

VOL. 4 | ISSUE 2 | FEB. 2018
(UGC Approved Journal No. 63716)



ISSN: 2454-5503
IMPACT FACTOR: 4.197 (IJIF)

CHRONICLE OF HUMANITIES AND CULTURAL STUDIES

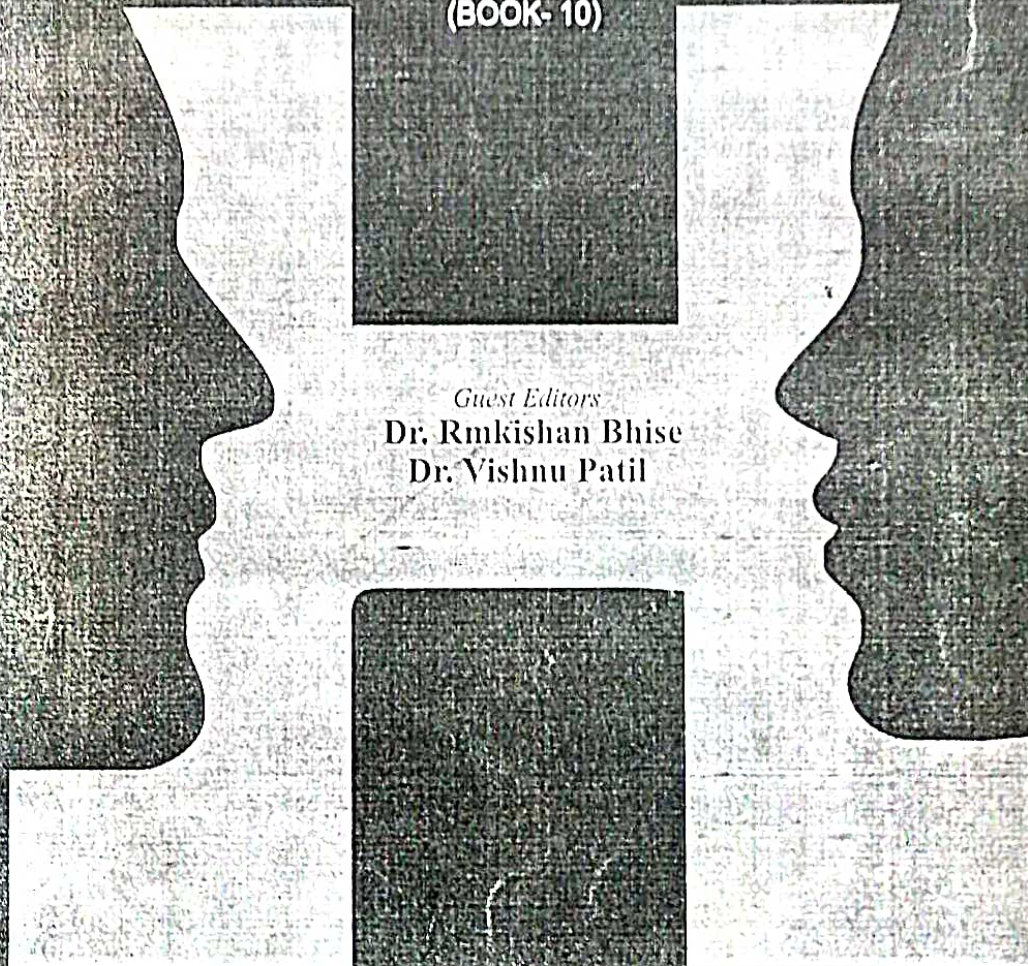
A BIMONTHLY REFEREED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

SPECIAL ISSUE

On the Occasion of One Day International Conference On

**RECENT ADVANCES IN
LANGUAGES, LITERATURE AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**
17th February, 2018

(BOOK- 10)



Guest Editors

**Dr. Rmkishan Bhise
Dr. Vishnu Patil**



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**CENTRE FOR HUMANITIES AND CULTURAL STUDIES,
KALYAN, DIST. THANE &**

**NEW MAN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
MULTI-DISCIPLINARY STUDIES, PARBHANI**

www.newmanpublication.com

CHRONICLE OF HUMANITIES AND CULTURAL STUDIES (CHCS)

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*Special Issue on the Occasion of International Conference on
Recent Advances in Languages, Literature and Social Sciences*
17 Feb., 2018

Guest Editors

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CONTENTS

1. The need of Translation in Children's Literature Dr. Suhasini U. Jadhav
2. Deconstructing the Epic- Narrative Re-reading Ramayana ... Krishna Rohidas Sandanshi
3. Use of Mobile Apps in English Language Learning... Sidhartha Sawant
4. Gender Equality and the Feminist Movement Rupali A. Ingole
5. A Friend's Story – Lacanian Perspective Nisha Suresh Endait
6. Religious and Cultural Identity in the Novel
"Does My Head Look Big In This?" ... Sana Siddiqui
7. Search of Identity in G.B. Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* ... Digambar M. Bhise
8. Second Language Learning and Teaching ... Ojaswi A C
9. Indianised Version of Arbindonean Sonnets Hiralben Natvarbhai Vala
10. Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*: A Cosmic Symbol Ramakant M. Kasture
11. Study of J.G. Ballards "The Drought": An Ecological Perspective Dr. V.M. Rasure
Chorghade C.M.
12. Arbindonean Racy Style of Versification Anurag Bihari
13. Interpretation of Nostalgia and Memory in Diaspora ... Sujay Kumar Bag
14. The issues of Memory and Nostalgia among Indian Diaspora... Sujay Kumar Bag
15. Deconstruction Of Religious Values In Samskara ... Dr. Vinita Virgandham
16. 'Tara' an agonized soul in Mahesh Dattani's play *Tara* Dr. Mrs. Shaikh Ajaz Pervez
Mohd. Khaleeluddin
17. Politics of Memory in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* Dhanlaxmi Subbaiah Medid
18. Selected Theatrical Forms and Movements: A Study Dr. Chandrashekhar B. Kan
19. Thinking Bodies, Material Minds and Trans-corporeality in ... Madhumanti Dasgupta
20. Trade and Truth Status of Autobiographical Disclosure ... Dr. Satyajit Tejpal Patil
21. Translation: Bridging Cultures -Languages Basharatul Haq
22. Trauma of Social Abjection in Perumal Murugan's... Ashok B. Bhosikar
23. E-Governance in India Dr. Vitthal P. Sandur
24. The Rising Voices In American Indian Study Autobiographies... Wakude Nisha P.
25. Written on the Body: An Echo of French Feminism Javaid Ahmad Ganaie
Gh Mohd Mir
Nisar Ahmad Dar
26. Voices of The Voiceless; A Comparative Study of ... Yasmeena Jan
Dr. Shachi Sood
27. Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*... Beena Vinod Rathi
28. Nation and Contemporary Reality : Historical Reflections... Dr. S. J. Ghotekar
29. Impact of Cinema on Youth Dr. Rajendra Gonarkar
Gangadhar Raut
30. India's Challenges in Post ISAF Afghanistan Shakoore Ahmad Dar

Deconstruction Of Religious Values In Samskara And Tale-Danda

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The aim of comparative study of literatures is to show the essential unity of human life. The two texts that have been studied for this paper, Anantha Murthy's *Samskara* and Girish Karnad's *Tale Danda* help us to understand the common human tendencies. In *Samskara* Anantha Murthy depicts the life of a Brahmin priest against an orthodox religious background. In *Tale Danda* Karnad has re-examined the need and structure of the caste system of India that was once, hailed as an ideal one.

In *Samskara*, Anantha Murthy has left no stone unturned in revealing the hypocrisy of orthodoxy of the Brahmin community. The story of the novel revolves around the pending death rites of a renegade Brahmin Naranappa, who had lived a wayward liberated life, cannot be cremated without consulting the holy books. For this they are waiting for the directives from Madhya Praneshacharya whom the entire clan looked upon and revered as the 'Crest -Jewel of Vedanta'. It is really astonishing that a group of the so-called high class people who claim to have good understanding of Vedas and Puranas are keeping the dead body incremented only because they are unable to decide whether to cremate it or not, just because he had deviated from the Brahminic way of life.

Suresh Raval in his book *Interpreting Cultural Impasse in Anantha Murthy's Samskara*, says:

"Orthodox Brahminism is vividly presented in Praneshacharya's fruitless search for an answer from the scriptures, and it is made even more wimple mindedly ritualistic and superstitious by his prayers to Lord Maruti for divine intercession." (Pp.117)

Orthodoxy looms large at the very beginning of the novel. Chandri, the lower caste woman that Naranappa lives with, comes to inform Praneshacharya about the death of Naranappa. The irrational and ugly belief is illustrated as Chandri's voice rings in the ears of everyone. If the Acharya talked to her, he would be polluted; he will have to bathe again before his meal. (Pp.2) Talking to Chandri means that the Brahmi has to take another bath to purify him. The irony is that these high class Brahmins fall flat right on their noses as they are unable to keep up their set rules and succumb to the very human shortcomings of greed and lust which they despise in the members of the sections that they consider inferior.

These people who dictate terms on the name of religion are men who hide their inner carnal desires behind the pious wrap of ardent follower of religion, inside the walls of Agrahara. But if an opportunity

available they make every effort to fulfill their biological urge. Though Naranappa was considered an outcaste, it is Naranappa's ways they follow knowingly or unknowingly. Praneshacharya who tried to bring back the Brahminic way of life faces failure and in the long run fails to maintain his status of a pious Brahmin, despite he being the best in the entire clan. All his life he had tended tirelessly his invalid wife and kept himself far from the carnal world and yet he was happy with it. He felt his marrying an invalid and serving her was one of his greatest achievements as a pious Brahmin on his path to salvation as is depicted in these words:

The lord definitely means to test him on his way to salvation; that's why He's given him a Brahmin birth this time and set him up in this kind of family. The Acharya is filled with pleasure....he is filled with compassion for his ailing wife. He proudly swells a little at his lot, thinking, 'By marrying an invalid, I get ripe and ready.' (Pp.2)

But later after he establishes physical relationship with Chandri in the forest he wants to give away his Brahminic principles. He feels guilty of his act, of his inability to control his sexual urge and indulging himself in the arms of the low caste woman. But it is the human in himself that has made him act in this manner. All his philosophy of the universe undergoes a sudden transformation after that experience. He wants to be with Chandri again and even starts fantasizing about other low caste women: He remembered the darkness in which Chandri had fed him the plantains from her lap...He'd heard that a young lad went to the river bank and slept with an outcaste girl there, after hearing his description of Shakuntala. The Acharya's fantasy dragged in all the untouchable girls he'd never thought of stripped them and looked at them. (Pp.79) This shows sexual desire of a normal man leaping out of Praneshacharya fiercely. All vows of celibacy are thrown to the winds.

Rashmi Gaur in *A Window on Brahminic Orthodoxy in Samskara* says:

'The attempt of a holy Brahmin to trudge the path of celibacy is nothing except hypocrisy and an exercise in futility.' (Pp. 141)

The novel also displays mocking exposure of the greediness of the Brahmins such as their greediness for free sumptuous meals. They fear that they might not be invited to such meals if they hurriedly perform the death rites of Naranappa without consulting the holy books. As it is customary for the Brahmins not to take their meal until the dead body is cremated, entire clan,

Bijjala: Your family- the Hoysalas, you may be Kshatriyas. But I am a Kshatriya. A barber His majesty king Bijjala is a barber by caste. For ten generations my forefathers raised the land as robber barons. For another five they ruled as the trusted feudatories of the emperor himself. They married into every royal family in sight. Bribed generations of Brahmins with millions of cows. All this so they could have the caste of Kshatriyas branded on their foreheads. (1993 Pp.14)

Here Karnad shows that the kind of *Kalyan* is not a Kshatriya but a barber. Further he shows that noble character and ideal administration are not the inborn qualities of one community alone. Treat everyone as a human being is the message in Tale-Danda. Religion cannot ill treat anyone, nor can it reduce from his being a human being. Bijjala explains to his wife Queen Rambhadravati the difference between God and a human being and the difference in him and god in the words: "But the one truth I know that I exist and God doesn't. (Pp.15) Karnad disagrees with the established tradition of considering a caste or creed on the strength of 'physical parentage.' He goes away from the accepted traditional beliefs regarding having a son and regarding birth, caste and creed.

Bijjala: A son is the final goal of human existence! It may be that he drinks your blood and chews your bones to mash. But he is the one who'll keep your soul fed till eternity.

Basavanna: For a sharana, physical parentage is of no consequence. A person is born truly only when the guru initiates him into a life of knowledge.

Bijjala: That's what you believe. As a child you tore up your sacred thread and ran away from home. Birth, Caste and Creed mean nothing to you. (Tale Danda 1993 Pp.20)

In Act II, scene V, we find Sheelavanna, a cobbler boy, is going to marry Kalavati, a Brahmin girl. The author develops this delicate matter and handles it in a situation in a masterly way to achieve new dramatic heights. Here the Brahmin girl has no objection in marrying the cobbler boy. But the cobbler boy is hesitant to accept the Brahmin because the girl can't stand the smell of leather. (Pp.40) King Bijjala, who is a barber by birth, wants to forbid the marriage. Basavanna, a sharana saint poet is not ready to support this kind of marriage because

"the orthodox will see... mingling of castes as a blow at the very roots of varnashrama dharma." (Pp.38)

Later he consents but the king warns him that it will create an uncontrollable bloodshed. However, the king "launched the wrath of the people and invited disaster on his own head." (Pp.65)

except children starve for days. Dasacharya, unable to endure his hunger, goes to Parjapur the place of the lower clan of Brahmins whom the Madhva sect looked down upon and despised because of their less orthodox outlook. When Manjaya offered him food, he pretended being afraid of his Agrahara people coming to know about it and the consequence thereof. He Says,

"I don't really mind eating in your house. But if those rascals in our agrahara hear about it, no one will invite me to a ceremony again." (Pp.7-8)

However after a short time he starts eating. He brings out greed and weakness of people who talk of high philosophy, for good food in utter disregard of austerity that they preach. Another example of greediness of those who preach satisfaction on the name of religion is depicted when they greedily eye Chandr's gold ornaments, which she takes out and places in front of the entire sect as a price for having Naranappa's body cremated: The heap of gold was worth at least two thousand rupees. One after another, the wives scanned their husbands' faces. The Brahmins bowed their heads; they were afraid, fearful that the lust for gold might destroy Brahmin purity. But in the heart of every one of them flashed the question: if some other Brahmin should perform the final rite for Naranappa, he might keep his Brahminhood and yet put all that gold on his wife's neck. (Pp.9-10) As gold is desired by everybody, so is it by Brahmins. After having sight of Chandr's gold, Lakshmanacharya and Garudaacharya see little reason for an argument as to who should be allowed to do the cremation. In fact, this is a show of their human weakness no matter how far they may feign their disinterestedness in these worldly devices.

Gurub Karnad has attempted various themes concerning past history, past and present values, and religious beliefs and myths of India. He is also concerned with subtle meaning of religion. In *Yajati* he re-interprets an ancient Hindu myth on the theme of responsibility. In Tale-Danda he re-examines the need and structure of the caste system of India. Picking up historical cum political background for his plot he moulds his theme of Tale-Danda to serve his present needs.

The theme of *Tale-Danda* is that of deconstruction of caste and religion to arrive at its real, proper meaning and to restructure the same for the benefit of the society and the country. Scene after scene Karnad gives new doses and fresh outlook to the set beliefs and rooted religious faiths. It is through the Sharanas that the author advocates his philosophy. Basavanna, the great sharana saint poet is the mouthpiece to announce the author's views. However, the author's views are expressed also through King Bijjala. The traditionally established caste system facilitates either a Rajput or a Kshatriya to ascend the throne. In Tale-Danda we have a conversation between Bijjala- the King and Rambhadravati the queen.

Bijjala: What is my caste? Tell me.
Rambhadravati: We are Kshatriyas.

The inter-caste marriage takes place inviting the wrath of people and bloodshed in the society. Karnad's *Tale-Danda*, a tragedy, shows Basavanna's "principle of movement and progress in human enterprise" (Preface to *Tale-Danda*) ending in terror and bloodshed. Through conflict and confrontation which go side by side in the drama, Girish Karnad deconstructs the meaning of caste and religion and shows a new community of sharanas who reject anything that is static, believe in equality of sexes and hard work and oppose the caste system. Anantha Murty in *Samskara* has come out with a very realistic rendering of the evil practices of the highly orthodox Indian society with its all flaws and worthlessness.

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