

PORTRAYAL OF RELIGIOUS VIEW IN SELECT DALIT NOVELS

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Abstract

The privileged Brahmin was treated with high respect and had the superior power in hand and the less privileged Dalits were treated equal to animals and mere slaves. Vedas are ruling the Hindu religion even now and the Brahmins considered themselves as pure and Gods people which were totally done on the basis of the karma and dharma done in the previous birth. They considered the Dalits as impure and low by birth. The Brahmin speaks about 'punarjanma' which mean 're-birth' and they propose a rule towards the Dalit and make them believe that their situation as a slave is due to the adharma done by them in the previous birth and they have to obey the Brahmins and do all the odd jobs imposed to them in order to attain a prosperous birth next time. Lack of knowledge made the Dalits to believe the Brahmins and the Brahmins made them believe that the only God who will help them attain salvation is Brahmins so they have to obey them and follow their words and should consider them equal to God. Dalit are denied to enjoy the mankind's basic needs and rights such as food, shelter, clothing and they have to depend on the dominant class to do all the agricultural and other labour work in order to have their livelihood. Education refined the minds of the Dalits and made them think and not to remain subjugated in terms of inequality and domination in the name of Caste and religion. The proposition of the paper will deal with the religious view depicted in two novels *Hindu* (2010) (ii) *Untouchable God* (2011).

Keywords: Dalits; Brahmins; Inequality; Religion; Superiority.

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The novel *Hindu* seeks to highlight the power politics 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.

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 was 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 Ambedkars and Gautama Buddha’s figurines”(6).

The school reopened Kasbe Guruji was teaching a lesson on Babasaheb Ambedkars. The news spread in the village, Narendra Patil and other people went into the school and they tore the pages of that book. Kasbe Guruji applied for transfer and felt that was a castiest 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 castiest. Hindu religion is tolerant religion to. 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). 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 “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).

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. Complete transformation is not possible until the economic slavery of the dalits is washed away.

In the novel *Untouchable* God Paraiiah, a Dalit is apparently beaten to death while walking about his village in the evening, allegedly for the crime of thinking about God, which might well lead to thoughts of equality. Six important men celebrate his death, which they had arranged. They represent the remarkable Brahmin of India. Veda Shastry of Tamilnadu is the rightful leader. Namboodri of Kerala is from a caste that created the most perfect system of discrimination that the world has seen; Krishnamurthy of Karnataka and Appa Rao of AndhraPradesh are slightly

moderate; Tilak of Maharashtra dreams of increasing discrimination while Banerjee of Bengal believes he is above caste. As the men take their leave Shastri lastly comes Isaiah, an American black, who knows all about race and journeys to India to find out about the non-violence movement that has inspired Martin Luther King, Jr., and discovers much more in India and leaves India with more memories.

Each religious people considered themselves as superior and the others as inferior and because of these they separated the people and enmity was formed and it lead to the extent of murdering the people. The Brahmins lived in the other side of the village, far from this street. They lived in their divine feudal lands called agraharas. “The Gods gave them lands so they could stay away from the productive humans, socially connecting dogs and beasts of burden called donkeys.” (5-6) The Hindu Gods has not stooped to create Chandalas, Paraiyahs or dogs therefore the Brahmins hated them most. Paraiyah felt the pain in him for being untouchable

“Why then had the Gods allowed him to be born? If the Gods had nothing to do with it, maybe there were other Gods, enemies of the High Gods and creators of the fallen. But if so, where were these others? Why weren't they doing their jobs? The High Gods gave their followers land, grain, money and status. If Paraiyah's life was the gift of the other Gods, he would have liked to be able, just one, to tell them what he thought of them.” (7-8)

When Namboodri On the way in the bus he saw people wearing shirts and he felt that during his day's people was semi- naked. In this country were humidity and heat is prevailed it is good to see people half dressed and he felt that when he was a child in 1880's men and women wore only mundu. Kerala women never wore blouses. Prophet Mohammed said to Arabs to come to Allah's mosque only with fully covered bodies wearing switched clothes from toe to head. Women wearing switched burkhas had come to spoil the women of Kerala. He felt how wearing clothes could be the end of all modesty. And when the Christian hospital people were giving treatment to the Paraiyar the upper caste people hated them and spoke ill of their religion. He was distracted by the man who sat beside him and some of his parts touched Namboodri. He felt that “Evil days: A Brahmin gets touched so casually by an unknown, perhaps an untouchable! These buses are profane places” (23) But the person was dressed well if he was an untouchable he would be

smelt fishy and meaty so Namboodri asked his name he said Matthew, Namboodri snuffed “A Christian! This bloody Matthew could be of any caste! The Christians and Muslims in Kerala would definitely go to hell for spoiling the sancity of God’s own country” (23).

British were spreading Christianity. Kerala is going Christian, going Christian was the household refrain of Brahmin families. In Kerala the Ezhavas who were toddy tappers, were revolting under the leadership of Narayana Guru. Namboodri called for the Meeting of the temple there were eight members and a British official. He saw the British officer chair and said this chair of Christian has to be removed. He ordered to remove the chair of the British beef eating Christian. Namboodri said “British had not only brought bad administration but also a bad God, a God who did not distinguish between Brahmin and Chandala. Even if they left tomorrow this Untouchable God would stay on here to spoil the air and water of Aryavarta.” (48) Namboodri started running toward the church and he went inside and he saw the Jesus statue and he saw the priest speaking to the people of what God has told but Namboodri felt how can a God speak in prose to people directly, his mind was in whirl. He wants to live as a Christian Namboodri said to his Sister-in-law. “But I do not wish to be, I cannot be, a Christian among untouchables. I cannot imagine that God is untouchable too. Can you find out if there is a Brahmin Christian anywhere in this God’s own country or outside it?” (53)

‘Caste conflict in the Syrian Church: Bishop Benjamin Chako refuses to Admit untouchables’ all such news in the paper instigated the religious riots in the city. The Bishop said I stand for the purity of Jesus, protecting Varnadharm and I will never allow the untouchables into the Churches. Hussein and Saraswathi studied together in the school and love blossomed between them. Their parents accepted and nikah was arranged Saraswati was changed to Mumtaj Bee and she went to her in-laws house. “A mosque education was followed by a mosque marriage and a mosque name. And a Hindu Saraswathi became a mMuslim Mumtaj Bee.” (78) It was Friday and people gathered for mosque but they saw Hussien’s body in a pool of blood one eye socket empty and his private parts was cut and his chest was crushed and there was a note “ANY CUTORGAN DARES TO MARRY A HINDU GIRL THIS WILL BE THE FAIT” (78). Balaram’s house was so silent and outside the house hung a banner “IF MUMTAJ BEE DO NOT BECOME SARASWATI WITHIN WEEK SHE ALSO FOLLOW HER HUSBAND” (78).

Under this someone has scribbled “*Any Shudra lerns letter any were in world will have punishment like Sarwathi call Mumtaj Be met.*” (78). The news of the murder was spread in the newspaper. Many people gathered near the mosque to meet the chairman Yusuf Ali Khan. They discussed about the murder and they asked to type a pamphlet about the incident and they asked the people to distribute it after the mosque and then they can take the sword and cut as many head as possible but women should not be raped. The Muslim were planning to kill many more people. “HEAD FOR HEADS...TWO HEADS FOR ONE PRIVATE ORGAN.” (84)

Tilak invited all the people and told the tolerance behind the plan he told them briefly that one of the Brahmin is being arrested by the police and the Muslims are high in number we have to stimulate the lower caste Shudras and tell them that the Muslim men attacked their men in the market place and if the rivalry between them broke out our Brahmin would be released and the investigation will turn upon the Shudras. He asked the people to heat the Shudras with passion and righteousness. “No Brahmin boy should go to jail.”(91) The dressing sense of the Christian their food habits were being made fun off. Each religion considers itself to be superior and it people behaved like animal when it came to religious patriotism. Though many saints and philosophers have spoken about the religious views and issues still the conflict in the name of the religion remains the same. When the people fail to get the respect in a particular religion they tend to change the religion which gives them the strength, love and respect. Likewise when the Caste Hindu failed to receive the Dalits into the religion the religious conversion started and from then on the Dalits started to get into a religion like Christianity, Buddhism and Jainism where they are being treated as human. Love is God and where there is love there the faith prevails. Human is a social animal when there is care, love and respect automatically humans tend to hold on and survive. Religious fights will come to a halt when there is equality and humanness in the hearts of the people.

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