

Women and Life: Scholarly views of Dr. Shivarama Karantha

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Abstract

This paper tries to communicate to the readers the views of Dr. Shivarama Karantha regarding the social life of women. He was of the opinion that the women then also has the social confinement. They were denied of independence in their social life. Their personal life was restricted to the four walls of the house dominated by the male. Even within the house their role was absolutely limited. Throughout the novel Dr. Karanatha has remarkably explained and touched the readers. This paper makes it clear the view points of him as a social evil prevailing in the society.

The novel 'Sarasamma Samadhi' the first socio – literary work by Karanth was published in the year 1928. As Karanth had the concern for the down trodden Dalits of the society, he has every sympathy for the women who have been exploited in the society. He is aware of the superstitious beliefs and unhealthy customary practices which have spoilt the lives of women whose independent life has been snatched away in the society. The theme of the present novel is also about the major social problem and how the women are tortured and exploited in the society.

The novel depicts the desperate and wretched situation of the women. The women character Janaki being a mother who wants to get her daughter married as soon as possible but her husband, a male character who is the most irresponsible one and a drunkard spends his time idly always scolding his wife. Annappayya and Sunalini the husband and wife who are not able to head a happy life due to lack of mutual understand between them. The husband Annappayya who even is not bothered about, his wife's likes and dislikes, his wife Sunalini being educated longs for the happy and meaningful life. Annappayya's infinity that he is uneducated before his educated wife makes him may a time to tortures his wife. He blindly obliges his mother who always hates her daughter – in – law. Both these the son and the mother tortured Sunalini, she was fed up with the life and started losing interest in life. Sunalini found herself in a critical condition that even she couldn't continue to live in her husband's house bearing all the torture and she couldn't go back to her father's house carrying all her difficulties to him. So she surrenders to the shrine of Sarasamma which was believed to be the holy place where all human problems could be found solace. Annappayya's greed for money has shattered Sunalini's dreams for life.

So it was very difficult to lead a life with him. The couples Bhagirathi and Hirannayya give us the picture of another couple who also couldn't lead a happy family life together. Bhagirathi who wants to lead

a life of freedom by maintaining her status but her husband Hirannayya who is seen fully under the control of his father and he is not in a position to face his father's domination even to lead his personal life with his wife. Nagaveni, who was born and brought up in the village naturally very innocent was married to Seetharama who was tempted and inclined to city custom culture with his attraction towards English and romantic life. These husband and wife also couldn't lead the life of happiness. Chandrayya, a unsatisfied character who loiters here and there throughout the novel, being attracted towards married women always makes conversation with the spirit. He is in search of happiness which he never finds till the end.

All these characters sketched by Karanth are dissatisfied with their condition in the life for different reasons. But they are all trying to find solution for their problems. So they trusted and come to Sarasamma to get solace. How strongly the superstitious beliefs had ruled the minds those days can be well understood by this novel. Those who were in such problems only believed that Sarasamma is the deity who could solve their problem.

Janaki gives up her happiness and marries a husband who has already lost his two wives and is too old by age only to make her mother happy. Sunalini who at the beginning of her married life raised her objection against injustice, inequality, and exploitation was seen attempting suicide in her later days. At last she was convinced by Chandrayya to go back to her father's house. Bhagirathi dreams of her independent happy life and always hates her husband, Hirannayya's ugly nature and she thinks of having relation with Chandrayya but, ultimately the social custom has stopped her and decided to stay with her cursed life only.

The village folk, who believed and trusted the most Sarasamma as 'Maha Pathivrathe' but at the end of the novel we understand that Sarasamma who was exploited and forced to lead a life with her most disliked and unwanted husband. She even wanted to marry a husband of her own choice. But the society has not allowed him and she was made to burn herself and die in the pyre of her husband. The spirit of Sarasamma narrates the tragic end of her life to Chandrayya who is seen throughout the novel making conversation with the spirits. Ultimately, the tragic and unhappy status of women who, were forced to lead a wretched life by this male dominating society of those day and the society was full of superstition which spoilt the happiness of women.

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