



WOMEN IN S L BHYRAPPA'S NOVEL 'THE UPROOTED'

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ABSTRACT :

The novel form as a literary genre is new to the Indian provincial writing. The novelists were made to study the roots of the culture and the evaluation of the historical traditions and the philosophic paradigms which were kept in store at the intellectual level. S L Bhyrappa is a well-known writer and novelist. He started writing novels during navya period, but he stands far away from Navya. Bhyrappa is not only an intellectual writer but also a conscious thinker.

The degree of freedom and responsibility given to women give the idea of the nature of the society to which they belong. Every culture characterizes men and women in its own unique fashion. Yet the common images of women as a beloved, wife, mother, daughter and etc appear almost in all literature. Bhyrappa as a conscious thinker tries to say something more about women.

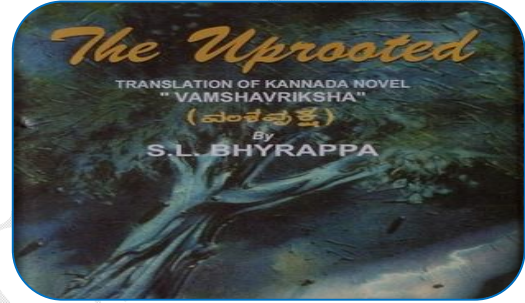
His novel *The Uprooted* is an example that illustrates this point of view. The role of woman is identified both in surviving the conventions and in uprooting the Vedic practices.

KEYWORDS : literary genre , historical traditions , philosophic paradigms.

INTRODUCTION

A novel was constructed not only as a realistic representation of life but as an artistic design which incorporates the social, historical, philosophical, the cultural and the political sources of the society. Kannada novel as an artistic design of representing the social, history of the people with its pleasures and pains. The writers like Masti Venkatesh Ayyangar, Tarasu, Galaganath, Basavaraj Kattimani and a host of early writers experimented with the novel in order to bring to it a literary flavor, especially for the urban middle class. The 1960's and 70's in Kannada novel writing were crucial years the writers had a challenge to sustain the conventional structure of society.

S L Bhyrappa in his novels makes use of his versatile ability through which he represents the different layers of a nation or a society. In addition to the historical and cultural background Bhyrappa views the basic relationship between man and woman in the context of an individual aspiration and the established moral and conventional canons which are approved by the religion. In this context Bhyrappa has been constructing her not only as a source of conflict but also as an individual experiencing the conflict. In all his novels woman therefore is presented as a biological structure and as a product of nature. Bhyrappa creates the character of the woman as the custodian of the conventional moral principles. He also introduces the masculine invasion on the woman which can enable her to rethink and to violate the moral boundaries determined by the conventions. Hence it is relevant to



study her not only as an Avant-garde individual but also as individual who lives in the conventional security.

His novel *The Uprooted* is an example that illustrates this point of view. The role of woman is identified both in surviving the conventions and in uprooting the Vedic practices. Woman therefore is the body that represents the natural urge for the creation. She can also be the paradigm who can control the natural drives for constructing the harmony not only in the individual self but also in the social structure.

The whole story goes around two families one is the family of ShrinivasShrothri at Nanjanagudu and another the family of Sadashiv Rao at Mysore. Shrothri has a wife Bhagirathamma, who is a paradigm of Vedic practice and a metaphor of the women would in a family construct. She is accompanied with Lakshmi, a widow but who takes her a new way of life to live in the house of ShrinivasShrothri. They had a son by name Nanjunda, who was married but who died by drowning himself in the swirl of the river Kabini. His wife in the novel is a protagonist. She is a widow but takes up a new role of being a wife of a new man. Kathyayani is a woman who enacts the role of a widow, of a daughter-in-law, of a mother and later of a new wife to a new man. Her education takes her to go beyond the boundaries of convention to discover a new space for her future. The philosophy of the transition is metaphorical said through the creation of the Kathyayani's character, moreover, she becomes an emotional link between the two families.

There is another story of a family consisting of only the minimum members. It is the intellectual family at Mysore Sadashiv Rao has a wife Nagalakshmi who is not highly educated but is shown as a woman given the responsibilities of husband and son along with the management of the house. She too is young in her 20's. she knows how to care the husband. Sadashiv Rao is shown as an historian and he has taken a worldwide acclaim in the academic world as a new and young historiographer. He has a brother Raja Rao who is also a foreign degree holder and who is employed as a lecturer in the same college at Mysore, where his brother Sadashiv Rao was working as the professor of history. There is another character who is academically related in the initial stage but who later enters into the intrinsic marital relationship with Sadashiv Rao. Karunaratne is a scholar who has come to Mysore for her research degree and who works on the cultural history of Cilone concentrating only on the Buddhist areas.

A woman could be an enthusiasm, a help and a companion for a man's life. Dr. Rao, who had a larger purpose of reconstructing the cultural history of primordial India. Karunaratne was able to give the basic concepts of the research in the first volume. Ratne contributed equal labor in the completion of his work. She was also able to work on her topic and she was able to complete it within the period stipulated. She owed gratitude to Dr. Rao both of them were mutually helpful. Their relation turned into an inseparable bondage that one could never work without the help of the other. He felt that without Karunaratne, he could not complete his project. Moreover, he could also lose his hope, feeling empty of his own inner being. He was pragmatic in such a practical re-orientation of his mind he compared his wife Nagalakshmi with Karunaratne. She was in need for the basic facilities but, he had an intellectual project. He thought of any other student would come as a help, at the department but none of them was able to work with him with the same insight. Many a time he thought of marrying Karunaratne. He thought to live with both wives, one for biological interest and another for intellectualism. He did not think that Karunaratne could also feel satisfying her physical urges coming into the social bondage of marriage. In fact, she had promised Dr. Rao that she could be a wife only for satisfying intellectual and academic needs. Bhyrappa portrays the character of Karunaratne, though belonging into another nationality and another culture, as an obedient wife of Sadashiv Rao. But woman is a woman. She is made to feel happy in the success of Dr. Rao whose name is popularized across the boundaries. She could have worked for her name and fame. But she subsided her identity. A woman is shown as supportive character not a main character.

Bhyrappa here brings the contrast between the woman characters Bhagirathamma and Nagalakshamma. Bhagirathamma was not so highly learned. She was not physically attractive. Bhagirathamma was ready to sacrifice all her individual desires voluntarily accepting ascetic

life for the sake of her husband. She wanted him to have another woman for his physical needs. Ultimately Bhagirathamma emerges as an ideal woman who has lived her life being adherent to the moral laws of the society and also to cross the boundary of the social morality for the sake of her husband's satisfaction. Though Shrothri had rejected all the extra marital arrangement. He became a rationalist controlling his natural appetites.

Nagalakshmi could have been led the same life. She was not ready to sacrifice her domestic privileges for the sake of her husband's needs she could not help in his academic works. Karunaratne could be a greater help. As an ardent and obedient wife of Sadashiv Rao could have followed the orthodox constructs to sacrifice her personal and individual prejudices. She could have open mindedly accepted it just as Bhagirathamma accepted in her broad thinking an alternative woman for the physical satisfactions. Moreover, Nagalakshmi was assured that there was no question of sharing the body that Ratne could be for an intellectual need, which she could not tolerate. She continued her self to the kitchen, cooking the food and serving her son and Raja Rao she thought of disassociating herself from the domestic burden caring the none in the surroundings only caring her own interest. She did not sacrifice but in her depression retired into the seclusion. It was the loss of human feelings which aspired for the collective relationships. She tries to discover her own identity only in the mechanical writing of Ram's name as if it was her devotion to Rama.

There is a parallel story of the nature in the relationship between Raja Rao and Kathyayani. Raja thought of writing play and enacting it on the day of inauguration accordingly he wrote in English a play, which consisted four characters. The main characters were Prakruthi and Purusha. He assigned the role of prakruthi to Kathyayani. They succeeded reproducing the natural law on the stage. Nature comes to the bloom with her youth and beauty during the spring. Nature does not experience the stillness and barrenness all the time. There is always an internal law which revitalizes the life and makes the world appear beautiful and attractive. Man has to lead ultimately the life which is given to him by the natural laws. This was the message of the play. In fact, Raja Rao wrote the play keeping in mind Kathyayani, who was young and beautiful but a widow. Her youth could not be a waste. She could realize that the body of woman had an immense potentiality of bringing it into the creative faculty. But the widowhood was against the law of nature. Many a time Raja wondered why should the Indian society burn the beauty of a woman. He thought many time,

"All man made social structures, quotes and norms are at bottom strangle words on fundamental life forces and they tend to destroy life giving forces. Real wisdom understanding of life lies in cutting away these constraints. So that fundamental life giving forces can flourish". P 82.

There was a room created after the dinner between Shrothri and Kathyayani for speaking about her desire of remarriage. She thought of debate, comparing the situations of men with the situations of women in Indian social structure. There was a gender difference in the Indian society. If a man had lost a wife, he was privileged to remarry no moral law would hinder him, but when a widow wanted to remarry the social principles never allowed her. Moreover, it had advised her to suppress the physical desire and to lead the simple life wearing the saree of an ascetic color. But Shrothri was not in the mood of debate or discussion. He believed the social religion of India and practiced it in his life. He did not allow her to talk on social behavior when the issue was only related to herself. He was wise in giving the discussion of choice only to herself. He said,

"I did not come in the way of your decision and I shall never do so. You have every right to act as you think right. Yet all our decisions and choices should conform to our Dharma, responsibilities and obligations". p.133

His ideas are clear which are still persistent in the Indian society. Kathyayani was made silent when Shrothri gave the freedom to her to decide her own life. The feminists argue that woman is not given the freedom to choose her own way of life. She is always bounded by the masculine laws. But Shrothri though a traditionalist gives a freedom of choice to Kathyayani herself. It is a way of making a woman to rethink about the possibilities in her future.

In the total body of the novel Kathyayani is shown as a soul of experimenting with the socio-cultural changes. Hence she becomes a representative image of hermeneutics which combines both the

conventional rituals and the modern vision of life. Kathyayani in view of orthodox moral law was to lead an empty life without revitalizing her intrinsic being. She could have lived scarifying all her natural feelings of joy and happiness for the sake of adding a new meaning to the family of Shrothri only to care her son and old parents of her husband.

She mystified the meaning of life comparing it with the emptiness of the human life, living and dying and turning into ashes. She philosophies her own desires keeping them against the flames of pyre. She thought,

“All our desires, hopes, aspirations, our feelings and passions, pleasures and agonies, everything will burn to ashes like this in the end.” P. 156

The Indian society was transitional when Raja Rao married to Kathyayani some were opposing it and some others were accepting it. the urban middle class society was shown in its transition with the new systems of values bringing to the old the touch of the reformations. This is the major theme of the novel The Uprooted. The orthodox system which was binding a widow is now uprooted by the bold decision of Kathyayani to have remarriage. In this way one can understand the women as she is represented in this novel as the participant of social life and varied in their different appearances and functions.

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