



GLOBALIZATION, RESTRUCTURING AND HEGEMONY: ANALYSIS OF VASUDHENDRA'S STORIES

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ABSTRACT

It is well argued by theoreticians that the onset of Globalization has resulted in large scale displacements and caused anxieties in rural India. If urban middleclass has a celebratory attitude towards LPG era, the response of "other" India is quite different. The feeling of loss and trauma are the direct result of the onset of "new" values in India. Globalization has restructured social and economic sphere, thereby causing anxieties and paradoxes. The changes are so drastic that people feel alien to new set of moral and ethical values. Though there is no immediate solution and an easy answer to this phenomenon, native literary narratives are trying to negotiate with this complex process. Taking e.g. of an important contemporary writer in Kannada, I have tried to analyze the process of Globalization in this paper.

KEY WORDS: Globalization, LPG era, 'Other' India, anxieties, new values, Vasudhenra, trauma.

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between language, literature, culture and society is always a complex and paradoxical question. Literary representations almost always have responded and negotiated with the forces of history and time. The onset of globalization and liberalization and privatization has remarkably restructured the very fabric of Indian societies. It has thrown up

new challenges and created new opportunities. An important feature of these phenomena is that the sovereignty of the nation-state is questioned and the national boundaries are being blurred. Metropolises across the world have become cosmopolitan, multi cultural, and hybrid. As argued by many thinkers, the strategies adopted by globalization, for its domination and

consolidation of power are more invisible than that of the colonial strategies. The strategies of finance, military and politics are more defused and wide spread now. This complex phenomenon in India has two major effects on local cultures and local life worlds.

GLOBALIZATION, RESTRUCTURING AND HEGEMONY

On the one hand the onset of LPG era has opened up huge challenges and opportunities. The expatriate Indian English narratives which celebrate multiple and hybrid identities are largely benefitted by this. Writing back to the center with an assertion of one's own identity is an important feature of these micro Kannada narratives. On the other hand the effect of globalization on local cultures has resulted in displacements and re orientations. The local economies are crushed to nothingness with the introduction of MNCS and Wall Marts. Therefore the micro narratives of local cultures portray rather a grim story altogether. Without being parochial and chauvinistic, the native narratives in a big way question and represent the process of globalization. The Kannada narratives like '*Hampi Express*' (2009) , '*Riding the Tiger*' (Huli Savari in Kannada -2002), '*Gaandhi Chitrada Notu*' (2008) narrate the traumatic multiple experience of globalization at individual, societal and at cultural levels. This research article attempts to analyze two brilliant short stories "*The Red Parrot*" (*Kempu Gini* in Kannada) and *Ugadi* of Vasudendra as a representative texts to understand the negotiation of native writings.

Vasudendra is a premier contemporary writer in Kannada whose large volumes of literary productions have a huge middleclass readership. This is an achievement by itself, because through this he has extended the scope of Kannada language and identity. It is to be noted that he has come from a non academic background and is a part of corporate sector. One can safely say that he has firsthand experience of IT sector and

the mode of working of multinational companies. For Vasudendra, the medium of expression is irrelevant because his stories break the boundaries of short stories and light essays. He has a seemingly a- political personality and does not express his political views explicitly. Especially in the area of public sphere he-like many of his young contemporary writers-does not play the role of a public intellectual like U.R.Anantha murthy. Of course, it is true that a writer need not to be a so explicit and activist in his /her stance. But this non articulation in the public sphere has given an expression that Vasudendra is a non political writer. This is largely misleading and this short paper tries to explore how his short stories reflect the anxieties of contemporary society.

There are two strains in Vasudendra's short stories. On the one hand, his narratives re examine the traditional *Madhva* life worlds of Bellary and its surroundings. These structures are reminiscences of his childhood memories and such structures are reviewed with passion and sarcasm. On the other hand, his narratives negotiate the neo imperialistic forces of globalization namely MNCS and their complex maneuvers. The realities of the corporate sector and its terrifying effect on society and culture are represented. It is not that he dismisses these experiences unilaterally. Rather, there is an attempt to narrate new experiences with an impassive voice. He looks at the opportunities that the new experience has brought and also at its inherent violence and destruction. Therefore many of his stories gain political mileage unobtrusively. The contradictory forces of history and culture enter into the fabric of his literary representation.

Red Parrot is seemingly an innocuous narrative which narrates the onslaught of mining industry and the resultant destruction. Aijaz Ahmad once remarked that the main feature of globalization is to colonize everything that is

natural and restructure it to suit its materialistic needs. The mining industry- a byproduct of globalization- has acquired wealth and power to redefine the concept of citizenship, ownership, morality and ethical values. The re structuring of the economic order has given industry an enormous political power. It has also bulldozed the harmonious relationship between man and mother earth. Even the state governments are influenced and controlled by the mining mafia. The seeds of all this can be found in in the story Red Parrot. It begins on an easy, leisurely pace with a school boy writing a ridiculous essay on his corn field. The boy goes to the extent of describing onions being grown on huge trees!! The poor boy is cut off from the realities of rural life, because he is brought up in urban, middle class atmosphere. Though the incident looks farcical, it is quite significant. The writer hints at the loss of harmonious relationship between intuitive knowledge and mere superficial information. Even his father, who was caught up in a complex web of beaurocracy, finds himself in a ridiculous position. He even fails to find path to his own land and looses path. This is because he has rented out his land for another landless farmer. The text here raises another important question of landless labors and feudal lords. It is true that prose narratives in Kannada have negotiated with the question of landless labors and hegemonic feudal lords. Shivarama Karantha's *Chomana Dudi* (Choma's Drum) is a fine example. *Chomana Dudi* is set in a society where changes are slow and takes place at leisurely pace. However, Vasudhendra's text brings forth the altered LPG society where changes are drastic and incomprehensible. Therefore these questions are not resolved so easily.

From this point, the story gains another dimension with the introduction of the theme of mining industry. The whole landscape and the corn field of the narrator are destroyed beyond

recognition. The whole area looks like war field with no scope for imagination, poetry and human relationship. The magnitude of destruction is beyond the perception of the narrator. The very concept of ownership is redefined. The educated son of the tenant Kumaraswamy has nowhere to turn to, loses his land and continues as bonded labor in mining company. This is symbolic of pan Indian post LPG era experience. The sons of 'Choma' had at least an escape route by way of conversion to a new religion. But here, Kumaraswamy continues his slavery with new barriers. Even the emancipated and economically secured narrator looks helpless and captivated. He suffers from acute loss and helplessness. The forces of globalization can bulldoze both the rich and the poor. The traditional hierarchies based on caste get redefined and re-examined. The binary oppositions of *Brahmin - Shudra* are diffused. Both are made helpless by the new economic order. However, it must be noted that the higher caste Brahmin articulates his helplessness from the position of economic and social security. Whereas, the *Shudra* continues his silence and suppression with utter insecurity and the loss of identity. Hence, it is only natural that the narrator in the story fails to recognize him as driver of a huge vehicle. Therefore, the transformation of 'Green colored Parrot' in to a 'Red colored Parrot' because of mining dust is striking metaphor of the narrative.

His other story 'Ugadi' narrates the modes of experience of the corporate sector. The new realities and the fast ultramodern life styles have annihilated the traditional values systems. Consumer cultures with global outreach have decidedly made the native value systems "useless" and "out of place". The 'text' is story of two generations whose values are diametrically opposite to one another. Articulating the generation gap and thereby foregrounding the difference between two generations is not new to Kannada narratives. Masti Venkatesha

Aingar's 'Mosarina Mangamma' [The Curd Seller] and A.K. Ramanujan's poem 'Appa-Maga' [Father-Son] are fine examples. Both 'Mosarina Mangamma' and 'Appa-Maga' talk more about the difference in time. The transformation is pretty slow. But, Vasudendra's articulation on the break between the old order and a new order is a direct result of the economic choices that we have made. The corporate sector has constructed altogether a new and an awesome social order. This new setup has created inferiority complex and rendered the other society as "useless" and "helpless". Therefore, Gopanna Master, the protagonist of the story, suffers from inferiority complex, helplessness, loneliness and further loss of identity. He, in fact, experiences a sudden break from the past. He could not digest the new way of life of his ultra rich corporate son. Ashish Nandi, constructing a theory of anti modernity remarked that the experience of modernity and colonialism have led to loss of 'self' and identity. This is because modernity is seen as an invasion and a principle of domination. He argued that modernity by legitimizing western science and technology under mined the collective memories, the cultural traditions and indigenous knowledge system of the colonized countries. In this story Gopanna master increasingly becomes frustrated and tries to commit suicide. All the beliefs of Gopanna master become useless and what we witness is the total restructuring of social values.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the native narratives negotiate the phenomena of globalization in a complex way. There are no easy solutions. The destructive aspect of globalization is increasingly felt in these narratives.

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