

Chapter-4

Bhava: A Picture of Modern India

This chapter is fundamentally concerned with the characteristics of modern India. Modern India states the individuals who are not only affluent but elite also and lives in posh colonies of metropolitan cities of urban India. The title of the novel *Bhava* states emotions, feelings, sentiments, passions, existence etc. or abstract notions of human behaviour that cannot be seen or measured but can be felt. This chapter is principally based on the sentiments of individuals and their life style in urban area of India by using stream-of-consciousness technique. All the characters used in this chapter or places represent their respective communities by applying microcosmic world. For example, Dinakar, Narayan Tantri, Shastri etc. represent modern men of their respective communities. Sittamma, Gangubai, Saroja, Mahadevi etc. represent modern women of their respective communities. Comparison between the northern and the southern India is also presented by providing references of Delhi and Bengaluru metropolitan cities of India. Besides providing various characteristics of modern age i.e., frustration, depression, dilemma etc., routine life (culture) of urban India and their relationship with lower caste are also presented.

Bhava is impregnated with salient features of modern age. Modern novels and poems are being written for specialist while earlier it was being written for common man. Like *The Wasteland* by T.S. Eliot, technically it is very difficult and different poem. Modern novels depict suffering humanity. Life is very hard and one cannot be soothed by reading modern novels. Anti-war novels were written in modern age by those novelists who themselves took part in war and had real experience of war that is why they became disenchanted. This age depicts current picture of society. So, it reflects a depressive kind of writing like *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf,

symbolically, it reflects the personal space, rights and privacy for men and women even if they are in relationship. As women have to content with their limited boundaries and personal life. It is first time when freedom and individualism of women was reflected in any novel.

German Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in his work *Death of God*, talks about modern age and says there is no god. God is dead and man is in wilderness. In his second work *Beyond Good and Evil*, he says there is no guiding power to humanity and hence man has become individual. Disillusionment is also one of the main traits of modern age. People are in total confusion, in allay. Life has now become a wasteland. It is no longer the garden of Adam and Eve. Now that garden has become wasteland, nothing to grow, no greenery and no fertility. There is no place where a person can go for peace and guidance. Ultimately, he has to rely upon himself and this has become the condition of modern man/woman. In modern age, dislocation means modern man/woman is unable to feel any belonging to any person and place. He feels a kind of disruption. He does not feel to have any attachment to his surroundings. He has lost the sense of belonging. He feels a sense of alienation and alienated from his environment. He is hanging in the vacuum. He is incapable to decide where he has to go. He is an individual, loner, rootless and hopeless being. His life has become an anguish and painful experience.

So, the keys to modern age are the sense of disillusion, sense of historical dislocation, hanging between past and future and the sense of feeling utter individual in the entire cosmos. It is very painful for a modern man to undergo into these types of situations and living in that consciousness. His life moves from external to internal. Now his world is within himself. He lives in a godless world. There is no source to guide. All doors are closed. All roots of morality and conventions are uprooted. He

feels that he is imprisoned within the stoned wall. He feels a kind of suffocation and getting choked. Like Prufrock in the *Love Song of Alfred J Prufrock* by T.S. Eliot, modern man has split into thousand dots and spots. He has been decomposed. He does not know anyone, anyplace and suddenly become alien in the world and this is because of the historical disruption.

As memory plays an important role in stream of consciousness technique so in this respect, Gustav Hume says that memory is rational in his book *The Principal of Psychology* while William James says that memory is neither floating nor storehouse. They are total disordered and jumbled together. After that, modern scientists say that memory is very structured right from the childhood. Virginia Woolf writes in the stream-of-consciousness in her books like *The Light House* and *Mrs Dalloway* where main female characters recalling their past and use the technique of flash back while doing their domestic chores. In this age, life has become more internal than external. There is a world in mind itself relatively to the outside world, moving all the time as the screen floating in the form of stream and it is never ended stream. It is new kind of narrative where a time is not linear in one-way i.e., moves in past, present and future. It has a world in its own and functioning itself.

After the Second World War or in the post modernism age, people lost faith in humanism. This is called a period of complete disillusionment and nihilism. A famous French Philosopher Lyotard in his famous book *Postmodern Condition* (1979) says that true phase of this period is neither absolute nor self-contained. In this phase, emphasis is given to the applied science. This suggests the utility and usefulness of any person or things while in the 19th century, emphasis was on the idealism irrespective to the usefulness. Another philosopher, Baudrillard in his famous book *Simulation* tells that reality on screen is given more importance than the street or society. In this age, media

or virtual world plays an important role in order to portray any society or incidents. For example, in 1991, Gulf War was begun, but due to the media coverage (control over the media by dominant nation), common people even did not have knowledge about the Gulf War and they are ignored completely about the happening of Gulf War. Similar case happens when 370 Article is abolished from the Jammu and Kashmir on August 2019, due to the control of media by the dominant government of India, they try to depict the peaceful condition of these areas by posting few photos of smooth traffic and opening of public places but reality is far from it and common mass of other part of India can never assume what has happened in Jammu and Kashmir. So, people believe on what is news spread by the media rather than reality.

Michel Foucault in his book *The History of Sexuality* describes about the general concept related to men and women. They vary from nation to nation. They are not true and absolute. Men and women are constructed by the society. These notions change from time to time. All these things are constructed by the culture. In his second book, *Power/Knowledge* he suggests knowledge leads to power and it is only the knowledge through which England would be able to colonize Asia, Africa and Australia.

Antonio Gramsci gives the theory about the dominance of culture. Theory of culture is like the various species in which more developed culture dominate on the less developed. Through the dominance of culture, Punjab, M.P., Bihar, Andhra Pradesh are considered more developed than Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Telangana respectively. Derrida, a famous deconstructionist, describes the binary thinking of western philosophy and it can be easily evaluated whatever comes first is superior to later. For example, man-woman, good-bad, sky-earth, heaven-hell. Then he starts to deconstruct the traditional notion of western philosophy. He says that decentralization

is the main characteristic of modern age. It is suggested that margins should be brought to the centre that is why most oppressed, poor, colonized, denied to justice and uprooted people were given more importance thus feminism, eco- feminism, dalit literature and dalit poetics are given more importance than conventional theory.

On one hand there is a theory of globalization, but at the same time there is more localization. Literature has also split on the same line as both having contradictory forces and they are working simultaneously in the postmodern era. In his famous book *Writing and Difference*, Derrida writes that meanings are not stable, universal and absolute but they are tentative, with the passage of time, they change.

There are lots of episodes in the novel which reflect dislocation of structure, interior monologue, stream of consciousness, lack of humanism, struggle for survival, isolation of protagonist from the society i.e., there is no sharing of values and perspectives between artist and society, there is large scale of experiment in personal and public life, there is no linear form of narrative, innovative language include vernacular are used.

A nation is structured on community and each personal is connected to nation deliberately as a personal being. It is important to suggest that nation is a community which provides the personal an excuse to be complimentary appreciate his/her privilege. The clash between privilege and essentiality is demonstrated by the individual aggravating to perform in the community. There is a link amid individual's destiny and nation's destiny. What is pleasant and atrocious for nation must be pleasant or atrocious for the individual. Globalization, localization, urbanization, gender conflict, caste conflict, class differences, alienation, dilemma, confusion, frustration, depression, displacement, self- indulgence, nihilism, identity crisis, health crisis, unemployment, lack of faith, uncontrolled population, pollution, unconventionality,

capitalism, spiritual crisis etc. are the main characteristic of modern India. However, globalization and localization are two contrary terms but they have its own significance in modern India.

According to the survey of Greenpeace NGO in 2019, Gurugram is the most polluted city in the world and Delhi is the most polluted capital in the world. This novel shows the environment friendly attitude of the South Indians as they use banana and jackfruit leaves as disposals that can be decomposed easily as compared to the Northern. Northern Indians have less awareness towards environment and more materialistic than Southern Indians. Mostly use plastic disposals that cause health crisis and environment hazards. Various food items of South Indians are also described from the novel *Bhava*:

“Banana leaves cured on the hot ash of the bathing- room fire. On these fragrant, bud- shaped banana leaves, *kadabu* steamed in cups made of jackfruit leaves, and on the *kadabu*, yellow – colored ghee from cow’s milk. Three different types of chutneys. In a banana cup, creamy curd. On the side, hot steaming coffee ... of any of these foods, sat and ate with great appetite ... [and] she came in again, ladled some *kadabu* and chutney onto a banana leaf.”
(Ananthamurthy 78-79)

A person who belongs to the South Indian Society, generally wears traditional dress i.e., shawl, dhoti, basil leaves in top- knot like Shastri and Dinakar but due to the urbanization and industrialization, people start to wear jeans pants and shirts:

“He had a scraggly white beard, since he shaved only once a month, and he wore a green – bordered white cloth shawl wrapped around his upper body, as well as a dhoti with a matching border. He looked to be seventy. The other two men wore pants and shirts. Only Shastri and the Ayyappa pilgrim, because of

their traditional dress, appeared remarkable in the first- class compartment.”

(Ananthamurthy 4)

Shastri is suffered from the disorder of multi personality. His life is full of flicks and brutality. In his young age, he has to leave his village due the misbehavior of his step- mother and quarrelsome relationship with his brother who was suffered from asthma. He shifts to Bombay and does all the enterprises that were against his family norms as by birth he is an orthodox Brahmin. Thus, he leads his life like a rebellion:

“He did not want to live under his miserly brother’s control, everyday hearing that asthmatic breathing, so fifty years ago, he had taken his share of property and gone to Bombay ... [and] In Bombay he had taken to wearing pyjamas and a shirt, and with a cap on his head seemed. He transformed into a Sindhi or Marwari, even though...[and] pimps became his friends. He got into the habit of playing cards the whole day. His eyes were always red from going without sleep. Constant smoking had given him a cough.” (Ananthamurthy 33)

Shastri has a mistress named Radha, but he could not be father and married with an educated, beautiful and poor girl named Saroja. He does not behave properly with Saroja and he even smashed her head and kept this kind of treatment with his second wife, Mahadevi and his daughter (Mangala). In his later age, he has become a saint by reciting *Puranas* and other sacred books. This kind of character of Shastri shows the hypocrisy of his life. In modern India, sacred places have become the rescue place for criminals and rebellions. All kind of illegal activities especially, to seduce women, drugs, smuggling of restricted objects also take place in these places. Even a simple and an ordinary being cannot take safe entry in sacred places especially nearby the villages. If it is the case of girls and women, situation becomes even worse.

Hypocrisy of Shastri can be observed easily when she treats Saroja brutality that reflects the existing sterility in the relationship of husband and wife who are the representative of modern Indian couple:

“Shastri chided her, beat her, but nothing he did could change Saroja’s indifference ... [and] Shastri lifted the heavy wooden cover of the big brass pot that was kept for hot water ... before realizing that he would do it, he had smashed her head three times with the wooden lid. He felt her blood splatter his face. Lifting her slumped body, he strode like a gloating demon on his two great legs, from the bathroom to the backyard. She had seemed dead ... [and] thrown her into the red earth pit.” (Ananthamurthy 39, 59)

After observing the condition of Saroja, one can easily estimate her sufferings. But why she is so rude and ignorant towards her husband. The fact is that every third married women have to face marital rape which is done by their own husbands. This is not the case of one and two women who is being victimized. So Saroja here symbolizes all married women who are victim of marital rape. Vulnerability and exploitation level also increases when it comes to the question of pregnant and bed-ridden women because they cannot object or express resistance with full force. The question is, this is not the case one or two men, who are doing rape and exploitation. This is the matter of one-third married men of the nation who consciously, unconsciously and deliberately commit this type of action. It is important to analyze this kind of behavior adopted by the married men:

- Some argue that it is the sexual organ of men is such type that they cannot control their sexuality. But when it comes to the matter of organs then it is only the mind which controls all the organs of body.

- Relevant answer may be that every person has different libido power irrespective of gender.

After analyzing, elite being can easily understand that it is the matter of upbringing and how men are constructed as dominant due to the patriarchy structure of society. Women are constructed as secondary, submissive, not to outlet her opinion regarding anything and deprived from the decision – making ability. It is the fault of upbringing in which boys are less constructed rather than the girls when it comes to the matter of self- restraint and self-discipline. Shastri thinks about the ignorant and cold attitude of his wife Saroja. But why this happens to mostly husbands, who regard their wives as sexless and rude. Observation is, husband is the root cause of such type of behavior performed by the wife. As wives need primarily emotional and psychological affinity rather than physical so husband can maintain and satisfy her emotional needs only after that he can see the changes in the attitude of his wife. The same case happens with Saroja, she blooms like a flower after coming into the contact of Pandit, friend of Shastri as there can be seen mental and even intellectual bonding between them as described in the novel. The root cause of the emotional longing of the girls is that first, she has to be uprooted from her family and her friends circle from where she gets all types of emotional and mental support consciously and unconsciously. But after getting married, to whom she can express herself, it is only her husband. According to her mind that is constructed from her childhood that for her, husband must be everything and it is only the duty to fulfill all her responsibilities regarding her husband. But husband has his own family and spend time with his friends as like spending his life before his marriage. Sometime husband does not share any information to her wife due to less educated wife or thinking her inferior. This type of behaviour can develop a communication gap between couples. So, he consciously or unconsciously receives

mental and emotional support from his family members and craves only for sexual satisfaction that is why female as wife considers her husband lusty. So, who is really faulty? Neither husband nor wife, it is the fault of marriage institution and social structure. If it is patriarchy then it is only girl who has to leave her father's house permanently without having any affinity with his husband and his family members. She has to spend her whole life like others by doing household chores, upbringing children, poor physical and mental health due to miscarriages and unwanted pregnancy (mostly males do not want to lose their pleasure by using any type of precautions), services of elders and fulfill the customs in order to prove the sanctity of marriage with let aside her own pleasures and longings. So, if a couple wants to maintain the harmonious relationship between them it is important for both to understand the needs of each other and to try to satisfy the crazy desires of each other as stated by famous Indian poet Kamala Das in her poem *The Looking Glass*.

Through Dinakar who represents a modern man, it is described if a person wants to take the vow of Ayyappa then he will have to follow some dietary, sexual, alcohol and clothing restrictions. As he has become Ayyappa pilgrim in his fertile age, it shows predicaments and conflicts of his life, "Clearly the man opposite Shastri had taken the vow of Ayyappa – he was wearing a black kurta, a small black towel over his shoulder; and against these black clothes the amulet around his neck compelled attention" (Ananthamurthy 4). Although he is a famous TV actor residing in Delhi but in order to submerge his identity, he becomes Ayyappa pilgrim and now he is unaware about his surrounding by feeling sense of dislocation i.e., who is sitting around him and who is observing him.

Men of any age may go there i.e., temple which is situated at the hill – top of Sabrimala in Kerala but women are not allowed to visit that temple due to their

menstruation except young girl and women of post menopause. It shows the injustice faced by women and reflects the patriarchal system of society. Is it a fault of a woman if she does menstruate? Does she not have any type of problems, conflicts and predicaments? And if she has, she should also right to visit any temple at any time as to get mental peace which is the right of every human being. It is not the humanity to make someone deprived from their rights. Society may be grateful and thankful for the female of having menstruation because of it, they can see their next generation. However contemporary government and Supreme Court have given its order to alter and avoid this conventionalism but rigid minded people are still and continuously protesting of this entry of women in the temple and not a single woman is allowed to temple entry. Even Smiriti Irani who is the representative of half humanity is also included in this category who states a very controversial statement to justify the norms of Sabrimala temple entry. She states, “Can we go to a friend’s house with blood stuck pad? How can we go to temple/in front of God? (Irani). See the irony, mostly protesters are women. How women are used as a weapon against women by applying ‘divide and rule policy’ in order to avoid this type of agitation?”

Dinakar is highly educated and a famous TV actor but he even does not know who is his father, who is his mother and from where he belongs to. He is an orphan who spends his early life in orphanage in the protection of Tripathi at Delhi. Dinakar as the representative of modern man feels identity crisis and situation of displacement. Sitamma truly states his present condition

“As soon as I saw the amulet, I knew that it contained a Sri Chakra and was from our parts. From which house is this boy...gale, you may recite from the *Purana*, but only Ved Vyas could have written ... the whole country thinks this child has grown into a very intelligent man, but this man doesn’t even know

who is his mother, who is his father, which is his town, so perhaps he wants to believe that God himself is his mother and father.” (Ananthamurthy 27)

After having multiple and extra-marital affairs, he wants to get peace and for this, he becomes an *Ayyappa* pilgrim where he has to follow many restrictions related to dress, vocal, wine, food and sex. This shows the discrepancy between his past life and present life. He refers to the modern man who runs for money and power and after getting all those things, he understands the futility of all materialistic things and starts to search for permanent peace. That is why Dinakar, who is in his fertile age, becomes the epitome of modern man who has lost faith in this mundane world and wants to get rescue in the lap of God and nature in the scorching heat of sun. A modern man like Dinakar who is morally uprooted and leads very unconventional life and ultimately realizes the traditional values of Indian Society:

“Clearly the man opposite Shastri had taken the vow of Ayyappa – he was wearing a black kurta, a black dhoti, a small black towel over his shoulder, and against these black clothes the amulet around his neck compelled attention ... [and] why should I judge him because of Rangamma when I Myself have never been innocent. There is no liberation without clarity. And there is no clarity for me as long as I live in this world.” (Ananthamurthy 4, 107)

In the opening page of novel, pictures of traditional dresses are described. How Shastri and Dinakar wear traditional dresses irrespective of their past life/inner reality while due to the effect of urbanization, people start to wear western dresses also:

“The man opposite Shastri ... wearing a black kurta, a black dhoti, a small black towel ... [and] he had a scraggly white beard, since he shaved only once a month, and he wore a green- bordered white cloth shawl wrapped around his upper body, as well as a dhoti with a matching border ... [and] the other two

men wore pants and shirts. Only Shastri and the Ayyappa pilgrim, because of their traditional dress, appeared remarkable in the first – class compartment.”

(Ananthamurthy 4)

Through the below cited passage, it can be observed that how a person changes his clothing style in order to hide his identity and run towards urban area and starts to learn concerned language of that area, “He used his Bombay Hindi to speak of his present calling, Shastri remembered that he had learnt that language half a century ago, when he used to wear a shirt and pyjamas and a black cap to hide his Brahmin tuft, with no caste mark on his forehead, while wandering like a lost spirit on the streets of Bombay” (Ananthamurthy 14).

Through Sittamma, it is delineated how a modern South Indian woman starts her day living in Bengaluru and how a woman spends morning time in drawing a rangoli. Importance of *rangoli* is described that signifies prosperity:

“Every day she would get up at dawn, sweep and sprinkle the veranda, and after a bath in the river Ganga, she would spread her hair on her back. Then, with great concentration, she would take up pinches of different- coloured *rangoli* powder and, slowly sifting it between two fingers, draw on the earth of the veranda. So, the ancient house of Tripathi suddenly acquired the charm of new prosperity...[and] she took a pinch of rangoli powder and rubbed it to make it firm, moving her fingers just enough for the delicate thin line to appear. In a moment, at the very centre of the swept and cleaned veranda, she had drawn two intersecting triangles, one upward-pointing and the other downward-pointing.” (Ananthamurthy 18, 20)

Through Saroja, it is described how a woman has to leave her house that belongs to his husband if her husband does not have faith on her, “she came with a

trunk and a bag full of clothes. Tripathi knew only that she was from the South. He was such a large-hearted man. Seeing, what state she was in, he didn't ask, "Who are you? What about you? Why did you come?" and all that. He just gave her a place to cook her food and stay." (Ananthamurthy, Bhava 25). It shows the condition of woman who spends her whole life in diaspora and displacement. Before marriage, she has to obey her father and after marriage, she has to follow her husband's desires. If she is able to adhere her husband's wishes only then she can live in his house otherwise she has to leave that house, in this condition, she becomes completely uprooted. In this novel, Saroja is very lucky of getting a noble person like Tripathi otherwise women don't have any other rescue method except to attempt suicide. From centuries, women are deprived from property right that is why they have to satisfy with their present condition and limited personal periphery. So, how it is important for every parent to give the gift of education to their children so that they do not have to look upon others for their financial, spiritual, emotional needs and then nobody can take them as granted.

Dinakar even does not know who his father is and who his mother is. That is why he becomes an Ayyappa pilgrim. This shows the identity crisis and quest for identity. Although he is famous and intelligent but he is an orphan even does not know from where he belongs to:

"As soon as I saw the amulet, I knew that it contained a Sri Chakra and was from our parts. From which house is this boy, who is his father, why did his mother leave home with a little child? Shastri- gale, you may recite from the 'Purana, but only Ved Vyas could have written a story like Dinakar's. The whole country thinks this child has grown into a very intelligent man, but this man doesn't even know who is his mother, who is his father, which is his town, so perhaps he wants to believe that God himself is his mother and father and

that is why he wears these kinds of clothes and goes wandering here and there.”

(Ananthamurthy 27)

Shastri does not have peace and spends his whole life in conflict. He does not know whether Dinakar is his son or not. Whether he is the murderer of Saroja or not? Thus, a conflicting fear continuously lies in his mind. He always seeks the help of Goddess Durga:

“No, he must be my child. I begot him while I was I that mad howling. Yet through *maya*, he received a tender nature. He is mine, but he is not like me ... my doubts will never be cleared. It will be my karma to go to hell and be wailing there alone for eternity. O Bhagavati, show this old man the path ... release me ... [and] I am sure of nothing. Was it really Saroja herself who went to Tripathi for shelter? could it have been someone who resembled her? ... save me from these tormenting doubts which make me like a ghost in limbo.”

(Ananthamurthy 113, 65)

Karunakara Pundit is an educated, rich and handsome, yet advises Shastri to perform a tantric rite for begetting a child. How he hypnotes shastri through his tantric rite and seduce his wife? How he betrays him by taking all his gold and his wife? This shows the intellectual level of an educated being who still believes in superstitions and is being deceived. However, all the hovering spirits are the Shastri's brutal acts performed in the past life that torments him continuously and leaves him in a state of unrest. But he could not recognize his inner reality and has faith on Pundit's suggestion:

“There is no progeny, no peace, for those who live here now. Some lowly spirits hover over people living here. As soon as I came in, I felt two burning eyes open in my brain. And when two other eyes opened to stare back at them, ‘I

began to do *japa*'. Hearing this from Karunakara Pundit, Shastri was stunned... [and] toward the end of the rite, the lady of your house will have to sit naked and offer worship. Karunakara pundit spoke as if he were prescribing the manner in which to take a medicine." (Ananthamurthy 42-43)

Radha admits everything without resistance and spends her life without involving in this mundane world like a river with 'let it go' attitude. She is like the unconscious mind of Shastri who knows everything and guides him for involving in this world. She saves him from his tormenting conflicts and gives advice of remarrying to beget a child, informs him about his daughter, Mangala who is now pregnant of seven months. As Sruthy B. suggests, "She wins the hearts - Saroja, Mahadevi, her daughter and Shastri – with the life span of a seventeen years old girl to a grey-haired old woman" (661).

Sittamma, who is the representative of an ideal Indian woman, has immense faith in Indian tradition and caste system. After getting up early in morning and having bath, she starts to design a *rangoli* that signifies prosperity and sacredness. Then she cooks food for all the family members:

"Every day she would get up at dawn, sweep and sprinkle the veranda, and after a bath in the river Ganga, she would spread her hair on her back ... she would take up pinches of different- colored rangoli powder and, slowly sifting it between two fingers, draw on the earth of the veranda ... house of Tripathi suddenly acquired the charm of new prosperity ... when the rangoli-laying was over, she would go into the kitchen to make upma or kesaribath or idlis." (Ananthamurthy 19)

Relationship between elite and lower caste can be observed during the conversation between Chandrappa and Sittamma in modern India. Lower caste people

are the permanent servant in their houses and even food cooked by them are being consumed by elites. They are treated nicely and decently. So, the notion of untouchability and pollution are erased on the basis of practicing physically or in modern India, untouchability based on physicality does not bother to these people but it is still in their mind. That is why she gives food to Chandrapur but does not allow him to use her common dining room. Separate edible utensils are used in order to maintain the notions regarding caste. She even takes care of outcastes and asks about their sorrows and sufferings. She inquires minutes detail of Chandrappa' cow, holidays of Gangubai, Prasad's music. This shows the affectionate relationship between master and servant but caste is still in mind also:

“Sitamma, who was very fastidious about eating taboos, didn't serve Chanrappa or Gangubai or Prasad inside the dining room. But she would never let them go without giving them something to eat and exchange courtesies, inquiring after their joys and sorrows...[and] has the white cow become pregnant? Were you able to sell the male calves? ... how long is the school holiday for Gangubai? Why doesn't Prasad show his face her at all? How is his music going?”
(Ananthamurthy 79-80)

“But the ayyappa devotee wiped his eyes, pointed at his black clothes and said ‘Swami’, adding flatly, ‘I have lost any other name’” (Ananthamurthy, Bhava 8). Giving up one's name or attire, can it possibly result in transformation in the basic nature of that individual? In a world full of uncertainties, chaos and disintegration, one can only pretend to be noble, since nobility is a virtue held by rare people. People these days have lost the understanding of right or wrong, and as a consequence inherent goodness in men has disappeared. It is very famously stated that, change is inevitable, true, but the question here is whether this change is for better or worse. As it is evident

that the world has changed a lot since primitive ages but has it really turned into a favourable one, a world where nobility and peace are held on a high esteem? A world where man is valued and his emotions are not a joke but a serious consideration. After the two World Wars, there began an age of destruction, disillusionment, suffering, loss and metamorphosis. The light of humanity slowly vanished and selfishness clouded all possible efforts at altruism. Transition is a perpetual process and man is always under transformation. And this perennial transition is being compared to something termed as '*bardo*' in Tibetan Buddhism – a state in which man is in intermediate state between death and rebirth. Duration of this intermediate phase depends on the deeds performed by the person. Modern human conduct is the *fons et origo* of prolonged transitional phase. From conception to death, man is continuously striving to evolve but has been unable to achieve perfection. The entire universe is evolutionary, which indirectly depends on man's evolution for better or worse.

Shastri and Dinakar try to evolve by giving up their clothes, and disguising themselves as *puranik* and *ayyappa* pilgrims respectively. But as proceed through the novel, it is discovered that there is a wide gulf between their appearances and their inner reality, which is a peculiar characteristic of modern age. This gap between appearance and reality leads to doubts and uncertainty about one's true nature as an individual. Shastri though dressed as one who recites puranas to people, still can't get rid of his true self which is caught in the web of worldly affairs and he wonders, "Can I be the same person, 'he had asked himself in wonder', who in reciting a Purana can describe Prahlad and Dhruva with such moving tenderness?" (Ananthamurthy 30)

As an individual, Shastri is full of rage, lust, hatred, doubt, and dilemma. By replacing his pant and shirt with his puranic clothes, he expected to get rid of his outrageous and pleasure seeking self, the recalcitrant self that leads to the murder of his

own wife, Saroja. But the ghosts of his former actions and present inner reality never stopped haunting him. He is struggling to break free from his self but only if it was that easy.

Dinakar, another character, who is also caught up between his outer appearance and inner reality, finds it difficult to break free no matter how hard he tries. A famous TV actor, a married man, a pleasure seeking individual, tries to give up his true self by taking the vows of and disguising as an *ayyappa* pilgrim. He is dressed up in black from head to toe and wants to forget his name in order to become someone new, someone better. But although devoted to the vows of *ayyappa* and living a life of minimal needs at the moment finds himself embarrassed and aroused at the sight of Gangu even after so many years. Dinakar reflects, “His sexual impulses had not changed in spite of the *ayyappa* clothes he wore.” (Ananthamurthy 83)

Gangu is the woman with whom he has had an illicit liaison with many years ago. One glimpse of her turned all his efforts at renunciation to ashes. Was he really a different man or was it just the outfit that has changed and nothing else inside him? By the looks of it he is living as an ascetic but deep in his heart he still yearns for the pleasures he enjoyed with Gangu and other women like her. It is difficult to perceive the genuine traits of an individual judging by their appearance. Appearance can deceive people into believing what’s not true. Life has become more of a charade than a reality these days, and it’s very difficult to ascertain the true nature of people under the pretenses. These pretensions lead people to believe the fake people who have been living now a days. Same is the case with Shastri and Dinakar, trying to hide their genuine self they become *puranic* and *ayyappa* devotee respectively. Shastri tries to overshadow his murderous self and the rage and brutality that define his character. A failed husband, married twice he couldn’t even become a good father to his daughter,

who had to elope with the man she loved, detesting and fearing her father's nature. A person who could neither be a good husband nor a good father, could never get away from his failures even after putting on the façade of being a *puranik*. Trying so hard to renounce his dark old self and creating a new identity for himself, Shastri gets stuck in his memories and struggles to break free but in vain. Unintentionally, walking down the memory lane he encounters his demons and feels their overpowering force. Breaking off from the atrocities and animosity of one's old life is as preposterous as chopping off a limb from one's body. Since, conduct tends to formulate the self (personality), it becomes an inevitable part of the life. Although with time, the memory may be clouded but a sudden bolt of lightning is enough to send one back in the time and space, and relive the experience. Shastri has been living as a *puranik* for quite some time now but just a cursory glance at the amulet around Dinakar's neck transports him into a scary old memory, one that Shastri has tried hard enough to forget. It does not only bring back the memory but also the rush of emotions he has felt at that particular moment while repeatedly smashing Saroja's head with a wooden lid, where last time, he noticed the amulet hanging on her breast. Recalling that incident was tantamount to reliving it and the same evil overshadowed his *puranik* outlook. An evil incarnation himself, he prays to God to ward off the evil and help him to get rid of the devilish stupor.

Dissatisfaction, rage, impatience, cynicism, callousness etc. are the some of the defining features of modern man. He is always looking out for ways to vent his emotions. Although such actions have damaging consequences but the urge to let it all out is way stronger than the impulse to control. Excessive outpouring of emotions be it love/hatred, anger/calm tends to baffle the human mind. And the mind goes into a trance of ethical undecidability, struggling to cling to the right, although it has already lost all sense of right and wrong. Right and wrong in the modern world are subjectively

maintained. Depending on individuality one's right could be wrong for the other and vice-versa. Subjectivity has overshadowed the realm of ethics and values. The understanding of right/wrong, good/bad depends upon the individual and situation. For instance, in the novel, Shastri maintains an illegal relation with Radha (mistress) outside his marriage and somehow thinks it to be acceptable but even a shred of baseless doubt about Saroja (wife) and Karunakar *Pundit's* acquaintance arouses hatred, jealousy and unsurmountable rage in him. His own illicit relation with Radha is justifiable to him but Saroja's mystical acquaintance with the Pundit strikes him as disgraceful and unacceptable. In that trance, he overlooked the slightest possibility of having impregnated Saroja when he so violently coupled with her in a mental fury, and accused her of bearing Pundit's illegitimate child. He says, "O you adulteress, have you become pregnant from that bastard Pundit?" (Ananthamurthy 58). Years after when he accidentally meets Dinakar in a train, wearing the amulet he once saw on Saroja's breast, he now considers the possibility of fathering him. But like it is said, there is no use crying over the spilled milk. He can be remorseful all he wants but can he take back what he did ages ago? Can he compensate for the troubles and sufferings, he inflicted on his wife? Can he compensate for all those years his son spent fatherless, yearning for one?

Next Dinakar is to be taken as a star, a famous TV actor who has lived his life devoid of any morals, full of lust and carnalism. Disgustingly maintaining parallel affairs and drowning himself in the erotic ecstasy night after night, Unable to commit, he shudders from standing either with Gangu or Mahamata or with any woman for that matter. He cannot even commit to the marital bond and maintains multiple extra marital affairs. As disgusting as it sounds, under the impression of having committed to meet one woman he would forget about the other and the anger aroused the passion in him

which would make his love making experience worthwhile. Living a life of laxity and doubtful integrity himself, his wife's infidelity seems unacceptable to him and of immeasurable dimensions compared to his own ecstatic adventures. To some extent, he considers himself or is living under the illusion of being morally upright because this could be the only explanation for his judgemental stance at his wife's extra marital affair, something he has been continuously and deeply engrossed in. He feels the crushing weight of his wife's infidelity and goes to the extent of accusing her to be a slut when he himself is no saint. How can there be two judgements for the same crime and if there are then modern men/women are in an ethical trance. On one side, he refers to his wife as a 'slut' and on other regards himself as someone who changed the entire course of a woman's life and lead her on the path of virtue. He writes to her wife, "But if you continue to be a scheming slut all your life, you will never completely turn over. I am writing this after seeing that a girl who was touched by me in her ecstasy of passion became a mahamata." (Ananthamurthy 129)

Struggling to find his self, he knocks at every door and indulges in romance with every woman he meets. Unable to answer the question 'Who am I?', he plans to give up his way of living and becomes an *ayyappa* devotee. And he expects that just by shedding his western clothes and putting on all black *ayyappa* pilgrim dress, he would be able to shed his dark and pleasure seeking self. Dressed up as a devotee, he is still unable to restrain the fire of passion burning inside. He is as delusional as a mad man for thinking that it is easy for one to turn over as one turns over in one's sleep. Modern men don't sleep like a demon and wake up as a saint. Character transformation is an eternal and unsatisfying process with no final outcome. One is always striving to be better the next day but the strings of their past deeds and present uncertainties keep pulling them back. The horrors and trauma of former days keep hovering over

indefinitely. Especially the demons of sinful and passionate past never depart, no matter how many attires you change, how many names you pick up or how many shrines you visit. Once done, it cannot be annulled. It will haunt a person's memory eternally and torment his soul until if by any chance, he can achieve redemption and which is a big if in the present age. But as naïve as man is, goes on living without considering the consequences of his actions and later takes refuge into prayer and offerings to the deities, hoping all his sins would be forgiven. People these days are not visionary, they are dreamers and live in the moment. Ignoring the thought of future, they continue to savour the delicacies, this moment has to offer. But they are oblivious to the fact that this moment is just another step into the future and so it is even more important to tread carefully if they expect a bright and content future. Both Shastri and Dinakar fall prey to excessive indulgences neglecting their ethics and duties and find themselves in a dark spot after a few years, when suddenly faced with the consequences, of their former actions, to which they have yet been ignorant. And it is at this moment that self-realisation dawns upon them but too late since their loved ones have sustained the pain and agony resultant of the former's doing.

True love, chivalry, sacrifice, heroism are pristine concepts. Ancient legendary love stories still function as fountain head for modern day romance. Youth, now a days, full of uncertainty, illusion and superficiality. Romeo-Juliet, Heer-Ranjha, Shirin-Farhad, love legends act as snake charmer's tune to lure the youth on the well-treaded and obscure path of romance. Philosophers have referred to human mind as a blank slate in the theory of 'Tabula Rasa' as propounded by John Locke. This philosophy regards human beings as born with no inbuilt knowledge or understanding of the world and all knowledge that they acquire is through experience and experiment. Aristotle writes in his treatise *On the Soul*, "... When we said that mind is in a sense potentially

whatever is thinkable, though actually it is nothing until it has thought.” (“Tabula Rasa”)

Young mind is like a blank slate, striving to acquire comprehensive knowledge and the knowledge such acquired is altered at every step through experience. Youth is a very impressionable stage of human life. Whatever they watch, hear and do leaves an indelible imprint on the mind. Years passed by and the lessons learned and knowledge gained still stay fresh in the memory. In an age like this when youth is indulging in ecstatic existence, mind struggles to hold on to the surface reality while drowning in the corporeal subsistence. The mind delves into the romantic ideals but finds it difficult to get a hold of the seriousness and immortality of the genuine love. The legends perished with the unsurmountable passion for their sole beloved but their love for their partner never even wavered. They were overjoyed in life and took their last breath with a heart full of their beloved’s affection. In life they pined for their exquisite love, fought with the world to be with them and bore the unbearable just to unite with the one.

These days, it can be easily observed, people indulge in charlatan romance, which has become an elucidating characteristic of modern days’ love/romance. Simultaneous multiple affairs, illicit and incestuous relations, infidelity, breakups-patch ups, excessive eroticism exemplify modern day romantic stance. *Bhava* seems to be an epitome of carnival desires and modern days’ love. In the very beginning, Shastri is haunted by the question whether he is father of Dinakar or not? And the question of fatherhood occupies the entire scene of the novel in majority. Throughout the story, Shastri struggles to come to a definite conclusion about Dinakar being his son or not. Who fathered which is the bone of contention in the story? First thing to consider is as to why there is a doubt about parentage? Is it because of ignorant illicit relations rampant throughout the society these days? Man is busy living with animalistic passion

indifferent to the outcomes and this is what leads to doubts and uncertainties. Shastri adores a prostitute girl and makes her his mistress without marriage. But even after years when she is unable to conceive, they reach a mutual agreement and as a result Shastri marries Saroja, a poor peasant girl. The bride is aware of the intimacies between Shastri and Radha and cannot bring herself to like him. There is a mechanical coupling between the two and even this time Saroja is incapable of conceiving. Bringing a Pundit into the house to cure Saroja's infertility creates uproar in the family. Shastri begins to suspect Saroja and Pundit's proximity. In his suspicion, he concludes that Pundit impregnated her and in a fit of madness killed her. Therefore, Dinakar's fatherhood remains an unanswered throughout the novel. Shastri accused his wife of adultery although there was no concrete proof to sustain his accusations. But then why would he even consider the possibility? How could he be so naïve to act on his baseless whims and commit something so terrible as a murder? Probably because of the mindset he has been living in because of his own illegitimate affair. Mind is the eye with which we see and judge the world around. So, whatever a person perceives is basically a reflection of our inner self. Similarly, Shastri's suspicion arose from his own salaciousness.

Shastri's laxity began in his early Bombay days, dressed in western jeans and shirt, befriended pimps and visited brothels. One of these days while visiting a prostitute's house to satiate his lustful passion, he encountered a girl named Radha, young and beautiful. Unexpectedly a sudden compassion arose for her in his heart, although hitherto he had only had sexual tendencies towards women. But for Radha, he felt an altogether different sort of attachment and concern. He bought her from the owner as is the tradition and kept her in a big house, somewhere near his own residence. His love for Radha was eternal, it went on increasing but never even

wavered. Even after marrying twice, he would still go back to her in times of distress and spend the night with her, waking up all bouncy and breezy. One would wonder if what he felt for Radha was love or something else? If he really was in love with her why not marry her? Why keep her as a mistress her entire life? From ancient ages to present day, the concept of love has undergone complete transformation. It's just a sham, a façade behind the veil of which lust and eroticism reign supreme and man is a prisoner of his passions. Even to think that a man so deeply in love with one woman would have the capability to so brutally murder another one under the slightest suspicion, proves the dominance of passion over reason. If he was really in love with Radha as he claimed, wouldn't he be a different man, a better man instead. Because love doesn't just make a person, a beloved to someone, it makes a person, a gentle and benevolent fellow. But Shastri's violent coupling with Saroja and later on her cold-blooded murder shows how he is devoid of any emotion, specifically love. One furious moment is described as, "Even demons could not have engaged in such a violent coupling. He tore the clothes off Saroja and fell on her, shrieking and moaning" (Anathamurthy 53). This leaves the reader shocked and wondering as to what love is and what he had with Radha was it love or just another way to pacify his frenzy.

Similarly, Dinakar finds himself stuck in the whirlwind of modern days' counterfeit romance. In his entire life, he lived an ecstatic and nonchalant existence. Once in train, he drooled over an eighteen-year old and tried to gratify his sexual desires by touching her entire body in the bathroom of the moving train. When she asked him to get away with her, he stood still and could not bring himself to commit. Commitment in love is the first and the foremost necessity but when it's only about the heart's passion, committing would mean surrendering. Which would mean listening, caring, and considering your partner's wishes, all these a lustful man is incapable of

incorporating. It's all about the intermingling of bodies and has nothing to do with the union of souls. Soulful love has lost all meaning and fleshly romance has clouded the entire horizon of love. Dinakar's innumerable attempts at sexual gratification whenever, wherever and with whom so ever possible, would have shocked the precursors of luminary romance, "Forgetting the time I promised to one woman, I promised the same time to another; cheating on one in order to placate another; using the anger and emotion that I caused as a spice to make the act of love more delicious- this became an addiction." (Ananthamurthy 121)

The triad of Dinakar, Gangu and Narayan Tantri is full of illicit and clandestine physical coupling. Both Dinakar and Narayan have had their share of secrecy with Gangu, who happens to be married to a slow-witted man. Gangu has had her roots in a prostitute's family but has risen to paramount heights through education. She entertained them both simultaneously and was apt in keeping it from both. They were both ignorant of each other's covert acquaintance with her, until one day during her pregnancy, she confessed to Narayan about her secret relation with Dinakar. Until now he was willing to take a stand for Gangu but this revelation numbed him. It shocked him to the core and he maintained distance from her but only a few days passed and there he was, back to her house. After years when Narayan shared this secret with Dinakar, he found it difficult to digest the fact since for so long they both were under the impression of being the sole possessors of Gangu's affection. Secrecy is another pertinent feature of modern life. Keeping secrets has become a necessity since revealing our true selves would mean to invite criticism and judgement. Imperfection is looked down upon but perfection is a myth, feigning perfection is the only way to get people to appreciate you. Therefore, people prefer to keep their real self as a secret and put on a show. One could wonder at the need of such secrecy and infidelity, both on

part of Gangu as well as Dinakar and Narayan. Dinakar lived in the same house as Narayan, regarded his mother as his own, developed a close friendship with him and yet could not gather courage enough to share his secrets with him. Neither did Narayan have the faith and courage to tell him about his affair with Gangu. Another question that surfaces is, why would she get involved with two men at the same time besides being already married to a decent man? What is it that she wanted to achieve by getting erotically involved with two men simultaneously? Was it really love, the boundaries of which are superficial or was it her physical needs which are insatiable no matter how many erotic interventions one is involved in? How can one differentiate true love from lewd passion? People tend to mistake their passion for love and vice-versa. This leads them on a path of self-destruction, but once set foot, there is no turning back from the glittery and overpowering path of superficial romance. It hinders man's rationality, tends to dissolve the boundaries of good/bad and obsession takes control. Heart to brain co-ordination is abruptly and all one thinks about is to satisfy their passion. Needs, desires and yearnings of human body become the main concern. Once undefiled and pure emotion of love these days has become polluted and defiled. The love triangle or more aptly called as the lust triangle between Gangu, Dinakar and Narayan left them shocked and scandalised. Both the men were completely clueless of each other's acquaintance with Gangu. When Dinakar finds out about Narayan's involvement with Gangu, the thought that crosses his mind is, "I had thought that all Gangu's stolen moments were mine alone, where else, when she was out of my sight, could she have been meeting him? At Hardwar? At Kashi? At Mathura?" (Ananthamurthy 96-97)

Gangubai otherwise depicted as an intelligent and compassionate woman is trapped into the modern vice of carnal yearnings. Seems like there are two distinct sides to her character, that of being a virtuous woman to the world and a lustful one in her

solitary. She is depicted in the novel as being an amalgam of two morally opposite selves. On one hand, she takes care of Narayan's son as her own, gives him motherly affection and aspires to become something in life through education. On the other hand, she indulges in malicious affairs with two men simultaneously. Gangu stands as a perfect example of duplicitous character, another major feature of modern age. She is not the only one to live a double life. There are other characters as well who are not what they appear to be. Every individual has contrasting attributes which come in the front as and when required. One's own near and dear friends, family and relatives have become a mystery these days. Everybody seems to be living a different life apart from their socially active life, others have no clue about. They conceal their vices and project virtues to the public, as once revealed their vices may be the beginning of their end. Revelation requires courage and audacity to face your demons and their outcomes, but people are used to stay in their comfort zone and hence prefer pretending rather than revealing. People are hollow from inside and one solid push would make them crumble to pieces. One loose end and they lose everything they aspired to be and are whether it's genuine or just a façade to get people to appreciate them. Although at the end, one has to face the consequences of living a double standard life, but one does not realise it until faced with the after effect. Shastri lived a double life and as a consequence ended up losing both his wife and child. Dinakar discovered to his dismay that in his sexual endeavour, he might have fathered a child. Gangu finds herself in a dilemma unable to decide who father her child is and ends up having a disturbing relationship with her son.

There is another character in the novel whose two-facedness tends to baffle the reader. One would keep wondering as to what side of her character is her true self and what is fabricated. It's quite difficult to distinguish between the real and the superficial.

Initially Sittamma is presented as a spokesperson of religious cultures and tradition, deities and prayers, and what not. When Shastri and Dinakar visit her for the first time, she offers to prepare food for Shastri but only after she has cleansed/purified herself lest the food would be polluted. We are told that she cooks her own food and does her own chores to keep it from being defiled. But sometime later she is shockingly shown as advocating his son Narayan Tantri's illegitimate acquaintance with Gangu. A woman of religious predilection, engrossed in the *bhava* of *bhakti* and reverence, her indifference at Narayan and Gangu's illicit relationship strikes the reader as a bolt of lightning. She definitely seems to be knowing all about morality, ethics and the right and wrong. But then why would her son's affair seem to be acceptable and not even debatable? A staunch believer, a devotee herself, she gets caught up between her morality and motherliness. She herself lives by the code of conduct of devout people but her judgement is clouded when it comes to her son. It is like she is an altogether different woman when performing her daily duties and becomes another character when supporting Narayan. She is a shady character with nothing definite about her, except her reverence to the almighty. She does believe in the supreme power's existence and that he is the final authority to reward or punish people according to their deeds. But she loses all sense of right and wrong when taking her son's side and even going to the extent of permitting him to marry Gangu, an already married woman. Sittamma's binary character portrayal raises questions in the reader's mind, the answers to which are never found. What could be the possible reason for her willing acceptance of Narayan and Gangu's licentious know-how? How can a woman of such belief and devotion stray from the path of righteousness and fall prey to her emotions and follow into her son's whims? She respects and is grateful to Gangu for taking care of her grandson, Gopal, when his mother died, but allowing her to be in a seductive

relationship with Narayan, isn't exactly the way to show your gratitude. That is too, when the grandson is offended by his father's association to a married woman. She even chides him for entertaining wrong thoughts about Gangu and asks him to seek forgiveness from the lord. Which son would be comfortable with his father's untimely visits to a married woman's abode? Gopal is an educated man and he understands that his father's actions can have consequences, but his grandmother is blinded with gratitude and cannot look beyond. She says, "Just think, your mother died after giving birth to you and didn't even see you, do you know that? It was Gangu who carried you about and played with you. Get up, go, bow down to God and ask forgiveness for your bad thoughts" (Ananthamurthy, *Bhava* 81).

In the modern days' world, religion is seen as a shield, under whose protection one could indulge in phoney acts and still be somehow acceptable. Veritable understanding of religion is limited and one could even go to the extent of saying that it is directly proportional to man's convenience. Convenience is the modern days' synonym for religion. One would bow where and when it is convenient otherwise not. Religion is misused by people for accumulating wealth and favours, and alteration in its implications is a common and casual phenomenon owing to man's convenience again. Faith has been uprooted by the storm of needs/desires. One is Hindu or Muslim or Christian or secular as and when it is advantageous. Religion is a flourishing market these days making profit from devotee's fear. It is in the pretext of fear that people visit temples and shrines. They are afraid because they know what they are doing is wrong and somehow, they have come to believe that visiting a temple, praying to a deity or donating funds to the temple would nullify their deeds and save them from the wrath of God. So, millions of people visit temples, have a private god in their homes, donate lots of money, but still retain their basic human nature, continue to live a sinful existence

hoping for forgiveness. It would be surprised the most sinful people tend to escape while the lesser ones or the virtuous ones get stuck in the quotidian struggles of life. Has modernisation also affected the almighty's sense of judgement, may be but people still posit their faith or fear in him for survival. Fear is the main force that drives people to take refuge in religion. A perfectly fine life becomes our worst nightmare when faced with hurdles and the only saviour is God. So, what govern religious instincts in the present day- faith or fear?

Families have undergone a metamorphosis in the contemporary times. Individualism has forced family values on the backfoot. Once of grave importance, families have now disintegrated and self-interest is the new motto. From all-encompassing joint families to narrow and limited circle of nuclear families, people have come very far leaving their familial bond of love, sacrifice and dependence behind. Diminishing emotional attachments result in misunderstandings and feuds in the family. From occasional disagreements to impulsive and violent outpourings, these feuds shake the very foundation of family. Shastri's bitter relationship with his brother is highlighted in the early chapters of the novel. He never had good terms with him and was always in disharmony. They have spoken heartrending words to each other and lived away after their parent's demise. Regular disagreements and prolonged separation climaxed whatever little emotion they felt for one another. So, when Shastri heard the news of his brother's death and went to attend his last rites there was not even a single drop of tear in his eyes. There was a time when people would burst into tears at other's pain but today people are so cold-hearted that their own loved one's agony is unable to move them. Shastri's brother on the other hand invested his life in digging up every corner of the house to find the hidden gold rather than trying to communicate and resolve issues with his brother, which was the real wealth. People find joy in wealth

and other materialistic possessions, ignoring the real happiness of being surrounded and cared by the loved ones. From 'we' the world has come a long way to 'I', now it's all about what I want, what I have, what makes me happy, etc. People prefer to stay alone considering family to be a restriction and they love their liberty more than family. Shastri is happy that after his brother he came to acquire all the wealth of the family and he can easily keep his mistress, Radha with no one left to rebuke him. One moment of his cold bloodedness is described, "There were flies around his short-pointed nose, that nose he had often felt like smashing. Even seeing his brother's corpse did not bring tears to his eyes. They had spoken such cruel words to each other" (Ananthamurthy 34-35).

Shastri has lost his entire family, mother, father, brother but there isn't even a shred of discomfort that he feels. He feels liberated after the last hurdle i.e., his brother is gone forever, and now he can enjoy the extravagances and licentiousness, he is addicted to. Shastri is not a family man as it has been already observed his only affection is for Radha. When married to Saroja, he is unable to maintain the holy union of body and soul and ends up murdering her in a fit of madness. After Saroja he marries again, in want of a successor and is bestowed with a beautiful daughter. But Shastri being Shastri, is unable to connect to his daughter emotionally and is in perpetual disagreement with her. As a result, she elopes with the man of her choice dreading the consequences if her father caught her, as he doesn't approve of her choice. As is already evident that Shastri is short-tempered and outrageous, finding that his daughter has eloped with the man of his dislike, he goes into an uncontrollable rage capable of murdering her. The daughter on the other hand gave up her family and decided a brief acquaintance was more valuable than the family bond. Shastri was not in talking terms to his daughter but after recognising her vulnerable condition, he helps her not only

financially by providing better job to his son-in-law but provides emotional support to his daughter by welcoming her in his house. One most beautiful outcome regarding modern Indian man can be observed as the best father regardless he must be powerful and liberal minded otherwise honour killing can also be performed by the same Indian father. People are selfish and ambitious. They discard family emotions and relations for a life of fame and luxury. But how far is it justifiable to cut off yourself from the family tree that nourished and protected you for years and how long can one survive without his roots? Men, these days, want to transcend all boundaries and achieve the impossible but what are they willing to lose in the process? Can one really live happily after having forgotten the one thing that made them what they are today? It's family that makes one capable of achieving the unachievable, it is the ladder that takes one higher on the path to success, it's family that's willing to sacrifice its own existence just for one and yet somehow people think it easier to desert their family and move on and away. The world has really changed a lot in the last few decades, and not for the good, it is guessed, but for the worse. Yes, people have better facilities, improved technologies, rising economy but they also have depreciating family values, dwindling morality and defunct humanity. And this isn't over yet, with every passing decade we are moving one step ahead towards self-destruction. Since, families are left behind there is no one to save them and hence no redemption. One has to reap what one sowed.

Shastri is not the only one to have a disintegrated family but Narayan Tantri's family is also not so compact. Although being a famous lawyer of Bengaluru, he lives with his son in the same house, under the same roof, there seems to be a lot of distance between the two. The son doesn't approve of his father's extravagances and licentiousness. And the father doesn't concern himself with his son's emotion, continuously indulging in self-gratification. Which leads to a wide trench between the

father-son duo. Then Gangu, unable to reveal the truth about his father, and continuously indulging with Narayan Tantri, is in perpetual argument with her son, Prasad. He detests Narayan's involvement with his mother and often gives clues about the same. He grows up to be a man of high moral and religious understanding and eventually lives an ascetic life renouncing all emotions of hatred and anger towards his mother and Narayan. Even when he was clueless as to who his father was, he always regarded Chandrappa, the dull-witted husband of Gangu to be his father. Later when he realises the truth about his father, he continues to take Chandrappa as his father. Dinakar who turns out to be his father spent his entire life seeking pleasures and passion unaware of the existence of his successor. All three main male characters Shastri, Narayan and Dinakar lose their chance at a peaceful familial existence due to their own vices. Living an emotionally secluded and dull existence, they do realise at the end how their past actions have come to shape their present and future. If only they could make right decision at the right moment and not take the wrong turn, life would have been different. But they put their self-interest before their family and loved ones and that is what leads to such an awful existence. Family is not just a bunch of people connected to one another through blood and so living together. Family is that shield under whose protection man walks free and full of confidence that no matter what there are people to back him up. But the scene has drastically changed in present times and man considers family a burden and prefers to walk alone. He forgets that one man can never conquer the world, there is always forces working to support and guide him.

Bhava presents the declining family emotions and overpowering individualism very clearly and almost throughout the story. As U R Ananthamurthy was highly influenced by the philosophy of Dr Ram Manohar Lohia who explains women are the most oppressed categories of humankind. She may bid to obliterate her situation with a

piece of jewels, affection and her humanitarian hospitality. Women have a life apart from their sexual and domiciliary role. She must not be judged solely her rapport with men- be it her husband, father, son or brother. If the women don't express their view that does not suggest that they don't have wisdom or knowledge and a writer who is quite sensitive towards their miseries can present a stage from where they can raise their voices. Lohiya explains:

“Draupadi should be the model for Indian women, not Savitri. Yet he shows a great regard for Savitri and Sita. Chastity is only one virtue of a woman, but she has several more virtues, which should not be sacrificed for the one i.e., chastity. He finds Draupadi intelligent with her presence of mind and courage to ask questions ... [and] there is nothing wrong in virtues only, that limits and confines the multi- faceted capacity of a woman.” (*Prem Singh 2, 8*)

Ananthamurthy gives ample opportunity to readers to explain the silence of women characters as he has. Mostly postcolonial writer use the notion of silence to represent suppression, miseries and marginalization but Ananthamurthy emphasizes the upper phase of silence that means state of calmness, realm of transcendence and nothingness. Shastri knows Saroja's indifference is not the shyness but it is the result of contempt towards him. She breaks the norms to reside with her husband and flee away from his house. In every woman's life, feeling of uprootedness always comes. The traditional women bear all kind of injustice but unconventional cannot bear. The writer presents mentally and emotionally strong women through the references of Saroja, Mangla, Radha, Sitamma, Mahamata and Gangubai. All these characters realize the futility of the materialistic things that is why Saroja takes rescue by drowning herself in the *Ganga*, Mangla comes to know the miseries of housewife in patriarchal society that does not value a woman's intellectual talent and expect from her to sacrifice her life for

the sake of husband and his family members while she tries to cope with adverse situation and has to leave her dream of becoming a revolutionist, Radha spares time for her spiritualistic pursuits, Sitamma involves herself in household chores without expecting anything from anyone, Mahamata become ascetic and indulges herself in worship of God Krishna like Meerabai and Gangubai does all the duties without involving in this world and becomes an independent woman after acquiring higher education.

Unlike Rammanohar Lohiya, Ananthamurthy did not realise the necessity of people organisation. He believed in the need of small intellectual institutions. Nataraj Holiyar explains the efficiency, all round personality and guiding force of Ananthamurthy, “he remained an independent, secular, public intellectual who wanted to remain his freedom to say and write what he felt strongly. With the exit of Ananthamurthy, one suddenly starts realizing the need for such fearless, independent intellectuals who are an ‘endangered species’ in our time.” (Huliyar 3B)

Bhava is an amalgam of all the modern days’ characteristics, and the themes are presented with such vigour that it seems like a modern novel to some extent. Identity crisis, individualism, self-interest, disintegration, chaos, eroticism are some of the main themes being taken up and which are the peculiar characteristics of today’s world. Modern day chaos and uncertainty is rampant throughout the novel in the main contention i.e., the question of parentage or more specifically of fatherhood. Who fathered whom and when? This is the question which occupies the largest time and space in the novel. Shastri’s uncertainty at being Dinakar’s father, Narayan Tantri and Dinakar’s doubt about who is fathered Prasad All this confusion arose from uncountable illegitimate physical relations, another marker of present world. This is an age where redemption remains a myth since people are submerged in sins head to toe

that no amount of repentance can redeem them. Their actions are unforgivable and unforgettable. So does the novel end with Shastri's uncertainty, Dinakar's remorse, Gangu's submission to his son's decisions and a prolonged life of brooding and contemplation?

Thus, Dinakar and Shatri go through all the paths of life and get its results. They even try to get spirituality that is one of the main traits of post-modern age and peace but they seem to be shallow, distorted and disturbed being in comparison to the ordinary life of Chandrappa, Prasad and Sitamma. In his prior works, the motifs were dominated by the fiery social issues like caste conflict, gender inequality, cultural-economic and political affairs but the novel *Bhava* has a clairvoyant notion which is a healthy notion in the composition of U R Aananthamurthy all in all. Hence, *Bhava* gives the realistic pictures of modern India i.e., identity crisis, dilemma, depression, culture, spiritual quest, capitalism, man- woman relationship, status of women and outcastes etc. through its various characters.

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