

Voice Raising Against the Atrocities: A Critical Examination of P Sivakami's Taming of Women and Grips of Change

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ABSTRACT

Dalit literature is written by India's disadvantaged and oppressed people, those who are despised by various laborers. It is the literature that challenges all forms of exploitation that are motivated by caste, class, race, occupation, atrocity, or any other form of discrimination. Dalit women are going through sexual atrocities and violence brought on by discrimination based on gender and caste. In addition to the sexual and professional harassment Dalit women experience from upper caste men and the police outside of their homes, Sivakami's book *The Grip of Change* details the domestic and sexual violence Dalit women endure at home at the hands of Dalit men, including fathers, brothers, sons, father-in-law, and brothers-in-law. This essay focuses on how Bama's *Sangati* and Sivakami's *The Grip of Change* examine the sexual assault that Dalit women endure at the hands of men and women from higher castes as well as males from their own society. The members of the higher caste oppress and rule Dalits. They are denied access to all essential amenities, and more significantly, they are not accorded the equal status in society that they are due. Because they belong to the lowest classes, they are shunned and forced to the outskirts of society. The Dalit women's situation is far worse, and one needs to highlight how they manage to live and survive in these terrible conditions. However, despite this, the second sex makes an effort to oppose and fight against the horrors that are the main topic of the thesis.

KEYWORDS: Oppression, hardships, Gender Biasness, Sense of Alienation, Inhuman, Discrimination

INTRODUCTION

The goal of Dalit literature is to draw attention to the inhumane treatment, hardships, crimes, and disabilities that Dalits face in society. Making social arousal among the discouraged is the key question. In essence, being Dalit is a way to achieve a feeling of cultural identity. Nowadays, the idea of "to be a Dalit" is disappearing. Dalitness is currently a source of conflict against the underlying basis, which is ultimately the alleged oppressive tactics of the society. The desire for equality for all men worldwide is embodied in this move. Valuing one's overall potential is a component of Dalitness. Thus, individuality, culture, societal burden, and Dalitness all influence Dalit literature. The caste society's inhumanities and discriminations against the Dalits have been made public by Dalit writers, who also raise the social and cultural consciousness of members of the Dalit community. The majority of Dalit writing is presented as poetry, short stories, and memoirs. However, Dalit literature frequently deals with themes of suffering, hopelessness, pessimism, annoyance, humiliation, subjugation, and revolt. The African American fight for equality and liberation in white-dominated America had an impact on Dalit literature. In Maharashtra, the Dalits banded together to oppose the caste system. Presently, Dalit women are becoming interested in the political, cultural, and social approaches of Dalit development. Dalit women believe that ending long-standing mistreatment is a prerequisite for their emancipation. Dalit women are significantly more devoted and effective than their male counterparts in the home and in society since they do not view their husbands as "protectors" and "providers."

Subaltern women have recently achieved incredible strides out of their harsh and enslaved situation, and women writers have discovered that the artistic tradition encompasses the relationship between them and their society. The literary world of women reflects and integrates their experiences and lives from their perspective, which is quite different from that of men. The claim that all women face persecution has been a central tenet of contemporary women's activism. According to this statement, women are similar in terms of caste, religion, class, race, and even sexual preferences. Sexism can be an oppressive force in the lives of individual women, each of whom inevitably experiences a variety of things that provide them their own space. The most common experiences Dalit women have included sexual assaults at home, workplace rapes, and custodial rapes. Such an oppressive and sexually repressive social system that permeates both the home and social spaces is highlighted by Dalit writers. Their articles highlight the patriarchal system's and caste hegemony's cooperation in trying to regulate a Dalit woman's sexual life. One developing theme that is evident in substances used in daily life is sexual orientation. The notion that sexual orientation is formed via self-reflection and achieves success solely through social interaction leads us to examine areas such as sex-based components, sex relations, self, character, the societal, sex-related, and so on. Dalits of all sexual orientations face discrimination and persecution in public settings, and they are frequently ignored on a number of fronts.

Dalit women hold the lowest rank in society, and sexual abuse is a significant problem that contributes to both caste and gender inequality. This demonstrates the caste and gender-based vulnerability of a Dalit woman as well as the community's powerlessness. The attack on her is an attack on her entire community as well as an expropriation for the guys. Sexual assault is a particularly paradoxical topic when considering pollution from caste. Ironically, an untouchable woman's body becomes more than just "touchable" in the event of rape. Conflicts over public resources and the use of Dalit labor power—where untouchability is irrelevant—also demonstrate this uncertainty. When there is labor exploitation, retaliation, punishment, or compulsion, untouchability is terminated. The discussion of sexual violence against Dalit women based on caste is essential to understanding how Dalit women are viewed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Smeeta Patil, in her article "Revitalizing Dalit Feminism Towards Reflexive, Anti Caste Agency of Mang and Mahar Women in Maharashtra" featured in the *Economic and Political Weekly*, emphasizes the arduous circumstances faced by Dalit women. She underscores that the structural hierarchy entrenched in the caste system perpetuates the subjugation of Dalit women. Patil delineates the multifaceted oppression, exploitation, and discrimination experienced by Dalit women across societal spheres, highlighting their limited agency in both public and private domains. Their subjugation, according to Patil, operates on the intersecting axis of the three forces of caste, gender, and class.

Gyatri Spivak, a feminist critic, introduced the term "Subaltern" to denote marginalized groups within society. In her work "Can the Subaltern Speak," Spivak posits that the subaltern lacks representation in history and remains voiceless, much like women, existing in the shadows of societal visibility.

METHODOLOGY

The proposed methodology for this research involves a textual and theoretical approach. Centered on feminist theoretical frameworks, the study will scrutinize chosen novels authored by contemporary Dalit women writers through the lens of Dalit feminism. Dalit studies research has long been firmly established among the social sciences, recognizing the sociopolitical challenges that oppressed populations must contend with. Nonetheless, it is impossible to overestimate the importance of literature in elevating Dalit voices and expressing their issues. Comparative techniques have been used in this study to clarify the complex topics present in Dalit literature. Carefully chosen primary and secondary sources have been used to guarantee a thorough examination.

DISCUSSION

The Play of Power and Female Marginality in Sivakami's *The Grip of Change*

One of the first Tamil Dalit authors to highlight the dual oppression of Dalit women—by both Dalit and upper caste men—on the basis of their gender and caste was Sivakami. Her book *The Grip of Change* has set the stage for a controlled investigation of domestic abuse. In addition to the sexual harassment Dalit women experience outside their homes from higher ranking males and the police, Dalit men—fathers, siblings, children, fathers-in-law, and brothers-in-law—mistreat Dalit women at home. In Dalit literature, the double mistreatment of Dalit women based on their sexual orientation and station raises serious concerns. In addition to highlighting how the family as an institution is ingrained in a patriarchal, authoritarian system that is obviously unfair to women, Sivakami focuses on the brutal exploitation of women's bodies. Whether they are daughters, wives, or companions, Dalit women's sexuality is forcibly confined and suppressed. *The Grip of Change* by Sivagami is a detailed account of the twofold oppression of Dalit women as a result of their caste and gender. It addresses the problem of Dalit leadership and highlights the dangers of an imitation model in which Dalit leaders replicate the corruption and scheming politics common among powerful politicians from higher castes. The novel's notable dedication to Dalit discourse was demonstrated by its emphasis on the violent treatment of

Dalit women by Dalit men in the home. The main character of the book is Thangam, a poor Parachi widow who endures hardships not just because she is a Dalit but also because she is a woman. Paradoxically, she is also a victim of her own Dalit community. She experiences caste prejudice, gender subjugation, and economic oppression. She becomes a "surplus woman" for her brothers-in-law after her husband passes away, and they coerce her into being a prostitute. Because of her infertile "body," which is incapable of bearing children, even her entitlement to a portion of the property is denied. She can only receive a portion of the property if her "body" is satisfied. As a result, Thangam leaves her home to work as a worker in the fields of wealthy landlord Paranjothi Udayar, where she is sexually assaulted by him. As she tells it, "I didn't want it. However, Udayar ignored me. While I was laboring in his sugarcane field, he sexually assaulted me. Since he is my paymaster."

Caste and Gender as Reflected in Sivakami's *The Taming of Women*

P. Sivakami, in her work, *The Taming of Women* (2012), depicts the previously mentioned stage in her writing. Sivakami eloquently explains how discrimination in society has stunted Dalit women's advancement in their own community. They must suffer greatly as a result of the gender bias they encounter on a daily basis. By highlighting the Dalit women's tenacity and never-say-die mentality, Sivakami has not only highlighted the negative aspects of the issue but also its positive aspects. The "war" between males and women in modern society is shown in P. Sivakami's *Taming of Women*. Periyannan, the main character, was once a resident of a destitute village. He had a constant desire for wealth and influence and showed no concern for his family's ladies, particularly his mother's illness and wife Anandhayi.

The terrible nature of Periyannan, who used to abuse his wife and other women, is depicted in the poem. He paid less respect to others because he wanted to live his life as he saw fit.

P. Sivakami's *Taming of Women* exposes the horrifying state in which Anandhayi endures abuse at the hands of her husband, Periyannan. The scriptures provide numerous instances that tell us about Anandhayi's suffering and trauma. The novel's first chapter portrays the pitiful state of Anandhayi, the female lead..Periyannan had brought another woman into his room to sleep with him when Anandhayi was pregnant. This demonstrates how men in their home treat women inhumanely. Anandhayi was pressured by Periyannan to ignore her illness.

"... Things are strewn about this house and you don't seem to be interested in setting them in order. Did your secret lover get you this skirt? Hey stop those words, eh? And if I don't? I'll chop your hair off... You are a fine one to talk. You're the one who has a bitch around the house, and you accuse me of having a lover?"

CONCLUSION

This essay focuses on the sexual abuse that Dalit women endure at the hands of males from higher castes, including their own husbands, fathers, brothers, and others. A fresh viewpoint on Dalit women has been made possible by Dalit literature. A Dalit woman is portrayed in the literary imagination as oppressed and enslaved. The idea of these defenseless Dalit women charting their path from "subjugation" to the heights of a "celebration" of their lives, however, is exploded. In actuality, Dalit women face a wider range of issues than women from other castes, which made it necessary to express their predicament. The problems of a Dalit woman start with her husband at home. She suffers from external patriarchy and caste persecution. . They are already at risk as women, but their vulnerability is increased by the fact that they are Dalit and impoverished. Due to their lack of education or lack of literacy, Dalit women are forced to work in the fields. They work just as hard as males do. Without a land Workers are required to labor on the landlords' fields. They have no other employers who give them a living wage. The poor Dalit women's helplessness turns into a weakness, and the landlords exploit their suffering. They sexually abuse and harass them. The situation regarding women's living conditions is drastically shifting. There are several instances that demonstrate how Dalit women are making every effort to own the same identity and status in our culture. One example of those brave attempts and demonstrations where Dalit women have begun to question social conventions and particularly the established rules of the patriarchal society is P. Sivakami's *Taming of Women*. Dalit literature has recently attempted to support and empower women's voices in their struggle against the injustices they have endured for generations.

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