

Meena Kandasamy: The Voice of the Unvoiced (With special reference to her poetry)

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Abstract

India is a country of vast diversity, immersed in various traditional institutions that pose a challenge for the country. Though all cultures with time are open for transitions, yet some rigid norms do not let the time govern itself. Every society, religion, region, class continuously strive to emerge, without even noticing the same need for the female folks. Resultantly, Indian women have always faced the societal oppressions in multi-dimensional ways, this class, undoubtedly, is a part of the marginalized India. The society is further partitioned on the basis of caste, creed, and sex. In the light of new free India, the paper intends to depict the pitiable condition of the Dalit women in free India with special reference to Meena Kandasamy's poetic excellence in *The Touch* and *Ms. Militancy*. She has effectively been the spokeswoman for her sex in dalit society. She has not left any stone unturned to bring in the changes in the lives of the marginalized class of the society through her works. Her portrayal of the lower strata is an eye opener for the so-called civilized country. Meena writes for a magical transformation with in the country that can only be possible in the "dreams of our India". She discusses the plight of the women and reasons behind the unjust treatment given to them. Meena cleverly uses her literary genius to explore the darker side of society for the betterment of dalit. The paper is an attempt to study the writings of dalit female writers for better understanding of the marginalized section's universal sufferings.

Keywords: oppressor, marginalized, section, downtrodden, suffering.

Introduction

Meena Kandasamy is a well-known contemporary Indian dalit literary icon, born on 12th October 1984 to educated Tamil parents. She is a realistic fictional poet, fiction writer, translator and activist, who started writing at quite early stage of her life. She was seventeen only when took responsibility of depicting reality without any sugar coating. The mere portrayal of the marginalized class has been her primary concern that she has taken care of till now. She started as a poet and later took up translation of dalit regional writers. She has a degree of 'Doctorate of Philosophy' in Socio-linguistics from Anna University, Chennai. She, being the first woman dalit writer does justice to her taken task of exposing ongoing atrocities on dalit.

Dalit literature has gathered momentum since 1972 when the young Marathi writers-activists started an organization called Dalit panthers. The practice of untouchability endangered the marginalized class and the movement originated in response to the social injustice in mid twentieth century. Though many social reformers stood against it in the late nineteen century successfully abolished the practice in 1950 under the article 17, yet the ground reality in today's scenario is the other way round.

Women in India has always been discriminated on the basis of gender, dalits are no exception. The so-called civilized society marginalizes females in every field and task. Dalit already the oppressed class has seen the brutality of the oppressors did not even leave any stone unturned to further exploit their women folks. The situation is worse for the dalit

women. They have been striving for their survival even in their own set up. Many dalit writers have come up with realistic tragic stories of this lower strata of the society that can give anyone goose bumps. Meena Kandasamy has tried her level best to portray the social reality of this downtrodden class.

Meena Kandasamy is the first woman dalit poet. She has given her voice to the unvoiced class of the society. She is a realistic poet who depicts the atrocities, classicism in the free and independent India. Even after the 77 years of freedom, dalit still live in a chained society. The marginalized class has always been the victims of development. The more society grows, the more marginalized they become. The articles in the constitution have not broken the shackles of responsibilities on these oppressed folks. Meena, being a poetic interpretation is a rebel at the same time. She insists on breaking the sequence of brutalities. Meena in her collection of poems, *Touch* (2006) and *Ms. Militancy* (2010), examines the utopian culture, tradition and the terrible history. The poems of *Touch* are divided into seven groups: *Bring him up to worship you, Touch, and some spice, To that more congenial spot, Lines of control, Slander in a slaughterhouse, and Their Daughters*. The second part of *Touch* deals with the issues of the marginalized/dalit communities of our society. Casteism has been deep rooted in the blood, this social evil is a tool to dominate the lower strata. Kandasamy wants to have an idea about the prejudiced elite class behaviour with the dalit people. Her poetic brilliance identifies the caste theories and portrays the objectionable attitude of the civilised society against the lower strata. The 'Touch' highlights the untouchability to the extent that even the single touch of an untouchable can force the high class to pacify their body through prayers and sacred water. The height of dejection captures the dalit minds and leave them shattered. Even the liberal minded people don't have their say in the society. The influence of the upbringing changes them in a course of time. Meena depicts the societal injustice done to the class that has strictly been marginalised. She can also be called a dalit social realistic writer and poet. Her poems give a live experience of the lives of dalit. Kandasamy opposes the hypocrite society through realistic portrayal. Kamla Das expresses herself in the foreword to *Touch*:

"dying and then resurrecting herself again and again in a country that refuses to forget the unkind myths of caste and religion, Meena carries as her twin self, her shadow, the dark cynicism of youth that must help her to survive" (7).

Meena strives to bring into light the pitiable condition of the class. She has used English language for her expressions and projected them well. Her efforts have always motivated other writers to work for dalit. She puts her selfless attempts for the betterment of dalit community. Meena's expression regarding her use of language is remarkably presented by her. She claims:

"I dream of an English/ full of the words of my language... An english that shall tie a white man's tongue. (Kandasamy, 2006)

Kandasamy visualises the society as an epitome of injustice, the societal clashes are based on caste, creed, and gender. She has been an expressive voice of the victims, but in vain. Her poetry shows a kind of helplessness in the lives of dalit. Many laws have been introduced, but the ground reality remains the same. Kandasamy's works are thought provoking, forcing the minds to be critical of the ways of the so-called upper class.

'Touch' is a satire on the civilised society that boasts of its culture, principles, and empathy and it is totally opposite. The eyewitnesses can reveal it to the others but they don't have any say. Kandasamy has been an inspiration to other writers to reveal hypocrisy of free Indian society. She knows how to play with the words, and she deliberately files attacks the prevailing class prejudices. She says:

My language is dark and dangerous and desperate

In its eagerness to slaughter your myths (Kandasamy, 2010)

The poetess bluntly warns the elite class about her intention to reveal the corrupt attitude of people around. She sadly pens down the fact of an indifferent society that keeps mum seeing the atrocities done to the other strata of the society. A common man is least bothered about the conventional injustice. The way she describes her thoughts makes the readers stunned and disturbed at the society's repulsiveness. She expresses herself saying:

That now upon a future time/ there will be a revolution

It will begin in our red hot dreams that scourge/ that scorch/ that scald

That sizzle like lava but never settle down

Never poignantly solidify

It will begin when the oppressors will wince

Every time they hear our voices

(Kandasamy, 2006)

'Touch' represents her agony against the discrimination on the basis of caste that is very much prevalent in Indian society. The marginalised section has to face humiliation which shatters their self-respect and urge to live. The poetess as an informed writer does her task perfectly and presents the realistic picture of the society. She claims that the anger and resentment in the marginalised class can never settle down unless gets social equality. The pain is unending and unexplained. It is difficult for her to make people imagine the pitiable condition of the downtrodden people.

Casteism has always ruled the society, provides a helping hand in the subjugation of the marginalised strata of the society. The hierarchal social structure dominate the lower ones and want total surrender that is really not possible. Though caste has always divided the society, yet it is considered as a tool to suppress the other. It is a human nature to make a disadvantage of the other, casteism has further increased the powers of the oppressors. The irony of the situation is that the deeds of a person does not decide his stature in the society but his caste does. It remains the cause of every kind of discrimination. Individuality suffers a lot and gives rise to anger, insecurities, and hate. The untouchables and marginalised

class have always been degraded and demoralised. Works are assigned on the basis of the class, creed, and sex. In Touch Meena Kandasamy highlights pitiable condition, frustration, humiliation, oppression, and anger of the oppressed section. Meena's poem 'Another Paradise Lost: The Hindu Way', is a revolutionary one to disseminate the anguish and resentment. The poem is a conversation between a serpent and the poetess. The serpent is the monarch and was held with honour on earth and heaven at the same time. He used to question Gods about the futility of caste system on earth. He wanted to have classless society for its better functioning, but he had to face the wrath and was thrown down to the earth. He was called a rebel, he was not supposed to speak against the wishes of the gods. He was badly cursed as he wanted to have equality on earth that was not taken in a positive way. The system could not be dismantled by anyone on this earth, and hence it flourishes by the grace of god. The serpent reveals:

I wanted to know why caste was there, why people suffered because of their karmas.

I questioned the Gods, and the learned sages there.

I asked what would happen if a high born did manual work just like the low-born.

I worried about the division of labour, this disparity in dreams and destinies.

You could say I was a rebel pleading for liberty-equality-fraternity. (56-63)

Meena Kandasamy unmasks the real profile of the people who project to be liberal and just. She discusses the contradictory standards of people that are really harmful for the survival of the marginalised section. The social structure has been organised in such a way that one summer can never make a summer, the change can be brought unanimously. Even the elite class should come up and practice what they preach in public. She is very outspoken and call the oppressor as the privileged class and the oppressed ones are considered to be the unprivileged ones. She remarks:

We will singe the many skins you wear to the world

The skins you change at work

The skins called castes and the skins called race

The skins you mend once a week

The filthy skin you thought you could retain at bed... (Kandasamy, 2006)

Meena Kandasamy blames the upper class of veiling themselves as the path bearer of the society. She further puts allegations on them saying that their real motive is to earn name and fame at any cost for which they crush the marginalised section to the fullest. They have two faces, they have to hide the ugliest one from the society. Actually, the Indian society has more concession for them and the underrepresented bear the burden of societal norms. She questions the concept of all men are equal in the eyes of God and law. Meena states:

Non dualism/atman/ Self/Brahmaan/God

Are equal and same

So I untouchable outcast am God.

Will you ever agree?

Can my untouchable atman and your

Brahmin Atman ever be One? (Kandasamy, 2006)

Meena follows the realistic portray of the society. She does not prefer any kind of sugar coating to describe the situations. She live in a realistic world of beasts and parasites, and finds it truly difficult to bring in the changes easily. She being a dalit writer can also be called a social realistic writer who portrays the societal ills in order to reform it. The realism and contemporary ideology reveals the basic conventional partition of classes. Kandasamy writes in a deductive way, she starts talking about the condition of a woman in society then comes particularly to a dalit woman tragedy that seems a way ahead from a general caste female. Females have always been marginalised and considered as merely objects. This mind set further exploits the female folks. The historical facts prove Kandasamy's depiction of women oppression. In every war, the women had to suffer humiliation, abuse, and ill-treatment. Meena's revolutionary attitude embarks the journey towards real equity that is not superficial in nature. The writer always desires for self-respect and right to live with dignity. The resentment is not baseless, equality in terms of living is confined. Women act as slaves taking permission for their future ventures, actions, and planning. The freedom of speech remains surfaced most of the times. Meena concerns for the dignified lives of women in free India which is beyond imaginations in this contemporaneous world. They are victims of ego clashes, superiority, and male chauvinism. The constant torture and mistreatment derail them forever, they are alive but become detached. They are mostly unheard and at times prefer to keep themselves mum. Meena objects the patriarchal notion followed everywhere. This prevailing system encourages males to further mishandle females. She says:

To make her yours and yours alone

You pushed her deeper into harems

Domesticated into drudgery....she was just a slave

(Kandasamy, 2006)

Meena, however, openly refuses to be a follower of the dissembler society. She does not want to be dictated every time. She believes in sharing and welcoming different ideas. She strongly believes in unconstructed society, there should be norms but not a line drawn forever from a particular gender or class. Love can change a person but not an order can do it.

With the same perception, she expresses herself:

When you called me to light up your life

I could never refuse... Love I can't be a candle for I know it's an ancient lie

The candle is for the solemn...for those who yearn a slow and

Tenderness/Not for us... (Kandasamy, 2006)

Turning the tables, she further says:

Love, I will promise you a substitute

I could be that piece of holy camphor

So safely locked from your prying hands...

Our blending shall be so sublime, so intense, so total.

Come consummate me Devastate me love, if you ever will

But with a force that I will forever remember. (Kandasamy, 2006)

Females have always been sexually objectified, the demeaning nature of the society remains constant for this marginalised class. The division is based on superiority, sexual need, and psychological assistance. Males have always been dependant on females but with a different outlook. The self-centred behaviour can easily be gauged by their authoritatively tone that really hurts. Since ages, women have been suffering the pain of misogyny. The contemporaneous approach towards the women is same as it was before. Though, there have been many women empowerment programmes, yet the change is negligible. No doubt, Meena must have been an eyewitness of male superiority as she belongs dually to the marginalised section, she is a dalit and female 'the other of the other'. The more she writes, the more history of subjugation and oppression gets registered in her mind. A dalit female has had the worst of experience of gender and class discrimination and the marks don't subside. Sarangi feels:

"For her, writing means tracing out her identity-

her "womanliness", her "Tamilness" and "low/outcasteness"

that she wears with pride (Sarangi, par1).

Meena's writing skills are not dependable on any kind of explanation. She writes very subtly without accelerating any issue unnecessarily. The projection of the society is very vividly done, simple language makes her works easily readable. No complexity has been observed in her works. The deliberate representation of the oppressed class puts her in the list of social realistic writers who somehow try to bring about a favourable change in the society. The rigid conventions have always chained the marginalised section of the society.

Meena inspects the life of a girl very minutely. Being a girl, she can easily grasp the problem the other girl is in. even the custom of a marriage is a very challenging task for her. She has to bear frowns on the faces, greed in eyes, despotic attitude, and compromising live ahead forever. The irrational scanning of a girl is cruel that no one can understand unless feels it. She says:

Look at the floor/ the fading carpet and the unshapely toes/

Of the visitors who will inspect the weight/

Of your gold/ the paleness of your complexion/

the length of your hair and ask questions about/ the degree you hold

and the transparency of your past... (Kandasamy 2006)

Meena criticises the standard selection system during marriages, rather she refuses to even consider it as a part of life.

Actually, the overburdened femininity wants to unshackle themselves. Meena She opposes it bluntly and says:

There will be no blood on our bridal beds

We are not the ones you will choose for wives (Kandasamy, 2010)

Meena Kandasamy feels really sorry for women, as the changing society does not moderate anything for them. Women can get education, may work if it's permissible by the family, might hang out with friends, but after the completion of household chores. The house tasks have not been divided, both work outside, the inside tasks still are performed by the women whether tired, ill, or feeling giddy. Here, society does not utter a word as it's already male's world. If a woman is unable to perform her tasks, she has to face the consequences. Hypocrisy has no way, somehow, every individual is a part of this hypocritical behaviour of society. Nobody can change this constructed thought, it has been followed through ages. She targets the society saying that it makes a woman:

The spoon-feeding the man

The pot and pan- banging

The sweeping-the floor

The masochist slave (Kandasamy, 2006)

A woman is never a woman but a mother, sister, daughter, wife, even a goddess. Her individuality is compromised, every time she shares her views is criticised first, mocked at. She hardly gets an applause at her achievement, rather raised eyebrows question her talent. She remains a cook, helper, sweeper, and laundry lady, nothing else. The reason for her agony is the upbringing of her sons which is done more by set societal norms than the mother herself. She has to feed the males, she is in touch with. Meena believes that women should stand for themselves as no-one will do this for them. A woman should gather confidence, and project her feminine ideology upfront without any kind of hesitation. Unless, she senses the suppression and speaks for herself, others can never. In her another collection of poems, Ms. Militancy, Meena directly projects her image as an extremist who bluntly condemns the prevailing system. Every work of her is another revelation of pain and protest against the oppressors, and the irony of the situation is that the oppressors belong to her proximity. Meena firmly believes that "charity begins at home", a woman has to speak for herself at her closed premises. She says in the beginning to her book Ms Militancy:

You are the repressed Ram from whom I run away repeatedly/

You are Indra causing bloodshed...you are all men for whom

I would never moan, never mourn.

You are the conscience of Hindu society.

Your myths put me in my place.

Therefore, I take perverse pleasure in such deliberate paraphrase. (Kandasamy, 2010)

Meena's writings attack the ideal patriarchal society set up. She tries to explain idealism through equity, which is not easily understandable by the heads of patriarchy. She does not leave gods as well, she considers them as the epitome of the patriarchal system. She finds gods responsible for the wretched conditions as no shelter is provided to the poor females. No doubt, her anguish forces her to complain before the gods. She has an idea about her unheard voice in the society, and that leads to her moaning before the gods. The acceptance of being ignored, muffled aggravates her inner self, leaving her distressed. She feels helpless and her expressions prove it. She says at a place:

My Mahabharata moves to Las Vegas; my Ramayana is retold in three different ways.

I am unconventional but when I choose to, I can carry tradition.

That is why I am Mira, Andal and Akka all at once.

Spreading myself out like a feast inviting the gods to enter my womb...

like each of these women I have to write poetry to be heard,

I have to turn insane to stay alive. (Kandasamy, 2010)

Meena suggests all women to come up as an empathetic voice with their ideas for their betterment. Woman should cease projecting herself as a mere submissive. Her self-expression does not mean that she revolts every time, but it's the projection of her growth that the society keeps a check on.

I growth that the society tries to check. She says:

I work to not only get back at you.

I actually fight to get back to myself.

I donot write into patriarchy.

My Maariamamma bays for blood.

My Kali kills. My Draupadi strips.

My Sita climbs onto a strangers lap.

All women militate.

They brave bombs, they belittle kings. (Kandasamy, 2010)

Meena's dialogues attack on the social odds that are generally ignored by the society. Society prefers to keep itself mum at the suffering of a female. The pseudo- equality is chosen to be talked about, ills are taboos and are liked to be hidden. Women are generally not heard, cannot even think of being listened to. Meena expresses herself very strongly:

I strive to be a shrew in a society that believes in suffering in silence.

I strive to be a sphinx: part woman, part lioness armed with lethal riddles.

Come, unriddle me. But be warned I never falter in a fight. (Kandasamy, 2010)

Meena Kandasamy politely warns society about her rebellious attitude towards the prejudiced society. She further claims that she has to struggle for her survival. The art of expression remains constant and she deliberately projects the harsh reality. She acts as a voice to the unvoiced people so as to notify all about the changing behaviour of female folks who are now ready to face any consequence for her freedom.

Meena strongly proves herself an agnostic. She believes in deeds, but has to face caste based discrimination. Her thought about religion based prejudices is encouraged by religious connotations and different stories. In Eklaivan, an episode from Mahabharata, she vividly explains the casteism at that time even followed by great teachers. Eklaivan had to get his right thumb amputated as asked by Guru Dronacharya. He was not allowed to learn archery as he belonged to low strata. The poem reads as:

You can do a lot of things

With your left hand. Besides,

fascist Dronacharya's warrant Left handed treatment.

Also You don't need your right thumb To pull a trigger or hurl a bomb. (1-9)

A question arises out of the episode if Dronacharya wanted Eklavya to learn the archery better than all or he had some prejudices against the class. The poetess firmly states his biasness towards the lower class of Eklavya. She does not even have a second thought, but asks repeatedly whether it can be justified or not. Her notion has no bounds, rather she tries to link every thing to the class discrimination. In 'Liquid Tragedy: Karamchedu 1985' Meena Kandasamy recalls the barbaric massacre on July 17 1985 in Andhra Pradesh in which six Madiga (lower caste) men were killed and three Madiga women were brutally raped by the Kammas (upper caste men). The massacre was followed when there was a protest by a Madiga woman as she saw Kammas were washing of their buffaloes in the pond whose water the Madigas drank. The poet writes:

Buffalo Baths. Urine. Bullshit Drinking Water for the Dalits

The very same Pond. Practice for eons.

A Bold Dalit lady dares to question injustice. Hits forth with her pot.

Her indignation Is avenged. Fury let loose. Violence. Rapes. Killings..... (1-9)

Kandasamy has a very genuine question to ask people about proposing something authentic. The marginalised class should be allowed to put forth their issues before the head of the restricted society. Right to speech is a fundamental right according to Article 14 A, which can be used by any star of the society without class, caste, gender discrimination. The suppressing the demand of lower strata make them feel detached and humiliated. It acts as a hindrance in their growth. The dream of

free India remains a dream till now. The changed society has not fully transformed its set norms for class division. No one can even imagine casteism in 21st century, lower strata still have to take water from the ponds where upper caste wash their buffaloes. The killing of Madiga men and rape of the women show the superiority of the upper class. Such incidents can still be heard in the so-called educated and civilised society.

The unending brutality with the oppressed class makes them feel unwanted in the society, their behaviour gets a setback as it affects them badly. The unending subjugation kills them daily, they don't even try to retaliate as only a few gather themselves to stand and speak for the whole class. The poem 'Fleeting', the everlasting impressions of despotism can never be erased out of their minds. The marginalised class may not be able to recall their history but every step towards embarrassment remains alive till death. The order of class division never fails to take over the oppressed minds. The poem is an attack on social evils:

And fleeting memories are perishable—

Imagery showcase stuff having expiry dates,

Caste perennially remains a scheming bulldozer Crushing Dalits—

And renewing, revoking our bitter past. (1-6)

The societal attitude is to divide things for their benefit and need. Even gods are divided and made the personal property of the upper class. It is another tool to dominate the marginalised section. Temple is also a place for upper class, lower section cannot even think of entering and praying, if they do so, they get a severe punishment by the saviours of religion. Meena Kandasamy opposes these activities and call them a brutal practice done by the upper class. The poem 'Prayers' delineates such harsh realities. Even if a sick dalit goes near the temple to take the blessings of god, he is killed. The poetess presents realistic incidents that really make us feel sorry for the marginalised class. She writes:

He drags himself clumsily to a nearby temple.

Sadly, of an Upper caste God.

Away from the temple, he bends in supplication. (7-9)

An irked Rajput surged forth and smote the untouchable with an iron rode.

The warrior caste lion couldn't tolerate encroachment. (14-16)

The poet is really concerned about the increasing caste division. The rigidity is increasing rather than getting subsidised. The inter caste relationships are not allowed specially between the upper and the lower class. The division is like the bifurcation of power and dignity. People have built this world of illusion that does not allow a particular class to live peacefully with dignity. The violation of set norms result in inhuman punishment. The poem titled 'We will rebuild worlds' she explains how typical punishments are given to the said culprits. She states:

But the crimes of passion/ Our passion/your crimes Poured poison,
and pesticide through the ears-nose-mouth/ Or hanged them in public/
because a man and a woman Dared to love

And you wanted/to teach /other boys and other girls/the lessons of /
how to/whom to/ when to/where to/continue their caste lines. (16-23)

The poem discusses how lower strata gets harassed and mishandled. Meena believes that the lower strata will make their own world of equity, they will no longer bow down their heads before the impractical selfish society. The time has changed everything, upper class will witness this change soon. She finds a rebellious attitude to be essential to stand against the atrocities, or else future generation would face the same. A firm statement believes:

So/nw/upon future time/

There will be a revolution. (42-43)

In 'Dignity', she appeals the upper class to be considerate and have sympathy for the lower class of the society on human grounds. She further tries to convince them that all are equal in the eyes of god and law, who we are to discriminate on different grounds. Her request for nobility should be considered. She does not leave any stone unturned to make people understand the need and importance of equality in the growth of the society. She prays to have an empathetic towards the oppressed class. She also informs the heads of the civilised society not to mishandle the lower strata without any reason, she insists that how one can be denied one's dignity. She writes:

You stick to your faith the incurable sickness of your minds,

We don't stop you from continuing to tend centuries of cultivate superegos.

We will even let you wallow in the rare happiness that hierarchy provides

But don't suppress our rightful share of dignity. (7-18)

Indian society has always been controlled by the patriarchal norms that have exploited dalit to the extreme. The caste division along with gender discrimination acts as a terrible combination. Women suffer doubly, outside by the society and inside by her husband, father, and brother. Actually, the male chauvinism is responsible for women's plight. Sometimes class governs the whole other marginalised section, and sometimes the other section treats "the other of the other" with same anguish. Its really difficult to govern the transform the society in a positive way. So, Meena decides to detail the atrocities done to a particular segment of the society that can help in some kind of improvement. Females are treated as an objects for the satisfaction of the males, they are threatened for rapes, face humiliation more than males. Meena Kandasamy really wants to help the community and the gender in risk. Her poem 'Narration' she portrays the extremely wretched condition of the oppressed woman by her landlord. She vividly expresses the hypocrisy of the upper class, upper class treat dalit as untouchables but can molest a dalit girl, everything is set for the pleasure and satisfaction of the high class. Meena expresses sadly:

I'll weep to you about My landlord, and with My mature gestures—
You will understand:

The torn sari, disheveled hair Stifled cries and meek submission.

I was not an untouchable then. (1-7)

The Indian society somehow allows exploitation of the marginalised class through various religious connotations, social liabilities, and rules set by the upper section. The marginalised section is bifurcated so as to humiliate them and put them at their right place. Upper class men take advantage of dalit women and get escaped easily. The poem 'Shame' depicts the plight of a dalit girl, who is gang raped by the upper class, but nobody considers her pain and blames her for her miserable condition. Resultantly, she commits suicide. It's really a shame for our society where justice is given on the basis of caste, creed, and gender. There is not any unfair judgement. Meena expresses herself:

'Gang Rape' Two severe syllables/ implied in her presence perpetuate the assault...

Public's prying eyes segregate her—the victim.

But the criminals have already maintained— Their Caste is classic shield. (1-9)

Gory scars on the wretched body serves as constant reminders of disgrace, helpless. (14-16)

The helpless girl sets herself into fire as a solution to this sin.

Bravely, in search of a definite solution, and elusive purification,

she takes the test of the fire— the ancient medicine for shame. (22-26)

Touch deals with the harsh realities of the society. Though the things have changed, still the ground reality remains same. People who belong to the lower strata still are marginalised and threatened for their survival. The poetess depicts the brutal reality that makes us feel ashamed of our existence in such a barbaric society. Even, the constitution has failed to bring about the positive change in the contemporaneous society. The society that marginalises people on the basis of caste, creed, race, gender can never develop easily. All the sections of the society help in the growth of it in a sustainable way. The society as a whole should condemn discrimination of conservative traditions. Meena's poetry is an eye-opener for us.

Conclusion:

The years of discrimination have torn the nation apart, and its repercussions have brought insecurity in the minds. The different sections of the society live in their worlds without even acknowledging the existence of the other. Though every section plays an important role in the development of the society as a whole but no strata admits it. Resultantly, caste based psychology exists and introduces further challenges. The works of Meena Kandasamy have highlighted the inhuman behaviour done to the marginalized section, but the intolerance will take ages to ease off the society. Social realism, liberalism, and secularism will definitely breed peace and social equity. The human psyche has not still overcome with the traumatised past as some instances can be seen in today's world as well. Though the status of dalit has been upgraded but lower section in dalit still face the same bifurcation that is being worked upon. Rural areas are in the realm of such atrocities, cities have risen to the standard of equity with a few inhuman instances. No doubt, changes are being introduced but the previous marks are taking long time to subside. The writers like Meena relive the brutality and try to address the same to the society so that it should not be repeated again ever.

Limitation:

The paper proposes to deal with Meena Kandasamy's Touch in the light of social discrimination. This paper aims at discussing Meena's efforts to be the voice of the unvoiced. She has achieved the target of projecting the distressing lives of the marginalized section of the society. The paper restricts itself to the depiction of Kandasamy as the assertive utterances of the unstated section. It is open for further research on various themes. The paper adds conscious awareness to the existing knowledge, leaves a scope for appreciation and criticism of contemporaneous societal inequity.

Scope:

The present paper adds additional information about the atrocities done to dalit. Even the title of the paper is thought provoking. Today's society needs real projection of societal ills so that it can do the needful.

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