

**Loyalty towards disloyalty-Dalit perspective in the stories
Chilukurui Devaputra's Gurudakshina
And
Boya Jangaiah's Hecharika**

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Abstract:

The paper inquires into the principal reasons for the emerging of dalit literature and how it contributes to the Dalit cultural movement. The marginalized and culturally stigmatized sections of Indian society did not oppose colonialism or think of it only as anti-Indian rule. Dalit Literature is a social movement invested in the battle against injustice and driven by the hope of freedom not simply a literary trend. It throws light on two Telugu Dalit short stories representing the oppression, denial of self-respect, brotherhood and equality. It focuses on the integrity of the Dalit besides the dishonesty of upper caste people and experiences of the buried expressions. It portrays the premeditation of upper castes to prevent them from access to knowledge.

Key words: Dalit literature, stigmatized sections, colonialism, oppression and denial of self-respect, premeditation.

Introduction:

Dalits are marginalized people from ages in all social aspects in India. They are scapegoats in the game of social hegemony by the so called upper castists. In Hindu mythology the Chaturvarna, (four folded caste system) system was introduced by Manu, which was later re-categorized as five folded caste system introducing the Panchama Varna (Fifth caste) i.e. Untouchables. In the process of proving their supremacy the untouchables are deprived of all their social, economic, and intellectual development. The beginnings of dalit literature are traced back to Ambedkar's struggles for Dalit emancipation in the early 20th century. The

Dalit Panthers writers brought in a new point of view, a new thinking and a language that left Marati Literature shaken and transformed. They began to describe the reality of the Dalit life with an insight that came from those who belonged to the community and had first hand information of Dalit life.

Dalit Telugu Literature:

Literature is the representation of social life. De Bonald considers "Literature is an expression of society". Dalit literature is a voice of oppressed and marginalized people of Indian Society. Dalit literature does not grow out of literary discussion or the practice of writers, It is a social movement invested in the battle against injustice and driven by the hope of freedom, not simply a literary trend or a formal development. Dalit literature is basically a 'counter hegemonic ideology' created by 'Dalit organic intellectuals' The modern spurt in Dalit literature in India is an attempt to bring the forefront the experiences of discrimination, violence and poverty of the Dalit... Expression of these experiences have long been buried in silence, often with religious social sanction and relegated to the margins as non-literary. Dalit literature is one of the most important literary movements to emerge in post independent India. Babu Rao Bagul said "Dalit Literature takes man as its centre. It participates in man's joys and sorrows and leads him to a just revolution. It teaches equality to the mass of humanity, i.e., society. It considers man noble. The transformation of the stigmatized identity of these so called 'Untouchables' to a self chosen identity as Dalits is a story of collective struggle for the centuries. 'Dalit literature does not spread hatred among men but love'. The Gandhi an mobilization of all sections of Indians to present a united force to challenge British rule obscured many questions of inequalities amongst Indians., most importantly , the questions of freedom from slavery and untouchability. Even novelists who attempted to represent dalit and lower caste life do not escape the ideological hold of Gandhian thinking on their representation of dalits. Unnava Lakshmi Narayans's Malapalli (1922), in Telugu, and Mulk raj Anand's Untouchable (1935), in English, and several other Indian language novels can be cited an examples of this trend.

There is a long past in the creation of Dalit consciousness in Telugu literature. The exploitation of life, reaction, pleading, protest, reform, progress, and revolution are the main causes for the creation of Telugu Dalit literature. Dalit literature gave society democratic aesthetic values that freed Telugu literature from the burden of the Mahakavulu (writers of upper castes). The first phase of the Telugu Dalit short-fiction was written by the upper castes" Pallamraju" was the first ever Dalit story written by a non-Dalit writer Sripada Subramanya Shastry in 1925 criticizing the conversions. The 1990s saw a great flowering in Dalit poetry, song, short story, novel and essay.

Dalit short fiction in Telugu took fairly a long time to be what it is now. Shaped by the literary and social movements, the Telugu dalit short fiction traversed a long way in transforming itself from highly educated to common man.

Among the modern Telugu Dalit short fiction writers Chilukuri Devaputra is a renowned one. Whose writings are translated into English, Hindi, Marathi, Oriya and Kannada languages. He began his literary creation with short stories in the year 1977. His first short story Manavatvam (The Humanity) published in Prajasakthi (daily) in Oct.1977.. He has written four novels of which Panchamam considered to be the first Telugu Dalit novel. It is a prescribed text book in postgraduate studies at the University of Hyderabad, Andhra University and Sri Krishnadevaraya University. He has also written five anthologies of short stories. He has been a recipient of Rachakonda and Chaso literary awards.

As one of the early Telugu Dalit writers Boya Jangaiah has published sixteen anthologies of short stories, four anthologies of poetry, four novels, and four novels. Jathara and Jagadam are two of his well-known works.. He was born in Panthangi, a small village in Nalgonda district of Telangana. He has received several awards, including one by Telugu University.

Social inequality:

Either it is from Darwin's theory or The Bible that speak of human existence say that all Human beings are either from one species or from one Man (Adam), which convey that all are equal and promoted brotherhood but the so called Brahmins started new interpretations of the human existence to deprive the other people from their social equality saying that they are from the head of Brahma (the God of creation). Though India became free from colonial rule, the untouchables denied of their freedom from the bondage of upper castes.

Beware

The short story 'Beware' originally titled 'Hetcharika', was first published in 1984 written by Boya Jangiah translated by Shasha Kumar. It portrays the victimization of Dalits in the system of hereditary bonded labour. The status of communities as Dalits in the Hindu caste system was the most serious impediment to their education. Pentaiah was the protagonist of the story. He was a bonded farm labourer (Vetti) to Narsi Reddy (Patel) for three generations, Pentaiah, his grandfather, and father had been working as farmhands for Narsi Reddy's (Patel) grandfather, then his father and now to Narsi Reddy. Pentaiah's son Ramulu, twenty old, who was slim and dark, did not like to work in Patel's farms. Ramulu who was aware of the reason of his poverty and slavery wants to become free from this. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar properly identifying the reasons for the Dalit poverty gave the slogan "Educate, Agitate, Organize"

While stringent social taboos conscribed their behavior, severe strictures were laid down to prevent their access to knowledge. The children of untouchables were not allowed to study in public schools. Knowing this pretty well Ramulu was learning the alphabet and simple arithmetic at night time. Patel was furious. He was not ready to accept the outcasts access to knowledge. In spite of their loyalty for three generations, the hard-work that helped for the improvisation of the Patel's economic status, Narsi Reddy doesn't want to accept the social, economical or intellectual equality with the outcasts. He may not be loyal to all the sweat shed for the last three generations in growing their crops Narsi Reddy is not willing even to recognize their hard work. They don't want to lose their hegemony. Narsi Reddy wants to deceive Pentaiah with his fraudulent words saying that education is useless for them as they are born for agriculture labour only. When Pentaiah expresses his son's wish to leave the village and go for studies, Patel says "Why? What will you gain from education Pentaiah? Arre, for who is this land, this agriculture? Why give up agriculture and lose living in comfort? (pg.94...) In his words Patel tries to convey that his son is eligible to study as he is the child of a land lord, he can sit and eat the fruit of Pentaiah's hard labour even if he fails to continue further studies. Still Pentaiah expresses his helplessness and his loyalty to his master in his words, "Patel asked Pentaiah, "Did your grandfather and father disobey to us and migrate to other places"? (pg.94)

"What can I say, Patel? My father and grandfather obeyed to your family. I am at your feet till today, but my son doesn't listen to me. He keeps saying I will go away, I will go away. (pg.94)" In spite of Patel's prevaricating words Pentaiah is loyal. But Patel is disloyal to Pentaiah's sincerity. With an intention of oppressing the wish of Ramulu to acquire knowledge, Patel said to Pentaiah, "I believe your son refuses to work as a farmhand, clear my dues and go where you please". (pg.93) Narsi Reddy (Patel) exploiting the illiteracy of Pentaiah brought some documents which were discolored and ink faded. Narsi Reddy (Patel) asked the local Pantulu (a brahmin who is a village revenue officer by profession) to calculate the interest and the principal of the Pentaiah's loan. Deliberately, with wrong calculation Pantulu said that it was two hundred short of two thousand rupees. It clearly shows the unity of all upper communities in oppressing the outcasts. But Ramulu argued with Pantulu that he did not deduct the work of their three generations hard labour to the Patel. Ramulu appeared as a ray of hope to Pentaiah, spurt of freedom. The study at nights after drudgery all the day in the farm proved useful to save his future generations from hereditary bondage. The Patel was thunder struck. It is something unexpected, Pantulu fell into thought. Pentaiah felt that his son

Ramulu suddenly looked like the rising sun. He said to the Patel, “We won’t turn up for work till accounts are calculated properly! Saying this, Ramulu and Pentaiah walked away. This shows their polite resignation from slavery. This is how they showed loyalty towards Patel’s disloyalty. Ramulu brings freedom not only to his father and also for his future generations proving Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s slogan “Educate –Agitate–Organize.”³.

Gurudakshina

Another short story “Gurudakshina” a Telugu short story by Chilukuri Devaputra is translated into English by K.Purushotham. The story presents the atrocities bared by them from their child hood. This shows the realization of a teacher towards the loyalty of his Dalit student Nallappa. The writer Devaputra worked as a teacher in many places. Once he was travelling in a train to visit his younger son, Gourinath Sastri who works as an officer in one of the banks. It was lunch time and he was very hungry. His elder daughter-in-law packed some eatable to eat and his son gave him six hundred rupees so that he should not fall short of money. Unfortunately his suitcase was stolen by somebody. He was left only with five rupees. Two strangers, possibly wife and husband, were seated in front of him. That man kept glancing at him quite often. All of a sudden he identified that narrator as his teacher and he introduced himself as Raja Reddy, his old student. Devaputra couldn’t recollect the memories of that man as his student.

His hunger knew no bounds. Meanwhile, Raja Reddy’s wife took out a couple of food packets. Master’s mouth began to salivate, but he is thinking of tidiness, cleanliness, pollution and touch. He thought that they would offer him some of their food. But they didn’t share their food with the master.

“Saar, if you don’t mind, we shall eat; I think it’s too early for you to eat,” (pg.121) said Raja Reddy.

“Yes, yes, it’s too early for me to eat,(pg.121)” Master replied.

Master felt that Raja Reddy had cleverly escaped offering food to him. He is dying of hunger and felt like borrowing some money from his student Raja Reddy. But he didn’t like to demean himself by borrowing money from his student. He recollected the saying “Man can’t live by bread alone” but here by bread (food) only he can live.

The train came to a halt where Raja Reddy and his wife got down. The passengers sitting behind him were bargaining guavas with a fruit vendor. As the vendor neared the Master, he noticed that the vendor was thin and dark with an untidy beard, but sharp – eyed and smiling, displaying beautiful teeth. He is speaking many languages. Master wondered how he knows so many languages. If he were educated, he would have been very smart. It was no ordinary feat to have mastered so many languages.

“My livelihood has taught me every language that I speak Saar (sir). My work teaches me”, (pg.122) he replied to Master’s question. Master thought that he would buy the guava at the price that his fellow passengers bought. But the vendor didn’t agree for the price. Meanwhile, the fruit vendor smiled at the master as he left the place. Meanwhile railway caterer appeared taking passengers’ orders for meal. Master shook his head saying no to meal. He was terribly hungry. He wished that the fruit vendor would return and called back. That boy replied “coming sir” (pg.122) in an Anantapur accent.

Suddenly that boy took a choicest fruit from his basket and offered him, saying that he doesn’t need any money in return for guava as he knows about the missing suitcase from co-passengers. Vendor boy introduced himself as Nallappa, a student to Devaputra. He is from Kaluvapalli village. He is Vetti Malappa’s son; who is a Madiga by caste. He recalled how master used to be an angry man in those days. He used to hit with a tamarind stick even for a small mistake. One summer, the school bought a new earthen pot for students to drink water. When the Mala, Madiga (outcast) boys were thirsty the upper caste students

used to pour water from a tumbler into their cupped palms. One day he was severely thirsty, Nallappa drew water on his own from the pot and drank. For that, the master thrashed him with a stick till he fainted. The other teachers also thrashed him. So, he was afraid of entering the school again. His father left him with his uncle, in this work. Though the pledge in schools teaches that all Indians are my brothers and sisters, the teachers never dared to develop brotherhood among the pupil. The children of out castes denied of drinking water in the same glass used by upper caste children.. Even today there are many places in India where two glass system is implemented even in public institutions. This is the pitiable condition of the Dalits or out casts in independent India. Teachers who have to love all their students equally were not loyal to their professional values. The recollection of atrocity and punishment given by his teacher might be the reason for Nallappa rejecting to sell the fruits to his master at his price.

After this narration of past, Nallappa gave the master a meals coupon he bought for his master and a guava and asked him to eat when the food is served in the next station. The reaction of Nallappa represents true loyalty towards his teacher. Nallappa bid farewell and got off the train. Master filled his eyes and realized his mistake. His hunger had long vanished. The favour and loyalty of Nallappa filled the hungry of his teacher.

Conclusion:

The atrocities on Dalits are an unending saga. They are deprived of their social equality, became live witness to the wise deception of upper castes making them distance to all rights. Either it is Pentiah or Nallappa they are loyal to their masters, in spite of the disrespect, inhumanity they faced all through the years.

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