
Reservation and Dalit Literature

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ABSTRACT

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Since time immemorial, a human being, hailing from the most intelligent species of universe developed a tendency to enjoy certain privilege and prominence not only over animals to coerce them into his permanent service but also on average humans whose limited intelligence or awareness served him an opportunity to take undue advantage of their ignorance. This ignorance on part of victim and cruelty, callousness on part of the offender widened the ditch between humans on economic, social, gender, religion and caste lines where superiors left no stone unturned to maintain their authority denying perks and privilege to lesser intelligent breeds.

India was a perfectly balanced country in the past with division of labor to signify skills and talent. She made an arrangement wherein a scholar who devotes himself to education or service of brahm for welfare of mankind became a Brahmin and was revered from rest of classes, the reserved position accorded them influence and a human, having evil in the constitution cashed it on less privileged. How this reservation sowed the seed of dissent will be unfurled with the progression of paper.

The major focus here is to “bring to light the voice of an empowered and embittered writer in Prakash valmiki ... he represents Dalit literature as a gizmo to carry out his anguish as a communal trauma of his community” (Revathi and Bindu 1). In his quest of representation from repression, Valmiki narrates unpleasant tales related to his community and also inspires young generations how to improve his lot and wriggle out of caste constraints with western education and white collar job.

Introduction :

Human tendency to prioritize oneself generates reservation to aspiring and ambitious humans. Credentials are earned by dedication, discipline, hardwork and are managed and maintained by humility and courtesy. Humans have three kinds of energies – erotic, intellectual, and spiritual; *Gita* classifies them as Sato, Tamo nad Razo gunas; western philosophy observes them as ID, Ego and Superego. Animals limit themselves only to erotic or basic pleasures of life i.e. sleep, sex and subsistence; birds make nests like humans and administer proper care to their offspring. Humans, in case they survive, raise children and make homes as good as birds. Intellectual emancipation and welfare of ignorant people makes us humans. With this sense, our forefathers initiated education which is to further initiate enlightenment and also employment for a better living. Unfortunately, those who were deprived of education were also deprived of humanity and they were named shudras.

Valmiki was made to sweep floor even in school and by seeing Valmiki sweeping the school ground his father “raised his voice which echoed throughout the school and gave a great impact on his personality” (Revathi and Bindu 3).

Valmiki was asked by her father whether he is a Hindu or Christian when he stopped praying and going to temple.

Valmiki answered “neither am I a Hindu, if I were really a Hindu, would the Hindus hate me so much? or discriminate against me ... why does caste superiority and caste pride

attack only the weaks ..." (Valmiki 60).

Valmiki becomes spokesperson of Dalits under Patronage of Ambedkarji and his representation of Dalit unnerves those who repressed them religiously and under shield of religion. The brazen and unblushing face and facade of upper caste showcases itself when a teacher talks about caste distinction and propagates it, for instance:

Master Sahab said, "Darkest kalyug has descended upon us so that an untouchable is daring to talk back" (Valmiki 23).

Valmiki is shocked to hear the words of upper caste lady – "you are taking basket full of Joothan and on top of that you want food for your children ... no one had any grudge or shame or repentance (for Jhoothan)" ... (Valmiki 10-11).

Such derogatory remarks pierced and penetrated mother of Valmiki and she emptied the basket in anguish and despite feast, the family remained unfed. When Valmiki joins white collar job as apprentice in ordnance factory, his father announced him a representative of his caste saying – "at last you have escaped the case" (Valmiki 77). Valmiki's involvement in social work enabled him to initiate representation of dalits in main stream.

Ambedkar's battle for Dalit selfhood contributed a lot to unleash the self-confidence of many dalits. Dalit panthers activist tried to coalesce Ambedkar and marxist to bring up a big revolution, (Revathi and Bindu 3)

Deliberation and reflection:

Reservation has always been in practice when division of labour was initiated in India, it automatically divided the entire population in four classes : Brahmin – The preceptor; Kshatriyas- the warriors, Tradesmen – The traders, Shudras – The serving class.

Depending upon the office of influence Brahmins monopolized the education realm and expelled all else from the discipline of education; Kshatriyas defended the country ; they were self- sufficient warriors and they basked in the glory of their influence and privileges. Tradesmen enjoyed a wealthy lifestyle and pacified two upper castes by money and other perks. The Shudras, the working, service class suffered the most as they had no office of influence so they became dependent on three upper caste for their subsistence and this class remained most under -privileged.

This class being in service of upper caste had a degraded life style and shabby dwellings and dress code. Based on their life style and smelly outfits, this class was thrown on the outskirts of the city, banished from the main course of life. This class deprived of education, definite employment and social rights was treated as dull, dumb and degraded not even as humans but as animals.

This dumb, driven human reduced to two legged animal was raised and consolidated by M.K. Gandhi to boost up national movement as he thought it important to synchronize all communities under one umbrella of citizenship cutting across the lines of caste, creed and gender. M.K. Gandhi named them 'harizans' and tried to unite them with main stream of society.

The upper caste promoted the prevalence and priority of caste system as it favored them in privilege. Dr. Ambedkar felt the pain of plight not only of service class but also tried to remedy it by extinguishing discrimination through legal efforts. He fought for education of serving class, created facilities for them and also created much -debated reservation for them.

Reservation, unfortunately is a privilege given to someone diluting merit and efficacy. This reservation was earlier given to upper caste. The Brahmins were given diplomacy, monopoly to dispense knowledge, to do vedic karmas and to proclaim divine punishment on whosoever displeased them and invited their wrath. They monopolized their arena so much so that they diluted the hunger and quest for knowledge in all other classes. The other two upper classes were only employment-oriented and looked up to Brahmins for all religious rituals. Brahmins complicated the rituals and religious practices so much so that other caste found Brahmins indispensable for religious practices which were a portal for heaven for humans after death. Humans are by nature little greedy and futuristic, they believe in permanence of relations, arrangements and believe in their gradual helplessness with receding power and growing age, this is the reason behind family framing and organizing society; they also want a good send-off, so they need connection and connectivity. This feature of humans is exploited by Brahmins and they assured them heavenly bliss in life after death through certain rituals which only they could perform.

Brahmins stressed upon the importance of soul, life after death, futility of material things and their own supremacy to give passport to heaven through various rituals and innocent credulous people literally believed in their concocted stories. It is very difficult to believe how *Gita* believes in rebirth and *Puranas* believe in Pitras. Contrast and inconsistencies in religion confused people further and for answers, they again clung to Brahmins for explanation. They explained as per their sweet will and divided society to reserve safety and security to their own caste putting it on the helm of affairs.

Brahmins hailed service class as shudras and gave them inhuman treatment; the plight of this service class complicated by religion and religion as guided and explained by Brahmins made them forcibly serve other upper castes as they are born from feet of God and Brahmins from mouth of God. Nobody, due to lack of education, could think that only feet of deity are worshipped not the mouth and also where may be found the validity of such proclamation.

Brahmins shielded by impunity of religion tortured and exploited the marginalized group of society. Evil breeds evil only and the entire strata of society is polluted. This section was so tormented in the name of religious services that they could hardly believe them to be human and part of a civilized society. The wound of injury and injustice widened and this group invited the pity and compassion of educated people like M.K. Gandhi and afflicted souls like Ambedkar. When evil is full, its eradication becomes sure, similarly this sudra class also got its due share and made entry into government, white collar jobs and improved their lot gradually and also successfully. Caste-based treatment and also politics jeopardized social fabric and stigmatized, stunted growth of people.

Even today educated people have casteist mindset. A Brahmin teacher once commented: "See the difference of teaching between Brahmins and non Brahmins" even when she was twice transferred to place of her choice and her mediocre sister was inducted into government job by political pull of non-Brahmins showing how they monopolized education and are still ungrateful despite immense and selfless favor from non-Brahmins. If Brahmin alone can teach well as they have done this from decades, they are unfit for other jobs and how their exceptional knowledge doomed India with two times slavery, right from 12th century till mid of 20th century. Their lack of knowledge in technology handicapped country and they were solely responsible as they alone were entitled to teaching and preaching. Governed by casteist mindset, she reasserted on another occasion:

"This scheduled caste is fair because his neighbour was an upper caste, fair in complexion".

This is very surprising how a woman cannot understand the pain of woman who was raped by an upper caste and the child born out of counter fare bears resemblance with the rapist deterring her from loving and fondling her son. Brahmins should first cast aside their caste superiority only then they should ridicule dilution of merit by reservation on caste lines. Shudras suffocated by all ills of the upper caste raised their voice and contributed to full-fledged literature. Dalit literature unbandaged the festering wounds of downtrodden shudras and compelling emotional souls to feel and address their pain.

Dalit literature refers to "belated recognition of Dalit's militant claims upon a history of humiliation and suffering" (Rao 11). Dalit literature is closely related to "hopes for freedom by a group of people who as untouchable, are victims of social, economic and cultural inequality" (Limbale 10). Dalit literature also encompasses issue – "literacy self consciousness individual introspection ... without losing its authentic Dalit identity" (Brueck 153). Dalit literature helped marginalized groups to "articulate their protest, concerns and sense of self" (Kumar 47). Dalit literature upholds equally freedom and justice. It emphasizes the centrality of human beings and society and therefore it is revolutionary. "Suffering and revolutionary awakening is the basis of Dalit literature" (Barak et al., 173). "Dalit Literature is unique because of its consciousness" (Limbale 24). C.T. Indra also states : Although today they are fighting for restoration of dignity as human being some people belong to such under privileged strata have historically believed that it is because of the Karma in their previous births that they have been born so (15).

Reservation is nasty for everyone. It accords special privilege and perks to a specialized group for specific reasons the worst part of it is a temptation which is very lucrative with host of incentives but rust the faculties of a person. Humans when evolved from Gurrillas had a different skull may be they had a tail-on extension of coccyx but now they move on legs unlike animals. Snakes too lost limbs because of disuse. Similarly, the reserved class does not exert its faculties as intensely and immensely as others; for instance-Baniyas are smart at calculation due to their genetic disposition for trade and commerce; women are physically weak due to less exposure to warships. The amount of exertion, experience and exposure is directly proportional to evolution of strength and reserved people due to less hardwork and fatigue learn less and laze around with limited potential. Brahmins too were reserved and exercised undue and unquestioned authority with zero accountability which made the country intellectually bankrupt inviting foreign rules for centuries and the same gesture is being repeated with politicized reservation for Shudras.

Reservation was never given to women in modern age. They were equally treated after independence and were given equal opportunities. Women suffer menstrual pain every month, undertake various physical and mental constraints and socially also suffer various prejudices and have to cope up with preferential treatment to males. Despite their limited canvas and restricted sphere, they have travelled into space, are at par with men in almost all walks of life without any professional or personal reservation, they fare well in their lives and maintain themselves at helm of affairs. Women also have ever borne the stigma of being lower in intellectual capacities and social accomplishments but they serve as fulcrum of society and manage their roles with all vigour and spirit. Women were also victimized by male since time immemorial; they too were given animal like treatment and targetted for their preference for

leisure and luxury at expenses of men but women continued to strive for their quest of identity, framed their identity and continuously struggled to maintain it by other efforts of their mental faculties.

Untouchables or Harijans only suffered atrocities but women also suffered fear and sexual abuse. Their status was always in shadow of men and they collapsed or flourished at their convenience; women were denied opportunity for education and employment. They were limited to four walls of household and were not allowed to participate in any activity of male bastion. Gradually, women with courage and patience improved their lot and progressed in various walks of life; they proved their mettle, worth and also their significance in main course of life. From a slave to man, they became the life-partner and betterhalf to cooperate and contribute men in all respects and regards. All these observation and deliberations showcase the rewarding struggle of women without any reservation and reverence.

Reservation of women in politics is also not laudable; women like Sarojini Naidu, Indira Gandhi, Mamta Banerji, J. Jaylalitha donned the platform of politics without reservation and induced remarkable change in political arena. They left an indelible mark on politics and proved their potential as they entered into politics by choice and taste not by force or grace.

Reservation douses down the creative struggle a requisite to shape up and sharpen personality of a person to groom him according to his gifts. When we are placed on a secure platform, we choose our loss in two ways: one by relaxing our assertion and required force (internal) for genesis of our creativity; second by giving ourselves a smug satisfaction that we will remain eternally entitled to that particular privilege and continuous update creeps out of our life. Dr. Ambedkar thought reservation of untouchable because he found them wanting in awareness and self-sufficiency. He observed that the untouchables have accepted their inferior status and their indoctrination about their untouchability has touched their mind and soul rendering them polluted, perverted and petrified, their numbed psyche could not think of their welfare and future so they should be kept separate like saplings which are reared in reserved pots for their better growth.

Reservation uplifted the untouchable to a considerable length and height. It improved their lot and assured them much beyond their imagination, about the possibilities to mingle or even rule the upper caste. It was a dream for them which could never be realized in common standards. They realized their lot, humanity, their lost respect and dignity and completed their journey from Joothan (left over) to dignified earning in white collar jobs.

The condition of women was a little different because they enjoyed queen like status too under patronage of men. When given power by men, like Nurjahan, women enjoyed and executed this borrowed power and exhibited their potential and talent. Women at least, were conscious of their treasured talent they had the awareness that their seed of potential can sprout well if planted well in an appropriate soil. They never enjoyed continuous flow a power, hegemony and monopoly like men but they knew the taste of power; they also knew the execution of ideas and plans and also had knowledge of their traits and virtues which enabled them to win favours from men.

Women with their continual exercise of power didn't queue up for continuum contumely of exploitation and humiliation; they were somehow, anyhow even though once in a blue moon, bossed over some small or big set of entities and gained a knowledge of their vitality and also how to earn it.

Reservation of women cannot thus, be compared with untouchables who never tasted even humanity for them; like dumb, driven cattle, they were employed in dangerous task without considering their human anatomy. Such people never even had the strength to raise their voice against the system and never even had the intellect to tackle the situation and wriggle out of it conveniently and considerably. Reservation served as a boon to the untouchable as it straightened their backbone, straitjacketed them for responsible undertakings.

It gradually evolved them and transformed them and they responded well; trauma transformed them and added various features and feathers into their cap; but excess of everything is bad and undue extension of reservation for political mileage not only have disheartened upper caste which zealously supported Shudras merging them into mainstream like Gandhiji but also have compromised the honest, hardworking nature of this serving class of untouchables.

Too much relaxation and rest gives inertia and humans are to rest for a while in the nest otherwise they are to explore the sky. Over use of reserved facilities which add to emotional and intellectual lethargy of serving class will only create unrest and hatred for the reserved. Reservation is only inverted now; earlier the upper caste had reserved privilege and repugnance was the share of the serving class, now upper caste is sulking over prolonged and over concession to reserved categories.

Humans deserve their due share and in case they are denied, they claim it by revolt and revolution. The world of the reservation class is revolutionized and now the need of the hour is to strengthen them in realizing their human power in intellect and to counsel them to stand on their own feet without a prop of reservation to lean on.

Conclusion

Various books on dalit literature for instance Siddalingaiah's *Ouru Keri* and *Joothan* by Valmiki are reminiscent of dreadful, disgusting tale of hunger and humiliation of Dalits. Poverty and anxiety was checked by education in free night schools which enabled the Dalits to gain self-respect and a sense of dignity. These books reveal how caste discrimination is an everyday struggle for all Dalits. Dalit literature basically, is a vehicle to display rejection, resentment, revolt and remuneration for the dalits.

Dalit literature focuses on human consciousness and in a dispassionate manner without showing an idealization of painful and ugly realities of life. The incidents of unrest and distrust are well arrayed in such works but not to celebrate but to emphasize the cognizance of the offense committed by upper caste authoritatively and also purposely and in cold blood. *Karukku* by Bama portrays a poignant tale of a woman who is victimized not only in her household but also at her workplace. "A dalit woman suffers a double curse, curse of being a woman curse of being a dalit in her own house, a women is like an Ox tied to the yoke.... in this patriarchal high class society life of a women in curse" (Kumari 207).

Journey of the struggle from silence for dalits is not fraught with violence rather it is very convincing consistent struggle for respect and regards. Soul affliction and depiction of details showcase how a serving class was paid for its services brutally and brazenly by sharks of society which never respond to reason and rhyme. "The caste -ridden bias and animosity is heartbreaking and horrible", (Bheemaiah "Dialectics of Caste Culture" 54). Reservation true to its nature is a condition and it should not be made a habit as humans are slaves to gambits and

reluctant to discontinue them even though it corrode and corrupt them.

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