

The Pains and Sufferings of 'Mukri' Women

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Purpose of choosing this topic:

The actual purpose of writing this paper or choosing this topic is to focus on the pain and sufferings of 'Mukri' community women. The Mukri community is one of the communities which come under 'Dalit' category. They are mainly seen in the coastal area of North Kanara. The research work on them is not done that much compared to other communities.

The real sufferings and pains this community people have gone through is indescribable. But, through this research article, I have done an attempt to highlight their pains, and sufferings and how day by day they are trying to come out of it, and how this community people are trying to educate themselves. And how their culture, their language become a main study area nowadays in literature.

The Different communities, their language and cultures of North Kanara:

There are so many different categories living in North Kanara district of Karnataka. And there can be seen the different categories like Mukri, Patgaar, Gowda, Naik, Shetty, Bhandari, Mesta, Madiwala, Ambiga, Havyaka and tribal communities like Siddhis, and Gondas and many other communities. They all live their life doing different works. There are some works that are meant for the particular community only. For e.g.: Fisheries is the main work of the Mesta and Ambiga community. Washing clothes has been the main occupation of the Madiwala community for so many years, and the laborers mainly come from the Mukri community.

Nowadays, times have changed. The lower community people are educating themselves and getting jobs. But it's a sad reality that things have not changed completely. and it's sure that things will change slowly.

The languages of each and every community are different. There are 11 taluks in Uttara Kannada District. The languages of Uttara Kannadigas are divergent and unique. They speak Konkani, Nadavar language, Halakki people's language is also different, Namdhari's language, Havyaka language, Mukri's language. Region wise also the languages changes for eg: Tadadi, Gokarna region people is completely change than Kumata people language, Ankola region language is different than Karwar people. And when it comes to festivals the festivities are also celebrated differently. The sweet aroma of jaggery, the sound of traditional mortar and pestle, continuous chatter of relatives and loud playful children are the signs of a festival in Uttara Kannada house. The lighting festival Deepavali is celebrated so uniquely. They celebrates it for three days and they call it (Sanna habba, Amavasye Pooja and Dodda habba) on the 3rd

day of Deepavali they celebrates 'Ghanti pooja' (worshipping cow or 'Gowmata') Bandi Habba is also very famous in different places in Uttara Kannada, Honde Habba, and various deities Jatre is also very famous in the different areas of Uttara Kannada.

Performing arts are one of the oldest forms of expression. Creativity is known for providing people a means of self-expression and dancing is one such creative art. Dancing has been a part of human society for centuries. There are various forms of art that people from different parts of the world practice. Yakshagana is a classical dance drama popular in Uttara Kannada district. This Theatre arts involves music, songs, dance, acting, dialogues are created spontaneously on stage depending on ability of artists. This combination of classical and folk elements makes yakshagana unique from any other Indian art. This would be considered to be a form of opera in western eyes. (<https://www.journaleca.com>).

The lower community people like Mukri and Gonda community people worships the 'Grama Devaru' (Mahasati, or Masti, Kalla, Beera, Jataka, Nagara) It's a belief that the 'Grama Devru' is very powerful. It gives strength to people. All these aspects show how the culture of this district is so rich in culture and in tradition. The people of this district live their life with unity, prosperity and with peace.

The Conditions of Women in North Kanara District:

In this section I have focused on the conditions of women in Uttara Kannada district. How they are living, their education, their positions, their contribution to arts, culture and literature.

There are over 15 lakh people living in this district. The female literacy rate in this district is quite good, 78.39%. People living in Uttara Kannada depend on multiple skills. Cultivators are dependent on agriculture farming out of 76,210 are cultivated by men and 20,337 are women.

In this part I want to add the little information about the queen who ruled for 54 years- the longest reign by any Indian woman ruler, Chennabhairadevi, the queen of Gerusoppa, situated on the banks of the river Sharavathi in North Kanara, was under the control of the Vijayanagara kings. The queen had to resist the Portuguese who tried to grab the ports and take over the trade. She was at war with the Portuguese army. One of the Portuguese chronicles states that during the war of 1570, the Portuguese attacked Honnavar and burnt it to the ground. After the decline of Vijayanagar, Chennabhairadevi dealt with the army diplomatically, who nicknamed her 'Raina de Pimenta'- the Pepper Queen.

Chennabhairadevi's story is an inspiration for today's women. She projects herself as a powerful woman, when other women stayed indoors under submission. She was the contemporary Queen Elizabeth I of England and succeeded in ruling for the longest period against all odds. (<https://www.newindiaexpress.com>).

North Kanara district women's position is quite good compared to the other districts of Karnataka. But the situation of lower community women still remains the same. They are somewhere hesitant to grab the opportunity in the mainstream. Rural areas Mukri community women are also one among them. Though, the situations of urban areas are quite good. It's actually the question of why women of the lower communities are not getting equal opportunity. May be, the belief that why to educate a women: There are so many people who thinks that why to educate a women, it's not necessary to educate them, so this is the one reason that they are not getting equal opportunity as compare to male. I think in some of the areas of society and the higher community people are not showing interest to educate or guide lower caste people. Why I have put these lines here is to say, as we all know, the condition of Savitribai Phule. How she suffered to provide education for the women, how the higher community smears a cow dung on her face.

Being a Dalit is not easy in India and especially Dalit's women are doubly suppressed sections of India. So getting an education, getting a higher position for Dalit women is a difficult task. And Mukri community of North Kanara district comes under Dalit category. The women of this category basically do the household chores of higher communities; they mainly do the agriculture works, and laborers. But, nowadays the situation is somewhere changing, the women are educating themselves, they are slowly joining the mainstreams of the society, while retaining the individuality and uniqueness of their culture.

The issue of untouchability is one of the main problems that every lower community faces. And the Mukri community is also not out of it. There are some higher caste people in society who do not treat them as equal. So this is also the one reason that the lower communities are not getting equal status in the society. As our so called ministers, higher community peoples are using these lower community people for the sake of votes. But they are unable to create a better society for them. It's really painful that the lower strata groups are not coming to the mainstream. And the situation for women is worse than for male. They are the real sufferers of society.

Some incidents based on untouchability get the limelight and there are more than 50% incidents that didn't get any hype or limelight. so the conditions of these poor people never change. in one article of Indian Express which published in the year 16th July 2017 The same Mukri community people, they had a BPL cards but did not get ration because they didn't had Adhar numbers. The people of this community died of starvation and the higher authority people denied it. This is how the conditions of poor and lower caste people remain as usual. We can see, if it is happening in any higher caste family the incidents definitely gets some focus of ministers or higher administration sections. But when this

incident happened in a lower caste family the matter was not taken seriously.

So on the above note, Dalit consciousness is very important in the society to eradicate the unequalness treatment in the society. Getting a proper education, spreading awareness among women about late marriage, because it helps them to get a good education and also it is very important to keep their health safe. If they marry at a very young age, they carry a baby at a very early age. It's very harmful for the body. So education is a must for women. It will help them to provide some contributions to society.

How Dalit Consciousness is must for Mukri People:

In this part, I have explained how Dalit Consciousness is very helpful for lower community people and With the help of Dalit Consciousness how Mukri community women's can come out of the shackles of caste system.

Dalit Consciousness is a revolutionary attitude that is linked to struggle. It's an anti- caste belief system that puts the human person at the center of all it does. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar aimed to liberate the lower castes from the oppression of the higher castes via the process of emancipation. For this, the Dalits had to become more aware of their own oppression and the need for a modern, equal India. Dr. Ambedkar started full-fledged Dalit rights activities in 1927. The liberty of all castes to attend was desired, as was unrestricted access to public drinking water supplies, and he publicly criticized Hindu scriptures.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is not only a Messiaha for one particular community or a particular sex. He is the icon for each and every people of India. How he worked hard to emancipate women, how he succeeded to eradicate the caste system, how he is a true legend and a champion of women's rights. He once said, "I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved"- Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

Education to women is the most powerful instrument of changing their position in society. It's not only belong to one particular Mukri community. It is for everyone. Education also brings about reduction of inequalities and also acts as a means to improve their status within the family. In order to encourage education of women at all levels and dilute gender bias in the provision and acquaintance of education, schools, colleges and even universities were established exclusively for women in the country. (<https://www.legislativeservicesindia.com>)

To get a proper education at proper time, and to gain knowledge is very important with this and the help of Dalit consciousness one can achieve anything in the society. Women are the backbone of society. And a well educated woman provides the skills, knowledge and self-assurance necessary to be a better mother, worker and citizen.

Mukri community women being a Dalit they suffered a lot, there pains are inexpressable. But with all the odds they are educating, they are getting more and more benefits that governments are providing them. It is really difficult for the

upper caste society to accept them. But I hope in the upcoming days, that we can see an oasis somewhere in the desert. That society will accept them and treat them as one among us.

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