

SUFFERINGS OF DOWNTRODDEN IN THE SHORT-STORIES OF ANNA BHAU SATHE

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Abstract:

AnnaBhauSathe is one of the greatest Dalit social reformers and writers who through his writings portrayed Dalit life in very apt manner. This paper is an attempt to bring forth the reflection of struggle in the life of Dalit/Downtrodden in the short-stories of AnnaBhauSathe.

In the modern era, Dalit literature received its first impetus with the advent of leaders like Mahatma Phule and Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar in Maharashtra, who brought forth the issues of Dalits through their works and writings. This started a new trend in Dalit writing and inspired many Dalits to come forth with writings in Marathi, Hindi, Tamil and Punjabi.

The writers who contributed to Dalit literature are AnnaBhauSathe, ShankarraoKharat, BaburaoBagul, DayaPawar, WamanNimbalkar, NamdevDhasal, Arjun Dangle, YogirajWaghmare, ManoharJilthe, P. I. Sonkamble, YashwantManohar, KeshavMeshram etc. all these writers get inspiration from Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar.

AnnaBhauSathe, the versatile genius, wrote 35 novels and 15 collection of short-stories. His short-stories have been translated into many Indian and as many as 27 non-Indian languages. Besides novels and short-stories, Sathe wrote a play, a travelogue on Russia, 12 screen plays and 10 ballads/powade. Sathe wrote directly from his experiences in life and his novels and short-stories celebrate the fighting spirit in their characters who work against all odds of life.

AnnaBhauSathe through his characters portrayed the struggle in the life of downtrodden. In the story *Bandwala* the main character Tatyamang stands against injustice. Inamdar had grabbed eighty bighe of land of an innocent Mang in exchange of a very paltry amount. His grandson Tatyia, in an attempt to free it from the clutches of the Inamdars is sent to jail twice under the fake charge of attempting to beat and kill Inamdar. When all humble and legal ways of getting the land back from Inamdar seem to be useless, at last, Tatyia turns a rebel.

The story *Ramoshire* reflects how in a quarrel between two arrogant feudal lords the lives of the poor, honest, innocent people are unnecessarily crushed, how government machinery has been corrupted and how this plight forces a common man to take law into his hands. Here, Yadu Ramoshi, an honest protector of village seeks revenge of feudal lord Tatyadongre, killer of Yadu's son- Khandu. After Khandu's murder Tatyadongre absconds, Tatyadongre's relatives attempt to grease the palms of law and order and upon hearing all this Yadu's faith in law and order department comes to an end and then he himself kills the Tatyadongre in jungle.

The short-story *Barbadya Kanjari* portrays the nomadic uneducated, poverty-stricken community namely Kanjari, a community living in hutments in slum areas of Bombay. It shows the worst conditions and inhuman practices that prevail in this community such as selling a daughter child, imposing ostracization on one who breaks the rule of the society. The story *Kombdi Chor* shows how poverty compels a person to resort to stealing and that unless poverty and hunger are alleviated, stealing, deception and crimes will not stop. AnnaBhau comments that Indian Independence failed to alleviate these social evils.

AnnaBhau had shown that, at times, reality is unimaginably stranger than fiction. His story *Smashanatil Sona (Gold in Graveyard)* puts forward this fact. It depicts the worst plight of the poor, the uneducated and unemployed of this country. It depicts how unemployment can force a man to live even by digging out buried corpses, by breaking the mortal remains of the buried bodies in an attempt to find out trinkets of gold that are supposed to be buried with the dead bodies. The main character in the story, Bhima, earns his livelihood by selling those trinkets on dead bodies, as the query in which he was employed was suddenly closed down. AnnaBhau has narrated the incident of one night, when trying to approach a buried corpse Bhima was attacked by around a dozen wolves. He fights with wolves to get possession of the corpse. After a fierce fight with wolves Bhima approaches the corpse to get gold out of corpse's mouth. His fingers of a hand get caught up in the most tightly locked up jaw of the corpse. At the same time he is reattacked by wolves. He fights against wolves with one hand and tries to free fingers of the other while the wolves are tearing the flesh from his body. In an attempt to free his fingers from the mouth of the corpse, he has to lose his fingers as they get cut down, which incapacitates him from

any effective manual work. Thus AnnaBhauSathe depicted real struggle in the life of contemporary downtrodden people.

Conclusion-

AnnaBhau's short-stories depict struggle in the life of Dalit. It gives very minute and apt picture of downtrodden through the character of Tatya, Kanjari, Sultan, Bhima and many more. All these people in attempt to quench the hunger of their bellies are ready to take any risk in their life. Tatya in *Bandawala* turns a rebel when all humble and legal ways of getting the land back from the theInamdar seems to be useless. After vanishing faith in law and order, YaduRamoshi kills the Tatya in the story *Ramoshi*. Bhima in *SmashanatilSona* fights with wolves to get possession of the buried body and finally get cut his fingers as they get caught up in the most tightly locked up jaw of the corpse. One of the noted Marathi writers namely Acharya P. K. Atre eulogized AnnaBhau's stories as follows-

“ These stories are the stories of those who fight for living... The blood that flows through the veins of them all is of a fighter type. Each one of them wants to live honourably. Against offensive forces they apply their full strength with a view to be victorious... Their chests are always ready to receive strokes... Through all these stories Maharashtrian temperament is evident... And Anna Bhau has portrayed all this in equally strong, powerful language and style.”

Thus, Anna Bhau had succeeded in creating alive picture of the plight of contemporary lower castes.

References –

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