

Research Article

The Dalit Feminism Focussed by Bama in Karukku

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Abstract

Indian history has been a lively history of dispute and dialectic between exploiters and oppressed, colonizers and colonized, authoritative and powerless. Dalit literature is known for its conflict and rebellion of the subordinate caste against the higher-class community. Dalit women are notably twice manipulated. Feminism, or feminist, deals with society in general and women in particular. This research paper features the troubles faced by Dalit women. It also focused on the self recognition of the marginalized women in the novel Bama's Karukku.

Key words: *Dalit feminism, authoritative, colonizer, patriarchy.*

Introduction

Dalits are recognized as people of detached sets of subordinate castes. They belong to a low caste, so they face discrimination in education and social and political growth too. Untouchability is the significant mark on Dalit ages. The new Tamil Dalit writing aims to provoke the reader to make recognition of the persecuted Dalit and to share the Dalit background. It describes the anti-caste and anti-religious strive of the Dalit. Writers like Daniel, Poomani, Sivagami, Imayam, and Markku design the parade of Tamil Dalit writers. Bama occupies a place among them. In her works, she views not only an existence but also the changing concept of identification alive in Dalit people.

Bama Faustina Soosairaj is one of the famous Tamil and Dalit feminists. Karukku is

the first Dalit Tamil document that portrays the joy and sorrow experienced by the Dalit Christian woman in Tamil Nadu, and it was rewritten into English by Lakshmi Holmstrom. Bama is a subordinate of the male child. This gives her only the secondary claim in all matters like food, education, medical care, and so on. So the Dalit girl is born into a system that accepts the social paradigm of male superiority and gender discrimination. Bama chooses to become the scream of the dispossessed girl child that asks for a paradigm shift. Bama's novels, thus, became sites of social amelioration where the social cartography for the future is envisaged.

In the novel Karukku, Bama explains many issues that the Dalit people have to face in the caste-ridden society. Most of the Dalits were the prey of exploitation, and they are landless

agricultural workers. An absence of access to land makes Dalits economically susceptible. Their trust is manipulated by the high caste proprietors. The impoverished condition of rural Dalits made struggle for endurance situations of life. They are the sons of the soil, yet in the so-called Republican structure, they have no confidence of retaining their share of that ground. They were convicted, day after day, that anguish, misery, and poverty are inflexible conditions of their lives.

Karukku shows the condition of the author, as she doesn't like the religious disposal to which she resides for seven years. Karukku means palmyra petals, which, with their jagged corners on each side, are like the double-edged blade. In her childhood days, Palmyra Karukku aches her when she goes to collect the firewood. Like Palmyra petals, life with its unfair social order and merciless actions wounds her so much.

Bama also expresses how Dalit women are physically misused in the autocratic form. She explains one event in which Udan blower used to beat his wife like an animal, and nobody came forward to protect her. There are terrible sections of statistics that Mari Marcel Thekaekara contributes to suggest the significance of persecution:

“In India, Dalit's faced constant discrimination. Every hour two are assaulted, everyday three Dalit women are raped and two Dalit are murdered - simply because they come from a caste considered 'Untouchable'; the bottom of the heap.”

As well, wife beating is a daily happening in most of the Dalit families. A Dalit woman's problems begin from the time she gets married. Unfortunately, she becomes a victim in the hands of her husband too. The Dalit man becomes violent like an animal when he is frustrated in the world outside. Bama feels a growing resentment at the injustice-sexual abuses, endless daily harassment, and humiliation – the Dalit women face. Many women suffer from a corroding sense of inferiority, which often expresses itself in a lack of self - respect.

“As dalit women, they have a double cross to bear: not only are they exploited outside the home by the upper castes, they are also abused by the highly patriarchal men within the community.” (karukku 4)

Dalit women are the sufferers of sexual molestation. Even before the sun rises, the Dalit women go to the farmland for their daily survival. When she returns home, she has to prepare food for her children and her intoxicated husband. She feels drained from having worked throughout the day in the farmland under scorching sun. She is compelled to entertain her husband at night, whether she likes it or not. To the intoxicated husband, she is just a usable body, not a woman with feelings. In her distress, if she refuses to share his bed, she is subjected to such brutal slaughter that she succumbs to him, certainly.

This harassment at home is worse than the hospitalization she received from the area where she works. Bama displays such atrocities

heaped on Dalit women, both within and without their communities. The dependence of the Dalit woman on her husband has serious downsides. Her financial insecurity compels the dependence. Most Dalit marriages are forced upon the women by their parents. The parental monitors get the women who have to silently put up with disharmony in marriage. Most often, disharmony leads to marital ruptures when these women are deserted by their husbands. The helplessness of the Dalit woman was thus exacerbated. Now, one may suggest that the Dalit women could think of marrying outside their community to escape the stifling patriarchal decree.

Freedom for a Dalit woman, even in her home, is still a distant dream. From her birth to death, she has to obey all the instructions of society and also the men folk at home. There is no freedom of thought or of action. Education is denied to her. In many Dalit families, women are still like caged birds. They are forced into silent acceptance of their low status. They are not allowed to raise their voice in protest against the denial of their rights. The coming age of Dalit women is not merely the end of innocence. It is, ironically, the irredeemable end of personal freedom. The sense of bondage is ensured by the telling of stories of devils that will catch them if the Dalit women go out alone.

This paper also discusses the role of Indian women in society. It also tells about the defending of political, economical, and social legitimate and corresponding space for Indian women. Bama experienced a lot of struggles as a

Dalit child in school days itself. She works hard for her daily livings too. She faces an injustice that happened at her hostel. Furthermore, she wants to attend her brother's holy communion. So she asked permission to go to her home from the warden. Her request was rejected by the warden. But she allowed the upper class students to go home. This incident makes her strong reactions to injustice. Finally, she won the integrity and went home. "There cannot be the different rules for different castes, only the same rule for everyone".

This kind of discrimination happens to every Dalit student. Every time the upper caste people dominate the lower caste people. Even in the school itself, she is having the caste discrimination. She joined as a teacher at a Christian school. The nuns were showing patriarchy to upper - and lower class people. They regularly suppress the low class students. These kinds of things couldn't be tolerated by Bama. So she left the convent.

When she was traveling in the public transport, she sat next to the woman, but that woman immediately stood and sat in the next seat. It clearly shows the social discrimination in society. It also shows how women are having discrimination. The Dalit community is greatly hurt. For centuries, its potential has been systematically undermined. The irony cannot be missed that the upper castes thrive on the services rendered to them by the downtrodden. The Dalits dig the village graves, throw away the dead animals, and remove human waste with their uncovered hands. They have for their

services a heinous treatment called “the second tumbler” at the tea stalls. The Dalits are forbidden to use the tumbler meant for the upper class: the other. Any attempt to defy this social order is put down with an iron hand.

She also writes about the incident that happens to low caste women. She worked at Naicker House. One day she asked for drinking water from Naicker, but he refused to give the water from their vessel. Because they think that their vessel is humiliated when the Dalit women touch the vessel ironically, the Dalit Christians have been co-shares of the burden of oppression with the other Dalits. The circumstances of a Dalit are the same whether he or she is a Hindu, Christian, and Muslim. Even the caste Christian does not treat the Dalit Christian as their equal.

The culture that ought to become the source of strength is turned into an instrument of oppression and dominance. The administration of culinary order to dehumanize the Dalits had continued unabated through the centuries. The Dalits have neither financial stability nor the political clout to make their voices heard. It is the upper caste that determines what the Dalit should think, how they should act, and how they should look at their status in society.

“As Dalit women, they have a double cross to bear: not only are they exploited outside home by the upper castes, they also abused by the highly patriarchal men within the community.” (Karukku 4)

The difference in the economic position can come about only if the women are boosted to engage equally in all walks of life. The stark

reality is that the female child is an unwanted object in most Dalit families, that the number of women is dwindling quickly, and that female foeticide is one of the primary reasons for this downturn. The author dreams of a society where the girl child is wanted and given all the encouragement. The Indian society ascribes to the Dalit woman a lowly social value. This impacts the treatment of the Dalit women within the Dalit household. The reluctance of a Dalit mother to give birth to a girl is reflective of the overwhelming social acceptability of the girl child. The quality of mothering shows in the nurturing of the girl child. Thus, Bama experienced the partition in the village, church, bus, nun's convent, hostel, recruitment, and in the work zone.

Conclusion

Bama civilized the people of the marginalized community through her own experience and wants society to know the consequences of being unfamiliar with their rights. Karukku demonstrates that even the religious spots are not reputed by the higher class. The real difference must appear in the attitude of the people who are following the past - designed caste format blindly. Even today, despite the law that prevents caste inequity, many merciless practices, including public rape and vicious activities, are experienced by the Dalit community. But the low caste people are suffered a lot by the upper class people. Bama explains the harsh experience intensely and serves as a data of the caste partition that is usual in Indian society.

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