



Research Paper

G. Kalyan Rao as an Contemporary Indian Writer

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ABSTRACT

G Kalyan Rao through his novel “Untouchable Spring” focuses on the identity of Dalits which is revealed through its rebellious, collective character; how the Dalit writers distinct their experience, their use of folk language, their commitment to human liberation and the influence of Ambedkar’s thoughts. The history of Dalit literature came into existence and is extensively talked about in this novel. G Kalyan Rao (author of the novel) and Sharankumar Limbale’s viewpoints and many others also helps us to understand “Untouchable Spring” from the perspective of a Dalit literature text.

KEYWORDS: Identity, Human Liberation, Collective character.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

G. Kalyan Rao is a renowned Indian writer who through his works attempts to depict the harsh reality of the society and its atrocities faced by the minority communities. The author clearly portrays the heritage and traditions of the Dalits by telling the story of “Untouchable Spring” through a Dalit protagonist. He also shows how the norms and traditions of their culture was passed on through oral means from generation to generations. Rao, being a Dalit added a personal touch to his novel as what he wrote was a result of what he faced being a Dalit in his community. The journey of being a Dalit and how different it is from the rest of the people is strongly portrayed in his work.

I. MAIN CONTEXT

Even though “Untouchable Spring” is a ‘memory text’, it has autobiographical elements that share personal experiences of a community altogether. Kalyan Rao traces the roots of his life as an artist and activist to the cultural lineages of his parents and to the magnificent cultural heritage of Dalits. Both on his mother’s side and his father’s side, there were good singers, actors and storytellers, great artists and gifted litterateurs. Rao’s unlettered grandmother, who is the inspiration for Ruth, a key character in the novel, was a renowned storyteller. She would weave together tradition and current events to create stories, which in turn in the novel becomes a collection of memories reconstructed by Reuben’s memory which was given an oral flavor by Ruth. Even the village ‘Yennala Dinni’ in the novel is based on the place of Sambasivapura Agrahara in Nellore district and Rao also states that the episode where Yellanna goes to see a ‘natakam’ performance was an actual incident in his life. Further Kalyan Rao himself makes some aspects clear in an essay which talks about “The Story behind the Story” of “Antarani Vasantam” where he states:

That’s true- my ancestors lived really outside the village. But they were inheritors of a magnificent culture. Great artists, Litterateurs, too. They did not know how to write. They’d weave songs. Weave poetry.... All that magnificence has become untouchable. Has been suppressed. Why so? This Brahminical dominance couldn’t tolerate its naturalness. In this country, more than art and literature, caste has become important. Art and literature have been assessed from the perspective of caste. The dominant upper caste culture does not feel ashamed of this. That’s the great tragedy here. That’s truly tragic.¹

1. ¹ Uma, Alladi and Sridhar, M. Translator’s Note: “Touch the Spring: An Introspection” *Untouchable Spring*. Hyderabad. April 2010.

In regard of this revolting spirit of Dalit mothers, in *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature* Sharankumar Limbale (translated by Alope Mukherjee) writes-

Revolt is the stage that follows anguish and rejection. I am human, I must receive all the rights of a human being — such is the consciousness that gives birth to this revolt. Born from unrestrained anguish, this explosive rejection and piercing revolt is like a flood, with its aggressive character and an insolent rebellious attitude.

(Limbale 31).

II. ABOUT THE NOVEL

Dalit literary development and advancement, which had started in the early part of the 20th century, has been a part of the maltreatment of Dalits by the upper castes. Through scholarly works, they have been endeavoring to ensure their feeling of pride, identity, personality, legacy and tradition of their local people. "Untouchable Spring" by Kalyan Rao addresses the circumstance of Dalits in a post-freedom time. It includes how they "discover their humankind through resistance." The novel investigates the lived insight and battle of Telugu Dalits and Dalit Christians in history from the colonial times to the present.

The opening pages of the novel give us some indication into the historical theme and narrative structure of this novel. The storyline is held together by the narrator, Ruth, whose memory takes her back two generations and whose experience covers another three. But memory we learn, is a fact of the present, not the past. Though the storyline of "Untouchable Spring" cuts back and forth across time, chronologically, the account begins with the terrible famines of the 1870's and 80's, in which many 'mala' and 'madiga' neighborhoods were wiped out. It is a story of degradation, migration, conversion to Christianity, battles with the upper castes both in society and within the Church. As we move down the generations, this story becomes one of involvement with revolutionary politics.

To comprehend what Dalit or Subaltern writing rely on, we need to realize who all constitute in the term a 'Dalit'. 'Harijans' and 'neo-Buddhists' are not by any means the only Dalits, the term depicts every one of the distant networks living external the limit of the town, just as 'Adivasis', landless ranch workers, laborers, the suffering masses, nomadic and criminal clans. Hence, the distant position as well as individuals who are lingering behind economic conditions likewise should be incorporated under this class.

Moreover, Subaltern writing isn't accurately that writing which imaginatively depicts the distresses, hardships, corruption, embarrassment and neediness suffered by Dalits. It additionally proposes that each person should discover freedom, honor, security, and independence from terrorizing by the other upper strata of society. These qualities are currently being explained in a specific sort of writing being known as the Subaltern or Dalit Writing. Perceiving the centrality of the person, this writing is completely immersed with humankind's delights and distresses. It sees individuals as preeminent, and leads them towards absolute insurgency. Kalyan Rao's "Untouchable Spring" fits to act as an illustration of this. Dalit social and basic creations make a huge basic mediation in the reasoning and expounding on Indian society, history, culture and literature.

The relationship of Subaltern writing to the mainstream writing is a tangled one. As per the set of experiences Dalit writing is identified with upper caste Hindu writing similarly as the Dalit society is to the upper position society; it is both a piece of but then separated from the standard. Through Dalit writing, the Dalit inferior has now showed up in writing as a talking subject, however this current inferior's discourse isn't introduced by the prevailing gathering's voice, language, tone, style or customs. Thusly, this writing is set apart by a discount dismissal of the custom, the style, the language and the worries of a Brahmanical writing that, even at its best, conveyed inside it the indications of the position based social and cultural order. All things being equal, Subaltern writing has set up its own custom or distant scholars against anti-caste thinkers like Buddha, Kabir, Phule and Ambedkar as its signposts.

There was a bad situation for Dalits in the substance of this writing. The space they involved external the town, all things considered, was deleted in the realm of writing. In this way, if society guaranteed its virtue by consigning the untouchables to a liminal space, writing went above and beyond; it guaranteed that the distant would not contaminate its reality even by contacting that space.

For millennia, Dalits have been denied of force, property and position. It was propounded that 'God made this progressive system' as its written in the 'Vedas' or 'Shastras' so Dalits may not agitator against social order. A huge number of ages of Dalits have kept on persevering through this foul play.

Dalit writers assert that their literature conveys the life that they lived, experienced and seen. Since the experience contained in Dalit literature is articulated out of desire for freedom, its character is collective. It is this experience that has inspired Dalit writers to write and this connection of experience with the lives of Dalits cannot be ignored. Thus "Experience here, is the product prepared from a chemical process, with pain and revolt as the ingredients. Dalit consciousness plays a prominent role in this." (Mukherjee 32)

Rural writers hold that, if 'the experience of untouchability' or 'the stigma of caste system' is set aside, the lives of all the oppressed people are alike. Notwithstanding, to deny the noticeable presence of the caste

system and say that all rural life is indistinguishable is to deny reality. It is preposterous to expect to ignore the experience of the untouchables, in light of the fact that it is the experience of thousands of individuals more than millennia. This additionally centers around the self-portrayal of Dalits regarding the idea of all-inclusiveness. Hence, Subaltern writing is brought into the world from the belly of this untouchability. This is its uniqueness.

The truth of Dalit writing is particular, as is the language of this reality. It is the uncouth-impolite language of Dalits, being the expressed (oral) language of Dalits. The truth of the matter is that it is correctly the encounters that stream from a centuries-old progressive and genetic framework, unalterable in light of the fact that endorsed by religion with the idea that individuals are dirtied and untouchable, which makes the Dalit particular and remarkable. Any remaining encounters of avoidance, enslavement and abuse that takes after those of different gatherings, result from this principal reality. Dalits may achieve instructive, financial, social and political achievement, however their remarkable 'Dalitness' remains.

Limbale characterizes Dalit literature as “purposive, and describes its purpose as revolutionary, transformational and liberatory.” (Mukherjee 14) The claim that Subaltern literature is revolutionary and transformational is not based on the fact that all Dalit writers adhere to a radical ideology, such as socialism or Marxism. It rests on the view that, as much as transforming the condition of the Dalit and challenging the caste system is a revolutionary cause, a literature that is entirely dedicated to this cause is by definition, radical.

Arjun Dangle, the Marathi Dalit writer and social activist said that:

Dalit literature is marked by revolt and negativism, since it is closely associated with the hopes for freedom by a group of people who, as untouchables, are victims of social, economic and cultural inequality...Dalit literature is nothing but the literary expression of this awareness...Dalit literature is associated with a movement to bring about change. (Dangle 1994, vii-viii)

Therefore, Dangle suggesting the fact that in Dalit writings there is new thinking and a new point of view.

III. CONCLUSION

Very much like in "Untouchable Spring" by Kalyan Rao includes an unromanticized and un pitying appearance in writing of the materiality of Dalit life in the entirety of its measurements. Dalit (auto) biographical and biographical accounts and verse neither cover up nor romanticize anything. Individuals that occupy these writings are not objects of pity. Their life is frequently hopeless, embarrassing, and loaded up with day-by-day tokens of their contamination and discrimination. Consequently, portrayal of Dalit life isn't restricted to an over-the-top self-indulging portrayal of the hopelessness and horror of individuals unequipped for acting, as is it in a large part of the upper caste writing of Dalits. Subsequently, affirming the way that Subaltern writing is neither a joy giving writing of fine suppositions and refined signals, nor a narcissistic floundering in self-indulgence.

Therefore, one can conclude that in “Untouchable Spring” as a Subaltern Literature, Kalyan Rao brings into notice that being a memory text, it is focused more upon the celebration of Dalit life and that it's not just a victimized text as throughout the text there is emphasis on suffering as well as their victory over some events through their rebellion and struggle and opposing others as a community standing together.

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