

Role Of Women In Regulating The Unjust Practices Of Patriarchal Society In *Mother Wit*

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Abstract

The studies about the dalit, the subjugated class under Indian Caste System forms a significant and prominent part of Indian Literature. Developing with Marathi and soon raised in other languages through self-sketches like short stories and poems and autobiographies which are known for its realism. Dalit literature is mainly based on the experiences of the writers and is directed at abolishing social exploitation by reflecting the hard realities of dalit's life. Mother Wit is one of the short stories of such distinguished work of dalit Literature as well as Dalit Feministic writing, which shows the voice of women to alter the oppressed class. It centers on their experiences on lives of class, caste and gender. The three major defining aspects of Urmila Pawar are Dalit, Women and Buddhist which she assimilated into stories. These stories are an extensive portrayal of experiences of Dalit women in rural and urban settings that are significant to the reformulation of women's roles in general and Dalit women's role in specific in post-Independent India.

Key Words: Dalit, Gender, Class, Caste, Suppression

Introduction

Urmila Pawar, a Maharashtradalit woman writer and Buddhist is one of the prominent writers in Indian Dalit Literature. She is identified as a famous in many genres like autobiography, poetry, personal, and critical essays as well as in short stories. She is almost the only short story writer among many dalit women writers. She portrays dalit women's experiences and their discrimination on different lines of gender, class and caste by the patriarchal society. The predicament of dalit women was mistreated by the upper caste men and women as well as their men. "Woman is dalit from beginning to End" (Shivkumar 356). The statement reveals women were robbed their dignity and freedom. *Mother Wit* is elevated as one of the different works of dalit literature through not only showing the darker side of the dalit women's life so pathetically but also depicts the women with self-respect, brave and wise proponents of oppression against them. Thus *Mother wit* gives the autobiographical elements can remain as a strong defense against some scholars who opposed the dalit autobiographical writings, thinking them as the process of "digging out stench from hateful waste bins of past". *Mother Wit* elevates the thought of Baburao Bagul, a leading dalit intellectual, about the necessity of human freedom, who explains that dalit life is not specified by suffering, waiting and sorrow alone but is a historical need in developing human freedom. *Mother Wit* is a collection of short stories translated by Venda Deo, who in her introduction to the book claims: 'Pawar's feminism is evident. Think of the presence in almost every story of strong and clever women' (pp.x). She gives an insight into themes that are major to the reformulation of women's roles in general and dalit women's role in specific in post-independent India.

Women in *Mother Wit*

Pawar narrates jointly dalit women's works and meticulously unties each of the ties- gender class, caste – to depict historical discrimination of her protagonists. Women in her stories do not show watchwords and stride in movements but they fight everyday suppression within the situations that they find themselves in. Pawar's protagonists periodically in every aspect defeat patriarchal structures and at other times restore them in ways that work for them.

“Mother” (Aaye) is to some extent having the realistic elements are closely related to Urmila pawar's mother. Mother is the lifelike depiction of a widow, being dalit had noticed and experienced the oppression that a person had to go through for being dalit, hence Aaye struggled hard to make the ends meet. Aaye, named as vahini, earns by weaving baskets to cherish her dream of educating her kids in the school where Brahmin kids studied and therefore, to reform her kids in living and habits. Aaye's concern for her kids proper education clues to the most scaring want of the dalits for their social and economic upliftment. Besides leading an oppressed life as dalit, she was forced to oppressed as a woman and widow, her husband's family wanted her to leave the place for their economic benefit by selling the land she lived in for which they tried to create bad gossips about the land by saying that is the only cause to the sickness of her son.

They inject her kids mind too with the thought that they have a very careless mother who neglects them by staying at that land itself in the town. So, the children of Vahini (Aaye) force her to leave the town and to go to village. But Aaye stands very strong to endorse her decision in the midst of such pressure and harassment. Though she never raised her voice to oppose men in the family when her husband lived, she responds very wisely, strongly and confidently when things demand like, ‘

“Bhavji, why are you talking about like this?” she said angrily.

“Bhavji how will the children get an education in the village?” (Pawar, 3)

Babasaheb Ambedkar told us to live in our villages and move to towns.”

I'll work with my hands. I'll make baskets and sifting pans. I have that skill. (Pawar, 4)

As a wise woman she says a lesson to the men who thinks women as foolish and helpless by directly hitting her brother-in-law's cruel thoughts as she is in guise of reciting the ovis to the soul of her husband satirically blames him fir searching ways to send them out from their land for financial comforts. It hitshim stunned for utilizing their unprotected situation.

“Shalya”Pain is the story of a dalit upper class woman Jyothi, a motheris compelled to exchange her girl child the for the boy child for by giving money to mid-wife, but she is stunned of her girl child's fate when she comes to know that the woman whose child she exchanged was unmarried. Thus they felt the baby as trouble to manage with. She blames herself for being a woman who is unjustifiable her mother ship as she is the mother of five daughters earlier, the birth of sixth girl would cheapen her in the view of her family, whom she has no guts to face. Jyothi is the story of devaluated female child identifies totally spoiled

by the system in which the boy child is respected with the immense reputation in the view of her family while her girl child is not even respected as a human being. It clearly shows the existing gender inequality in social and cultural contexts contrived rules which give the priority to the boy child for the girl. The story ends with the note of ironic sympathy in showing Jyothy's wounded heart on hearing the words of her husband. "Her husband helped to her bed and placed her son on her lap saying, "Aga, don't be so upset about the girl. Whatever is written in her destiny will happen. What can we do about it?" (Pawar 55).

"Vegli" (The Odd One) is the story of an educated working woman named Nalini. Pawar portrays the life of an educated dalit woman and trouble she has to face at her office and home. Being an educated and civilized could not get habituated to the way of life of nasty condition at her in-laws house. As a dalit she got sanctioned housing complex and she feels happy for that. But she is insulted by her co-workers talk on the benefits she gets only for being dalit, not for truly deserve for what she enjoys. Barring this she is vulnerable to her in-laws to speak about her in vulgar. They make her false of her status as educated and working woman by comparing with other women in the slum who have taken for granted their uncultured abused life. Instead of feeling proud that she is educated and employed, they treat her as an odd one amidst of the unjust patriarchal society. She decides firmly to leave her husband and her in-laws with her son to get a better future for her and her son by leaving them shocked at her determinations.

"Mukti" (freedom) is the depiction of Buddhist teaching in dalit literature. It is a story of a proud, rich and self-willed girl, Subhadra, who achieve what she wants in her life. She marries a malicious thief who was about to be effected and later kills him when she notices her life is damaged by him, and she then is changed as Jain nun of huge reputation. With the pride of this she challenges the scholars to beat her in the talent of argument. Then she was beaten with scholar Sariputra of her pride and desire for dominance and she gets real conversion though the story delivers some thoughts of Buddhist teaching that contemplates gender inequality illustrating male as a Buddhist teacher and woman as learner.

"Kavach" (Armour), emphasizes how language can be used as an arrow to abuse the women which leads to sexual harassment. Indira, the protagonist of the story, the only breadwinner of the family, beats her son Gaurya for stopping her from going to the market to sell mangoes. As shown in the story Gaurya lives in the village called 'Choli' and is commented by the rouses "Choli se Ambe" mangoes from Choli (blouse) on finding Indira, the mango seller, which Gaurya feels very abusive? Though Indira is uneducated, poor and rustic she hits back very peacefully and clearly in the filthy language. The story deals with the inhuman treatment of the dominant groups of the village towards the people who are poor and women by using the abusive language that leads to oppression, harassment and dehumanization.

"Cheed" (Anger) is about the friendship of two working women Shanta and Neema, sharing the similarities in their age and hobbies. Pawar reminds the need of women to maintain their individualistic selves. But, Neema couldn't stand as a trusted friend need to stand independent, but Neema as a person always shifting to her husband's thoughts. Shanta tells her "you always tell your husband every little thing. You live by his advice and walk with his

help he is your crutch. You are always looking for juicy gossip to chew on with him later on. What guilty pleasure are you trying to grab for yourselves?”

The story tells the bond between two female should be maintained as their autonomous selves, but is considered as less significant between Neema and Shanta.

“Maajhi Manse” (My people) is the tale of kamali, became mad by the rude treatment of her husband. Her husband spread the rumor that she is crazy always and suffering from mental health problem, blaming him with jealous as wicked and double-dealing. Later she is cured, but she doesn’t reveal it. She acts as mad to escape from the inhuman environment. She understands that her brother and husband are harsh and selfish. She feels that the real problem is their wickedness not her madness which can be healed by taking medication, but their selfishness and greed has no treatment and cure.

“Haatcha Ek!” (One in Hand) shows the life of Rajani, known as Kaki, the protagonist, is treated as a slave bounded to be oppressed. Marriage becomes as the life-imprisonment for her, through it she lost everything, her individuality, self-including her name which means identity. Apart from doing household tasks, she worked hard in farm and in tuitions, but she is not considered hard. She was neglected even though she works hard. When her husband is in kidney trouble she not even asked her whether she is willing to donate her kidney to her husband or not while signing the papers. Her husband is not even thankful to her for the kind of act. She finds it their inhuman attitude towards her when she identifies the truth that she is neglected in the property will, in which major of the property is written on Kaki’s younger son, nothing is for the safety of Kaki. She tears it later without the knowledge of her husband. When she hears that her husband is in coma stage, she thinks that she was in coma till that time in the companionship of her husband, she feels that is the movement she gets the new life from being orphaned with the right action at the right time by tearing the will and becoming as the owner of the property after her husband. “She looked at her sons and spoke, pulling herself together you know I was in a coma all my life too. You don’t need to look at me like this. I know because I was in a coma, you never spared me any thoughts’ didn’t think for myself either. I never learned that you should always keep a spare ace hand. But now you should know, I haven’t lost my spare one. And I have kept it intact not just for me but for all of us.” (Pawar, 165).

Conclusion

Urmila Pawar gives not only the interpretation of dalit women’s life in distinct manner but also denounces the society who is the cause for the suppression of women and clues the truth that there are no gender or caste inequalities with the attitudinal change of the superior classes of the society.

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