



THE ELEMENTS OF SELF-DENIAL AND RESISTANCE IN DAYA PAWAR'S BALUTA AND BAMA'S KARUKKU

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ABSTRACT:

It is said that literature is the reflection of life and society. Every human life and all aspects of our society must be reflected in literature. Is this really true when we consider the socio-economically deprived and culturally marginalized class of our society? Mainstream literature never tried to hear the voice of voiceless in full measure. It was Dalit literature which protested against all forms of exploitations based on class, caste, gender, race, and occupation. It is a literature of protest, pain, anger, agony, and quest for identity. According to *Arjun Dangale*, Dalit literature is one which acquaints people with caste system and untouchability in India.

The present paper is primarily focused on Daya Pawar's *Baluta* and Bama's *Karukku*. These autobiographies were primarily written in Marathi and Tamil languages respectively and later on they were translated into English language. *Baluta* is a story of humiliation experienced by the author, both in rural and urban life which is narrated by Dagdu Maroti Pawar to the more literate Daya Pawar, both are the personas of the author himself. Bama being Dalit Christian woman experiences humiliation because of her caste and gender. In this paper the emphasis is given to the elements of self-denial and resistance in Daya Pawar's *Baluta* and Bama's *Karukku*.

Key words: - *Baluta, Karukku, self-denial, resistance, protest, movement, Bama, Daya pawar.*

Aesthetics of Dalit Literature :

Many of the Savarna critics argued that Dalit literature should not be considered as distinct form of literature and hence this literature should be evaluated on the basis of universal literary theories and criteria. Shriranankumar Limbale opposes this view and feels that mainstream literary criticism can never give justice to Dalit literature.

Savarna critics like Kavi Anil, Vidyadhar Pudalik, Nirmalkumar Phadkule and Narhar Kurudkar states that any person, by the power of his imagination can write about Dalit sensitivity and hence Dalit literature should not be limited to the writings of untouchables only. Sharankumar Limbale strongly opposes them and claims that it is quite impossible for the savarna writers to fully deal with Dalit life. Lived experience of untouchable writer is worthy than that of imagined delineation of pain and suffering, and the feelings of self denial,

resistance and anger, A non-Dalit writer can never imagine the whole Dalit consciousness.

Baluta and Karukku as a narrative of pain and suffering and anger

As a literary genre autobiography claims to be different from other literary forms as it is based on fact than fiction, and lived experience than imagined picture. Dalit autobiographies are narratives of pain, suffering, anger and revolt. Daya Pawar's *Baluta* and Bama's *Karukku* are no exception to this.

Rejection of heroism

Dalit autobiographies reject heroism. Here the hero is the victim of caste discrimination and humiliation. He doesn't possess the heroic qualities to conquer all situations and he is not the only person who can liberate the whole community.

Baluta as Daya Pawar's Journey of 40 years

Daya Pawar born as Dagadu Pawar in the village Dhamnagaon, and migrated to Mumbai for the

sake of employment. The entire story revolves between his tiny village and a big city. In both places his caste belittles him. Daya Pawar is targeted and tormented because of his caste.

Elements of Self Denial and resistance in Bama's *Karukku*

Now we will see some of the experiences from Bama's life delineated in *Karukku* which have the elements of self denial and resistance

In the very opening of Second chapter Bama reveals that when she was studying in standard third she never heard people speaking openly about untouchability. But she adds that she had already seen, felt, experienced and humiliated by it.

A bitter experience at School Street:

One day when Bama was coming to home from her school, she crossed the street of the *Pallas* and came to her *Parayas* street, she saw an elder man from her street coming from the direction of bazaar. He was carrying a small packet which may contain vadai or green banana bhaji. He came along, he hold the packet by its string, without touching it. Then this elder man went to the direction of *Naicker* man, and bowed low and extended the packet toward him. Then *Naicker* man opened the parcel and began to eat the vadais. After returning home she narrated the full episode to her elder brother. Her elder brother told her that the *Naickers* are the upper caste, and *Parayas* are the lower caste, therefore *Naickers* should not touch *Parayas* and if they do that then they will be polluted. This was the reason he had to carry the package by its string. After listening this she felt very sad, provoked and angry that she wanted to go and touch that parcel.

Humiliating experience of Grandmothers

Bama's both grandmothers worked as servants for *Naicker* families. Bama felt shameful when kids were calling her grandmother by her name. While her grandma was calling them very respectfully as *Ayya* or *Master* even to a little

newborn *Naicker* boy. The reason of this was that they belonged to so called superior *Naicker* Caste. As other untouchables in India *Parayas* in Tamilnadu were not given easy access to drinking water. The *Naicker* women would pour out the water from a height of four feet while women from *Paraya* caste received and drank it with cupped hands held to their mouths. Bama says that she always felt terrible when she watched all this.

Bama's grandmother and other women from her community were doing menial work from dawn to dusk but they were not given respect for their work only because of their caste. After day break Patti, grandma of Bama would go to *Naicker* houses, sweep out cowshed, collect up the dung and dirt, and then bring home the left-over rice and curry from the previous evening. Bama realized later on that this was the unwanted food that the *Naickers* were ready to throw away. This food was not handed over respectfully, when *Naicker* lady came out with her leftovers, maintaining a safe distance and trying not to touch as touch may pollute her.

The Coconut Episode at School

Bama says that even in school her caste chased her. Students of her caste were always targeted and blamed. When anything happened and resulted in bad way, *Cherry* children were blamed for any little mistakes. Cheap labour work was always given to these boys. Once when she was playing with her friends the game of climbing the coconut tree and touching the coconut, the coconut fell at her touch. All the students were frightened and dispersed to their home. Next morning at the time of assembly headmaster, who belonged to *Chaaliyar* caste, scolded Bama in front of all students in very rude manner and blamed her for stealing the coconut. When he said, "You have shown us your true nature as a *Paraya*. We cannot allow you inside this school. Stand outside" Bama felt ashamed and insulted in front of all the

children. All the children looked at her in strange way and went to their classes. Bama was in shock and she didn't know what to do. Then a teacher who lived on her street advised her to go to the priest and bring a letter from him to headmaster. She went to the Priest and told her story and begged him for giving permission to join school. The priest gave her permission letter but he commented on her lower caste which made Bama more nervous.

Embarrassing experience at Hostel

Bama went to another school which had a hostel facility in a neighboring town as there was just up to eight classes in her village. Here Bama felt very shy and fearful as children wore smart clothes, jewels and wristwatches. All these students were from rich and upper caste families. The warden of hostel was prejudiced about low-caste poor children. She was scolding these students for no reasons. She was always passing mocking comments on the poor condition of this poor and low caste *Cheri* students. According to warden-sister these students were living in hostel just to eat nice food as they don't get at their home. They look like a round potato when they stay in hostel and become just skin and bone when they go to their home. Her comments were embarrassing to Bama.

In the Bus

When Bama was going to her home from hostel or vice versa, she experienced the stigma of low caste as *Naicker* woman would prefer to stand but not to seat beside her in the bus. Sometime Bama was asked to shift to another seat. Bama says that this happened many time with her. *Naicker* women were keeping distance in the fear of getting polluted. When she narrated her experience of bus to her mother, she advised her not to reveal her caste to other passengers. But Bama asked herself why should one pretend to be from different caste.

Experience at College

When Bama went to college where students from different caste and economic background studied altogether. Bama assumed that here she will not be treated on the basis of her caste. But even in college she found caste differences. The rules of college and hostel were not same for all students. Upper caste students deserved some privileges while low caste students were treated differently. Once Bama asked permission to join Communion ceremony of her younger brother and sister. Principal and Warden refused her permission. When Bama insisted for permission, Principal mockingly replied that what kind of Communion ceremony will be there in her caste, which is socially and economically deprived. Bama experienced same pangs of caste when she joined B.Ed. College.

Caste-bias at Work place

After completing her education Bama worked as a teacher. A nun asked her about her caste identity. When Bama replied that she is from Parayar caste she made a noticeable face. Bama here realized that all nuns were not just indifferent to Dalit children but also Dalit teachers. Bama realized that these nuns are not following the teaching of Lord Christ as instead of love they have hate towards Dalit students and teachers. Bama wished to become a nun to help those students who were discriminated on the basis of their caste. At last she resigned her teaching post and went to enter religious order.

Discrimination in Convent

Bama read about the lady who founded a particular order for the betterment of socially and economically weaker section of the society. This woman lived and died only for them. This woman was the inspiration for Bama as she wanted to do something for low caste people. She was tried to dissuade from her decision to join religious order by her near. They told her that even this religious place is not free from discrimination, but she was not in a mood to hear anyone. She thought that here no one will

ask about her caste. But that was her illusion. Bama soon realized that in this order Tamil people were looked upon as a lower caste. And among Tamils, Pariyar was a separate category. The entire trainees in that convent were eager to know Bama's caste. When Bama revealed her caste identity no one was ready to believe her. In one class a sister told that Harijan women were not allowed in certain orders and they could not become prospective nun because of their caste. There was a separate order for these outcaste women. Bama was shocked after listening this. She lamented herself deeply that there was no place that was free of caste. After completing her training Bama became a nun and was sent to a convent somewhere. A school was attached to this convent.

Students from Bama's caste were not admitted to this school. Only children from well to do families and belonging to so called higher caste attended this school. While the people of her community were doing menial work like sweeping the premise, swabbing and washing the classrooms and cleaning out the washrooms. Here the authority always used filthy language about low caste people. In this convent and school everyone assumed that Bama might be from superior caste. They were using disparaging language about her caste in front of her. There was a continuous inner conflict in her mind. According to other nuns low caste people are sans morality, sans cleanliness and sans culture. And their condition could not be changed. And helping them is like giving milk to cobra. Bama listened to their words and as she said she died several deaths within.

CONCLUSION :

When we think about the artistic standards of Dalit Literature we could find different opinions. According to one opinion or school of thought a demand for separate criteria for evaluation of Dalit literature should not be granted. Critics

like P.S. Rege and Balkrushna Kawthekar advocates that all forms of literature including Dalit literature must be evaluated on the basis of universal aesthetic standards. Another school of thought adheres to the view that every genre of literature must be treated as a distinct entity and ipso facto universal aesthetic standards could not be applied to them. As there is no place for beauty and pleasure in Dalit literature, it is mainly concerned with realistic portrayal of lived experiences of Dalit writers. It depicts exploitation and humiliation of deprived class.

It should be noted that life experiences of Daya Pawar and Bama are depicted in their autobiographical work *Baluta* and *Karukku*. However both texts should not be considered as person-centric. Like other Dalit works they speak the voice of their respective community. The elements of self denial and resistance are not person centric but it's about their community.

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