

Research Paper in
English



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**MARGINALISATION, HUMILIATION AND DEPRIVATION OF 'SELF' IN
UPARA AN OUTSIDER**

ABSTRACT

Indian writing in English has been a widely recognised and warmly received branch of English studies all over the world. Today poets, novelists, dramatists, story writers from India have written in English voluminously over the last hundred years. We also have great many writers living abroad and writing about India and Indians. Some of them have received prestigious awards there it needs to be complimented and encouraged as well. Some good authors from so called backward communities from Maharashtra have written their life stories in the form of an autobiographies first of all in Marathi, Later their autobiographies are translated in to various Indian and foreign Languages.

Dalit autobiographies are often considered as marginal literature describing oppression, suppression, exploitation and maltreatment experienced by the communities mutely from centuries. Their voice was suppressed. No one was taking care of them and they became dumb and despair. They lost their liberty, dignity and prick. Dalits are victims of verna system of ancient India. Dalits were intentionally kept in ignorant conditions by the upper caste Hindus. They were denied basic rights like food, clothes, housing and education. They were intentionally and very artistically kept away from mainstream. India in the name of Varna System and Karma theory and this is nothing but the marginalization and oppression. Dalits had to do menial jobs like skinning the dead animals and cleaning the village. They earned their livelihood doing odd jobs such as cattle grazing, tending, working as watchman and when they were unable to get jobs they restored to scanty robbery.

The versatile writer, **Toni Morrison** Observes: **“An Autobiographical form is classic in Black American or Afro-American or Afro-American Literature, Because, it provided an instance in which a writer could be representative, could say, My single solitary and individual life is like the lives of tribe, it differs in these specific ways, but it is a balanced life because it is solitary and representing.”** (32).

In ‘Upara An Outsider’ (1997), Laxman Mane has tried to focus on the problems of people who are living in slums, on pavements, on the outskirts of villages and those who do not have even such places who are suffering in miserable conditions in the vales and valleys, hills and rocky planes. They have neither work nor opportunities, neither facilities nor support, neither shelter nor protection. Laxman mane in the retrospection of his autobiography mentions a noteworthy declaration **“What shall I say about the book ? Whatever I lived, experienced and saw, I poured into my writing”** (06).

The writer, Mane begins his narration in the following words **“leaving the donkeys on the outskirts of hamlet, we would play, loitering behind these poor animals grazing on fresh human excrement and brandishing our sticks in the air. We played mostly with marbles of flat pebbles piling one on top of the other and smashing them with ball from distance. A skit someone’s charity covered my body. Mended of several places, it was full of wrinkles. Shorts were a luxury. The shirt itself hung loose serving the purpose of shirt also. Its sleeves too were long. They came in handy in blowing my nose now and again. My head was covered with father’s cap. This too was a handout. A brisk breeze kept lifting it off my head. Khatrya, Indya, Martya and I usually played on dunghills or in the places where villagers came to relieve themselves”** (01).

People of the time were not sympathetic towards nomadic tribes like Kaikadis. It was also believed that these people were engaged in criminal activities during their stay in the villages. They were doubted for thefts. When they were living from one place to another place, the villagers checked their bags while entering in another village they have to inform to the village chief about their stay, men, women, children, animals and all the possible things they carry with them. Several times when there was a theft in village, even Kaikadi women in doubt was badly beaten by the villagers and put in front of the panchayat and were punished.

Laxman’s parents were brutally beaten when a farm owner suspected them of stealing cane from his field. Villagers grouped together and beat his father and mother with wet cane mercilessly. Father lay down half dead, mother was stripped naked and spanked publicly. Nobody from the crowd came forward to protect and rescue them. Mahar Rambhau put his shirt on mother to save her from further humiliation.

There are lots of incidents in the life of writer which are most humiliating place to place. Kaikadi nomad tribe played musical instruments during various auspicious functions like child birth and marriages. Laxman Mane played bells initially and later on he shifted to the beating of drum. Though they comprised the part and parcel of the palanquin procession in the fair, nobody thought of giving food and water to them. Many times band players fainted and collapsed on the ground. Yet nobody had any human feelings for them. Merciless hearts of the people did not budge even a bit. Kaikadis performed their social duties honestly but others failed to reciprocate. That was the tragedy of their life.

The hindu caste society was not ready to accept a Kaikadi boy or girl inside the classroom. When Laxman Mane was admitted to school. He was also used to sit outside the door of the classroom. So that he would not touch other students. He experienced and faced a grim reality of caste based marginalization in his life due to his caste Kaikadi that one of the dalit or ostracized communities of the caste Hindu.

Kaikadis did not cook food every day. Their wives and children brought food either begging in the villages or picking up from dung hill. Dead animals, rats and squirrels feed them. Though they were the inseparable parts of marriage celebrations in the area, they were deprived of wedding feast in the same functions. Laxman Mane refers to the incidents where they played musical instruments throughout the day without a minute of rest. The host of the functions did not give them a glass of water, a cup of tea or a bite of food for the entire day. They got the left over food in the nights only after the festivities were over.

Another incidents of his deprivation and harassment is that the writer played musical instruments with his father and other mates in his childhood. While singing and playing the musical instruments he was thirsty so, he wanted to drink water, he went to the water tank and requested the women there for some water. The woman poured water from above. The writer drank it voraciously, but in a feat of drinking his hand touched the water tank and it was a sufficient provocation for the upper caste onlookers to beat him like a beast.

They were like hounds thirsty for his blood. They emptied the entire tank after their beating program was over.

The writer narrates here an incident in which Jat Panchayat punished a guilty person to carry a mud pitcher filled with human shit and urine on his head and go around the temple. Onlookers hit the pitcher with stones so as to make holes into it. Shit and urine dripped down the face. Member of the community had no other way but to obey the judgment. Though verdict

many times was arbitrary and whimsical nobody dared to disobey it for fear of being excommunicated.

The writer's father immediately read the situation and finished that he sent Laxman to school there cannot be radical change in the lot. Though Laxman did not relish the idea of school, he went to school for fear of his ferocious father. Life in school for Laxman was filled with humiliation, segregation, tortures and verbal attacks. The teacher naturally did not like a stinking Kaikadi boy in his class.

Laxman's father wanted that Laxman should learn. He was admitted in the first standard. His appearance was shabby. A boy from dalit community and no any information about how to behave. Due to poverty he didn't have proper clothes. His appearance was so abject and poor. The school atmosphere for Laxman was complete new. He was just like jungly being and approaching in the group of pet animals. There he faced much humiliation and verbal attack by the upper caste boys. The teacher also didn't like such a Kaikadi boy in his class. Laxman faced torture and insult in the school. The school master said at this moment. **“ You funny guy! Do nomadic beggars go to school ? If they study, who would weave our baskets ? Nothing doing! You want to study, hum?” (36).**

Laxman knew only his Kaikadi dialect instead of Marathi so he did not pay attention to the teaching of the classroom or hearing of it. He used to sit outside of the class. He couldnot ask questions simply because he knew he would not be given ear. The teacher always humiliated Laxman in front of the other boys. His teacher and classmates used to make fun of him. They used to tease him and beat him. Laxman told his father about this torture in the school. But his father didn't listen to him. He mutely tolerated it all tortures.

When Laxman became older in that period he was called to attend the wedding ceremony by his close friends in the house of Jagtap. He went with his relatives and invitees who hired the bullock carts. He felt happy playing with the other boys freely from his village who had come there. Laxman became one of the guests of them. After the marriage the guests took their seats in a row in the pandal. He also took his seat in a row of the guests right inside the pandal. He was feeling the guests like treatment. Later the meal was served. Half the meal was over. The bearers were serving happily to feed the guests. But where Laxman was seated that row was Maratha children. But unfortunately one of the bearers from his village and Maratha community and he was invitee to the wedding saw Laxman taking the wedding meal in the Maratha row was shocking for him. He opened his eyes widely on Laxman and bent down and thundered,

“Son of Kaikadi low-caste! Have you taken leave of your Senses? Get up and get out” (107).

Laxman had eaten his half meal. But there nobody interfered. Everybody enjoyed the panorama. He is mercielessly Laxman was humiliated in the meal row. He expresses his deep grief

“ I had to get up, leaving my half eaten meal. No one interfered. I was hurt, The river Nira was nearby its water flowed calmly. My shirt became damp with my tears. I went quietly and slept in the house allotted to the family of the bridegroom. Nobody enquired about me, nobody asked me anything. The only thought that hunted my mind was that when I returned to my village, I would be roasted alive, And that thought tears to my eyes” (Ibid).

Humiliation of Laxman was knew no bound by the Maratha people was not limited only up to the taking meal and getting out half fed from the tent of wedding. The matter was not finished there. When the relatives and the guests returned to their village. Jagtap sent for Laxman’s father and admonished in the severe insulting words.

“Tell your son that he desecrated the food of an entire row of the guests at the wedding feast! We controlled ourselves and kept quiet. If this had happened in this village of ours, you would have realized the magnitude of the offence” (Ibid). His eldest son added **“Where did you fetch this seedling from your old chap? He has hardly studied four books. He still cant blow his nose nor can he clean his arse. And he has started behaving so cheekily. Take care! You may have to face dire consequences!” (Ibid)**

After this matter Laxman’s father thrashed him with his flat shoes studded with hobnails. One of his eyes started bleeding. Because his father was told and threatened to teach. His son something to behave according to the level of caste as he was from lowest and dalit community. His father beat him so cruelly.

Once Laxman helped the well acquainted boy named Matkar from Maratha community. The boy was economically very poor. He had no money. Laxman

had received the scholarship and salary of ninety rupees. Laxman helped him But when the friends came to know the caste of Laxman he kept away from Laxman. He felt very sad.

Thus, Laxman Mane vividly depicted about his and community’s marginalization, humiliation and deprivation in his autobiography and have put forth before the world to think and to draw attention towards it by the people sympathetically.

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