CHAPTER - IV

CHOMANA DUDI: THE PLIGHT OF AN UNTOUCHABLE

INTRODUCTION

The beginning decades of 20th century had a marked influence on the psyche of the then youths of the country. The advent of English education, growing general awareness, budding nationalism and the resultant political movements – from non-operation to quit India – influenced the youth to take to the national cause. They came out in thousands, discontinuing their education and leaving their jobs in support of the ideals propagated by Mahatma Gandhi- prominent among them being the rural development, eradication of social evils such as untouchability, alcoholism, prostitution and the stress on self-reliance. They had their own influence on the writers of that era, which had a reflection in the works of writers. Shivarama Karantha was one such writer who took up the ideals deep into his heart and attempted to work on them with missionary zeal. His was an individualistic pursuit, for he found only a handful of friends to rely upon and limited resources at his disposal, but carried on steadfastly nevertheless.

Untouchability has been the bane of Indian society which is in practice since time immemorial. Anyone, who takes upon the cause of rural development will invariably encounter this hurdle which is deep rooted in the social system. Shivarama Karantha did it in the thirties, much before any other writer woke up to the gruesome social reality, strived hard to educate the public through artistic pursuits such as drama, film and literature. In the process he observed the plight of untouchable from close quarters.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kota Shivarama Karantha is popularly known as the ‘Kadala teerada Bhargava’ meaning literally the Parashurama *of the coast and is often compared to the proverbial goat which devoured all sorts of vegetation. The metaphor successfully brings home the fact that Karantha was not only a writer but a multi-faceted talent as well. Apart from being a writer, he was also a thinker, artist, musician, journalist, dramatist, social activist, environmentalist, a lexicologist, writer of encyclopedia and several other talents personified in to one. Coming to literature proper, there is hardly any genre he has not worked upon, be it a novel, short-story, drama, satire, humour, travelogue and other forms of literary expression. It is astounding to note that his contribution to kannada literature – reckoned presently- stood at as high a number as 421 which may even go up in future!

Shivarama Karantha has penned about 45 novels encompassing a plethora of themes. The themes include social, political, spiritual, anthropological and other relative issues. Marali Mannige, Mookajjiya Kanasugalu, Mai Managala Suliyalli, Bettada Jeeva, Alida Mele, Sarasammana Samadhi, Kudiyara Kooosu and Chomana Dudi are some of his acclaimed novels.

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*An incarnate of lord Vishnu, who is believed to have created the state of Kerala and coastal Karnataka*
Karantha assumed the status of a legend not only in Karnataka but at national and international arenas as well. His was a career that extended well beyond 75 years enriching the cultural echelons with memorable contributions. As noted journalist and writer G.N. Ranganatha Rao puts it:

‘One is dumb struck to see at the richness of his contributions to the literary world. His novels appear as that wonderful mine which contains a huge cache of life’s riches.’

At the tender age of 19, Karantha discontinued his studies to participate in the freedom struggle. This participation made him aware not only of the political aspect of the struggle but the social realities obtained at that time. Social service became his pursuit thereafter. He took active part in educating people against the evils of untouchability, prostitution, alcoholism, superstition and many other pressing problems of the day. He worked for objectives like rural development, hygiene and health awareness among the rural public with a missionary zeal.

Karanth’s writings are not just the musings of a man who sat in an ivory tower. They are the honest accounts of his experiences which he underwent in his long cherished career. His student and also a long time associate Malini Malya says emphatically that ‘most of his writings are not just the products manufactured from his brain. Many of his characters were moulded after a careful analysis of his real life experiences.’

Decades of proximity with the grass roots of the rural society in Karnataka had brought in a tremendous clarity and conviction in the approach of Karantha. He advocates that the human existence should be for
the good of all living beings. His idea of a civilized existence is made amply clear from this quote:

‘This world is one. Planet earth is the only dwelling place for all of us. Every living being, from an insect to ‘that animal’ called the human being, has a right to live in it. We all are created by an unknown power. May be we are aware of our interests but It would be an impertinence to say that we knew its (the power’s) will. We will be called civilized human beings only when we shake off the false pride and try and learn to live, not for the sake of humans alone, but for the sake of all living beings.’

Interestingly, Karanth received little or no support from his home for pursuing his ideas of social service or to participate in the freedom struggle. His father wanted him to complete his education and take up legal profession so that the financial woes of the family could be taken care of. Writes G.N.R. Rao:

‘Karanth was born at a time when India was under the servitude of the British. The society was reeling under the clutches of poverty, blind faith and a stagnant tradition. Karanth was born in a Brahmin family which committed itself to the traditional values. Neither the family environment nor the general atmosphere obtained in the country was encouraging.’ Yet, Karanth continued with his mission steadfastly. His mission was to try and restore the sense of dignity –irrespective of one’s social origin –in the human existence. He espoused the noble ideal that irrespective of the caste, creed, sex and religion mankind is essentially one.
Karanth observed that many a misery or mirth in the society were caused by the complex human relations and to endure them required a level of maturity.\textsuperscript{\textcircled{9}} That endurance displayed by many of his characters – particularly the old women- may at first seem nothing but naivity. But the faith and resolve they display belies that impression and the readers are convinced of their mettle. They are, indeed, Karanth’s own ideals. The ideals of love, compassion, forebearance, courage and conviction depicted through several characters in various novels represent his own persona.\textsuperscript{\textcircled{10}}

Karanth’s convictions towards the general welfare of the society made him to resent deeply the inhuman practices in the society. He highlighted those evils in his literary works. The theme of untouchability (Chomana Dudi), prostitution (Mai Managala Suliyalli), the woes of tribal existence (Kudiyara Koosu), a culture forgotten (Mookajjiya Kanasugalu), false spiritualism (Jagadoddhara Na) and marital incompatability (Sarasammana Samadhi) have all been dealt with with utmost empathy. As the list is exhaustive it suffices here to say Karanth’s was not just a make do approach to the evils of the society but a well fought mission which he retained till the very end.

Karanth has been the receipient of as many as 33 state, national and inter-national awards, the significant of which are as under:

1. Padmabhushana award from the Govt. of India ( Returned in protest against the imposition of emergency in 1975)

2. Bharatiya Jnanapeeth award

3. Fellowship from the central Sahita Academy
4. The Pampa award – the top honour from Govt. of Karnataka.

5. Tulsi Samman – the top honour from the Govt. of Madhya Pradesh

6. Honorary D.Lit from Mysore, Karnataka, Mangalore, Meerut and Jabalpur universities and also from world academy of art and culture.

7. ‘Deshikottama’ award from Vishwa Bharati university, Shanti Niketan.

8. Award from the Dance critics society, Japan

9. Bronze medal from the International archives, Stockholm

Karanth, a writer par excellence, a champion of human values, and a thinker with tremendous vision immensely deserved all the honours conferred on him. He acknowledged them only as a matter of fact and continued with his convictions everafter. L. S. Sheshagiri Rao aptly describes Karanth, the man as well as the artist, as a symbol of adventurism and intellectual honesty, for whatever be the price offered he never agreed to ‘sell’ himself.11

CHOMANA DUDI

The novel Chomana Dudi was first published in the year 1933. Going by the accounts in his autobiography, it was that period in his life when he was obsessed with the ideals of social service. Eradication of untouchability and prostitution were his prime missions. Beginning from the early twenties, he worked non-stop for decades to fulfill them. Steadfast he was in his
purpose, Karanth used every forum of creative expression to fight the evil of untouchability. Malini Malya records:

‘Through dramas, poems, speeches and movies Karanth had been fighting the evil of untouchability from the twenties of the last century. Later he used the medium of novel to fight against this injustice of inequality. The actual results of this fight could be seen in the society only after a lapse of 3-4 decades of writing this novel.’12

Such was Karanth’s zeal he had even produced a film named Domingo in 1930s to drive home the theme of anti-untouchability.

In his auto-biography ‘Hucchu manassina hattu mukhagalu’ (Ten faces of a mad mind), Karanth gives the background which caused him to write this novel:

‘At home, where several religious restrictions were in place, the elders were never agreeable to our playing with the sudra children. The Billava (the toddy tending community) children were not allowed in to the schools. We had to take bath if by chance we touch them. If we see a holeya on our way to school, we had to walk avoiding his shade.’13 The restriction continued to exist for a fairly longer period. K. V. Subbanna, noted social and theatre activist who is 30 years junior to Shivarama Karantha, records as under:

‘We were not allowed to mingle freely with the low caste people of the village. We had to grow in clear separation. if not, our elders feared that our everything- the language, character, mind, intellect- may get polluted.’14 Subbanna further rues that ‘the obsessive compulsion to be called supreme had created such an inhuman tradition in the form of caste system it was difficult to get away from its hegemony completely.’15
Another opinion, recorded recently, reads as under:

‘In South Canara, the slaves were treated as untouchables. They had to erect huts at a distance from all other inhabitation and were not allowed to approach the houses or person without certain prescribed distances’.

The novel chomana Dudi deals with the life of a holeya from the Dakshina Kannada district. As detailed in the preface to the novel, the holeyas of district were divided in to various sub-castes such as Mera, Byra, Ajila, Mari, Mundala and others. The treatment meted out to them also varied as per the practice prevailing from region to region.

‘Only Mera holeyas were allowed to undertake cultivational activity. But the society did not allow the Mari holeyas, treated as the lowest caste, that opportunity. There are people who say even their shades are to be avoided. They had to survive by eating the left-overs, or the dead cattle, or undertaking despicable menial jobs. In the northern parts of our district, they are not called for daily labour even to this day. In the southern parts they are however called for daily labour. Choma is one such individual from that community.’

With this as the background, the author proceeds to give the picture of their existence in an imaginary village named Bhogana Halli. It deals with the series of injustices heaped on an individual named Choma, the resultant pain and anguish leading him to the inevitable tragic end-all this because he belonged to a down trodden community. The tradition denies Choma an opportunity to become a cultivator, a dream he cherished for a long time. It is beyond Choma to fight for it and get it for he is rendered weak and mute by a cruel society. L.S. Sheshagiri Rao observes that ‘No character here has
a personality of its own. They are all crushed by hardships and have become such mute characters, they are unable to recognize they are being crushed.¹⁸

**STORY**

Choma, a holeya belonging to the Mera sub-caste in the then South Canara district, is a bonded labour serving the household of Sankappayya, a landlord of the village named Bhoganahalli. The bondage has run through several generations ¹⁹ the beginning of which is not indicated in the novel. Choma’s forefathers in the past, Choma now, and his children in the future were, is, and are going to be tradition bound to serve the lineage of Sankappayya. The bondage was unbreakable as the former can not desert their dhani (lord, Master) and the latter is obligated to keep them under his tutelage. The service offered mostly is manual and menial labour and is compensated with 2 quarter seers of rice and 5 quarter seers of paddy a day. Evidently, the allowance is too meager to maintain a family of six. Understandably, the life of Choma and his family members is characterized by abject poverty, hunger and misery.

Choma had three passions in his life. Toddy was the first, on which half of his income was spent.²⁰ Next came tobacco which he repeatedly consumed. Third and most important of his passions was beating ‘dudi’ - a small hand drum beaten with bamboo sticks. Choma compulsively indulged himself on beating the dudi, whenever he felt sad, miserable or happy and elated. Beating dudi gave him the much needed vent to his feelings.

Choma had an ambition of his life i.e. to become a farmer. Tilling a strip of land, however small, was his dream which was unattainable as the
tradition barred a holeya becoming a farmer.21 His fervent requests were repeatedly rejected much to the despair of Choma.

His miseries deepen when two of his sons die, one convert in to Christianity and the daughter caught in an amorous relationship with a labour contractor of a coffee plantation. With his dreams shattered, Choma dies heart-broken beating the drum till his very end.

The story has a central theme of untouchability. While doing so, it covers the entire gamut of oppressive and exploitative practices in a feudal set up. Denial of basic human essentials and dignity to the likes of Choma, highlights the bane of such a society and draws empathy from the readership. Author’s purpose to create an awareness among the public as regards to the evils of untouchability has found adequate success through this novel.

SETTING

The story is set in a remote village named Bhoganahalli in Dakshina Kannada district. The village is situated amid a hilly terrain and is adjoined by dense forest. The time frame is between second and third decades of 20th century.

Bhogana halli was a small village having about 50 households. It is cut off from the civilized world. Civic amenities and medical facilities were unheard of. Local lords like Sankappayya were assumedly the masters of the village. They had vast areas of cultivable lands most of which was given on rent to various tenants belonging to different castes. The tradition obtained thereat debarred holeyas from taking up cultivational activities. Sankappayya, the landlord does not dare to break this unwritten social
He tries to deter Choma from his pursuit to become a farmer with the following words:

‘Look here, Choma. Our elders never rented lands to your people. It can’t be given now either.’

Sankappayya’s mother curses the impertinence of those holeyas who had the ‘temerity’ to ask for lands for cultivation

Choma can not rebel against his master for he had no alternative to live on. He could have got a small strip of government land for cultivation but the daily allowance of grain provided to him by his master would be stopped for having walked out of the bondage.

The coffee plantation in the region comes in to focus as the lords thereat ‘recruited’ labour from the surrounding areas every season. There too, the labour is paid a pittance, just enough for subsistence. Wages paid in cash was spent by the labourers on toddy. Malaria played havoc with the lives of the labourers. Loans availed from the master never got repaid for reasons aforesaid and kept on increasing from season to season. Seregars (labour procurers) were responsible to find labour from the surrounding villages for working in the plantation. The wages paid to them were only marginally better from that of the labourers. It was the owners of plantation who benefitted most from their toils.

The general trading was local and usually carried out through bartering. Toddy was served against payment of grain and bamboo baskets and even against the meat of a hare.
The weaker sections were exploited by each and every one. Ignorance, poverty and misery were the routine to which all the down trodden were set in to. Rebellion is not heard of. Instead, ‘Bhootaraya‘ is appeased with sacrifices and subjugations. Any misfortune that befalls on the family is regarded as a result of his ire.

Christian missionaries were active on their look out to spread their religion. They offer inducements that include providing church lands for cultivation on rent, in order to effect religious conversions.26

LAND HOLDINGS

The first chapter of the novel gives a general indication of the cultivable lands in the village. Sankappayya is one among the few land lords of the area.27 The extent of the land holding is not indicated. Given the general practice prevailed in those days, the land could be extended by cultivating newer areas and all such encroachments were regularized at a later date. Assumedly, therefore, the holdings were vast. There were cultivable as well as barren lands under the ownership of a land lord.

Most of the lands owned by such landlords were cultivated by the tenants. The tenants belonged to various castes such as Brahmin, Bunt, Gowda but not a single holeya. The rent was paid in kind. The novel records instances of some of the tenants cheating their land lord by not paying the rent properly or not paying at all.28

Apart from tenants, a part of the holdings were kept for cultivation from the land lord himself. The landless labourers and bonded labourers worked on such lands and were given padi at the end of the day.
The village church too owned large areas of land. Only Christians were allowed to cultivate church lands on rent. If a non-christian wanted to become a tenant of the church lands, he had to convert himself to Christianity. Land here was used as an allurement to encourage religious conversions.

Coffee plantations those days were mostly owned by the Europeans. But the labour had to be procured from the surrounding areas through seregars. The work available therein was seasonal. Wages paid were meagre and were paid in cash. The labourers spent most of which on liquor and the rest went towards adjustment of loan taken earlier.\textsuperscript{29}

**FEUDAL RELATIONS**

There were landlords and tenants. The latter paid rent to the land lords. Also, there were the landless and the bonded labourers. They were paid padi as remuneration to the labour provided. The remuneration was barely sufficient for subsistence.

The landlords had bonded labourers under their fold. The bondage ran through generations. There was a concept of ‘Moolada Holeya’\textsuperscript{30} in vogue meaning the untouchable bonded servant, his forefathers and progeny and all his family members served at the house hold of the landlord. The novel depicts the hard and strenuous labour Choma provides to Sankappayya. He can not leave the services of their lords without prior permission. Even to send his children to work in the coffee estate Choma had to take permission from Sankappayya. Just as Choma and his family members had the obligation to serve Sankappayya, the latter too was tradition bound to provide them food and shelter.
The lands belonging to the church were under the control of the priest thereat. The church lands were given on rent for cultivation to Christians only. Tenancy was an allurement to prospective converts. Guruva marries a Christian girl Mary and gets a strip of land from the church for cultivation. Choma too was given similar hopes provided he converted to Christianity.

In the plantation area the planter was the owner under whom served the seregars. The latter supervised the plantation labourers, took attendance, distributed wages and allowances of grain. They also took care of procurement and deployment of labourers. They also maintained accounts to monitor the repayment of the loans taken by the labourers. If remained unpaid in a particular season, the loan was carried over to the next season. The seregar himself appeared in front of the hutment of the defaulting labourer and ensured that the latter came and worked in the plantation this season too. The plantation work usually lasted for about 8 months in a year. Labour was procured by enticement or by co-ersion- usually urging him to repay the loan taken earlier immediately. Women un-accompanied were sexually exploited.

**BONDED LABOUR**

As said earlier, the novel reveals a system of bondage which ran through generations. Choma, his forefathers and offspring were bound by tradition to serve the family of the landlords they are assigned. The author points out that either for gain or for loss, they, without the express permission of their lord can ever enter in to the service of another lord. Even their master too was bound by certain obligations. They had to look after their traditionally bonded labourer no matter what circumstances they are
There are occasions in the novel, that the master had given consent to Choma and his family members to go to the coffee plantation labour so that the latter could pay off their debts thereat in order to ensure that the lord can have their services uninterruptedly thereafter.

As bonded labourers their primary duty was to serve their lord with his household works, at the lands and whatever else desired by the land lord. Choma serves his master providing his physical labour in the cultivational activities. A well built body and an intrinsic loyalty towards the master drives him to serve loyally. His efficiency in the work even surprises sankappayya when choma, with hopes of getting a land for cultivation, toils untiringly with all his physical might. Chaniya and Guruva, still children render assistance to their father. Belli helps with the daily chores at the household of the master. Even that pair of bullocks which Choma had reared, although meant for his futuristic ambition to become a farmer, are desired by his master to be used in the latter’s fields. Of course, the master promises a price for the pair, but the expectations are that the bullocks can be taken up readily instead of taking the trouble of going to the market and picking up suitable ones.

Choma and the members of his family lived in a hutment in the edge of a hillock. Inter-woven bamboo planks served the purpose of walls and wild grass the roof. The roof leaked during the rainy season causing havoc to the inmates of the hutment. The roof needed reinforcement every year with fresh grass put on it. A small interior served as the kitchen, and the rest as living area cum sleeping place for Belli and smaller children. In contrast the house of Sankappayya was a big dwelling place with a big courtyard where several servants worked.
The dream of Choma to become a farmer proves impracticable due to his caste origin. The tradition barred allocation of land to an untouchable. Even if Sankappayya was considerate, his mother opposes it vehemently. Even the very desire that Choma, a bonded labour and a holeya, wanted to cultivate a piece of land looks as an act of temerity to her. The Church may provide him an opportunity but for that he had to convert to Christianity for which a tradition bound mindset of Choma would not agree. The government land may be taken up but the bondage with Sankappayya’s family would be broken cutting off his only source of survival. The returns from such an endeavour would be far less than what he presently got from Sankappayya.\textsuperscript{32}

Disappointed that he can not become a farmer and overcome by the grief of his eldest son’s death and the anger at the conversion of his second son to Christianity, Choma in a fit of rage disregards his master. The master almost threw him out of his household, but for Belli who pleads and assuages the feelings of the master. Sankappayya agrees to maintain status-quo and is benevolent enough to provide the usual padi to Choma’s family. This act is seen as a godly gesture for Belli who assures Sankappayya that she and her brother would work in the place of Choma.\textsuperscript{33}

**EXPLOITATION**

The environment picturised in the novel is typically feudal. There is exploitation everywhere. Labour from the entire family of Choma is compensated by small quantity of grain. Although Choma’s wish to become a farmer is not granted, the oxen reared by Choma is readily taken for the cultivational activities of sankappayya.\textsuperscript{34} Birama poojarI, the toddy shop
owner, cheats Choma by not giving toddy the worth of grain brought by him. The oxen reared by Choma is under quoted for Rs.10 against their real worth of Rs.30. Manvel soza, the seregar of the coffee plantation gives a wrong account of loan owed by Choma under the pretext to scare him for an early repayment.\textsuperscript{35} Labour procurement for the plantation labour is partly through enticement and partly through compulsion of repayment of loans availed earlier.

The living conditions at the plantations area were horrendous. The labourers are provided with small, dungeon-like rooms, with an uneven floor and without ventilation. No medical facilities are provided resulting in many of them suffering from Malaria. The wages earned are spent on liquor and nursing the illness. As a result the loan remains unpaid eternally.\textsuperscript{36}

Hapless women are sexually abused by the seregars and also by the plantation owner. Belli manages to clear the loan of her father by succumbing to the overtures of both the seregar and the plantation owner.

The hardships of the down trodden community are seen as an opportunity by the Church to effect conversions.

CASTISM

The caste factor is very dominant in the society depicted in the novel. The land lord, sankappayya belongs to the Brahmin caste. The tenant-farmers belonged to various castes in the sudra varna such as the Bunt, Gowda and others. The toddy vendor is from the caste of Billava.
UNTOWACHABILITY

The central theme of the novel is untouchability. The story revolves around the life of Choma, an untouchable bonded labourer, his dream to become a farmer and the ultimate tragedy that befalls on him.

In the preface of the novel, Karanth has admitted to have been moved by the despicable conditions in which the holeyas of Dakshina Kannada lived. He enlists about 4 sub-sects of untouchables obtained in the district during the thirties when set about on his mission of social service. He names them as Mera, Byra, Ajila and Mari. In the novel there is a mention of another sub-caste namely the Mundala.

All these communities lived in abject poverty and penury. Only the Meras are allowed to undertake cultivation activities. Others are not allowed. The caste considered the lowest among the untouchabilities, the Mari, are not called for working in the fields on daily labour. Some people despised the touch of even the shades of these people as they were said to be polluting. They were condemned to survive consuming the left overs of the food consumed by all other castes above or by eating the carcass of dead cattle. Tobacco, whenever offered, was thrown from a distance.

The protagonist of this novel, Choma, belongs to the aforesaid Mari sub-caste of holeyas. He and his family, his ancestors and descendants were the bonded labourers of the house hold of Sankappayya, his ancestors and descendants. Their labour is accepted and meagerly compensated. But the dream of Choma to become a farmer is considered a temerity. Such an act (a holeya cultivating the land) was not heard of and was believed would bring
in pralaya if occurred. Repeated requests of Choma cause annoyance to Sankappayya.

Not that Sankappayya did not have spare strips of land to give Choma on rent but it is the tradition that stops him from doing so. He expresses so to Choma in the following words:

‘Choma, my ancestors never gave any lands to your people for cultivation on rent. It can not be given now either.’

Even if Sankappayya is agreeable to give lands to Choma, his mother vehemently opposes such a move.

‘Has anybody else done so, son? Don’t be the first one to break the tradition. This act will defame you.’

Sankappayya tries to preach Choma to learn to live within his means and to take solace on the fact that he may not have been ‘destined’ to become a farmer. Belli, his daughter too tries to advise him that being holeyas, they should keep within their limits and should not aspire for what is beyond them.

The Church has no objection to give lands to a holeya but is insistent that the beneficiary should convert to Christianity to get such benefits.

Apart from bringing in the disappointment by denying him an opportunity to become a farmer, the untouchability factor delivers another cruel blow in the life of Choma. Neela, his third son drowned in the pond with no one trying to save him because he was a holeya and an untouchable. A Brahmin youth does indeed try to do so but was prevented by his peers highlighting the fact that the boy is a holeya and therefore an untouchable.
The bitterness makes Choma utter that the caste of holeyas was a godforsaken one, as Neela would have been saved if he had belonged to any caste other than that of a holeya.\(^4^2\)

With so much discrimination against them conclusions can easily be drawn against the quality of the living of people belonging to these castes. They survived on the meagre allowances of grain provided by their master. Whatever other earnings made through basket weaving went straight to the toddy shop of Birama. The carcass of dead animals are claimed by them for consumption. In fact, the very availability of it thrills Choma, who with his family members and relatives makes a feast on the dead animal’s meat.\(^4^3\)

Though untouchables, holeyas are tradition bound. They had tremendous belief on the Bhootaraya, named Panjurli. Choma paid obeisance to Panjurli temple regularly. He firmly believed that Panjurli will make him bleed to death if he converted to Christianity. Choma even disowns his son Guruva for having converted to Christianity \(^4^4\) for the holeyas believed that they were superiors to Christians.

**SUPERSTITION**

The element of superstition has a strong presence in the novel. Years of penuary and misery coupled with illiteracy had made People believers in the all-pervasive powers of Bhootaraya. They try to appease those spirits through various rituals which included sacrifice of animals and fowl. Whenever in trouble, they prayed the spirits promising them of a ‘bali’ at the earliest.\(^4^5\) Such prayer was believed to ward off the impending curse. They also believed the spirits will bring in untold misery if the promise to those spirits was not fulfilled.
The death of Pomma’s grand daughter is attributed to the wrath of Panjurli.\textsuperscript{46}

Achila Chinna, a priest among holeyas, advocates sacrifice of fowl, and a pig in order to appease Panjurli\textsuperscript{47} Chaniya’s death from illness prompts Choma to believe that it is due to the wrath of Panjurli.

Choma’s decision to convert to Christianity in order to fulfil his dream of becoming a farmer is shaken by the vision of an angry Panjurli.\textsuperscript{48}

\textbf{CONCLUSION}

Shivarama Karantha had selected the villages surrounding Kundapur as his operational area. It is here he ventured to implement the high ideals of rural development and eradication of social evils such as untouchability, prostitution, alcoholism and bringing in a general awareness among the people towards health, hygiene and community development. His action plans were village specific and were based on the socio-economic survey which he undertook before drawing up an action plan (As transpired in an interview with Malini Mallya. See a photo picture of a sample economic survey sheet published in the beginning of this book). It is while undertaking such exercises he came in close contact with the lives of untouchables living in his operational area. The facts given out in the novel are, therefore based on the real life experiences of the author. It indeed was a fact, a custom strictly observed those days, that an untouchable was not allowed to undertake cultivation. There was not one, but thousands of Chomas bound to the households of their masters by tradition, for they did not have the courage and means to pursue an alternative livelihood. Karantha, in his mission to eradicate untouchability, wrote and enacted dramas, produced a
film and wrote this novel to effectively educate the public on this inhuman situation. Understandably, the names, sequences may have been changed, but the general social background depicted therein adhered to realities obtained during the thirties. Publication of the novel in 1933 is regarded as an important event in the history of modern Kannada literature.
1. ‘एकूण विवेक विरोध’ A popular saying.

2. ‘हे म्हणून कल्पना नक्षक अर्थात नक्षक शैले येथे कल्पना समर्पित नक्षक मान्य
कल्पनेचे अर्थ म्हणून कल्पना नक्षक शैले येथे कल्पना समर्पित नक्षक मान्य
हे म्हणून कल्पना नक्षक शैले येथे कल्पना समर्पित नक्षक मान्य असलेले कल्पनेचे अर्थ


4. ‘कल्पना ह्या संगीताने मिळून आलेले अर्थ याच्यावर अनुभव समर्पित मिळून आलेले
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’ Ibid

5. ‘कल्पनेचे अर्थ- कल्पनेचे अर्थ कल्पनेचे अर्थ. कल्पनेचे अर्थ कल्पनेचे अर्थ. कल्पनेचे अर्थ कल्पनेचे अर्थ
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’ Ibid p-31

book house 2002

7. Ibid p-34

8. Ibid

9. Ibid p-40

10. Ibid p-35

book house, 2002 p-


14. K.V.Subbanna, noted stage and social activist, in his article ‘Shreshtateya vyasanadalli’ (The compulsive desire to be called the best or supreme)- published in ‘Matu taleyettuva bage’ ed. Rahmat Tari kere, Prasaranga, Kannada University, Hampi,2005 p-248

15. ‘चोमाना दुडी’ (Chomana Dudi) by Shivarama Karanta.


17. L.S.Sheshagiri Rao ‘Hosagannada sahitya charitre’ pub.by Ankita 1999 p-45

18. Ibid p-57

19. Chomana Dudi by Shivarama Karanta, SBS publishers 2005 p-9

20. Ibid p-10

21. Ibid p-11

22. ‘चोमाना दुडीमध्ये भज्जोताने आशेच?’ Chomana Dudi p-20

23. ‘चोमाना दुडीमध्ये भज्जोताने आशेच?’ Chomana Dudi p-20

24. ‘चोमाना दुडीमध्ये भज्जोताने आशेच?’ Chomana Dudi p-21

25. Chomana Dudi p-40

26. Ibid p-4

27. Ibid p-38

28. Ibid p-40

29. ‘चोमाना दुडीमध्ये भज्जोताने आशेच?’ Chomana Dudi p-15-16

30. Chomana Dudi p-6
31. ‘...’ Chomana Dudi p-6
32. Chomana Dudi p-22
33. Ibid p-68
34. Ibid p-41 and p-42
35. Ibid p-13
36. Ibid p-15-16
37. From preface to Chomana Dudi by Shivarama Karantha.
38. Chomana Dudi p-11
39. Ibid p-20
40. ‘...’ Choana Dudi p-38
41. ‘...’ Chomana Dudi p-92
42. ‘...’ Chomana Dudi p-95 and p-97
43. Chomana Dudi p-79
44. Ibid p-55 and 70
45. Ibid p-60
46. Ibid p-33
47. Ibid p-60
48. Ibid p-101
49. Barkur Udaya in his paper ‘Constructive history of slavery in 19th century canara coast’ taken from ‘Studies in Karnataka History and Culture’ proceedings vol vii, Karnataka History Congress, Mysore 2008 p-47