

BOOK REVIEW

Satire of high order

GOVINDARAJU RAMAKRISHNA RAO

The protracted title of this Telugu book is in tune with the tone and tenor of its contents. The pen name adopted by the author is a dexterous mutation of his name K.V.N.Sarma (Kandula Varaha Narasimha Sarma). By vocation, he is a professor of Engineering, and he worked in several prestigious Universities in India and abroad. In Sanskrit "Kavanam" connotes poetry or muse. He calls the musings, in a way recollections, *Kavanaalu* rhyming with his name. *Kavanaalu* are, in fact, narratives (*kathanaalu*).

The book is an anthology of 66 narratives, under six Heads and 20 sub-heads. Except 25, the narratives, primarily, revolve round the field of Education in India, with particular emphasis on Research. Most of the narratives were published in Telugu weeklies during 1970-77, the rest before 1993. This mention of the period is relevant for a judicious appraisal of the issues discussed in the narratives. As the very cover page pronounces, they are Satirical Narratives ('*Vyangya Kavannalu*'). Before delving into the pages,

the readers will do well to comprehend the background of the writings, as divulged by the author in his introductory remarks. Similarly, they must be prepared to read the narratives couched in a language soaked with satire, humour, pun, parody, twist, sarcasm, new idioms, typical vocabulary and the like.

A random reconnoitre may enthuse the readers. 'Brain Drain' is at the helm of the narratives. The author discloses: "I have been acquainted with the Research work in India for 30 years. A large number of students are leaving the country inasmuch as proper opportunities do not exist here for Research and as the authorities are still enamoured of foreign degrees. Of course, there is exaggeration in telling the story, but not in the context." In this story a rich landlord Siddayya wants to give his daughter Mani in marriage to his nephew Gopanna alias Gopala Rao. But Gopanna wants to do his Ph.D., before marriage. Siddayya and Gopanna visit the four corners of India to identify a suitable University for Research. To their dismay, they find horrible ground realities at all the places. Finally Gopanna weds Mani and then leaves for USA to do



his Ph.D..

Narratives under Head-2 uncover the hollowness of some of the so called Experts and the nepotism of some other Experts. The author clarifies: "I do not mean that we do not have real experts in our country, that they do not produce good reports and that the Government is not respecting them. The narratives just present other side of the coin."

The noxious practice of recruiting kith and kin for appointments is the subject for narratives under the third Head. Under the fourth Head, the narratives deal with mockery of Entrance Tests, lack of infrastructure, morbid system of donations,

strikes, caste factor, ragging etc., in our colleges and Universities.

Different facets of prudent financial management and frugal canons postulated by housewives form the topics for narratives under the fifth Head. The subjects for the last Head are the organisation and functioning of societies with numerous nomenclatures, and the story part in films.

By all parameters the book is an uncommon product, highlighting the discrepancies in different areas. Obviously, the author intends to bring them to the notice of the authorities concerned and the general public and pave the way for their rectification. Rare themes, typical characters with bizarre names, skillful craft laced with copious humour and inimitably racy style make this book a paradigm in the satirical species. Needless to say it is a must read.

Vahini Books deserves kudos for publishing this book.

**Brain Drain Anu America Majilee Kadhalu Leka Vangyakavanaalu**

By Kavana Sarma  
Price Rs.240.

**For Copies :** Navodaya Book House, Kachiguda, Hyderabad - 27.