

General Applicability of Human Values: Karnatha's Perceptions

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This paper tries to find out the human values that one of the great authors from Karnataka Dr. Shivarama Karantha in his great novel Choman Dudi. Every angle of the common life of human beings pertaining to rural life is made known in a heart touching manner by the author. The novel tries to throw the lights on the exploitation of in terms of casteism by the elite class

Key words: Deity, miserable life, exploitation

The Novel 'Choman Dudi' by Shivarama Karanth was first published in the year 1933 depicts the social condition of the society during those days. It presents the disparity, the miserable condition of the life of Dalits who had been exploited from the last many centuries. Being deprived from all the facilities and rights to live in the society with equal social status and liberty, the Protagonist of the novel 'Choma' leads a life of slave in a tragic way represents all the Dalits of his time who were victimized to lead a life of untold misery. The dream of tilling a piece of land as the owner of it never becomes real and he had to end his life with utter dissatisfaction and despair only. Due to the social dogma of the cast system Choma who was born as dalit' had to lead a life of slavery throughout his life along with his family. The novel depicts how the dream of Choma to become a owner of a piece of land always tempts him and makes him despair till the end. The life becomes critical when he had lost his wife and had to continue to live with four sons and one daughter in a small hut. The dog 'Kari Badu' and the two bullocks he found in the forest, along with these 'Panjurli' the deity whom Choma believed most, his landlord Sankappayya under whom he lived as a slave throughout his life. Biruma who was running an arack shop to which Choma visits daily and his Drum (Dudi) which always expressed his inner feelings of sadness and his longing for a piece of Land and whenever he beats his Drum, a kind of rhythm 'Dhama... Dhama... Dhakka... Dhakka...' was heard for which Choma's daughter Belli starts singing 'Le... Le Le Le..... Le.. Le.. Le.. Le.'

These were the only world of Choma's life. The Novel contains only 30 pages but it presents Shivarama Kharantha's gigantic personality as a Novelist. After visiting the houses of 'Dalit' Community and spending several hours with them, Karantha as he himself only declared that he wrote this novel only in five days. Choma with a dream of tilling a piece of land and trying to realize it

spends his whole life of slavery but unfortunately his dream is never fulfilled. The loan he took from the Coffee Estate owner the other factor which made Choma helpless, ultimately he decided to send his two sons. Chaniya and Guruva to work in the Coffee Estate as slaves. But even in this critical situation also he never thought of selling those two oxens which he found in the forest. His dream of tilling the land was so attached with those two oxens. Though Sankappayya, Choma's landlord was willing to give a piece of land to Choma, his orthodoxical mother always opposed the idea. So Sankappayya didn't dare to go against his mother. Choma was victimized to lead an untold miserable life as a slave and his struggling to clear the loan of Coffee Estate are really heart touching in the novel. His daughter Belli ultimately had to lose herself for the sexual thirst of Mingela and Monvela. Though it caused enough pain to Choma he could not do anything in his helpless condition. His son Guruva was converted to Christianity. Chaniya who died of severe fever, another son of him Neela who drowned into the water, nobody came to rescue him because he was a 'dalit'. Choma was a dumb spectator to face all these series of tragedy in his life. Choma even thought of converting to Christianity to realize his dream of tilling the land but the Deity Panjurli whom he believed and feared most never allowed him to have the courage of doing like this, so here also he was desperate.

We can observe in the novel the efforts of conversion from one religion to another during those days. The Casteism, the social evil had taken the lives of several people who dreamt of the meaningful life on this land. The novelist Shivarama Karantha has ably convinced the readers that the dreams of thousands and thousands of people like Choma were shattered, not because of their faults but because of the injustice this society showed to them. Choma throughout his journey of suffering was only accompanied by his 'Dudi' (Drum) through which he could only express his hidden agitation, desperation, and his shattered dreams of life. The series of tragedy faced by Choma really touches the readers. The novel is successful in reaching its readers by depicting the helpless condition and exploitation of the Dalit whose dreams are snatched away by the unnatural and unlawful customs of the society. The known critic of Kannada Literature has rightly remarked that there is an influence of colonization on the orthodoxical rural life of India. This could be seen in the novel. The desire to own and till a piece of land by an untouchable Choma is a contradiction to the orthodoxical social custom and casteism prevailing in India. The influence of the colonization can be observed here clearly in the novel.

Shivarama Karantha, a veteran Kannada Novelist sketched the role of Choma as a public character not only restricted to a particular region. There could be many like Choma whose lives were shattered and had to undergo the life of untold miseries only because they were born in believed to be an untouchable communities. Naga Ithal another known critic of Kannada Literature also opines the same.

The Novelist has shown the invent of modernity in the novel that the social values are taking the path of change. Choma who was a Dalit and born in an untouchable community has started dreaming of owning the land which was socially restricted in those days symbolizes this. There is an interface of colonization with the theme of this novel. Hence the novel 'CHOMANA DUDI' Can't be read as only a regional Kannada novel, But it has a broader and greater consideration due to its universal values. The novel strongly proposes for the change of the inhuman social customs of the society.

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