

A NOTE ON KANNADA WOMEN AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

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ABSTRACT

Women's autobiographies are supposed confessions of self and species. They are chronicles of women's lives. In Kannada there are outfits of women's perspectives. They are not revolutionary as they appear in Marathi. Their subversive strategy indeed explores the chauvinism in a different way. Women's autobiographies in Kannada come from different sectors: actors, writers, wives, daughters and others. It is a portal that could accommodate multiple voices.

KEYWORDS: *Women's Perspectives, Subversive Strategies*

INTRODUCTION

The autobiographies are confessions, regrets, untold stories of miseries and self-satisfactions. The genre of autobiography caught fire during cultural studies period. Mainly because of personal becomes public and something political that is present in all our lives. It is a search and research of political voices which run as undercurrent. Also, because the value judgment one makes in the present days is definitely have sharp edges. Autobiographies in this regard serve more than a genre. We do read autobiographies for novels. Most of the times autobiographies are written to correct the prevailing misunderstanding. The stock of memories (of melodies and blues) is constructing a pathway to fictionalize the bygone century.

Feminist histories have an incessant relationship with author orientation. This is because lives of women are, of course, curious to the world but they have been constantly studied for constructing female history from a human history. There is in feminist history to find out the footsteps of the contributors of female history. This, they call as 'spade criticism'. To restore the forgotten lives is one intension behind this mission. Moreover, the feminist motive is to see how the women of the past combat with the patriarchy. This approach definitely has the motive of constructing a small history of its own overcoming the damages that a mainstream history always probed.

Female autobiographies are not full length versions. They, like all other female writings, suffer structural pit and falls. They are too talkative or jarringly silent. The imbalance is quite common in any woman writing (especially early writings of women). The female has no tongue of her own to express her. Despite of these discrepancies, women write autobiographies since they have lot to share, lot to say about their worlds. Though people are odious to a woman writing in general, women are enthusiastic to eat the prohibited fruit as true to their kind. The buoyant spirit of woman has lots of life to write. Kushwant Singh has commented when Amrita Pritam decided to write her autobiography as, "a bus ticket is enough to write your autobiography".

Kannada women autobiographies have long done duty of building up a woman's history through the genre called autobiography. In the context of Kannada feminism is a phenomenon throughout the twentieth century. The Kannada feminist history dates back to early twentieth century when the national movement was inflamed the nation. Early feminist

attitudes therefore developed alongside of nationalism. The Gandhian inspiration was very high on the early women writers. So they wanted to set right their selves according to the models served by Gandhi. The patriarchy they felt was something enemy inside. Their wish was to combat the challenges. So the widows, departed women of upper castes wrote literatures to set a moral standard of a woman.

The late eighties and beginnings of nineties of the twentieth century when feminism inspired women writers to explore a woman writing, they researched the lives of women writers who spent their lives in writing. It was a search for forgotten links of history. Vijaya Dabbe, a noted researcher and activist has begun the search certain women writers and tried to rearrange them within the mainstream histories. She wrote monographs and edited the literatures of women writers with elongated preface to justify their literatures. Following Dabbe, Sumitra Bai, Gayatri Devi, Nemichandra and many more chose to research the lives of early women writers and explored their literatures and biographical details. This helped a lot to construct a woman history in Kannada. Sati Hitaishini, Shymala Sanchaya, Sara Saraswathi, Kalyana Saraswathi, Belagere Janakamma and so on. Anupama Niranjana wrote shared her memoirs in a Kannada Magazine which later anthologized and published as her autobiography as *Nenapu-SihiKahi*. The above said writings have the motivation of going through women lives as well as their writings as they are incessantly combined. It is mainly a query into patriarchy that how far it operated women writing. But writing an autobiography is a challenge for many women writers in Kannada. As they have to contest patriarchy in all respects, they think it is a challenge to expose them and the society enveloped them. Many women writers till today do not want to focus themselves as “feminists”. The Kannada women writers are of the opinion that writing an autobiography means contesting their own people. Reputed writer Vaidehi shared that writing an autobiography means one has to have a deep love about society that a woman writer is going to portray. However, a writer should have great faith regarding readers’ perception power since it is a female issue. Sara Abubakr has shared the same opinion. In a woman’s autobiography certain issues are kept untold fearing canons.

Going through women autobiographies at a stretch, it is seen that the act of writing itself is an act of asserting female self. Space of writing oneself is one dimension to understand female revolt against silencing patriarchy. In India there are countering voices of women who found their own paths. Kannada women writings have also exercised few strategies to counter patriarchy. By and large, the strategies used by women are either open or avert regarding the power bases.

When compared to bold women autobiographies of Marathi Kannada women autobiographies suffer such openness. Neither do the Kannada women writers have historically seasoned contexts like partition. The female awareness was spirited with the national movement of the nation. When the nation was fighting for freedom, Indian women were also forced to search for their self. The appropriation of Hindu woman was taking place, the Kannada women was somehow attracted towards the model. Many early women writers who started writing were trying to appropriate their selves for national woman. Gandhi was their source of inspiration. So they pursued the path of Gandhi in public life. Meanwhile, though they used to absorb their female self with newly arising woman, there were whispers inside to which they bothered silently. Their ways of subversion can be seen in their autobiographies also. The boldness that a woman writer is writing up something of her life is enjoyed by these narrators. But at the same time, they have hindrances. So Kannada women autobiographers sought of writing in a fictional mode. It is a technique that can be seen in women autobiographies. The faulty lines of their stories have jerks, tensions but they are maintained finely.

In Kannada women autobiographies the contributors are from different sections of society. A postmodern kind of representations occurred very much here. Earlier, women of upper caste and creed write. But in case of autobiographies the writing space was opened to all. The actresses from Drama Company occupy much space of autobiographies. It is mainly because they did have rich experiences than household women. Indeed, they were in public contact which opened the gates of experience. The then models of dignified wife and ill reputed whore work in the narration styles also.

Kannada women autobiographies have the register of female domain. The legacy of writing is quite often inaccessible to the women writers. But they practiced writing as emancipatory source. Vasanthi Padukone, the mother of actor Guru Dutt, used to uncover the male indifference and irresponsibility in her writing. She criticizes her husband boldly. Anupama Niranjana shared her experience as a writer in her autobiography. She was almost marginalized in a well-educated family since her writing has little stuff of rationalism. Anupama realizes the push of reading. She also talks of leisure of women writers where she took the idea from Virginia Woolf. Du. Saraswathi used to write her autobiography to seek righteousness in the very act of writing.

Memoirs of women writers appeared not solely in the regular genre. Autobiographies from women are scattered memories. Through constructing memories of fellow beings, the women writers tried to construct their lives' memories. This seems to be a strategy. In Kannada women memoirs we see great number of women who involved in writing used to gather remembrances of their nearest ones, like their husbands, sons or fathers. The front lining of male personality examines the lives of women in their lives. Vasanthi Padukone, while writing on her son Guru Dutt, shared the memory of patriarchal hold that she has undergone. In Kannada we do have good number of memoirs where they are constructed in the names of their husbands. It is a best place where one can analyses their relationships as husband and wife. Especially when a husband is a reputed personality, the inner fiasco or understandings focused get hyped in memoirs. Sharada Gokak (Olave Namma Baduku), Rajeswari Tejaswi (Na Kandante Tejaswi), Shanthadevi Malavad (Navilu Gari Bichichidanga), Kamala Hampana (Dr. Hampanamattu Nanu) and so on is the few examples.

Sara Abubakar, who came up with first Muslim woman memoir, targets the fundamentalism which has been associated with patriarchy. The prohibitions put on Muslim women according to Sara, are mainly set by community men. Even writing is set to fire by the community. Sara has been condemning and criticizing such patriarchal attitudes.

Aesthetics of women's writing is extremely put under magnifying glass of culture. Women's writing is targeted for its openness. When she writes her personal emotions/opinions boldly, society feels embarrassed. So censorship is always swaying on women writing. Patriarchal dictations of what to write what not to write come with great anxiety. Obscenity is an awkward assumption in a woman autobiography. Especially when a woman writer opens up, the eruptions disturb male writers. Kannada poetess Pratibha Nandakumar's memoir, 'Anudinada Antaragange', which is recently released, has faced the same problem. Readers wanted to know the personal lives of women writers to gossip.

To conclude, striking features of Kannada women autobiographies are they are subversive, human concerned, revealed marginalization to the extent. Women autobiographies in Kannada echoed different categories of social class. However they adapt the strategies that are smart!

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