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Anthology : The Research Portrayal of Women Select Short Stories of Omprakash Valmiki

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Abstract

In the history of Dalit Hindi literature Omprakash Valmiki (1950-2013) was an well known name. He was born at Barla in the Muzaffarnagar district in Uttar Pradesh in an untouchable Chuhra family. His autobiographical novel *Joothan* (1997) and its profound appeal to the readers have reached his name and fame as a writer to the peak. *Amma and Other Stories* is an English translation of fifteen stories of Omprakash Valmiki. The stories depicts the pain, anguish, humiliation, social discrimination of the lower caste people during his times by the hands of the upper caste people. Being a Dalit he had seen and felt the misery, humiliation, deprivation etc from very close quarters. The selected stories was basically dealt with the struggle, exploitation, humiliation, discrimination of the Dalit community. Valmiki describes the position of women in the Dalit society as well as upper class women in the class and caste ridden society in our country. His stories also focuses the sexual harassment of Dalit women in work places, mental dilemma of the women in the family, patriarchal dominance due to economic dependency, helplessness of women regarding earning livelihood etc. Amma, the protagonist of the story 'Amma', asserts her own struggle to maintain her family and aims to provide education for her next generation to make themselves eligible to be a clerk or peon at least so they would not do the job of a sweeper with canister and broom. The story 'Homeless' portrays the helplessness of Mano and her husband, Sukhia in regard to building a house of Pucca bricks. Sexual harassment is also a key issue of the story. *Biram's wife* and *Eclipse* relates the anxiety of a upper caste women who is still not able to give birth a child and the desire to make sex with a Dalit man to get herself pregnant. The story *Beast* depicts the plight of an unnamed Bahuji and her abrupt disclosure regarding the male person to whom she is acquainted with. The paper will explore the authentic portrayal of the predicament of women of both the upper class as well the lower class Dalit one.

Keywords Women, Dalit, Predicament,, discrimination pain, humiliation.

Introduction

Literature has rightly been called the 'mirror' of society as it truly reflects the picture of contemporary society. Since the beginning of civilization women had been treated as a 2nd category under the patriarchal system in the class and caste ridden society in India. The women have made a significant contribution in the family. From early dawn to midnight they have maintained their responsibility and duty to bring up the children along with other domestic affairs. They have become victims of the caste system. Sometime the lustful man wanted to enjoy the bodies of the Dalit woman despite of being Dalit, the so called untouchables.

Selected stories particularly dealt with the suffering of the Dalit women inside the home and outside, at the workplace. Women have to face various difficulties in their way of life. Generally they belonged to the illiterate, poverty ridden families and did not have the liberty to take their own decision in regard to their aspirations. They were not well informed about their rights and not able to make any complaint against the so called upper caste. They are compelled to work in order to maintain their livelihood by enduring such violence and mental torture. Valmiki through his stories wanted to portray the unheard voices of the so called women Amma and other Stories consists of 15 short stories particularly dealt with the plight, pain discrimination of the untouchable, the lower castes people in the caste system in India. Apart from Dalit background the selected stories 'Amma', 'Eclipse', 'Biram's Wife', 'Homeless' depicts the predicament and sufferings of the women in the Indian society. The story 'Amma' tells the painful and struggling story of Amma, the protagonist, who had been working from house to house as a sweeper with broom and canister. She was named Sukru's wife after her marriage according to the name of her husband Sukru, a safe

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