



BAMA'S "KARUKKU": SUFFERING OF DALIT WOMEN LIFE

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Abstract

Dalit literature is the liberation of Dalits. The Dalit struggle against castes tradition had a long history. Dalit literature was also influenced by the works of Afro-American writers. They found a quality of their support for self-statement in the leading visionary of the movement, Dr. Ambedkar, who inspired and motivated the creative instinct of the people to voice the emancipator spirit through Dalit literature. Dalit Literature found a voice. Dalit life is a continuous struggle and dominated, Dalits have undertaken one fight more, a fight to affirm and assert their identity. It is protest literature that faithfully mirrors the harsh realities of the Dalit situation and becomes an important weapon to strengthen throw Dalit political and social movement. Dalit literature has today taken an important form from a variety of Indian languages such as Kannada, Tamil, Hindi, and Malayalam, etc. Dalit autobiographies became evidence of how Dalit writers understand their situation of marginality. Dalit autobiographies stressed on several issues like autobiographical expression as a source of truth, reading personality development, historical investigation, the study of psychological development, reading genders, and reading of subaltern experiences. The appearance of Dalit autobiography gives a new aspect to the study of autobiographies. Some Dalit Women dare to raise their voices to the bitter and painful experience of those who belong to a community of downtrodden and expresses the common experiences of exploitation. The present research article is an attempt to discuss the abject misery of Dalit women and the inhumanity of the upper caste on them depicted in the selected women's autobiography.

Keywords: Dalit Literature, Dalit Women, Oppression, Discrimination, Exploitation, Violence.

Dalit Literature

Dalit literature immersed as a part of the social reformation movement. During the 20th century, in the age of post-modernism and post-colonialism, the world faced a democratic revolution that demanded a society with equal human rights. It brought forth the marginal, aboriginal, and the

oppressed. The new waves of humanism spread across India also and many social revolutionaries started movements against the stigmatized social practices. The movement also challenged the hierarchy of the caste system which is believed to be a root cause of the oppression of millions of Dalits for centuries. Along with other social revolutionaries, Jyotiba Phule and Dr. Ambedkar

protested against the oppressive and discriminating caste system. And out of the protest emerged Dalit literature primarily to support the movement. Dalit literature is primarily written to give voice to the Dalits. Hence, it has its own aesthetics with newer subjects, styles, techniques including forms. It is mostly written in regional languages as it is rooted in the soil. It's also a paradox for Dalit literature as on one hand it is written in regional languages for authenticity and on the other hand, the sole purpose of its creation is to make the world hear about their existence and oppressed condition. In such a case, one of the best ways to fulfill both needs is translation. Translating a Dalit text will serve the purpose of its existence by reaching to a large number of people.

Dalit literature has handled a number of genres such as poetry, auto narratives, short stories, drama, Novel etc. Of all these genres, the most important and, in fact, the first one is poetry. There would be a very long list of Dalit poets and their works which is hardly likely to be complete no matter how many of them you accommodate in that list. However, some of the most representative writers and one of the most representative works of their recorded in parenthesis, whenever possible, first in Marathi and then its English translation wherever applicable in front of their name are: Narayan Surve (Maze Vidyapeth- My University), Keshav Meshram (Utkhanan-Excavation), Waman Nimbalkar (Gavkusabaheril Kavita-Poems from Outskirtsof Village), Daya Pawar (Kondawada- Suffocating Enclosure), Namdeo Dhasal (Golpitha- Redlight Zone), Tryambak Sapkale (Surung-Dynamite), Pralhad Chendvankar (Audit), J. V.Pawar (Nakebandi- Suppression), Arjun Dangle (Chhavani Halate Ahe- Camp is Shaking), Yashwant Manohar (Utthan Gumpha- Caves of Progress).

Dalit autobiographies

Dalit autobiographies address such dissentious problems that refuse to travel away. Autobiographies are the foremost distinguished and marketable genre of Dalit literature these days. Om Prakash Valmiki's Joothan addressed the Bhangis in Uttar Pradesh, Sharankumar Limbale's Akkarmashi

depicted life in rural Maharashtra, Vasant Moon's Vasti (translated by Gail Omvedt as Growing up Untouchable in India) spoke of life in associate urban Dalit slum, Narendra Jadhav's memoir Outcaste probed what it meant to be an extremely educated Dalit. The publication of Dalit autobiographies, including their literary assertion has recast and revived the literature of the regional languages.

Dalit Women's autobiographies:

Dalit women's autobiographies which sprang up inside the final many years of the twentieth century, react to the privileged dominance of men, emphasizing the socio-intellectual circumstance of Dalit women's and generally surrender with the definition of social relationships. Youth days are elaborated on this sort of manner that there isn't always a lot the peculiarity amongst private, public, and social lifestyles. However, the depiction of later years is full of discrimination and humiliation. Dalit female writers make literature a tool for reclaiming their brutalized selves and maintaining their identities. Those autobiographies describe tremendous periods of society. Incredible tiers of Ambedkrite Dalit motion, the participation of Dalit women inside the movement, their flow violently for survival, the man or woman-lady dating, humiliations, atrocities, and degradation of Dalit women shape the centre a part of Dalit women's autobiographies. The one's autobiographies have enriched Dalit literature in addition to provincial literature. Shantabai Kamble, infant Kamble, Urmila Pawar, Kumud Pawade, Mukta Sarvagod, Shantabai Dani, and Bama have enriched Dalit women's writings thru their autobiographical narratives. Those autobiographies provide a close to the view of woman studies. They may be, consequently, the assertion's approximately patriarchal society and writers' struggle for woman autonomy. Dalit women's autobiographies display the conditions that tore Dalit women lives to pieces harshly. Writer hopes for a contemporary tradition in which equality and brotherhood be successful rather than inequality and injustice. For this reason, these autobiographies replicate the struggling of the entire community and quest for self-identification. Elaboration of Dalit network and use of first man or woman to carry the trauma, pain, conflict of the

writer is valuable. They're socio-historic narratives, which formulate consciousness in readers' thoughts approximately Dalit women's existence. Hurt memory performs a critical role which in no manner permits them to erase their painful reviews. In the autobiographies of Dalit men's, women's are slightly remembered as sacrificing better splits, mothers, and daughters. As in the direction of the ones, Dalit women's autobiographies depict the struggles of Dalit women's. Dalit women's autobiographies don't forget their past and reconstruct records. The own family, food, starvation, community, castes, culture, labour practices, mortification, violence, resistance, collective struggles are extensively located in Dalit women's autobiographies.

Karukku is the first Tamil dalit autobiography written by a dalit Christian woman. Bama gets international recognition when Karukku won the Crossword Award in 2001. Karukku means Palmyra leaves with their serrated edges on both sides are like double edged swords. The autobiography is a narrative of trauma, pain, resistance and atrocities committed on dalit Christian women. It is a document of poverty, violence, rejection and suffering and how the writer strives hard to overcome the problems and how she reconstructs her 'self'. The author is a representative of all dalit women who have suffered atrocities for centuries. By portraying her insults and agony, Bama gives an accurate historical picture of India. She is one of the most challenging figures in dalit feminist world. She starts her career as a writer in 1992, when she comes out of the convent. She has been awarded a life time achievement award by Canada Tamil Literary Garden Toronto.

A dalit women's life is ever filled with hurdles. Bama curses herself for being born as a female. She curses the Government for not giving her job, though she is qualified. According to Bama both married and unmarried dalit women are looked down upon by everyone. Bama lives with caste discrimination and negotiates with its oppressive facts. Bama uses folk language which is unfamiliar to the mainstream writers. Unlike Shivakami, who uses folk language only in dialogues between her characters, Bama uses folk language throughout her

work, moreover she challenges the decorum and aesthetics of mainstream literature

Bama completes her education (B.Sc., B.Ed.), fighting against odds, and wants to be a teacher who imparts values. She is bold enough to focus on caste domination and social discrimination in the present work. The work describes personal crisis of the author's life and anticipates equality, social justice and love towards all. It has been adequately perceived that, dalit women's writings largely concentrate on the problems and experiences of dalit women. By portraying their experiences.

Caste hierarchy takes an ugly turn when it enters the church in India is a more recent phenomenon when compared to America and other countries. In India, many Dalits converted to Christianity to escape the Varna-based caste discrimination. However, even after conversation, Churches carry out the cultural values and caste practices of Hindus. This leads to discrimination in the church.

The presence of caste discrimination is more evident with practitioners of the Roman Catholic faith and they raise the issues of the identity crisis within the church. The Dalit Christian face subjugation in many forms. In Tamilnadu, their residences are situated away from the higher caste Christians.

In Kerala, they are landless labourers who work for the Syrian Christian. There is no inter caste marriage among there Christian as rice Christian. The upper caste converts think that the Dalit converts to Christianity. To overcome economic deprivation and untouchability. It cannot be denied that Dalits converted to Christianity to gain better acceptance in society. The contemporary situation exposes that in many villages the Dalit Christian live separately worship in different church buildings and have separate cemeteries.

The Dalit Christian have lost the constitutional safeguards means for the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes. As S M Michacle remarks "In fact, a Dalit Christian today is thrice discriminated against by the state, by the church, and by the non-

Dalit Christian” He argues that for a Dalit Christian the Dalit identity overshadows the Christian identity.

If any work is available in the upper caste people’s house, the lower caste people have to go there and find out. Those upper caste people never entered the lower caste people place because they thought they are touchable. These upper caste people have marginalized the Dalit people. All the facilities available only in upper caste people street not in the lower caste. The children are always used the bare-bottomed both boys and girls. In water lap, people are always fighting for the water, which shows the pity of the poor people.

The elder went straight up to the Naicker bowed low and extended the pack towards him cupping the hand that held the string within the other hand” (p 15).

When Bama was studying the third standard in elementary school. She never heard “Untouchability” when she entered the school. She felt and experienced one day Bama had seen Naicker at the house when all Bama’s neighbours were doing hard works. Naicker was sitting in his chair an elder person who belonged to Bama’s street is considered as respect one. When he had been carrying tea and Vadai or bhajji from the tea stall to the Naicker house. The person has bent himself and gave tea and vadai to Naicker, Bama laughed herself.

“Naicker women would pour out the water from the height of four feet. While paapti and others received and drank it with cupped hands help to their mouths (P 16).”

Bama said this incident to her elder brother with comic details, her brother is an MA graduate, and her brother replied that they belong to low caste paraya community and they belong in upper caste, if they touch they would pollute some important elders of Bema’s street goes work at Nicker’s house, the upper caste people used to give some old food and other eatable items to them, they get it and bring it their one day Bama went with grandmother to the Naicker’s house.

Where Bama’ Grandmother does all the hard works after Nicker women have given water to her grandmother is an abnormal way. Bam felt terrible

to watch it. She thought that her grandmother bought the foods from Nicker’s house, which are not unwanted. But later she has realized all the things are unwanted. But later she has realized that all the unwanted. So the Nicker woman has given all these things to Bama grandmother. When Bama asked her grandmother replies to bam don’t say like that they are superior to us, they are upper caste people and we are lower caste.

“There people were Maharajas who feed us our rice without them how will we survive?” (P17)

If any wrong incident happens in school or class. The scope always goes to Cheri children about the three-quarter of the children in the school who were built on Nadar Street. They gave all kinds of menial work. We are carrying the water for teacher’s house and school when bam was studying the seventh standard after the end of the class everybody evening she used to ply with her relative students one day they are playing on the big Neem tree after they play another game student-run fast towards the coconut everyone touch the coconut. When Bama’s turns she also touched the coconut which felt down.

All children were frightened everyone said that Bama had plucked the coconut (P.19)

The next day at the assembly time the school headmaster has called Bama and scolded her that she shown her true nature of Paraya, you only climbed the tree and plucked the coconut as he does not allow Bam to enter the classroom. At the time there was a fight between Chaaliyar caste and paraya. The headmaster belongs to the Chaaliyar caste. When one of Bama school teacher lived at Bama Street. She advised Bama to get a letter from the church pries the headmaster allow you to enter the class. But the priest reaction also different after all you are from Cherri Street. Resolutely you have done it finally priest wrote a letter to the headmaster for permission, headmaster allowed Bama to enter the class he used to hard word words on her community.

After the completion of her secondary education, she joined the ninth standard at

neighbouring towns where she was staying in hostel. There was holiday time Bama used to travel town bus when the Naicker woman was sitting beside Bama. When she asked Bama's name and native place. Again the Naicker woman asked in that village which street Bama belongs. Bama says that she is living in Cheri Street. Suddenly Naicker women moved to another place.

Bama joined as a Mathematics teacher in one of the schools. In that school, a man has asked Bama was a Nadar? After completion of B.Ed. when Bama replied herself as a Parayar. The Nun has shown different expressions at her face even now if Bam remembers she laughs, Majority of the students are Dalits. The showed great affection for Bama. She takes classes in a good way. Most of the Nuns are Telugu people they won't take of Dalit students they oppressed the Dalit students. So Bama decided herself to become Nun then only can serve for the Dalit students finally Bama has resigned the teaching post and entered religious order.

Caste discrimination in the Catholic Church became clear to Bama on joining the convent she decided to become a nun to serve the oppressed. The wealthy lifestyle of the convent disturbed her. The true essence of her vocation was in renouncing material pleasure and embracing simple living. After leaving the job of a teacher Bama joined the order with three vows (P122) she realized much earlier in her life that if you are born into a low caste every moment of your life is moment of struggle (P 27) this is further proven during her training period. During the last leg of training to become Nuns a sister told everyone that "In certain orders, they would not accept Harijan women as prospective nuns and that there was even a separate order for them somewhere (P 25).

The lifestyle at the convent was not like anything she had in her village Bama could not help but wonder why the nuns and priest who were chosen to serve the oppressed and the needy be prejudiced. When she started work again as a teacher after become full-fledged Nun she had to teach students from wealthy familiar she noticed that in the school Dalit "were looking after all jobs like sweeping the premises swabbing and washing

classrooms and cleaning out lavatories" (25) The spark of resistance in her was fanned on seeing the Dalits do menial jobs and treated in destroying manner. The young and old alike kept their sealed and obeyed the sisters, self-respect, and pride was being sacrificed in every act of enduring subjugation.

Bama desperate to leave the convent due to disillusionment. It was not without the scepticism that she described to go back she writes "I have entirely lost faith in all the talk of service to the poor within the convent (P 121).

She was excessively worried about her social security as she would remain unemployed until she finds a prospective employer. The convent is a symbol of the hollow promises of the church. There is no human touch in the service imparted to the society. The rules in the convent damaged her consciousness and yearned for a time when she will be able to soar with the wingspread in the sky of freedom. The wounds received by Bama will take time to heal. She finds it largely ironic that the nuns considered the Dalit are so devout when it comes to religious matters every festival and ritual is observed with devotion and gaiety. Bama recollects various instances of religious celebration in her childhood where the village exhibits their faith. The disastrous phase of her life ended when the sister released her from the three vows.

The sufferings of the Dalit women can't be expressed higher than this, despite the fact that one ought to conjointly note that similar experience is not uncommon, really it's equally widespread, among the poorer and socially purportedly lower castes among the non-Brahmin communities in Tamilnadu. All the twelve chapters are therefore the odyssey of Dalit women revealing the multiple kinds of oppression further as agency however who are still miles faraway from leading a decent life. Bama terribly pitifully speaks concerning her community's present state. She conjointly offers terribly substantiate encouragements for the new generation of her community. Bama asks her community to follow some things to place a finish to the suffering women. Bama finally she didn't give

solution for these problems in her autobiography "Karukku" Bama showed her anger through her work, she doesn't protest against in the public place, by caste discrimination Bama failed in society.

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