

## Conclusion

Today when India is heading towards being one of the major superpowers of the world, one section of it is still aspiring to achieve ultimate dignity as a citizen with equal social, cultural and political rights. Since ages, one group of Indian society (upper castes) has dominated all resources of education, economy and other socio-cultural resources of the society and the second section (earlier dalits but Ilaiah included OBCs also) of the Indian society have remained deprived most of all these resources. This deprivation or segregation created disgusted mindset/psyche among those who were segregated. Movements like Dravidian Movement which is also known as 'The Self-Respect Movement', SDNP (Sri Naryan Dharma Pratipalan Movement) and Mahar Movement took place against the hegemonic powers of the society against their tyrannical behaviour and cynical mindset towards dalits.

Human actions and reaction are the reflections of his/her psyche or mindset. Whatever kind of environment a person receives at home, school, college, university and other institutions, his/her character is bound to be affected by its . John Locke has compared a child's mind to a 'tabula rasa'/blank slate just to signify the building process of his character. He describes a child as a learner who learns from observing whatever happens around him/her. Hence his/her mindset is shaped by the socio-political, cultural and economic content surrounding him/her. If a child is born and brought up in a dominating family his character and behaviour gets deeply affected by it and he/she starts dominating others who are subordinate to him/her. On the other hand, if he/she faces polite behaviour then he/she most probably becomes a polite person. Psyche is a sum of the lifetime experience and it can be seen in the case of dalits as well as other subaltern groups

who express their mental grief through dalit literature or Subaltern studies and various other movements. Dalit psyche is a sum of oppression and the kind of behaviour they have faced in the society. They were forced to work as mere slaves and forced to clean gutters, toilets and skin the dead animals. They were segregated from the mainstream society which affected their mindset in a significant manner. This deprivation resulted in creating disturbed psyche of dalits. They were mentally tormented and portrayed as sinners in scriptures and epics. They were deprived from entering into educational institutions and accessing economic resources which resulted in their overall backwardness. Prior to social reformers like Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and Babasaheb Ambedkar, their condition was very miserable. Reformists like Phule and Ambedkar worked hard for the welfare of dalits and helped dalits in changing their socio-political and economic conditions and worked hard to change Dalit and Brahmin psyche and making them realize that they are not just objects in the hands of caste Hindus but rather they have the right to live their life with pride and honour. They used specific terms like 'dalit' just to portray their position and condition in the society and their resistance against the upper castes. Kancha Ilaiah expanded the term 'dalit' and included other inferior sections in it. He has expanded its domain to other marginalised groups of the society such as backward classes and women. Kancha Ilaiah has used the term *Dalitbahujan* to depict the majority of depressed people in India. He has combined economically backward classes with those who have been the victim of caste-based discrimination and the mindset of both groups (Upper Castes and Dalitbahujans) to understand their opinion towards the society.

## **A Critique of Kancha Ilaiah and his works**

Kancha Ilaiah has tried to depict the condition of dalits and Brahmins in the society and their actions and perspectives towards each-other. He, in his works, has represented the psyche of various groups (Dalits, Backward Classes and Women) and their condition in the society. There are some positive as well as negative aspects in his writings. The most interesting part of Ilaiah which separates him from rest of the dalit writers is that he openly criticises dalits for creating hierarchies among themselves. He uses a term 'neo-Kshatriyas' to define the hierarchy among dalits which creates more negativity among them. This negativity further leads to their disoriented more towards achieving the desired equality in society. One of the important positive aspects of his works is that he always adheres to his ideas with strong conviction. In *Untouchable God*, he sticks to the idea of contradictions in the society and the condition of dalits in the society. He speaks through various characters such as Paraiyah, Namboodri, Tilak, Basu (Ramadev), Krishnamurthy and an American Black called Isaiah to portray the mental condition and thinking of upper caste and lower caste people and their perspective towards each-other. He finds similarities between Indian Dalits and African Blacks. Through this comparison he tries to take dalit narratives and their issues to an international level. According to Kancha Ilaiah money or any piece of land can't change the perspective of upper caste people towards Dalitbahujans. Only change of mindset of caste Hindus towards lower castes can bring this change in the society and this psychic change can be brought by providing quality education to not only Dalitbahujans but also to the children belonging to upper castes so that they also come forward to eradicate these differences in the society. Kancha Ilaiah does not look at reservation as permanent solution to the socio-political and economic backwardness of

dalits. Rather, he favours providing education, especially English education, as a major step to change the condition of Dalitbahujans in a society dominated by upper castes.

In his novel *Why I am Not a Hindu*, he delivers his views on the importance of education where he presents dalits as more educated and trained than upper caste people. According to him, dalits are practically very sound and skilled because they know how to skin the dead animal, how to cut plants and keep each and everything neat and clean. Hence, practically, dalits cannot be called illiterate. His main motive behind focusing on the need of English education is the interaction of Dalits with the whole world. Dalits, if they had English education, would have raised their voice in a proper manner at international platforms. Lack of a proper dalit leader becomes the main reason of the educational and social backwardness of dalits. Ilaiah looks at dalit leaders as failed politicians as they couldn't work for the welfare of Dalits. They could not facilitate dalit children with vocational and technical education. Besides, Kancha Ilaiah shows his disappointment on the lack of dalit intellectuals and shows his anger on rest of the dalit intellectuals on their inability to put forth the miserable condition of Dalits. This lack of intellectuals depicts the lack of educated dalits on national level. Hence it is the responsibility of those few dalit leaders to ensure the enrolment of dalit children in Universities, IITs, IIMs and other vocational educational institutions. Another positive aspect of Ilaiah's writings is that he included other subjugated groups such as OBCs and women in his definition of the term dalit. He moves further and includes every group, except STs, who suffers on the basis of caste and economy.

There are some negative aspects in Kancha Ilaiah's works. For example, he creates binaries between various groups of Indian society. He looks at upper caste as destructive

force that dominated every source of development. He harshly criticises them for their discriminatory nature without realizing their present condition. On one side, he sympathizes with the economic backwardness of those who do not belong to the dalit group of the society and on the other hand he criticises those who are out of this socially accepted identity. Another negative aspect about his writings is that he doesn't provide any solution to abolish the dissimilarities among various groups- both caste and class, in the Indian society. He just harshly puts forth the problems and contradictions present in the Indian society without proper solutions. Basically, he talks about southern part of India whereas the northern part of India remains untouched by him where dalits reside in huge numbers. Other flaw in his works is that he tries to instigate dalits to raise their voice in a violent manner.

### **Suggestions**

Casteism was a problem at one point of time when dalits were really oppressed and exploited. They were deprived of education, economic resources and political powers. That was the time prior to the birth of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and Babasaheb Ambedkar. These reformists tried to bring changes in the society through social reforms, social movements and literature. It cannot be denied that reservation has brought a change in the life of dalits. Subsequently, they have grown economically but now they are looking for social reforms to take place overnight which is a bit difficult to change because it takes time in changing the mindset of a particular group of individuals who have been rooted in the culture of the caste-based society. At one point of time, the term 'dalit' was used to signify the backwardness of a person or a group of people to show his/her miserable condition. Reservations were provided to dalits for the removal of this kind of psyche and for the

betterment of their socio-economic condition in the society. Reservations worked upto an extent and a significant change came in the life of a handful of dalits, but not all. But this change created a negative attitude in the minds of upper caste people as they started looking down on the abilities of dalits. They even questioned the need of providing reservation to dalits as they could not accept on equal footing. Though dalits are obtaining authoritative positions in various offices but a large group of their population is still struggling to earn bread for their living. So it becomes very difficult to decide whether reservations should be provided on the basis of caste or class. At this time *middlepath* comes into functioning where creamy layer or Non-creamy layer works. One can't deny the fact that exploitation is possible at the level of caste as well as class. Hence, both social as well as economic levels should be kept in mind while deliberating any solution to the existing problem. For the welfare of dalits, education should be made compulsory because only education can mitigate all differences between various castes and classes. Lack of education is the biggest hurdle in the overall development of dalits. Dalit leaders should facilitate dalit children to pursue further education and ensure their admissions in higher educational institutes.

### Works Cited

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