

Demoralized Mother in *The Outcaste*

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I. Introduction

The history of human civilization is the history of the clashes between the oppressors and the oppressed. The oppressors oppressed and colonized the weak. For instance, the European colonialism tyrannized the people of their colonies in the world. It dominated and ruled them. The tendency to rule and oppress the weak is everywhere and prevails even today.

The long awaited independence brought ecstasy to India. However, the inhuman and evil practices continue to colonize the weak masses because the Indians are influenced by the caste system. They strictly believe in the Hindu scriptures. These scriptures state the four Varna (classes): the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas, and the Shudras. The Indian society is based on these four Varna system. Each Varna is given a separate profession. The Brahmins are the priests, The Kshatriyas are the warriors, the Vaishyas are the traders, and the Shudras are the labourers. The Shudras are segregated as untouchables. The religion teaches that the caste system is the order of the God. Social life based on differences of castes existed in India even after independence. People of each caste did only those jobs that were allowed to them by the religion. The untouchables did the job of scavenging, carrying away the carcasses etc. They were treated as the slaves of the upper caste people. They carried a broom at their backs so that their footprints do not pollute the roads used by the upper caste people. They lived in the dirty outskirts of the villages. The caste system in India segregated the people into the superior and inferior human beings. It has a long history. With the spread of education the untouchables started to go to the cities and then slowly the caste system started to decline. However, it is a fact that this system existed before colonialism, during colonialism, after colonialism, and it exists even today in various hidden forms. It has inflicted innumerable miseries on the oppressed.

The social reformers and thinkers in India brought changes in the society. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, an eminent thinker, condemned the caste system and struggled to bring the untouchables in the main stream. He stressed the need of education to change the social and economic status of the untouchables. He became the icon of the suppressed masses deprived of freedom. His teaching and awakening influenced them and the literature reflecting the caste system.

Akkarmashi is an autobiography written by Sharankumar Limbale in Marathi. It was first published by him at the age of twenty five in 1984. It was translated into English by Santosh Bhoomkar as *The Outcaste* in 2003. It puts forth Limbale's life as an outcaste. The word 'akkarmashi' is a Marathi word which means a person whose birth is illegitimate or one who is an outcaste, impure, incomplete. Mahar community calls him 'akkarmashi' because his father is a high-caste man and the high-caste people call him an untouchable because he is Mahar. This book gives the account of his life in the postcolonial India. It proves how the caste system is followed in the so called developed postcolonial India. The book becomes a chronicle of the community of the untouchables.

The most exploited lot of the downtrodden was the Dalit women. They were twice tyrannized, firstly by their husbands and secondly by the high-caste people. Limbale writes about his mother in Acknowledgements:

My history is my mother's life, at the most my grandmother's. My ancestry doesn't go any further.

My mother is an untouchable, while my father is a high caste from one of the privileged classes of India. Mother lives in a hut, father in a mansion. Father is a landlord; mother landless. I am an akkarmashi (half-caste). I am condemned, branded illegitimate.

I regard the immorality of my father and mother as a metaphor for rape. My father had privileges by virtue of his birth granted to him by the caste system. His relationship with my mother was respected by society, whereas my mother is untouchable and poor. Had she been born into the high caste or were she rich, would she have submitted to his appropriation of her? It is through the Dalit movement and Dalit literature that I understood that my mother was not an adulteress but the victim of a social system. I grow restless whenever I read about a rape in the newspaper. A violation anywhere in the country, I feel, is a violation of my mother. (ix)

This paper endeavors to highlight defenselessness of Masamai, Sharan's mother. The circumstances around her take away her pleasure to love her children and bestow on them her blessings. Her defenselessness can be studied on the two levels: I) Her defenselessness struggle for food to survive, II) Her defenselessness sexual victimization. Masamai's life emphasizes the socio-political establishment of postcolonial India maintaining and maneuvering the exploitation of the subaltern women.

II. Masamai's Struggle For Food

Masamai was married to Ithal Kamble, a very poor man. There is always a shortage of food in Masamai's home. They work as grass mowers and never have enough to eat. Ithal Kamble works as a farm worker on a yearly contract to a landlord, Hanmanta Limbale, a Patil. He works hard on the fields as well as in the house of Hanmanta who helps him during hard times. But while helping Ithal, Hanmanta's intention is quite different. He ruins Masamai's family which is happy in its own way by tyrannizing her sexually. The caste council forces Masamai to divorce Ithal. This separates her from her suckling baby, Suryakant and her four-year-old son Dharma. Masamai weeps when she leaves her Ithal's house without her two children. Dharma and Suryakant too cry. Sharan rightly says, "The relationship between husband and a wife can come to an end, but what about the relationship between a mother and her sons?" (36). After the divorce Masamai is a free woman. To make a living she carries headloads of wood and sells them in the town every day. Before the divorce she had been busy with her husband, children, and domestic responsibilities. But now uprooted, "she felt like Sita lost in the Dandakaryana searching for shelter" (36).

Masamai's tragedy is the result of Hanmanta's lust. The caste council has no excuse to save Masamai. It neither protects Masamai nor saves her further catastrophe. A woman's life after rape becomes murky. On the other hand Ithal remarries. Sharan comments, "A man can eat paan and spit as many times as he likes but the same is not possible for a woman. It is considered wrong if a woman does that. Once her chastity is lost it can never be restored" (36). Masamai cannot marry. Sharan says, "How could Masamai marry now? There wasn't a grain to eat in her house. Deserted by her husband she was a free woman and yet would never regain the status of a wife" (36). Hanmanta comes forward and lures Masamai and gives her a rented house at Akkalkot. Sharan says:

It was a kind of revenge to live openly with the same man who had uprooted her from her family. Hanmanta Limbale now possessed her like a pet dove. They lived happily. Masamai became pregnant, and gave birth to a son. Who's the father of this boy? Hanmanta didn't want this to happen, but who can disown a child? A child is a reality (36).

Neither Masamai nor her child is to be blamed for their doom. However, a grown up Sharan feels sorry for the life he lives and reflects:

Why did my mother say yes to the rape which brought me into the world? Why did she put up with the fruit of this illegitimate intercourse for nine months and nine days and allow me to grow in the foetus? Why did she allow this bitter embryo to grow? How many eyes must have humiliated her because they consider her a whore? Did anyone distribute sweets to celebrate my birth? Did anyone admire me affectionately? Did anyone celebrate my birth? Which family would claim me as its descendant? Whose son am I, really? (37)

Hanmanta is interested in gratifying his lust and he has no conscientiousness for Masamai's motherhood or the child. He tries to avoid her. He even does not acknowledge Sharan as his child but accuses that he is the child of other man, Dhondya. Hence, Masamai comes to live with her mother, Santamai because "Only a mother and the earth can accommodate and stomach everything" (37). The fact about the Dalit women is that their beauty becomes a curse for them because each Patil in the village chases a beautiful woman. Masamai is beautiful and she suffers for it. She is divorced by her husband, after which Hanmanta enjoys her and then deserts her.

Masamai's worries and physical abuse give her no time to make Sharan's life comfortable. The injuries of the negligence by mother are unforgettable for Sharan. So he says, "I never received her wholehearted love. (38). Masamai cannot feed her children well. For example, in a school picnic all the high caste school children enjoy the rich food. The Mahar boys and girls eat just pieces of dry bhakari. About the high caste boys and girls, Sharan says, "Their mothers had given them fried food, whereas we had just pieces of dry bhakarīs which were hardly enough to satisfy the cave of hunger" (2). Whatever Sharan brings for picnic is not sufficient to satisfy his hunger.

Masamai always scolds Sharan for his hunger and shouts angrily, "What is it you have, a stomach or Akkalkot? There seems to be a gizzard in your stomach. Why don't you go around with a big bowl at your mouth?" (3). Sharan says, "I always felt half-fed. Whatever was given I ate greedily and nothing was ever enough. Everyone in my house needed food so how could I alone think of eating till I was full? I had searched for every bit of leftover food in the house to make up my tiffin. I felt I had swallowed the whole land and was chewing stones" (3). It is a fact that Sharan's mother cannot cook enough food because she cannot get money to buy anything.

Masamai faces starvation. When Sharan informs her that they ate the leftover food given to them by the high caste boys and girls, she like the victim of a famine says, "Why didn't you get at least a small portion of it for me? Leftover food is nectar" (3). This reaction of mother puts the harsh reality of her struggle to get food. On one occasion Sharan tries to take some kheer for Masamai. The kheer is served to the Mahar people on the wedding ceremony in the high castes family but the master snatches his plate, slaps him in mouth, and shouts, "The scum! They eat as much as they want and still crave for more to take home" (9). Sharan does not want to go for such feasts but Masamai forces him to go pushing a plate into his hand and driving him away saying, "Do you want me to feed you with dust-there is nothing else in this house. You are not yet old enough to go digging to earn a living. Get out. Come back only after eating at the feast. You have too much of self-respect. From where should I produce food for you? Go and find out if anyone would like to buy me in the market! You won't be happy until you swallow me!"(9). Sharan is very innocent and he wonders, "if I could sell Masamai like junk in exchange for salted gram" (9). Masamai gives birth to twelve children. Out of her three children from her husbands, Ithal Kamble, one child dies. Later on she is sexually exploited and she gives birth to nine children. She is poor and hence she is helpless. Sharan says, "Starvation was written in our lot from the moment of our birth. Most of the time all my sisters went to sleep without eating anything. Nobody woke them up for dinner, because there was nothing to eat" (21).

More than Masamai Sharan is attached to his grandmother, Santamai. He says, "Masamai, my mother, always treated me as if we were her stepson. I was more attached to Santamai, my grandmother. Whenever Masamai began to hit me Santamai would intervene and save me" (42). Once Masamai and Santamai quarrel so fiercely on Sharan's account that Santamai, in a rage, leaves the Maharwada. After that Sharan, Santamai, and Dada live together in the open behind the bus stand.

The high-caste people do not pay the Mahars well and hence, they are always hungry, underfed, and given the callous status. Masamai and her people living at the bottom of the social level experience rejection, subhuman treatment, and suffering everywhere. The caste system is its root reason. It is contempt for human life. This system can be compared with the racial struggle between the whites and the blacks. Hence, what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. says about racism is true for the caste system in India:

It is the arrogant assertion that one race is the centre of value and object of devotion. It is the absurd dogma that one race is responsible for all the progress of history and alone can assure the progress of the future. Racism is estrangement. It separates not only bodies, but minds and spirits. Inevitably it descends to inflicting spiritual or physical homicide upon the out-group.
(70)

Sharan's grandmother's struggle to get food is implausible. For instance, Santamai collects the lumps of dung, washes them and collects the jowar grains passed undigested in the dung by the cattle. She dries these grains and then grinds it into flour. But Santamai herself eats the bhakari prepared from this flour and does not give it to Sharan. When one day Sharan eats such bhakari he says, "It stank of dung. As I chewed it, I felt I was actually eating dung. It was difficult for me to swallow it. Somehow forcing myself to gulp it down, I returned the remaining bhakari to Santamai" (11).

Santamai has to struggle for food. The supremacy and dominance bestowed upon the high-caste people give them the right to make life unfeasible for the low-caste people. Sharan, Santami, and Dada live on the money earned by Dada. For carrying the bundles of luggage to the top of the bus Dada gets ten paise. Most of the time they sleep without eating anything. One day while carrying the loads of a sack full of jowar Dada slips and falls. The bus conductor moves aside narrowly escaping death. He abuses Dada and asks him to stop working as a porter. Sharan thinks, "What would happen to us if Dada lost his job?"(41). He is worried about their survival.

Santami stores bhakarīs in a wooden chest. Many times the chest is full of cockroaches and bugs. Sometimes there are dead cockroaches in the curry kept in the clay pots. They throw the cockroaches away and eat the curry. Sometimes Dada carries the luggage to other villagers and walks for miles on an empty stomach. He gives his wages to Santamai. She sweeps the bus stand. The tea owner gives her a cup of tea, half of which she gives to Sharan. Dada fetches water for the tea-stall owner for which he is given one cup of tea. Though Santamai cleans the bus stand she is not respected as a human being. It reminds Bakha, the scavenger protagonist of Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*. About the high-caste people's views about people like him, Bakha says, "They think we are dirt because we clean their dirt" (68).

How to satisfy the hunger is always a great difficulty for the Mahars. Once Sharan comes to his village from Sholapur with his friends. Santamai cooks food for them. On the second day when the friends leave Sharan sees that there is only one bhakari. Sharan is extremely hungry. Santamai brings the tin box of flour and says, "Here look, our store of flour. You eat this bhakari. Don't worry about us" (97). Sharan lifts the box. It was heavy and so he thinks that it really contained flour. He eats the bhakari. When Santamai leaves the place Sharan opens the box and finds that Santamai has put a big stone inside it to make it heavy. This example shows Santamai's love for Sharan and also her constant struggle for food.

Masamai and Santamai have to fight the problem of food. They survive by struggling for it. This struggle is common for their community. It makes them restlessly think more and more about the human existence and its association primarily with the food.

III. Masamai's Victimization

Masamai has no identity. Her only identity is her body which is exploited sexually by the rich high caste masters. Her son's struggle for the identity begins with his entry in school. The teacher asks Sharan his father's name. Sharan does not know his father's name and he thinks, "Strange that I too could have a father!" (45). The teacher sarcastically calls him a Patil of Baslegaon. He feels good as well as bad to be called Patil. The name of Hanmanta Limbale, the Patil of Baslegaon is added to Sharan's name in the school record. Hanmanta quarrels a lot with the headmaster but fails to remove his name from the record. Sharan cannot comprehend his mother's exploitation. He questions himself:

Why did my mother say yes to the rape which brought me into the world? . . . How many eyes must have humiliated her because they considered her a whore? Did anyone distribute sweets to celebrate my birth? Did anyone admire me affectionately? Did anyone celebrate my naming ceremony? Which family would claim me as its descendant? Whose son am I, really?" (37)

But in Acknowledgments Sharan, as a writer, writes "It is through the Dalit movement and Dalit literature that I understood that my mother was not an adulteress but the victim of a social system" (ix).

Masamai's exploitation causes Sharan to worry about his identity. His father is Lingayat and mother is Mahar. A Muslim man, Mahmood Dastagir Jamadar, called as Dada lives with his grandmother and in this sense his grandfather is Muslim. He says:

Does this mean I am Muslim as well? Then why can't the Jamadar's affection claim me as Muslim? How can I be high caste when my mother is untouchable? If I am untouchable, what about my father who is high caste? I am like Jarasandh. Half of me belongs to the village, whereas the other half is excommunicated. Who am I? To whom is my umbilical cord connected?" (38)

Dada has groomed Sharan with great affection, as if he were his own child. Neither his religion nor his caste was a hindrance to Sharan. He says, "Is it man who is a hindrance to religion or is it the other ways round? Is the premise of religion greater than man's? Is religion made for man or man made for religion? Does man cause religion to degenerate, or is it religion that degenerates man? Can't man exist without religion and caste?" (40).

Sharan ponders very seriously over the problem of finding identity. His mother's tragedy is the tragedy of the Dalit women who are mothers and daughters. He says:

The Patils in every village have made whores of the wives of Dalit farm labourers. A poor Dalit girl on attaining puberty has invariably been a victim of their lust. There is a whole breed born to adulterous Patils. There are Dalit families that survive by pleasing the Patils sexually. The whole village considers such a house as the house of the Patil's whore. Even the children born to her from her husband are considered the children of a Patil. Besides survival on the charity of a Patil what else can such a household expect? (38)

After Hanmanta, Masamai's next exploiter is Yeshwantrao Sidramappa Patil, the Patil of Hanoor. Masamai gives birth to eight children from Yeshwantrao. Sharan remembers his first meeting with his father who was brought home by Yeshwantrao whom Sharan calls 'Kaka'. He Says, "I was excited that I had found my father at last. No one would humiliate me, now that he had come. Tomorrow I would show him to my friends?" (61). But it takes quite some time for Sharan to understand why his mother was angry with Kaka who was persuading her to sleep with Hanmanta. This fact reveals the sexual tyranny against Masamai. No master has the heart to think of their cruelty against a woman who is also the mother of a grown up boy. What Sharan thinks of his mother and his existence is a truth about rootless and helpless victims of sexual exploitation. Sharan says, "Why didn't my mother abort me when I was a foetus? Why did she not strangle me as soon as I was born? We may be children born out of caste but does that mean we must be humiliated? What exactly is our fault? Why should a child suffer for the sin of its parents?"(64). This thought reflects the misery of the children born out of illegitimate sex. Sharan says, "whenever I look at my mother I grow wild with anger. Why did she commit adultery at all?"(64). His upset mind gets filled with devilish thoughts and he thinks:

Why shouldn't I enter my mother's bed? Isn't she an adulteress? But whenever I look at my mother and Santamai my throat constricts. Masamai and Santamai are not the only examples. They sold themselves to be loved and cared for by someone. They hadn't sold their bodies to appease their lust. Do we exit just for the sake of that hunger? Beyond hunger lies a vast life. There is life beyond bread. And yet I had no experience of life beyond this ghetto. (64)

Sharan is not able to get mother's love. It is to be noted that his mother delivers illegitimate children and it is impossible for her to think of any other life. She cannot take care of them or provide them facilities but it harms her son's sensitive mind. Sharan says:

I never got real love from my mother, so she was not my mother in the true sense. Half of her was my

mother and the other half a woman for that Patil. She had to satisfy the Patil. Her milk meant for me went dry even as her arms were busy embracing the Patil. My mother was snatched away from me. In this cycle of destiny if she chanced to pat me on my back, that mere touch revived me. Who wrenched my mother away from me? Why was she sterile for me? (65)

Sharan's mother never gets status and position in her life either with Hanmanta or Yeshwantrao. Sharan cannot understand the behaviour of Kaka. He sees that when Kaka comes to his home he behaves as if he is their father. But the same man shuts the door of his mansion when he sees Sharan lingering in front of his mansion. Sharan gets an opportunity to visit Kaka's mansion to see Kaka's ill father. When he sees Kaka's beautiful mansion, very innocently, Sharan ponders:

Obviously, Kaka's mansion and our hut could not be compared. Why did Kaka keep visiting us when he had such a mansion? In what way are we connected to the heritage of this mansion? If Nagi, my sister, and my mother were dressed properly they would look smart too. My mother would look as good as a Patil's wife. (55)

He cannot understand his relationship with the Patil. He says, "We were born to a Patil and yet we couldn't claim to belong to this mansion. Why doesn't this mansion accept us? Why is this mansion dumb? Why are its jaws locked? Why is its tongue tied?" (55). He cannot understand his mother's life because Hanmanta deserts his mother and she is now kept by another Patil. He states, "What sort of life had she been living, mortgaging herself to one owner after another and being used as a commodity? Her lot has been nothing but the tyranny of sex." (59).

Sharan's life with his mother always makes him think that in many ways he is similar to the other human beings but he gets confused and says, "What else did I have except a human body? But a man is recognized in this world by his religion, caste, or his father. I had neither a father's name, nor any religion, nor a caste. I had no inherited identity at all" (59). He observes his situation and states, "I am an alien. My father is not Mahar by caste. In the Maharwada I felt humiliated as I was considered a bastard; they called me akkarmashi. Yet in the village I was considered Mahar and teased as the offspring of one" (62). Whenever Sharan is upset he longs intensely to go to Balsegaon, his father's village but he is not sure of his life, so he says. "If I went there I knew I would be finished" (64).

The motherhood of Sharan's mother creates problems for his marriage also. His mixed caste becomes a hindrance for his marriage and also for his sister's lives. No one is ready to accept Sharan because Sharan is neither a pure Mahar nor a pure Lingayat. He understands, "The girl I married needed to be a hybrid like me to ensure a proper match. A bastard must always be matched with another bastard. No one else will marry their daughters to a bastard like me" (98). Sharan struggles with his rootlessness and alienation. The search for identity haunts Sharan at the end of the book. Many questions and worries make him restless:

Who will undertake Dada's funeral after his death? Will Muslims attend his cremation? . . .
Would people come for the rituals on Santamai's and Masamai's deaths? Why this labyrinth of customs? Who has created such values of right and wrong and what for? If they consider my birth illegitimate what values am I to follow? (113)

Sharan is worried about his fate in Dalit movement. He asks himself: "What would happen if the volunteers of this vast Dalit movement came to know that I was impure? Would they avoid and ostracize me?" (106).

Sharan's struggle signifies the persistence of the caste differentiations in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The problems created by Masamai's motherhood make Sharan's struggle miserable for getting the educational opportunities and social recognition. It is shameful for the high caste authorities. Sharan wants to go to the neighbouring village Chungi and has to apply for a freeship for high school education. The application form is to be signed by his parents and the sarpanch. He goes to the sarpanch with other boys. The sarpanch signs everyone's form except Sharan's. The sarpanch refuses to sign because he does not like the guardian's name 'Masamai Hanmanta Limbale.' Bhosale guruji convinces the sarpanch but he is not ready so he suggests the name of Sharan's grandmother, 'Santamai Rama Balshankar', but the sarpanch refuses because he knows that Santamai lives with a Muslim man, Mahmood. Next day when the class teacher asks Sharan about his father, Sharan says, "He is dead" and to the teacher's questions about his mother, Sharan answers, "She too is dead" (60). Sharan is totally upset. He cannot understand the meaning of the word "whore" when mother asks him to tell the teacher that she is the Patil's whore.

The sick Ithal is brought to Masamai. It is believed that he is sick because he has done wrong to Masamai and unless he is sorry for it he would not be cured. Masamai nurses Ithal wholeheartedly and with greatest devotion. She does not let the bitter past affect her present devotion. It is very odd for Masamai's children to see the death of Ithal. They say, "Our mother's husband has died" (69). When Masamai's sons Suryakant and Dharma are brought to her Sharan wonders, "Didn't Suryakant and Dharma ever remember their mother, Masamai? How could they live without their mother? (70). About his relation with Masamai now Sharan has different feelings. He reflects:

Sometimes she punishes us but she also loves us a lot. Is there any woman whom Suryakant and Dharma claim as their mother? Who got them ready to go to school? Was there anyone to listen

to their stubborn demands? Did they know what a mother means at all? Do their classmates tease them for not having a mother? What a pleasure it was when Nagi, Nirmi, and I played, watched fondly by our mother! (70)

This thought of Sharan indicates his affection for mother. He thinks that he is fortunate to have a mother. Sharan's grandmother, Santamai is also not exempted from the lust of the rich high caste. When Sharan faces the financial problem to get admission in a college, he goes to a money lender along with Santamai. The money lender keeps staring at Santamai's breast peeping through her torn blouse and refuses to give them the money. Sharan says, "His looks spread like poison in my hearth. I wished that the blouse of this moneylender's mother or sister was torn so that I could stare at their breasts. I burned within. Out poverty was detestable. I wanted to rebel against such humiliation" (82). Somehow Sharan succeeds in getting himself admitted in Dayanand College in Solapur. Sharan succeeds in his mission of getting the higher education. He decides firmly to empower himself with education to transform his life of hardships into the life of comforts.

The mixed caste forced on him by his illegitimate birth does not leave Sharan in the college also. An office clerk asks Sharan his caste and Sharan tells him that he is a Hindu Mahar. But the clerk is surprised and says, "Is there Nimbale among the Mahar as well?" (82). Sharan says, "I was afraid of my caste because I couldn't claim my father's caste and religion. In a sense I was not a Mahar, because high-caste blood ran in my body. Could I drain this blood out of my body? My own body nauseated me" (82). The high-caste people tried to wipe out Sharan's efforts for better life but he succeeds in awakening himself and rising high with his strong will power. If this is taken as his postcolonial situation, it is true in the words of Fredric Jameson that beginnings of postcolonialism can be located when the "natives" become human beings (128).

Sharan's life in the Maharwada and then in the open behind the bus stand of his village make him experience all the atrocities imposed on women. The Maharwada has no facilities. When Sharan comes to live with his grandmother at the open area behind the bus stand, he says:

Initially we lived in the open behind the bus stand. We made stoves by arranging stones. Half the fire went waste because of the unruly wind. It was very difficult to make our bhakaris.

My duty was to gather twigs, rags, and bits of paper for fuel. If I pricked up something from a farm its owner would beat me and drive me away. My hands and legs were bruised and torn by thorn pricks. We ate and lived in the open behind the bus stand. Four tin sheets offered us shelter during the rainy season. (42)

The Maharwada is like the town of the colonized described by Frantz Fanon:

The town belonging to the colonized people, or at least the native town, the Negro village, the medina, the reservation, is a place of ill fame, peopled by the men of evil repute. They are born there, it matters little where or how; they die there, it matters not where, nor how. It is a world without spaciousness; men live there on the top of each other, and their huts are built one on the top of the other. The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light. (30)

There is an immense resemblance between the misery of the Africans and the untouchables in India.

IV. Conclusion

Limbale expresses the bitterness and deprivation in the book. Moreover, his book becomes a record of the cruelty of India's caste system. Such books remain significant forever like Richard Wright's *Native Son* which brought into light the sufferings of the black Americans. Though *The Native Son* did not change the American world, it gave it a big shock. In the similar way *The Outcaste* has put forth the dark life of the oppressed Indians. Limbale espouses change and transformation of the society in order to overcome the wrong beliefs and inequalities which fling humanity into perilous state of affairs.

Masamai's exploitation by the privileged masters is a record of the atrocities carried out by age-old traditional social systems. She symbolizes the women of her community. The Dalit women are twice victimized by the male power structures. They are victimized by their husbands and also by the high caste people. They are defenseless. Masamai is Dalit, poor, and illiterate. She is excluded from all the comforts of life but the major tragedy of Masamai is that she is not allowed to enjoy her family life with her children. She cannot get any status in her life. She is just a whore for the men. These men cannot perceive her motherhood and her illegitimate children's rootless lives. She is an epitome of stoicism.

Sharan observes the social and political worlds through his insightful senses. Even after the independence, the caste ridden India fails to terminate the caste differences. Sharan wishes to amend the caste system and thinks of a system founded on humanity. His efforts have clear contemporary relevance, even considering the current dynamism of Indian societal relationships. Masamai's predicament underlines the need of granting human dignity to Dalit women and safeguarding the pious motherhood.

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