



# Discussing A Theme Of Caste And Self Identity In Bama's Karukku

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**Abstract** - The modern Indian literature is that the representation of every aspect of life. Dalit literature deals with the oppression of Dalits within the Indian scheme. Dalit literatures are noted as a rebellion against the suppression, humiliations by Dalits in past and sufferings continuing even now a day. The motive of Dalit literature is that the liberations of Dalits. The narration of the story of Dalit literatures are purely experienced based. Their shame, anger, sorrow, suppression, sturdy, hopes became a sturdy hand for Dalit literature. In this society marginalized the dalits for various reasons like caste, gender, colour, money, and complexion. Karukku is an autobiographical novel written by Bama, a Tamil Dalit feminist writer from Tamil Nadu, India. The book was first published in 1992 and has since become a classic in Indian literature. It is a powerful narrative that delves into the experiences of Dalit women who are marginalized in a

society that is structured around caste and gender.

**Keywords** - marginalized, suppression, humiliations, domination, betrayal.

## Introduction

The modern Indian literature is that the representation of every aspect of up so far life. Indian English literature is an authentic enterprise to exhibit the ever rare adornment of Indian writing in English. English has arrayed to be a replacement sort of Indian culture and voice within which India converses regularly. Many female writers are exhibited their views and voices through literature. Dalit literature deals with the oppression of Dalits within the Indian scheme. The term dalit originated from Sanskrit 'dalit' meaning oppressed. Dalit literatures are noted as a rebellion against the suppression, humiliations by dalits in past and sufferings continuing even now a

day. Dalit life would present from dalit point of view when only an ideal work of Dalit literature can produce. The motive of Dalit literature is the liberations of Dalits.

The narration of the story of Dalit literatures are purely experienced based. The writers within their work present the precise truth of the lifetime of enthralled society and under advantaged within the Indian society. Their shame, anger, sorrow, suppression, sturdy, hopes became a sturdy hand for Dalit literature. In this society marginalized the Dalits for various reasons like caste, gender, colour, money, and complexion. People are marginalized by the category people. Especially the Dalit people were marginalized, muted and dominated for several years. They were tolerated of these sufferings eventually only they started raising their voice for his or her rights. Therefore, Dalit literature manifested as a voice of Dalit people and their rights. Kamila opines “It is additionally a revolt against social injustice, and their need will be a society for them innocent of discrimination... She bravely strikes out the ill treatment of upper caste towards out castes”. (p.104)

Karukku is an autobiographical novel written by Bama, a Tamil Dalit feminist writer from Tamil Nadu, India. The book was first published in 1992 and has since become a classic in Indian literature. It is a powerful narrative that delves into the experiences of Dalit women who are marginalized in a society that is structured around caste and gender. Definition of doubly marginalized society.

A doubly marginalized society is one in which individuals face discrimination and oppression on the basis of both their caste and gender. In India, the caste system creates a hierarchical society where Dalits, also known as 'untouchables', are at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Women from these communities face additional discrimination and marginalization, making their struggles for equality even more challenging.

### Theme of Caste

The term caste in India is often regarded as unchangeable and closed system of social stratification. Caste and gender are the central part of the Hindu society. Indian caste system is a

curse. The privileged, uplifted, oppressed, marginalized, voiceless are the outcome of the of this caste system. Dalit is a term which is the result of Indian caste system. The terminology like low born, low caste, untouchable, oppressed, voiceless, marginalized, poor etc, are associated with dalits. M.N Srinivas talks about the caste and religion to highlight the structural functional aspects and the dynamics of caste system. He introduced the term Sanskritization to reflect the social mobility present in Indian society. According to him, Sanskritization is a process by which a 'low' Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, a 'twice' born caste. It is followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than traditionally concealed to the claimant caste by the local community. Such claims are made over a period of time, sometimes a generation or two before they are concerned (Dhanaraju 110). Uma Chakravarti raised some questions about status of women in her essay 'Conceptualizing Brahmanical Patriarchy in Early India Gender, Caste, Class and State', such as marriage law,

property rights and rights relating to religious practice, normally viewed as indices of status. The limited focus has left a major lacuna in our understanding of social processes which have shaped men, women and social institution in early India (Deshapande 305). She further talks about the subordination of women in India. In Hindu society for the social stratification women and lower caste have been subjected to humiliating conditions of existence.

### **The quest for identity**

The quest for identity and social acceptance is a recurring theme in Bama's Karukku. The book explores the ways in which Dalit women struggle to find their place in a society that devalues their existence. It highlights the challenges they face in establishing their individuality and gaining social recognition in a culture that is deeply rooted in caste and gender hierarchies. The quest for identity and social acceptance is a complex process that involves navigating multiple layers of discrimination and oppression. For Dalit women, their caste and gender identity intersect in a way that makes it difficult to separate one from the other. They face discrimination not only from upper-caste individuals but also from their own communities who adhere to patriarchal and caste-based norms. In such a society, finding a sense of self and belonging can be an arduous journey. In Karukku, Bama documents her own journey of selfdiscovery and the obstacles she faced along the way. Through her writing, she sheds light on the experiences of Dalit women who are often silenced and invisible in mainstream society. The book also highlights the importance of education in helping individuals carve out their own identities and challenge the oppressive structures that restrict their progress. Moreover, Bama's Karukku also explores the intersections of caste, gender, and religion. As a Christian Dalit, Bama faced discrimination not only from the upper castes but also from her own Christian community, which was dominated by upper-caste individuals. She had to navigate between her Dalit identity and her Christian faith, which often conflicted with each other. This intersectional approach highlights the complexities of identity and the ways in which individuals from marginalized communities must negotiate multiple aspects of their identity to find acceptance and belonging. The quest for identity and social acceptance is not just a personal struggle but also a political one. It is linked to larger issues of social justice and equality. Bama's Karukku challenges the dominant narratives that perpetuate caste and gender hierarchies in Indian society. It provides a platform for the voices of Dalit women and underscores the importance of their inclusion in conversations about social change. In conclusion, the quest for identity and social acceptance in a doubly marginalized society is a complex and ongoing struggle. Bama's Karukku serves as a powerful testament to the resilience and resistance of Dalit women in India. It highlights the importance of challenging oppressive structures and promoting social justice and equality.

## Conclusion

Dalit women faced much violence and harassed by men and as inferior to men. They are not getting money properly for their work. Men got much amount while women got meagre salary for the identical work. In many places, landlords harassed Dalit women, often scold them with unkind words and ill-treated them. Because of their family and kids only, they tolerated these kinds of evil actions. Bama projects that Dalits should become independent from the socially constructed prison so on fight against the force of enslavement and separation. In Karukku, Bama depicts her anger about the enthralled hopes of Dalit those are still in gloom of mistreatment and inequity. Dalits were neglected and lived within the state of enslavement. In spite of their pain, sufferings, injustice and struggles they have to lift up their positions. Dalits have sought to redefine their position and transform their character of Indian society.

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