



**A JOURNEY OF INDIAN WOMAN AGAINST  
PATRIARCHY WITHIN  
(WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MEENA KANDASAMY'S  
POETRY)**

**DR. SUNIL SHIVAJIRAO KAMBLE**

Associate Professor

Siddharth College of Commerce & Economics,  
Anand Bhavan Mumbai – 400001(MS)  
(MS) INDIA

**ABSTRACT**

*Indian patriarchy within is like a slow poisoning process of male domination over the Indian female which creates inequality and gender discrimination. Indian women were treated as a secondary entity; she didn't have liberation to take any decision in her personal life. She constantly considers herself inferior to male. Moreover, Indian patriarchal social system deprives women from their fundamental rights. Since, ancient period; a woman was denied rights, such as the right to education and decisive power. Therefore, women were not treated even as human beings. Since ages, male measured her as another part of society. Various issues contribute to establish and develop Indian patriarchal system such as, family structure, polygamy, child marriage and Purdah system. A woman is yet to be given complete decisive power about subordinate issues, like her career as an ideal woman and marriage wife. Accordingly, she gets exploited and on the other hand, man made her into a goddess. In the name of belief, she had compulsion to have fasted on various occasions and made her weak physically and psychologically. Socio-economic and political problems women are different to male. Even her existence and way of thinking is also different. Because of oppressive traditions and customs of Hindu religion, women keep quiet for a long period.*

**Key words:** Patriarchy, family structure, polygamy, child marriage and Purdah system and oppressive tradition.

**INTRODUCTION**

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Since the intelligence is significant means of the development, the lower caste sections are trying to be educated. But on the contrary, the upper-caste sections do not want the intellectual prosperity of Dalits; the ruling section wants that the Dalits should be absorbed in the caste-based hierarchy, inequality, and so on. If anyone belonging to the lower castes tries to raise voice against the discrimination, it is considered as a big crime. It has been picturized and subject to severe punishment. The inequality is beneficial for the ruling section and they nourish the unhealthiness, inequality, anti-sociality and illiteracy. Following this conspiracy, the upper caste section dissuades Dalits from the most significant principles of an ideal society. Kandasamy describes the punishment of Dalits in her poem, *Evil Spirits*:

*Forced fed a 'meal'-bland food mixed  
with your hair, spit, and pus,  
Illegally despite the government ban (Kandasamy45)*

A Dalit woman is accused of being witches, devils and other superficial powers. Dalit woman is made psychologically weak, using the various conspiracies throughout the ages. Moreover, to maintain the caste discrimination based on gender discrimination, a Dalit woman is made to accept the imposed weakness. The Hindu mythology strengthens the unsatisfactory state of Dalit woman. Kamble mentions the untold injustices of Dalit women in the passage:

*Touchable groups attack Dalits two hours a day. Three Dalit women are subjected to be raped per a day; two Dalits are murdered by the touchable in a day. Touchable burns two houses of Dalit in a day. Violence, rape, murder, injustice, etc. is increased against Dalits; specifically, in a rural area, these events happen frequently. (Kamble 26)*

With the changing time, the caste discrimination has been increased. Still the government is not serious towards the worst state of Dalits. The ratio of Dalit violence, rapes, murders, injustices, etc. are multiplied every year. In opposition, the anti-social, anti-national and anti-integration aspects are being increased. All these elements together are to make the nation non-secular and at times unsocial. Consequently; Kandasamy mentions the dalit woman's exploitation through the dominant section of the higher caste in her poem, *Shame*:

*the sixteen years old.  
Gory scars on a wrecked body,  
Serve as constant reminders  
of disgrace, helplessness. (Kandasamy 48)*



It had been considered by the upper caste sections that the Dalit women are always available for all types of services. It does not matter whether the woman is married or not. The same dominant section has the privilege to exploit the Dalit women. They don't have any kind of sympathy towards her. Even the exploitation of a Dalit girl is a good subject of gossiping for the upper caste groups. The issues which are born from Dalit woman even they do not get proper treatment from the upper caste. Upper caste used to rebuke the Dalit women in dirty languages. Kandasamy discloses given ill-treatments of upper castes to Dalit Child in her poem, *We will Rebuild Worlds*:

*electrocuted children to instant death because they played  
in your well /and other ghastly carnage  
but the crimes of passion/  
our passion /your crimes. (Kandasamy 60)*

The wrathful remarks of Dalit women are against casteism which ends the claims of hundreds of Dalit women. The Dalit woman is not allowed to love the upper caste person; otherwise, she is bound to face underestimation, injustice, and enslavement. The caste-based prejudices remain entrenched across the country; particularly, against the inter-caste marriages which results in the death of the bride and groom. If a boy marries the upper caste girl, the upper caste men resolve to revenge. They victimize Dalit communities because of their insult by the Dalits. The victimized Dalits have nothing to do with the discrimination. The government, because of social and cultural powers of the upper caste groups, they partially. The boy who loves the upper caste girl is severely punished publically. Kandasamy mentions the plight of dalit girl in her poem, *Narration*:

*I'll weep for you about  
My landlord, and with  
My mature gesture-  
You will understand: (Kandasamy 56)*

Most of the Dalit women work in the fields of landlords. The women face numerous discriminations at the places. These women are considered by the upper caste men as freely available labor. The lust makes the upper caste men to exploit the women. Instead of her resistance, the exploited woman is to be the physically strong exploiters. Very few people help such women who consequently are troubled by the victimizers. The exploitation of Dalit women is still in continuation in the disguised form. Kandasamy expresses submissiveness and suppression of women in her illustrious poem, *Narration*. In this context she says:

*So I take shelter in silence*

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*Wear it like a mask  
When alone, I stumble  
Into a flood of incoherencie... (Kandasamy 56)*

The confused state of mind of a woman refers to her silence, honesty and commitment. This uncertain expression of woman represents her needs of liberation and human rights from lived experiences of patriarchy. She wants to break the generational silence of the woman section. At the same time, her expression becomes the suffering question of women and about their worst lives. Hence, Kandasamy describes lived anguish experiences of women in her poem, *Songs of Summer*. She states:

*To make her yours and yours alone,  
You pushed her deeper into harems  
Where she could see the sunlight  
only from the lattice windows. (Kandasamy112)*

Indian male keeps females alone without thinking about their career and hopes. He imposes his thoughts on her personal life. This selfish attitude of Indian male gives to the next generation as an inheritance that's why the socio-economic and political condition of women is different to male society. Due to poverty, she goes out of the house for working purposes; at the workplace the employer seduces her easily, she becomes passive at the time, thus she is victimized by Indian patriarchal dominance. Therefore, in this context, writer Chavan expresses the meekness of women in his writings. He says:

*So far the Hindu community was concerned, the man had divided women into two classes, touchable and untouchables, description of 'untouchable' as a person who would cause pollution by his touch. What about lower caste women who have been violated by the upper castes. (Chavan 206)*

According to the Hindu religion when a touchable male seduces the untouchable female, at that time, the pollution fact keeps aside, and the lower castes directly name their female only but not to the male of higher caste. In this context, Kandasamy rightly discloses submissiveness and subjugation of the lower caste female towards her own family and mainstream society in her outstanding poem titled as, *You*. She expresses:

*Your society always makes  
the masochist slave  
and other submissive women  
as goddesses. (Kandasamy 130)*

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The capitulation and repression of women in patriarchal dominance is so regretful. Male expects economic support from his wife to fulfill the basic needs of the family. An uneducated village woman works as a slave in the field of landlord where she faces against the sexual violence from the landlord. This depravity made the woman weak and at the same time a passive entity from her childhood, additionally, her male family members treat her secondary to the male. In addition, the feminist male writer Rafizadeh describes the subservient nature of woman in his novel, *A God Who Hates Woman*. He says:

*One of my grandmother's relatives had a thirty-nine years-old son who needed to be married off, and the women in the man's family had taken it upon themselves to find him a suitable wife. (Rafizadeh 19)*

Indian patriarchy does not give any option to their daughter, in the context of choice of groom but son gets much freedom of choice of bride, he examines her beauty and inspects her previous characters, friend circle, love affair and all things but Indian patriarchy never gives these same options to the daughter. Therefore, according to Indian patriarchal views, the birth of a daughter is a selling thing in others' houses and the birth of a son is an income thing. Hence, Kandasamy describes the reason for the gentleness of females in her poem, *Eyes Meeting*. She says:

*The length of your hair and ask questions about,  
The degree you hold and the transparency of your past. (Kandasamy 127)*

The sense of prettiness imposes on the female side only, but she doesn't have any freedom to examine and appreciate the handsomeness of the male. Simply, all the relatives take into consideration her corporeal exquisiteness as a female only at the time of marriage. Indeed, the chastity of the bride is sought by the bridegroom's family side. Thus, Indian patriarchal system follows the same rules and regulations for the marriage process.

Indian male-dominated society doesn't know the importance of females. They suppose that females are not more intelligent than male. Women are emotional but not practical, but society considers women inferior to the male. Male assumes that the female is a worthless animal, as a 'use and throw thing'. Male gets married to a woman only to satisfy his sexual desire and beget the children. Sometimes, without thinking, he kills, and half murders his wife on the cause of small mistakes without any serious reasons. Therefore, Indian patriarchy within is more dangerous to those without Indian patriarchal society.

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