

Women Empowerment In Modern Age

ISBN: 978-93-94819-09-2

Pub. Date: 15 Sept. 2022

Volume: I

An Ideal Indian Dalit Woman's Depiction in Baburao Bagul's Short Story "Mother".

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Abstract:

Author Baburao Bagul is a pioneer of Dalit literature. He is a 'Vidhrohi' and 'revolutionary' writer and claims that Hindu reformers are opponents of Dalit literature. And some upper caste people are tortured and humiliated Dalit community in general and women in particular. In this short story titled "Mother," Bagul has depicted and highlighted the miserable and pathetic conditions of Pandu's 'Mother' (unnamed). That she belonged to the Dalit community. She is a married woman. But her husband is suspicious and has doubts that she might be in an illegitimate relationship. And for the same cause, he used to beat physically Pandu's mother. But she didn't have any option but to bear his outrage and inhuman treatment as she is helpless. Later her husband was diagnosed with the disease tuberculosis. She is a Dalit Indian woman who is honest and loyal to his husband and other family members. And of course, she has taken all the possible care of him during his sickness. Unfortunately, he couldn't survive and finally demise. After his demise, she lives alone with her son 'Pandu', and ultimately his entire responsibility comes to her shoulder in the absence of Pandu's father. Then, she couldn't get any option except earning, and hence she reached the public domain. It is a tragedy that nobody cooperates with her on her bad days. That is why the writer Bagul has raised his voice against injustice done by the upper caste people. At the same time, he exposed discrimination, exploitation, and outrage as common practices in the life of Dalit women. Thus, the writer has criticized some conventional traditions that are deeply rooted in society. Hence, he attempted to explore from this short story of 'Mother' that every woman is protected and protested in the eyes of law and it is needed to make either certain or make it amendments to implement the law effectively if something wrong against a woman's rights and her security. Further, Bagul exposed that there are some anti-elements deep-rooted in society and due to that the life of a woman becomes filled with pain and suffering. The writer is not only making representations of this Dalit woman but also all the women existing in the universe. In the end, the writer says that the Pandu's mother is not only the victim of the caste system but the entire woman folk. Because the place of an Indian woman is secondary but Dalit women have tolerated injustice by the upper caste people based on 'caste' and 'gender'. In this connection writer, Bagul imparts his bitter experiences about 'womanhood' and 'motherhood' entitled story of 'Mother' and raised some questions that why Dalit women did is badly treated by the upper caste people. And why did she become the victim of the manmade mentality of the Brahmanical structure of the caste system?

Keywords: Revolutionary, discrimination, misinterpreted, manhood, motherhood.

Introduction:

In the short story titled 'Mother' the writer, Bagul attempts to examine the widow's mental conditions. The writer narrates the conflict between 'mother' and 'son' in this story. This is a success story and hence the professor and critic Dr. Gangadhar Panthavne his comment:

"The story of the mother is immensely successful because the artist cannot be constrained merely encircled as experienced but he has expressed the episode of his mother and given a colorful shape to wonderful words and imagination. The role of the artist is always often impatience and due to the same reason, the production of art can be retained only to take revenge. But this story is impartially sketched by the writer Bagul. And one more feature of this story he has underlined is to make the reader uneasy. The writer who has demonstrated and tried to bring an equal balance of the dual mind of the

mother that she tried her son should not declare me as an illicit relation with someone. The writer has to strongly illustrate and take care not to be damaged personalities and situations wise. At the last, he unlocked that there may be a possible happening in the Marathi Language". (Nazrethmiskitta, 66-67) Mother' is one of the short stories from the collection of "Jeva Mee Jaat Chorli Hoti!" (When I Concealed the Caste!) Written by an Indian Dalit writer Baburao Bagul, published in 1963. He was a Marathi writer and he contributed many works to Dalit Literature. His work deals with the oppressed and suppressed and marginal of the lower-class sections of the Dalit community and emancipation as well as the 'Empowerment of Women' because the place of a woman is secondary and she is denied equal rights based on 'gender' and 'caste'. At the very outset, the short story titled 'Mother' (unnamed) made a commencement that she faced

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the dilemma in her mind about a proper choice and couldn't get confirmation and preference either 'Pandu' or 'Mukadam, she was much confused and cannot bring an immediate solution to this particular question hence she becomes restless. The writer Bagul is minutely observed and posturized emotional, affectionate and the cruel incidence from his stories and this present story of 'Mother' is no exception. He has discussed some natural, social and cultural, and psychological emotions of women through his various stories for example from *Vidhrohi* the 'Bhani', from *Gund* 'Shantiben' and from *Sood* 'Janki' and in *Luthalut* 'Valhalla. This story 'Mother' is emotional and its impact is profoundly stored ever in the memory of the readers. Due to the beautiful combination of 'emotions' and 'motherhood,' the reader becomes speechless. But at the next moment, the same mind becomes thought-provoking. This short story 'Mother' of Bagul is posturized on the basic real life and mother Pandu (unnamed). The male folk considered women as only an object to fulfill their sexual appetite. That is why the dominance of men overruled women. The mother of Pandu belonged to the Dalit community so she is considered marginal and the Brahmanical structure of the society is restricted and decided certain boundaries for Dalit woman and she should not go it beyond. That is why Dalit women are always under pressure and governance of higher caste people because of the deprivation, poverty, ignorance, and superstitions and she is easily oppressed and suppressed in the hands of landlords. And it is a tragedy that she couldn't come out easily encircled by restricted norms and traditions. The 'Chaturvarna Caste System' is regulated and encircled Dalit women to the complete square. That is why there was no scope for Dalit women to rescue from several outrages which were deliberately imposed by the upper caste people. The existing marriage institutions were controlled and executions were in the hands of upper caste people hence they use to damage the ease of life of Dalit women. To arrange a wedding the opinion of a concerned member is not taken into account and major family members fulfill all formalities in the absence of Dalit women. Her sights and choices are in vain. This particular convention and model were not only restricted to Dalit women but the entire women folk. Compared to Upper Caste Women, Dalit Women are unlucky (Unsuccessful) and face several difficulties in their daily practice life. Whether the husband of the woman is alive (existing) or not alive. (non-existing) it doesn't matter for a Dalit woman and she doesn't have any other option except earring due to poverty and this might be a

cause to the second choice to have illicit relations in this present short story of Bagul titled "Mother". Here the writer Bagul specifically addressed his two short stories titled 'Mother' and the next short story title: 'Bandval' (capital)' which are the fittest examples of this present situation to explore the pathetic conditions of Dalit Indian women.

The story titled 'Mother' is a story of a widow. She is (unnamed) Pandu's 'Mother'. The writer Bagul highlighted that Dalit woman is not economically sound. She is powerless and sexually easily available to the upper caste people. At the same time, the political people used pressure and strategies to possess sexual relations with a poor Dalit woman and some of the instances were unreported. In this story, the writer is demonstrated that the 'Mother' of Pandu is badly treated by her husband because she is a beautiful woman hence her husband is suspicious about her character and that she might be having some sexual relationship with other men. And for this cause he used to beat his wife physically and badly manner. And of course, Pandu's mother is helpless and she couldn't teach him a lesson. After some days her husband was diagnosed with the disease tuberculosis. As she is an ideal woman, she never neglects him, on the contrary, took care of him along with the rest of the family members. She has taken a lot of care of him and provided food and medicine too. But it is in vain and finally, his demise left a son name Pandu behind. That is why her son Pandu's ultimate responsibility comes on her shoulder and she didn't have any option except to earn and reached the public domain. But gradually she got bitter experiences and of course, was insulted and humiliated by the upper caste people.

The writer Bagul criticized the Hindu 'scripture' and fourfold 'Varna' system that hatred and dominated Dalit women. That is why there is some bitter momentous come into the life of Dalit women. As we know in our country the upper caste people created a false reputation and gave importance to the manmade structure of the caste system. And under this particular title, they raised a basic question about who is superior either male or female, and of course, the male species is superior to the female. The writer Bagul attempted and explored that the structure of society is male domain and followed some of the false reputations that we belong to certain houses or dynasties. Of course, this false reputation may affect and overall damage the lives of women. This story of 'Mother' is fittest for the said situation and Pandu's 'Mother' is becoming the victim of the 'Varna' system.

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In this story titled 'Mother' of Pandu is a Dalit woman hence she is treated badly by the upper caste people. When her husband demise. The caste system is deeply rooted in society and due to that, she didn't get any help from the neighboring people because they were followers of the caste system and because of the said cause, they didn't make help Pandu's mother. On the contrary, they denied accepting them as mothers as they know that their husband is demise so she becomes a widow. And further neighboring people had made a conspiracy with the mother of Pandu. Because of having an illicit relationship with a man of 'Mukadam'. In the same upper caste, people held she is responsible but they couldn't understand her mental and physical conditions after the demise of her husband. Instead, they are creating a problem for her but no single person comes forward for helping her. And hence she doesn't choice but to come out in the public domain to ear for survival.

'Mother' of Pandu is not alone her son Pandu's ultimate responsibility comes on her shoulder and of course, she has to fulfill some requirements to manage the household and day today's expenses. But the upper caste people didn't allow her to do something easy. This story of 'Mother' is depicted by the writer Bagul and her background as a slum woman and this story is one of the graceful examples that the writer Bagul is successful to explore the conflict between the 'son' and 'mother'. Through the story of 'Mother', the writer Bagul is explored that the Pandu is a naughty boy who behaved disgracefully with his mother. The reason the Pandu is not this mature and hence some anti-elements of society hammering on him against his mother. And he couldn't understand the conspiracy and false allegation which has been done deliberately by neighboring people. And at the same time, they were instigated and misinterpreted to Pandu that his mother had illicit relations with a person named 'Mukadam'. It is so unfortunate that Pandu has believed in those people and begins to hatred of his mother. And for the same reason, Pandu stopped dialoguing with his mother without any rectification. At least Pandu tried to know what a fact is instead he raised questions and accepted the allegations which have done false and baseless against his mother by the upper caste people. But at the same time, the mother of Pandu is worried about her son and but Pandu is an object and raised some questions about her 'purity' and 'loyalty'. On the other hand, Pandu's mother gets a lot disturbed when her son objects and challenges her 'purity'. And this particular reason Pandu has stopped communication and dialogue with his mother and

gradually there is a communication gap created between 'the mother' and 'son' and this would be the real reason for conflict in their relationship.

The writer observed and explored the relationship of 'mother' and 'son' having differences due to some misunderstandings and communication gaps between them. At the same time, either mother or son would come forward to mutual concern and dialogue. It was expected but not to be happened due to some 'ego' and some grievances with each other. It was expected either 'mother' or 'son' would take some initiative to resolve the conflict with each other. But the same would not happen that is why there may be a lot of twists coming in between them. The 'Mother' of Pandu is simple and innocent and has a lot of love and affection for Pandu. Unfortunately, she didn't express herself face to face which is why Pandu couldn't get understand and the result both were going far from each other i.e., detachment. The quality of Pandu's mother is genuine and she was not all greedy and money minded. But she is hungry the love her son. On another hand her 'son' Pandu refused it. The reason her son was under the wrong illusion and the neighboring people were corrupt against her mother was that she had illicit relations with 'Mukadam'. That is why Pandu is hateful to his mother because his friend and neighboring people criticized and abused her mother and at the same time made adverse remarks and comments.

Pandu feels that it is true and keeps blindly trust on them. Meanwhile, Pandu is at home and waiting for his mother desperately. But his 'Mother' couldn't reach home in time. And he was hungry and thought mother will be preparing something instantly for me. At the same time, his mother of Pandu appears at the door and her son Pandu has seen her mother on the arm of 'Mukadam'. Then he gets to confirm that, whatever his friends and neighboring people speak about his mother that's true and he ran from the house. His mother tried to stop him but he didn't listen to her and continued running and finally, he missed in dark. Hence some dogs were gathering around and barking at him. Her mother is witnessing to this incident and feeling bad but couldn't help out being she loves genuine of her son. This has happened only reason the mother of Pandu is poor and her husband is demise. Hence, she couldn't have any option except earning and she prepared herself to reach the public domain. But nobody understands her condition and no single person comes forward to assist her. On the contrary, she has been teased and mocked by the member of upper caste society based on 'gender' and 'caste' which is manmade and created by the higher caste Brahmin.

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The mother of Pandu was hopeful and looking positively toward her son after her husband's demise but her son couldn't give her any positive response from his mother. She is expecting something from her son Pandu after the demise of her husband. He couldn't understand all her inner feelings because his mind has been corrupted by the upper caste people by continuously hammering that his mother had illicit relations with a 'Mukhadam' obviously for this serious cause he began to hate his mother. Meanwhile, the teacher teaches a poem about a 'Mother' after that he came to know the importance of a mother in our life and he tried to compare the image and beauty of his mother with the mother in a poem taught by his teacher and he gets repentance about his deeds.

Pandu's mother is disturbed, nervous, and has a lot frustrated due to this tricking situation. And she was held responsible for creating this situation and muttering alone and confessed everything in observing God and said that:

Oh! my child, you declared me a lady of pleasure (slept woman). I feel whatever the pain and trouble are given your father compare to him your pain is more for me. Does God make a prior provision for me to send here aimed at tolerating pain and insult? You are not the only cause of my pain but also your father and of the neighboring people including some male, female, and children too. I have been tolerating a lot of grief for your sake as well as your fathers too. After deceased your father I got offered from some person named and first was Mohammed Mestry who was ready to make his vehicle in my name. The second person Baljiseth was ready to send Rs. 20 immediate to the hands of Tukabai. And last person Dagdya was ready to give his entire assets and services too. But I have to refuse all the offers and decided to burn myself for your protection and livelihood. As soon as you enter adulthood then you avoid your mother and ignore talking with me. I think the communication gap is one of the major causes between me and you to go to the long distance. I mean, whatever the allegation which has been done by you? Are you admitting that's the true...? You might remember the last Diwali Festival. Mr. Dagdya who has attempted and forced physical relations with me... If you would accept me as your mother of course the second relationship couldn't come in to exist. You were only my support and strength. But you only quit me... (Translated by me, Bagul,39).

In the short story 'Mother' the writer Bagul has described the memorable classroom scene the teacher teaches a poem about a 'Mother'. Of course,

he is praising and explains the importance of the mother in our life in different ways and says:

Prem Swarup aai, Vatsalya Sindhu aai, bolahu Tuz atta mi kontya upayi? Nahi jagat jhali abbal jivachi, tujhi univ chitti aai, trihi jachi chitti tujhi smarena kahich ruprekha, aai havi mhanuni sode n jeev heka.. (<https://bhaneelyrics.com>)

The above lines might be teacher teaches and all these lines are stating the importance of a mother in the life of all and Pandu was no exception. The Pandu who was listening with full concentration and becomes panicked and started comparing the images of his mother taught by the teacher in the poem. The first time the mind Pandu is working in the right direction. Because his mind has become already corrupt by the neighboring people and school classmates. His schoolmates already abused his mother several times. But Pandu feels restless after the teacher teaches a poem about a mother and he comes to know the fact. And confessed his repentance about his deeds and compare the image and beauty of his mother with the mother in the poem described. And finally, he comes to understand the importance and greatness of a mother.

Here, the writer is demonstrating that the upper caste people were making continuously hammering Pandu's innocent mind and the result was fixed that his psychological approach towards his mother is intolerant. The writer observed that the upper caste people have done it deliberately and created distance as well as conflict between 'mother' and 'son' as she belongs to the Dalit community. The schoolmates of Pandu were making trouble and mocking him as his mother having illicit relations with a person 'Mukadam'. Hence the Pandu never gets an opportunity to live his life like schoolmates or friends and of course, he has been humiliated by his schoolmates on the basis that he is from a lower caste and his mother has illicit relations as once his schoolmate Kisan says, "Don't touch Pandu, any of you. My mother says Pandu's mother sleeps with the Mukdam like this..." (Bagul, 183).

To conclude this story 'Mother' is a great touching heart. And she is the ideal Indian Dalit woman the writer Bagul is depicting in his memorable short story titled; 'Mother'. No doubt this particular story of Bagul is appreciated and appealing at the same time in the entire corner of Dalit society. The reason the writer Baburao Bagul is exploring is that the humiliation of Dalit women is a daily practice. And Dalit women are easily available to the upper caste people as if they are just puppets in their hands of them. Hence, they can make Dalit women humiliate based on 'caste' and 'gender'. Society is praising

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women as goddesses such as Laxmi, Durga, and Sarawati. But in real life the place of a woman is secondary. Though she is caring on one hand and another hand she is taking responsibility for the entire family. But it is unfortunate that still today she is not considered an equal human and makes the difference between a girl male and a female child. And family members ultimately give importance and make available more amenities to the male child than to girls. And if something happens wrong with a woman by her destiny though she is not given any sympathy. In this story, 'Mother' is the fittest in this situation. The writer is not explored or represent Pandu's 'Mother' in this story considering she is the 'symbol' of entire women folk.

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