



ISSN Print: 2394-7500  
ISSN Online: 2394-5869  
Impact Factor: 5.2  
IJAR 2019; 5(6): 385-387  
[www.allresearchjournal.com](http://www.allresearchjournal.com)  
Received: 18-04-2019  
Accepted: 22-05-2019

**Dr. Shylaja S**  
Principal, Government First  
Grade College Peenya  
Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

## The unfilled gaps and the unending meanings

**Dr. Shylaja S**

### Abstract

Meanings are made by men. When a writer creates a text he is very much involved in creating the meaning. In other words, the writer intends the readers to see what he wants them to see. Therefore, the gaps in the original text inspire creative writers to mould the work according to their will. This paper refers to Dr. Shivaprakash's Mahachaitra (The Great Spring) and Banjagere Jaya Prakash's ("Aanu Deva Horaganavanu").

**Keywords:** Ballads, creativity, gaps

### Introduction

Meaning is produced by weaving together various components like purpose, interest, feel experience, time, and place etcetera. when the writer or the creator of the contingent meanings is involved in the process of transforming the reality into language consciously or unconsciously he/she tends to blend her/his own attitude or perspective with the facts in order to achieve the intended purpose of the work. Therefore, 'meaning' is not autonomous but it is subject to the thought process of its creator. When the creation of meaning depends on the principle of selection, addition and deletion definitely there are bound to be gaps in the real action and the written or the narrated action. As Wordsworth writes in his preface to Lyrical Ballads

"There cannot be a doubt that the language which it will suggest to him must often, in liveliness and truth, fall short of that which is uttered by men in real life".

Now, the question that I have tried to address in this paper is that how do these gaps lend themselves to increased probing and evolution of new meaning and also how they affect the world in general. As an example I propose to consider the 12<sup>th</sup> century revolution of Karnataka which is made and remade by the historians, literary writers, thinkers and philosophers, but every time a researchers evince interest in it, it is sure to yield something afresh. The focus of this paper is the birth of Basavanna the most important figure of this revolution which has always intrigued the literary writers who have mused and meddled, with it to create texts with different 'meanings'. Right from Hariihara to the present day Dr. Shivaprakash and the most recent Banjagere Jayaprakash - the writer seem to be basking in the warmth of the less recorded historical facts as it renders a fertile source for imagination and creativity.

Whatever the original might have been, the reflection or the distortion as we wish to call it produced by the modern writers seems to have created ripples in the minds of the people which perhaps the mere reading of 'Vachanas', the only exiting proof, may not excite the readers to this extent. The specific reference here is to Dr. Shivaprakash's "The great spring" Mahachaitra and Banjagere Jayaprakash's ("ಆನು ದೇವ ಹೊರಗವನು") (Aanu Deva Horaganavanu") once again from the point of view of the general semantics, the reception of these polemical works by the Kannadigas speaks volumes about different levels of comprehension. Ever before we discuss the responses, let us dwell in the way the birth of Basavanna has been dealt by these two creative authors.

The aftermath of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Veerashaiva revolution gas led to a lot of controversies as no document precisely narrates what happened to either Basavanna or his followers after the revolution. These are different version to it. Again one has to rely on the Vachanas scribed by the Vachanakaras. The ahistorical reading of the vachanas has led to the creation of the texts like Sankranthi, Taledanda and Mahachaitra.

**Corresponding Author:**  
**Dr. Shylaja S**  
Principal, Government First  
Grade College Peenya  
Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

Whatever may be the purpose behind writing these plays what concerns us semantically is the inherent scope of the vachana Sahitya, which allows multiple readings resulting in fresh unknown meanings. As Basavanna aimed at eliminating the caste and class distinctions, time and again people have wondered whether they could fulfil their objective, or was it a failure. Even if they succeeded till when did the society enjoy the success, what were the undercurrents? How did the society bear the confusion of acceptance and rejection of the new values? As and when the writers or the thinkers have attempted to examine the great revolution the leader of the revolution Basava has been at the crux of their debates and discussions.

It is commonly believed that Basava was born to a Brahmin couple but he rejected the brahminical rituals which segregated them from the other lower marginalised classes. He questioned many of their practices and rejected brahminism and fought for the entire humanity. He took the bold steps of uniting an upper caste girl with lower class boy in marriage. A couple of his vachanas in which he tries to identify himself with the lower classes have enriched or contributed to the already existing gaps between the map and the territory. When the territory is drowned in time one can draw or imagine several maps. Keeping his vachanas as a proof, as words can be moulded according to one's will, the parentage of Basava has been illustrated differently in different texts. Dr. Shivaprakash creates a Brahmin character by name Mukunda Bhatt who very suggestively deludes the listeners who are also very eager to fuel such distortion and says that Basava is not a Brahmin but born illegally out of marriage and accuses his mother of extra marital relationship. I quote from the text.

"We too are at fault, Sire. We ignored him. Thinking after all he is a brahmin like us. Only later it was learnt that his mother has no children for a long time. And afterwards....." Adinathiah another character contribute to the misevaluation or the distorted thinking and says "You mean.... he was born out of Wedlock? Surprising, do such thing happen in your caste too?"

This piece of conversation reflects the incorrigible nature of human chatter which comprehend thing according to the circumstance and personal benefits. As long as Basava was patronised by Bijjala was believed to be a Brahmin by the people like Mukunda Bhatt by once he loses all the glory they not only discard him but demean him. The text reiterates the human tendency to follow the powerful and think, act and understand according to their convenience. This is one of the examples which that 'meaning' gets corroded by human interventions.

Next, I would like to examine the responses of the common people after the play was prescribed as a text for U.G students. Even here we witnessed different ways and levels of comprehension by different sections of people according to their preferences. If the Daliths rejoiced over this new finding or version and made much of it, rather more than what the text intended to say, the pontiffs took a serious objection and designed strikes and processions against the prescription of such a text. While the earlier group was operating through the sentiments of marginalisation the latter one was looking at it from religious point of view. While one was threatened by dispopularity. Unfortunately, nobody bothered to consider him as a human being unattached to any community as such. I would like to quote

from one of the report published in Times of India on 16.12.1994.

"The book written by H.S. Shivaprakash has already drawn widespread Criticism from the Lingayats, particularly the orthodox and religious leader of the community, for, What they regard as its highly disparaging and insulting reference to the 12<sup>th</sup> century philosopher and reformer Basaveshwara and the Sharana movement he led. For the last few months, the lingayats, also called Veerashaivas have been demanding immediate withdrawal of the text book by the two universities. Their demand also included a ban in the book and punishment to the writer, with neither of their demands having been met; they took to the streets organizing rallies in November under the leadership of Mate Mahadevi, the head of the Basava Dharma Peetha.

....Meanwhile, the rebel writers led by prof. Chandrashekhar patil of dharwad and the PVK a pro - Dalit organisation of the students, on the other hand, vehemently opposed their demands, which according to them, and smacked of "fascist" attitude.

While a meeting of the likeminded people convened by the Bandaya literary writers at strongly criticized the lingayat orthodoxy for, what they as attempts to stifle freedom of expression and creative thinking"

These responses of people endorse the fact that "meaning" are born out of human sentiments, their pride and prejudices. Their intention here is nit to explore the truth but to presume that, what they believed is the truth. So, is meaning then subjective? Yes, It is bounded to be Subjective, it is people who cull out the meanings, give it a form and shape. It is born in the minds of the people and not in the air. Therefore, human mind can construct, deconstruct, add, delete and keep changing the meaning.

"ಅನು ದೇವ ಹೊರಗಣವನು" ("Aanu Deva Horaganavanu") a historical; evaluation written by Dr. Banjagere Jayapakash is a fine illustration of this. This work is a search for truth, "Suspected truth" (ಅನುಮಾನಿತ ಸತ್ಯ) according to the author. The usage of the phrase 'suspected truth' by the author - questions the very concept of 'true meaning'

The text demonstrates how the vachanas the only believable sources of the 12<sup>th</sup> century revolution also is affected by human motive. According to Banjagere Jayaprakash, the vachanas were documented only during 15<sup>th</sup> century and while documenting them there was not only a difference in time, but historically, culturally and socially also there was a gap of nearly two centuries. And the documenting was done by the court scholars of the Vijayanagara emperor Krishnadevaraya who were far removed from the spirit of the 12<sup>th</sup> century revolution most of whom belonged to the lower rung in the society. Therefore, the selection of the vachanas and the temperament of the commentators are sure to affect meaning of the vachanas.

He goes on to say that even when vachanas are read the meaning is derived according to the per-conception and objectives. It is in this background that a vachana can acquire multifaceted meaning. And according to Dr. Rajendra Chenni the expanse of 12<sup>th</sup> century vachanas movement was not as huge as the Buddhist movement both geographically and also in the sense of time. It is the interest, the inquisitiveness of the human mind which has provoked repeated probing into the shrouded history and the great revolution s kept alive in their works. Probably, the gaps rendered it a fertility which continues to be haunting the mind and yielding new interpretations.

Then, now arises the question, is there a meaning at all? Can we emphatically bang the desk and say this is or this should be the 'meaning'. Can meaning be static?

As long as there is thought meaning keeps changing. There are bound to be gaps between territories and minds. Even the attempts to bridge these chasms can result in unravelling new hidden meanings. So, instead of labelling human comprehension as misevaluation, isn't it better to call it circumstantial understanding/ and allow the gaps to thrive as they can induce mobility to stagnation and add newness, so that every moment of life is savoured.

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