



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Comparative Analysis of 'Untouchable' by Mulkraj Anand and 'Gypsy Goddess' by Meena Kandasamy

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Abstract: This research paper is about comparative analysis examines two novels, Mulk Raj Anand's "Untouchable" and Meena Kandasamy's "Gypsy Goddess," through the lens of their portrayal of social oppression and resistance in Indian society. Both novels focus on the experiences of marginalized groups, particularly Dalits and women, and explore the complex intersectionality of caste, gender, and class in shaping their lives. Through a close reading of the narrative structure, language, and themes, this analysis highlights the similarities and differences in the authors' approaches to addressing these issues, as well as their implications for broader social and political change. Ultimately, this study sheds light on the ongoing struggles for justice and equality in India, and the power of literature to amplify the voices of those who have been silenced by centuries of discrimination and inequality.

Key Words: Caste Discrimination, Dalit Literature, Untouchable, Social Oppression

Introduction

According to Collins dictionary Dalits means member of lowest class in india whom those four main caste were formerly forbidden to touch they were formally called dalits offensive or untouchable Historically, the word 'Dalit' was chosen by some members of caste communities of Untouchables within a social and political context of equality, justice, and empowerment.

Etymologically, the term dalit has started from Sanskrit, dalit signifying 'abused'. The term dalit means 'oppressed' broken crushed and 'downtrodden' in marathi was first used by phule and was reactivated after Indian independence the first mentioned of 'Dalit literature conference held in 1958. It certainly was a significant moment in the history of 'Dalit Literature' 'Dalit' actually signifies "persecuted". It is utilized as an equivalent word for "unapproachable". It likewise alludes to casteless areas of India. Dalit is likewise gotten out caste. It is a self-assignment for a gathering of individuals traditionally viewed as untouchables. Dalits are blended populace of different caste gatherings living allover India, South Asia however everywhere throughout the world. There are a few distinct names used to characterize their gathering like "Fiery remains Prash" signifying "untouchables". Harijans meaning children of God, Dalits significance Broken People.

Until the beginning of the 20th century there was no formal education available for Dalits. Dalit literature as a genre emerged only in 1970s through some of the Dalit protest movements in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Dalit literature is the literature produced by the Dalit consciousness. Human freedom is the inspiration behind it. Dalit literature must be written from the Dalit point of view and with a Dalit vision. The "Dalit view point" calls for a writer to internalize the sorrows and sufferings of the Dalits. Any writer with some Dalit sensibility may have Dalit view point but not necessarily "Dalit vision." The difference between Dalit view point and Dalit vision can be found in the desired objective. A person with the Dalit view point aims for a limited transformation whereas a person with the Dalit vision demands a total revolution or transformation.

Dalit Literature in India has not reached out proportion that it should have, in spite of the sustain and dedicated pioneering efforts in many writers, thinkers, academics outside India such as Deb jani Ganguli, Christophane jaffrelot, Nicholas Jauol, Alok Mukherjee, Arun prabha Mukherjee and many others.

It is not dalit writers or thinkers who does not produced primary as well as secondary literature Arjun dangle, kancha illah sharad kumar limble and vasant moon among others instantly come to connoisseurs and reach out wider circle. Academic, critics and thinkers like raj Gauthaman, Gopal Guru, Geeta kothari, sanal mohan, pramod nayar, Gali omvedt, M.S.S. pandian, Anupama Rao, shrmila reje, K. Satyanarayana and susie tharu among others, have been writing forcefully dalits and dalit literature in India quite some time and are well-known on international stage.

Dalit movements in India:

Dalit movement is a struggle that tries to counter attack the socio – cultural hegemony of the upper castes. It is a movement of the masses that craves for justice through the speeches, literary works, dramas, songs, cultural organisations and all the other possible measurers.

As Dr. Garima Dhankhar claims in the International journal of political science that, The Dalit movement was started to improve the socio-political and economic conditions of Dalits in India. The exploitation of Dalits by the upper castes continued for a long time for

centuries. Due to the prevalent Varna system and caste system in India, Dalitshave alwaysbeen victims of exploitation and oppression. The Chaturvarna system (four varnas)

prevailing in India in which mainly Brahmin Kshatriya Vaishya Shudra was the hierarchy

system. Under which Shudras i.e. Dalits were kept at the lowest rung whose main

funcation was to serve the above three classes.

The Trauma of Untouchability: Depictions of Caste-Based Discrimination in Dalit Literature Untouchable, also called Dalit, officially Scheduled Caste, formerly Harijan, in traditional Indian society, the former name for any member of a wide range of low-caste Hindu groups and any person outside the caste system.

Traditionally, the groups characterized as untouchable were those whose occupations and habits of life involved ritually polluting activities, of which the most important were (1) taking life for a living, a category that included, for example, fishermen, (2) killing or disposing of dead cattle or working with their hides for a living, (3) pursuing activities that brought the participant into contact with emissions of the human body, such as feces, urine, sweat, and spittle, a category that included such occupational groups as sweepers and laundry workers, and (4) eating the flesh of cattle or of domestic pigs and chickens, a category into which most of the indigenous tribes of India fell.

Much of Dalit Literature revolves around the question of caste discrimination and untouchability. Untouchability becomes central trope in this literature. The practice of untouchability may well remain unintelligible to the victims and one may add provocative even to the perprator.

Similar Aspects of Both Novels:

Caste Discrimination

Both novels deal with issues of caste and discrimination in India. "Gypsy Goddess," on the other hand, takes a broader view, exploring the lives of several Dalit women who work as Agriculture farmers. When the

Untouchable mainly discusses about caste-based discrimination through the experiences of Bakha at that time there was colonial rule in 1935. So how the britishers were treat the Untouchable at that time. on the other hand Gypsy Goddess is all about contemporary time though it is mainly focuses on caste based discrimination and injustices of dalits. Which is observed today's time also. In this novel there is upper. Caste landlords who suppressed the dalits and treat them as they were Untouchable

Education: Both novels explore the issue of education and its role in social and economic mobility. Untouchable depicts the experiences of Bakha, who desires education but is denied it because of his caste.while Gypsy Goddess depicts the experiences of Kali, who uses education as a way to challenge the social and economic structures that oppress her community.

Labour and work: Both novels explore the issue of labor and work, and how it is tied to social status and caste. In Untouchable, Bakha's family is employed as sweepers, a job that is considered low-caste and demeaning. In Gypsy Goddess, the Dalits are employed in menial jobs and face exploitation and discrimination.

Contrasting Aspects

Colonialism v/s post colonialism

Another social aspect that is explored in the novel is the impact of British colonialism on Indian society. The novel is set against the backdrop of the British Raj and shows how the British rulers perpetuated and reinforced the caste system for their own benefit. The novel also shows how the British introduced modern ideas and technology to India, but these advancements did not benefit the lower castes who continued to live in poverty and oppression

While the Gypsy goddess is a post colonial novel because it set in 1970 at that there was no rigid caste system like during the colonialism in this novel the landlords are superior, not the britishers so it can be called as post colonial novel

Historical difference

Another important difference between "Untouchable" and "Gypsy Goddess" is their historical and cultural contexts. "Untouchable" was published in 1935, at a time when the Indian freedom struggle was gaining momentum, and the country was grappling with issues of caste discrimination and social inequality. On the other hand, "Gypsy Goddess" was published in 2014, when India had already gained independence, and the country was dealing with more contemporary issues related to caste, gender, and social justice.

Conclusion:

The novels "Untouchable" by Mulk Raj Anand and "Gypsy Goddess" by Meena Kandasamy both explore the social and cultural discrimination faced by marginalized groups in India. While "Untouchable" focuses on the life of a Dalit, Bakha, who is treated as an outcast by society due to his

caste, "Gypsy Goddess" portrays the life of a Devadasi, who is forced into a life of prostitution due to her lower caste status

Despite their differences, both novels emphasize the need for social reform and equality in India. They highlight the urgent need to eradicate caste-based discrimination and other forms of social oppression., "Untouchable" and "Gypsy Goddess" provide valuable insights into the experiences of marginalized groups in India and the challenges they face in their struggle for equality. These novels serve as powerful reminders that discrimination and oppression based on caste, gender, and other social factors must be eradicated to build a more just and equitable society.

One of the key social aspects explored in the novel is the rigid caste system that existed in Indian society during that time. The protagonist, Bakha, is an untouchable and is shunned by the upper castes, who consider him impure and polluting. The novel *Gypsy Goddess* also explores the discrimination and inequality that the untouchables faced on a daily basis, from being denied access to public spaces to being forced to perform degrading and menial tasks. In the *Gypsy Goddess* explores the experiences of the Dalits. Both novels show how caste discrimination leads to social and economic inequality, and how it limits opportunities for the lower castes.

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