

Glimpses of 21st Century Vision in the Vachana Literature

Dr.JYOTISHREE KAMAT

*Head, PG Coordinator, Department of English
KLE'S J T College, Gadag, Karnataka, India
(Affiliated to Karnatak University, Dharwad)*

Abstract

The 12th century, Vachana (Verse) writers of Karnataka were the first thinkers of medieval India, and probably in the world to grasp the importance of simple and equal life mechanism through their literature. The sharanas had the sheer intuition, discovered what to become, some 900 years before, the basis of the today's technology. It's indeed a duty of every one to spread the remarkable foresight of the 12th century sharanas, the followers of Lord Basaveshwara thoroughly and practically. The Vachana Literature is embedded with the sheer knowledge of equality in the society. They depict Social upliftment, religious tolerance, women liberation and more over the vision of future with the impact of ecofeminism and metaphysical. This literature is focused on the connections between feminism, militarization, healing and ecology. The revolutionary era of 12th century, Kannada Vachana literature had produced many women poets and activists. Basaveshwara, Akkamahadevi, Allamprabhu, Akkanagamma and others had produced connectivity between the physical and conceptual of the earth itself and all life on it. The current paper is bringing the impact of the Vachanas, the mundane, local serenity to Global scenario.

Keywords: Vachana literature, Future vision, equality, women liberation, ecofeminism, serenity.

Futuristic Vision in the Vachana Literature

The sheaf of Lingayat Vachanas rendered from their original Kannada marks a distinct contribution made by Shaivite thought to Kannada literature. These Vachanas, (verse) have democratized the Kannada classical style into a simpler and direct form easily understandable by the masses. They have explained and illustrated the various truths of the absolute and eternal which had remained abstruse and latent in the Jnanakhandas of Vedas and the Upanishads.

The Vachanas are not mere academically utterances. They possess a synthesis and a sincerity of actual experience undergone by their authors in the various planes of spiritual existence. They are quite homely and intimate with diction direct and simple. The tangible sensuous phenomena of the earth are often conjured to explain and illustrate the intangible abstract truths.

The vachanas at present are translated into all languages especially in English to meet the global platform. They are comprehensive, there is no topic materialistic or spiritual, ethical, socialistic, idealistic even secular that they have failed to cover. Besides they are poetic utterances of the great in tune with the infinite. They are re-statements as well as affirmations of the truth in its various manifestations

of human experience. They are revelations of one's own soul, its tribulations, hopes, disappointments, hunger all naturally strung together in a genuine offering of itself to the super soul. They are pervaded by a novel rhythm of their own that of the modern free verse thought with Bhava, - deep sincerity and vision.

Ecofeminism first came to prominence in the early 1980s, based on the feminist philosophy, environmental activism. Ecofeminism focused on the connections between feminism, militarization, healing and ecology. The adoption of the term had also been preceded by many women poetry and fiction in the 1960s and 70s, and has gained increasing prominence through the work of Val Plum Wood and Kren Warren at the west, but the revolutionary era of 12th Century Kannada Vachana Literature had produced many Woman poets and activist. Akkamahadevi, Basavanna, AllamPrabhu, Akkanagamma and others had produced connectivity between physical and conceptual of the earth itself, and all life on it.

The notes of Valplumhood were already discussed in the Vachnas, the lyrics written by the Kannada Vachanakars. Few centuries ago, it was a false assumption made woman are unproductive, just a background.

Ecofeminism is all about the building up the strong philosophy, that to recognize woman as a part of Society not just a sex. Woman has always made invisible in the fields of society. Woman should be the teachers, deep sense of shakti, another power which is subjugated in the world all human beings should be more womanly.

As ecofeminism being a philosophical and political theory and movement which combines ecological concerns with feminist ones ,regarding both as resulting from male domination of the society. Further, it must have sounded 'nature' in those days if Akkamahadevi has shown that the empirical and the spiritual were not separate categories both in life and poetry. She described the cloths to show the society, that the evils eyes should change not every time female stands. She discerned God everywhere in the forest. In all the great trees in the forest; in the birds and the beasts and in the entire natural environment around her. She firmly believed that there should be no gender inequality because the soul is neither male nor female, and there could be no devotion without knowledge.

She rebelled against the traditional women's roles and social expectations. Her entreating devotional lyrics suggest the spiritual heights, she attained by sublimating her worldly desires. Akka Mahadevi's lyrics emancipate her transcendental vision of Lord Shiva (as Chenna Mallikarjuna) and are known for their deep devotion, picturesque and poetic imagery, metaphor and melody and spiritual resilience.

The challenges of worldly life which Akka takes in her stride forms the substance metaphorically, as in the following lines,

If I build my house on a hilltop
How can I fear wild beasts?
If I build my house on the seashore

How can I fear the sound of the waves?
If I built my house in the midst of market
How can I shrink from noise?

Once life is perfected it transcends its past of suffering and sacrifice. In order to sustain the 'life- House', metaphor the poet uses words which are applicable to both 'House' and 'Life' with equal aptness. Mysticism in this source and sustenance of the best of poetic traditions, hence it is enshrined in it all that is finest that makes for the perform of life. It is bathed in the consciousness which does not know itself. In the final stage of spiritual enlightenment the

subject and the object together with the link of consciousness between them, become indistinguishably one. The self forgets itself and merges itself with the Higher – over self.

As a result, the impact of the poetry of Akka Mahadevi is not limited to the only regional, with the long tradition of mystical life, she become specimen of womanhood philosopher and a poet. The legitimacy of her transcendental love or the Lord, searching of Him and His devotees, she utters...

You are the forest
You are all the great trees in the forest
You are bird and beast
Playing in and out of all the trees
O Lord while as Jasmine
Filling and filled by all
Why don't you?
Show me your face?

The major writer mystic and empowered first Kannada poetess Akkamahadevi is role model of women liberation. Her melodious vachanas reflect her new musical talent as well as sublime spiritual experiences. Her contemporary Sharanas (the one who surrenders to God) have expressed 'an unbound veneration for her', Channa Basavanna (another major writer of the time) says...

Twenty Vachanas of Basava

Are equal to sixty –Vachanas of the Adhyaru (established ones)

Ten of AllamPrabhu's Vachanas
Are equal to twenty of Basava's
Five of Ajaganna's Vachanas
Are equal to ten of Allam Prabhu's
One of AkkaMahadevi'sVachana
Is equal to five of Ajaganna

This statement acknowledges the caliber and quality of aesthetic literature and she is associated with some literary works during the 12th century which itself is indicated the women liberation for the future development. For example.... Akkamahadevi vachanas, yogang Trivedi, Srishtiya Vachanagalu, Akkagalapeeth.

She describes the human body as 'a pot of excrement, a cesspool of urine, etc. In the following Vachanas of her:

... A vessel of ofal

A cesspool of urine,
A frame of bone and a pot of pus
Oh! Fie! Burn this body!
Possessing a body; ruin yourself

Ignorant fool! Realize the Lord, Chenna Mallikarjun

Akkamahadevi spurns the world and its temporal pleasures but like a tin- can tie to a dog's tail (to use a Yeatisian Metaphor). This is why AkkaMahadevi unlike the generality of maidens had the anthromorphic picture of the absolute imprinted on her young mind and she surrendered herself entire to Him. He is the one and only true lover, she declared. In contradistinction with Him, earthly lovers or husband's mortals all would pale into insignificance. She implores God to burn her in the crucible of travails and purge her mind of stain of sin. She invites God to plunge her into endless perils and pains only to smash the sense of me in her.

The Sense of ecofeminism can be read and reread in the vachanas of the Kannada Poets. Ecofeminism in the Vachana literature of 12th Century Karnataka reveal their ecological, feminist vision. The upright –ethical systems, visualized by them in the poetry can avert the ecological crisis. The vachnas (Verse) have attempted to raise the eco consciousness of the people to feel the oneness with the universe.

The founder philosopher Lord Basavanna of Vachana literature is more flexible in his insistence upon God's worship. In fact such worship is much better for the attainment of divine peace. The vachanas of Sharana are based on the theme of social equality, well being solidarity and self –sufficiency. That explains how these Vachana are characterized by intimacy, freedom and simplicity. Shatstala siddhanth (six planes of spiritual existence) was a compromise between the various seemingly distant paths of spiritual endeavor, namely the Bhakti, Jnana, karma, Vyrageya and the Yoga. These vachanas do not distinguish between spirituality and ethics, individuality and community the spirit and the flesh.

Moligeya Marayya; (a Vachankara, the king of Kashmir) whole stressing the immanence and awareness of the Lord hints at this truth when he set out this parable.

When earth becomes the village constable;
Is there any place for the thief to hide himself in?
Is there anything then that is?
Not concentrated unto the Lord,

Who is infinite – limbed?

The above lines enshrine the greatest truth with the minimum of words. The unified mind can be noticed in the vachanas of Basaveshwara. The Buddha and Basavanna attempted to reform Indian society from the shackles of superstition and ignorance .They fought for the casteless society. The Buddha believed in the intellectual enquiry, freedom of thought and action, the dignity of labor. Basavanna continued the Buddha's Noble tradition in these respects. It was in the 12th century the women were treated equal in social and religious matters. The future vision was clear to them in respect of free thinking, freedom of speech and parliamentarianism (start up of AnubhavaMantapa). Freedom of Write was already given and practiced by the Vachana writers.

The Vachanas advocating the practice of the democratic principal of equality are outstanding.

Today's problem of reservation system is based on the caste was the effect of ill-treatment of our ancestors towards the low caste. The meritorious candidates are suffering due to the discrimination on the caste system.

While condemning the scriptures, the false practice of ritualism, Basavanna praised the low- caste person's conduct which itself was veda- Agama in practice...

The pot in which the superior cook food
Is a dog's skull, Sir?

The low- caste Svapacayya's act of covering
Food with slippers
Is Agama in practice?

None should see him preparing his food.
That "the food seen by the worldly is unworthy
Of offering

To the 'Linga' is Thy word,
O Lord Kudala Sangama!

The day labour is the only way to impress the Lord, and that leads to the service embedded to develop the community. That is the Dasoha (Tribute to society).

Very often human beings are discriminated on account of physical disability and deformity. Basavanna gave much importance to Work (Kayak) .The quality of a person is dependent on the service not on the higher caste. He says, Work is Worship.

Today, in this global warming, terroristic earthly conditions, we need to concentrate more on togetherness,

ecofeminism, safety and fraternity. The uttered dangerous factors were all solved by the Basavanna as....

I use

For the lips, truth

For the voice, prayers

For the eyes, pity

For the hands, charity

For the figure uprightness

For the heart, love

These are the cosmetics of soul are to be drawn from within. Humanity has ushered in a new phase in the history of this planet, due to tremendous advancement in science, technology, transport and communication. The human existence is threatened by nuclear, chemical and vertical weapons in the hands of men. People of all countries have to act together to create a culture of Peace, equality and justice.

The Vachanas are the Roots of 'thinking locally and acting globally' mission. It is high time that such literature should spread to several countries and sustain the activities till the realization of the goal. Vachana Literature was perennial in potency and universal in appeal then and now.

The philosophy of Veerashaivism crowns the evolution of Indian thought right Vedas, Upanishads and Agamas. The concept of Ishtalinga the symbol of One's own divinity the idea of Shatasthala- six fold evolution of the self realization through Bhakti with the grace of Gurulinga (God

as teacher) Jangama (Holy personality) Kayaka (work) compulsory social duty by one and all walks of life Shiva yoga (attainment of Salvation) not in the traditional sense of yoga, but in the new form of day-to-day living and unique two contributions of Veerashaivism to Hinduism.

Martin Luther King Jr says, "The course of human history is determined, not by what happens in the skies but what takes place in our Hearts." The Veerashaiva Vachana Sahitya strongly believe that, there is divinity in the entire humanity and service to man is the service to God. The Vachana Literature is perennial in potency and universal in appeal. To any problem ethical, social or spiritual an individual faces, a family encounters or a nation comes across, there is always a right solution implicit or explicit in the teachings as vachans of Sharanas

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