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Baraguru Ramachandrappa's *Shabari*: A Postcolonial Novel

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Abstract:

The 'term' postcolonial is always much discussed debate. It mainly explores or inquiries imperialism and colonialism. This novel scrupulously presents hard and exploited life of tribes who paid much attention to their own unique traditions and rituals. This novel also deals with democratic politics. And feudalism also plays major role here. This paper mainly aims at presenting how the novelist, Baraguru Ramachandrappa, constructs innovative ideas for deconstructing odds or subverting the concrete myth in order to bring out the equality in tribes and in general through the struggle. Struggle is key point of the novel. Shabari is the protagonist and shabari is a metaphor. The novelist, Baraguru Ramachandrappa, is an outstanding Indian regional writer who depicted it in myth-narrative style which involves around the character Shabari. She struggles hard a lot against the odds or system as a young lady with her people but system collapses her dreams so much so that her fate lies in the hands of system. Shabari got married with Chandra, an educated man but the next day he died due to revolt against the system that God cursed and then, Surya, friend of Chandra, worked for the welfare of the settlement to whom she wished to marry but Surya also died in jail, for he fought for the equal rights for the tribes.

Keywords: postcolonial, customs and rituals, feudalism, democratic politics and struggle.

Baraguru Ramachandrappa (1946) is an outstanding Indian writer who is novelist, essayist, screen writer, film director, socialist, professor of kannada and his literary views so excellent. His notable works : Suntaragali, Onduurian Kathegalu, Kannadabimana, Rajakarani and so on. Movies: Shabari, Thai, Hagalu Vesha, Bhagirathi, Angulimala etc. The novelist,

Baraguru Ramachandrappa, fictionalized facts and figures vividly especially the inner urge of tribes informatively and insightfully. He is an original thinker of deeply rooted in the tribal culture. His crucial views are an honest attempt at decolonizing of the tribal thinking about their tradition and rituals and he tried to make them awakening and free from colonial point of view through his intellectuality and he rightly observed plea of such depressing or suffering from poverty because of dependency, in other words he points out dominancy which made them source less people and due to believing rites and rituals. The novelist knew the such mythical culture by reading some books as he mentioned his strands. He has abundantly put his effort in decolonizing the inferior and superior complexity and slavish mentality of tribes throughout the novel. His metaphorical constructed characters are like Chandra and Surya both put much more effort in order to deconstructing outdated rites and rituals.

Indeed, postcolonial is interdisciplinary study. This novel unfolds sensitive and very sensitive predicaments or traumatic experience of tribes. Here really struggle is its prime or main object of the novel and waiting is another important fact, waiting is also absurdity of the 20th century. *Shabari*, protagonist of the novel, she waits for everything for example good days and Surya. The novel analyses history and cultural conflicts of tribal people who had some fixed identities since time immemorial. The myth in tribes who used to send a newly wedded woman to the temple to spend first night with God instead of her husband, it is sacrifice of tribal bride. As per the tradition and ritual *Shabari* was sent to temple to spend her first night with God in spite of her husband Chandra but it had not been held because Chandra did not allow his wife *Shabari* to sleep with an unknown stranger. On that night Chandra entered into temple secretly to examine the myth with Huchcheera, a dumb fellow who watched it silently. To a certain extent Huchcheera is nothing but the salient society. When the God like figure appeared from the sanctuary Chandra pounced on him, while it was fighting between Chandra and the God *Shabari* ran towards the settlement but the next morning Chandra laid dead splitting blood before the temple. As per the myth those who opposes the God would die splitting blood. Chandra is a man of experience. The concept of the God made them fools. In disguise of the God Narasimharayappa appeared, Head of the village. The novelist, Baraguru Ramachandrappa, is a tribe by birth, his argument is that myth is mystery, superstition, drama of God, not more than that. According to Michael Foucault, French philosopher, there nothing is happened without

politics. Narasimharayappa is landlord or Zamindar, Head of the village, and like king and Rama Joisa is like Minister.

Broadly speaking myth is broken by Chandra but with tragedy. Therefore, Chandra's question about the role of God is unquenchable that all are the children of God even though how He sleeps with His daughter. God He can never ever do such things. The strong enough arguments of Chandra is that God plays an important role in order to perpetuate the system so tribes accepted it blindly. And then the novelist keenly points out the poverty of India that Shabari, at the time of marriage, had worn a sari without a blouse. She looked gorgeous with a lot of garlands made of metals and elephant's tusk. As Arvind Adiga mentioned in his novel "The White Tiger". Indian English fictional writer, he observes Indian in two ways that India of Darkness and India of light, here Shabari belongs to India of Darkness.

Basically, Indian is land of superstitions which played and plays majorly in having endangered. And as far as superstition is concerned the death of Chandra remains suspected although Huchcheera knew it but he is dumb and uneducated. As the novelist narrates illiteracy of the tribes is major cause to have been exploited. The death of Chandra is hidden but finally it is unveiled when Huchcheera is become educated. On the one hand Ramachandrappa emphasizes the importance of education in order to take the tribes or depressed to the main stream of life and even liberalize them to free from poverty as well as prejudice. Chandra strongly opposes both Priest and God because Chandra is rational and educated. Timmarayi is father of Shabari who is an honest and senior to the settlement and his words are valuable. The fixed mentality of Timmarayi about the tradition and ritual, he says to Chandra" if you speak like this, then I will surrender my daughter to this temple when Chandra called God as a stranger, such deeply rooted cultural contrasts, the author shows us insightfully. Consequently, Ramachandrappa shifts from traditional atmosphere to the modern atmosphere that is to be discussed in a great extent and then demolished by the leader Surya through establishing the 'Night school' in the settlement which is also dream of Chandra. These two powerful figures are treated symbolically or metaphorically as the Moon and the Sun such metaphorical construction of the novelist attracts readers as well as critics insightfully. This novel not only decolonizes the fixed identities specifically ritualistic and traditionalists of tribes but also in general.

V. S. Naipaul, one of the outstanding postcolonial novelists who comments about religion which is the greatest curse of the mankind. It has killed more people, destroyed more property, than any other thing. Even today Northern Ireland, the Middle East, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, all fighting each other in India. Naipaul also mentioned in his novel 'India: A Million Mutinies Now', the views of Periyar eminent Indian social activist, prophet, sage or a wise man. He was an atheist and a rationalist. He ridiculed the Hindu Gods. He cruelly mocked caste Hindus comparing the poverty of their scientific achievements with the achievements of Europe. Discourse of Periyar. There is no God. There is no God. There is no God at all. He who invented God is a fool. He who propagates God is a scoundrel. He who worships God is a barbarian. To some extent, by and large India was and is being suffered in the name of the God.

Susanne Langer opines about myth, American philosopher, writer and educator, Myth....Whether literally believed or not, is taken with religious seriousness, either as historic fact or as a 'mystic' truth. Its typical theme is tragic, not utopian; and its personages tend to fuse into stable personalities of supernatural characters. Another important feature of myth is that it's closely associated with beliefs, religious or secular. The psychoanalytical school of Freud and Jung considers myth an expression not of the external world but of the collective or individual unconscious.

Shabari raises her voice, it's either feministic thought or freedom of individuality, she expresses her strands that she leads her life like son of Timmarayi, after the death of Chandra when Narasimharayappa put the demand to concubine or art of coddling with *Shabari* because concubine which was become custom, practiced by the landlords and the rich but *Shabari* rebels it. She is strong enough against the patriarchy so that the dominancy of Narasimharayappa is flapped who is the symbol of feudalism whereas *Shabari* is symbol of democracy. And then the novelist characterizes Surya powerfully because the role of Surya is essential to uplift or enhance the settlement and he is the symbol of light.

Meanwhile the term, postcoloniality rejects the discrimination irrespectively. In all walks of life the novelist exhibits democratic point of view of which equality Surya says "why should we divide us seniors and juniors amongst. Almost all Surya is a revolutionized minded fellow who struggles against the colonized one. It is the theory of French Revolution like liberty, equality and fraternity. The exhibition of Surya's view lightens like rays of the Sun, Surya says to

Timmarayi "you ask the girl to bring a stick who is supposed to hold a pencil in her hand to write. And you guys hold a beedi (cigarette) in your hands instead of a pen. Here artistic expression of the novelist is a crucial and thought-provoking interpretation.

The novelist observes that the frustrated or furious life of tribes had been dominantly exploited through colonization and his powerful intellectual criticism on patriarchy is that in the words of Surya "if the society understands that even tribes are also human beings, things will be better". Furthermore, he explains it's only the human beings who can understand their fellow beings. The rich do not treat well the tribes and the poor. we are equal to their dust. When Chandra died, they threshed Huchcheera and beaten black and blue as though he was a beast. This discourse of the novelist is not new to the crooked society. In other words, it's true to say that the rich always behave mercilessly or hard-heartedly to a certain extent.

And discrimination is quite common of those who have.... Of course, the analysis of the harsh reality is relevant of what the author mentioned. However, the silence is broken. It's fire within them but it's outburst. And it's not forgettable ever that human life is not free from some unavoidable aspects. As writer describes the fact that drinking arrack and art of concubine is most probably important practice in the settlement. More Significantly the evil habit of drinking arrack continues to misdirect them. So more and more the life of tribes is clutched in the hands of Zamindar and there is a centre either power or property which always centralizes. The question of equality as well as self-respect is another salient feature of postcoloniality in order to encourage and empower them Surya explained that equality is to be an ideal, not discrimination between the rich and the poor, Zamindars and haves should not treat as slaves. In the name of caste they should not exploit .so each other should have respect and provide food, clothing and shelter in the same way.

There is racial discrimination or the problem of equality is major factor that Village has school but the settlement does not have. The novelist identified its much sociological differences basis on caste and creed which dark side of the society remained there. Hence Shabari always raises her strong voice against inequalities such as she questions "why don't we learn, is there any sin". And meanwhile Shabari actively involves as a central character especially to struggle for equal rights and the freedom is the central theme. Her concern for her people is absolutely a new avenue but plea of economy depressed due to landless in the agrarian

society that's why they had to depend on Zamindars. The foreground work of Surya is to decolonizing them through such proverbial slogan.

Shabari is not educated but very sensitive and intelligent.

All educate are not be intelligent.

All uneducated are not stupid.

The novelist points out how tribes were become slaves with their stagnant life that Timmarayi explains life is gone basis on tradition and beliefs without any changes and for only livelihood and silence in raising even having more questions of past, present and future. It is clearly examined that three strategies are introduced which are educating the settlement, eradicating poverty and developing self confidence in order to bring out the equality. The way differentiation must be subverted. It's true concept of what the novelist notices deeply about the depressed and disappointed expression of Timmarayi, head man of the settlement, " we don't dream at all". Through the wise and polite interrogation of Surya is to explore a suffering tale of Timmarayi. Baraguru Ramachandrappa as a creative writer keenly highlights the importance of effort continuously to gain and education to realize dream and to get succeeded that Surya says "if we don't try, how can things change."

The economic condition of tribes is crystal clear that a tribe said "The Head has bought us the cattle, we have to toil with them on his fields to earn our livelihood". It's a successful novel regarding the construction of economic conditions. No, how is that possible? If I remember him, my heartbeat fails, a tribe says.

On the one hand Surya, as a leader, completely mingled with them and concentrated about the significance of education. The action of Surya is performed here as a figure of renaissance because he enlightens. Huchcheera's non-verbal signals always actively encourage. Priest is the bridge between tribes and Narasimharayappa, landlord. Sanneera is another active character who participates interestingly. Certainly, their love and worship relates them deeply with supernatural power.

To start the 'Night school' in the forest means to be aware of the new developments and respect. To raise voice against Priest means to know the society confidently apart from the

settlement. To do honorary work by Surya means to work for the welfare of settlement. It's idea of Gandhiji. Baraguru Ramachandrappa's artistic projection by and large to break feudalism which was existed for many days. The power of people is very essential but needs proper attention either by education or proper guidance. Of course, strong voice of the novelist for subverting the system that people must speak for their rights. Meanwhile power of education plays major role here and support of Savitri, wife of Narasimharayappa, to the tribes is progressive point. The novelist keenly observes that the Priest's unhappiness with the latest developments in the tribes symbolizes the continuity of the feudalism or colonialism because it's condition of that time, usually time and space is major cause. Anyway, finally they had to agree the formulating policies of the government. Although initially they were not ready to accept democracy but when it became inevitable, they changed their roots keenly. The Priest and Rama Joisa had keenest sense of what to do and how to do. Specifically, Rama Joisa played as minister he always supported to Narasimharayappa, the Head, in every walk of life.

Savitramma, wife of Narasimharayappa, the raise of her voice in favor of tribe's education even being salient woman has uplifted them. The strong debate is that education changes which is the excellent motto of the 20th century. He introduced the upliftment of women. Ramachandrappa explores how the relationship was between the tribes and the Heads or landlords. He projects how to demolish the system that first let a spark within the social system and then it may gradually burn the system for goodness. He feels the external threats should act like burning coal. There should be collision of the two at different planes and levels. This is the internal force that puts the society which is suffering from inequalities on the right track.

Ramachandrappa opines wisely or keenly that "government is just a part of the system, that's all. His further observation is that not only government, in this worst system, but also caste, money, property, class, religion, everything is a component. All together constitute the social and economic system. Hence, if the government is changed, the entire system is not changed it results only the process of colonial continuation.

The exploration of such inner conflicts or contradictions must be subverted, he argues. He crucially points out the harsh reality. So that so much he directs "ours is one of the initial steps and certainly attracts much more harsh realities of democratic politics or government, he interrogates very clearly who are the real terrorists.

It's a fact not exaggeration of what the novelist notices and he characterize Surya as a socialist that Surya says "Look Nawab nobody would consider the violence committed by the state as brutal. If the police open fire, kill the innocents it will be considered as a right step to protect law and order and ensure peace. If people in a group kill the oppressors it is treated as murder and homicide. If one looks at it carefully, inequality is itself a form of violence. In this world discerning violence is an indubitable topic. Who are terrorists and who are not is also an issue. Those who raise a war, aren't they terrorists? Hence, I think that there should be an ideological clarity with regard to religious-unreligious acts, war, peace, communalism, caste". Ramachandrappa strongly attacks on this democratic political scenario or colonial realities, confused, or complacencies or absurdities of post-independence period. As much as possible the novel is read deconstructive point of view and the novelist narrates ultimate urges with new strategy that it is an ideology of which we need to be always creative.

The very vivid narration of the novelist about the system that firstly people understand what to fight what not to fight for example government is just a part of system but not the entire system. It needs proper revolution but revolution is only a dream not bloodshed, not war so the way it means struggle is existed in order to fulfill the dream. There is a transitional period which turns towards struggle for their rights, through the interrogation of Surya, the novelist deconstructs the myth "why don't you have land like your Head. You are the true Children of this mother earth. Nobody thought about the reason behind death of Chandra. You simply believed what you were told. Using your faith they have to amassed money and wealth. To decolonizing or subverting fixed mentality the writer strongly argues that tribes should claim "This is our earth". The novelist deconstructs here about the tradition of the tribes that a newly married woman spending the first night with God in the temple, "Why doesn't this apply to the all women? And the myth of the God, it's said that myth is bundle of beautiful lies, history deals with hard facts and hence reliable, Rama Joisa says to Surya nobody should enter the sanctum except Narasimharayappa, and speciality about the sanctum there was a Saint in sanctum but his name was forgotten and need not to know his name. The novelist explored how the reality was hidden brutally and tribes were exploited.

Tradition is broken when Nawab strongly rejects to send his wife, Gauri to the temple to spend the first night with God. This novel also deals with capitalistic point along with

neocolonized views, that natives as well as foreigners help each other in order to invest money like selfish fellows Narasimharayappa and Rama Josiah for their own reasons. The novelist points out how the system is continued in different forms that the end of kings and the rise of politicians. There is the progressive slogan, "The tiller is the owner of the land ". Along with this slogan the new question is arisen "tiller is the owner of the land" is true, the women who have been working in the fields why don't they have the right to the owners of the lands? This is a new avenue to break patriarchy or gender discrimination. There is another strong interpretation about present situation of those who have money are owners. To a certain extent it rejects gender bias in equality especially in the ownership of the land that both men and women should have equal rights. It's not only tiller but also laborers are the owners of the land. Of course, Ramachandrappa argues that people always get power for the leadership rather than only motivation and he records suppose the hidden things are unfolded enemies will easily be known.

Meanwhile leadership is different from heroism; conflict only provides effective leadership so Surya is a good leader who rooted deeply and questioned himself. The fact is that conflict is not the beginning but the final. There is a conflict between Shabari and Narasimharayappa about the land equality. There is a new law of enacting land. Getting land is essential for upliftment. Love between Shabari and Surya is a conflict because they are responsible for social changes. The narration of human complexity is apt here. This discourse of the novelist is true who pasteurizes the present harsh reality of India that in the name of economic progress not only the entire society is sold but also mind and heart have become market products. The World is too much with us, poem by William Wordsworth, he says that we have given our hearts away, sordid boon ! We are out of tune. The novelist unfolds such many crisis and how the hidden things were constructed brutally and deeply that the relation between land and religion. There is a man made concept make them laborers continuously that having land is only basis on previous life of those who have committed good deeds. But the tribes didn't do anything. Having rose the converting issue due to name Nawab but it is only for having kept quite them as well as created controversy.

The couple Surya and shabari consummated as a result of this she became pregnant of which the novelist handled the situation of human desire meticulously. The converting issue also interrupted of the marriage between Gouri and Nawab. The structure of feudalism always

lingered in the mind of the Priest he questions, is Nawab the Head of the village or a Lord of hundred acres to concubine my daughter, such the fixity of his mind is not ready to accept alternatives.

When Huchcheera was educated he unveiled the truth through his writing that the Head Narasimharayappa killed Chandra. This is the keenest view of the novel, for it climaxed the facts and figures specifically. The strong voice of Surya is that the system intentionally kept the settlement out of the village. Having forgotten its own life the Heads of village merely used tribes to protect the religion and work of them. The novelist regrets that freedom of tribes is dead. The tribes focused on the nature or lovers of the nature. Surya keenly knew that the path of struggle against the hard realities is not so easy. The point is that in the hands of system or the police Surya is blamed as a criminal due to struggle for the crisis of equality.

There is neo-colonization through democratic politics of which the novelist unfolds it is much predicament in this country that's why Surya is not allowed to meet his mother. In the name of the progress how the nation has been being neo-colonized in the hands of the politicians and the Heads. Ramachandrappa notices scrupulously that again people are kept in slavish for example M.L.A. Dharmaiah and others are ready to sale the grove of the tribes to multinational companies of America or foreign investors of which they protected longer it. Then the novelist records like M.. L. A. Dharmaiah says "The government is ready to take all necessary steps". The grove was acquired whereas the tribes became helpless. Therefore, American companies have built big buildings so the tribes' struggle is not successful. Of course, of what the novelist keenly observes the bribe system in India is true enough of understanding India to some extent. The relevant interpretation of the reality by the novelist is that governments, politicians, businessmen, rich people and upper-class people support to the foreigners in the postcolonial era. To control the struggle, power and money play major role thus the power of feudalism shifted to the power of police and money through politics. Broadly speaking Ramachandrappa symbolizes Surya as struggle but it is ever arrested. Finally, Surya is arrested and died in jail. The novel meticulously discusses many internal and external forces of past and present which are relevant. *Shabari* has struggled a lot and waited for so many days for good days but it's tragedy at the end of the novel. The novelist pays much attention to the struggle because life is endless struggle.

The discourse of the novelist to raise the voice of the settlement or the subalterns against the superstition or myth or dominancy is absolutely powerful. There is a statement of Thomas Hardy that life is poppet in the hands of fate but in India life is poppet in the hands of system. Here life of Shabari lies in the hands of system. The novelist, Baraguru Ramachandrappa, concentrated or interpreted the system which politics of the feudalism and politics of Democracy systematically. No doubt it presents the timeless conflict between haves and have nots. The novelist asserts the importance of the struggle for existence of the equality. No struggle no equality. Where there is struggle there is equality. Even though result is very difficult in democratic politics. This must not be forgotten to socio-economic and political or structural analysis but also consider subversive or deconstructive elements. The novelist's perspectives and insightful observations are essentially knowable in the novel, Shabari.

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