found its voice in Marathi in the 1960s and 70s, and then soon appeared in other languages like Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada. Using autobiography as a literary genre, writers could share personal experiences of caste discrimination, making its existence undeniable for the middle classes. Dalit literature particularly fiction, autobiography and poetry has emerged as a vital modern literary force in India. Writers from outside of the mainstream and within the mainstream have written about Dalits, the life of marginalized society and their conditions. Many revolutionary writers, who fought against the caste system and recorded their experiences in their books, Jyotiba Phule, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Anna Bhau Sathe, Narayan Surve, Babaurao Bagul, Namdev Dhasal, Bandhu Madhav, Shankarao Kharat, Shrankumar Limbale, Narendra Jadav, Vasanta Moon, Daya Pawar, Kumud Pawde, Baby Kamble, Urmila Pawar, Shantabai Kamble etc., have written about social, political, & economic conditions of dalits and marginalized people in the poems, novels, dramas, autobiographies and short stories and through writing they assert the position of Dalits and marginalized in the society.

Dalit Literature :

The development of Dalit literature and awareness of caste oppression is slowly getting fire-power in all over India. As a result, Dalit literature is being written in all regions and languages to explore the voice of marginalized. Dalit literature is originated in Marathi language and evolved in Hindi, Kannada, Telugu, Punjabi, Gujarati and Tamil languages. The Consciousness of self-identity and self-respect stimulated in the dalit and marginalized society by Dr. B R Ambedkar. Anna Bhau Sathe has influenced by the Ambedkarite, Marxist philosophy and the writings of Maxim Gorky. In the literary world of Anna Bhau Sathe, the ideas of self-identity, self-respect, abuse, exploitation, humiliation, inequality and injustice have explored through various


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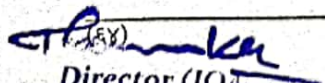
characters. The people, who lived and moved around him, worked hard, fought and loved, came alive in his writing. He depicted the life sketches of all those around him- of the loving, brave, honest, unafraid, hardworking and honest marginalized people from the dalaits and criminal tribes like the Mahar, Mang, Garudi, Kanjari, Wadar, Kaikadi, Bedar, Pardhi etc. His writings explore a new realization. The realization of the self-identity and self-respect in the dalits and marginalized people became very important and significant factor in framing the contemporary Socio-political and cultural movement in Maharashtra. Anna Bhau Sathe sacrificed his entire life for the marginalized society. Thus, he and his literary work remains a source of inspiration for humankind.

The scope and richness of this literature is brilliantly exemplified by novels like Fakira which is the landmark novel in the foundation of Dalit literature in India. Authors like Anna Bhau Sathe illustrate experiences of caste discrimination, untouchability, and Dalit subjugation. The undaunted and ceaseless battle of the protagonist Fakira for the collective welfare of his community forms the core of the narrative. He revolts against the rural orthodox caste system and the British Raj to save his village from utter starvation, humiliation and death. The rise of Dalit writings not only marks a new chapter for India's marginalized class but also it is voice for marginalized. According to Sharad Patil, a noted scholar of the Marx-Phule-Ambedkar schools of thought, "Fakira is the best novel by Anna Bhau Sathe. To show that the cactus-like boundary line between the colonies of Mahar-Mangs (untouchables) including Fakira, and Kulkarni-Patil (Savarnas) was that of the class system instead of caste system is the responsibility imposed on this communist Mang writer. During the time of Fakira, certainly, the caste system was much stronger than the class system in villages in Maharashtra. But, since it was imposed on the mind of Anna Bhau that the suffering of an untouchable peasant is equal to suffering of the touchable peasant in terms of its

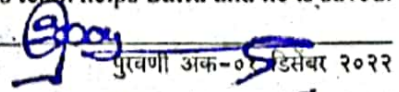
class, unsurprisingly, his talent was unable to trace the source of caste-class sufferings."

Fakira: A Voice of Marginalized Society :

Anna Bhau Sathe's award-winning novel Fakira not only depicts the consciousness of self-identity and self-respect but also explains importance of individuality, the value of forgiveness - a path towards much needed communal harmony in our times. Anna Bhau Sathe dedicates his novel Fakira to Dr B. R. Ambedkar. Fakira, the titular character depicts the reality of marginalized society and dalits, living on the margins, and being exploited and suppressed not only by British rulers but upper castes. Fakira depicts the story of Fakira, a man who is a Maang by caste and a perennial rebel. But he is compassionate. The novel begins his father's story. Daulati, Fakira's grandfather, is married to Rahibai. They have a son named Ranoji who is married to Radha. There is always a fight between two villages-Shivgaon and Vategaon-over which village will host the Jatra, traditional cultural practice. The Jatra consists of a competition where one village has to protect the Jogani meaning 'a small yellow color bowl' possession of which means a matter of great pride and an honor of hosting the Jatra 'a religious fest' in the village. The other village attempts to snatch it. The one who takes away that right is the winner of the competition. The village, which loses has to wait and cannot organize any more fairs. Ranoji wins this competition. He brings glory to his village. But Bapu Khot breaks the rules and murders Ranoji. He not only murders him but also severs his head from his body and also kills Ranoji's horse Gabrya just to show off his valour. Ranoji has two sons Fakira and Sahadev. Fakira cuts the hands of Bapu Khot and he lets them off with a punishment because he had beheaded his father. Satyaba is one of Fakira's best friends. He is from Kumaj. Satyaba's mother is Banabai. Satyaba kills Choughule for beating one lady belonging to the Mahar caste. Uma Choughule, son of Choughule, fights Sattu (Satyaba). In this fight, Fakira and his team helps Sattu and he is saved.


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There are many stories in which Fakira is shown as a hero for the people of Mang and Mahar communities. He never gets caught by his enemies. At last he surrenders to the British Army in order to save the people of Mang and Mahar communities in his village.

The book is written so meticulously that the whole scenario of that period seems to appear before our eyes. The minute details of timings, atmosphere and emotions of the people are depicted throughout the depiction of that time period. As you start reading the book, your curiosity increases. The whole life journey of Fakira is shown in the book. Fakira is like a symbol of valour, a person who is fearless and fights for real causes; he fights and questions the injustice happening to the Mang and Mahar communities. As Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar fought for all and against the injustice happening to them, similarly Fakira also fights for his community. That is why we can see due to the impact of such writings and speeches, many people started fighting against injustice. Fakira is not only a motivational and inspirational story, but also helps to build confidence and ignite fire inside the reader to fight against injustice. The situation in that time period was bad, but now the situation is totally different. Positive changes are taking place and the Mang and Mahar communities are scaling new peaks of development every day. (Vinay Damodar) According to Dr. Baliram Gaikwad, the novel also attempts to demonstrate the path towards the communal harmony and the strength of unity. How Vishnupant the upper caste, senior of the village supports the dalits and is closely associated with the feelings, and ups and down in the life of dalits. When British rulers had issued a regulation declaring Mang, Mahar, Ramoshi communities as criminals and imposing on them the regular attendance at the police station or to the village authority obligatorily, Vishnupant and Shankar Patil voice his abhorrence of it and question the new regulation. Fakira was defiantly against the law which declared the innocent Dalit community as criminal. It is a clear reflection

of the internal politics as well as the sheer bias and prejudice of the British and upper caste community in the villages towards Dalits. Fakira dares to challenge it. The magnitude of Fakira's character is also studied from various incidents depicted in the novel where Fakira risks his life to save life of Sattu and others. Sattu is also a brave Mang community leader who chopped an upper caste man Chaughule who was brutally bashing a pregnant Mahar woman and was not budging to any of the request made by the onlookers. As a result he had to leave his home since the police and the upper caste men were hunting for him with fire in eyes. Ever since, it becomes the mission of his life to counteract negative forces inwardly acting against dalits. Hence he becomes, the public- proclaimed- hero of dalits and he industriously brings to an end the dalit problem of torture and molestation.

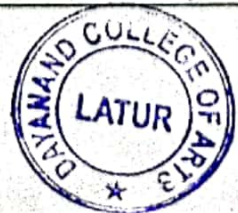
Conclusion :

Anna Bhau's writings are about the struggles and equalities of the marginalized sections of society. Annabhau had great regard for both Ambedkar and Marx. He wanted to fuse Ambedkarism and Marxism. Most of the Dalit writers have been ignoring Marxist literature. Through the character of Fakira who revolt against the capitalists and upperclass. Anna Bhau Sathe's Fakira is voice for the entire marginalized society.

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