
Rebellious Writing in Kannada Literature: Malagatti's *Government Brahmana*

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Abstract:

Rebellious literature in Kannada has a rich history. Though the attitude of rebellion is seen in all genres and the mainstream one, too, it is predominantly seen in progressive and Dalit literature. Authors like Siddalingaiah, Aravind Malagatti, Devanooru Mahadeva, and Baraguru Ramachandrappa penned the trend in Kannada literature. In the autobiography *Government Brahmana*, Malagatti rightly addressed the various caste-borne burning issues and their implications on the psyche of depressed people. From day-to-day life, farming, and occupation to education, religion, and cultural practices have been dealt with—hunger sidelines humiliation. One needs to have a sense of humiliation to be felt as humiliated, but the dependency of the depressed people puts it in a different scenario at the time setting of the book.

Keywords: Rebellious literature, Kannada, Depression, Hunger, Humiliation, Caste, Self-respect, Progressive literature, Dalit.

Aravind Malagatti was born on May 1 1956. He is a well-known poet, novelist, essayist, critic, and scholar of folklore studies. He is also active in movements like Siddalingaiah, especially in Dalit movements. Various poetry anthologies are to his credit: *Mookanige Baayi Bandaaga* (1982), *Kappu Kavya* (1985), *Mooraneya Kannu* (1996), *Naada Ninaada* (1999), *Silicon City Mattu Kogile* (2003),

Chandaal Swargaarohanam (2003), *Vishwatomukha* (2010), *Huvu Balubhara* (2010), *Ru Nisheda Chakrakavya* (2016). *Mugiyada Kathegalu* (2000) is a collection of short stories. *Karya* (1988) is a novel. *Masthakaabhisheka* (1983) and *Samudradolagana Uppu* (1999) are dramas.

Government Brahmana is the first Dalit autobiography in Kannada for which he won the Karnataka Sahitya Akademi Award. It tells the story of the painful experiences of his life in childhood and youth. The author reflects on specific instances from his childhood and student days that illustrate the normative cruelty practiced by the caste-bound society on Dalits. The autobiography is structured to provoke us into looking at caste experiences in all facets of society. In that sense, it shows that in the face of the oppressive structures, there are two aspects of these accounts of Dalit suppression; one is undoubtedly rooted in the Vedic narration of the Shudra, and the other is a complete out of capitalism, which is based on "the class antagonism relation, belonging to a definite historical much disdain and suspicion making him double alien. Not only these, but other Dalit autobiographies also criticize various caste-bound cultural practices that rivet Dalits to the stigmatized social status.

Aravind Malagatti explains the reason behind titling his autobiography as *Government Brahmana*. Generally, a Brahmana is a privileged person in a caste-bound society. Now, due to reservation provided by the Indian Constitution, Aravind is, in his friends' opinion, also a privileged person because he enjoys reservation in studies, employment, etc. Therefore, his college friends teased Aravind, calling him 'Government Brahmana' (61). One of his friends even goes to such an extent to hurt him that he asks, "Is your dress a gift from Indramma? [Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister]".

Self-respect, recognition, and dignity are essential needs of an individual. Modern self-formation regards these needs as necessities for a social individual. When there is a threat to 'self' regarding self-respect, recognition, and dignity, a person experiences humiliation. Mohe Dalit autobiographers narrate the threats to their self-respect, recognition, and dignity. It is a humiliation to their 'self' and their community. Some autobiographers rebel against such humiliation and

demand self-respect, recognition, and dignity. Many older generations, like parents in autobiographies, have tried to claim self-respect, recognition, and dignity. It means they are unaware of their very self-respect. One may not find a protesting and rebellious narrative tone in *Ooru Keri*, but it is ironic. However, in autobiographies like *Government Brahmana*, *The Outcaste*, and *My Childhood On My Shoulders*, one finds a sharp protesting and rebellious tone against the humiliation they experience. It means they feel they are humiliated. The consciousness that they are humiliated is crucial to claim self-respect. Unless one is conscious, one will never learn that s/he is humiliated. As a consequence of the consciousness, one will think and act against the humiliation and try to establish self-respect.

As a result of purity-pollution ideology, the very body of untouchables becomes, as Valerian Rodrigues calls, 'dirt.' When people gather around Bhakha in *Untouchable*, they consider him 'dirt' and call him 'low caste,' 'vermin,' 'swine,' 'a cock-eyed son of a bowlegged scorpion,' 'dog,' 'brute,' 'dirty dog,' 'son of a bitch', a, son of a dog,' 'offspring of a pig,' etc. With the help of this ideology, the caste-bound dominant communities have always tried to subject Dalits to inhuman and degrading status, thereby humiliating Dalits. Purity pollution is a basis for the dominant castes to keep Dalits away from education so that they can keep Dalits ignorant of all the issues and maintain the hypocritical hierarchy forever. The caste teachers do not even touch the Dalits even when they are punishing them. Aravind Malagatti writes in a painful tone that "we untouchable lot never had the good fortune of receiving slaps" (14) from teachers because the very touch may pollute them. The teachers are believed to be upholders of the values in the eyes of the students. Given these circumstances, one understands that every caste-bound institution is keeping Dalits ignorant. Despite that, Malagatti was fortunate to have enrolled at School. He observes with a deep sense of pain that he receives punishment from his teachers at School in quite a few instances. He is punished not because he is irregular in School or his homework but because he skips sweeping the classrooms. It is made a rule in his School that a Dalit should come early to School and sweep

School (14). It is just one of the numerous ways that the caste finds to humiliate Dalits. Even in a modern liberal institution like School, the Dalit children are not without humiliation. The four Dalit students, Devappa, Mallappa, Basavantappa, and Aravind Malagatti, must sweep the School. Illiteracy always has adverse impacts on Dalits. Then, it is naturally understood that Dalits would depend upon the castes for their necessities. Sharankumar Limbale narrates an instance in *The Outcaste*, where his classmate is put to work on "Girimallya's farm. His father had taken him away from school and put him to work, grazing cattle" (1). It is because of their harsh poverty. By having an education, Dalits want to improve their financial condition. However, there are few opportunities.

Hazari's family is nomadic, moving from one place to another in search of livelihood. Once, his family happened to go to the hill stations of Dehradun, Mussoorie, and Simla to serve the British families. There, Hazari is influenced to be literate. He decides to enroll himself at School. However, for a Dalit, it proved to be just impossible, even during the early years of the twentieth century. The School does not admit him because he is a Bauri (an untouchable community in Orissa). Therefore, Hazari joins a madrasa run by a mosque (61).

Quite a few of the elite group of Indians argue, and primarily urban youth join hands, that when the Constitution of India has sanctioned equality and freedom, they think any person can claim her/his self-respect in the society. In a series of discussions with the faculties of under graduation and graduation at the S.D.V.S. Sangh's S. S. Arts and T. P. Science Institute and Arts, Science and Commerce P U College, Sankeshwar, in the district of Belagavi, Karnataka, one gets to know the anger of the non-Dalits against the reservation. The non-Dalits sometimes seem frustrated because they assume that due to the reservation, many posts are reserved for depressed classes, and they have very few posts, and as a result, they are unemployed. The non-Dalits keep arguing that it is the twenty-first century, yet the Dalits want to enjoy various reservation provisions. They continue their argument, saying that they can no longer see discrimination in the name of caste. However, they need to answer why Dalits are not

given houses on rent in the mainstream areas of cities and are forced to go to Bhimnagar to live. One more question they need to answer is why there is a meager number of admissions of children from Dalit communities in schools and colleges in a semi-city like Sankeshwar itself.

It means Dalits are still underprivileged. Therefore, the very inner character of the society does not allow Dalits to claim their self-respect. Unless the very attitude of the caste changes, it seems impossible to bring equality. One, for instance, needs to be self-reliant, at least to some extent, to claim self-respect. One has to earn one's livelihood. One must be able to look after his kiths and kins respectfully.

A self-respectful person needs to be socially, economically, and politically independent. However, the caste-bound social culture has been constructed by various structures laid down by the hypocritical oppressors. Social culture is "historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed using which [wo]men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life" (Yagati 122). The transmitters of culture are economically and politically dominant castes. There has been "psychological preparation" for some hegemonic practices in the caste bound society. For instance, it is a psychological construction that some people are 'untouchable.' In the School, the other students sit on benches, but the Dalit students like Devappa, Mallappa, Basavantappa, and Malagatti, as narrated in *Government Brahman*, sit on the floor in the corner of the room. From very early childhood, the ideology of untouchability is developed in human psychology. The children in such a society grow up to develop the psychology that 'untouchables' are untouchables because they are born to untouchables. Here is another example: children usually call names by twisting them. However, in the case of Malagatti, it was deliberately twisted to ridicule and humiliate him.

Malagatti writes that the students, as well as teachers, call Dalit names by twisting, such as Devya for Devappa, Malya for Mallappa, and Basya for Basavantappa, which gives an additional odd

and belittling meaning to the proper names (15). It adds to the existing plight of the Dalit students at schools. Usually, Aravind Malagatti's name is written on the board as 'Malakatti.' They replace the letter 'g' with 'k.' The replacement of the letter gives the meaning of 'donkey' to the word 'katti.' Therefore, to humiliate him, teachers and students write 'katti' instead of 'gatti' on the board (16). Therefore, once Malagatti tries to rewrite the name 'Malakatti' as 'Malagatti' by standing on the chair the teachers use. A blunder has taken place by a Dalit student! The teacher abuses him for using the chair used by caste teachers and mocks him, saying, "Can a donkey ever become a horse? Why the hell should a donkey look for cotton seeds and good feed?" (16) Here, the teacher deliberates to call Malagatti as 'Malakatti' and in doing so he insists upon humiliating the Dalit child. If a teacher humiliates a pupil, it may not be considered a crucial issue. However, seriously, the teacher, in this case, passes his judgment that a Dalit child-like Malagatti is a "donkey" and cannot become a "horse."

A donkey is symbolically used for degeneration, and a horse is for intelligence. The teacher decides that Malagatti can never become an intelligent boy. These are the prejudices the teachers carry against Dalits. These are the village teachers who are the resultants of the caste system. The ironic and pathetic part of it is that the Dalit children receive the humiliation mutely since their elders never teach them their elders teach them to agitate against such odds but rather are strictly told to obey the caste-bound code of conduct. As time goes on, these acts develop a habit in children, and that humiliating act also becomes a habit for the caste children.

In many parts of India, Dalits perform traditional village services. They serve the dominant castes in their lands and homes. All the dirty work in the village is forced upon Dalits. Dalits are the source of cheap labor for a village in India. Despite their services to a village, Dalits cannot legitimately claim any space in a village. More importantly, they are forced to restrict themselves to the Dalit *Cheri/Keri* and live according to the norms of the village. By keeping and restricting Dalits to a particular location of living, the caste Hindus belittle and humiliate Dalits. Defiance of village norms will have severe consequences for Dalits. As Challapalli Swarrop Rani writes,

and earlier explained in this thesis, the Karamchedu massacre is an example of the consequence of nonconformity of the village norms by Dalits laid down by the caste Hindus. As a result of a social division based on caste and purity-pollution ideology, Dalits are made to depend on the mercy of caste people for many things, including water, leftover food, worn-out clothes, and work. According to caste Hindu custom, a person is invited to any feast full of humbleness, and s/he is served food with utter affection so an invitee may have and savor the food. However, the caste people lay down specific rules for Dalits at such feasts. As Aravind Malagatti writes in *Government Brahmana* :

1. Not to ask for more food.
2. Accept only as much food as you can.
3. Not to carry any food home.
4. While going home after the meal, we should dip our hands in the ink kept outside. (10)

As Aravind Malagatti writes, these rules do not apply to other people in the village. These are all the ways to humiliate Dalits.

Self-consciousness

Self-consciousness is crucial in order to protest against any form of humiliation. Gopal Guru observes in *Humiliation, Claims, and Context* that self-consciousness is generated by an element of comparison, which generates within a person the capacity for self-reflectivity necessary for gaining insight into oneself and others. Another essential element is the emergence and articulation in the language, making assertion against humiliation possible. This language helps the servile groups to achieve self-definition through resisting humiliation. (210) Modernity has been essential in raising critical consciousness in the servile groups. That, in a way, assists those groups in deconstructing the actual and possible forms of humiliation schemed into Indian human psychology. Because of the liberal modern atmosphere they are in, Bechain, Limbale, and Malagatti keep passing on critical comments that crucially deconstruct the hegemonic structures of the caste Hindu social and cultural institutions. For example, Malagatti analyzes the practice of '*Okuli*' (hurling colored water). He discloses the hidden agenda of the caste Hindus in that practice. He comments that during *Okuli*, Dalit women

have to be without clothes, which is an entertaining sight for the caste Hindu men. (71) The illogic behind choosing only Dalit women at *Okuli* does not go unanswered in a rational mind. Therefore, Kancha Ilaiah questions why only lower caste women are victims of such practices and why not caste Hindu women. () no example of a caste Hindu woman being played at *Okuli*. This is what Limbale attempts to analyze. Limbale, in another instance, criticizes with severe words Patil's urge to have a whore of the wives of Dalits. He explains the tradition of a Patil having a whore from a Dalit community. Limbale is surprised as to how a Patil touches a Dalit woman in such a relationship because Patils are said to belong to a caste (Lingayat) in especially North Karnataka and most parts of Maharashtra, and they proclaim that they do not touch untouchables. These are paradoxes caste Hindus need to answer as Limbale demands in *Outcaste*.

Historical views of humiliation rendered to the servile groups help them define and understand its complexities, and they can also measure its scope. In all the Dalit autobiographies discussed in this thesis, the autobiographers tried to have a historical view of the humiliation. The autobiographers reveal the humiliation their great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles, brothers, and sisters have undergone. They occasionally mention Ambedkar's experiences. They have written a history of humiliation Dalits have undergone. While giving a historical account of humiliation, some autobiographers have tried to analyze the layers of humiliation. There are vast numbers of comparisons between the Dalit self and the caste Hindu self. These comparisons intensify Dalit consciousness even more as and when there is a comparison in an autobiography.

Parekh says that humiliation varies in degrees. Humiliation can be minor and casual. Here is an example in which a husband humiliates his wife. It has been taken to be an example of minor humiliation. Guests are invited for dinner. The guests appreciate the food. However, her husband unnecessarily comments that the appreciation should go to the hotel. It seems to be a minor humiliation comparatively. Sometimes, humiliation becomes very acute. In *The Outcaste*, the humiliating experience of Limbale is sharply acute. The School has a picnic. After the picnic, the students are asked to write

an essay on the picnic. Limbale cannot make a single sentence. Then Limbale's teacher shouts, "You, son of a bitch, come on, start writing! You like eating an ox, don't you?" (4) The boy must have been so much embarrassed in a co-education classroom. Many teachers in Dalit's autobiography deliberate the caste identity. They never bother to use decent words for a Dalit student. The teachers always make Dalit students targets of ridiculous comments. Dalits are humiliated from within the community. Bhikarilal, Bechain's stepfather, abuses Bechain since he is good at School, "this bastard son of hers aspires to be a collector" (80). Bhikarilal call his wife, i.e., Bechain's mother, "slut" or "whore" because he believes that she has stolen one rupee from his kurta's pocket (89). Bhikarilal abuses her on her very face. This is harshly acute humiliation. Limbale also says that he is humiliated by his community, "my community humiliated me, calling me 'akkarmashi' (x). So, humiliation is from within as well as from outside.

The victims of humiliation cover a broad spectrum. Limbale declares in *The Outcaste* that a Dalit's humiliation and pain are at individual and community levels (x). It includes individuals as well as groups. The untouchables in India are treated with stereotyped humiliation. It is the whole community that the caste Hindus humiliate. Separate glasses and plates for untouchables in Indian homes and hotels cover the whole spectrum of the community. In almost all the villages in India, there has been a "separate glass and plate" system in hotels where the untouchables should bring their tea glasses and drink their tea sitting away, or outside, from the caste Hindus at those hotels. Sometimes, the hotel keeper keeps a separate set of worn-out glasses for them, and after drinking the tea, the untouchable customers have to wash themselves and keep them back in the hotel. In *The Outcaste*, Sharankumar Limbale narrates his experience of the humiliation of having to wash tea in a separate glass kept outside for untouchables and wash it by himself (Limbale 76-78). Siddalingaiah, too, experiences this sort of humiliation at hotels in his village. Siddalingaiah narrates incidents where the dominant caste Hindus throw occasional feasts on special occasions. "During such feasts, the Holeyas were made to sit in a corner. We were noticed only

after people of the dominant castes had been served. I felt contented with whatever food came my way, and would not overthink the discrimination" (7). The purity pollution is so much structuralized in the caste Hindu society that Isunath, the barber at Limbale's village, refuses to cut his hair just because Limbale is a Mahar. Limbale says the same barber shaves buffaloes but refuses to cut a Mahar's hair (22). A Mahar is made inferior to a buffalo. Aravind Malagatti writes, "In the past, the barbers in our village did not touch us." Therefore, there was a need to learn barbering, and Malagatti learned it. This is how Malagatti becomes an expert barber for his family and himself. A Chamar or a Bhangi has to carry his eating bowl along with him to a Yadav family. A Chamar or Bhangi supposedly cannot eat or drink with the utensil of the Yadav family. It is believed that it pollutes their purity. Therefore, one of Bechain's teachers in Delhi accidentally takes him home and offers him a sweet. However, Bechain refuses it, saying he has not brought a separate bowl to eat it (98). For caste Hindus, Mantralaya is a holy place of the god Raghavendra in the district of Raichur, Karnataka. Generally, Raghavendra is believed to be the god of the dominant caste Hindus because the god is a Brahmana, and hardly any Dalit from villages go to the temple. It is evident in the very practice of removing clothes while entering the temple. Aravind Malagatti, as he narrates in *Government Brahmana*, along with his friends, once visited Mantralaya. The temple management arranges separate places for lunch, namely a separate place for those who wear 'janivara' (a sacred thread worn around the body by a caste Hindu) and another for those without 'janivara.' Only dominant caste Hindus wear the 'janivara.' Therefore, the hidden idea behind removing clothes is to identify the devotees' state of being either caste or lower caste so that they can be accommodated separately for lunch (67).

Institutionalized humiliation

The verse in Manusmriti :

Ekameba tu Sudrasya Prabhu:

Karma Samadishat Eteshameba Varnanang
sushrusamanasuyaya,

Says that the Lord has endowed the Sudra (untouchable) with only one Karma (action) to render the three varnas with selfless

services. According to this verse, an 'untouchable' is born only to serve the caste people. It is his only Karma (action). Later, Hindu mythology constructed an imagined 'mukti' (salvation) concept. The salvation concept says that every Hindu is born on this earth because of the result of the 'karma' of the previous life. Being free of this cycle of birth and death is the ultimate goal of a Hindu, i.e., 'mukti.' Therefore, in order to be free from this cycle of birth and death, that is, to achieve 'mukti,' every Hindu has to fulfill their 'karma.' It means the Sudras must fulfill the 'karma' in the present life to be free from this life-death cycle. Their 'karma' in this life is to serve the caste. According to Hinduism, because of their 'karma' in their previous life, some people are born as Sudras in this life. Therefore, they are not supposed to touch the 'pure' people. The pure people are those who did good 'karma' in their previous life; thereby, they are born, for example, in the clan of Brahmins. The hypocritical dominant caste Hindus have been successful in forming the concept of purity-pollution in Indian society.

How does one then explain Limbale's fate or 'karma'? Limbale writes in the "Acknowledgement" in his *The Outcaste*, "My mother is untouchable, while my father is a high caste from one of the privileged classes of India. Mother lives in a hut, father in a mansion. Father is a landlord; mother, landless" (ix). Therefore, he declares himself an "*akkarmashi*" (half-caste) (ix) and says he is condemned and branded "illegitimate" (ix). Limbale can be taken as either a caste Hindu since his father is a Patil or an untouchable since his mother is an untouchable. Then, what 'karma' is he supposed to fulfill, a caste caste's or an untouchable untouchable's? Bechain's maternal grandfather marries Bechain's mother to Ramlal after the death of Bechain's father, Radheyshyam. Then, his mother and her children go to Pali-Mukimpur to live with Ramlal. Phoolchand refers to Bechain as a "son of a heifer." He means that he is a refugee in his stepfather's house, and hence, he means that he is inferior to an animal. Here, Bechain wonders in *My Childhood on My Shoulders* about the plight of illegitimate children in this society who are often found in Dalit communities (55). Malagatti writes in *Government Brahmana* that if a Dalit touches a vessel that belongs to a caste, then they will have to

smear it with cow dung and burn it in fire. Then, it will be immersed in a solution of tamarind and salt, and afterward, it will be immersed in cowcow's urine. Only then will the vessel be purified and kept with other vessels in their house. Malagatti here protests, saying a cow's urine is more pleasant for the caste Hindus than the touch of a human being (102). These are extremities of the ideology of purity-pollution. The very practice degrades a Dalit by bringing her/him down to the level of a non-human being.

Upendra Baxi and Bhikhu Parekh argue that public institutions in India entail elements of humiliation. Baxi says specific constitutional provisions, like reservation in India, may regulate the humiliation. However, it is the society that has failed to see the untouchables equally (59). Organized or institutionalized humiliation exists when social institutions and practices embody disrespect for and systematically violate the self-respect of an individual or group. An unequal society nourishes such organized humiliation. The caste Hindu society has used the institutions of the temples, schools, villages, panchayat, marriage, etc, to create the ideology of untouchability systematically, hence, to humiliate Dalits. However, Parekh argues that all unequal societies do not necessarily humiliate individuals or groups (31). Parekh cites an example of the modern liberal bourgeois society. In such a bourgeois society, the poor and powerless are exploited, manipulated, and sometimes humiliated. However, here, as Parekh argues, inequalities are relatively fluid. They allow "vertical mobility". One's life is not fixed forever in such a society (31). However, a society that has structuralized some practices does not allow the victims to have "vertical mobility." The inequalities in such a society are "ascriptive" based on skin, race, birth, ethnicity, caste, etc. Since the inequalities are ascriptive and unalterable, it has been made to believe they are unalterable. Such a society deliberately manipulates the available social and cultural institutions to its advantage. That society only maintains a hierarchical gradation of humanity, and humiliation is constructed into its very structure. It is based on slavery, racial segregation, and hierarchical status. Untouchability and the caste system are examples of institutionalized humiliation. Here, some human beings are identified

by birth as impure and inferior. The inequality and its consequence of humiliation begin with the very birth of an individual. In caste Hindu society, untouchables are untouchables because they are born to untouchables. V. Geetha observes that the "Dalit body becomes the playfield of humiliation. The Dalit body is the prison for the Dalit human, and his [her] corporeal being precedes him [her] and is itself considered as evidence of its lowness" (9).

Aravind Malagatti describes the plight of the young Dalit girls whose lives are ruined by the dehumanizing Jogini system. The joginis (women) are made to practice the ritual of begging twice weekly in the village. Generally, joints in the state of Karnataka are devoted to the goddess of Hulegemma (name of the goddess), whose temple is in the district of Koppal, and to the goddess of Yellamma, whose temple is in the district of Belagavi. Malagatti writes in *Government Brahman* while giving a picture of his locality: "ever" prostitute in the colony." Som" joints live by tying a replica of the goddess of Yella Yellamma's around their neck. They are called 'joga'his' or 'java' in 'Karnataka. They are to beg from five houses on Tuesdays and Fridays (55). It is believed in the district of Koppal that 'java' is 'not supposed to undergo family-planning medical operations. The joginis will consequently have many offspring. It, in turn, is a crucial economic burden on the family. The family suffers from utter poverty, and as a result, children suffer from hunger and malnutrition. Thus, the women in these traditions are condemned to subsist on begging and are subjected to the worst kind of sexual exploitation. This is one such institutionalized humiliation.

Potraj (this time for a man) tradition is another dehumanizing tradition imposed on Mahars in the state of Maharashtra. Like the women in the Jogini tradition, who are called jogathis, those men who are ritualistically devoted to the village deity are called potrajs. Potrajs are legitimate beggars who go around begging from village to village. The eldest sons in the Mahar families would be offered to the village deity as "port" ay." "To" o "for the son as Viagra or Potraja is considered a great honor and prestige for the family," says" Baby Kamble (19). One may then think about what potrajs do and what sort of recognition and respect they enjoy in the villages. The fact that

only Dalit communities offer their children devadasis, joginis, and potrajas proves that these traditions are social impositions on Dalits. Then, the question arises as to why Dalits sacrifice their children to these dehumanizing traditions. The traditions have been spiritualized and romanticized by the Hindu caste, and at the same time, such traditions meet their many odd needs, which is an answer to their hunger. As Baby Kamble says, "For that family, giving away the child in the service of the deity would sort out the problem of earning a livelihood. It was like making a provision for generations to come." (19) Thus, an element of poverty is involved in the illiterate Dalit Dalits' pittance of these traditions. Therefore, hunger plays a severe role in Dalits accepting the stigmatized social role in the name of traditions. A vast hype is also created around the Jogini, Devadasi, and Potraj customs. Potrajas are decorated in a specific style. The father of the child would teach his son how to carry on his head the *devhara*; how to dance, bend, and revolve, balancing its weight; and how to sing the prayer to the mother goddess; how to conduct the *dhupaarti*, beating the brass ring worn on his thumb to keep rhythm (19-21). A detailed account is given in Baby Kamble's *Prisons We Broke*. The customs are ritualized and surrounded by many hypes as symbols of honor. They are made to think of themselves as embodiments of the goddess, but in reality, such social roles are derogatory and hinder those complete material lives. These beliefs are blind faiths and superstitions which ruin the Dalit Dalits.

In her autobiography, Baby Kamble delineated how Potrajas are trained and respected among Dalit communities. The child's learning to be a Potraja would begin when he is seven. The first Tuesday in Ashadh (June and July) is chosen to initiate the son into the ritual. The relatives, Baby Kamble, writes, "gaze" upon the child, now became a potraja, with eyes brimming with admiration and love. Among the Mahars, there was great respect for the boy who became Potraja. Mothers would show the 'chil'-potraja' as a 'role model for their young sons' (21). A demeaning tradition such as this and the Yeskar Mahar duty have been valorized and followed by Dalits as a special "private" lege" and "honor" unit." Ambedkar analyzed and explained such demeaning cultural practices and advocated Dalits to

prohibit such practices.

Aravind Malagatti, unlike Siddalingaiah in *Ooru Keri*, narrates his life history not with a neutral tone but with sharp analysis. Thereby, he shows a rebellious tone in his narration.

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