



QUEST FOR NEW VALUES IN SAMSKARA

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ABSTRACT

Samskara spins around the moral dilemma and anxiety of a traditionalist, Praneshacharya, in taking a decision on whether it is technically rights to perform the funeral rites for a person born in the Brahmin community but an outcast in his character and behaviour, or not. Amidst making a decision, the unexpected physical union with Chandri, Naranappa's concubine, further complicates the issue. This in fact leads to an inner rebellion that tosses Praneshacharya's mind this way and that. However, he regains his equanimity and find an orientation to his life by carefully making a decision. The plot of the novel has a parallel to the lives of the other Brahmins in the Ghetto.

INTRODUCTION

Praneshacharya is the central consciousness and the character of representation of the novel *Samskara*. Though, Praneshacharya's life is confined to the limitations of an *agrahara* (Ghetto) these are a few culturally representative aspects in the way he grapples with the issues and his character. There are philosophical evidences for the Spiritual, demonic and humane phases he undergoes. The structure of the plot intends to show this transition of Praneshacharya 's character from spiritual to demonic and finally to humane stage. The character is formed by a person's culture and the character forms one's culture. the novel progresses from one level of consciousness into another plane of consciousness.

In the beginning of the novel The very foundation of Praneshacharya's life was his lifeless beliefs like, work without the expectation of results or fruits and quest for salvation. But despite his ghastly state he does not lose or forget his humane qualities. He does not hesitate to touch his arch rival Naranappa. His compassion towards Chandri, and his indomitable resolution to over powerNaranappa.

The second phase of the novel depicts the discomfiture in Praneshachariya after his accidental union with Chandri. Praneshacharya feels that it was not a progressive dynamism that developed in him it was rather an impious character that possessed him. Praneshacharya

MADHUSUDANA P. N.

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acquires a gamut of feelings teeming his mind. The concept of beauty and ugliness, extinction of ego. The experience of the life's conflicts etc., all these feelings give him a sense of maturity, a self assurance that his life is heading towards a worthy accomplishment. Search existential feeling bring him a quantum of Solace. But the story-teller seems to hint at this stage of the novel that his precarious position has not ended. Praneshacharya's struggle continues during the last phase of the novel. He fights against fear sense of defeat guilt of self betrayal and gets a real cultural refinement by the influence and contact of the external world. He comes to a conclusion that the real liberation can be attained only by free but cautious and determined effort. Then reveals to him conflict- free avenue casting of his garb of a saint, he progresses towards a more fulfilling, humane and mature life. He evolves from the phases of a ghost to beast to a human being.

If praneshacharya is the epitome of the culture and rituals, Naranappa stands as an epitome of behavior. Though Naranappa is already dead by the time the novel begins, the narrative develops as though he is a live character, to Praneshacharya and the reader as well. Performing the funeral rites prove to be more challenging and complex, as Praneshacharya has a sort of fear, regret and a headstrong compulsion to defeat Naranappa.

When he fails to find a solution on how to perform funeral rites from Theshastras and Books of Dharma, Praneshacharya realises that his beliefs to which he was clinging to have the limitations and feels defedent. Finally who wins is none other than the dead Naranappa. This is the theoretical framework of *Samskara*. This becomes more obvious by the intentional terminology used by the author. *Samskararises* fundamental questions about the very foundation of our culture and gives his own solution for the problems condemning the traditional values and honouring the progressive modern values.

Rather than just being a question of social responsibility of Praneshacharya with respect to Naranappa's last rites, he also stands as a representative of his culture. The novel does not give a slight clue on which culture they are talking about. Praneshacharya believed in *Sanatana Dharma*. His ideal was to work without expecting a reward. His responsibility was to protect the Brahmin culture. His pride was that he was a great meditator, intellect and a genius in Vedas. Praneshacharya had implemented the Sanatana Dharma values with commitment into his life. He was an ideal person in the society's eye. Unfortunately even with all the abilities he had, he was weak to face the religious invocation. What are the pointers? Are they the weakness of the culture he is following or is it the question of his history? As a sensible reader feels, Ananthmurthy's personal and cultural values have influenced the character of Praneshacharya and resulted in confusion. If religion means lust and salvation, then Praneshacharya is not a representative. He doesn't try to change the karma dharma to the lust for religion. There was no problem in him going for a second marriage after his first wife couldn't beget a child due to her weakness. But he doesn't choose this option. Praneshacharya knows that there is an answer to the confusion in Naranappa's last



rites. Naranappa wasn't an out-caste. There was no doubt that though he had left the Brahmin religion, the religion hadn't left him. So why was he acting helpless?

Watching closely one can notice that the helplessness was the belief, dedication to religion and promptness in him and a few values that had grown in him. Though he knew that the religious rules could give an answer to all his confusions, Praneshacharya did not have the mental strength and determination. The zeal towards Naranappa, the tone he had to his childhood friend Mahaabala also included hatred. Fear and disturbance were the strong reasons behind the confusion. As a matter of fact, it remained hidden that the amount of failure in the culture he believed is equal to his practice of silence.

It will be more clear if we raise a question that Ananthmurthy hasn't raised in the novel. Praneshacharya serves his wife following the Sanatana value to work without expecting the fruits of labor. Though he works like a tiger tamed by work lust, we must notice that it is in no way related to sexuality. Ananthmurthy's philosophical confusion would have been solved if he had described any one of the values that Praneshacharya later agrees in the limelight. What could he have done in recreating the relation carefully and wantingly? The writer has come of difficulty as he killed his sick wife after introducing the character of Chandriya and meeting Praneshacharya. This has made it easy. Had the work of following Chandriya instead of taking care of his wife become a very cautious job? Though Praneshacharya grows disgust towards his wife, the author has saved him from the situation due to his intentions. Ananthmurthy has easily slipped away from this issue.

The way Ananthmurthy questions the Sanatana Dharma values and its mistakes he mentions about is found when he talks about the values. The meeting of Praneshacharya and Chandriya is seen as the greatest moment of the novel. But looking at the history of the novel, this seems to give a different meaning. We can notice Chandriya getting fascinated by Praneshacharya's character. It is natural for her to wait for a moment to unite with Praneshacharya and it is not an impossible task. We should also observe Praneshacharya's mentality. The confession in Naranappa's problem also had a negative influence. He remains in a sad state created by hunger and distress. So Chandriya utilizes the weakness and bad time of Praneshacharya.

Even in this stage, the story moves completely in personal and mental state and not on any theory or lust based plot. Just like sage Vishwamitra who got separated from Menaka and went to meditate, Praneshacharya could have also left Chandriya and went. But that does not happen. The story takes a turn towards enlightenment that happens to Praneshacharya. The realization happens only when a person is self-driven, conscious and committed about the job. But what is the guarantee that this is not a part of self-actualization in Praneshacharya's life? Just like the incomplete old values, even the new values are not gained.



We can experience the character and life of Agrahara Brahmin through the description made by Ananthmurthy. It sometimes makes us think the solution for Praneshacharya's problems who stands as a representative of SanatanaDharma .the common factor of MulkRajAnand's Untouchable and Ananthmurthy'sSamskara is the antihero character of a Brahmin. The Brahmin society is purposefully made weak in the end. All the Brahmins who appear in Untouchable are either sick, prostitutes or lovers. Even in Samskara, the Brahmins are shown greedy and their wives are said to have lost the charm and attraction. Their Brahminism is a showoff and are depicted as hungry and greedy for worldly pleasures and vulnerable in the story.

Intentionally or unintentionally, Ananthmurthy has portrayed an uncivilized society where the civilization they have inherited has long gone sour, trying instinctive lives, crippled by the rules and thus makes up a society without brains. Ultimately, without knowledge and intension, he has provided our society, the item for orientalist absorption.

New description can be done by comparing chinuaachebe's things fall apart with Ananthmurthy'sSamskara. The Trivali mentioned by Ananthmurthy are similar to Trivali of achibe. In things fall apart, achibe shows Ibe society in the path of destruction. He shows that this destruction was due to internal problems more than the external forces. But he does not forget to mention the method to existence and beauty of the society. Most parts of the novel describe all these. But unlike him, Ananthmurthy has shown Brahmin society as a community that has lost power. It is difficult to believe that there was such a stage in the history. Due to tempered reality factual errors on foreign idealism, Samskara fails a novel though it is a enlightening write up.

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