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BASAVARAJ NAIKAR AS A NOVELIST: A STUDY

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Abstract:

Humanity is the essence of medieval religious philosophy. Humanity comprises the entire mankind under its title and treats all the human beings equally and does not make any discrimination on the basis of caste and religion. It also spreads the anti-war philosophy and underlines the importance of human life. It educates the people and inspires them to behave as human beings and spread the thought which advocates the right of living for not only human beings but for animals too. Basavaraj Naikar has cast a clear vision of a harmonious India vis-a-vis a world by mingling and mangling he traditional, orthodox, religious and spiritual systems of the Hindus and the Muslims.

KEYWORDS–

Basavaraj Naikar's , Mapping Minority , Indian Writing in English literature , psychological.

INTRODUCTION

Naikar's novel three significances are rapidly popular in the nature, these novels had been beautifully described and these novels are...

- 1.The Sun behind the cloud in the year 2001
- 2.The Light in the House in the year 2006
- 3.The Queen of Kittur in 2012

Naikar's works such as The Queen of Kittur, Rayanna the Patriot Other Novellas, The Rebellious Rani of Belavadi and Other Stories, and The Thief of Nagarhalli and Other Stories include the Lingayat people and their socio-cultural identities. He explores the past and present of this community in his works.

The historical characters such as Raja Mallasarja, Rayanna, Mallamma, Chennamma, Kanakadasa, and Raja Isaprabhu are presented in his works. Naikar presents the Lingayat religion in his works comprehensively. This religion has credit of enlightenment and credit to fight against the social conflicts like caste and differences. Many characters follow this religion and principals of this religion in many works. The religions were not permanent in ancient India. Kings used to patron different religions in their palaces. The details of Swadi Kingdom reveal this: THE KINGS of Swadi Kingdom were formerly Lingayats and later became Jains. During the last phase of Vijayanagara Empire they become Ksatriyas. When the great Emperor Sri Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagara established blood relationship with the family of Swadi Kings, the latter were at the zenith of their glory. Arasappa Nayaka was happy to have a son called Madhulinga Nayaka born from the grace of Lord Madhukeswara of Banavaso Temple. When Madhulinga Nayaka attained puberty, he embraced Lingayat faith. His wife Viramma was a very pious lady devoted to her husband. Thus their kingdom was known for peace, prosperity and happiness. Madhulinga Nayaka's maternal aunt Nilammaji was the Maharani of Belavadi Kingdom.

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Here, Naikar reveals the history Belavadi Kingdom from Lingayat to Jain to Lingayat. He presents the religious changes in a family. He underlines one important thing that is Religion identity was not the permanent in ancient India. People, especially kings, used to change their religions to have their power on a kingdom.

Another minority religion feature is rituals, customs, and traditions of Lingayat religion. Naikar presents them often in his works. Almost all major characters fulfil daily puja to their respective gods. A small piece of puja and its details explain this: On a Monday morning, both Raj Isaprabhu and Rani Mallamma went on a palanquin to the temple of Lord Virabhadra and attended the special worship of the deity. The pipe and drum players were playing upon their instruments as the puja began inside the temple. The priest washed the idol of Lord Virabhadra in cold water and smeared the marks of vibhuti and vermilion on the forehead, arms, belly and feet of the idol.

Then he decked it with jasmines and other flowers. He lit the incense on the thurible and waved it around the deity. The thick spirals of smoke rose and filled the temple with its sweet aroma. Then he cracked two coconuts and offered the prasada of consecrated dishes to the deity. When he brought the arati plate of Isaprabhu and Mallamma, they dropped a few silver coins on it and joined their palms in reverence to the deity. Both the king and the queen felt a spiritual calm in their hearts. Then they sat on their palanquin which was carried by bearers back to the palace. (11-12) Major Kings of Naikar's works follow Lingayat as their religion. But the values such as secularism, brotherhood, non-violence, anti caste, and equality are at the center in their kingdoms. The secular religious discussions were the essence of ancient times. Kings used to call different philosophers into their palaces for discussion and these discussions used to improve the religious and secular and spiritual atmosphere in kingdoms. The following discussion of emperor and Ramanujacharya proves this: "Holy sir, you may be a greater scholar than the scholars of my court. But that does not mean that your religion is the best and that the other ones are inferior." "I did not say that other religions are inferior." "Then, holy sir, what is the use of conversion? Why should we abandon our religion to embrace yours?" "Dear emperor, the goal of all religions is the spiritual liberation. But they follow different paths to reach that goal. One should follow the path that is agreeable to one."

NAIKARASANOVELIST

"Holy sir, if we go on changing our religion every now and then, don't you think we'll be displaced and disoriented without a permanent anchor to rely upon?" "O emperor, when I am ready to prove that my religion is the superior one, why should you hesitate to accept it? Please tell me if you have any doubts about it. I shall prove it with a variety of evidence." The following quotation reveals the religious and secular nature of Raja Mallasarja:

Raja Mallasarja used to celebrate the Ganapati puja, Dasara and Dipavali festivals and the worship of Goddess Kariyamma regularly with great pomp. He would arrange religious discourses on Basava Purana and Durdundeswara Purana by Virasaiva scholars, in the month of Sravana every year. Similarly he would invite the subjects of 360 villages of fourteen Karyats of the kingdom to attend the religious discourses. After the discourses were completed on the last day of Sravana, Raja Mallasarja would arrange the programme of Purana scholars to be mounted on elephants and taken in a procession around the capital. Dasara happened to be the grand festival celebrated in Kittur, every year. On that day Raja Mallasarja would distribute alms and land grants to deserving individuals. For example, he granted Chitradurga village to a swamiji. Another year, he granted Sirahatti village to Sivamurti Laxmiswami. Yet another year, he granted Bidarkal village to Sri Madivalaswami of Garag.

The quotation depicts in detail the entire secular administration of Raja Mallasarja who organizes different religious programmes of different religions in his kingdom.

The identity of Kanakadasa is presented as anti caste movement and it forces the principles of religion, namely, brotherhood and equality. We notice how the Brahmins are set against the teachings of Kanakadasa. The Brahmins are critical of Kanakadasa. They are against Kanakadasa for his religious principles to worship God. It has been vividly and critically presented in the story of Kanakadasa. The inequality which was seen in the contemporary society is shown in the following lines in the story: "You do not understand the subtlety of the problem. In our society, Brahmins are known for their sense of superiority. They do not want to pollute themselves by any intercourse with sudras". These words of Biregounda prove the rigid casteism in the society and how the downtrodden people were deprived of education and other civilized facilities of the society. The casteism is the rigid specialty of the multicultural society where classes of people, for example Brahmins, treat another class of people as sudras, or inferior or subservience. The minority people and their culture are rejected as inferior and something harmful and not useful for the society. This complex of superiority and inferiority of society is criticized and coaxed in hard words by Naikar and he makes those people the heroes of his stories who rejected the casteism. For

example, Kanakadasa becomes the symbol of social harmony and equality in the story. These visions of humanity, equality, harmony, and brotherhood are depicted by Naikar in this novella "The Golden Servant" and an entire novel *Light in The House*. The life and achievements of Sharif Saheb and Kanakadasa are similar in the line of secular social reforms of India. Both these characters in contemporary society are deprived of knowledge and respected place in the society as human beings but they, by doing hard work and breaking the walls of inequality and social inferior superior mentality of the ruling classes of the society, become the ambassador of social harmony and equality. The discussion of casteism and its relative aspects will be covered in next chapter while discussing the novels.

The above people of different minority groups fight against many social problems including inequality, caste conflict, and violence. Naikar presents Lingayat and Muslims minorities in his works as social reformists in his works. Their contribution is noteworthy in the history of North Karnataka. Sharif Saheb and his contribution in Karnataka show the importance of saints to reform the society against of caste and religious conflicts. He became ambassador of brotherhood, equality, non violence, and love. He belongs to another minority group that is Muslim in Karnataka. Sharif Saheb's story moves around these socio-education and socio-religious and cultural setting of the society. The educational aspects of this story are discussed under separate title of education. Here, the researcher would like to collect and analyse the socio-religious aspects of the novel. Mostly, the Bhakti and Sufi movements are related to this story of Sharif Saheb. Both these movements inculcate the values of humanity, devotion, God, brotherhood, equality, justice, non violence, truth, and affection. This particular novel throws light on these aspects of these movements through the life of Sharif Saheb. Let us see the detail discussion of these values and principles.

Casting the humble life of one Muslim Sharif Saheb born and died on the same day i.e. 7th of March 1819 and 1889 respectively the author has made an interesting story that could being a cultural synthesis specially of Islam and Hinduism (Virasaivism and Vaidicism). Sharif is portrayed as an unusual saint poet who has defied the norms of institutional religion and ritualism to bring a new synthesis in the form of Khadar-Linga. Humanity includes the anti-caste and inequality basis and religious movements in medieval India

taught the essence of humanity, brotherhood, equality, and justice. Sharif preached these thoughts of humanism through his speeches and songs. Sharif and Guru Govindabhatta both were out rightly rejected by their people for besmirching and impuring the religious atmosphere. People also took strong objection to their contracting other people from other religion. The families of Sharif and his Guru were excommunicated by their respective religious leaders for breaking the rules of religion. They were enlightened with their ideologies of brotherhood and equality which were the real principles of all religions on the earth. Both became the symbols of brotherhood, love, affection, and equality. They canvassed these ideologies through their works and speeches and lives. Caste identity is followed by all the subjects of all the castes but a few people uplift themselves from this identity. The conflict of Govindabhatta and his brother was to stick to caste identity. His brother advises Govindabhatta to reject Sharif for their castemates hate their family and do not invite them for any community service. As he says:

This is not a question of mere food, brother. It's a question of our life in the society. Functions like initiation, wedding, cradle ceremony of funeral ceremony will have to be celebrated in our family for which we need the help of our Brahmin community. We cannot live an isolated life in the village. We must have somebody, whom we can call our own. (93)

This shows how people were obsessed with caste identity and how they do not want to break the caste discriminations. But Govindabhatta proves that not birth but quality of a person proves his caste and purity and not mere birth is enough to prove the chastity. He answers to his brother:

If it is possible for a Brahmin to degenerate into a Shudra by his immorality and vicious behaviour, it is also possible for a Shudra to rise to be a Brahmin by his morality and virtuous behaviour. We have to measure the worth of man by his merit and not by his birth. (96)

Apart from socio-religious, political, educational, and historical presentation of minorities depicted in Naikar's works, he presents their culture, arts, cuisine, festivals, and architecture in his works. Folk art from the medieval India comprises of different kinds of songs that are known as Bhajan, Kirtan, and religious discourses. Bhajan was the essence of Bhakti and Sufi movements. Different kinds of bhajans were sung to express devotion, love, and other feelings towards God and other things. Bhakti movement composed different kinds of songs on devotion, spirituality, rituals, marriage, fairs, different ceremonies, and mostly celebrated the religious functions in daily life. Naikar, in his works, has exposed different festivals of Indian community prevailing in the north Karnataka. To depict these varied festivals of the north Karnataka, Naikar traces from twelfth to twentieth century. These festivals are patronised by the kings in their kingdoms. Chennamma used to organize Dasara and other festivals in her kingdom; Babasaheb used to organize the festivals of Tirupati. The festivals like Diwali, Dasara, Ugadi festival, fairs

of local Gods, Savandati Yallamma fair, and a few more festivals of Lingayat, Hindu, and Muslim religion are comprehensively and graphically presented by Naikar. The vision behind this presentation is to show the religious and cultural harmony, peace, brotherhood, and natural life of Indian people. The details of these festivals will preserve the nature and form of festivals for the next generation in India. The detail discussion of Dasara festival in *The Queen of Kittur* reveals the sound knowledge of Naikar in regard to Indian life. Naikar wrote an entire novella on the life of Jakkana who spent his life in constructing the temples in his kingdom in twelfth century. The construction of temples indicates the mark of religious progress of the period. The story of Jakkana reveals the Indian traditional constructions of temples of various Gods. It also shows that Indians used to allot more and more budget for the constructions of temples. Kings, like Mallasarja, always helped to construct the temples of different religions in their kingdoms and tried to maintain the secular fabric of their kingdom.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, Basavaraj Naikar presents Lingayat and Muslim of North Karnataka. Naikar, being a writer, does not blame any major group or religion for the problems of minorities. He presents the comprehensive history and present of minorities which is proud of not only that religion but entire India. He presents minorities not as isolated parts from the main society but he presents them comprehensively struggling for the Indianness and not have any minority conflicts in mind. He underlines the importance of perishing the social and cultural taboos of minorities.

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