



## REVIEW ARTICLE

### SOCIALISTIC PHILOSOPHY DEPICTED IN ANNABHAU SATHE'S SHORT-STORIES

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#### ARTICLE INFO

##### Article History:

Received 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2016  
Received in revised form  
13<sup>th</sup> August, 2016  
Accepted 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2016  
Published online 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2016

##### Key words:

Annabhau Sathe,  
Short Stories,  
Socialistic Philosophy,  
Realistic.

#### ABSTRACT

Annabhau Sathe a creative writer and activist, depicts the lives of downtrodden, landless labourers, peasants and workers of his times in his short stories. Their sorrows and sufferings, their struggle for existence and their lone protest against the established society. Annabhau Sathe who was deeply influenced by socialistic philosophy strongly advocates it in his writings. The characters portrayed in his short stories, the contemporary society and socio-economic situation of his time is described in realistic way by him. It shows his deep concern as a socialistic philosopher. In his short stories like 'Sawala', 'Dole', 'Pirajichi Bhangad', 'Kombadi Chor' communist philosophy is reflected. Principles of this philosophy - fraternity, liberty and equality are clearly depicted in these stories.

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Citation: Dr. Sunil Shankar Bhise, 2016. "Socialistic philosophy depicted in annabhau sathe's short-stories", *International Journal of Current Research*, 8, (10), 40330-40334.

## INTRODUCTION

Annabhau Sathe was born in small hamlet, a layman who went to Mumbai to earn his bread and butter and settled there. He was a simple labourer in a mill, tried many sundry jobs in his life struggled hard against the circumstances. He was rich in experience. He was member of communist party and followed the socialistic philosophy throughout his life. He was a born poet and a follower of truth in every field of human life. Annabhau describes the lives of downtrodden, landless labourers, peasants and workers, their struggle, their poverty, their sorrows and sufferings in his literary work. He paved the way to eradicate poverty and suffering of those people and advocated socialistic philosophy. He deals with struggle of those people for their existence and their ceaseless efforts to overcome the hindrances in their ways. The struggle of those people in the most adverse circumstances is the recurring theme in his work. The efforts made by masses for upliftment, their lone revolt against social customs, conventions, traditions and religion are depicted in his short stories. He describes the lives of masses of his time that gives realistic picture of the society during pre-independent era and post independent period of 50s and 60s.

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Even after the six decades his literary work is inspiring for all downtrodden and people from lower strata of the society. It is realistic and hence it appeals to the reader today also. The social relevance of his literary work is not decreased even today. It is my humble attempt to throw light upon the socialistic philosophy as reflected in his short stories. Annabhau Sathe dealt with all literary genre: Short-story, fiction, ballads, folk-drama (*Tamasha*)<sup>1</sup>, Plays and amorous poetry (*Lavani*)<sup>2</sup>. If we glance at his short stories, we find that all stories are realistic, and underline the life philosophy of Annabhau Sathe. These stories are of living characters and deal with human relations, their strains their

#### SAWALA:

Sawala the hero of the story, who tries to expose injustice made on women in the male dominated society of his time. Sawala belongs to Mang (caste from SC group, people from this class were formerly dealing with making ropes).

<sup>1</sup>Tamasha are Loknatya : A kind of drama performed on the stage.

<sup>2</sup>Lavani: A poem (lyric) sung with dance accompanied by musical instrument dulchi (a percussion instrument). It deals with amorous feeling and lovelorn mood or deed of valour. struggle on social canvas which has been interwoven by the criss-cross threads of cast discrimination and exploitation. All characters from stories are realistic, their struggle and their attempts indicate emerging new society based on socialistic pattern. Some of his short stories are discussed in this paper.

Sawala along with his friends from *Mang* and *Ramoshi* caste protest against British Government. All of them are honest and committed to their work. However allegations of sexual assault of women are made on them deliberately. British government had already passed a bill against these castes and were convicted as criminals. Sawala who tries his level best to escape Kashi : daughter of Dada Patil from the clutches of her in-laws. Kashi has been harassed by her father-in-law and mother-in-law for dowry. Emancipation of women from injustice and exploitation is focused by the author in this story. To fight against exploitation and injustice as the cardinal principle of socialistic philosophy is underlined in this story. The following dialogue between Sawala and Dada Patil highlights his qualities. Sawala says: "Dada Patil are you the only person of a noble character and do you take us characterless, who told this to you?" Dada Patil retort "The people say that all Mangas are rapist", to this Sawala burst out violently. I will burn that world into dust and ashes". (Jivant Kadtus, P. 19). The dialogue indicates emotional outburst, determination and dauntless nature of the community. When Sawala goes to Rajaram Patil's home with Kashi, Rajaram Patil invites them to take lunch with him, but Sawala refuses and threatens Rajaram Patil, "I will not hesitate to behead you if you misbehaved with Kashi henceforth.

As I am committed to this work, I will not take lunch with you. If you behave properly and treat her decently certainly I will accept your invitation in future and dine with you." (Jivant Kadtus, P. 23). Characters portrayed by the author in this story are the characters of blood and flesh they are committed to their work, loyal to the master and of noble behaviour. They support the weak and poor from the society, they treat equally all men and women. His characters are truly Marxist as they express the socialistic ideals like fraternity and equality. It is an attempt of the writer to boost up these people from *Mang* community. He dreamt a society based on socialistic pattern so he portrayed such men and women in his stories.

### DOLE (The Eyes)

„Dole“ is typical example of Indian woman who has been suffering in injustice and discrimination from ages together. Heroine of the story Geeta who is the victim of male dominated society. The circumstance compel her to destroy her beautiful eyes. Her attractive eyes and beautiful appearance turned to be the most dangerous factors, those make her life unbearable and miserable. She has to face sexual assault and violence made by men. Ultimately she has to accept the sordid reality that a woman is a weak and different in the male dominated society. Being weak she couldn't break the chains of social customs and traditions laid down by the society from ages together. Hence she surrenders to the circumstances, but her every attempt turn in vain. At last she destroys her eyes. Annabhau writes, "The change is the law of nature, nothing remains static, hence everything was changing, and the new world was emerging out of old one. The old sorrows and suffering were vanishing and there were new sorrows and sufferings and yet no man was away from sorrow". (Jivant Kadtus, P. 97) One has to face adverse circumstances and instead of blaming them one must try to fight against them to survive in this world. To stand and to survive is the message that writer wants to give to his readers through this story.

He writes, "Geeta was harassed by her in-laws, she was compelled to leave the home of her husband, she was defamed. So she destroyed her eyes, but later on she was weeping for those beautiful eyes those were lost; sorrow gives birth to another sorrow, but Geeta's sorrow conceived cruel sorrow. Though she destroyed her eyes they were immortal in her soul and she realized the importance of her eyes." (Jivant Kadtus, P. 18) The story gives the message that one should not lose courage, and blame others, but one must be courageous to fight against the circumstances.

### TEEN BHAKARI

This story is narrated by Minchekar to Annabhau. It is the story of two obstinate women the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law both of them quarrelsome and obstinate. They were living in poverty. "An old woman was working and living thriftily, both of them were regularly working as a labourers." (Khulwadi, P. 19) Both of them were landless labourers and were toiling throughout the day. "No body paid attention at them : how did they live? how did they work". (Khulwadi, P. 20) Thus people from the village neglected them as if they were living a life of out caste. Negligence of the people is inhuman quality of the society which is explicit in the story. People in the village were ignorant, illiterate and superstitious, they believed in ghost, witches and their activities and this leads them into confusion. Santaji one of characters from story says, "They were starving, nothing was there to eat, so mother thrashed corn sticks and she got some grains, she prepared three bhakarīs, those made a mess." (Khulwadi, P. 28) Unless, the poverty be removed from the society, there will not be enough to eat for the people. There was the issue about three *bhakarīs*, how to distribute those three between two. Both of them was in dilemma. It was pointed out by Santaji in these words, "Sir, my wife and mother thought in different fashion about the distribution of three *bhakarīs* as both of them were obstinate, mother thought if she takes lead and prepare a dish for her daughter-in-law she has to give two bhakarīs and only one will remain for her; similarly my wife thought she has to give two bhakarīs to her mother-in-law and only one will remain for her". (Khulwadi, P. 28) Both of them were too hungry and thinking in this way went to the bed and both of them died for food. On the way to the cemetery the mother-in-law utters, "Yes, you can eat two; I shall eat one". The words listened by the persons who were leading her dead body for the last performances made the confusion in the story. Minchekar comments on this – half starved and empty headed people can't think more than that; throws light upon the scarcity, starvation and poverty of that time. Hence, the causes of confusion should be searched and solution should be suggested. The feeling of co-operation, equality and fraternity should be developed among the people in the society to overcome such issues. The author in this story gives this message of socialistic philosophy.

### PIRAJICHI BHANGAD (An Affair of Piraji)

Piraji the hero of this story is a simple layman, he has involved in number of affairs. He makes money by hook or crook and is involved in same affair or other. Slowly he comes to know that it is very difficult to make living in this way. So he searches for the job of a labourer and turns to be a victim of poverty and he repents. To him, "the world is futile and it is hostile against him". (Khulwadi, P. 30)

This indicates his frustration. He states, “the man earns eight annas (50 paise) and a bull is paid Rs. 1.50, it means a man is starving and a bull is enjoying green grass and fodder.” (Khulwadi, P. 31). His criticism indicates that labourers and landless labourers wander from place to place for work. On the contrary peasant has achieved undue importance. He has strong desire to lead a decent life, he wants to marry and enjoy luxurious life with his wife and kids, however it’s not possible unless he has money. The different affairs in which he involved didn’t turn fruitful.

### **KOMBADI CHOR (The Poacher)**

The story is about the theft and it tries to trace the reasons behind it. In the capitalistic society there is nexus between capitalists and thieves (Criminals). In the system of self-government there is no need of prison and police. (The self-government is without police and prison). So there is a need of self-government and everyone should enjoy liberty. The common man is not enjoying the liberty, is the sordid reality. So Rama the hero of the story is deprived of everything; circumstances compel him to make theft. Police arrest him and put him in the prison. However, the intension behind the theft is ignored. It was the fact that he was unable to make his bread; he was starving, this situation makes him criminal and ultimately he was put in to the prison. If everyone gets food no one will be a thief in the society. This simple principle is underlined by the writer in this story. Does the self government change the life of a thief? Is the question that can be raised in this connection; who is enjoying the liberty? In the society such questions haunt the reader and remain unanswered. The author tries to trace the answers of those questions in the socialistic philosophy; to him a society based on socialistic principles is the only solution to these problems. In that society there will not be thieves and there will not be police and prison.

### **MARI AAICHA GADA<sup>3</sup>**

Mari Aaicha Gada is a story of the villagers suffering and dying in epidemics. Instead of consulting doctor or taking any medical treatment to overcome the epidemics they followed the superstition. The hero of the story advocates scientific outlook and rational thinking and tries to enlighten the illiterate villagers. The old, decayed, out dated customs and superstitions should be destroyed and new ways should be adopted for the development of the masses. When people in the story began to die due to epidemics. Nana Patil appeals them to clean the village and take the medical help to cure the diseases, he calls the doctors and tries to control epidemics with medical help. He appeals them to adopt scientific view and discard old customs and superstitions. Rational out-look and scientific view is needed for the development of the society is the message of the story.

### **CHIKHALATIL KAMAL (A Lotus in Mud):**

Chikhalatil Kamal is a story of a small boy and his mother. Both of them were living in poverty, to add their suffering mother fell ill.

<sup>3</sup>It was customary during that time, if epidemics spread in the village, and people began to die of the disease. They took it as the wrath of goddess Mari Aai, so they put the idol of that goddess into a small wooden cart and place it away from the outskirts of the village to the lives of people from her wrath. It was superstition of that time.

The responsibility of mother comes to Jagu a small boy, he struggles hard to survive in this world with his mother. The dilemma posed by the doctor : whether to beg for food and survive or to work and earn the bread; disturbs him, but being weak and helpless, he chooses to beg for food, rather circumstances force him to do so as he has no other option; anyhow he leads the life and saves the life of his mother from the disease. The doctor amazed at this said, “Jagu will not be a great person in the future, but he will be a loyal worker”. These words of appreciation boost up Jagu to live in the adversity. The author underlines pitiable condition of poor people those who belong to the class of „have not”s, so it is very essential that in the society there should be provision of earning for every person so that he will survive and probably it is the only way to eradicate poverty.

### **NAVATI**

This is a story of a newlywed couple Navati and Sampati. Sampati’s mother Jana an old woman, mother-in-law of Navati tortured Navati. In this new house of her husband, Navati is exploited and the most neglected person in the family. She had to work hard throughout the day. Jana tried her level best to keep husband and wife away from each other; as she was afraid that if they come together, they will neglect her and her dominance in the family will come to an end. She was the head (woman) of her house and so she treated daughter-in-law harshly. The young couple had lost the joy in their matrimonial life due to behavior of old woman Jana. The relationship between Navati and Jana were like labourer and the owner.

Annabhau Sathe expects that the situation should be changed. He writes “every thing was changed, but there was not any change in the life of Navati, she was a wife, but deprived of the happiness of husband, she was very eager for it, she was pining for that; her dreams and hopes of matrimonial life were shattered into pieces.” (Navati, P. 8) The circumstances make Navati frustrated. Woman has every right to enjoy her matrimonial life, but old customs and conventions should be discarded by the people. Especially women in the society should think seriously about this issue. As in capitalistic society the labourers are exploited by the owners, so also one woman exploits another. Even after independence the situation has not much changed. Margaret Alwa has criticized this situation in her convocation Address delivered to the young graduates in Tamil Nadu University, she states, “woman is the worst enemy of a woman”. Hence, it is necessary that woman should try to revolt against this situation. They should stand and fight against all old customs.

### **SULTAN, BHOMKYA AANI KRAURYA**

The three stories named Sultan, Bhomkya and Krourya deal with basic (fundamental) needs of human beings: food, shelter and clothing. The people from down trodden community are deprived of everything they are suffering in poverty, their sorrows are boundless. The circumstances have lost their identity as a human being; so Sultan and Bhomkya prefer to go to jail than to suffer in this world. Whereas Gopikabai and Shama take shelter of Kisan. This sordid reality is portrayed by Annabhau Sathe. All those characters were suffering in poverty, they had neither shelter nor food and adequate clothes. They were leading miserable life and struggling hard, in fact they were pining for food and shelter.

Annabhau writes in the short story, „Sultan“ : “Sultan thought that man must get all fundamental things: food and shelter and clothing”<sup>16</sup> (Gajaad). But his thinking was futile because he was starving in poverty. Annabhau says “I don’t know the meaning of prison, but to me – it is a place where situation is lethargic, minds are exhausted and the process of development has stopped”. (Navati, P. 48) These people were living there, they were not criminals, but they preferred to live in a prison as it was the place where their fundamental needs were fulfilled. Annabhau comments on this situation : “I never expect justice from this capitalistic world, but those who live with the air of superiority of Indian culture are hit at head by Indian slavery and poverty” (Gajaad, P. 40). The characters like Bhomkya, Sultan, Kisan, Gopikabai and Shama are characters of blood and flesh, it is expected that the people who take themselves as the heirs of Indian culture think seriously about them as they are also the part and parcel of that cultural legacy. Few questions can be raised in this connection : How long these people have to suffer in poverty? When will they be emancipated from slavery and poverty? Even today it is difficult to give proper solution to these problems, however these problems make us introspective. The society should be developed. No one should be starved and live in poverty. The social scenario be changed to make these people lively and happy. Everyone has right to survive in this world and one must be aware of that, this awareness among the people is underlined by the author in these stories.

#### **CHIRAG NAGARCHI BHUTE (The Ghost of Town Chirag)**

„Chirag Nagarichi Bhut“ is a collection of thirteen short stories by Annabhau Sathe. People living in Chiragnagar and Azadnagar, suburbs of Mumbai are portrayed in these stories. They live in slum; their life is depicted in these stories. He writes. “I have observed these ghosts at close quarters. They are my friends and I am one of them.” (Preface to *Chirag Nagarichi Bhute*). Annabhau was among those people, further he writes, “people were living in those two suburbs were toiling and earning their bread and butter, some of them were beggars, phakirs (one who begs alms on the name of Alha in front of mosque), lame, physically disabled and they were striving for living and when it becomes impossible for them to survive they commit suicide in the nearby lake; for them there was no difference between life and death (Chirag Nagarchi Bhute, P. 5). They were living miserable life, however nobody heed at them. “They were any how leading the life and were dying unheeded”. (Chirag Nagarichi Bhute). Their life was bundle of contradictions: “There was poverty, ignorance, darkness conflicts, riots and love also! sublime faith in family life and hardships, those hands engaged in the mill work to enrich Mumbai and dominating railway tracks for smooth functioning of India were lying in poverty and leading the most miserable life.”

(Chirag Nagarchi Bhute, P. 18, 19). Work should be worshipped, manual labour be honoured, poverty be eradicated is expected by the author. Further he strongly opposes division of society in two groups: haves and have nots.

“Machines in Mumbai were not functioning unless those were operated by the hands of these people who were half-starved and toiling” (Chirag Nagarichi Bhut, P. 48). Realistic picture of labourers is depicted in his short stories. He focuses the poverty and suffering of the labourers. Expects that this situation be changed. This theme is at the core of his short stories. Annabhau earnestly thought that the labourers should lead good life, there should not be sorrows and suffering in their lives. At least they should get minimum wages to fulfil their fundamental needs : Food, Shelter and Clothing. Where as society shouldn’t be divided into the class of „haves“ and „have not’s“. So the labourers should come together and insist for their rights. They should organize and struggle for their rights. This appeal is made by Annabhau Sathe in his poem “Jagatil Kamagarano Ek Vha”. This poem appeals to all workers in the world to write and fight against capitalism. Annabhau Sathe in these stories appeals all workers to stand and fight for their rights and make them aware of their potential as a workers. He writes, “O, workers in the world let us come together, you have nothing to loose than your shackles”. This cardinal principle of revolution is advocated by Annabhau in these stories.

#### **Conclusion**

Short stories of Annabhau Sathe shows deep concern for economically deprived classes, their struggle, where as their revolt against old outdated customs and conventions laid down by the established society. The emancipation of those people from under privileged class is advocated by Annabhau Sathe in his stories. He hopes for new emerging society which will be based on equality, humanity and liberty. For him socialistic philosophy is the only solution to make such change.

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