

**'MOTHERWIT' AND 'THE WEAVE OF MY LIFE...' - TALES OF SUFFERINGS****VIVEK DINKAR KHABDE**S. S. Dhamdhare Arts
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Tal- Shirur, Dist - Pune.**ABSTRACT**

It took a long span of time for literature of the downtrodden to come to the limelight in the midst of popular mainstream literature. They had to struggle for their survival and had to suffer the caste stigma. They were deprived of education and equal status in the society. The struggle was many-fold, the struggle for survival, poverty, deprived from education, inhuman treatment by the upper castes. The inhuman treatment given to the downtrodden of the society has reduced them and left undernourished from education and intellectual life. Due to great work done by the social reformers particularly in Maharashtra, the life of the downtrodden started gaining self-respect and dignity of life, sense of consciousness. They took pen in their hand and began writing their moving experiences of their suffocating and the inhuman treatment.

Keywords - Women's Struggle, Patriarchal Attitude, Identity Crisis, Individuality.

The fourteen stories collection 'Motherwit' translated by Veena Deo is written in simple language, Every story has a message exhibits the tranny of the patriarchal Indian society. *Motherwit* is an anthology of the short stories portraying the life experiences which are part real and part fictitious. The anthology gives detailed insights into the lives of the downtrodden and the hardships in the life of the women in particular. The stories underline the fact about double marginalization as being a woman and being a downtrodden Dalit woman. The stories are assertive and has revolutionary tone. The stories are not only limited to the plight of the Dalit women but it goes beyond and exhibits the plight of Indian women in general. The very first short story in the anthology is Mother (Aaye) which portrays a headstrong woman, having strong will and is courageous and who struggles and fights against all odds after the death of her husband. The very first short story gives a sense to the reader the difficult terrain of the downtrodden life. The short story Pain (Shalya) is a saddening tale of Jyoti and his maternal instincts. She suffers the familial pressure of bearing a son and hence exchanges her baby and gets a son from an unwed lady in a hospital. The tale is heart touching and sympathises with Jyoti's character. The short story named The Odd One (Vegli) is about the experiences at professional life and the general outlook towards reservation. It is the tale of Nalini who suffers alienation in her professional sphere and a sense of neglect. The reader finds a sense of independence in her character where she moves out of her husband's home and shifts to her own flat. She rejects everything which restricts her freedom and space.

The shifting of places does not always mean that you leave behind caste. It follows where ever an Indian goes. At times, you might forget your own caste but the 'other' always

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847

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reminds you about it. This vicious circle gets completed in Mauritius in the short story 'Circle' (Vartool). Netra, an artist attempts escaping from the caste ridden marriage system and decides to lead a free life. In an attempt to search a match for her she ends up in the same vicious circle of caste consciousness which she has rejected and tried to escape from.

The short story My People (Maajhi Manse) discusses about the psychological and emotional exploitation and torture of women which leads to the psychological and mental illness in woman. Armor (Kavach) is about the language abuse which is used as an instrument to harass and humiliation. The mother in the story does retort to the obscene comment and abuse calmly. The story exhibits the harassment and oppression is not only physical and mental but language can also used as a tool to oppress and humiliate. The Cycle of Dhamma (Dhamma Chakra) is about the life experiences which teaches us. Anger (Chid) is about female friendship, which is affected by the husband. The story reiterates the fact that males are at the apex position and can influence anything according to their wish. The above-mentioned stories and the rest of the stories in the anthology *Motherwit* is in a way counter questioning the male patriarchy and rigid caste system. The oppression of women is not restricted to Dalit and downtrodden women but women's oppression in general. This anthology highlights the condition of women in general as being victims of the oppressive structure. The fight with the odds and the oppressive system is way of hope which Urmila Pawar has tried to ignited in the minds of the readers as her own life is full of struggle.

Urmila Pawar's 'Aaydan' is a documented rich history of her own experiences which she fearlessly records in her autobiography. The prominent autobiography of a fearless author Urmila Pawar, is translated into English by Maya Pandit as 'The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs'. It is the record of the inhuman treatment and a moving tale of a mother and a daughter who fight against all odds and struggles to lead a life with dignity. The rigid caste structure has no scope for escape. The translation is with extreme subtlety and has succeeded in bringing the genuine essence of the autobiography. Language is considered to be culture specific. Maya Pandit has succeeded in bridging the linguistic barriers in the translation. Being a Maharashtrian, Maya Pandit has an added advantage of understanding the culture specific terminology of Marathi and could express well in her translation.

Urmila Pawar's autobiography exhibits a deep sense of gratitude towards her mother who has devoted her life for the upbringing for her children and educating them. She expresses as being fortunate for having such a courageous mother who has the will to fight against all odds in life. The autobiography is a saga of inhuman treatment which the author experienced in all her life beginning from her very childhood to the present day. The local dialects used in the autobiography has an impact of genuineness over the readers. She stresses the fact that the patriarchal attitude is present in all castes and is not restricted to the upper castes.

Urmila Pawar's mother Laxmibai has played a very important role in the author's life. After the death of her father, the responsibility of the family's upbringing was on her mother's shoulders. She accepted the responsibility and truly succeeded in it. Her mother worked day and night to make the both ends meet. The author says that her mother use to weave the basket with the cane until we sleep and when we use to get up in the morning we see her at the same place weaving the baskets. She saved money and never spent money on unnecessary

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848

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things. The money was ultimately used for her own children for whom she was working day and night so that her children could be self-reliant, independent, well educated.

The death of Urmila Pawar's father has affected her mother badly. Her mother threw all the photos and idols from home after the death of her husband. But later she again started worshipping it. It was only for the well being of her children. The author expresses with gratitude that her mother never lived for her own, her mother never expressed her desire to any one as she has devoted her whole life for the children.

The anthology 'Motherwit' and *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs* both represents the ill treatment given to women and to the downtrodden of the society. These writings have made a mark at the national and international level and have brought the issues of women and Dalits to the forefront. These writings have raised hope in the life of the people and could fight against the odds in their life irrespective of gender bias.

Pawar's writing projects the struggle of a dalit women. She acknowledges the role of her mother which has shaped her life, gave her self- esteem and self- respect.

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Vol. 5 Issue 1

849

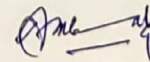
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