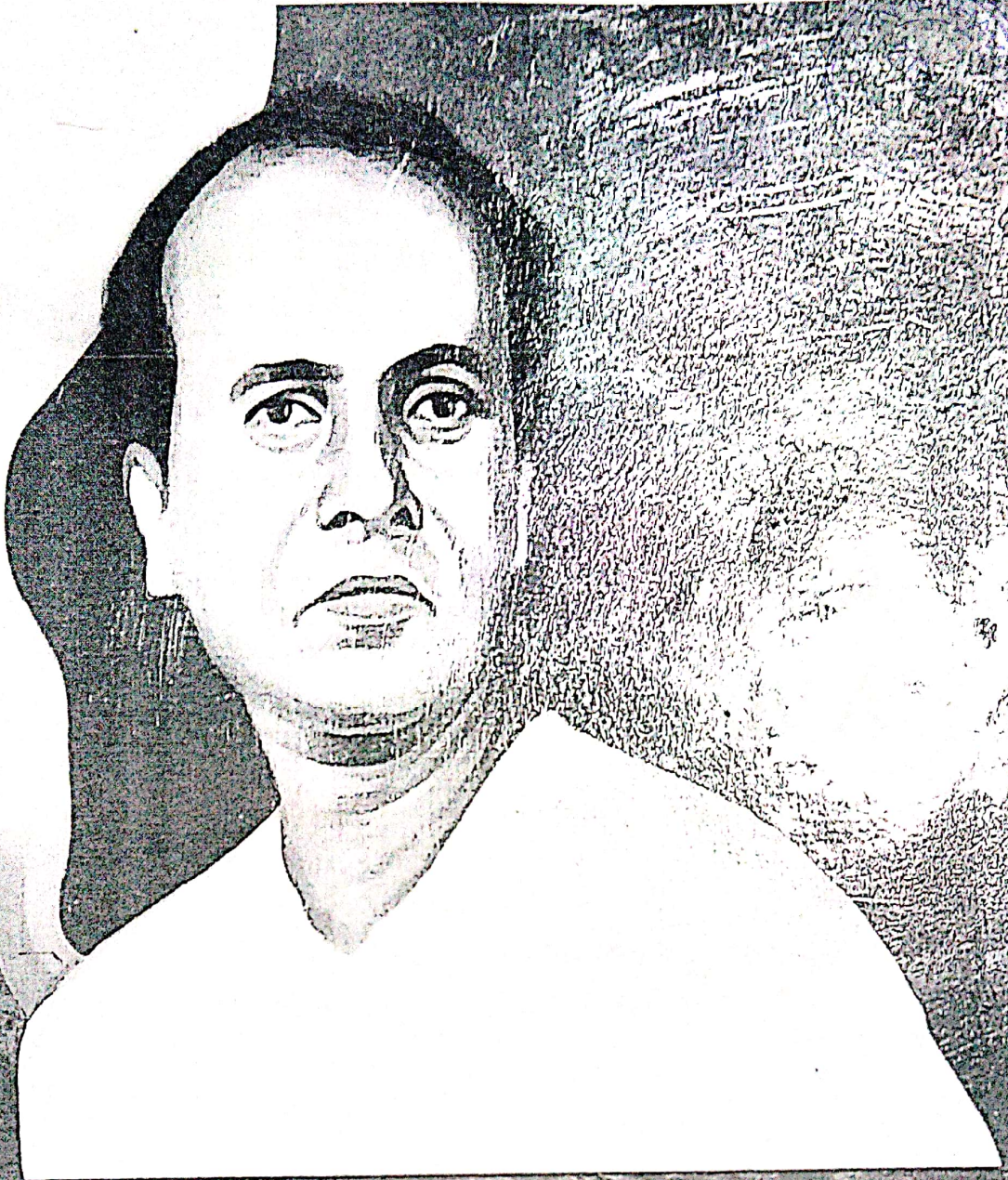


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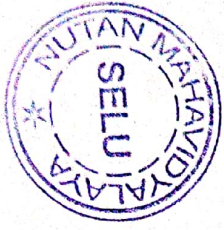
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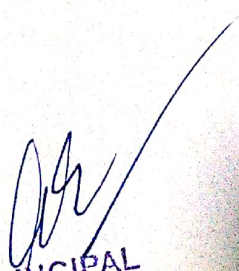
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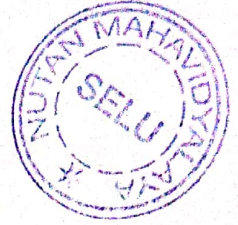
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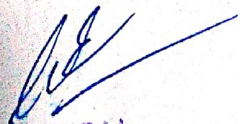


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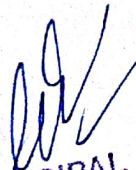
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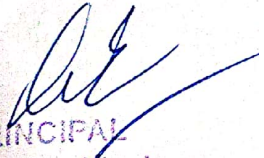


From Editor's Desk

It gives us immense pleasure to hand over the book titled, "ANNA BHAUS ATHE A Voice for Voiceless" to the readers. Anna Bhau Sathe dedicated his life and work to uplift the oppressed and marginalised classes. He raised voice against injustice with the help of street protests for higher wages and dignity of labour. He used his writing as an effective tool to educate oppressed and marginalised community. This book definitely will inspire readers to raise their voices for voiceless communities.

I express my sincere thanks to Mr. Ramchandra Madhavrao Adawale, the Secretary, Ujwal Shikhan Sanstha, Kandiwali (East) Mumbai, Principal, Dr. S. H. Gone, Ujwal Gramin Mahavidyalaya, Ghonsi, my colleagues Dr. D. M. More, Dr. V. S. Londhe, Dr. D.S. Kendre, Dr. S. B. Tondarkar, Dr. K. P. Waghmare, Dr. S. S. Uppe, Dr. P. K. Morakhande, Dr. N. B. More, Dr. S. S. Gaikwad, Dr. S. S. Dawale, Dr. D. R. Munde, Dr. D.M. Gudewar and Dr. P. B. Gone for their constant support and encouragement to complete this work. I am thankful to the Librarian V. S Motherao who assists me and makes available library facilities for this book. Non-Teaching staff of my institution including Mr. S.N. Waghmare, Mr. S.S. Indrale, Mr. B.V. Ulfe, Mr. S.D. Biradar, Mr. D.H. Patil, Mr. B. S. Banduke, and K. S. Tidke for their moral support.

Last but not least, I am thankful to the editors, Dr. Shrikant Jitendra Jadhav and Ms. Aishwarya Vasantryao


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Sanap for their devoted contribution for this book. Had I been not supported for this book, I would not have dared to publish this book.

It gives immense pleasure to admit that no book is available on the central theme that is "Anna Bhau Sathe A Voice for Voiceless". All chapters of the book are connected to the central theme of the book. I responsibly admit that the present book will be very useful for the faculty members, research scholars and students.

Thank You!

EDITORS

Dr. Sachin Shesherao Ghuge

Dr. Shrikant Jitendra Jadhav

Ms. Aishwarya Vasanttrao Sanap

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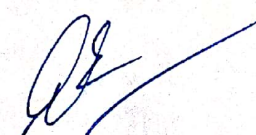

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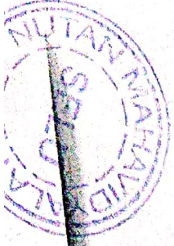


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CHAPTER-17

“Fakira: Anna Bhau Sathe’s Masterpiece in Dalit Literature”

-Dr. Nirmala S. Padmavat*

Abstract

The proverb ‘The adage that life may be short, but it should be meaningful’ fits perfectly with Anna Bhau Sathe. Anna Bhau Sathe born on August 1, 1920 at Wategaon in Sangli District of Maharashtra. He was alive only for 48 years but his work made him alive for lifetime. His short life was very struggling but he made is creative. At the age of ten, he joined the drama troupes. He Born in a village but the circumstances brought him to Mumbai where he learned to read and write by looking at film posters and sign boards on the roadside. Later, he formed his own drama troupe and joined labour movements too. He took part in Maharashtra construction movement along with this, he composed 35 novels, 13 story collections, 14 folk plays, 3 plays, a travelogue, dozens of pobades, folk songs and a travelogue in Marathi. His work ‘Majha Rasiyacha Pravas’


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has the distinction of being the first travelogue of Dalit literature which is rightly viewed by Jamdhade, Dipak Shivaji (June 2014) as Anna Bhau, 'Sathe was a social reformer, folk poet, and writer from Maharashtra, India.' In those days, he was more famous in Russia than in India. Many of his works had been translated into Russian. By 1998, seven of his novels had been made into films. He is perhaps the only Dalit writer whose works have been translated into 27 foreign languages. The credit for starting the Dalit Sahitya Sammelan also goes to him. In the first event of Dalit Sahitya Sammelan in 1958, he had said - 'The earth rests not surviving on the Sheshnag (As per Indian Mythology) but it is alive due to hardworking of the Dalits and downtrodden working class.' Most of his work is based on the theme of struggling of these downtrodden group of society. 'Fakira' is the most famous novel of Anna Bhau Sathe based on the same theme which was composed 1959 and in 1961, it was awarded with the biggest award of the Government of Maharashtra. Since its publication, it has gone through two dozen editions. In this novel, both Dr. Ambedkar's social justice and Marx's class-struggle have been presented in such a way that they seem complementary to each other. The current work aims to study on the theme and representation of struggling of these downtrodden group of Indian former society with special reference to his famous novel "Fakira"

Introduction: 'Fakira' written by Anna Bhau Sathe is considered as the masterpiece and to be his best novel. It is historical and contemporary novel. Through this novel 'Fakira', Anna Bhau Sathe is seen sowing high values such as social integration, culture, national religion, nation, political system, love. In the words of Paul, S. K. (2007) 'Sathe was a Dalit born into the untouchable community, and his upbringing and identity were central to his writing and political activism.'² Along with this, 'Fakira' is a well-documented work with full of social and political references.

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spirit as it also teaches the values of inferior life, tolerance, militancy, national duty of the Dalits. The plot of this novel is given below.

Plot of 'Fakira'

The plot of the novel is mainly spread between two villages i.e. Shigaon and Wategaon. The story starts from Shigaon. In this village annually 'Jogini' Jatra (travel) is taken out as a part of ritual. The whole village participates in that festival. Jogini means brass bowl, which is considered to be the symbol of Gramdevi. Capturing Jogini means having Gramdevi on his side. It is a matter of honour and prestige for the whole village. The people of Shigaon are happy. Because Jogini is in their possession. They are busy preparing for the Jatra. On the other side, Shankarrao Patil from neighbouring village Wategaon wants Jogini to come to his village. So that his and Wategaon's reputation gets boosted. He is upset thinking that there is not a single fighter in the village who can bring Jogini to Wategaon by fighting with the people of Shigaon. One day he tells his wish to Ranoji who belongs from the Schedule Caste Maang Ranoji is stronger, nimble and more daring than Kathkathi. He is impressed by Patil's words. He is determined to bring Jogini to Wategaon.

Bringing Jogini from Shigaon is like winning a war with the entire village. Jogini protects the village. On the day of Jatra, the whole village is armed and alert. If caught within the limits of the village, it is not good. The villagers are immediately beheaded. Thinking that even if he dies while bringing Jogini, he will be a part of fame - Ranoji leaves for Shigaon without telling anyone. There he meets his friend Bhairu. He asks Bhairu to go to Wategaon and convey the message to Shankar Patil and Vishnupant that both should be ready to welcome Jogini at the village border. The Jatra was at its peak in Shigaon. Getting an opportunity, Ranoji pounces on Jogini.

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After killing the most powerful man in Shigaon, he takes possession of Jogini. Then taking advantage of the darkness of the night, rides away from there on a horse. The villagers follow him. Running the horse, Ranoji crosses the boundary limits of Shigaon and enters their boundary of Wategaon. According to the rules, now there is not in any danger. The people of Shigaon should go back. But regardless of the rules, the people of Shigaon chase Ranoji. Eventually they kill Ranoji and his trusted horse 'Gabaria'.

Here, the plot changes. The story turns around and reaches Mangbada in Wategaon. The Colony of people suffering from poverty, suffering from caste discrimination, sitting close to each other, they used to narrate their stories of their poverty, their slums like their life. Due to the fear of contagion, the villagers are afraid to even set foot in it. But after Ranoji's sacrifice, the situation changes completely. Ranoji sacrifices his life to bring Jogini to the village. He has increased the prestige of the whole village, that is why he is discussed in the whole village. Everyone's heart is full of respect for Ranoji. Everyone knows that the people of Shigaon killed Ranoji by deceit. They are eager to avenge Ranoji's death. Efforts are also being made to prevent the tension between the two villages from turning into bloodshed. Eventually, the matter is settled on the condition that the people of Shigaon apologize and return Ranoba's head. Jogini comes under the control of Wategaon. Ranoji is cremated with full respect.

Fakira is the elder son of Ranoji. He was as powerful as his father was. Adept in fighting skills. He is very brave, fast and agile. Always forward to help people. After his father, he becomes the leader of Mangbada. Ten years later, some youths of Shigaon dare to bring Jogini back. Fakira gets a clue of their intentions. He covers a front to protect Jogini. He successfully fights the Shigaon fighter. Fakira overpowers him before he can go outside the limits of Wategaon. If he wanted, he would have beheaded the

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Fakira Anna Bhan Sathe's Mentorship in Daff ...
who was caught. This was the rule. But he doesn't do that.
As a punishment, only the wheat is cut.

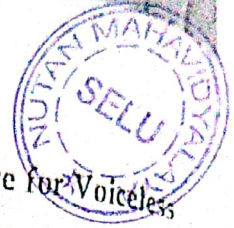
Fakira' and Daff Consciousness: Through 'Fakira' we can understand the structure of Indian villages even to eight decades ago. When the British government puts the Mang caste under the category of criminal castes, the upper castes of the village Vishnupant and Shankar Patil raise their voice against it. The protagonist Fakir is also against the new ordinance. His anger is now played by many. Some sub-stories also run in the novel. Once a high caste chaugule (village level government employee) was beating a Mahar woman. People tried to stop him, but he didn't agree. Chowgule has a fight with him. Angry Sattu kills him.

Postage Stamps Issued by the Government of India in Commemoration of Anna Bhan Sathe

After this incident, police and upper caste people fall behind him. Sattu has to leave home. Aske bad he becomes a rebel. Warrior of class struggle. He burns the books and accounts of feudal lords and usurers. Punishes those who oppress Dalits. The government announces a bounty on his head. Once he gets badly caught between the police and the upper caste assailants. People convey this news to Fakira. Fakira helps Sattu and he gets him out safely from the clutches of his enemies.

The story-telling of the novel is of that time when famines and epidemics were frequent which had a worst impact on the poor and underprivileged Dalit slums. That year famine struck and the people of Mangbada started dying of hunger. Fakira complained to Shankar Patil and Vishnupant. He pleaded for help from the government. But no one came to relieve them. Saving people from hunger was a big challenge for Fakira. Let's find out that even in Akal or Vibhishika, the food stores of the rich are full. Fakira attacked him with his companions. After a deadly encounter, Fakira and his companions died. He distributed


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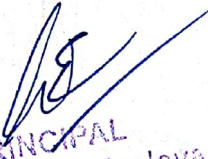


the looted grains equally among the hungry Dalit families. After that, the police came to the village. Shankar Patil and Vishnupant take the side of Fakira. It is said that hundreds of thousands of people have been saved. The police return. After few days, Vishnupant and Shankarao Patil, who sympathized with Dalits, were removed from their posts.

There is no sympathy for the poor in the heart of New Patil. Meantime, police took attendance law. According to him, Every Mang was ordered to go to Patil's house and attend. In the period of famine, the time required to prepare food was wasted in attending it. Anger started spreading there. Standing like a criminal in Patil's court was extremely humiliating for the Fakira. The upper castes were doing arbitrariness under the guise of government laws. Mangbada's condition started to deteriorate day-by-day. One day Patil insulted Fakira too. To convey the message that excess of injustice breeds rebellion—Fakira plans to loot the government treasury. He went to Raghunath Brahmin of the treasury and asked him to hand over the key to the treasury. There was an attack on the village. The upper caste people reached Khajanchi as helpers in which after the fight of whole night, Fakira got success in this fight. He distributed the looted treasure among the people. He also gave a share to the blacksmith whom he forced to cut the treasure chest. Looting the government treasury was like challenging the government. Fakira's reply for this was, "The death is ultimate truth of life, which conveys that on any day, he has to die, then why not die like a great fighter and King of the forest join."

Fakira: A Leader of The Masses

The qualities that Dhiroddatta heroes used to have in the olden times, those all qualities are found in the character of Fakira. Like his father, he is also fearless and brave with having pride in the sword gifted by Shivaji to the ancestors.


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Fakira: Anna Bhau Sathe's Masterpiece in Dalit . . .

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He is ready to help others during the crisis. Some qualities take Fakira even further than Dhiroctatta heroes as looting the government treasury during the crisis and distributing it equally amongst the poor. In the language of philosophers, this is called 'Distributive Justice'. The message of the novel is that when the state fails in its duty; Or if the forces that are close to power descend on arbitrariness, then class struggle becomes necessary. Negligence towards civic problems gives rise to mass heroes like Sattu and Fakira.

Conclusion

Thus, Anna Bhau Sathe Dreamed dream for the day when this country will be happy and prosperous, that equality should prevail here, that this land of Maharashtra should become a paradise. The ideological foundation of Anna Bhau's literature is an eternally flowing fountain of the glorious tradition of unbroken India which enhances the sense of Indianness and nationalism. The past eight decades have proved that Anna Bhau's classics and its usefulness and relevance writing which are increasing day by day, despite the constant changes in established literary thought parameters and critical values which is rightly stated by Anna Bhau. as "We want pure materials like the Ganges, we want Mangalya," Thus, Bhau's literature has to be said to be an invention which arranged the then Indian society in a global manner. In the wake of the violence that erupted in different states of India, Anna's literature contains the sacred thoughts of all Indians embracing the path of peace and condemning violence. The novel Fakira has a confluence of two such generations in which one generation had lived the freedom struggle, the other had regained consciousness in the atmosphere of freedom. It is notable that the circumstances in which Anna Bhau Sathe wrote his prolific writing while living his life, the heroes of Dalit Panthers' had also lived in the same circumstances. He founded the Dalit Panthers in 1972, almost 12 years


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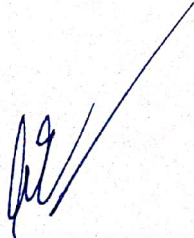
after the publication of 'Fakira'. The establishment of 'Dalit Panthers' and the character of 'Fakira' both are the product of frustration arising from their time and society. It is due to this belief that when the state and the society were neglecting even in the protection of minor rights, violent protest becomes necessary.

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