



1196, Sadashiv Peth, Limayewadi Road, pune - 411030.  
contact- 020-29526979/ 9699644930 E-Mail- [ssf@ssfoffice.co.in](mailto:ssf@ssfoffice.co.in)

## Anna Bhau Sathe

In the grand sweep of Indian history, names of emperors, reformers, and saints are remembered and honoured. But there are others voices from the streets, from the chawls, from the edge and cut of society—whose stories rarely make it to the textbooks. Anna Bhau Sathe was one such voice, but he carried within him the collective cry of millions like him. He was not a philosopher in the traditional sense he had no formal education, no library to draw information from but his life itself became a lamp on hill, one of resistance, of dignity, and strong faith in humanism.

Born in 1920 in Wategaon, Satara, Anna Bhau Sathe migrated to Mumbai with his family during a time of famine. There, he worked as a porter, a bricklayer, a factory worker. But in the quiet hours of exhaustion, he listened, observed the world around him and finally, began to write not from imagination, but from experience he gathered. His words were raw, alive, and necessary.



He gave language to those who were never allowed to speak because of their conditions. For Anna Bhau Sathe, literature was not decoration; it was a hammer to break chains, a song to gather courage, a mirror to reflect the world's cruelty and a torch to light the path ahead. For him literature was to say something ordinary in extraordinary way and something extraordinary in ordinary way.

Anna Bhau Sathe's novels and stories such as *Fakira*, *Chitra*, are not simply tales. They are documents of communities who were crushed under caste, custom, and class in his contemporary era. In *Fakira*, he writes about a rebel Dalit known as 'Fakira' who rises against feudal oppression. In his other account on the Murali system, where young girls were offered to gods and abused by society, Sathe does not shy away from exposing how religion and tradition can sanctify violence. And yet, he never strips his characters of hope this was the greatness of writing of Anna Bhau Sathe. Even in unbearable suffering, he shows their dignity. The writings of Anna Bhau Sathe inspired the masses to dream.

This idea that the oppressed are not just victims of history but the very ones who build it—was expressed most strongly by Anna Bhau Sathe in his speech at the Dalit Literature Conference in 1958. There, he made a powerful appeal to writers, artists, and thinkers to use their work in support of justice and stand with the people.

*"Therefore, those who wish to write about the Dalit must first have solidarity with him. The Dalit must be made to realize: 'You are no slave. This world rests upon your hands.' We must strive to elevate his life to a higher plane. And for that, the writer must always stand alongside the people. For the artist who stands with the people only he gains their trust. Art turns away from those who turn away from the people. The greatest artists of the world have always regarded literature as the vigilant eye of the world. And that eye must always look forward together with the people."*

This was not just advice about writing it was a deep message based on real life. Anna Bhau Sathe believed that literature should not stay above society but walk with the people, show their dreams, and support their struggles. For that matter he said:

*"I do not have the wings of imagination to soar. In that sense, I consider myself a frog."*

In a striking chapter of his writing '*Vishnupant Kulkarni*', Sathe introduces Vishnupant Kulkarni, a Brahmin who encourages starving Dalits to loot grain during famine not out of rebellion, but out of necessity and gave fight for them against colonial state. It's a complex moment where a man born into privilege risking everything to side with the oppressed. Anna Bhau Sathe doesn't paint all upper castes with a single brush; he shows that compassion is possible, and solidarity is real. This, too, is Anna Bhau Sathe's genius he believes in change, in shared humanity, in the potential for conscience to overcome conditioning. His guiding mantra was: *"Do not allow injustice to be done to you — and never commit injustice against others."*

Anna Bhau Sathe authored 37 novels, 11 story collections, 13 powadas, plays, and screenplays all without formal schooling. His work has earned academic honour, with scholars like Baburao Gurav and Madhav Gade completing doctorates on him. His novels have been adapted into films, and his stories are still taught, read, and remembered. But more than anything, his legacy lives in the heart of oppressed child's of Bharatmata. His work is a lifeline for those who still find themselves unheard and unseen.

Anna Bhau Sathe did not just write for his time he wrote for all time. He gave a language to the silenced, a mirror to society, and a map to those looking for justice. Anna Bhau Sathe did not write to entertain but he wrote to awaken. With no pen of privilege, he carved truths into the conscience of a sleeping society.

To raise public awareness through the prominent labour movement and communist movement of that time, many people quickly labelled Anna Bhau Sathe as a "comrade." However, Anna Bhau's entire literary work completely rejects the violence and social discord of communism.

Anna Bhau Sathe was not a rebel but a vocal symbol of social equality. In his works, he championed social justice and considered Marathi saints who advocated for it as his ideals. He was a social reformer who wrote, "I have tears for the marginalized. I desire literature and thoughts as pure as the Ganga."

Literary genius does not depend on university education. If you study with an open mind in the open school of society, empathizing with the joys and sorrows of the deprived and oppressed, the blessing of talent will always remain with you. Anna Bhau Sathe is a prime example of this and will always be.

Chandrashekhar Jadhav ([Chandrashekharj0099@gmail.com](mailto:Chandrashekharj0099@gmail.com))

### **Reference's:**

- 1) Shrirang Shyamrao Lohkande, "Anna Bhau Sathe Yanche Katha Aani Kadambari Sahitya," *Review of Research* 7, no. 4 (January 2018): UGC Journal No. 48514, ISSN 2249-894X, Impact Factor 5.2331 (UIF).
- 2) B. R. Gurav, *Anna Bhau Sathe Samajvichar Aani Sahitya Vivechan* (PhD diss., Shivaji University, 1984).
- 3) Lokshahir Anna Bhau Sathe Nivadak Wangmay, Published by Maharashtra rajya sahitya ani sanskrutik mandal.