

Violation of Women Rights in Sivakami's *The Grip of Change*

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Abstract

Human rights are fundamental human needs. It is a birth right of an individual by moral standards of his/her being a human. One may belong to any race, religion, culture, tradition, society and nationality. The concept of Human Rights is based on human beings who are born equal in dignity and rights. Many writers present violation of human rights, especially women rights. Sivakami, renowned writer of subaltern literature has written a few novels portraying the sufferings of the dalits. Sivakami's *The Grip of Change* is the English Translation of Pazhaiyana Kazhithalum, the first full length novel by her. This translation features "Asiriyar Kurippu", in which Sivakami writes:

Thangam: "Ayyo ... Ayyo They have butchered me ... Ayyo...." The figure cried like a wounded animal and finally fell down. (4)

During one early morning, Thangam's noisy voice disturbed not only Kathamuthu but also his family. All at once Kathamuthu and his family members came out of their house. Gowri, Kathamuthu's daughter, got frightened then began to cry. Nagamani and Kanagavalli wives of Kathamuthu also rushed out of their house. They ask:

You women ... why are you here, wailing so early in the morning? What is the matter? Get up and explain your problem without making such a fuss. (4)

Kathamuthu is flanked by both of his wives. He questions her. As she describes:

What can I Say? May they be hanged? May they go to hell? The ground will open up and swallow you. You will eat mud. Bastards! You abused a helpless woman. You curs! Come now! Come and lick....(4)

Thangam begins to narrate her conditions to Kathamuthu. Gowri looks at the women. She was full of fear that looks like a pity. Also she showed her injury at her arms. Also she lifted her sari above her knees. The skin of her thighs and knees was torn as if she had been dragged on a rough surface.

For a while, Kathamuthu stands and keeps in silence. Then and there, he asks the correct tone of someone else who had been once elected the president of the Panchayat Council. As Kathamuthu asks:

Where are you from?

What is your caste?

And your Name?

As she expresses her anger: Sami, these hooligans who beat me up, they should be jailed for at least a day and tortured. The pain is killing me. (5)

She is unable to reply instantly. Kathamuthu turns around and begins to divide the work to each member of his family. As Sivakami writes:

Nagu, gets some hot water and clean those wounds. Sekar, runs to Muchamy Vaidyar. Drag him here, if you have. While you are at it, buy milk on your way back. Gowri, why are you standing there doing nothing? Clean the front yard and spray the cow-dung. (5)

Meanwhile, Thangam narrates her horrible experience at the hands of the uppercaste people. "Sami, I come from the same village as your wife Kanagavalli. Kanagu, don't you recognize me? You know Kaipillai from the south street who died? I am his wife" (5).

Thangam presents her crucial situation to Kathamuthu continuously. After her husband died she begins to work on Paranjothi's farm. Thangam's husband's brothers did not hand over his share of the family land. Because she did not have children. She fought with them for rights; to inherit her husband share of property. She could not go to court. Who can give that huge amount of money to me? Even if I had won, I would not be able to take care of my share of land in peace. Now she lives as a single woman. But Munusamy, the god on the Mountain, is watching what it is happening around with her. She curses that one day the god will punish them. She is a poor widow. Finally, she has a thatched roof over her head. As Thangam says:

My husband's relatives spread the story that I had become Paranjothi's concubine. That's why Paranjothi's wife's brothers and her brother-in-law, four men, entered my house last night. They pulled me by my hair and dragged me out to the street. They hit me, and flogged me with a stick stout as a hand. They nearly killed me. No one in the village, none of my relatives, came to help me. I begged for mercy, but they would not stop. They abused me and threatened to kill me if I stayed in that village any longer. They called me a whore. (6)

Kathamuthu interrupts and asks her:

All right, it happened. Now tell me, why didn't you go after someone of our caste? It's because you choose that upper caste fellow, that four men could come and righteously beat you up. Don't you like our chaps? (7)

Indian society and the human history show the occurrences of violence against women on account of sexual discrimination. Among the violences against women, rape is one of the worse violences in Indian society. Rape is a deadly act and against the personal life and violation of women in society. As Sivakami writes:

Sami, is there anywhere on earth where this doesn't happen? I didn't want it. But Udayar took no notice of me. He raped me when I was working in his sugarcane field. I remained silent; after all, he is my paymeter. He measures my rice. If you think I'm like that, that I'm easy, please ask around in the village. After my husband's death, can anybody say that they had seen me in the company of anyone, or even smiling at anyone? My husband's brother tried to force me, but I never gave in. They wouldn't give in. Each time one of them came near me I brandished the broom. After that none of them came anywhere near me. I am a childless widow. There is no protection for me. (7)

Practically, in India Dalits do not enjoy any of the Human Rights. But the Dalits who would afford to conceal their identity can enjoy Human Rights. Elite Dalits enjoy human rights in India because any violation against them would be reported by the media. Thus the paper deals with the Woman Rights in India which is associated with social status. Higher a person's caste is higher the security is. Lower a person's caste is, least the security is.

Works Cited

Sivakami, P. *The Grip of Change* (Pazhaiyana Kazhithalum). Chennai: Orient Longman, 2006. Print.