

**THE HIERARCHICAL DELIVERANCE OF SANSKRIT AND ITS CASTEIST
NUANCES: A STUDY OF MARGINALISATION IN KUMUD PAWDE'S
AUTOBIOGRAPHY ANTASPHOT**

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Every creation of God in the form of a human being has been given equal rights if God has given five senses, one mouth, two hands, and two legs. Then why some people are discriminated? Why they are treated so bitterly? Why society doesn't accept their existence? Are they not a human being created by God? Why people are so discriminated on the basis of their caste and gender? Why they are considered a Shudra? After all what is their fault? Is someone's caste the definition of his whole life? Someone's existence can be the existence of his life? Does his identity depend on caste and gender only? Is there something more than that? Many reformers are doing very good work against gender and caste discrimination. Only a Dalit writer can understand the depth of those humiliations and pains, which others fail to understand so deeply. The narrow mindedness and mental sickness of our so-called modern society remains the main concern of this paper.

Does this women's liberation movement not the movement for the liberation of handful women? It is not the movement for the emancipation of the entire womanhood—Dalit, tribal, untouchable and Muslim women. They are being exploited by caste, gender and poverty. Is it not our duty to think that their exploitation should be stopped? Maximum rape cases have been occurred with Dalit girls. Why Dalit have to bear the pang of customary poverty and persecution always on the basis of their caste. Kumud Pawde, a Dalit woman writer from Maharashtra, tried to show the mirror to the society why Dalit also have the right to be educated. Why they have to face a lot of pain only to earn bread and butter for them? Why are there terrible situations to prove themselves? We have to raise all questions. Why are Dalit girls considered as objects of enjoyment? If there is only one creator then why there is too much difference in His creations. Why is there so much discrimination?

...although I try to forget my caste, it is impossible to forget. And then I remember an expression I heard somewhere: 'What comes by birth, but can't be cast off by dying—that is caste. (Pawde 25)

Kumud Pawde, social activist and feminist writer was born in Nagpur, India in 1938 as a member of Dalit community. She belonged to Mahar community which is one of the untouchable communities of India. Her autobiographical work *Antasphot* (1981) is in Marathi language. She has narrated the experiences of her early childhood and youth in caste-based Indian society in the story in "The Story of My Sanskrit" in the anthology *A Corpse in the Well* which is translated by Dalit writer and activist Arjun Dangle. The story has immense potential to raise serious questions about the hegemony of the story. How it has been too much insulted to read and teach Sanskrit—the ancient language of the Hindus. There is a powerful temptation of indelibility of the caste system in the Indian social psyche, but also for Inequality by two most important social categories—caste and gender. Kumud Pawde, her first name is Kumud Somkunwar, who was born in lower caste, narrates how she used to be humiliated for studying and teaching Sanskrit:

According to the principles of Brahmanism should be learnt only by the members of high caste. While the story brilliantly depicts the insurmountable hardship that Kumud Pawde

had to face for receiving a job despite possessing a postgraduate degree in Sanskrit, the real twist in the story, comes at the end as Kumud declares how 'miraculously she got the job of an Assistant Lecturer in a Government college after her inter-caste marriage. (Pawde 34)

Dalit literature, forced me to think over the intricate relation. How much the two factors like caste and gender have in shaping the identity of a woman. It also speaks about many of the traditional inequalities of Hindu social structure, resulting in making the lives of women and Dalits very miserable. Kumud Pawde narrated the experiences of her early childhood and youth in caste-based Indian society.

The issue is that she belongs to which social group, does not exist in the Indian common public, She have learned against her caste background seems strangely bizarre. The most amazing thing is that a low-caste woman, whether she has the right to learn Sanskrit? Whether she has the right to teach it? It is a terrible discrepancy. A man whose life has these anomalies accumulates become the centre of attraction. Is the attraction of mixed culture and acceptance?

The question is that the one language (Sanskrit) which was not even touched by his caste for so many centuries was now under her control, it was natural to have arguments but if the praise was limited to this personal level, she would have tolerated it but it was all determined. As usual, people started beating the drum of my caste and spread of my knowledge of Sanskrit.

Not only caste system but also two other important problems of society are also to be described. Her maiden's name is Kumud Somkar, born into untouchable Maher caste. This is the story about how she had to face a lot of humiliations because of her gender and her thoughts about language.

According to the society, Sanskrit language is only the personal right of Brahmin, not to anyone. Sanskrit language is only their fundamental right. A person who belongs to other caste can't have the right to speak or teach this language. If he would teach then have to face lots of problems. Either he is Dalit or Muslim except Brahmin no one can do this. Kumud Pawde has expresses her all story in his autobiography. Situations have not been changed yet. This is a story about her untouchable's hardship obtaining a job after possessing pg. degree in Sanskrit. Society is least bother about his qualification they have only one concern—her caste.

Everywhere, every time, her identity is considered with her caste and gender. She has no other identity, no existence. Except it, she is a Dalit and a female. Why our modern society is not trying to understand the reality. Why they are called Harijan? But its real meaning is *Hari ke Log* (People of God).

In his autobiography, she said, on the day of Vijay Dashami in 1971, the Government of Maharashtra organized a meeting in Nagpur to honour the scholars of the Vedas, according to the wishes of the Honourable former Education Minister Mr Madhukar Rov Chaudhary, she had to introduce these respected scholars in Sanskrit language. From the Himalayas to the Kanyakumari these days, the perception of common Indian people had become in their mind that her ancestors should blame themselves if they even listen to Sanskrit voice. And it was strange, today is the same language, which I have to speak. Describing my inner opinions, saying that she could not control her heartbeat, his mind stalled due to anxiety and she was in a state of inferiority.

The clash of her emotions and the clash of public appreciation enveloped her from all around. Women of our caste and studying Sanskrit were forbidden for research. This is how a woman today will introduce these scholars in Sanskrit despite being one of the lowest caste. This was a very big question; it was the beginning of a progressive way of thinking in India itself.

A tornado of mixed emotions always creeps into his mind. Seeing this hatred, she repeatedly slips into the past, while this hatred is familiar to her and she is used to this. The house that took place was surrounded by the homes of casteist Hindus in every way, a seven

eight-year-old girl like me could not understand what is happening, why this discrimination, on what basis, why this bitterness is there? She writes in her autobiography, about *vatsavitrivrat* and expresses her displeasure towards the false religious beliefs. She writes:

Are all the scriptures have been written to keep the woman under control? Though such oppressive religious customs are gold-coated, they cannot be admired. Though I was happy in my husband's company, there were many other women who were enduring the pangs of hell in the company of their husbands. Though those women were wishing for the same hell again and again, didn't I have my own duty? Why should I follow such evil customs after being aware of their futility? And shouldn't I explain the cruelty and meaninglessness of those customs to the ignorant women? (Pawde 16)

If one compares the houses, our house is cleaner and more beautiful than the rest of the houses, from the cleanliness to the dyeing, to the splendour of utensils, the rangoli was everything. This hatred made me to think at a young age, that this feeling inspired me to introspect, the idea of playing and running here and there at this age put me in great dilemma:

I take a bath with Pear's soap daily. My mother applies Kaminia hair oil to my hair and plaits them neatly. My clothes, too, are washed clean... At home, there are always various oils, soaps and perfumes. Besides the girls of our area, other girls of my class also liked to sit with me... My home is cleaner than theirs. (Pawde 25)

One incident shattered my self-esteem. She had a thread ceremony for her classmate's brother, in which she was not invited, but a very curious voice she went there and the result of that, she was interrupted with their response. She started the Sanskrit with the help of her father, but she became a laughing stock in front of the educated people. Is Sanskrit such an easy language? It is very difficult. Is it discouraging to hear that our forefathers have ever learned it? Only her father used to encourage him and his encouragement made him confident and awakened his confidence Sanskrit was a difficult subject. Kumud Pawde writes:

Like the previous occasion, our educated neighbors made fun of me. Some of them were professors and lawyers. How is it possible? Though you scored good marks in Matriculation, is it so easy to complete M.A. with Sanskrit? One should not boast of one's abilities. Should realize one's capabilities. People were talking. And the amusing aspect of it all was that most of them belonged to our own caste. But their words couldn't deter me away from my determination. I did not respond to them. (Pawde 28)

Kumud Pawde said that she went through all kinds of struggles but she hated crying so much, she never used to cry. Her talent soon became clear and by the time she started college and doing an outstanding performance in Sanskrit. At that time Motiram Pawde, an idealistic young teacher, should run the night classes for the underprivileged children at Haslop College, Nagpur. As educated youngsters were looking for teachers to teach poor children, someone suggested the name of Kumud Sonkuwar. Both of them did work together. They got married but his family was not ready to accept her. But she didn't lose hope and with her strong determination she became successful to settle her family. His autobiography in Marathi titled & Support, published in 11th Marathi 2, lectured his childhood and youth experiences in a caste-based Indian society.

Kumud explains her relationship with his father-in-law after her marriage. He got very annoyed and so obstinate and conservative. He refused to forgive his son for getting married to a Dalit woman even after the birth of his grandson. Kumud writes:

I was terribly angry. The old man did not cuddle my son, didn't fondle him, didn't put his hand on his head... Though this man was our blood kin, he didn't touch his grandson, as he was born to a Mahar woman. (Pawde 79)

This behaviour is certainly despicable towards daughter-in-law and grandson. She got the full support of his parents to pursue his career, yet he got married. Much oppression and

discrimination had to be faced. Her in-laws did not accept her from the beginning so she faced redress within the family and also continued her faith against all forms of oppression. She had a strong voice of women in the Dalit movement Comes recorded in October 2017 at his residence in Nagpur.

After entering high school, she chose Sanskrit an optional subject. She tried relentlessly to stop learning Sanskrit. You are not capable. No one will teach you at home. Her teacher Hatekar had suggested her:

“...you can become a doctor, can't you?”

“Won't you be able to help the afflicted? That's what's needed among your people.” (Pawde 25)

You cannot do this. I used to look at it from my past, but it had no effect on me, the effect of words like ghrina and bitter could not even touch my existence. With great keenness and interest, she started studying Sanskrit. She also gave herself a good score. She was highly impressed with Gokhale Guruji by the kind and humanistic behaviour of his family members. But she was always possessed with the fear of her caste being exposed to his family members. As she writes:

...the older boy came out bearing plates full of cooked poha. I became nervous, fear crept over my mind. Suppose this lady were to find out my caste? Along with sips of water, I swallowed the lump in my throat as well as mouthful of poha. I couldn't concentrate on what anyone was saying. My only worry was when and how I could escape from there. Suppose someone from the Buldy area were to come here? (Pawde 34)

She completed his BA with good marks. She respected the fairness of her teachers. Now she has started M.A. her department president was a scholar of all India fame, he never liked to learn his Sanskrit and he used to say clearly. His taunts used to paint her room with full of darkness. She had completed her education despite all the difficulties

But even after doing M.A., she was unemployed. She had no means of job. Standing in the dock of many questions, she answered many questions in every interview and in her desperation; she took some arrows in my body. Took a bold step to get out of the trap. She presented her entire case in writing to the Honourable Shri Jagjivan Ram, the eminent minister of the Union Cabinet. Her words had the power of a sharp sword as it was bleeding from the heart of a man. Words were weeping that were crushed to death under the circumstances such as Jatayu's scream alone in his final struggles.

The minister presented her letter to Pandit Nehru. He was worried that why I had not got the job yet, he proposed to meet me and she was given a prize-money of two hundred and fifty rupees but all this was only for my assurance.

But she was left with assurances. She did not want promises. Promises keep false hopes alive. Research is the fruit of mental peace. She also did MA in English. In the meantime, she got married to an interracial marriage of Indian society. Nature has a different surprise that after 2 months of my marriage, she got a lecturer job in a government college and she is a professor but this question always runs in his heart that the credit of Kumud Somkuwar's job is given to someone. Is not the name of Kumud Pawde? My job depends on my surname? Not on my capabilities:

After acquiring a non-Dalit surname, he opened up a lot of job officers and was declared a Sanskrit Pandita by the Nagpur College. Eventually Amravati retired from Government College as a Sanskrit department head after decades of being her daughter-in-law. She always said that she would be remembered with her mother-in-law and she was her student. People loved her class.

After facing a lot of pains and sufferings, she never liked to cry. Her son said that I have seen my mother crying only once in my entire life when my father had lost his eyes, he got all this strength

from Dr B.R. Ambedkar's message was to be free, freedom, intellectual freedom and social freedom. Kumud Pawde of Nagpur, Sanskrit scholar and freedom soldier.

There was an ideology of B.R. Ambedkar, at that time, Baba Sahib thinker who wrote the last challenge of a civilized existence, the feeling of changing the caste apocalypse, the fight for social democracy, the vigorous intellectual attack on Brahminism, along with the youthful idealism and revolution in Maharashtra, she remembers that when due to fear they were not allowed to draw water from the wells, they would get polluted. She would join in queues with women to drink our water. She was a degree holder in Sanskrit but could not get a job yet.

From time to time, various scholars and even women have attacked us very much. Leave the women considered polluted and the new position of the community, the knife which I have very systematically raised is the important caste of modern India. The combined legacy of anti-feminist thinking stood solidly behind our remarks, yet we found the chief professors of Sanskrit making absurd claims, for example, caste is related to birth, that Hindu society is inhuman. When she has left her surname then she got the job.

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