

Unveiling Traumatic Past: Expression and Exploration of Self through Trauma Narrative

Sarada. P. V

Guest Lecturer

Little Flower College

Guruvayoor

ABSTRACT

Post-colonial India projected itself as a horizon of liberty, equality and fraternity. It is obviously true that India offers these privileges to its citizens. But how many of them can have the accessibility of such socialization and democratization is a pertinent question. Most of the population enjoys these multilayered political and sociological liberties from where the minority erased. The negligible section of the society includes Dalits, tribal people, transgenders, sexual workers, slum dwellers, diseased people, and victims of natural calamities etc. Do they possess least amount of rights to live in their native society is a question to ponder on.

KEYWORDS

Socialization; Democratization; Tribal people.

Trauma a very difficult or unpleasant experience that causes someone to have mental or emotional problems usually for a long time. Here the endeavor is to delve deep into the traumatic experiences of Dalits, tribal people, transgenders, sexual workers, slum dwellers, diseased people, and victims of natural calamities etc to examine the amount of psychological and sociological segregation of such groups from the main stream. Indian literature offers a wider perspective on the marginalized life positions of these segregated societies. Unveiling traumatic past through fictional narrative was taken as a strategy to create an open space for discussing controversial topics related with transgenders, dalits, tribals, etc. Here the paper is an attempt to disseminate the narratives of popular figures like Innocent, A Revathy, C K Janu, and Bama to unveil the traumatic past of the suppressed sections of society.

Creating a trauma narrative will usually take place over an extended period of time, but the process of creating it is in itself beneficial. The author will definitely begin a journey to her innermost suppressed consciousness by telling the story of over overwhelmingly out of control events. Expressive experiences also diminish distress by venting strong emotion and, over time, desensitizing survivors to the details of their own stories. Re-experiencing feelings and sensations of the original trauma as the story unfolds will eventually help survivors gain confidence in their mind.

Trauma

Trauma can be explained as a type of damage to the individual that occurs as a result of a severely distressing events. Trauma is often the result of an overwhelming amount of stress that exceeds one's ability to cope or integrate

the emotions involved with that experience. A traumatic event involves one experience, or repeating events with the sense of being overwhelmed that can be delayed by weeks, years, or even decades as the person struggles to cope with. Trauma can be caused by a wide variety of events, but there are a few common aspects. This is also seen when parameters like caste, disease, education, colour that are used to represent the multiple aspects in society became the measures of social suppression and inflicting trauma upon them. Such parameters segregate mankind into separate entity where many included in the upper strata of hierarchy and some occupy the lowest strata.

Generally society displays a wide horizon of people with divergent aspects. Most of the majority enjoys basic amenities but the unacknowledged minority is under periphery even now. The social and psychological experiences display a marginal aspect of such groups. The differences like caste, culture, job, diseases make the demarcations more prominent. Earlier demarcations have limited range but nowadays the society displays multiplicity of parameters. Being the negligent sections of society, their life displays marginalization and the social negation. Mostly Society is deaf about the multiple suppressed voices but literature displays the tales of trauma of the suppressed world. Social out castes and the downtrodden sections reflected in various genres of literature. From black American disposition of social negation to the present Indian dalit literature comes under the gigantic heading of marginalized community. Their literature depicts the multilayered exploitation and the trauma of their existence.

Divergent Aspects of Trauma

As the divergent marginalized sections of society, the traumatic experiences too are divergent. Various

people of the world suffer divergence of trauma. Even though the world offers variety of people their agony too is different. Some people suffered due to war some others due to colour and the others due to various parameters like caste, colour, gender, tribe, job.

Psychological agony of the depressed class was unexplainable through words but if the society displays their own agony through words it displays a vast arena of self-exploration and self-expression. Sociological stress suffered by the depressed community unveiled the traumatic experiences of their real life. Literature that depicts the traumatic experience put forward an honest representation of their innermost feelings of social oppression. Trauma narratives explicate the vicious social chains and such literature inspires generations to shatters the bondage.

Trauma of Transgenders

Society always provides prominence to the biological genders- the male and female. But the status of a third gender is still a mystery. Social query about gender ends up in filling the columns with either male or female. There are people who oscillate in between these two genders but their psychological and sociological trauma still under enigmatic casing. Sometimes literature in its varied genres displays the disposition of the neglected third gender existence. Nowadays the society at least acknowledges the existence of such third gender. by the revolutionary endeavors of the society nowadays these transgenders enjoy freedom of expression and existence in society.

A. Revathi, a transgender through her work *The Truth about Me: A Hijra Life Story* vividly portrays the pangs and strains of a transgender whose identity oscillates within the social constrained biological genders. This depict an audaciously daring and moving

autobiography of a Hijra (Eunuch) who fought ridicule, persecution and violence both within her home and outside to find a life of dignity. The traumatic experiences revealed by A Revathi display how society perceives the eunuchs. Being born as a eunuch itself is the reason behind such a traumatic life. Revathi was born as a boy, but felt and behaved like a girl. The social and familial marginalization made her to escape from native place and the new asylum in Delhi offers her a possibility of new living. Transgenders could not attain peace of mind even in their home so their predicament in society is beyond interrogation.

The trauma of being born as a eunuch is expressed here through words. Her life story offers the strenuous psychological experiences of a transgender and the incessant searching for real identity. Revathi treated this work as a platform to make the word audible of her sociological trauma. Self-expression was the objective of such a narrative. This work is an exploration of the identity of a third gender. Till then voices of the transgender is unheard but this work made the voice heard in society. The strenuous experiences were revealed through this narration. Her life became an incredible series of dangerous physical and emotional journeys to become a woman and to find love.

Trauma of Diseased

A talented actor cum writer opens the vast arena of experiences about psychological and physiological trauma of being the diseased through his memoir *Cancer Wardile Chiri* (Smile in the Cancer Ward). This must be viewed as the reflections of an anguished mind and how he surpasses strains of disease. Most often diseases became a parameter of segregation nowadays. Diseases like AIDS, LEPRESY create a kind of marginalization for the diseased. Here the writer stressed the point in which how society perceives

disease and the victims. Society viewed diseases like cancer as something horrible and the diseased will be perceived as pure scapegoats. But here he projects diseases are not something to be marginalized upon but have to ponder upon the mindset of the diseased. He discloses how he overcomes his painful traumatic experiences at the hospital through confidence and laughter. His work vividly explicates a platform of expression and a self-exploration for the diseased. Exploring the identity of the victim of a disease is the objective of such a book. Traumatic experiences of life are mixed with glimpses of hope in the form of smiles.

The memoir, replete with humorous undertones, narrates how he bravely fought cancer and survived the most painful phase of his life with a positive outlook. Being a diseased person he admits the physiological trauma but at the same time reveals Cancer has not shed his passion for acting. "There is nothing to feel ashamed of or to hide if at all you are a victim of cancer. Unfortunately, this fear dilemma still exists," said the actor who has penned the book *Cancer Wardile Chiri* on his experience in fighting the fatal illness. His endeavor inspired the diseased people to stay away from wrong notions and pretensions about the deadly disease and the fake practices among people.

Trauma of Dalits

Indian constitution offers equality and liberty among citizens irrespective of caste, creed, colour, language etc. but even now most of the minority are under the ignorance of such a perspective. The predicament of dalits are of inferior quality in a society where upper castes rules. The situation worsens when they were treated as untouchables; don't have rights even to fetch water and basic amenities. Generally the life of dalits was the typical representations of repressed, ruined, and obliterated class of society. Exploitation, complete lack of respect and love made the

life of dalits unbearable. But when the postmodern era comes with the motto of equality, liberty and fraternity dalits realized the glimpses of hope for the less privileged community of themselves.

Bama Tamil dalit woman through *Karukku* expresses the issue of caste oppression within the Catholic Church. Being born as a dalit woman her life is doubly oppressed. The harsh exploitations that modified her life are treated as measures to mold her identity. Thus traumatic experiences of her life as a dalit woman made her life more composite with repression and utter exploitation. By narrating the pangs of suppression she explores the neglected identity of a dalit woman.

Trauma of Tribals

Since time immemorial human beings lived along with indigenous fauna and flora complacently. Civilization brought drastic changes in man's perceptions on the world. Till then they live satiated with undomesticated surroundings. Treating animals and wild life as something to be tamed and used according to the desire of man was the visible aspects of their shifting focus.

It is very true that the tribals of forest are having a different perspective about the existence of the wilderness. Untamed aspect of the wilderness was the reason of their eternal admiration for the forest. Forest was treated as a mother, a goddess, and an eternal asylum for the natives. They desire a life in close association with nature where their identity is strictly preserved. Otherwise their ethnicity would be in great jeopardy. CK Janu's *Mother Forest* depicts the agonies of the tribals who were alienated from their land, they worried they would lose their identity and livelihood which are focused mainly on forest.

Being a tribal woman C K Janu knows the throb of tribal and their sociocultural inconsistency as when

compared to the civilized society. C K Janu's voice is audible even in the United Nations Organization where she authentically demands for equal opportunity and recognition for the tribal woman around India. Her work displays the traumatic experiences of a tribal woman. Primary level of oppression was the result of acknowledging the status of a tribal. The society always demarcates tribals as uncivilized heathens. But the reality lies in their honest treatment of nature as the ancient husbandman. The modern society marginalizes the role of tribals in society. C K Janu raised her voice against all make humiliating treatment of tribal women whose role was negligent before the masculine civilized eye. Trauma of being born as a tribal woman is narrated by C K Janu in her *'Mother Forest'*. This narration vividly helps to understand the neglected social strata of a tribal where he was ill-treated. Herself expression discloses the pathetic predicament of tribals and how they are living with all these marginalization.

Conclusion

Technological advances paved the way for worldwide development and the ever growing possibilities of communication. But since time immemorial the world compartmentalized the progeny of human beings according to various yardsticks. As the yardsticks may be the categorization too became a severe problem. Strenuous past experiences make the life of the marginalized sections a disgusting one which later molded their character to write against the powerful in the society. Individual consciousness was vigorously haunted by the psychological trauma and the effects of social segregation. But the trauma narrative is focusing mainly on the aspects of creating an open space of discussion on social alienation and the exploitation of the depressed class. As the years passed a kind of rejuvenated spirit conquers the prejudiced social consciousness which

offers a wide horizon of hope for a revitalized world.

WORKS CITED

- Innocent. *Cancer Wardile Chiri*. Kozhikkod: Mathrubhoomi books. 2013.
Janu, C. K. *Mother forest: The Unfinished Story of C K Janu*. Thrissur: DC Books. 2003
Bama. *Karukku*. Trans. Lakshmi Holmstrom. Ed. Mini Krishnan. Chennai: Macmillan, Print.
Revathy, A. *The Truth about Me: A Hijra Life Story*, India: Penguin Books. 2013.