

Volume-1, Issue-VI, Sept- 2017

Research maGma

An International Multidisciplinary Journal

CONFERENCE

of

**Thiruvalluvar University
College of Arts & Science, Arakkonam.**

on

**"EMERGING TRENDS IN ENGLISH
LANGUAGE & LITERATURE"**



Research maGma

An International Multidisciplinary Journal

ISSN NO- 2456-7078 IMPACT FACTOR- 4.520 VOLUME-1, ISSUE-7, SEPT-2017

DISCRIMINATION OF DALIT HISTORY AND CULTURE

R. Aamina Begum

Department of English, M.M.E.S. Women's Arts and Science College,
Melvisharam

ABSTRACT

"The blight of caste discrimination, under which millions in India are regarded as 'Untouchable' has spread to this country virtually unnoticed".

--- Koith Porteus Wood.

The word 'Dalit' comes from Sanskrit and it means "Down Trodden", 'Suppressed', 'Crushed', or 'Broken to pieces'. The term 'Dalit' literally means 'oppressed' and is used to refer to the 'Untouchable' casteless sects of India. Mahatma Gandhi called them 'Harijans' which was translated roughly as 'Children of God'. Dalit have been depending upon the nature since centuries. Their culture and tradition can't be narrated without natural resources. This discussion will be confined to the cultural history of Dalit and their relationship with natural resources. The aim of the paper is to improve our understanding on the issues relevant to the history and culture of Dalit [the ancient "Todas of Nilgiri Hills".

KEYWORDS:

Dalit History, Culture

INTRODUCTION

"Men are mortal, so are ideas,
An idea needs propagation as much as
Plant needs watering, otherwise
Both will wither and die" _ Dr. Ambedkar

The word 'Dalit' comes from Sanskrit which means, "down trodden", suppressed, crushed, or 'broken to pieces'. It was first used by Jyoti Roa Phule in the nineteenth century in the context of the oppression faced by the erstwhile "Untouchable" castes of twice born

"Emerging Trends in English Language & Literature"

Hindus. The origin of Dalit's as a clan may be traced back to Rigveda, the oldest veda of Hindus. Four varnas are identified in the ancient classics which are subdivided into many subcastes and there is a final stratum of this ethnic division known as the "untouchables" the lowliest of all, so impure despicable that they stood outside the caste and social structure of the Indians altogether. This final stratum is known as 'Dalits' in modern linguistic terminology. Dalits were called by different names in different parts of India, invented by caste people and all entailing to insult and contempt. Such names include words like dasa, dasya, raksasa, asura, avarna, nisoda, panchama, chandala, and so on. The British had called them as "Depressed classes" and the term 'sc' (after India became a Republic) has come to denote the entire Dalit communities official

"Life should be great rather than long" _Dr.Ambedkar.

The history of Dalit literature can be traced back to centuries. But Dalit literal/cultural expression were never taken into consideration due to the hegemonic nature of the field of literary production. It was widely acknowledged that traditional Indian society was based on 'Varna' and 'Jati'. This system is very ancient in origin and through the passage of time it has undergone profound changes, but the term caste is still a very powerful institution in our socio-economic, religious and political organization. The 'varna' model provide a framework within which the innumerable variations of caste throughout India are found. Most of the castes are traditionally associated with an occupation, such as high ranking Bramhin, middle ranking farmers and Artisan groups and very low ranking_'Dalits'- where majority of them are leather workers, butchers, latrine cleaners. These low ranking jobs are low paid. Therefore many lower caste people face conditions of poverty and social disadvantage.

"Religion must mainly be a matter of principles only. It cannot be a matter of rules. The moment it degenerates into rules it ceases to be a religion, as it kills responsibility which is an essence of the true religious act." _Dr.B.R.Ambedkar.S

J.H.Hutton points out that caste provides the individual members with a fixed social milieu, a prominent body of association which controls almost all behaviour and contacts. A.R.Desai has described that the social structure has stratified into the divisions which in turn is identified as castes. From time immemorial class conflict has been one of the major themes of literature. Class conflict is a long term used mostly by socialists, communists and many anarchists.

Mulk Raj Anand was the first writer to touch upon the genre of Dalit literature in his novels like 'coolie' and 'untouchable' and 'Two leaves in a Bud' in English. They are simultaneously translated into different regional and world languages. The Theme of 'untouchable' is the evil of untouchability in India. Anand depicts the experiences of an 18year old Dalit boy in the course of n a single day in a town called 'Buland Shahi'. 'Coolie' gives a freezing picture of a down trodden boy name Munoo who at a very young age gets into oblivion of his own existence. The theme dealt with 'Coolie' in a subtle manner is rather archetypal namely man's relationship with inanimate nature around him. Munoo, the hill boy brought out forcibly from his natural surrounding and exposed to urban life, is confused and his various attempts to find his identity

"Emerging Trends in English Language & Literature"

ending ultimately in his death. Plucked out of his native hills, Munoo suffers through a series of maladjustments and drifts. Tribes are an integral part of our civilization but they mark distinct difference from the ordinary population in terms of defying change.

"A culture that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, customs and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society"(Tylor 1874).

Dalit Adivasis are the Mulnivasi or aboriginal people of this land. They have been inheritants of rich culture and tradition since time immemorial. Culture also includes all the elements in man's old endowment that he also acquired from his group by conscious learning or by a conditioning process techniques of various kinds social and other institutions, beliefs and pattered modes of conduct.(Herskovits-1955).

"Todas an ancient tribe living in the Nilgiri's, are according to anthropologists an offshoot of the "Lost Tribe of Israel" who in dress and stature strongly resemble characters from the old Testament."

The Todas are the original inhabitants of the Nilgiri Hills and they are one of the most picturesque tribes in India. The Toda people are a small pastoral community who live on the isolated Nilgiri plateau of Tamilnadu. Before the 18th century, the Toda co-existed locally with other community including the kota and kuruba in a loose caste like community organisation, in which the Toda were the top ranking.

Classically described as patriarchal, the Todas actually possess some part linear and mart linear divisions they were undoubtedly polyandrous (Emeneau 1984). They once practiced fraternal polyandry, a practice in which a woman marries all the brothers of a family. The Toda language is a member of Dravidian family. The language is typologically aberrant and phonologically difficult. The interaction with civilization has caused a lot of changes in the life style of the Todas. From being a pastoral people they are now increasingly venturing into agriculture and other occupations. During the last decade forty new huts have been built and many Toda sacred dairies have been renovated. It n is also interesting to note the many young men and women have to do higher studies and are also placed in prestigious positions.

CONCLUSION:

This paper illustrates a message about the the Toda community as a whole and discusses the revolt not passivity and about progress and civilization of the Todas. This message is to the entire world about their status in society by portraying the exploitation, suppression and enslavement in a subaltern state. It could be said that the Dalit literature achieved a firm foundation in the mid 20th century; but its frame work was established only in the early 19th century.

REFERENCES:

1. Anand, mulk Coolie Noida N.P Penguin Books India,1993 .
2. Gupta R.B, Tiwary R.S.1991. Haemoglobinopathies among tribal groups of Central India.
3. Paul Premila 'Thematic study bof Mulk raj Ananrd's Novels.
4. Reddy,K.N 1988. A study on food system on Nilgiri tribes. Unpublished project report of TRC Ooty, TamilNadu.

"Emerging Trends in English Language & Literature"

5. Sasikumar.M.1999 Kattunayakans of Nilgiri District TamilNadu: A Tribal documentation. Tribal Research Centre(TRC)43-44.
6. Thurston.E 1909, Caste and Tribes of South Indian, vollv, Government Press, Madras.
7. Wikipedia the free encyclopedia "Verma Hinduism", N.P n.d. web 12 Nov.2010.

