
Portrayal of the women in Sivakami's Grip of change

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Abstract

The Grip of Change is a renowned work in Dalit literature, which concerns on women's suppression. This research titled Portrayal of Dalit Women in Sivakami's The Grip of Change aims to bring out the aspects of male domination over female in dalit community. The researcher attempts to project the Dalit women's sufferings and struggles through subaltern feministic perspectives. The study exposes the struggles faced by the character due to double marginalization. This examines the oppression of lower caste women in the patriarchal society. Different dimensions of this discrimination are studied in the research

Keywords: Double Marginalization, Patriarchy, Feminism, Male Dominance, Caste

Thangam is the protagonist of the novel The Grip of Change. She was a widowed wife from a Dalit community, whose life was tormented by the upper caste people. Even people from her

community despise her for being a widow and she was also abused by her husband's brothers in corresponded to the authority over her husband's land. There were similar incidents occur in the life of Thangam for which she doesn't get any justice from the society. At the same the discrimination and abused faced by her used for political purposes by Kathamuthu a lower caste head. There were many other incidents where she was sexually tormented and tried to abuse by the power structure of society mostly by dominance of men.

Kanagavali

Kanagavali is a minor character in The Grip of Change by P. Sivakami. Kanagavali is a first wife of Kathamuthu. She is from low caste community. She is a so-called virtuous woman in Indian society, she obeys her husband's words without any hesitation.

3) Nagamani

Nagamani is the second wife of Kathamuthu. She is an upper caste widow. Even though she suffers a lot under patriarchal society. Nagamani is considered as a typical house wife. She does not have any rights in the family. She is only used as sexual toy. 4) Gowri

Gowri is a modern female in the novel The Grip of Change. She creates

a difference in their society. Her father, Kathamuthu wants his daughter Gowri to study. According to this Gowri is the one who had a mindset to uplift their society.

4.3 Portrayal of Dalit Women in Grip of Change

In the incidents portrayed by the novel where Thangam was beaten by the brother and brother-in-law of Paranjothi's wife. She was dragged out from the house and beaten severely in the street by pulling her hair and beaten with sticks. They would have nearly killed her. The scene depicts the condition of female position in the novel *The Grip of Change*. The line shows the domination of male, both in the terms of verbal and physical status. Thangam has a protagonist lives as a dominant figure like inferior in status and lack of education and unsupportive family background. Though Thangam is woman who termed as a most dominant being in the society, the advantages society took over was extreme. Thangam became the victim of verbal and physical abused by the Paranjothi's brother-in-law, who is the brother of his wife. Paranjothi abused Thangam along with four men. In the following lines Thangam describes that:

That's why Paranjothi's wife's brothers and her brother-in-law, four men, entered my house last night. They pulled me by my hair and dragged me out to the street. They hit me and flogged me with a stick stout as a hand.

They nearly killed me. (Sivakami 6)

In the same paragraph Thangam was threatened by Paranjothi's brother-in-law along with the four men's, here their way of behaviour represents the dominance of men and them over on the women. It justifies the character of women the way Thangam used to be. They use abusive words to describe her character as whore. This shows the subjugation towards the men and the society, where to accept what the superiority condemns. "They abused me and threatened to kill me if I stayed in that village any longer. They called me a whore'. Thangam began to wail again." (Sivakami 6)

Udayar comes to know Thangam was widow and no one can raise the question whatever might be happen to her. So, while Thangam working in sugarcane field, he noticed her, and he wants that chance to rape her, and he did it. "Udayar took no notice of me. Paranjothi raped me when I was working in Paranjothi sugarcane field." (Sivakami 7)

"My husband's brothers tried to force me, but I never gave in. They wouldn't give me my husband's land but wanted me to be a whore for them!" (Sivakmi 7) Similar to the previous incident, Thangam was a widow with no financial background or any family support. Though Thangam was facing the issues of men assaulting her both physically and mentally, the chance of

giving up in life could not be seen. Here in this event the researcher implies the theory which relates to the event where Thangam was forced by her husband's brother for fulfilling his pleasure, but Thangam didn't give up on him. The main cause arouses through the land which was partially divided to Thangam's husband but her husband's brother wouldn't provide her the ownership for the land but rather they force her to be whore for them. This shows the superiority over dominated woman Thangam. Because though Thangam is a woman people has the common mentality of women were as weaker sex in the society. Though Thangam was termed as woman who lost her husband the isolated way of living had been portrayed has woman with no support, so it shows authority over her.

"Oh, "Gold"! The broomstick is tied with a silk thread.' Proud of his little joke. Kathamuthu winked at Nagamani". (Sivakami 9) In this event, Thangam was metaphorically criticized by comparing her with broomstick and the dress Thangam wears as silk thread. This shows the caste hierarchy and subordination woman. Because Thangam was criticized based on the appearance as if Thangam was a non-living thing. There Kathumuthu winked at Nagamani after making fun of her appearance. Because in a caste-based society the appearance matter for the lower caste people or they would be taunted and despised by the upper caste. This is something derogatory in making

fun of others appearance, because the dress Thangam wears could not be considered as joke but these upper caste people making fun of her shows the superiority towards her

"Udayar's wife Kamalam glared at me scornfully and shouted. "You Paraya bitch, how dare you walk on this street? Is this not the upper caste street? Go away from here". (Sivakami 11-12)

Here in this context, the researcher finds out humiliation faced by Thangam as Dalit widow and painful life Thangam is going through. In this event where Thangam walks in the street of upper caste people for that reason Thangam was taunted by Udayar's wife Kamalam by uttering her caste and uses abusive word to despise her. This shows that Thangam was treated worse more than animals in the context. The hierarchical power structure in the society who formulates the idea of discriminating people based on the caste could be seen through this event. In this the researcher identifies the humiliation and discrimination faced by Thangam as Dalit and that too as a Dalit woman.

"Ayyo...Ayyo...They have butchered me...Ayyo... The figure cried like a wounded animal and finally fell". (Sivakami 3) This line brings out the sufferings of Thangam. The word "Ayyo" denotes her extreme level of pain. The phrase "wounded animal" shows, how the dalit women has treated in the typical dalit community.

Verbally, they suppressed women and the word 'animal' depict the treatment of female in the society. The men raised against the innocent soul Thangam and brutally wounded her. They didn't consider her as a human being and not even valued her feelings. Women play a major role in every individual's life and each man is dependant of women. Though society worships female as a god, but their way of treating women is terrible. In this novel. Thangam has been picturaized as such a woman, who is left for granted to the men society.

"You'll eat mud. Bastards! You abused a helpless woman. You curs! Come now! Come and lick" ... (Sivakami 4) The protagonist ussed like anything, Thangam is bussting but her emotion. Thangam screams very anglity and says that come and lik again. Thangam expressed her fulling towards a low caste man because the upper caste man never lends their ears to listen all those things. Hera we can be able to see that Thangam was marginalised by her caste and even though Thangam was marginalised based on her gender.

"Shut up, bitch. Don't you dare use fool language here. I'll hit your mouth. Don't you have any respect for the man you're talking to? If you've nothing more to say, piss off". (Sivakami 4) In the above statement, how Kathamuthu ill-treats and discriminates Thangam by shaming slang words and danes to hit Thangam and orders here to have more respect on Kathamuthu and there Thangam stands, processing what has

Kathamuthu said and even before that, he asks her to get lost if Thangam has nothing to say.

In these lines a lot of male dominance, female discrimination can be seen, as even though Kathamuthu was the head of the lower caste. When Thangam came out accused of her being abused by the upper caste man. Instend of consoling Thangam, Kathamuthu questions her of why Thangam went to work under upper class man, if Thangam had not gone to work for them, Thangam would have not been abused. Thangam argued on the accusations made by Kathamuthu, which made him anger and he started to shame and discriminate her using slang words. It shows that Kathamuthu did not care for people or Thangam being abused, rather Kathamuthu was more concerned of respect, which shows the male dominance.

Women are always considered to be the subordinate to man. The idea of male chauvinism suppresses women ideologically, physically also mentally. Being women, it is a curse in the society still being a low caste woman is another scar of the birth in indian society. The irony in the society is that there is no equality even for low caste men in the Indian society. Even Low caste men are at the periphery level where a woman has no place to stand on. This is the status of women in the then Indian society. The Grip of Change is the novel that portrays the status of low caste women who only survive than living.

The portrayal of Thangam who seeks justice in leagly is being threatened by the people of uppercaste. The subaltern and their voices are unheard even legally. Equality is one of the rights that every human expects from the society. Thangam is character to substantiate the idea of the need of the rights. Yet she is denied and threatened only because she belongs to the lower caste.

"I asked her again not to talk like that. But Thangam lunged at me and said, "Are you threatening me, you low caste bitch?" and picked up a thick stick and began to beat me. (Sivakami 12) She looks for justice all alone only Gowri supports her, yet the idea of justice is not spoken well in the novel. It is left without conclusion that leaves an idea that justice is not done to these people.

Women is always considered as an object of sex, and they used to deceive a man in terms of their sexuality or their attractiveness it is notion of men, and it is being portrayed women as an object of sex so the morality and equality is lacking between men and women whatever happens the women is being accused of false. Here Paranjothi tries to have her in life sexually. The accusation is on a particular girl, thamgam. thamgam is a married girl and paranjothi also a married man. Paranjothi as being upper class men he tries to have her sexually. But the is not on men but on women here it can be analysed in two ways a term of men and women and the terms of lower-class women and upper-class men. Being a woman, she is accused of her sexual

abuse and attractiveness, as a low caste woman she doesn't have any rights to voice out in society "All four pulled me by my hair, tore my blouse, bae; my breasts, dragged me along the street naked and tried to murder me" ... (Sivakami 12)

"Hopeless bastards. Nothing to eat. Yet they have all the pride in the world... Abusing someone with choice expletives, he stomped around to the front of the house". (Sivakami 13) Thangam is the main character; she is a lower caste woman. She was abused by Kathamuths two brothers. Kathamuthu is the leader of lower class. She went to meet Kathamuthu to as justice where Kathamuthu uses her to develop in politics as an issue.

Conclusion

The study reveals that the uprising of Dalit women is not only depends on the individual's self, but it is always a, overflowing with love as embodiment of sacrifice. When it compared to Dalit men, only a few Dalit women have penned their autobiographies, their narratives of struggle. The plight of Dalit women is marginalized in Dalit literature as they are in their community. Education enables them to express their voices of grief, and pain in their autobiographical writings. The contribution of Dalit women writers of Dalit literature is significant, and Sivagami is one among them who always focuses the plight of Dalit women.

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