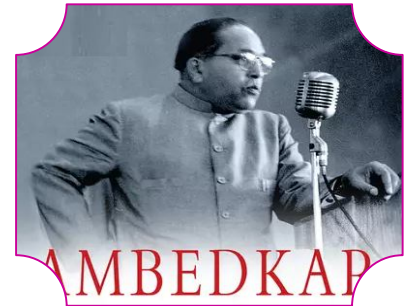




THE PANGS OF UNTOUCHABILITY

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ABSTRACT

We must uproot the four -caste system and untouchability, and set the society on the foundation of the two principles of one caste only and of equality..... Our work has been begun to bring about a real social revolution..... No one can now arrest it. I pray to God that the social revolution which begins here today may fulfil itself by peaceful means. It was Dr Ambedkar's statement a speech was given by him on 25th Dec.1925, he burnt the symbol of slavery,"the Manusmriti" which is celebrated in many parts of India as Manavmukti Din,.Gail Omvedt, in the Poisoned Bread edited by Arjun Dangle in his prefatory note quoted the srevolution started by Dr Ambedkar in India for the liberation of the downtrodden people who were suffering from generations together in the name of caste and religion. The new literature of revolt, saw itself as an alternative to the established and main-stream Marathi literature.

KEYWORDS: *Dr Ambedkar's statement , Marathi literature , caste and religion.*

INTRODUCTION:

Dalit literature is the voice of the voiceless people who have been living in grinding poverty and misery. But these people were showing the pride and in such survival conditions fighting against the caste based slavery. The undignified and humiliating labour represented by caste based 'duties' in the case of 'Mahars' this was particular the carrying away of the dead animals. One such incident was portrayed by Daya Pawar in his autobiography. When he was living with his grandmother in Kavakhana and he asked his grandmother, "aji, when did she come to Bombay?", the answer given by his grandmother which shows that the mahars have to perform the given duties and its aftereffects also mentioned in many cases. His grandmother told him that, his grandfather was died of drink. His father and his uncle were very small. There was no grown man in her house. Her relatives were also cruel to her. The widow should call out the village proclamations, she should guard the village gate, and she should help to carry the carcasses of dead animals. If anyone in the village died, she had to go from village to village in any situation, such were the duties of mahars which she had to carry. Once the village chief, the Patil, sent her to cry out a proclamation of small-pox in the village. The cart of goddess Mariyai was pulled out in the procession to the next village. The mahars used to pull it. It was the custom that this cart should not stopped at the time of procession, if it was stopped, the small-pox would increase. The Patil had ordered her not to stop it. So she took the stick in her hand and was going round in the village shouting the proclamation. There was a young man, named Kondiba, who was sitting on the threshold of Vithoba temple. He stood in her way and said, "Catch hold of this mahar woman. Tie her up in the square. Has she gone mad? She is quite happily saying 'do not fry orfuck.'" A crowd had gathered. Some were laughing and some were furious with her. She was begging for their mercy but no one was in the mood of listening. She swore earnestly about what proclamation she had

really been carried out, but the villagers would not listen. She was rescued by her paternal brother-in-law. She was sleepless in the night. She decided to leave the village and went to Bombay. It shows the humiliation, insult and caste based slavery of the then mahars.

Even in Shankarrao Kharat's short story we witness such humiliation of his father in "A Corpse in the Well". He remembered the dangers of village duty, which was a perpetual noose around the neck of a mahar! He was on vacation in his village. A corpse was floating in the abandoned well near the village. It had bloated and risen to the surface. The village chief, the Patil, had received the news, the Mahars and the Ramoshi had got the news. His father Anna, as the Mahar on village duty. The Ramoshi and his father stayed the whole night by the well to guard the corpse. In the morning the head constable another police were expected for the initial inquiry till the as per the custom the mahar and Ramoshi would have to guard it. His mother knew about it and she was expecting his father's arrival but it was afternoon and yet his father had not returned home. His mother sent him with his father's Bhakri wrapped in a cloth. His father was sitting nearby the well. He told his father his mother had asked for him. His father told him that the police men were not arrived. Till the investigation the mahar will not rest. He father started smoking, he thought that his father was suppressing his hunger so he told him to eat his bread which he had brought with him. His father told him that when everything is over he will take the rest. He was told by his father that the policemen were arrived in the village and were dining, the corpse will be taken out of the well and they will investigate it and then he will be free. The conversation goes on Shankar insisted his father for his bread and his father meekly denied. Shankar requested him that he will do his duty till his lunch but his father do not want that Shankar should do such undignified jobs like him. In the meanwhile the policemen arrived

The head constable arrived on the horse. Everyone had paid their homage to him. The Ramoshi tied up the horse to a tamarind tree. His father brought water and some fresh green grass for the sahib's horse. The constable looked into the well and looked around and again peeped into it. He watched the steps of the well which were buried in the soil, some steps were slipped into the water. It was an abandoned well. The constable and the village chief whispered something and the constable ordered the village Mahar to fetch the dead body from the well. Shankar's father pleaded that the mahar's duty is to guard the dead body. But the sahib had ordered him otherwise he threatened him, "You lump of dirt! Are you going to jump, or do I have to whip you?" Shankar's father remained silent, seeing this the village chief and the head constable started bombarding His father with threats and curses. His father remained silent to this oppressive power. All these things shocked the little mind of Shankar. He heard their curses, threats and shouting. A number questions raised in his mind, why his father was threatened? Whose well? Whose dead body is this? He thought about all this because he has some education to his credit. He could understand this injustice done to his father. His father was innocent, he had not done any wrong, his crime was being the Mahar of the village. He was on his Mahar duty. Suddenly by listening this the head constable charged at the small Shankar and he said, "Catch him! Give the bastard a good beating!" At this his father removed his clothes. He went inside the well through the rope. There was a furious dialogue between Shankar and the head constable. He shouted at his to save from the snake. He requested him to come out of the well, and he will manage to go there. Till the end of the story we can see the suffering of the Village Mahar doing his duty and the son who was very much worried about his father and family.

Even such humiliation we can see in *Sharankumar Limbale's Akkarmashi* also. That he was a born to a Mahar woman from the Village Patil. The relationship with Shewanta which was narrated by him in his autobiography. Their relationship was known in his area. His grandma Santamai promised him that she will ask Shewanta's hand for marriage with him. He was told by his grandmother the story of Rohidas who had carried a woman from Mahar tenement and the entire community set out with sticks and axes as if to lynch a mad dog. Santamai told him that the Mahars were a little fanatic, they will Sharan into pieces because he was considered a Bastard in his community. There were four liquor dens in his tenement, which belongs to Damunna, Mankunna, Hiramai and Kamlakka-besides Sharan's. The liquor of the first pouring was very strong. The leftover was waste thrown into the gutter. The smell of the liquor filled their nostrils but they were used to its smell. The customer who came to drink will remain hours on end downing cup after cup.

They demand for salt or send him to get salted gram from a shop. Sometimes such customers can bought chiwada with them and was given to them a little bit of it. His mother Masamai was the only daughter of his grandmother. His mother was married to a poor man called Vitthal Kamble. Starvation was a daily affair, yet she had to work hard to fill the belly. She had to cut the grass all day, lug it to the town four miles away and sell it there. Vitthal Kamble was a labourer with a farmer, called Hanmanta Patil. The future of Vitthal lay before him with all the cramped squalor of a cow-shed. Patil helped Vitthal in his needs. But the patil was of somewhat a different nature, because whom the happy married life was broken down. His mother was divorced, the small children were taken away by the Jat -Panchayat. A husband-wife relationship can be ended but how a mother will remain without her baby? How she will forsake her child? His mother was a free bird. A man can have many relationships with many wives but a woman was considered spoilt fruit. She had no right to remarriage. She was a woman deserted by her husband. However the Patil managed to hook her. She was kept in Akkalkot in a rented house. They lived happily there. She had given birth to a baby boy. The patil wanted the body of a woman not a child. Hanmanta wanted to avoid all this. It would be a blot on his family honour. Sharankumar Limbale's birth was a fruit of defilement, he was a forbidden seed. Here he posed different questions to the custom and tradition who had given such undignified privileges to men only and a woman had to suffer her whole life. His father was a Lingayat. His mother was a mahar. This the real identity crisis posed by him through his own story. All these shows the pangs of the untouchable peoples who had suffered, tortured, humiliated and had to lead the life of defilement.

CONCLUSION:

The caste system in Indian society was based on exploitation, inequality and untouchability. The untouchables lived a life of poverty, starvation, ignorance, insults, and injustices. They have to face different atrocities in their day today life. Today they are trying to raise their voice against these inequalities and exploitation. They are writing their life experiences through their poems, short stories and autobiographies. Their urge is that the society should understand them as human being and treat them as equal to them. There should not apartheid in the name of caste or creed. All human being are equal and should treated equally, as the mere expectations of them.

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