

Socio-Economic Problems of Semi-Nomadic, Nomadic and Denotified Tribes



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CONTENT

Sr. No.	Title	Author	Page No.
1.	Interface between the State and Marginalized Communities: A critical study on Police behavior towards De-notified and Nomadic tribe's in Maharashtra	Shrikant Borkar Amrapali Jambhulkar	1
2.	Right to Education and Health of the NTs and DNTs	Dr. Mithun Kherde	10
3.	Criminalising labour in Colonial India	ShirishAthawale	18
4.	Experiences and Voices of Criminal Tribes in India: A study of Pardhi women in Pune district of Maharashtra	Priyanka Jadhav Pradnyasurya Shende	26
5.	A critical analysis of National & State Commissions and Committees of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes in India	Deepali Ramesh Wighe Pradnyasurya Hemchand Shende	41
6.	Problems and Challenges Faced by Women in Ramoshi Community	Dr. Patil Amol Ashokkumar	49
7.	Ramoshi Caste in Colonial Maharashtra : A Historio-Sociological study	Devkumar Ahire	54
8.	Awareness Among Tribes About Government Schemes Through Extension Teaching Methods	Dr. Mrs. Manisha Darshan Bagawade	60
9.	A Study of Socio- Economic Status of Banjara Community Solapur, Maharashtra	Dr. Raj Chavan Prof. Shobhatai Patil	69
10.	Reservation Policy of Nomadic and Denotified Tribes in Maharashtra: A Critical Review	Prof. Dattatray D. Shinde,	78
11.	Reaching out to the Nomadic Communities	Dr.Sujata Jitendra Patil	82
12.	A Critical Review on Development Programmes of DTNT's in Maharashtra	Dr. Suryanarayana S. Bure	86
13.	Marginalization of the kaikadi tribe in Laxman Mane's AnOutsider:Upura	Dr. Kavita Tiwade	90
14.	Issue of Social Reservation of DTNT	Dr. A. R. Wagdao	94
15.	The Socio-Economic Issues of Women of Nomadic Tribes & De Notified Tribes. of Maharashtra	Ambulgekar Kailash Gangadhar	96
16.	Socio- Economic Problems of Semi – Nomadic, Nomadic and Denotified Tribes	Dr.Rupali V. Sambhare	103
17.	Role of ICT in Tribal Students Development	Naik Tarsing B.	106
18.	Rethinking of Social Problems of Nomadic Tribes in Maharashtra	Mr. Prashant Tanaji Nargude Mr. Sunil Ratnakar Sonawne	108
19.	Authentic origin of Ghisadi Tribes: An analysis	Prof.Pawar Kiran Sarjerao	112
20.	Problems of Dange Tribal in-Migrants in Kolhapur City, Maharashtra	Jadahv Ashish	116
21.	Denotified/ Notified in India: An Overview	Mr.Sushant Kashinath Mahajan	122

Marginalization of the kaikadi tribe in Laxman Mane's *An Outsider: Upara*

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The present paper is an attempt to study the marginalization of the people of kaikadi tribe in Laxman Mane's An Outsider :Upara. Marginalised sections of the society have been victimizing since their birth due to the discriminatory social system. An Outsider is an account of the kaikadi community. The writer unfolds his childhood experiences in the novel. He witnesses the extreme degradation of his family by way of the caste Hindus. He has narrated all the sorrows and sufferings of kaikadi community that was wandering in the darkness of suppression ,exploitation and marginalization. The writer understands the importance of education and shapes his life. He turned toward Buddhism long with his people from his community.

Key Words: Marginalization, Kaikadi, tribe, suppression.

The present paper is an attempt to study the marginalization of the people of Kaikadi tribe in Laxman Mane's *An outsider : Upara*. Marginalised sections of the society have been victimizing since their birth due to the discriminatory social system. The term marginalization is a process which ignores groups to the sidelines of political space, social negotiation, and economic bargaining. Marginality is a condition in which a person, a group or a community is marginalized by dominant forces. Hence marginalization is a process of domination and subordination. There are complex issues involved when we theorize domination and subordination. It is Hegel in his theorization of self other binary and critiquing Kant underlines the unequal relation between the two in that privileges the self. This inequality has been theorized from socio-political, ideological, gender and liberal perspectives. In India, marginality is very complex as it goes beyond the binary of domination and subordination. We have in India, marginalization of communities, minorities and others in the name of religion, location, occupation and so on besides marginalization in the name of class, caste, gender and tribe. The voice of the marginalized is mostly muted.

In India there are many groups that marginalized on the basis of caste, creed, class, ethnic, cultural and economic. The tool of marginalization is generally used to depict and analyze socio-cultural and political and economic spheres in which the disadvantaged groups of the racially discriminated people struggle to gain access to resources and aspire to get full participation in the social life. The marginalized people have been and still are socially, economically, politically and legally ignored, excluded or neglected, politically and legally ignored, and are therefore vulnerable to livelihood change. The tribal's are the marginalized groups in the name social stratification. Tribes in India have come to be conceptualized primarily in relation to their geographical and social isolation from the society.

The wide range of groups and community at different levels of the social formation have come to be categorized as tribes. Members of a tribe share the social cohesion associated with the family together with the sense of political autonomy of a nation (Oxford Dictionary of Sociology 769). The marginalization of caste occurs because of features of the caste system. Castes in India are fixed by social, cultural and economic rights respectively by birth and there are restrictions on their behavior. Marginalization centers on caste system and tribes.

The present paper examines the novel *An Outsider : Upara* by Laxman Mane.

The objectives of the research paper

- 1) To study An Outsider : Upara as a tragedy of protagonist.
- 2) To know the life of Nomads in general and Kaikadi tribe in particular through the novel.
- 3) To study discriminatory social system of India.

Hypothesis of the Research Paper –

The present research paper is hypothesizes that in India Nomadic tribes are marginalized at various levels. Laxman Mane is one of the active leaders, who is fighting for the cause of the upliftment of the Kaikadi tribe. An outsider : Upara is about poverty, hunger and struggle for education. If the readers succeed in understanding the sufferings of the Kaikadi tribe and oppose the caste system and educate them, can solved the problems of Kaikadi tribe.

Scope and limitations

The aim of present paper is to explore the sufferings of the nomadic tribes. The present study will inspire to work for the betterment of the tribals. The research has more scope but the present study limits itself to analyze the novel, An Outsider : Upara by Laxman Mane.

The present paper is an attempt to focus on the miserable condition of the kaikadi tribe. Laxman Mane is a Marathi writer and a social activist born in 1949 in a small village Somanthali, Phaltan in a nomadic tribe – the Kaikadi community in Maharashtra. He wrote his autobiography Upara in 1980 which brings out the problems of Nomadic tribes. He received the Sahitya Akadami Award in 1981. Upara is translated by A.K. Kamat entitled as An Outsider. An Outsider : Upara is an account of the Kaikadi community. Kaikadi is wandering criminal tribe and located in the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka. Kaikadi is one of the nomadic criminal tribe and noted for dacoity and burglary. The occupation of this tribe is basket making and other articles of bamboos, palm leaves. This tribe also referred as the Godhwe Sonar as some of them rear donkeys for carrying bricks and pigs for scavenging. They remained unaware of the civilized modes of socio – religious practices and kept on following the traditional path of Slavery and exploitation. The life of the nomadic tribes literary remained unfocused by the research scholars till 1980. The reality of the Kaikadi tribe came to focus only after the publication of the life of Laxman Mane's Upara : An Outsider

Arun Joshi says, hailed to the Kaikadi community an itinerant community of basket weavers. The autobiography can be said to be the first piece of conscious literature from a person of DNT. It traces the life full of strife of the boy who is the first one ever to go to school in his community, become a social worker and his inter – caste marriage a lot of uproar and agony for both the communities. [http://www.oijrj.org/] The writer unfolds his childhood experiences in An Outsider : Upara. It portrays the life suffering of a Kaikadi community. The people of this tribe live below poverty line, and poverty made the protagonist to wear borrowed things and survive. Laxman Mane has realistically depicted the very sensitive issues of kaikadi.

Kaikadi people suffered in every village wherever they had gone. The writer describes his childhood experiences. The upper caste boys do not touch him. If he is touched, they preserve untouchability. The author had to suffer due to casteism; Laxman Mane describes heartrending experiences of his life and his community as being a social worker. He has narrated -

All of us were terribly hungry. Mother had brought lots of Bhakri. Three of these were given by the village Chief's wife. She had also given the leftovers of the night before. In addition, the women whose baskets mother had mended had given her something or the other which she had packed in the loose end of her Sari. All of us sat down to eat father held a bhakari and lentils on the palm of his hand.

Mother skipped her own meal. I was given a Bhakri, some stale curry and some bits and pieces (Mane). Kaikadi had to beg for survive from one village to another. Laxman and other family members had to go through unbearable starvation. Wandering and hunger remained inseparable part in the life of Kaikadi. An Outsider : Upara is about so many stories within the narrative.

The protagonist has grown up in very tragic situation with his community. The novel begins with the description of the colony of the tribal surrounded by filthy atmosphere outside the village where the villagers come that place for latrine. The tribal are not allowed to live in the village. Laxman Mane says, village and they stay in the outskirts of the village in Khopoli, our huts erected on a plain by the side of a road – our hut was in the open. At night, a kerosene lamp without a glass cover was lit – - I grew in this hut like a small plant growing on the dunghill. (71 - 72). The inhuman discrimination is the shameful drawback of the Indian society. The writer has realistically described the truth.

Dr. Ashwin P. Ranjanikar rightly says. The author had no self – importance to become a writer, nor was he engaged with any literary activity. He write because he wants to tell the experiences of struggle, oppression, exploitation and agonies to the society his unending struggle started from his childhood and it reached its peak after his inter caste marriage.(

The novel revealed experiences of oppression and marginalization and also writer's conflict for achieving dignity and status of human being Laxman Mane finds himself deprived, depressed and subordinated in his personal as well as social life. Kaikadi tribe is marginalized and exploited group. Laxman Mane witnesses the extreme degradation of his family by way of the caste Hindus. The tribals have been denied the basic needs like food, cloth and shelter. The writer suffers throughout the life of being a poor, marginalized and unwanted as an angry man. Laxman Mane's An Outsider is a suffering tale of tribal community in Indian Society.

R. B. Patankar to says :-

Suppose that we are reading Laxman Mane's book Upara. Before we had read it we know almost nothing about Kaikadi tribe, whose life depicts. The range of our experience and understanding has been widened. But that is not all; more important than this is the fact that the structure of our customary emotional and ethical responses has been shaken (405). Kaikadi community are treated as untouchables and they had no right to attend the marriages of high caste people and eat along with them. Anybody who accidentally touched a Kaikadi would bathe again the protagonist of the novel was tortured by upper class society. He went to school without book, notebook, pen and pencil, as no one from his community had ever attended the school.

Laxman said 'I was going to school regularly, when we made a halt in a village, I had to go to school of that village. Now I was used to it. I donot mid with the other students. They too were not prepared to approach me (69) Mane is addressed as 'you lazy bum' of you beggar, Laksha, son of a Kaikadi low caste' etc.

Laxman Mane's An Outsider shows marginalization condition of female characters. The women are oppressed by both upper caste as well as their community. Kaikadi women are uneducated, religious, hard – working, humble and superstitious. They were not allowed to bath and adorn everyday. The writer has described one incident between Paru and Maruti, whenever Paru's husband Maruti finds her bathing and adorning. Laxman Mane speaks of degradation, subordination and dishonoring of humanity especially of Kaikadi females in this novel.

The writer writes -

Mother a Pardhi tribal about fifty years old. Her husband is sentenced to rigorous life Imprisonment. At, home, she has a young son. Well ! The Panchayat had a session questioning the

physical relationship between the mother and the son. The whole community was furious and this woman and her son trying to justify their relationship ---- At last, she was given the punishment : all the members of the Panchayat relived themselves on the ground. She has asked to make a paste of that soil and prepare flat loaves out of it with her own hands right in the front of the Panchayat - - - Everything's was stinking. I asked her, she said : "Brother dear! I planted the seed of a cucumber and ate the cucumber. What's my crime? Now, I don't want a fifth one. I have four children from the fourth. Now, I don't want to marry again. My first boy's my husband now". (11) Kaikadi women are treated as inhuman. The condition of woman is more horrible because woman is made slave of traditions, customs, castes, classes and sex. The characters like Gajra, Parumami, the wife of Pingla Joshi, Ratna are the victims of patriarchy.

Spivak comments,

"It is, rather, that, both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominate. If, in context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even deeply shallow." (284-285)

Laxman Mane has narrated all the sorrows and sufferings of a community that was wandering in the darkness of suppression, exploitation, oppression and marginalization. Laxman Mane through this autobiography shows his strife for achieving dignity and status of human being. Upara means an outsider, no permanent place to live and they have to live in poor and very miserable condition. They live in family groups: father, sons, daughters, grandsons, and family members of such near relatives in some temporary settlement.

The development of any community depends on its educational system and it is proved that education is the key to social change. Education is a powerful tool for empowerment of Kaikadi. The writer understands the importance of education and shapes his life. He has courageously narrated all the sorrows and sufferings of a Kaikadi tribe that was wandering in the darkness of exploitation and marginalization. In one chapter writer narrates his experience when he visited America. It was very disturbing because even in abroad and among all well educated people he is seen follower of casteism. He asks certain questions " Had I belonged to a higher caste, would it have happen thus? would they have treated me like this? (9) However, Laxman Mane turned toward Buddhism along with his people from his community and tried his best to guide his people.

Thus An Outsider brings out Laxman Mane's image as a social reformer not only for his community but all work cited for all the marginalized groups. He is a representative of the entire kaikadi community. An Outsider brings out a space for him to voice not only his victimization but also of the community he belongs. An Outsider is a restless commentary on the dehumanizing social codes and conventions under which nomadic tribes suffer.

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