



RISE OF DALITS AGAINST GENTILITY

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ABSTRACT

Dalit literature encounters the troubles and tortures forced upon the Dalit community both physically and mentally in the name of caste. Unfortunately few Dalits are accepting the discrimination, but some with the help of education, fights back for their rights and equality. In the work Kisumbukkaran Bama brought out ten short stories which speak about Dalit's life and troubles they are facing in day to day by the upper caste community. This paper attempts to bring out the constant efforts of Dalits to create a identity against gentility with the help of education and other factors. This paper speaks about the endeavours from Dalit community.

Keywords: *Mothalali, Flipped, Paraya, Annachi.*

INTRODUCTION

"You cannot build anything on the foundation of caste. You cannot build up a nation; you cannot build up on morality. Anything that you will build on the foundations of caste will crack and will never be a whole".

- (Annihilation of caste, Dr.B.R. Ambedkar)

"India is a land of diversities" is what we usually hear about India. The diversity not only stops with languages and cultures but also extends to caste distinctions. Kisumbukkaran, set among the Dalit of Tamil Nadu, these ten stories display the full potential of the 'Weapons of the Weak'. This work tries to bring out the social realities portrayed in it. Bama exposes the unequal laws of the society ruled by the upper classes, the atrocities in the name of caste.

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The present state of Dalit is filled with oppression, humiliation and economic deprivation. Untouchability is their fate. Untouchability is seen in every action of Dalit people. If they open a tea shop at the far end of the street, people say this is a *paraya* tea shop, this *paniyaram* is made by a *parayan*, and this kind of humiliation takes place in the name of caste (02). Upper caste people gobble up whatever the other caste fellows sell. So obviously their business comes to an end. Either knowingly or unknowing the gentility puts an end to the economic growth of Dalits.

“The division of labor brought about by the caste system is not division on based on choise individual sentiment; individual preference has no place in it. It is based on the dogma of predestination.”

(Dr. B.R. Ambedkar)

Character Madasami from the story ‘*pongal*’ is a clear evident for accepting the discrimination and realizing it later. It is the custom been followed in the village that during Pongal festival labors should gift whatever they can to the landlords though they were poor. Esakkimuthu, an educated son of Madasami opposes his father, because the upper community people treat them as slave though they gift them good things. He raises a question whether the upper community landlords are starving. Education gives an inner strength to question the superiority. Without minding the words of his son, Madasami offered everything to the landlord, in return he got only a bit of pongal. Only then multitude emotions rose up within him which leads him to throw the pongal and decide to lead a life with dignity (06).

Other caste people always practice a merciless attitude on Dalit people. That includes sexual harassment also. Mothalalis from other caste harass Dalit girls sexually and they try to compensate that by giving five or ten thousand rupees. Mothalalis does not treat Dalit girls as human instead treat them only as flesh. From the early years Dalit women are facing these kind of physical tortures from which they couldn’t escape. In Bama’s Sangati she gives a clear portrayal of women who has undergone such humiliation. The story ‘*Those Days*’ is the clear evidence which proves that dalits aren’t quit towards such behavior of landlords. *Parayas* tie a landlord in a tree for abusing the Dalit women sexually and ordered him to accept the victim as his wife (55). People decided to rise against the arrogant behaviors of the gentility.

Cruel behavior of gentility towards the Dalits been depicted clearly in the story “*half sari*”. The character Chellakkili, is the victim whose death has many unanswered questions. A mind with dreams of happy living came to an end in the name of caste. The urge of education and poor social background are the reasons for Irulappan to send his daughter to Landlord’s house for the purpose of getting education. When the landlord informed about the death of the poor girl, neither Irulappan nor others could say a word. Bursting with sorrow all they could do

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was to sit and stare at her vacancy. “Not for nothing did they say that money has power even over the nether world. The fellow has cash, he can suppress everything” (71). Whenever Dalits tries to rise up with the help of education in one way or the other the gentility puts an end to everything either emotionally or economically. Suppressed people keep on trying to break all the barriers which are constructed against them in the society.

Colloquy between Ammasi and the landlord Chandrasekhar in bus is the transparent evidence that Parayas are not the same as before where they use to accept the oppression. Upper caste people always expect others to obey their order without any hesitation. They think themselves as god and threat the lower caste people like slave dogs. Ammasi a young man always ready to act against the upper caste people, happens to meet his father’s landlord Chandrasekhar in bus, and he seated comfortable even after recognizing the landlord. The landlord ordered Ammasi to stand up, so that he can be sited. But the young blood refuses to do that. Rise of people against oppression and nobility is known clearly through Ammasi. When the landlord comes, all the *palla* and *paraya* people stand up in respect but this younger generation realized that all these practices are followed not out of respect but out of enforcement. Paraya people are not allowed to the call the other upper caste people as *annachi*, because it is considered as reputation issue for upper caste people. Once Ammasi called a *naicker* landlord as *annachi* for which the *naicker* gathered the whole village for panchayat (13). People in the village made it as an issue and treated him as if he has done a big crime. The court has assembled to punish Ammasi for calling a landlord as *annachi*. While the entire village enquires about his action, Ammasi gave an instant reply that “since because the landlord is elder he called the *naicker* as *annachi* if not he would have called the *naicker* as *thambi*” his answer provoked the anger of villagers. Even though the villagers act against him Ammasi never cares. Ammasi says “All men are just men” (14).

Bama pictures about the robust women in the story “*ponnuthayi*” who always spoke to the point and hit the bull’s eye. She is a middle aged woman who left her husband after undergoing physical and mental torture. Like other women she doesn’t work as laboures for landlords unlike her survived, doing business. Though Ponnuthayi was uneducated, she would board the bus to the town nearby, bring fruits and vegetables from there and survive by selling them from house to house. No one else did that on her street. She hate being under the control of landlords and other upper community people. She is an independent woman who doesn’t accept any dominance. She sets an example for other women in the village. She rose against the male dominance and the landlords who treat the laborers as slaves. Ponnuthayi worked with determination to uplift her life against gentility.

After undergoing the suppression for years Dalit community people are opposing the unequal practice which is been followed in the society. These problems cannot be rectified by taking revenge. Only through education these problems can attain solution. It is necessary to teach

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the children from the childhood that they should not give importance to caste and in the name of caste they should not discriminate anyone in the society. Education and self-realization are the solutions to eradicate the caste problem in the society.

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