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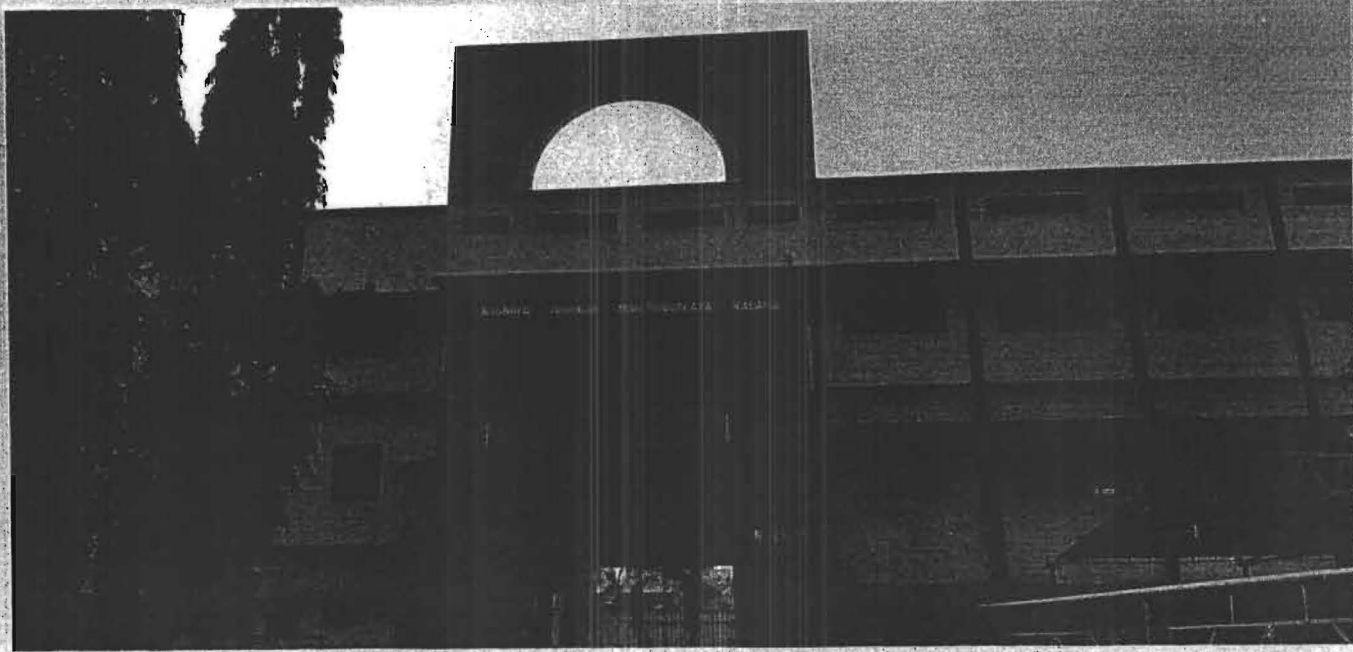
SPECIAL ISSUE

On the Occasion of One Day National Conference On

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN ANCIENT TO MODERN PERIOD

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KALAMB. DIST. OSMANABAD**

6.

Satyakka's Contribution to Vachana Literature

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Introduction:

In the Basaveshwara era alone women grew up on the basis of equality with men religiously, spiritually, socially, economically and educationally. During the revolution of Kalyana also they fought on equal footing with men. They also participated in were they as Gurus, Jangamas and religious heads of monasteries. They also granted Diksha Neelambike, Akkamahadevi, Gangambike, Satyakka, Lingamma, Muktayakka, Rayamma, Danamma, Masanamma, Akkamma etc. belonged to different profession and class. But they become the pillars on which the super structure of Virashaiva religion and literature could stand. This is no mean an achievement.¹

Anubhava Mantapa : Anubhavamantapa or the House of Religious Experience which came into existence by the great reformer was a nucleus, round which gathered men of religious experience who were known as Virasaiva saints. It regarded the gentle sex as in no way inferior to men in spiritual matters. The gentle sex were not only heartily welcomed but also more highly appreciated than that of men. This exceptional attitude of the institution towards the gentle sex changed, so to say, the destiny of Indian women as opposed to Jainism and Brahmanism. In which the one denied the right of salvation and the other. The right of studying scriptures except Puranas, to the fair sex. It produced personalities like Mahadeviyakka, Satyakka and Muktayakka women of sterling character and remarkable independence of thought and action and was also the cause of the production of Vacanas by many authoresses. Whose religious experience some times for surpassed that of men. Such representative women or sisters were afterwards called "The gentle-sex-saints of Virasaivism" and they may be numbered about 30. It became the power-house or the dynamo of Lingayatism which kindled many a cold soul and brought a miraculous

change in the lives of the most sinful men and women.²

Vachana Sahitya :

The Vachanas of the Sharanas are spontaneous outpourings of heart. As such the body of Vachanas is good literature. In the Vachanas, Sharanas have expressed their views on individual as well as social problems. As eternal principles are discussed there, the Vachanas are called Vachana Sastra also. There is intimacy as well as sublimity in the Vachanas. There is vast body of Vachana literature enriched by so many Sharanas.³

Satyakka Brief Life:

Satyakka of Jambur, who is a sweeper, comes from the lowest of low ranks in society, but both as a devotee and as Vachana writer, she is ranked among the greatest. Her native place is Hirejambur, a village near siralakoppa of Shimoga district. Her daily duty was sweeping and keeping clean the courtyards and streets of the Sharanas in Kalyana. She shows her unflinching devotion to Shiva, the only god she worships. She swears to worship none but Shiva, and to hear no other word but praise of Shiva. There goes a popular story which throws light on her adherence to the vow of hearing no other word than Siva. In order to test her strict observance of the Vrata, one day Lord Shiva, disguising himself as a beggar goes to Satyakka and begs of her some alms. When Satyakka puts a handful of rice into the beggar's bag which had a hole deliberately made at the bottom, all the rice falls to the ground. Then the imposter beggar pretends sorrow and says – [Harida harind kalu haridu hoytu]. Satyakka's anger, on hearing the word Hari repeated thrice by the beggar, knows bounds, and she soon thrashes the beggar with the wooden spoon in her hand. Pleased with her firm faith in her Vrata, Lord Shiva manifests Himself to Satyakka.⁴

¹ Mahanta Swamiji, The contribution of Basava to Indian Culture, Basava Journal, Vol.15, Issue No.2, December 1990, Basava Samithi, Bangalore, p.41.

² C.D.Uttangi, Anubhavamantapa the Heart of the Lingayat Religion, Basava Journal- vol.8, issue no.4, June 1984, Basava Samithi, Bangalore, pp.1-12.

³ S.S.Malwad, Virasaivism and Vacanakaras, Basava Samithi, Bangalore, 1980, pp.27-39.

⁴ C.R.Yaravintelimath (Trans), Vacanas of Women Saints, Basava Samithi, Bangalore, 2006, pp.54-55.

Satyakka's views on Kayaka (work): Her Kayakka was sweeping the floors of the Sharanas houses. She used to say, "One should not touch any thing that one has not earned through Kayaka". She said what she meant: she meant what she said. There was ambiguity with her. She was regarded as the embodiment of truth. Look at the way she admonished an accomplished Shivasharane like Muktayakka, who would not control her grief resulting from the loss of her brother -mentor, Ajagauna, Satyakka, Muktayakka's⁵ contemporary Sharane, disapproving of Muktayakka's attitude says:

"Why does the Bhakta need all this pain and pine?
Why weep away what we can be sung away?
Sambhjakkesvara's devotees from upon
Sister Muktayakka's sorrow without an end"

Since death, according to Virasaiva philosophy, is a festive occasion to be celebrated in the knowledge that the departed had achieved aikya with Shiva, her contention is that it does not behove a Sharana to mourn death. Satyakka's contention certainly suggests her spiritual status and accomplishment⁶.

Satyakka contribution to Vachana Sahitya :

Satyakka was a versatile writer. Her simple style reflected her honesty and integrity. She proudly professed "Lord, I swear by your name that I won't touch even if a piece of golden-cloth falls into my lap!"⁷ She practiced what she preached. 27 Vachanas are attributed to Satyakka all of which exhibit her single-minded devotion to Lord Shiva. The glory of gentle devotees, the thought of husband and wife being one integrated couple, the censure of hypocritical Guru, Disciple and jangannas, the concept of equality between man and woman-are a few important aspects of Satyakka's Vachanas. Satyakka's Vachanankita is 'Sambhu Jakkessvara', unique and purposeful but also apt.

There is no difference between men and women say in one of her Vachana. Equality between man and women.

Breasts and braid do not prove feinity
nor beard, sword and moustache prove masculinity
This may be what the world believes
But those who know,
Know it to be otherwise.
Sweetness is what makes the fruit tasty
The special quality of flower

Derives from its fragrance.
You know the truth of this
Shambhu Jakkessvara.⁸

One must avoid another's money, wife and property said Satyakka in a Vachana:

Archane, Poojane are not prescribed.
Mantra, tantra are not prescribed.
Doopa, deepa are not prescribed.
Not appropriating
Another's money
Another's wife
Another's God
These, Shmbhu Jakkessvara,
Are eternal prescriptions.

Satyakka focuses on importance of Istalinga worship.

I heard pinaki(siva) calling me
An intelligent mystic
Which I was still drawn to him,
I showed great love,
Now I greatly fear he will not allow me
To utter any words.
The word 'siva-siva' becomes
The foundation of one's life.
The axe of normalcy is lost
The moment I see Him.
On uniting with Shambhu Jakkessvara
I am dums -struck!

True devotion towards Gods mentioned in below Vachana:

Why did you make me go through impossible lives?
Why did you place me in insufferable worlds?
Why did you haunt me so without mercy?
Tell me my linga,
What wrong have I done?
If you push me aside
Saying you cannot tend me
Do you think I would let you,
Shambhujakkeshwara?⁹

Too much attachment to worldly things must be given up and Worship God with kind heartily: said in a Vachana by Satyakka .

Devotion mixed with things worldly,
seed mixed with ghee,
lamp which has oil mixed with water,
do they ever glow?

Not a worldling not a devotee
not havissu, not seed
not water, not oil

⁵ Ibid, PP.46-49.

⁶ Somashekar Munavalli & Siddhaya Puranik, Sivasaraneyaru, R.C.Hiremath Kannada Adhayana Peeth, Karnataka Univerity, Dharwad, 2003, p.93.

⁷ M.M.Kalburgi (ed), Vachana, Basava Samithi, Bangalore, 2012, p. 862.

⁸ Vijaya Ramaswamy-Divinity and Deviance; Women in Virasaivism, OUP, -1996, p.67.

⁹ M.M.Kalburgi (ed), Vachana, Basava Samithi, op.cit, Vachana No. 1345, p.447.

those sinners who feed in the house of bhavis
for the desires of their body –
why would our Shambhujakkeshwara
approve of them?

10. Yaravintellimath R. (trans), Vacanas of Women
Saints, Basava Samithi, Bangalore, 2006

Conclusion:

The 12th century was a turning point in the cultural history of Karnataka. Basaveshwaras period is also called Vachana Yuga, because along with him, other Shivasaranas and Shivashranes also wrote Vachanas. The first importance thing which regard to Vachana literature is its noble thoughts and simple style. It does not require any scholarship or erudition to understand and appreciate the beauty of many Vachanas. They are within the reach of every sane man. Satyakka born in Shivamogga district. sweeping the yards of Shiva devotee was her occupation. 27 of her Vachanas have been found. Apart from the supremacy of Shiva and the greatness of devotee she speaks about equality of man and women. Her thoughts relevant to modern generation to consider work as worship and built equality in the society without considering caste, community, sex and work. We leant about her humility and unwavering commitment to the preservation of the values we attach to our religio-cultural heritage. Satyakka Vachanas influenced till today on Virasaiva community. Her contribution to Vachana literature is unique in Kannada literature and culture. It teaches moral values, how to behave in the society, judgment on rights or wrong –relationship between men and women; convey the message of dignity of labour.

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