

ISSN 2347 - 503X

# Research Chronicler

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Vol III Issue I : January - 2015

Editor-In-Chief  
Prof. K.N. Shelke

[www.research-chronicler.com](http://www.research-chronicler.com)

A detailed still-life composition featuring a quill pen as the central focus. The quill is positioned diagonally, with its tip resting on a scroll of aged parchment. The scroll is secured with a red wax seal and a red ribbon. In the background, a lit candle in a brass holder casts a warm glow. In the foreground, a glass inkwell with a quill inside and a red wax seal are visible. The entire scene is set on a dark wooden surface.

# Research Chronicler

A Peer-Reviewed Refereed and Indexed International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Volume III Issue I: January – 2015

## CONTENTS

Sr. No.	Author	Title of the Paper	Download
1	Prakash Chandra Pradhan	Political Context of V.S. Naipaul's Early Novels: Identity Crisis, Marginalization and Cultural Predicament in <i>The Mystic Masseur</i> , <i>The Suffrage of Elvira</i> and <i>The Mimic Men</i>	3101PDF
2	Dr. Shivaji Sargar & Moushmi Thombare	The Ecofeminist Approach in Alice Walker's <i>The colour Purple</i>	3102PDF
3	Dr. Anuradha Nongmaithem	Re-Reading of Shange's <i>for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf</i>	3103PDF
4	A. Anbuselvi	Dysfunctional family and Marriages in Anne Tyler's Novel	3104PDF
5	Deepanjali Mishra	Impact of Sociolinguistics in Technical Education	3105PDF
6	Dr. Pooja Singh, Dr. Archana Durgesh & Ms. Tusharkana Majumdar	Girl, Boy or Both: My Sexuality, My Choice	3106PDF
7	Vasanthi Vasireddy	Akhila's Escape to Kanyakumari – a Travel in Search of 'Self'	3107PDF
8	Dr. Laxman Babasaheb Patil	Social Consciousness in Early Dalit Short Stories	3108PDF
9	Sushree Sanghamitra Badjena	Corporate Governance Codes in India- A Critical Legal Analysis	3109PDF
10	Dr. Ashok D. Wagh	The Role of Budgeting in Enhancing Genuineness and Reliability in Financial Administration in Colleges of Thane District	3110PDF
11	Sushila Vijaykumar	Consciousness-Raising in <i>Thirst</i>	3111PDF
12	L.X. Polin Hazarika	Influence of Society on Assamese Poetry	3112PDF
13	Dr. Archana Durgesh & Ajay Kumar Bajpai	Reading Women and Colonization: <i>Revenge</i>	3113PDF
14	Sachidananda Saikia	Mahesh Dattani's 'On a Muggy Night in Mumbai': A Critique on Heterosexuality	3114PDF

15	Nandini Sharma & Dr. V. Premlata	Theatre and Phenomenology: Beckett's <i>Waiting for Godot</i> within the Apparatus of Merleau Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception	3115PDF
16	Mr. Suresh D. Sutar	Ted Hughes' Crow's First Lesson: An Eco-critical Study	3116PDF
17	Goutam Karmakar	A Study of Margaret Atwood and Her Poetic World	3117PDF
18	Dr. Ambreen Safder Kharbe	Havoc of Western Culture on Indian Immigrants: A Study of Manju Kapur's <i>The Immigrant</i>	3118PDF
19	Dr. Raja Ram Singh	Ethnic Identity of Bagri caste: A Sociological Analysis	3119PDF
1	Hossein Sheikhzadeh	Bāgādh, the Lizard - A Balochi Story	3120PDF
1	Dr. Chandra Shekhar Sharma	On the 30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Bhopal Gas Tragedy	3121PDF

## Social Consciousness in Early Dalit Short Stories

Dr. Laxman Babasaheb Patil

Associate Professor & Head, Dept. of English, Athalye – Sapre - Pitre College, Devrukh, (M.S.) India

### Abstract

Literature is a reflection of society. This dictum is more true with regard to Dalit literature in Marathi. The roots of Dalit literature lie in the social suppression of the untouchables. Therefore, the literature reflecting Dalit consciousness is bound to be socially conscious. The major Dalit short story writers, who wrote in the early period of the movement, expressed this consciousness. Anna Bhau Sathe, himself a Dalit, presented the misery and exploitation of Dalits in his stories like 'Smashanatil Sone', 'Sultan', 'Sapala' and many more. His stories deal with rural as well as urban exploitation of the Dalits. Shankarrao Kharat shows the suffering of untouchables in rural area. His famous stories like 'Sangava', 'Sutka', 'Daundi' deal with exploitation of Dalits in rural area. Another important Dalit writer Baburao Bagul has more comprehensive approach. His stories like 'Jevha Mi Jaat Choral', 'Vidroh', 'Maidanatil Manase' expose the miseries of Dalits in rural as well as urban area.

**Key Words:** struggle, torture, social reality, injustice, livelihood, exploitations, crime, caste, inequality, conventions, starvation, poverty, agony, restlessness, insult.

The relationship between literature and society is vitally important. Literature is not created in void. The existence of literature without social concern and consciousness is just impossible. Taine, the French critic asserted that literature is the product of the race, the milieu and the moment. The relations of society and social issues in literature are inherent. Anyone can see social characteristics in the contemporary literature. Indian freedom struggle movement left its impressions in the contemporary literature. In the same way, post-independence social problems can be seen in post 60s literature. Dalit literature is one of the major movements in post-independence Marathi literature. The objective of Dalit Literature is to evoke social consciousness. Hence Dalit literature is not aesthetic expression but it is an expression of social consciousness. The present paper is an

attempt to take a review of social consciousness in early Dalit short stories.

Dalit literature enlightens society by representing social reality. Hence Dalit writers stress meticulously on content and experience. Their experiences are individual but they tell the universal story of sufferings of downtrodden through their experiences. Dalit literature tries to acclimatize with aspects like community consciousness, protest, struggle, social reality. A Dalit writer presents thoughts of awareness of self as well as social obligation. In this way, Dalit literature emphasizes social concern and it has no more remained individual. Initially, Dalit literature had been the literature of protest, however, now protest is not the sole objective. The protest is for restoring humanity, human ethics and dignity of Dalits. So the ultimate aim of Dalit

literature is to widen and enhance territory of humanity. Dalit writers accepted principles of negation and protest for social change and welfare. Pains, injustice, vested social interests, human tendency, desires, expectations of Dalits are being expressed through Dalit literature. The expression of these things is a necessity of Dalit literature. So Dalit Literature is a collective representation of society.

The problems posed by Dalit writers cannot be easily solved because roots of all these problems are in existing social system. These are the unique problems of Dalits and not of ordinary people. For understanding nature and seriousness of these problems, the study of social consciousness expressed in early Dalit short stories of Anna Bhau Sathe, Shankarao Kharat, and Baburao Bagul is essential.

Dalit Literature is essentially having different characteristics and so it is remarkably different in Modern Marathi Literature. It revolted against all Marathi literary traditions by presenting revolutionary thoughts about life. Simultaneously, it has given radical outlook towards history, society and literature. The revolutionary Dalit writers of the first generation were involved in the movement led by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and they were deeply influenced by his thoughts. The teaching and deep influence of Ambedkar resulted in endowing Dalit writers with definite ideology of social change. The writers like Shankarao Kharat, Bandhu Madhav proved through their writings that the 'Dalit life' can be the subject-matter of literature which was neglected in earlier literature. This is the historical and prominent contribution of these early Dalit

writers. The history of Marathi literature would be incomplete without their contribution and consideration.

Dalit writers have been expressing their consciousness during last five decades. "Shivram Kamble and Kisan Fagoji Bansode are considered the writers of first generation. The second generation writers Anna Bhau Sathe, Bandhumadhav, Sahnkarao Kharat paved their path on the direction of Shivram Kamble and Kisan Fagoji Bansode." <sup>1</sup> Afterwards, Baburao Bagul joined this movement. The new and contemporary, third generation writers who led this movement are Keshav Meshram, Yogiraj Waghmare, Amitabh, and Waman Hoval. Bhalchandra Fadake writes,

"Anna Bhau Sathe could give expression to pains of Dalits. Anna Bhau Sathe, Shankarrao Kharat, Baburao Bagul are the true sculptors of Dalit story. The generation of story writers like Yogiraj Waghmare, Bhimrao Shirwale, Pundalik Dhongade, Yogendra Meshram, Ashok Lokhande, Dangale, Daya Pawar, Madhav Kondvilkar etc. are following essentially the story of Sathe, Kharat and Bagul." <sup>2</sup>

So it is pertinent to mention here that only the stories of sculptors can be sufficient to study the purpose of this paper.

Anna Bhau Sathe (1920 - 1969) is an important Dalit short story writer. He was born in small village *Wategaon* (Dist - Sangli). As he was born and brought up in Dalit *matang* caste he had first hand experiences of Dalit problems. He went to Mumbai and "in order to survive in the vast metropolis, Anna worked as coolie, waiter, mine worker, household servant and did boot polishing, babysitting and looking after dogs. His world of

experience got enriched through it.”<sup>3</sup> While expressing his ideology of writing he says, “I write only what I live, see and experience in life.”<sup>4</sup> He started to write stories in 1949. Sathe presented both rural and metropolitan life in his stories. He lived in Mumbai and saw closely slum life and experienced it. So he presented the picture of slums. His stories tell a tale of struggling Dalit people for livelihood. The stories of Anna Bhau Sathe portray the picture of Dalit life with its poverty. Poverty gives birth to many problems. Dalit protagonists struggle for hunger in the stories like ‘*Smashanatil Sone*’, ‘*Kombadi Chor Bhomakya*’, ‘*Sultan*’. Even sometimes the protagonists like *Barbadya Kanjari* revolt against the existing social and judicial systems. His ‘*Barbadya Kanjari*’ shows the world of slum. Somehow *Barbadya* lives life by cleaning ears of people but his daughter, *Nilli*, runs away with somebody. His clan imposes fine on him and he is ostracized but he revolts against the clan. ‘*Smashanatil Sone*’ shows struggling of Bhima for livelihood and he collects gold from the mouth of skulls in grave and loses his fingers. After losing his fingers Bhima becomes sad not for fingers but for tomorrow’s starvation. The struggle between Bhima and foxes in cemetery is heartrending. Man and animals equally struggle for livelihood. Bhima’s problem is social problem. ‘*Sultan*’ is also struggling for livelihood and he says that he wants bellyful of food and he would fight for belly. Starvation is not only the problem of a man but starvation and struggling for it is a problem of whole Dalit society. *Kombadi Chor* Ramu also lives and struggles for livelihood. He has no means of living so he has no alternative other than to become thief. What has been

said about Sathe’s novels is equally applicable to his stories also. “Sathe wrote directly from his experiences in life, and his novels celebrate the fighting spirit in their characters who work against all odds in life.”<sup>5</sup>

Anna Bhau Sathe had been a staunch propagandist of Babasaheb Ambedkar’s thoughts and principles. Sathe’s stories like ‘*Sapala*’ and ‘*Walan*’ propagate Ambedkar’s thoughts. In ‘*Walan*’ the struggle of old and new generation is shown. The old, helpless Dalit woman, *Chima* represents old generation; on the other hand there is a new generation full of protest which rejects to eat beef. The story ‘*Sapala*’ shows how *mahar* people trap upper caste villagers by not removing carcasses. The protagonist advises *mahars* not to do their traditional work. ‘*Sawala Mang*’ is somewhat different story in which Dalit Sawala Mang threatens upper caste Rajaram Patil with sword who tortures Kashi for dowry. Sawala restores Kashi’s respect and home. In this way, Sathe’s stories give message to downtrodden that social change is possible. Sathe was influenced by Ambedkar’s thoughts and he disseminates the same. Anna Bhau Sathe’s stories present pains, problems, injustices, exploitations and struggle of Dalits. Sathe exposes social evils in his stories.

He adopted communist ideology and consequently his stories portray social picture. In spite of this, Anna Bhau Sathe’s some of the stories portray world of criminals and untouchables. The subjects of his stories range from rural life to city slums. One can find varieties of characters in his short stories. However, Anna Bhau Sathe’s stories are very optimistic about social change.

Shankarrao Kharat (1921–2001) is a well-known Dalit story writer. He was born in Dalit *mahar* caste. He says, “My published literature including stories, novels and articles have been based on my own experiences.”<sup>6</sup> His earlier stories show the Dalit life of Kharat himself and in this sense they are autobiographical in nature. He expressed what he saw, suffered and experienced. His famous stories are ‘*Sangava*’, ‘*Sutka*’, ‘*Tadipar*’, ‘*Bara Balutedar*’, ‘*Daundi*’, ‘*Titavicha Fera*’. These stories show the meaningless life led by downtrodden. Kharat shows that the suffering of downtrodden and exploitation of Dalits are caused by poverty, superstitions, traditions and conventions. The major cause of all these suffering is problem of bread and butter. All are struggling for livelihood. Kharat also portrays the life of people who became criminals for the sake of livelihood and their struggle to live. Their social crime is punished both by society as well as police. Both society and police torture Dalits. They do not protest against their injustice rather they do not know their rights. They accept the life as it is. Dalits break social ethics and conventions for livelihood. They are exiled from society. Kharat includes all types of castes and creeds in his stories. This shows his varied and rich social experiences. Even though, characters appear from different social groups, their common longing is to win bread. They are living for bread only.

‘*Bara Balutedar*’ presents the sufferings of the people because of their castes. ‘*Tadipar*’ shows varieties of characters representing their tribes. ‘*Sangava*’ shows how Rama Mahar is exploited and tortured by conventional village work. Rama Taral in ‘*Daundi*’ is leading same life.

‘*Bhandara*’ shows the helplessness of Dalits and their restless waiting with their children for food. ‘*Devacha Kop*’ is a classic example of how untouchability and superstition are governing the rural social system. Even education and knowledge are helpless to change this social psyche. Dalit women like Anju (in ‘*Wasana*’) and Jaya (in ‘*Aaba Ramoshi*’) are exploited by upper caste. The stories of Kharat show suffering of Dalit life caused by conventions and traditions (*Bhar*, *Kamayi*, *Rama Mahar*, *Sangava*, *Daundi*) and problems of starvations, hunger (*Tadfad*, *Rojgar*, *Kal*) of Dalits. He presented humiliations, insults, misery, struggle, helplessness of Dalits. Kharat is the only storywriter who delineated a picture of Dalit life with his keen observations and extensive social outlook. His stories deal with Dalit social consciousness.

Baburao Bagul (1930 - 2008) is another important Dalit writer. Basically, he is a thinker. He meditates over life, Dalit life and literature in a wider perspective. He had first hand experiences of torture and suffering in this unequal social system. He is influenced by the thoughts of Buddha, Marx and Dr. Ambedkar. Bagul wrote about rural as well as metropolitan slums of Mumbai. He effectively portrays social reality of rural life and metropolitan slums. ‘*Jevha Mi Jaat Chorali Hoti*’, his first collection of stories, “created a stir in Marathi literature with its passionate depiction of a crude society and thus brought in new momentum to Modern Marathi literature.”<sup>7</sup>

Some of the stories of Bagul portray the treatment of upper caste people to Dalits both in rural and urban life. Some stories portray contemptuous and scornful treatment to Dalits in Indian social system.

Dalits are meaningless and they are treated not as humans in this unequal Indian social system. In the same way, Dalits suffered because of untouchability coupled with religious evil conventions which snatched away equal rights of Dalits in rural area. Some of the stories show struggle between upper caste and downtrodden in rural society.

The stories like *Jevha Mi Jaat Chorali*, *Vidroh* of Bagul present the picture of social inequality and show revolt against such system. He shows how rural life is dominated by superstitions, religious conventions, untouchability, and false notions of prestige and honour. These social facts are shown in stories like '*Kalokhache Kaidi*'. Dalits are tortured, insulted, and exploited because of untouchability, superstitions, traditions, conventions, and false notions of honour in rural life. The rural social system is shaped and formed by caste system, religious system and class system. This resulted in tightening bondages of caste, class, and religion. Hence, Dalits suffered because of social system based on inequality and effects of untouchability.

Dalits are suffered by the starvation and poverty. Poverty pushed Dalits down from human to inhuman – brutal – status and they lead inhuman life. Even they are deprived of natural passions because of poverty. As they have no place to live in slums they live anywhere on open ground suffering from cold and fever during night. '*Maidanatil Manase*' portrays poverty and lust of the people who live on open ground. Bagul portrays effective pictures of Dalits selling blood for bread, collecting papers, gratifying sexual desire on open ground, delivering in shrubs etc. '*Bhook*' shows starvation of downtrodden. Bagul

presents human beings degrading into animals with their anger, envy, hatred, jealousy and lust. Dr. Vasant Dolas writes, "His stories are a product of harsh social consciousness and caustic awareness of reality."<sup>8</sup>

'*Bhandval*' presents heartrending picture of *Nata*, the protagonist of the story, who loves her sick husband and tries to save his life in spite of poverty. But her cruel old father wants to make her prostitute. When she rejects to become prostitute, her old father cripples his grandson i.e. *Nata's* son for livelihood. He capitalizes his grandson in this cruel way. *Nata* is also tortured by her old father. She is also tempted for prostitution by other people in slum. Gunabai, the prostitute, becomes pregnant and when she is in difficulty all her customers change their roles and become her brothers. The characters in this story capitalize various things in their own way for livelihood. A woman and young girls living in same slum capitalize their body and earn money for livelihood. Such a heartrending life is led by these people. The social system is responsible for this agonizing situation.

'*Rama Mahar*' gives a preference to conventional village work and goes to post a letter to taluka place when his son was suffering from fever. He does this work because he is downtrodden, he has to live in the village and earn his livelihood. Ultimately, his son dies and he becomes furious. Rama mahar is representative of Dalits who have to lead such a type of wretched and humiliating life. Even they cannot express their agony. If they express their pains and show inability to work, upper caste people threaten and trouble them. Their sin is that they are born in lower caste of the social stratum. Dhanya



in 'Bhamta' has no job; he wanders for job everyday from door to door. But when people learn about his caste they turn him away. Bagul shows a fact that people do not accept Dalit as a man in free India. Still people treat Dalits according to age-old social system. Thus, instead of removing their problems, free India posed new problems for them.

The story 'Aai' shows wretched life of a widow who keeps sexual relations with supervisor for the sake of her son, Pandu. The behaviour of his mother is disgusting for Pandu. Both mother and son are helpless. Mother is restless and torn between the love for son and lust for self. Her neighbours torture her and the height of all this is that her own son, instigated by neighbours, also tortures her. In this way, people in slum torture, trouble, insult, humiliate a poor widow. Mere poverty is responsible for this entire distressing situation. Shirish Pai says,

"The people he (Bagul) portrayed in stories are perverted, distorted, deformed, they are innocent but thrown out by society, basically, they are ignorant, blind, fanatic, maniac, vengeful, cruel.... It had not been possible to frame the laws to protect humanity if the artists and writers had not vehemently displayed the regretful pains of society."<sup>9</sup>

'Sud' is extended narrative and somewhat different story in which Janaki is a protagonist. She is Dalit and she is a woman so it is double trouble. Her mother tries to make her prostitute. Rasul, for the payment of meat, sexually oppresses her body. Rasul sells her to become prostitute. She is enjoyed by different types of people but nobody comes to her rescue. But with the help of a youth she escapes from that prison and throws away her womanhood.

She puts on a male costume and sets out in search a saint and ultimately she finds one. In the company of the saint she realizes the worth of female body which she offers to the saint and again becomes a woman.

Girija in 'Watevarchi' becomes prostitute to bring up her children. Her customer deceives her. Gangu in 'Lutalut' is tortured and exploited by her father and brother for money. 'Julum' shows that not only gangsters but police also torture carpenter Fredrick and Eliza. 'Mawali' shows five vindictive ruffians and how they murder one of their own companions for the sake of sexual gratification. Even prostitutes are exploited by different people like police, house owners, dada, etc. 'Lutalut', 'Sakmajuri', 'Tahan' show that poverty and helplessness of people in slums are responsible for their exploitation and pathetic condition. This shows that Dalits are not only exploited by upper caste people but Dalits also oppress and trouble Dalits. People who live in slums oppress and exploit their own fellows. Bagul portrays objective picture of exploitation whether by upper caste or by Dalits. So he is impartial in his presentation. Like other Dalit writers he does not show only one sided picture of exploitation by upper caste but downtrodden also oppress when they get an opportunity. This shows wider perspective of Bagul. This wider perspective is resulted in portraying multidimensional social picture in his stories.

The stories of Bagul reveal varied aspects of social consciousness. He holds wide view while portraying agony and pains of Dalits due to untouchability, poverty, social system, human nature and behaviour. So he stands somewhat different from other Dalit writers. In the

same way, he holds wider attitude towards human life and he has devotion for the human life. He handled various subject matters to show pains and agonies of Dalits. As he shows various social dimensions in his stories they remain somewhat different than other Dalit stories. Bagul highlights subtle human passions like cruelty, brutality, craziness, generosity, love of people who live in slums.

As Bagul has adopted wider attitude of social life he portrays not only Dalit life and suffering but life of other people in society. As a result, his stories no more become monotonous and redundant. He shows the fact that Dalits also exploit and trouble other Dalits. Consequently, his stories become expression of painful stories of human life.

Bagul is influenced by Ambedkar and Marxist ideology. Hence, he professes the emancipation of tortured, trampled, and exploited downtrodden. Dilip Chitre says, "Entertainment had never been the purpose of Baburao...he has never separated from the obligation of Ambedkar's thoughts."<sup>10</sup> Bagul is optimistic so he believes in bright and glorious future for downtrodden. He shows protest and revolt of Dalits for restoring the values of humanity. Baburao Bagul became successful in presenting effective life of Dalits who live both in slums and rural area.

Thus, the major three Dalit writers who are considered here show social consciousness in their writing. Their short stories express the manifold facets of agony suffered by the Dalits: poverty, hunger, inhuman treatment given by the upper caste people. The curse of untouchability shrouds these various pains. The story of female suffering becomes more acute and heartrending in that she has to suffer from patriarchal inequality in addition to the suffering of untouchability. The sufferings of the Dalits are not limited to rural area. Even in urban surroundings they have to face the troubles and tribulations in a changed aspect. Their revolt against the system peters to tame surrender because the system appears to be almost unbreakable. In Baburao Bagul particularly, the painful experiences are not limited to only Dalits. These stories encompass wider human sufferings.

Social consciousness is the all encompassing feature of major Dalit writers. This characteristic is the result of their experiences as Dalits. They express the lived experience of being Dalits and all the pains consequent upon it. All of the writers are influenced by the progressive and revolutionary thoughts of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. The constitution of India, framed by Dr. Ambedkar, makes provision for the eradication of untouchability and projects ideal society. However, the stories by the Dalit writers expose the ground reality.

### References:

1. Bhagat, Datta. '*Dalit Sahitya: Disha ani Dishantar*'. Abhay Prakashan, Nanded, 1992, p. 110.
2. Fadake, Bhalchandra. '*Dalit – Sahitya: Vedana ani Vidroh*', Sahitya Prakashan, Pune, 1977, p.180.

3. <http://uniquefeatures.in/e-sammelan-13/Anna-Bhau-Sathe>.
4. Sathe Anna Bhau, '*Barbadya Kanjari*,' 1960, p.4.
5. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annabhau\\_Sathe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annabhau_Sathe).
6. Kharat Shankarrao, '*Taral Antara*,' 1981, *Don Shabd* (Introduction)
7. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baburao\\_Bagul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baburao_Bagul)
8. Dolas Vasant, '*Dalit Sahitya: Prerna ani Swarup*,' Dilipraj Prakashan, Pune, 1992, p.32
9. Bagul Baburao, '*Jevha Mi Jat Chorali Hoti*,' Abhinav Prakashan, Mumbai, 1963, pp.4-5
10. Bagul Baburao, '*Maran Swastha Hot Aahe*,' Lokwangmay Grah, Mumbai, 2005, Cover.

RLU

# Dhanashree Publications

Flat No. 01, Nirman Sagar CHS,  
Thana Naka, Panvel, Raigad - 410206



[www.research-chronicler.com](http://www.research-chronicler.com)