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Satyashodhak Anna Bhau Sathe : A Humanist Philosopher

ATTESTED

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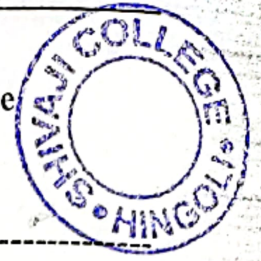
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Dalit Consciousness in the Writings of Anna Bhau Sathe**Dr. Kishor N. Ingole**

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**Abstract:**

Anna Bhau Sathe, whose real name was Tukaram, was born at Vategaon, district Sangli, in the family of humble farm laborers. Since he was born in a poor deprived family he had no access to formal education. He has written a large number of ballads, folk songs, lavnis, short stories, novels, travelogues, feature articles, book reviews and socio-political commentaries. Anna Bhau Sathe is a dominant literary figure in *Dalit* literature in Maharashtra. He is the founder figure of the most powerful *Dalit* novels and short stories in *Dalit* Literature. All of his writings are socially oriented, they are not only bring out the sufferings of men and women from the discriminated background but also brings out the positive force that sustaining them in their fight against the social and economic oppression. Thus, it is concluded that *Dalit* consciousness is the foremost and chief essence in the writings of Anna Bhau Sathe. After a close study in the writings of Anna Bhau Sathe, the researcher has found that he has written for the betterment of society, particularly for the *Dalits*, suppressed untouchables and all the sufferers exploited by the Society.

Keywords: *Dalit* Consciousness, writings

Introduction:

Anna Bhau Sathe, whose real name was Tukaram, was born at Vategaon, district Sangli, in the family of humble farm laborers. Since he was born in a poor deprived family he had no access to formal education. He thought himself to read and write when he was twenty. He also associated himself in Tamasha, the Marathi folk-theatre, as an actor and singer, and played on musical instruments with considerable. He took write around 1940. He has written a large number of ballads, folk songs, lavnis, short stories, novels, travelogue, feature articles, book reviews and socio-political commentaries. His works have widely translated into various Indian and foreign languages. He has some 75 books to his credit. He was one of the visionary writers who gave the first fully uninhabited expressions of the *Dalit* consciousness in his writings. His penchant for minute observation, deep compassion and understanding of life of the downtrodden and his irresistible gift for creating made his novel like *Fakira* and *Warnecha Wagh*, the remarkable creations in Marathi literature. The present research explores *Dalit* consciousness in the writings of Anna Bhau Sathe.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Bhavali'.

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Anna Bhau Sathe is a dominant literary figure in *Dalit* literature in Maharashtra. He is the founder figure of the most powerful *Dalit* novels and short stories in *Dalit* Literature. Anna Bhau clarifies his literary stand and says, "The writers who concern the society, society concerns them. I have a lofty dream that my nation will prosper, be happy, and be descent." (Gaikwad: 2013, p.1) The definition of *Dalit* literature consist mainly of the rejection of superstition, the varna system, inhumanity and unjust exploitation; a strong, protest against all the factors in the way of human welfare, as well as revolt against the caste and class based social structure. As Lai A. C. said in his opening address at the *Dalit* Solidarity Conference, Nagpur, "the word *Dalit* is a beautiful word, because it embraces the sufferings, frustrations, expectations and groaning of the entire cosmos." (Lai: 1995, p. XIII) It is true that *Dalit* consciousness is a kind of power of oppressed and exploited people in India which is given to them a freedom of speaking, writing and living. Concerning to *Dalit* consciousness Daya Pawar said, "*Dalit* consciousness is a revolutionary feeling which goes against middle class society. It is a system which makes sympathy about downtrodden people." (Muktibodh: 1994, p.29) According to him the prime concern of literature is human being. He made them at the centre place of literature. In the *Dalit* Sahitya Sammelan (*Dalit* Literary Meet), Anna Bhau, in his speech made clear about the base and centre of literature: "That the earth is not rested on the head of the mythical serpent, sheshnaag but on the palms of *Dalits* and workers." (Buwa: 2011, p.244) *Fakira*, the most famous of his novels, which was eulogized even by Jnyanpeeth Award winning novelist in Marathi namely V. S. Khandekar and which won the Maharashtra State Award for the best literary work in 1961, probably for the first time in Marathi literature. Through this novel, he shows noble qualities of the depressed life fighting, self-pride and courage to stand by the needy and the deserving through thick and thin. Due to Famine, fever, epidemics and hunger, the *Dalits* were dying due to lack of food to eat. Vishnupant Kulkarni of *Fakira*'s village asks to the *Dalits* to do anything but survive. Encouraged by advice and coupled with his own tenacity, *Fakira* loots godowns of grains and exchequers of the British and their henchmen and distributes them among the *Dalits*. As a result of *Fakira*'s deeds, the Indian-born police officer of the British namely Babarkhan tries his level best to bring *Fakira* to book. But *Fakira* absconds, takes refuge in jungles and frustrates Babarkhan's attempts to arrest him. But when his kith and kin are taken hostage and tortured by the British for him, *Fakira* surrenders and is later on hanged to death by the British. He dies, but leaves behind him an immortal and inspiring story which is at the heart of *Fakira*.

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Anna Bhau depicts the *Dalit* groups like that of Mangs, Cobblers, Nomads, traditional rural artist like Dancers, Singers in Tamasha (famous folk art in Maharashtra), Muralis (A female dedicated and supposed to be married to God Khandoba), Waghyas (A male dedicated to God Khandoba) and women in general. He also deals with those groups which are marginalized mostly due to economic reasons. Since they are poverty stricken, they are casteless because poverty itself is their caste. They are people like thieves and dacoits, liquor-traffickers, murderers, slum-dwellers, pickpockets, jailbirds, beggars, prostitutes, pimps, bastards and the like. In the view of B. S. Korde, "Anna Bhau Sathe also shows marginalization within marginalization in his writings." (Korde: 2001, p.83) The characters of Anna Bhau Sathe are so alive that the rattle of sword of *Fakira* and the sound of dancing bells of *Viajanta* dwell in the memory of readers forever. All of his writings are socially oriented, they are not only bring out the sufferings of men and women from the discriminated background but also brings out the positive force that sustaining them in their fight against the social and economic oppression. His writing depends on the junction of peoples' literature and peoples' art. They are prestigious.

Anna Bhau is the writer of those people who are captivated in life of sorrow the autobiography of pointed and sharp people, the people of exploitation who are devastated those who have experience of movements, events, customs and belief he was the person who advocates the side of people who lost justice and values. As a man he struggled for the people to live as a man and let live as a man to him. He wrote literature not for time pass and entertainment but he has maintained writing of excellent level by thinking untouchable life, new literary awareness and artistic value. Anna Bhau Sathe says that, "The Life that I live, and living also and whatever is experienced is written by me." (Shejule: 2016, p.19) He writes about the real people of flesh and blood who are suffering from the man made world. It is argued that his writings are propagandist but it is true that no literature is impartial at all. The other argument is that he was the victim of communist philosophy and talks only about the class-oriented philosophy. The argument seems untrue because his protagonists are from the suppressed class including everyone. As the influence of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, his poem "*Take a hammer to change the world*" here the hammer is none other than Dr. Ambedkar.

Take a hammer to change the world....

So saying went Bhimrao

Why the elephant is struck sitting

In the mud of slavery?

Shake your body and come out,

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Take a leap to the forefront!
 The rich have exploited us without end
 The priests have tortured us
 As if had eaten jewels
 And thieves had become great
 Sitting on the chariot of unity
 Let us go forward
 To break the chains of class and caste
 Hold to the name of Bhim (Patchala: 2016, p.4)

Anna Bhau Sathe, portrays Dr. Ambedkar as hammer to change this world with ups and downs, and to liberate ourselves, let revolt from our under privilege stage, saying the name Bhim means Dr. Ambedkar. Anna Bhau Sathe's famous novel *Fakira*, won Maharashtra state Award, and he dedicated this award to Dr. Ambedkar's warring pen, because he got inspired by Dr. Ambedkar's ideology as like any other *Dalit* writer. Anna Bhau's literature spreads universal and literary values of humanity. Comrade Sharad Patil regards him *Jatyantak Sahityik*, i.e. caste system demolishing writer. (Patil: 2009, p. 5-12) Anna Bhau Sathe has been stated that, in this world the reality is unimaginably stranger than fiction. And his story '*Smashanatil Sona*' (Gold in the Graveyard) is the strong proof of this statement. The story shows the worst plight of the poor, the uneducated and the unemployed millions of our country. The central character of the story, namely Bhima earns his and his family's livelihood by digging out buried corpses, by sifting the ashes of and also by breaking the mortal remains of the buried bodies in an attempt to find out the trinkets of gold that are supposed to be burnt with the dead bodies mainly of the Hindus.

One night, while trying to approach the buried corpse, he is attacked by about a dozen wolves. A fight ensues between him and the wolves for the possession of the buried body. The wolves tear out lumps of flesh from his body and when after waging such a fierce fight with the wolves and shooting them away, he approaches the corpse, in a bid to get gold out of the corpse's mouth, his fingers of the hand get caught in the most tightly locked up jaw of the corpse on the one hand and he is reattacked by the wolves on the other. He fights against the wolves with one hand and tries to free fingers of the other while the wolves tear flesh from his body in the total dark of the night. Bhima's misery does not stop here. In fact, it increases when, in a bid to free his fingers of the caught up hand which incapacitates him for any effective manual work. In the light of these horrendous experiences, Anna Bhau seems to be asking: can any fiction be stranger this reality?

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 Assistant Professor



In Anna Bhau's writing, he has presented the *Dalit* women with strong, bold, confident, self-respecting and pleasant personalities. He has given equal and respectful status to women. He gives unique chastity of a woman. He looked at women as one of the pure, chaste and attractive creatures. Sathé has written few novels on the women's problems and the novels have women protagonist e.g. *Chitra*, *Vaijanta*, *Chandan*, *Chikhlatil Kamal*, *Phulphakhru*, *Aavadi*, *Ratna*. All these novels have women protagonists. *Dalit* writers have presented a different mode of representation of the *Dalit* consciousness, so as to from multiple forms of rebellion against inhumanity. The sensibility of the *Dalit* writer is that they write like a *Dalit* he must reject all the dominant models to judge this kind of literature. Indeed an intention of reaching such literature must be like the *Dalits*. In a nutshell, *Dalit* writing presents itself as a critique of non-humanity and tries to make the world on the vision of equality. In the writings of Anna Bhau Sathé, he has been presented the painful and realistic picture of the so-called Indian society on the best possible scale. He has been played quite significant role in sensitizing the nation on the issue of *Dalit* consciousness.

Conclusion:

Thus, it is concluded that *Dalit* consciousness is the foremost and chief essence in the writings of Anna Bhau Sathé. After a close study in the writings of Anna Bhau Sathé, the researcher has found that he has written for the betterment of society, particularly for the *Dalits*, suppressed untouchables and all the sufferers exploited by the Society.

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I would like to congratulate the editorial team for publishing this Reference Book that comprises about 200 critical inquiries on Annabhau Sathé's writing from across India. That's the honor the academia can solidify to such a legendary Dalit writer who was a social reformer, folk poet, and writer from Maharashtra, India. It's a good reminder to look on the numerous sides of the writer whose over a dozen collections of short stories have been translated into many Indian and other non-Indian languages. The idea of spreading the part of a larger concept of firming up philosophical, theoretical and practical foundations of the ideas of Anna Bahu Sathé literature to larger readers and community of critics inside and outside India is praiseworthy panacea. Undoubtedly, it is the most indispensable motivation for the whole activity in the form of this conference. I, a non-Indian reader, have read some of his stories and I have found delight in them. Thank you very much for sharing with me the gift that you have toiled to collect and refine. I trust the journal will soon be the best repertoires.



With the Warmest Regards
Dr. Eak Prasad Duwadi
Kathmandu University, Nepal

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