

The Creative Launcher

An International, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, E- Journal in English

Vol. III & Issue VI (February- 2019)

Realism, Idealism and Progressive Outlook of U. R. Ananthamurthy's *Bharthipura*: A Critical Study

Vishnu Kumar

Research Scholar,
The Department of English & MEL,
The University of Allahabad,
Prayagraj, India

DOI: 10.53032/tcl.2019.3.6.06

Abstract

U. R. Ananthamurthy is a progressive writer of the twentieth century India, who was a prominent south India during the Nehru period, depicted the caste ridden society of India who believes on more on God than themselves. The writer has shown that to rule over human they made the caste system. They have made the God to create fear in the human minds. The protagonist of the novel has rightly said, "Unless we destroy God, We will never be creative. We are all like embryo in the womb of God. We remain unborn" (*Bharthipura* p.11). The people are so conservative that they can't do a single work without the name of God. Jagannatha, the protagonist of the novel, who has studied in England and whose girlfriend has gone with someone else, has returned to *Bharthipura* village with a progressive outlook and when he sees the different kinds of *sanskar* of the village, he became surprised. Observing the condition of the *Holeyaru*, dalits, he decided to reform their condition but due to the ideology of the society that they think that they are born for cleaning toilets not for education. The reality is that our country is backward because most of dalits are illiterate due to this caste system. Jagannatha realized that their condition can be reformed after removing fear of god from their minds. He decided that he would motivate the dalits to enter in the temples and touch the god.

Keywords- Idealism, Downtrodden, Untouchability, Exploitation, Misuse

In the novel, there is conflict between idealism and reality. The novelist has exposed the reality of the society and he has raised the question on the issue of caste, tradition, untouchability belief etc. Idealism that is created by the people is based on the wrong notion and that is created for the benefit of the particular class of people and exploitation of the downtrodden. He made the people understand that we must try to keep ourselves away from these issues. The caste is a major hurdle in the development of the downtrodden because the caste has created such kind of

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ideology and that ideology has become a kind of curse for the downtrodden because the dalits have found themselves unable to come out from that concept. The India is a caste ridden society and without caste nothing would be decided even the most literate person do all the things from the suggestion of a Brahman. He has suggested the society that in order to progress in the society, they will have to be rational in their ideas and will have to adopt western ideas. We would have to create equality in the society in order to get peace. He says that if we create problem for others, they will create problem for us, and this conflict of realism and idealism leads to the revolution. The exploitation of the suppressed classes becomes the major reason for the revolution.

Jagannatha has protested against flawed tradition of the society. He protested against culture of south as well as north India. He has discarded the society associated with him. He decided not to live with the conservative\ people of the village. Being a rational and the man of western ideas, he could not believe in supervisions. Jagannatha has a desire to remove the dialect from the society. He wants to change the mind of upper caste people regarding the downtrodden. He thinks that in order to reform the condition of the downtrodden, he would have to fight against social injustice. For the equal right, many leaders have been fighting but that is missing in the present scenario. He thinks that there should be equality in the society but here is no equal right for the downtrodden. Everyone is living in his own idealism and nobody wants to see and face the reality. The protagonist takes initiative to reform the condition and motivates the downtrodden to enter the temple to touch the Shaligrama and remove the misconception from the mind that they would die if they enter the temple and the pure stone. He thought that nothing would be changed in the village until I change the ideology of the people. He forced the dalits to touch and defile. He wants to change the ideology of the people regarding the concept of 'Sacred' *Bharthipura*. The novelist has thought that caste hierarchy of Indian society is the major problem and that has created inequality and divided the society. Jagannatha considered that revolutionary step should be taken to reform the society.

This is a novel with modern ideas. It talks about socialism and equality. It suggests us to go far behind from the concept of untouchability. It motivates us to adopt modern and logical ideas in our life. Jagannatha motivated the untouchables to enter in the temples as well as in the locality of upper caste society to touch every sacred things and pollute. He assured them nothing will be happened to them when they perform this. He guided them, taught them, motivated them to wear the dhoti so that they can have the feeling the upper caste people and they try to become like them and taught them the importance of cleanliness and education in their life.

The writer has shown that how the upper caste people has reconstructed and recreated the past to save their hierarchal position in the past and present. It is the God who creates fear in the minds of untouchables. He proves that the creativity can't come until we follow the social system

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which are made by the upper class Brahmins. They have only created fear in the mind of people for their benefit. Jagannatha was unable to break the practice of untouchability without breaking the economic power and polluting the sacred thing. He says in the novel: "Once he had been sitting on one of the huge boulders behind the temple. It was evening. The President of the country had come on a visit to the temple and left. Suddenly, he heard the temple bells calling for evening worship. At that very moment, an idea struck him: 'I must take the Holeyaru into the temple. I must change the tradition of centuries with that one step. I must break Manjunatha. I must make these people feel the anguish of becoming responsible for their lives.'" (p.60, *Bhathipura* pub.oxford university.press)

The novel has shown the pitiable and miserable condition of dalits and it has been written to show the effect of freedom movement of India on downtrodden and how the leaders of Gadhian era tried to change the condition of downtrodden. He has depicted the changing scenario of the society that some literate young men are trying their best for the upliftment of Harijans. Jagannatha is the example of those young men who tries to change the orthodox and god ridden society, as a mouth piece of the writer, has studied from England has a progressive outlook, thoughts and ideas to reform the society. He decides to reform the orthodox, ignorant, hypocrites, illiterate people of the village Bharthipua. This is the village like R.K Narayan's Malgudi and Raja Rao's Kanthapura. The protagonist Jagannatha like Murthy wears a dhoti and devoted himself for the upliftment of dalits, teaches them alphabet, offers a cotton dress to a half naked harijans and tell them importance of cleanliness in order to make them civilized and remove the fear of upper caste people and god from their minds.

The interesting part of the novel is that when the protagonist takes downtrodden into the local temple of Lord Shiva in order to defile the temple but there is fear in the mind of Harijans to enter the temple but Jagannatha motivates them to enter the temple and assured them that nothing would happen to them but one disciple of Jagannatha named Ganesha takes the Lingam one day before and throws it into the river in order to save the God. This is a kind of humour occurs in the novel.

This novel has shown the interaction among different social groups of Karnataka. The writer was living in a village Malenad at that time. He was against the landlordism. He has observed the condition of people and realized how the people are in fear regarding landlords and god. Jagannatha says in the novel:

Come! Jagannatha would say. They would come only to the edge of front porch. Jagannatha would talk to them. He would say, 'Think for yourselves, take decision, and act responsibly'. But those words did not seem real, least not yet. Jagannatha would ponder over this sense of emptiness night and day, How can I make my words make sense to them? How can I make them accept what I 'm telling them and make my words

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real by turning them into action? How can I slit the womb of Manjunatha and walk out?
Bring them out. (p.60, Bharthipura)

Anantha Murthy's novel *Bharthipura* is a realistic picture of decadent brahminism in a backward village of Karnataka. Brahmins are supposed to be the leaders of Indian society but according to the novelist, they are now misleading the society of Hindus. The novelist has presented the illiterate and ignorant society of Bharthipura. In the novel, the novelist has favoured the life and principles of Jagannatha. He seems to be symbol of modernity because he follows the progressive principles of Congress party. Western Education and particularly western ideology that has brought radical and major social change not only in the Indian society but also in African countries as well as in all over the world. The youngsters with modern ideology have challenged the religious activity of the society that has not any reasonable ground and they do not have any hesitation to say that God is bone of contention behind the problem and the writer says that the major problem of the society is God and he suggests the society that first destroy the God and with the God all the rituals and dogmatic and conservatives views of the society will be destroyed. If there is no god, there will be no priest and no rituals and there will be no fear in the mind of suppressed class and there would be no discrimination in the society. In the name of the God, some people are looting the country and here in India, ninety percent people believe more on God than himself. They are governed by the ideology which is related to the religion. They are busy in worshipping the God and serving the priest not in any creative work. They destroy their time in these activities not in any creative work. They wonder here and there and believe that everything will be done by the God. The writer is worried that how the idealism of the conservatives can be destroyed. Many people say that now the India is progressing leaps and bounds in all over the world and our prime minister says that in the next ten years India will become the second largest economy of the world. How can it be possible? That is also a question that where the marriages are made based on the basis of caste and religion. Not to talk about the marriages, even for deciding marriage date the most educated Hindu family waits for the holy day and the date will be decided according to the intention of priests and that can also be changed if you offer some money to them as it has also been shown by our one of renowned novelist R.K Narayan in his one of novels named *The Bachelor of Arts*. The modernity has come only in the outer level the thinking of the people has not changed. Even in the higher education the candidates of reserved categories are judged by their caste not by their talent and what is meaning of that education that is unable to change the views of the conservative people regarding the downtrodden people.

The reason behind that India has not become a developed country is God. The God is more powerful and everything will be done according to wish of the God. If we want to see change in the society, we will have to motivate the youngsters to be like Jagannatha to make the

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people aware about what is wrong and what is right and to believe more on themselves than God. The novelist has presented the Jagannatha as a god for the dalits who with his progressive ideas challenged the god ridden society and wants to see equality in society but some people are misleading the society for their personal benefit and want to maintain this caste hierarchy in the Indian society for their dominance. They want to rule over the dalits and backward community and having desire to maintain slavery system. They are taking the country behind for their personal benefit otherwise the country has become developed where the leaders like Baba Sahab Ambedkar and Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel are born.

The progressive outlook of the people is very necessary for the development of the people. The feeling of caste until the sense of high caste and low caste until removed, there will hurdle in the development of country because caste divide people not unite. Ananthamurthy through the novel wants to convey his views regarding the Indian society that until you believe in God, the life will not be creative. The creativeness is very necessary for the development. He suggested us that creativeness and progressive outlook can be major tools to remove discrimination and over all development of people.

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