

ISSN : 2348-7674

Research Innovator

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal



Vol II Issue III : June 2015

Editor-In-Chief

Prof. K.N. Shelke

www.research-innovator.com

Research Innovator

A Peer-Reviewed Refereed and Indexed International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Volume II Issue III: June – 2015

CONTENTS

Sr. No.	Author	Title of the Paper	Page No.
1	Dr. Archana Durgesh & Ms. Ekta Sawhney	Spirituality - The Antidote to All tribulations	1
2	Prof. S. Arunraj	A Study on the Status of Women Education in India	5
3	T. Avinash	Between Illusion and Reality: Subverting Stereotypes (An Analysis of Two Stories)	12
4	Dr. Archana Durgesh & Dr. Pooja Singh	Infertility: A Woman's Encircling Gloom	17
5	Dr. Vitthal V. Parab	The Emerging New Trends In Indian English Fiction	21
6	Dr. K. Anuradha & V. Elumalai	National Identity in Nissim Ezekiel's poem "Island" Correlative with Puram	29
7	Pragya Shukla & Sudhir Kumar	Fasting, Praying & Storytelling	33
8	Dr. Vitthal V. Parab	Pragmatism & Gender Bias in Kamala Das's Poetry	42
9	Dr. Maulik Vyas	Revisiting Mahapatra's Storytelling: a Study of <i>the Green Gardener</i>	49
10	Dr. Archana Durgesh, Dr. Pooja Singh, Achal Sharma, Bramh Prakash Singh, Aakash Wadhawan	Phoolan Devi: The Bandit Queen	61
11	Dr. Vitthal V. Parab	The Social, Cultural Impact of English Literature on the Traditional Life of the People of Bangladesh	67
12	Mr. Parkale Suryakant Narayan	"Sexual Politics" in Sharankumar Limbale's <i>The Outcaste</i> (Akkarmashi)	78
13	Thokchom Ursa	An Insight into Anthropometric Variations of Height and Weight among Monozygotic Twins	83
14	Dr. Prashant Krushnarao Pathak	Human Right and Child Education in Indian Constitution	87
15	कांछळे एम. एम.	दलितेतरांच्या दलित उध्दारांसाठी चळवळी	93

“Sexual Politics” in Sharankumar Limbale’s The Outcaste (Akkarmashi)**Mr. Parkale Suryakant Narayan***Assistant Professor of English, Changu Kana Thakur A.C.S. College, New Panvel, (M.S) India***Abstract**

Dalit Literature is known as ‘the literature of oppressed’ spring up as a distinct part of Indian Literature. It was, firstly commenced in Marathi Literature as a voice of protest against an injustice in social system. The legacy of Mahatma Phule and Dr. B. R Ambedkar encouraged the writers of Indian Literatures, unlike Sadashivepethi Literature it has been acclaimed as the one of distinct, creative, and multifaceted which highlighted caste discrimination, exploitation, oppression, struggle and protest against the age-old systems in Indian society. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has been the major inspiration for the Dalit writers of India, focused the inequality and injustice of oppressive social system. Sharankumar Limbale is regarded as the most prolific writers of contemporary literature whose literature aimed to expose the brutality of the upper class in Maharashtra. The Outcaste, the autobiography of Sharankumar Limbale is the translation of Marathi version, *Akkarmashi* which he has penned at the age of twenty five, depicts the oppression of one family and uncovers the feministic perspectives too in a skillful way. The paper entitled “Sexual Politics” in Sharankumar Limbale’s The Outcaste (2003)’ pursuits and analyses forces of patriarchal system which disclose perspectives of the theory of Kate Millett’s ‘Sexual Politics’. Limbale’s The Outcaste exposes the undermining role of women in so called male-dominated society. It manifests that the woman does not have their self- identity and self-esteem in Indian society. Also, it’s intended to make an in-depth and insightful study of the feminists’ predicaments, complications, contradictions and endeavors of the female protagonist and other major characters. It also explores those crucial circumstances in which women are sexually exploited. Masamai, mother of the author deteriorates herself as homeless and a victim in hegemonic society of upper class. While reflecting the theory of Sexual Politics of Kate Millett, this paper also touches the social and cultural issues by which the individuality of a particular woman is affected, decayed and disordered. The major aim is to expose the objectification and victimization of Dalit women in patriarchal society and how power is shared between upper class men and Dalit women, and how this affects Masamai’s relationships.

Key Words: Sexual Politics, patriarchal, hegemony, feminist

Limbale is a socially committed novelist has produced a good deal of literature. He has written articles and essays on a number of subjects. His novels fall into two categories namely social and autobiographical novels. He focused his attention on the sufferings, misery of the Dalits as a result of the

exploitation of the downtrodden class of the Indian society. Caste discrimination, hypocrisy, caste system, the place of Dalits in the society, poverty, hunger, exploitation and protest are his common themes.

The aim of Dalit Literature is to protest against the established system which is based on injustice and to expose the evil and hypocrisy of the higher castes. There is an urgent need to create a separate aesthetics for Dalit literature, an aesthetics based on the real experiences of life. (The Aesthetics of Dalit Literature)

The present research paper deals with *The Outcaste* (2003) which deal with poverty, hunger and exploitation as their major themes and above all it also disclose sexual politics of the upper class men in hegemonic structure. Kate Millett, as a Columbia university graduate student, was active in number of women's liberation groups in New York City. Her book *Sexual Politics* published in 1969, was originally as a doctoral dissertation. *Sexual Politics* (1969) is concerned with how power is shared between men and women, and how this affects their relationships. Millette argues that the ideology of male dominated society traps women and makes them subservient to men, moreover, she debunks the patriarchal practices which undermines the role of woman and determines that woman is an object of sexual gratification.

Akkarmashi is an autobiography written by Sharankumar Limbale, it was first published in 1984. It was translated into English by Santosh Bhoomkar as *The Outcaste* in 2003. It puts forth Limbale's life as an outcaste. The word *Akkarmashi* is a Marathi word which means a person whose birth is illegitimate or one who is an outcaste, Mahar community calls him *Akkarmashi* because his father is a high-caste man and the high-caste people call him an untouchable because he is Mahar. It is

about an untouchable family in general and community struggles in particular. The author narrates about how an innocent Dalit couple Kamble and Masamai are discriminated and exploited an upper caste landlord Hanmantha Limbale for whom the poor couple used to work day and night. Ithal Kamble, Masamai's husband is a farm worker on a yearly contract to Hanmantha Limbale and it was a job worth seven or eight hundred rupees. Ithal Kamble toiled on the farm of Hanmantha and was helped by him during hard times. Hanmantha Patil ruined the poor family and it led to the separation of Ithal Kamble and Masamai forever. After the divorce with Masamai, Kamble left the place with two sons Suryakant and Dharma and remarried a woman who is also a widow. Masamai remained a keep of Hanmantha Limbale and gave birth to Sharan Kumar Limbale. Masamai was given a rented house at Akkalkot. Limbale writes, "*After my birth the mansions of the Patil community must have become tense. My first breath must have threatened the morality of the world. With my first cry at birth, milk must have splashed from the breasts of every Kunti.*" (Limbale, 36)

Limbale states that to be born beautiful among Dalits is a curse. As Masamai was beautiful, she was lured by Hanmanth. She was made separate from her husband and suffered a lot in her post-widowed life. Though Hanmanth enjoyed the beauty Masamai, he was self-conscious that Masamai was a Dalit and tried to avoid her. He also commented that the newborn child was looked after by Bhondya, the potter. Limbale writes, "*Finally my mother and I*

come to stay with Santamai, my grandmother. Only a mother and the earth can accommodate and stomach everything?" (37) The upper caste men in every village had made whores of the wives of Dalit farm labourers and Masamai was one among them. After divorced from Ithal Kamble, Masamai gave birth to Sharan Kumar Limbale. Limbale's birth is the result of Masamai's private and helpless relation with Hanmantha Limbale, the village Patil. After Sharan Kumar and Nagi, Masamai gave birth too many children that include, apart from Sharan Kumar and Nagi, Nirmi, Vani, Suni, Pami, Tamma, Indira and Sidramma. Limbale writes: *We were all of one womb and blood. We shared a common mother but different fathers...I was born from her affair with Hanmantha Patil. Masamai had Nagubai, Nirmala, Vanmala, Sunanda, Pramila, Shrikant, Indira and Sidram from Kaka, whose name was Yeshwantrao Sidramappa Patil, the head of the village named Hanoor.*"

Simone de Beauvoir maintains that women have been given the status of "the second sex" and reduced to objects for men since the dawn of history. In her seminal work of that title --The Second Sex-- she has asserted that woman has been constructed as man's other and that as such, she is denied the right to her own subjectivity. Kate Millett who popularized the term "sexual politics" through her powerful polemic has thrown light on the unbalanced relationship of dominance and sub ordinance that has prevailed between the sexes throughout history and continues to exist even at present.

Millett in her *Sexual Politics*' discusses the role of patriarchy in sexual relations, looking especially at the works of D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, and Norman Mailer. Millett argues that these authors view and discuss sex in a patriarchal and sexist way. In the same way Limbale's *The Outcaste* 'exposés sexual politics of upper class people and Masamai became the victim of upper class societal sensuality which leads to the destruction of Ithal Kamble's family.

Sexuality is part of the domain of human practice organized by gender relations. *Sexual Politics*" is the contestation of issues of sexuality by the social interests constituted within gender relations. *"It is argued that sex is natural and comes first. Gender is perceived as a secondary construct which is imposed over the top of this natural distinction. This means that the distinction between male and female is a social distinction made by the society, that is, it is a social construction. Simone de Beauvoir in her book, The Second Sex says that "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman". She explains that gender differences in the society make the man superior through his role as the bread winner. It gives him a position of power in the society and family. Gender differences are set in hierarchal opposition such that men are superior and women are subordinate. Women's position is that of the other and women are the continual outsiders. Limbale's The Outcaste conveys that patriarchy exploits women biological capacity to reproduce as their essential weakness. In the autobiography patriarchy works in the guise upper class men who are*

the main components of authority and sexual power in social system. Men of upper class automatically privileges over women and exploits sexually. In the Outcaste dominant masculine group perpetuates the notion of feminine subjugation, no matter to which class a woman may belong, Masamai, a Mahar woman has lost her identity and derived from growth and the development of her selfhood and is excluded from many spheres of life. Limbale says:

Why did my mother say yes to the rape which brought me into the world? Why did she put up with the fruit of this illegitimate intercourse for nine months and nine days and allow me to grow in the foetus? Why did she allow this bitter embryo to grow? How many eyes must have humiliated her because they considered her a whore? Did anyone distribute sweets to celebrate my birth? Did anyone admire me affectionately? Did anyone celebrate my naming ceremony? Which family would claim me as its descendent? Whose son am I, really? - Sharan Kumar Limbale (p.37).

She is exploited by the upper class masters sexually because of that Sharan has to face the many untold problems during and after his schooling. Sexual Politics is inherent in the life of Dalit women. Like Mahasweta Devi's Dauliti, Masamai is victimized by Hanmanta Limbale, the Patil of Balsegaon. The sexual relationship of his mother with Hanmanta Limbale is the first instance of power and gender politics in patriarchal system. Limbale regards that his mother is the representative of whole Dalit women

wherein sexual politics is identifiable. He says:

The Patils in every village have made whores of the wives of Dalit farm labourers. A poor Dalit girl on attaining puberty has invariably been a victim of their lust. There is a whole breed born to adulterous Patils. There are Dalit families that survive by pleasing the Patils sexually. The whole village considers such a house as the house of the Patil's whore. Even the children born to her from her husband are considered the children of a Patil. Besides survival on the charity of a Patil what else can such a household expect? (38)

Masamai becomes a sexual object when she meets Yeshwantrao Patil, the Patil of Hanoor. Masamai gives birth to eight children from Yeshwantrao. The second sexual relationship validates sexual tyranny and victimization of Masamai in patriarchal social system which lands Sharan into the hatred of his mother in particular and upper class-men in general. He says:

"Why didn't my mother abort me when I was a foetus? Why did she not strangle me as soon as I was born? We may be children born out of caste but does that mean we must be humiliated? What exactly is our fault? Why should a child suffer for the sin of its parents?" (64). This thought reflects the misery of the children born out of illegitimate sex. Sharan says, "whenever I look at my mother I grow wild with anger. Why did she commit adultery at all?" (64)

The theory of Sexual Politics is asserted by the sexual relationship between Yeshwantrao and Masamai. Limbale writes: We were all of one womb and blood. We shared a common mother but different fathers...I was born from her affair with Hanmantha Patil. Masamai had Nagubai, Nirmala, Vanmala, Sunanda, Pramila, Shrikant, Indira and Sidram from Kaka, whose name was Yeshwantrao Sidramappa Patil, the head of the village named Hanoor.”(38)

Masamai's life speaks out how the poor Dalit families were destroyed and the innocent Dalit women were exploited under the hegemony of patriarchal system

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Conclusion:

It is possible to define this masculine world adapting the words of Abraham Lincoln: "It is of the males, for the males and by the males! Millett argues that the acquisition of sexual power is absolutely essential in order to secure equality with men. The concept of 'sexual politics' is highly charged for women. The delimiting aspect of sexual power in its usual sense is that it has long been associated with violence and the rape. Sexual power is seen in act of Hanmanta Patil and Yeshwantrao Patil in their own carnal interest by exploiting the powerless Masamai, a Mahar woman.

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Flat No. 01, Nirman Sagar CHS,
Thana Naka, Panvel, Raigad - 410206



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