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2. The Grip of Change: Caste and Patriarchy in Dalit Mind

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Abstract

This paper speaks about caste and Patriarchy. 'The Grip of change' is discussed about Dalit women's struggles for their respectful life. This novel has illustrated the reality of Dalit women standing for change through their agony, faced continuously patriarchal stigma which is given by Dalit and upper caste community. This novel is based on Dalit women's agony of each dalit women from their birth to cultivate their death. Illiterate female character takes new plight for womens self respect, new generation for stand for self. The intention of the paper is deal with Caste, Dalit, and Patriarchy.

Keywords: Caste, Dalit, Patriarchy

Introduction

'Dalit' meaning the term 'Dalit' forcefully expresses their oppressed status. It comes from the Sanskrit root 'dal', which means to crack open, split, crush, grind and so forth and has generally been used as a verb to describe the process of processing food grains and lentils. Dalit Panthers defined this word in their 1972 Manifesto as: "A member of Scheduled Castes and Tribes, neo-Buddhist, the working-people, the landless and poor peasants, women, and all those who are being exploited politically, economically, and in the name of religion." (Holmstrom xviii-xix) ¹

Dalit writer Pantawane Gangadhar writes: "Dalit is not a caste; Dalit is a symbol of change and revolution. The Dalit believes in humanism. He rejects the existence of god, rebirth, and soul, sacred books that teach discrimination, fate, and heaven because these make him a slave" (Who Are Dalits?) ²

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P. Sivakami is the first Tamil Dalit woman writer in Tamilnadu. 'Pazhaiyana Kazhithalum' in (1989) is her first novel in Tamil. It was later on translated into English as The Grip of Change (2006). It is a social record than a literature appearance. It is, therefore, reckoned a milestone in the history of Tamil Dalit literature. The novel shows the destruction of patriarchy shaped in all the domestic spheres of life in Tamilnadu. The book also documents the aspirations of the early stages in Tamilnadu who wish to bring out a sea-change in the social order. P. Sivakami belongs to dalit community but her writing against the Dalit patriarchy. She has raised her voice against patriarchy and Dalit patriarchy.

The Concept Patriarchy

V. Geetha a well known feminist writer quote about patriarchy in simple words: Patriarchy is a well-worn term. It possesses an everyday resonance. When used in casual conversation or in a descriptive sense, whether in English or in any of the several languages spoken in the Indian sub-continent, the term implies Male domination, male prejudice or simply 'male power'.³

Patriarchy rests on defined notions of masculine and feminine, is held in place by sexual and property arrangements that privilege men's choices, desires and interests over and above those of the women in their lives and is sustained by social relationships and cultural practices which celebrate heterosexuality, female fertility and motherhood on the one hand and valorize female subordination to masculine authority and virility on the other.⁴

V. Geetha traced her opinion on Patriarchy in these lines. She is critically addressed male dominance. A woman handling herself as in males restricts as in duty. She adjusts herself into secondary way. Family member is male who overruled on every member but he never gets right to a female as a dependent member.

Here, P. Sivakami wants to show society between cast, dalit women as well as in patriarchy. P. Sivakami reveals about the testimony of the female character Thangam, was dual crossed by Caste and Patriarchy.

Discussion

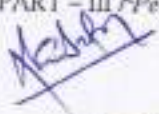
Thangam is leading the role of lower Hindu dalit women as character in the novel from Pulliar. Thangam's suffering was poverty from day of her husband's death. She was left alone without any share of husband's family property. Because of she was widow and childless women. For a daily meal she was working in another's farm named Pranjyothi udayar. Udayar's

field was sugarcane. Pranjyothi udayar has a political and economical background. Udayar was a related with Hindu upper caste community. Udayar's powerful position in the society made him extra confidence to do relation with woman named Thangam. Thangam was working in sugarcane farm that time he raped on Thangam. Thangam was known as alone, helpless poor Dalit woman. Thangam was without any support she could not raise her voice against Udayar. Her voice is undergone in mutely.

She has no one relative earth to support for good life. This is the point to give courage udayar for dominance on Thangam forcefully himself on her whenever he wishes. She was in his hands game. This relationship was known by udayar's brother in law. Brother in law conveyed to kamalam, udayar's wife. Then udayar's brother in law beats Thangam and dragged her along the streets still she bleeding. Her own caste community people to stand firm and to remain unnoticed. She wants to live as respectful life with own rules. She has never wants to subordinate person in her life. The society never accepted lonely woman live as Hindu women and Dalit women also.

Thangam come to kathamuthu who is a leader of paraya community for help. He gives firstly hospital service to primary treatment to her. Then he filed complaint to police station against udayar Hindu upper caste man. Kathamuthu made whole story change for making case strong on their side. Pranjyothi udayar was strange about lower caste women courage to case filed. Udayar cannot chew the thing about a lower caste woman doing against and making his life destroy. Udayar made meeting with political leader in village upper caste, Dalit caste leader and police officer for filed case dismissed. In front of all the people udayar was get penalty in money. He gave some money to Thangam then the complaint was dismissed.

Thangam's suffering was not easily. From Udayar gave money to Thangam that money was demanded kathamuthu as a lone for some days. She gives all the money. That night kathamuthu wife offered a glass of drink to Thangam firstly she denied but Nagamani convinced to drink then she drank. That night kathamuthu abused Thangam physically and mentally. After that night she lived in his house as her third mistress. Here upper caste men udayar and Dalit paraya leader both were targeted for their selfish fulfillment to Thangam. Thangam suffered in both side Hindu upper cast patriarchy and Dalit patriarchal society. On both side she was exploited from males. Both male targets to her physically and mentally which is patriarchal view. Here, shows that a woman is lower but a Dalit woman is game for them. Thangam was bond in


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as patriarchal chain but again their own Dalit community also trapped in it. Novelist reveals the novel's genuineness as *The Grip of Change: Patriarchy and caste in Dalit Mind*.

Conclusion

This societal views shows women are in patriarchal chain as well as in caste. This character of the novel named Thangam is cheated by her own community leader kathamuthu. It's purely because lack of knowledge. Naturally women and men both are independent. Here education is only one way to take new change in women's life to free from males patriarchal society. Education through woman can bring economical independence that made them to take care of their own needs. Through Education gives respectful life in society. They can raise their voice against caste and patriarchal society for change as equality.

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