

NARRATIVE OF POLITICAL CONFLICT IN POLIS:
A CRITICAL STUDY OF SHARANKUMAR LIMBALE'S
HINDU

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Abstract

The proposition of the present paper is to portray the experiences of the Dalits who were tense and remained homeless due to the animosity of the Caste Hindus. The struggle for power is being depicted in this novel *Hindu* and how a Dalit suffers to become a leader and what are the conspiracies made behind it and how the upper-class people dominate and oppress the lower caste people to get hold of power is narrated in this novel. Finally, the author proves to the society that leaders are not born by birth they are made to become leaders by the people. As Lincoln stated that the rule of democracy is 'For the people, of the people and by the people. Limbale's *Hindu* depicts the struggle for power and succeeds in making a Dalit reach the higher position of India. The novel shows the upper caste dominance and how the Dalits as a common people overcome the situation and win over the upper caste people is evident in this novel.

Keywords:Oppression;Dominance;Liberation;Power and politics.

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This novel *Hindu* (2010) seeks to highlight the power politics in Maharashtra state and further consequences that lead to the killing of a Dalit youth, raping of a Dalit woman and further legal operations from both the caste Hindus and the Dalits is all the novel about. Under the rules of reservation of seats in politics, the post of the village sarpanch falls to their share. When the Dalit activist gets the attention through the performance of jalasa the upper caste men are not able to tolerate it. They plan a secret murder and then they murder the Dalit activist. Later on, the novel takes many forms and the Dalit activist brother takes the role in hand with the help of the upper caste men and he gets into politics and he reaches the position to rule the state.

1. Social background of the novel

Sharankumar Limabale the author of the book shares his thoughts on the evolution of the novel *Hindu* as he states that “The fabric of Hindu society, interwoven with inequality, and the disfigurement of the caste system- *Hindu* has been written to perform a post mortem of these two. Our country cannot become beautiful until the stain of the caste system is washed away from its face” (xii *Hindu*) The novel *Hindu* appeared first in Marathi in the year 2003 and later on it was translated into Hindi, Malayalam and to English. Sharankumar Limbale further adds that *Hindu* is not just a literary text, but also about my literary role. It is my response to the casteist climate of our country. *Hindu*’s propelling event is the murder of a Dalit activist by a group of higher caste villagers because he had become too big for his boots in their eyes and through his Ambedkarite theater was threatening the established order by inciting his caste members, Mahars, to convert. Arun Prabha Mukeerje states that “Dalit writing as a whole, and *Hindu*, in particular, challenges the claim of universality made by the mainstream high caste writers and its critics by pointing out that they either ignore Dalits together or misrepresent them” (xv- *Hindu*).

2. Novel setting

The story revolves around the setting of Alachpur. It is a place with beautiful surroundings, dotted by hills. It is the place which holds three thousand as its population and has a village Panchayat also. Alachpur is an old village with recently developed primary school and post office. The two land mark of the village are the hangman hills in which the British hanged lot of Indians during their rule and the other is the Kavale’s baras elevation in which the whole village

can be seen. Major characters in the novel are Tatya Kamble, Sadanand Kamble, Madhukur Kavale, Prabhakar Kavale, Gopichand, Manikchand.

3. Caste and Political Conflict

The Caste discrimination in Hindu is depicted clearly through politics. In this novel, Hindu Kasbe tells that there is a talk about Prabhakar Kamble becoming the next patil, the head man of the village. As Rambhau Kamble will retire about two year then “Tatya Kamble will get a chance as the post will be reserved for Dalit candidates as by law” (4). But Rambhau Kavale will never step down the village headship which his family has enjoyed. He will make sure that his son becomes the next patil. Sonali the daughter in law of Rambhau Kavale went upstairs to see the jalsa being performed by Tatya Kambale. For the first time she felt that speech was like erupting volcano. The people were waiting to murder Tatya Kamble at the village square. Prabhakar Kavale, Gunvant Patil, Jagannath Pandit, Balshetwar were hiding and they came running out with weapons in their hands and pounced upon Tatya Kamble. But somehow he got out of their clutches but Shankar Pujari grabbed him as he started to scream the village doors began to close one after the other, Prabhakar had a sword, Gunvant had a spear, Jagannath Pandit an axe and others had a knife. Sonali's heart sank as she saw the massacre. At that precise moment, Manikchand and Gopichand car arrived on the scene and the violent crowd dispersed. Tatya Kamble fell on the ground. Sonali froze and she walked down the stairs slowly. The crowd broke out and they were scattered in different places. Manikchand car came near the gate of Rambhau and told that he saw his son murdering Tatya Kamble. And they made a secret dealing not to reveal it to anyone.

Miland seated in the car with Gopichand and Manikchand was on the way to enjoy the night. The car crossed Bhimnagar decorated with buntings and banner. Suddenly the headlight of the car showed the agitated crowd and ‘Murder’ shouted Manikchand. Tatya Kamble's blood soaked body was twitching by the roadside get the car moving shouted Manikchand. And car speeded up to Rambhau Kavale's house. Miland said to him that there has been a Murder. And asked where was his son Prabhakar? For which patil told that he has gone to Pune to visit his brother Madhukur. Then he said to Kavale that he saw him in the crowd. Kavale's face turned pale. Behind him stood his eldest son Sudhakar making odd gestures. He was mentally retarded. But

hiding his emotions Kavale called them to dine with him tonight because they were his guest. For which Miland got shocked his eyes filled with tears and thought of Tatya Kamble. He was like a lion. The killers have erased the identity of the village as ‘JalsakarTatya Kamble’s village’ forever. He felt that “This was an attempt to teach a lesson to ordinary dalits by killing a dalit. Who was respected for his talents and had made a name for himself? It was the disfigured face of social terrorism. Dalits have been murdered for thousands of years.”(12).

Manikchand said that Tatya Kamble was murdered and who knows where his brother Sadananad Kamble might be so we came for nothing tonight he said. “Kavale has removed the thorn called Tatya Kamble. Now he can have his son anointed as patil” said Gopichand. (12). Then Miland felt that now the law is on the Dalit side and the person who murdered him will surely go to jail. But paying the money they will get bail said Manikchand. Then Miland asked himself many questions was he dead or alive? Is he an activist or not a man? How can he be quite for the murder of Tatya Kamble? The car entered the farmhouse. Sadananad Kamble came running to open the gate he works as a watchman. He was TatyaKamble’s brother he was not aware of the murder. He felt like holding him and weeping on his shoulders. But Manikchand strictly said to him not to say it to Sadananad because when he comes to know about the murder he will run into the village and he too will be killed so Miland kept quite.

Miland told them to tell Sadananad about the murder for which they said “Miland, we don’t know what we witnessed to this event. Remember the three monkeys of Gandhi.”(16). Prabhakar Kavale came into the room with blood rage. And caught hold of Manikchand legs and asked him not to reveal that he saw him at the murder spot. And Manikchand told that he won’t do it and Prabhakar Kavale drank the wine in the glass and ate the mutton and he said to them that for seventy generations of Tatya Kamble family lived off the scraps which they discharged. But he did not respect our charity. The words of Prabhakar Kavale struck Miland and said to him that he will reveal about him to the police and get him handcuffed. For which they both fought with each other. Miland felt that “Muslims don’t kill Dalits, nor do Christians. Buddhist doesn’t commit atrocities on Dalit, nor do Sikhs. Then why do Hindus torment Dalits? Don’t they accept the Dalits are Hindu too? (27). Rohit Kamble the son of Tatya Kamble lit the pyre. Tatya Kamble body turned to ashes in a moment. There was a total silence.

The law was in favor of the people. The police visited Kavale's Bara and everyone was nervous. Then constable Marathe asked Rambhau Kavale about Prabhakar but he told that he was in Pune. And the police told them that he was caught and kept in the prison. And police confiscated the sword hidden in the Bara. Constable Marathe and Gautama Gangurde laid a clever trap and caught Jaganath Pandit at his farm for the first time people responsible for committing reckless atrocities against Dalits were behind bars.

4. Denial of Education

The dominance of the upper caste people in education is seen clearly in this novel. The school reopened Kasbe Guruji was teaching a lesson on Babasaheb Ambedkar. The news spread in the village, Narendra Patil and other people went to the school and they tore the pages of that book. Kasbe Guruji applied for a transfer and felt that it was a casteist village and he felt unsafe there. And he asked to transfer him to another place. Soon the news reached villages. And they were also waiting for his transfer but God bole Guruji and Kasbe Guruji were engaged in a heated discussion that not all Hindus are casteist. Hindu religion is a tolerant religion too. Then Kasbe told him that "you are right. We should consider the cow holy and the untouchable unholy. Offer milk to the poisonous snake and murder the untouchable. Is this what you call tolerance?"(36).

Even since Sonali came to Achalpur, as a new bride, she was enchanted by the sound of dholaki drums. She was married to Prabhakar and she heard the drums and went upstairs to see the dance her heart ached thinking of the sweet and sour memories of her happy college days. She was given a dance recital at the annual function and that gained a lot of fame for her and the local papers published her photographs and interviews and along her side, in the paper, there were Rohit (Tatya Kamble's son) a Dalit boy she even praised him and it created anger with the savarnas. She and Rohit got to know each other only in the dance and they became close friends. While the savarnas boys sent the photograph of Rohit and Sonali dance together to her father. As soon as Baliram Patil saw it he felt angry. Sonali had the habit of writing poems and many got published too and when Sonali's dairy of poems got into her father's hand he mistook it and put an end to Sonali's education.

5. Religious Views

The rivalry between the upper caste and lower caste men in *Hindu* is depicted through politics. Madhukar Kavale was upset because he feared that Tatya Kamble would become the next patil. Vishnu Pujari felt that people were losing eternal faith as they were going to see jalsa and the collection of the money in the temple were becoming low and Jaganath Pandit felt that because of Tatya Kamble only he lost his job. All of them were unhappy with Tatya Kamble for one reason or other. Tatya Kamble gave speech about Ambedkar by quoting his words

“Why do you stay in a religion that does not allow you to enter the temple? Why do you stay in a religion that does not acknowledge your Humanity? Why do you stay in a religion that does not allow you even water? A religion that forbids the treatment of human as human is not a religion but naked domination. A religion in which touching of unclean animal is permitted but touching of human is prohibited is not a religion but insanity” (50, 51).

Dalits now converted to Buddhism. They had thrown away the idols of the Hindu god and goddesses on to the garbage. Dalits were following new faiths and new ways of worship. Miland's house though still of Hindu idols. His wife Lakshmi stealthily worships them. When an activist comes to their home the idols are to be hidden. His living room represents the portraits of Babasaheb and Buddha, and the kitchen belongs to Hindu god and goddesses.

“Whenever I feel weak and helpless, I stand before the Hindu gods and goddesses with folded hands. And when I am bloated with self-confidence and dreaming of revolution, I go and stand with a bowed head before Babasaheb Ambedkar and Gautama Buddha's figurines”(6).

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unholy. Offer milk to the poisonous snake and murder the untouchable. Is this what you call tolerance?”(36). Then God bole’s stop came and he got down.

One evening Tatya Kamble programmed about the dhamma chakra parivarthan, the day Dr. Ambedkars and thousands of Dalits converted to Buddhism began with everyone praying to Buddha. Tatya Kamble gave speech about Ambedkar by quoting his words

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Kabir Kamble felt that everyone should convert their religion from Hindu to Buddhism. But the idea turned him very somber “We have depended on the savarnas for our daily bread even after conversion. Our God will chang, our rituals of worship will change but the question regarding dal roti won’t change. A complete transformation is not possible until the economic slavery of the Dalits is washed away.

6. Sufferings of Women

After the murder of TatyaKamble, the Dalits were scattered in different places because of fear they were hidden in the fields to save their life. Manikchand and Gopichand with Miland went to their farm house and they were least bothered about the murder. Even though the murder of the Dalit pricked Miland as they belong to the same caste he was not able to react to the situation as he was in company with the upper caste men of the night. Gopichand and Manikchand got a Dalit girl hidden in the fields and they wanted to rape her. Miland opened the latch of the restroom and he heard the sound of women’s anklet. Both of them were dragging her resisting body. They disrobed her she pleaded them to leave her. While Miland asked them to leave her because she was a Dalit women and she came into the fields to save her life. And now you are killing her. For which they said she was a woman. And they were men and why do you seek caste even in sex? He pushed him out of the bedroom. He was angry he couldn’t break doors like

ahero and save her. Gopichand left Manikchand in the bedroom with her and came out. Later Gopichand went inside. Then it was Miland turns to get into the room after Gopichand, Miland went into the room he saw her she was a new bride. He gave her sari and asked her to go. Then he felt why he reserves, to tell the truth to the people was. If he was an activist he must have told the truth to people. He felt shameful for his deed. The last night incident still remained in Miland's mind. His head ached like a wound filled with pus. He thought of the young bride and he felt that would she go and tell others about the rape or will she remain quite.

Miland was on his way to the hospital to see his wife Lakshmi for a second delivery. In the bus stop, he was attracted to women and he felt to have sex with her though his wife was not at home but when he went near her he came to know that it was Surekha and he knew her business and her husband was in jail so he ran away at full speed. Then he went to the hospital and he came to know that Lakshmi was given birth to a girl child but he expected boy but it was a great disappointment to him and he thought of his debts then he met Gopichand and Manikchand and got money from him.

A grand pooja was performed in the temple. Dalit lady Draupadi reached the temple after sweeping the village streets. Vishnu Pujari had his eyes on her. She asked for Prasad and Vishnu Pujari told her to come inside the temple to get it she told that her place is near the steps how can a Mahra come into the temple. But still he asked her to get into the temple and when she entered into the temple he grabbed her she tried to release herself from his grip by shouting and later on Sudhakar entered the temple and she ran away and Vishnu Pujari face fell for the deed he has committed. Vishnu Pujari in order to take revenge on Draupadi he told Sadashiv that he has doubt on Draupadi as she doesn't come to the temple and she never gets Prasad to. And later in the afternoon, he collected some stones and he went on the roof and himcast the stones on some houses. Everyone in the village came out and Sadashiv More told people that it was Draupadi who did the black art and they went straight to her house she was stripped naked and she was taken around the village naked. The Draupadi in Mahabharata was not stripped naked. But Draupadi in independent India was naked because she was dealt. The Bhimnagar people picked Draupadi up and went. The village watched all this like blind Dhritarashtra.

7. Love and Marriage

Even since Sonali came to Achalpur, as a new bride, she was enchanted by the sound of dholaki drums. She was married to Prabhakar and she heard the drums and went upstairs to see the dance. Prabhakar also accompanied her. Sudhakar too came upstairs with his mother Kashibai. And Kashibai informed Prabhakar that they have to go and visit Madhukar in pune. Then, at last, the couples were left to be alone in the stairs together. Then he asked about her passion towards dance and music. For which she told about Taty Kamble's dance and his father's tamasha was good and she liked it a lot and they both went and slept together but her heart ached thinking of the sweet and sour memories of her happy college days. She was given a dance recital at the annual function and that gained a lot of fame for her and the local papers published her photographs and interviews and along her side, in the paper, there were Rohit a Dalit boy she even praised him and it created anger with the savarnas. She and Rohit got to know each other only in the dance and they became close friends. While the savarnas boys sent the photograph of Rohit and Sonali dance together to her father. As soon as Baliram Patil saw it he felt angry. Sonali had the habit of writing poems and many got published too and when Sonali's dairy of poems got into her father's hand he mistook it and put an end to Sonali's education.

Thus to conclude the Dalit are being exploited physically, mentally and socially. They are treated very low and the upper caste people suck the blood of the lower caste people till the death. Though India claims freedom and states that it is the nation of equality and liberty but still the Dalit face the oppression and in order to overcome this poverty has to be eradicated and the future generation of the lower caste people must gain education to change the atrocities and humiliation faced by their own community under the pangs of the upper caste.

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