

Upara: Life story with Dalit sensibility

Aher Vaishali B

Prof., Dept. of English, Babuji Avhad Mahavidyalaya, Pathardi, Dist. Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, India

Abstract

The subaltern's autobiography challenges the rule that autobiography is the story of person written by himself or herself. It is because that the autobiography of Subaltern is not only the story or life history of himself or herself but his/ her autobiography is the record of their daily struggle for survival as the reserved, oppressed and exploited part of society. Autobiography of Laxman Mane is chose to represent and analysis discriminations from social, cultural and racial point of view.

Mane in his autobiography tells how he struggled in his life. By telling his own life story, he described the vicissitudes of the whole kaikadi caste. In Upara one Kaikadi's life story speaks for the entire kaikadi caste. So autobiographical writing provides a space for marginal writers to voice not only one's own victimization but also of the community they belong to.

Keywords: upara, life story, kaikadi's

Introduction

Laxman Mane is a Well-Known Dalit writer in Marathi literature. Mane's autobiographical novel 'Upara' (An Outsider) won the Sahitya Akademi Award and later on translate in English by A.K. Kamat in 1997^[6]. It is the first attempt to bring his nomadic 'Kaikadi' community in focus of the readers. This book shows us the miserable plight of the community which is worse than the other untouchables in India. Majorly this book is the reflection of how this particular community is underprivileged and disadvantaged at different levels.

The title of this book 'Upara' (An Outsider) is very suggestive. 'Upara' means an outsider, having no shelter and have to live in poor and miserable condition than animal. 'Upara' is a collection of sad memories with sad awareness of the writer and the poor status of his community. This book is the record of problems faced by himself and his community such as poverty, starvation, illiteracy, superstitions and exploitation at different levels because of cast discrimination.

The unstability is one of the major aspects of the life of the kaikadi community. They don't have their own professions, particular villages and permanent houses. They had donkeys, dogs, goats along with fowls. It throws light on their unstable life, their localities where they were enforced to live. It also indicates that they were not privileged to possess any other animal except dogs and donkeys. It certainly hints that it has its roots in Manusmriti in which in which Manu described horrible life and duties of Shudras.

Objectives of Research Paper

1. To highlight on the problems and struggle of the Dalit Communities especially towards the life of Nomadic Tribes.
2. To mention the real fact about the difficulties, sufferings and sorrows of the Nomadic Tribes.
3. To Focus the Socio-economic victimization and the plight of the Branded and outsider communities in India.
4. To enable the readers to comprehend the Dalit's wretched life which is rejected in Dalit's autobiographical writing with special reference to Laxman Mane's and autobiographical novel, 'An Outsider' (Upara).

Hypothesis of the Research Paper

The research study hypothesizes that still in our country Dalits are subaltern and marginalized at various levels. This low statues of Dalits has been reflected in Laxman Mane's autobiographical novel 'An Outsider' (Upara). These types of literary works guide the society and shows us the way for the upliftment of the subalterns. Even Mane's novel inspire the society to deny the Varna system and untouchability. Mane's novel proves it that 'education' is the perfect solution on the problems of Dalits such as poverty, exploitation, starvation, superstitions and cast discrimination.

Scope and Limitations

Since, the aim of research study is to highlight the difficulties and struggle of the Dalits are found in our county, India and it is not limited only to the Maharashtra Nomadic Tribes but certainly it goes beyond that. The study will motivate all those Dalits and the Non-Dalits to work for the liberation of mankind especially for welfare of the downtrodden.

Although this research study has more scope, it has some limitations too. Only the Dalit autobiography such as 'An Outsider' by Laxman Mane is not enough to change the mentality of everybody.

Research Methodology

As a researcher, once again I looked into the hypothesis of the research study and applied research methodology has been developed. And researcher thoroughly examined the novel such as 'An Outsider' by Laxman Mane.

'Upara' (An Outsider) Is a Life Story with Dalit Sensibility
 Dalit – Social sensibility is found in Mane's 'An Outsider'. Mane become restless when he realized the difficulties and questions faced his community such as hundreds of thousands living in slums, on the outskirts of the village, suffered in miserable condition in valleys, hills and rocky area. They have neither work nor opportunity, neither facilities nor support, neither shelter nor protection. They do not have even 'two meals a day'. Even they do not realize that they are human being. In

the field of wealth, flower, prestige, philosophic, thinking, arts, science will the nomadic tribal merge into the larger human culture after taking a stamp of 'Upara' from their forehead? Will this community's humanness be respected? Will their basic needs such as food, shelter, clothes be looked after? Will the society accept them as humans? All these questions derived Mane crazy.

In the opening part of the book the author mention the factual reality that the Kaikadi's dwelling was the outskirts of the villages, especially on the dunghill. They used to fetch came from hills and valleys, weave a variety of baskets and sell these articles mostly in exchange of food grain, worn out clothes given by villagers and other household things. Sometimes they exchange their baskets of state bhakarries, some buttermilk, pickle, flat loaves, stale curry, all state and of course collected as aims.

'An Outsider' also describes Kaikadi Community's struggle for food, hunger was the main problem of the Dalit's so they always struggle for food. There are many scenes in the book which portrayed the picture of their hunger. Because of poverty Mane suffered utter starvations and had to depend on others from daily food. He would get a quarter of bhakari from his teacher named Kamble. Mane and his Wife experienced a bitter situation the marriage of his Muslim neighbor's daughter. Dalit fought not only for the food but also for the honors. In this connection, Dr. Anil Surya states:

"If we study the Dalit autobiographies from the sociological point of view, it is clear that they struggle for human liberation". 'An Outsider' records the social as well as religious customs, beliefs and superstitions, their district dialect, distinct culture, conventions and traditions and common practices etc. Mane mention that despite their utter poverty, they take loan and celebrates the religious festivals of God Khanduba and Goddess Kalubai. They Sacrifice goats and hens and serve the meat to god and goddess as an offering. It is mandatory even for wives and children to eat meat and drink 'Country liquor'. Once in festival of Khanduba Laxman refuses to drink liquor, at that time all his people shout at him,

"You don't have right to say no. Shut your eyes and gulp it all down the throat in one mouthful. Nothing will happen to you".

In mane's 'An Outsider' we have a number of Kaikadi female characters in our male dominated society women is considered as marginal and secondary to man. They are uneducated, religious, hard-working, humble, loving and superstitious. They were not allowed to bath and adorn every day. Whenever Paru's husband Maruti finds her bathing and adorning, he beats her. It is said that they are beggarly women so they should live like beggars. These women are oppressed by both the upper caste Hindus and their community. Sometimes in a critical condition the women in the kaikadi community are sold. Munnappa mortgaged his wife to Dharmea for the cast for years who gave him two hundred and fifty rupees. Thus, Kaikadi female characters indicate insecurity and instability in every respect.

In 'An Outsider', we find the regional effects on life, manners, dressing, fairs, intersects, customs and also on social and religious festivals on the village people. Author described 'the fair of the God Khandoba at Malvadi is the best example of regional effect.

Conclusion

Kaikadi Community is a wandering tribe, which carry health and home on the back of donkeys. It is Nomadic Tribe which lives

out its life, generation after generation and wander from one place to another and so it is considered 'Outsider' (Upara). The life experience of this autobiography focused on 'untouchability' and 'cast discrimination'. Due to these two problems, their communities had to suffer a lot and so they were considered as social and psychological slaves.

After the sociological study of this book, Dalit Communities can realized their place in the society, their problems and their struggle. They would realized Ambedkar's thoughts, education and governments policies, helps them to understand the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. As a researcher I would like to mention –

A change is must require in the mentality of Non-Dalit Society. Thus, Dalit Literature helps us to understand the struggle of these Dalit's for the human liberation.

References

1. Dhongade Dr. R. Dalit Atmacharitre.
2. Sahityaani Samaj. Pune: Dilipraj Prakashan. 1992.
3. Kharat, Dr. S. Bhatkya Vimukt Jamati Va Tyanche Prashna. Pune: Sugewa Prakashan. 2003.
4. Mane L. Upara (Marathi), Mumbai: Granthali Prakashan. 1982.
5. Mane L. An Outsider (Upara). English Translation.
6. Kamat AK. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi. 1997.
7. Muller M. (ed.) The Law's of Manu, max.
8. Trans. Buhler G. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1886.
9. Ambedkar BR, Dalit Sahitya. Chinta Va Chintan (Dalit Literature: Concerns and Deliberation), (eds). Rokade, V. and Hinge, J. Mumbai: Prachi Prakashan. 1987.