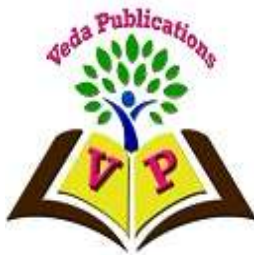


VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN RUKMINI'S *ONDRUMATTI*

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ABSTRACT




The ideal of free human beings enjoying civil and political freedom and freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his civil and political rights, as well as his social, economic and cultural rights. At an international level the most common categorization of human rights has been to split them into civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights. Civil and political rights are enshrined in articles 3 to 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Economic, social and cultural rights are enshrined in articles 22 to 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Rukmini's Ondrumatti is a novel which deals with the lives of three generations of KrishnaPuram, a coastal village and Rakuru, a village in Nizamabad district. This novel deals with the lives of different castes in both societies. The novel deals with the suppression and oppression of dalits and marginalized people. Rukmini portrays the lives of these people and their struggle for identity and recognition in the society from 1920 to 1985. This novel deals with the society which was built on the foundation of caste in Krishnapuram and how the upper caste people wanted to suppress the dalits and marginalized people in the village. This leads to the violation of the human rights and led to a massacre (The true story of Karamchedu on 17 July 1985). Though the caste system was very strong in Telangana in those days the writer did not focus much on it. The present paper mainly focuses how human rights were violated in Krishnapuram and how this has led to the massacre.

Keywords: *Suppression, Dalits Human Rights, Krishnapuram.*

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INTRODUCTION

The conventional list of basic needs of a human includes water, food, clothing and shelter. However, modern compilations emphasize many other factors apart from these, such as education, health-care and adequate sanitation. If we go with the conventional list, through immemorial times, man is not satisfied with them and his quest for achieving more and more knowledge, wealth etc, is endless. This eventually led the mankind through many changes, sufferings, dominations, suppressions and oppressions. Then man had become greedy towards wealth, recognition etc,. In this race man has become egoist, sadist and self-centered in the society. In this case, man did not win himself and reminds us that the modern man did not lose his basic instincts of animal. This eventually led him towards domination and discrimination on fellow beings. This domination and discrimination based on the caste, creed, gender, race etc. And it reinforces the basic sociological principle that 'man is a social animal' to dominate in terms of group. In case of India, especially in Telugu speaking states in South India, caste system is very strongly rooted in the society. The society is divided into different sections. This caste system is very far from the Varna system. In this case, my personal opinion is that the economy played a crucial role in terms of upper castes like Brahmins who had complete control over wealth and knowledge, the Vysyas who had control over the wealth related to business and agriculture, these two have the domination from the Varna system, and Kammas, Reddys, Velamas and other castes were not that much privileged and very few members of these castes were rich and Zamindars and many of them were in farming but were not privileged. The other part of the society was marginalized sections, whose responsibility was to support the lives of the upper castes by providing the required equipment for their day to day lives and services. The castes include kummari, kammari, vaddera, medara, boya, rajaka and many other castes. Another discriminated society was dalits, which include mala, madiga and their sub castes. These people were treated as untouchables and very less privileged people of the society. This entire kaleidoscope life spectrum can be seen in the novel of Nalluri Rukmini's Ondrumatti.

Ondrumatti deals with the lives of the farmers under the zamindari rulers and their survival stories under different governments, the British rule in India and their 'divide and rule' policies, spread of Communism in India and the influence of Russian communist policies and the great Second World War. This led to how Russia's ideology had spread across the world and its spread in Bengal and Kerala including Madras state and the Nizam state and the changes brought by the 'party': the social upliftment, eradicating the indifferences in the society and education etc. The novel also discussed the 'Razakar' movement, 'Mulki' movement and the Radical party along with the Naxalbarry movement.

This novel also deals with the social relations: relational ships among the family how united they were, the community relations among the castes like upper castes, marginalized sections and dalits. The unity among the communities and the social dependence on each other is clearly visible in this novel. The later part of the novel also shows the different kaleidoscope of the life with the growth of economic conditions and especially money through commercial

crops like sugarcane and tobacco. This novel questions, analyses and criticizes the so called development. This novel shows how money destroys the values and ethics. The novel stresses on the unity among the marginal and dalit communities. This novel deals with the migration of the farmers from coastal areas to (present) Telangana state and the difficulties in cultivating the barren and forest lands into farm lands and the suffering of separation from their mother land and the relatives and the isolation in the land where they migrated. The two different life styles like where coastal people want more and more money and land where the 'Rakuru' people wanted to cultivate as per their requirements and the contended life they led. Later, how the Krishnapuram people settled in the village Rakuru.

This novel does not deal with positive side of the life but also deals with the huge violation of human rights.

CHILD LABOUR

The first incident we could find in the novel was about 'Duggodu' who belonged to Mala caste to work as 'paleru' in the house of Kotaiah. He was as small as Kotaiah's son Venkayya. His son left for playing with his friends of his age and at the same time he was sent to school for education and but this poor boy has to do the house hold work and later he had to go for animal gazing which was one of the interesting work for him. This was a violation of human rights in those days around 1920s, which was portrayed very well. We could find the same characters in and around the society in those days. This system continued for a long time in the society.

Kondamudi Papadu's father Pulladu took Rs.20 from Mallibabu as a loan for interest. But, he could not pay the amount to him. In return, he handed over Papadu to be a worker (paleru) at his home. Even though he reached to his puberty, he was not relieved from Mallibabu and his life was in chaos. Because some of his friends got married and he had to pay bride price (o-li) for his marriage and he had to pay old debt. But, who would give him money for his marriage? And the adverse conditions of nature made the lives of the farmers and the dependents on the farmers very miserable. As a result, many dalits started migrating to different far places in search of their livelihood. In these conditions, Papadu was left for his fate and his family was also migrated to another place.

BRUTAL KILLING OF VANDANAM'S DAUGHTER

Bhupathi's son Chinna Ramayya was an abnormal personality. His sadism was seen while he was driving his bullock cart. Instead of controlling his bulls or slowing them down, he drove very harshly and if people were afraid of this he had felt very proud of it. One day he was running his bulls along with cart very fast. Even after reaching the village he continued the same speed and the cart entered into Madigapalli. Then children were playing on the streets and people were shouting and alerting them about the cart. But, Vandanam's daughter was below two years old who could not understand what was happening, by the time the cart reached there and passed on her stomach and the intestines came out with uncontrolled bleeding the girl died.

Instead of appealing for justice, a nominal amount was paid to Vandanam for the incident happened.

VIOLATION OF WOMEN RIGHTS

The evidences of violating rights of women are evident in this novel. The three incidents show the conditions of women in those days. The rights of women were violated in the form of molestation in Ondrumatti. Those incidents are:

- One day Madiga Nallodu's wife Rahelu went to work as usual. After the work, though her children were waiting for her at home, she needed to gather tender green grass to her buffalo's female calf. So, she fell behind of others and was plucking the grass. Within no time, Nandayya came and hugged her from back side and this was an unexpected happening to her. As she was working from the morning and she did not has both mental and physical courage to protest him. Finally she could not protect herself.
- On the day of trapeze (Atla tadde) festival, Yerukala Yellamma, a teenage daughter of Buchchodu made up herself very attractive. Though many naughty people had their eyes on her tender beauties, her father and mother were protecting her form the people. Because, Yerukala was a marginalized caste and they were very weaker section in the society. At the dawn, Yellamma went out for excrement. At that time, Kondayya went to call labour to work in his field next morning, and he observed her going. Then, he was waiting on her way to home. When she started to her home back, suddenly he attacked her. Despite of her crying and protesting, he did not leave her. When her parents were searching for her, she was found in a fainted condition in the hut which was abandoned.
- Sri Rama Navami is a festival which was celebrated vey pompously in Krishnapuram. That was the festive season of that year. Sarva Kala, wife of Setty (informal word for the Vysya community man), who runs a grocery shop in Krishnapuram , went to the temple. Her stunning beauty was a feast to many eyes on that day. On the second day, when there was no business, he closed his shop and went near the temple to observe the celebrations. At that time, Arjuna Rao and two others entered into Setty's house through back doors. At that time Sarva Kala was engaged in her domestic work. She protested them for some time and her crying and shouting for help which was subsided in the house and she was molested. When Setty came home and about to knock the door, Arjuna Rao and the two others opened the front door and went outside with a pride. With a suspicion Setty entered into the house and found his wife in a pathetic condition. With the help of others, she was lifted on to the cot and they served her to gain consciousness.

There were no severe punishments to the violation of human rights in this novel. Either the people, who committed, begged for pardon or they were not even questioned and the news was not disclosed. Or it was questioned the dominant society did not consider it as a violation of the rights.

VIOLATION OF THE RIGHTS OF DALITS AND MARGINALIZED

The common violation of rights of the dalits and marginalized people was witnessed throughout the novel. These people were rarely called by their names and instead they were called orey, arey and osey and emev which are very informal words to call a person. But these people accustomed to this in the initial stages of the novel.

On the day of trapeze (Atla tadde) festival, that year, the marginalized section youngsters erected poles and a trapeze was arranged. While the people were enjoying on the festival, some of the upper caste people came and demanded to vacate the trapeze and they want that place for their enjoyment. Many of the young people took a back step, but some of them were not ready to leave the place. Then, Subbayya's son (belonged to Kamma Caste) slapped Edukondalu (belonged to Uppara Caste). Then, Edukondalu wanted to take revenge and bet the Subbayya's son and ran away. Then these upper caste youngsters started chasing him, but they were stopped by Madiga Bhadrappa. The discussions went very hot and the upper caste people became furious. This created the calmness before the storm.

When the bus service was introduced from Krishnapuram to Chirala the upper caste people did not digest that all the weaker sections people could travel alongwith them in the bus. The incidents with the bus also add fuel to the fire. The discussions went on the incidents in both the village and 'palle'.

One day Subbavva was abused by the upper caste people (five members) without respecting her age and it was witnessed by Diwakar. He was unhappy about the incident and he wanted to question them. But Subbavva did not allow him to question. Later, all these incidents were discussed at Madiga Bhadrappa's house with youngsters.

In case of Boya Vengayya's son Kumara Swami was beaten by Papayya's son with a sandal in the quarrel of rice seedlings. This led to serious atmosphere in the village. The upper caste people wanted to protect the culprit and the other sections people wanted to take revenge. At night they went to Papayya's house and took revenge against his son by beating him. Then, the Boya and Uppara youngsters felt it as a victory over the upper caste people. In this situation Sarva Kala's molestation shocked everyone in the village. After that the culprit Arjunarao was attacked very badly in fields on that night. There was no clue that by whom it was done. The villagers thought that it was done by the Madiga youngsters and one more reason for the differences between the two groups. And the upper caste people were waiting for an opportunity.

On the day Solman's mother Elisamma went to fetch the water from the water tank. By that time Subbarao was washing his buffalos in that water. Elisamma questioned him how that water could be drunken? That discussion led Subbarao to slap Elisamma. This was witnessed by Vandanm and he reacted to it and he bet Subbarao. That evening, Subbarao came with his followers and raided on Vandanam's house and bet all the people whoever gathered there. The elders of 'palle' wanted to console the people and requested subside the issue with that. But, in the village the scene was different and they wanted to take revenge on these people so that they should never dare enough to touch the upper caste people. This

resulted to a great attack on the dalits that evening .Nobody was spared including male, female and children and the things in the houses were destroyed for three hours. The human rights were destroyed and the victims took shelter in Chirala church compound.

CONCLUSION

The Communist Party and Parvathaneni Veerayya Chowdary brought awareness of the rights of these people, they started questioning the about their identity. Dalits were not allowed to fetch water from the water tanks of the villages. They had to wait for a long time to get water from the upper caste man who could fetch water for them. Many a time they were denied and sometimes they did not get the water. This brought a lot of consciousness among these people. Mr. Veerayya fought against the dominant societies to allow them to fetch the water from the tanks directly. In many villages he was successful and these people supported Mr. Veerayya, who was an active participant of the National Congress.

In the later part of the novel, the communist party people played street play to bring awareness among these people. In the street plays they showed the possible solutions to the problem and violation of the human rights. This brought a great change among the dalits and marginalized sections. Later, establishing ITC in Chirala, the marginalized and dalit people changed the scenario of the life style. Because it had provided livelihood on the basis of daily wages and the number of working days were increased. As a result the income other than agriculture work had showed new ways to live and the dependency on the upper caste people reduced. On the other hand Bharathi Ranga's propagation in women education and the Christianity spread of education changed the life style of the people at the end of the novel. The writer ends the book with a new hope for the new life.

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