



## Subjugated Discourse of Dalit's in Society an Exploration of K.A. Gunasekaran's 'Touch'

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### Abstract

This paper attempts to examine the fights and miseries of the Dalits which they face under the caption "Untouchability" through the English version of K.A. Gunasekaran's Tamil play 'Touch'. 'Touch' is a short play which depicts about the unethical practices of untouchability. K.A. Gunasekaran is widely held as the first Tamil Dalit playwright. The play mocks the undeserved practices of untouchability which exists in the society under the name of caste system. It represents the nature of caste-based violence uncovered in the play. In addition, it displays how the play tries to make the audience realize in detail about the inhuman sides of untouchability and caste-discrimination. It will throw light on the politics of quieting the Dalit, the politics of defeating his independence, the politics of comparing him with unkind and unreasonable human being, and pronouncing them as most inferior and untouchable part of folks, amid other.

**Keywords:** Discrimination, Dalit, Society, Oppressed, Exploitation, Suppressed.

### Introduction

Dalit Literature is mainly a social and human document, which deals with the society who had been publicly and economically oppressed in India for centuries. The building of the cultures that is created on 'caste' system is liable for scores of heartless and unsympathetic practices that is previously documented by numerous individuals, and is being persistent to record every day in India.

The established system that celebrate the eternal purity of evil caste system and the power and importance it brings would not only stop Dalits from partaking in normal life style, they would also deceitfully refuse them to get any recognition and originality. This method would also attempt to confirm that Dalits will remain thoughtful with their own misery, deprivation, and dearth so that they do not pose any threat to its authority.

K.A. Gunasekaran is the first Dalit Tamil playwright and folklorist who nicely presents the barbarities done against Dalits in his plays. He considers the suppression faced by Dalits as something which is equal to the suppression faced by Blacks. He, with the help of his plays, creates awareness on other social issues and women issues as well. While Dalit theatre draws upon innumerable influences, the play 'Touch' written by K.A. Gunasekaran is not imitative of any of them. Its uniqueness lies in entwining in the angle of human rights with a view to exposing the nature of the caste based violence faced by Dalits. In Dalit literature, low caste people and their miseries are of major importance. The play 'Touch' also gives

prominence to the sorrows met by the Dalit people under the excuse of Untouchability.

### Methodology

When the play begins, the writer gives an ideal explanation about the backgrounds, mood and position of the performers on stage which assists the readers to imagine it in minds, imagining the mental pain which is the temperament of the play-into their minds. The play starts with the mourning of 'Mother India', being visualized as 'Woman' in the play. The mourning of the Woman ventures the mental anguish of 'Mother India' in seeing the fight between Dalit's and non-Dalit's. She cries for her peace of mind which she had lost because of the disagreement of her offspring's. She recalls her previous past and tells out in front of the audience. She pronounces that she will get back her delight only on the day they get together. Therefore, over the blasted emotions of the character called Woman, the writer highlights how India grieves more in the hands of its real possessors than the conquerors because of caste separations.

The writer, then presents the four performers on stage, uses them to signify the four separations in the caste system thus disapproving the caste separations. The four division caste system are the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishya's and Sudras. According to this method, Brahman's were created from the mouth of Brahma, the Kshatriyas out of his shoulders, the Vaishya's out of his thighs and Sudras out of his feet. So Sudras are the most low-grade in the order. Owing to the

firmness of the class system, the Sudras are viewed as outcastes, oppressed, contaminated, negligible and are misused by the higher castes subsequently through the centuries.

The woman personality in the play desires for the union of the four performers who characterize four castes and she cries as they have separated in diverse ways. People show off to others declaring that they are in contradiction of the evil of untouchability. But deep within they still hold on to the clutches of untouchability. Human nature of this unsuccessful arrogances is also complained by the writer through the four performers when they talk about their descent and about their abilities. But quite opposite to their talking they are not ready to display their braveness in action as they are not prepared to touch the mud container.

The writer carries in the method of play within the play in 'Touch'. He brings this out with the aid of the very same artists but rechristening them corresponding to his stacy motive. The writer embraces this in order to give an accurate touch to the drama as it stances as a specimen to indicate the brutality of untouchability.

### Discussion

In the play within the play, the farmer offers more significance to the status arrangement than his own life. The writer says a tale through this person. The farmer, is tilling his ground under the blazing sun, listening to a melody. While tilling, as the sun is intolerable, the farmer falls to the ground frothing at the mouth. A passer-by sees this and panics. He scrutinizes the sight sensibly and runs about shouting out for help. Not one person comes to help; he also pauses to touch the shaking body. Then he turns away and bends before the family God in his mind, he takes up some mud puts it on the farmer's forehead like the holy ash. Then, with much reluctance, he picks up the mud vessel and sprinkles water from it on his face. Now the farmer arises and requests for water. He raises the farmer's head, puts it on his leg and gives him water and enquires how he is feeling now. The farmer realizes the state; he advances his foot and kicks the man, who helped him, questioning why he touched him. Then the farmer attempts to strike him on the skull with the vessel that has been touched by the former. He lets go off the pot and taking up the plough, he attempts to hit the man's touch, he flings that away too. Then he flings a handful of mud at him, questioning "why did you touch me? How can I show my face to the village now? They will mock me for being polluted. "So what I died? Why did you touch me?" (166)

When the Farmer fall's lifeless because of fit, the Man assists him to regain back to his normal self by making him clasp the plough and by giving water to satisfy his thirst. The Farmer who gets help fails to distinguish it. Rather he rebukes the Man for touching him which has made him to feel polluted. The farmer is prepared to meet death but he is not prepared to be touched by the Man as he comes from the lower caste. He says, "So what if I died? Why did you touch me?" (166). He also screams saying, "A low-caste fellow touched me..." (167). Besides, the Farmer hugs his bullocks calling them as "beloveds" and "precious ones" but he doesn't have any pleasing words for the Man who helped him in his necessity. Furthermore, the farmer moves his bullocks yelling them as 'beloved' and 'precious ones' but he doesn't have any pleasing words for the man who assists him in his notice. The Mother earth shows the desire of the playwright who desires to see a country deprived of any caste discrimination, where all folks will live together overlooking all the dissimilarities.

The writer thus greatly remarks on the people which is prepared to love faunas but not the fellow human beings. The Farmer is one such specimen for this. Society treats humans worse than how they treat faunas in the label of caste system, refusing their privileges of service. People from low-caste are handled like outcastes. They are made to wander similar to migrants in their own nation with no fundamental needs to live their life. They are banned to education, to sleep on mat and even to live their life. Because of the fourfold system of caste, anybody can touch whatsoever but not another mortal. Such is the meanness of untouchability which societies follow in the excuse of caste system.

Dalits are not given any significance and are not accepted even like faunae. The writer strikingly stances a query to his spectators which displays the depth of his feelings as well as the cruelty of untouchability. He asks:

Touch a goat.

Touch a cow

Touch a dog.

Why, touch even a pig.

But can you touch another human? (168)

### Conclusion:

"Dalit writers tell their happenings in the most genuine way by making use of their innate tongue. Their dialectal as well as descriptions come from their own life experiences, and not from their scrutiny of nature. The writer has used Dalit's own life style, dalit artists and dialectal to represent the open view of life. He attacks the major society, carrying in the fourfold caste arrangement. The story that Gnanasekaran shows is not a imagined one but a story that is constantly taking place in faraway villages day after day. The play 'Touch' like all other Dalit literary works aims to bring transformation midst its audience. So, towards the close of the drama, the performers step forward, socializing with the audience to touch their equivalent humans proposing unity between them. Thus not only the idea but also the directing skill of the play aids to convey responsiveness midst the audience of the drama. For, lack of schooling and responsiveness are the main causes of the mistreatment and harassment of Dalits. Thus the play 'Touch, like how the name implies, talks about the themes of touch, relating the unpleasant and distressing practices of untouchability and caste discrimination. Besides, the play explains the readers with the heartless sides of untouchability and caste-discrimination. The Dalit play 'Touch' thus creates consciousness not only among the Dalit's but also to breakdown the borders of caste discernment.

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