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**The Tribal Conscious in Tribal Woman in Rachikonda Vishwanath Sastry's
*Beware, the Cows are Coming!***



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Abstract: *The resistance is part and parcel of human nature, they rebel when others especially outsiders intervene in their way of life and try to make their life difficult and miserable and Tribal communities are not exceptional to this, they have been very conservative in nature and wanted to retain and conserve their unique features of their society. Indian tribal uprising, rebellions, movements were motivated by the revolutionary ideas. After the interference in their way of living, diverse tribal communities from various region of India led revolt against exploitative practice of the British and the landlords in pre-Independence and against the Government*



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in post-Independence because of flawed model of development adopted by government which causes displacement of Tribes. The real tribal conscious for Tribes lies in knowing their place in exploitative system and their ability to identify snake (British, Landlords &) as their enemy and their attempt to throw out enemies. In the novel the ordinary Tribal woman, Maradi Mahalakshmi is known as Lachayamma rebel against her sexual exploitation by a landlord, Rajayogi-Pedanayangaru and injustice done to her and her son and claims rights of her son.

Keywords: *Tribal, Tribal Conscious, Exploitation, Abduction.*

RESEARCH PAPER

The research paper highlights the Tribal Conscious in Tribal Woman in Rachikonda Vishwanath Sastry's *Beware! The Cows are Coming! (Govulostunnayi Jagratta)!*. It is the best novel, it was originally published in Telugu, and it was published in the year 1973. Ravi Sastry wrote this in response to a poem of the same name by Sri Sri. He tries to prove Sri Sri's dictum that no subject is too insignificant for literature. The novel set between Bolshevik revolution and the independence of India. The novel narrates the story of an ordinary tribal woman's rebellion against her sexual exploitation by a landlord and injustice done to her and her son. The narrative is interesting in terms of story-telling techniques, especially for subversion of the narrator's voice.

Rachikonda Vishwanath Sastry is a Telgu writer. He was a prolific writer with more than 14 novels, 60 short stories in 6 volumes. The story telling techniques comes very natural to him especially, the oral mode of retelling a story and one description lead to another description with generous sprinkling of similes. Each sentence turns out to be much more complex at the end. Ravi Sastry wrote a poem entitled "*Rakkaalu*" wherein he argues that from puppy to a horse's bridle, anything could be proper subject of poetry (Literature). "*Pipeelikam*" (Ant) is one of the short stories written in allegorical mode in which he proves that 'the real knowledge for an ant is to know its place in the exploitative system and it's identifying the snake as its enemy and it's attempting to over throw it.

Alpajivi is most well-known his of novel published in the year 1952. It was written in stream of consciousness technique. Ravi Sastry is the first among authors in the region to write in the systematic similarity to the novels of James Joyce. His play *Nijam* is responsible for many changes in law especially relating to rape- it is argued in the play that when a woman is raped, the burden of proving the crime should not be on the woman but the accused man must prove his innocence.

The Telgu title of the novel is *Govulostunnayi Jagrata* is also known as *Mardi Mahalakshmi* and it was translated into English by Alladi Uma and M. Shridhar as *Beware! The Cows are Coming* or as *Horse's Bridle*. The novel was written with social condition in Telgu society between the Bolshevik revolution and struggle for independence in India as background. The novel begins with, "The poor should not read this book if they read they will be liable for

punishment” (Sastry 1). This mirrors to the intelligence and unique style of author’s writing. Because it tempts reader to open and to read the novel, how can one resist the temptation to read it after such an injection?

The narrator, Kireetirao being one of the characters, narrates the entire story in a systematic, detailed and interesting manner. When the novel opens, he is a sub-divisional magistrate known for his adroitness, honesty, strictness and sincerity. Kireetirao was born in the year 1917 on first of the January. The upper caste people never tolerate lower caste people and it is far away for them to consider lower caste people as equal and also they even don’t consider lower caste people as human beings. Kireetirao used to be proud of the fact that he was born on the first day of the first month but his maternal grandfather’s gardener’s son was also born on the same day! He used to feel bad about it. Whenever he thought about it, his heart would wince as if pricked with thorn. He used to feel that gardener’s son has snatched away a part of great happiness. Gardener’s son name is Gopaladasudu in short, he is known as Go. Dasudu. Kireetirao’s father, Pandurangarao is deputy collector. Kireetirao’s full name is Syamsundara Kireetirao. The first part is his maternal grandfather’s; the second, his paternal grandfather. But his mother would only call him as Shyam.

The antagonist, Rajayogipedanayangaru, Kireetirao’s uncle, used to come often to his maternal grandfather’s house. By the time Kireetirao started knowing the world, “Rajayogipedanayangaru must have been sixty. He was about six foot tall. He was as big built as he was tall. When he stood up, he looked like a Roman statue! He was not a red tuber, but like red apple” (Sastry 4). “We can’t say whether it royal look or a godly aura, but he shone bright. His white beard was like the collection of shining silver rays” (Sastry 5). He had obtained three jagiradars through his three wives. He owned Zamindari. His three wives died childless. After being a pleasure seeker(a bhogi) for sixty years, Raja Pedanayanagaru then turned into a good ascetic(a yogi)” Since Pedanayangaru is childless, Kireetirao’s family wanted Pedanayangaru to adopt Kireetirao as his heir. One dasara vacation, Kireetirao along with his servant Gopaladasugadu goes to the village, Suvarnasundarapuram where his uncle Rajayogipedanayangaru is Zamindar

After death of third wife, Rajayogipedanayanagaru happens to meet a tribal woman, Lachayamma in the forest while he was going to there for hunting with his friends. Lachayamma is a daughter of cowherd; she had a mother, father, and a younger and elder

brother. “She appears to Rajayogipedanayanagaru like goddess Lakshmi coming from the ocean or like the full moon coming out of the clouds. He seemed to have said immediately, “ho, beautiful come on! come near me!” (Sastry 58). Rajayogipedanayanagaru seems to have been excited at her beauty and the human race is one which has the innate nature to own beauty like it has to own wealth. The village where Lachayamma lived in is also belongs to Rajayogipedanayanagaru’s Zamindari. Rajayogipedanayanagaru sends a message to Lachayamma’s parents in which he says the he would keep her permanently. Lachayamma has a cousin, Rangam. They have had an engagement. Neither Lachayamma nor her parents have agreed, moreover they have said that “our caste may be low but our character isn’t” (Sastry 61). Exploitation and oppression are part and parcel of society as they are deeply rooted in the social system. One day Lachayamma was abducted in the absence of her parents when they were sent by landlords to fair and it is the scheme of Rajayogi. Having been instigated by landlord’s nephew, Lachayamma’s younger brother takes his father to police station and resisted a case against Rajayogipedanayanagaru but all police officers are in the hand of Pedanayanagaru, they have closed all the cases against him and Lachayamma’s younger brother was killed in the firing and her father was arrested and hanged in central jail for killing the head constable in vengeance who had beaten him. Lachayamma’s elder brother, either because he slipped or because he was intoxicated fallen into canal and died and her mother collapsed in rain and died. Lachayamma have lost her entire family but “what’s her sin?

What’s her first sin? To be born like goddess Lakshmidēvi!

What’s her second sin? To grow like Ratidēvi!

What’s her third sin? To live like Savitri!

What’s last sin? The worst of all the sins she committed? To be noticed by this Kaliyuga demon!” (Sastry 83).

Rajayogipedanayanagaru got four wrestlers to bind her and he raped her after intoxicating her. Days rolled into months. As months went by, she seemed to have started taking extra care of her food and health as she gets pregnant and she had a son and she used to protect her son as the demons protecting the treasure of nectar. As soon as she was blessed with male baby, she has announced her desire ‘Today onwards this kingdom is my son’s! But the upper caste people

never tolerate lower caste people and they never consider them as equal to them. Rajayogipedanayanagaru seems to have been shaken by this, how could he show to his own people a child born to a low woman? So he tried see that the boy did not call him, “Anna”(father) and he instructed his servants to teach him to call him ‘babugaru’(sir) and finally, Rajayogipedanayanagaru abducted the boy and kept him with his relatives and raised in secret. Lachayamma became mad and was kept as prisoner like half-alive and half-dead state. When Kireetirao goes to the village, Suvarnasundarapuram where his uncle Rajayogipedanayangaru is Zamindar, happens to meet Lachayamma in one night, “She might be forty but she appears like angel. She looked pale white, she wore a sari and it was red. She appeared like Queen Victoria. She was looking like the Goddess Bhagavati” (Sastry 32). She was really like Maradi Mahalakshmi, he saw her in the mirror and he could not utter a word. She smiled slowly, she laughed but she did not laughed all of sudden. She moved her right hand forward like a spray showing her index finger at him and said, “Hey who are you!” (Sastry 33). Her words sound very heavy on his ear like the low voice of a lioness which had turned into a human being. The entire room was filled with the brightness of her laughter, she asked him seriously but mockingly, “Hey. Is it you Rajababu want to adopt?. Kireetirao’s body was paralyzed at her question, he clearly understood that she does not like Rajayogi adopting him and that she is his enemy by the manner in which she questioned him. She saw him and said emotionally, instead of bringing of my son, pushing him somewhere.... “That...Rajababu, if he adopts you! Beware! If he adopts, his throat, your throat..., I will break” (Sastry 34). When Lachayamma raises her voice against Rajayogi, he would use dog (Jackie) to put fear in her and Rajayogi’s servant, Prabhudas tries to frighten her saying that ‘will you listen to me and go back to upstairs? Or do to you want me to call dog?’ But Lachayamma express reality “Shut up, you dog, shut up! You are a dog. When you yourself can’t do anything to me what can your dogs do? Know that you can’t do a thing! After you realize that tell it to that beard fellow too. That fellow seems to think he is my husband. He may be yours, not mine. He brought me by force and raped me, How can he be my husband?” . “You scoundrel Why don’t you speak? Therefore, He is not my husband but take into! The son born to me, my Kondababu, is definitely his son. So, my Kondababu is the real and rightful heir to that bearded fellow’s kingdom! The kingdom belongs to my son. These forests, mountains and these fields are belonging to my son. Orchards all these are my son’s. The rightful

heir to all this no one but my son” (Sastry 37-38). It shows that tribes are very straight forward, honest, sincere and more than that they are well aware of their rights.

But where her son is, no one excepts the god and Rajayogi know whereabout her son is? There are many rumors about her son but there is no evidence, someone says, He is in London. Some others say he stays in the hills enjoying Rajayogi’s land. Sastry depicts the inner sufferings of a mother when her son was missing, “She has burst like an atom bomb, wept like an ocean. She searched for her son and roamed like a tiger. She was collapsed on the mother earth. She stood up and stretched out her hands to the sky and prayed to all the existing gods. She holds Rajayogi and said, “Wretched bastard! What did you do to my son? Will you tell me or shall I kill you?” (Sastry 113). He escaped from the death, fifteen servants seemed to have saved him from her clutches after tremendous effort and bend her in the room. Lachayyamm’s aunt’s son Prabhudas is a trusted servant of Rajayogi, he helped him in many ways in Lachayamma’s matter. He was his pet dog, faithful slave: he is like an Anjaneya, Vibhushana and a secret agent, “Lachayyamm entered the mango grove near the palace like elephant in heat, she carried pestle and roared, where is your landlord?” (Sastry114). The mob surrounded her and holds the breath; she appears like a Shakti kali. People who were amazed at the vehemence of her anger and her strength, each of them fall at her feet one by one as well as all together and prayed to her. They requested her not to weep and cry, they said “her son was the son of Goddess Shakthi, that he was Lord Narayan himself and he had no death, her son would come to her rescue” (Sastry 115). Gadasugadu likes and devoted to Lachayamma. He praises her in front of Kireetirao as she glows like goddess Mahalakshmi. “If we have mother’s company in the darkness of the night, we don’t need a torch light! Mother will glow like petromax light” (Sastry 134). Kireetirao surprised at his referring Lachayamma as mother and his talking about her intimately and he further explains that “the bearded fellow had an eye on mother and abducted her the same way Ravana abducted Sita. He seems to have brought mother, didn’t feed her, made her drink liquor, deceived her and had a son by her! But mother said to bearded fellow that you have destroyed my life anyway, at least make my son the king but the bearded fellow didn’t agreed and took the child and handed it over o the hill tribes and thieves”(Sastry 134).

Then, Kireetirao beats Godasugadu to pulp; he cried holding his feet asking him not to kill him but he didn’t stop. His turban flew away due to his beatings. His shirt got torn. Blood streams filled his eyes. But! Rebellion is like a communicable disease. It’s like the fire from

petrol. It's like great anger of black ants. Godasugadu pushed Kireetirao and he fell down and his head hit against the edge of the bed. Godasugadu said "who are you to subjugate me? Are you paying me salary? My master pays me a salary to serve, not be beaten by his son" (Sastry 136).

Rajayogi resolved to kill Lachayamma so; he arranged an inauguration program of cattle-shed so he asked all people of the town to bring their cattle. On another side, Godasugadu and Satyamurthygadu had planned to murder Rajayogi. A number of people get together at the garden in front of Rajayogi's palace and farmers and shepherds tied turbans and sat in groups: the drums were beating very loudly. The garden looks like a garden of horns. They were appearing like not cattle but crocodiles with sprouted horns. There was a big crowd, Lachayamma was standing on the roof top, she was looking like Goddess Gouri and she appears like Goddess Mahalakshmi who was standing between the earth and heaven. Number of women came and got blessings. The entire crowd supported her and there was a great sympathy, affection and devotion for Lachayamma. She stretched out her hands and beats her chest, screamed repeatedly, "My prince, my child! I would not have recognized you but he has recognized me! I've to go! I've to go to my child! Leave me, please leave me" (Sastry 178). Lachayamma came out of Rajayogi's palace with the help of Satyamurthygadu and Godasugadu. She wept saying "My prince why have you become like this, my child?" (Sastry 178). And Godasugadu shouted "Hail, the mother" (Sastry 178). Prabhudasu left the Jackie on Lachayamma but she beat Jackie to death most ruthlessly and blood flowed in streams. Then the Rajayogi's car turned. As soon as Rajayogi's car came in the cattle which was left divided, reunited behind the car and blocked the way at the back. Like Abhimanyu in Padmauyham, he was caught in the govyuham.

He has noticed Lachayam and one-horned demon and her people. Lachayamma looked at him for a few moments and pointing to the one horned demon, 'ho, my dear, my prince, she called out to him, extended her right hand pointing Rajayogi to that one horned demon and said "ho my prince, my child, there, that's him! The one who has ruined our lives! Why are you still looking? Go, go! That's him'. The one horned demon lifted his head and looked at Rajayogi. Like a man drowning who rises up three times, Rajayogi rose three times. He fell down the fourth time. He succumbed. He became victim to the same cows he wanted to bridle and bind and to the same cows he wanted to keep them as permanent captives.

Lachayamma takes the blood from horn of demon and put a bottu. Some servants of Rajayogi fired the rifles which seem to hit Lachayamma but cattle hunted the servants who had fired the shots and killed them searching every room for them. They gored them to death. In the Rajayogi's palace, only Kireetirao and the corpse remained. At the end, the narrator recounts that what happened to Lachayamm, her son and her people. Ordinary people say that Lachayamma is sitting among the mountains and doing some penance for some purpose and when penance ends, she will come along with her herd of cows and her son that she will establish a kingdom of cows that she will bestow happiness and peace on the poor, which only good people will remain and prosper. The narrator completes the story by saying that ordinary people's words cannot be ignored! Therefore he keep saying often---"Beware Cows are Coming!

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