



RECENT TRENDS OF EXPLOITATION IN NARENDRA JADHAV'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY *OUTCASTE: A MEMOIR*

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ABSTRACT

Dalit literature was started from 11th century with the Madara Chennaiah, was called 'The Father of Vachana poetry' but Dalit literature took shape in 20th century. Dalits have tried their hands mostly in autobiographies. Autobiography is a real mirror of personal experiences. The technique of autobiography has become a new area of research. In autobiography author exposes the inner thought and does self-analysis. The purpose of writing this paper is to understand the inner feeling of Dalits through autobiographies. I chose Narendra Jadhav's Autobiography Outcaste: A Memoir for this research. It is a Dalit literary text in which author describes three generations of Jadhav's family, beginning with the father of the author, Damu Mahar and his wife, Sonu, then Narendra himself and in the end with author's daughter, Apoorva. The trends of exploitation were different in three generation of the same family. Dalit struggled against untouchability and for equality and self identity. Gradually the way of exploitation has been changed as we see through Narendra Jadhav's three generations.

Key words: Autobiographies, Dalit, atrocities, poverty, exploitation, Dalit literature Education.

INTRODUCTION

Dalit autobiography is a new phase and experience for the reader because the Dalit autobiography is different from non-Dalit autobiography. Dalit describes the pain, exploitation, misery, poverty and hunger. Dalit literature presents an important and unique

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role in the modern literature of India. *Outcaste: A Memoir* is written by Narendra Jadhav and published in 1993. It is a unique autobiography in Dalit Literature. He depicted his family and his experiences. It was a struggle of a family in three generations. It was divided in four parts “UpAgainst Bondage”, second “Towards freedom”, third one is “The Struggle” and the last “Making of the second generation”.

Narendra Jadhav narrated the story of three generation he took this story from his father’s diary. His father Damu was a protagonist in the autobiography. Its story is a very clear and lucid; it represents the whole Dalit community. Story began from Damu’s village, they were marginalized. Damu had been exploited and humiliated in the Marginalized society and caste based society. Damu fights against the social evils and caste based discrimination. He wanted to change the stigma of caste because their family had to do menial job due to because of caste. They belong to Mahar caste of Maharastra, Mahar caste was untouchable according to Hindu religion.

Outcaste: A Memoir exposed the social history and value of Dalit in the society and their experiences. Fredic Jameson’s described

‘the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third world culture and society. (Broughton 27)

Damu did the Yaskar duty in his village that did his family work but Damu didn’t like this work as he couldn’t tolerate the exploitation, he said there was no sympathy he wanted for self identity he denied this work and said

‘What kind of tradition is this treats Mahars worse than cats and dogs? I spit on these inhuman traditions, I am not going to abide by such tradition. I am man of dignity and I will not go from house to house begging for Baluta, what are all of you going to do? Kill me? (Jadhav10)

He was against the caste system in society. He left village and settled in the city. He got different treatments with humans in the city. Arjun Dangle presented comment on dalit movement,

“.....Varing facets of the Dalit movement; the struggle for survival; the emotional universe of a Dalit’s life: the man-woman relationship; the experiencing of humiliation and atrocities; at times, abject submission, at the other times rebellion.....”(Arjun Dangle xvi)

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Damu joined Ambedkar's movement; he was influenced by Ambedkar's philosophy and Ideas. He was much influenced by these following words, 'Agitate, Education and struggle.' B.R. Ambedkar is a panther of Dalits and Dalit called him Babasaheb. Dhamu was against the social structure in India. He wants to break the caste obstacle. He didn't believe in the destiny. He was an obstinate person he didn't like Hindu social structure. We can compare him with Dr.B.R. Ambedkar, life of Ambedkar was same he suffered whole life for Dalits and downtrodden.

He said through Ambedkar's words

"The untouchable have to do away with the humiliating and enslaving tradition of village duties like carrying away dead cattle. It is utterly disgraceful to sell your human rights for a few crumbs of bread. We will attain self-elevation only if we learn self-help, regain our self respect and gain self knowledge." (Jadhav 22)

Damu got marriage with Sonu in 1926. Damu wanted to his wife took participate in the Ambedkar's movement, but it was impossible for a woman because Hindu religion would not allow a woman do work same as a man. Society was male dominated society so Hindu religion was criticized by different person and same here;

"The Hindu religion and caste system are inseparable. Caste systems form the basis of Hinduism. This religion justifies the karma theory and so accords the slave status of women. It aggravates the conditions of women by reinforcing; rationalizing and practices and makes women feel that they are inferior creature and sinners." (Paswan 17)

Narendra Jadhav says that woman's condition was as same as of Dalit in the society.

Damu wanted to change the stigma of caste. He wanted to impart education to his children. He did not like the same treatment as their forefather treated by society and upper caste people. He was influenced of these words of Ambedkar,

"There will be no difference between parents and animals if they do no desire to see their in a better position than their own" (Jadhav,22)

Damu desired for self respect and self identity but it was not possible without equality and freedom. He was strongly opposed the social structure of Hindu religion, He said,

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“Atrocities exploitation and inhuman treatment of upper caste provokes Dalit to question their identity.”(Jadhav, 19)

Damu has struggled in his whole life for the future of his children. He wanted to educate his children. He had desire for equality in society, in education and in Economic and Politics. He knew that it was impossible without education. Ambedkar said,

“We can forgo the material benefits of the world but we cannot forgo the fruitful benefits of education.”(Ambedkar, 345)

Author described here the identity of a Dalit and Untouchables in these words of Kabir,

“I stood knocking at the doorsteps of human as I died.....Who are you.....? I was asked. My entire existence on earth could not tell me who I was..And that is what I have come to ask you...Who am I?” (Jadhav, 207)

Jadhav narrated the history of Dalit and treatment with Dalits in the society by upper caste. Dalit has been got present position with a hard struggle. Their exploitation, torment, inhuman treatment with the Dalits was intolerable. Author said,

“I was a mere Mahar, a Dalit, a Harijan, and a Scheduled caste belonging to the lowest stratum of society No matter what I did, where I went, or what success I achieved I would always be looked upon as a Mahar, an untouchable....albeit one who had achieved success. It was as if being a mahar was as apology for a human being! Yes I do come from the Mahar caste. Yes my father was an illiterate lowly employee doing menial jobs to earn a square meal for the family. Yes my forefathers were untouchables Yes, forefather required wearing clay pots around their necks to keep their spit from polluting the ground, and broom sewer tied to their rumps to obliterate their footprints as they walked”.(Jadhav,207)

But gradually has been changed the way of exploitation based on caste. *Outcaste: A Memoir* was a voice of Dalit and voice of oppressed people it provoked the Dalit. A man can change the status through hard work and education. Narendra's life has been changed through education. But he told the story of humiliation with him in his school time he got top marks in Sanskrit, He said,



“Once when I had outperformed all others in Sanskrit supposedly the divine language and an exclusive preserve of the high castes of centuries- this same teacher had said that he was beginning to lose faith in the education system!” (Jadhav, 207)

It was a prejudice that Dalit can't change the system of religion and social structure. After reading the Narendra jadhav, Harish Bansode's says

“I am proud that I am a mahar! Mahars have ruled this country. Mahars are brave. Mahars are scholars. Mahars have rich heritage and culture” (Paswan, 47)

The family generation of Jadhav had been changed and they had entered in the new era, his father had changed the psychology of upper caste's people and

“he believes that destiny is in their hands, and they are to be blamed if they don't come up; and they have to struggle and they have to fight, this awareness is unprecedented” (Anand, 34)

Author discussed the struggle of Damu and achievement of Narendra Jadhav as a Mahar next Aproova is daughter of Narendra Jadhav also by caste Mahar, three people belong to same caste but they were treated different way in the society. So Narendra Jadhav said that, “

If others look down on me in their belief that my caste is low, it is their problem, not mine. I certainly don't need to torment myself over it. I pity them, for they are the victims of their own absolute prejudices.”(Jadhav, 214)

Dalit were also Hindu and they worshiped same deities of the upper caste Hindu but Dalit were not allowed to enter in the temple Damu said,

“What do people these want? They want to us meekly follow Hinduism, a religion that does not follow Hindus to enter temples? Why should we favor the religion that preaches untouchability and discrimination?” (Jadhav, 176)

In Narendra's era, the ideas and thinking have been changed by entering into the temple. Narendra said these words when he was entering in the temple,



“I was the unwanted; unworthy untouchable. I was transported to another era. Fear gripped me....I could be thrown out of the temple....Whipped for violating time-honored social customs” (Jadhav, 212)

Next when we entered in the post modern age author discussed about his daughter, Aproova and she is living in USA. Aproova shared her view in these words,

“I am always treated as being ‘special’ by everyone in my family as I’m the ‘baby’ of the entire family....I came to know I was a Dalit when I was twelve year old or so. I didn’t know what it meant and was confused. There was this teacher in sixth grade who recognized the last name, I guess, and asked?’ ‘Are you the daughter of Narendra Jadhav? The Dalit scholar?’

I was proud, but confused. Yeah, my dad is famous, but what does Dalit have to do with it? Is that of significance? (Jadhav 261) The last words of Aproova in Epilogue,

“Now I think I know who I am. I am just Aproova, not tied down by race, religion or caste. My ancestors carried the burden of being a Dalit and bowing down to demeaning tasks even after India’s independence. I have the torch they lit for me and nothing can stop me.”(Jadhav, 263)

Author said that we can’t change the caste and social history but we can get self- respect and self-Identity through education. He said

“It is unfortunate truth of our society that whatever heights a man might scale, his caste is never caste off, it remains an inseparable part of his Identity His caste always remains a cause for scorn or contempt. Only the type of humiliation changes.”(Jadhav, 207-08)

Summing up-

The hypothesis which we took in the autobiography is true. The atrocity and exploitation are present in the three generations of Jadhav’s family. In the Jadhav’s family, there are three generations: the first generation the Damu’s family; the second generation family of Narendra Jadhav and the third generation; Aproova. Our hypothesis is true in the three generations. But the exploitation and atrocity which are present in three generations are true but different from one generation to another.



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