



An Expression of Resilience against Oppression in Bama's *Karukku*

Dr Mukesh Yadav, Associate Professor, Om Sterling Global University, Hisar, Haryana-125001

Abstract- The present paper articulates the injustice and discrimination faced by Dalit women. The paper highlights the pathetic real-life events and struggles underwent by a Dalit women. They are facing oppression not only against patriarchy but also against caste based society. They face triple oppression of casteism, economic deprivation and sexism. The present paper keenly observes Dalit people's lives narrated by Bama being a representative of women of her community and their lives as downtrodden that underwent lot of struggles. The paper investigates the Bama's *Karukku* as a *Testimonio* to uplift the whole community. The frequent skirmish between the Chaaliyar and Paraiyar communities resulted in police brutality and many killings have been discussed in detail in this paper. Bama's role in cleansing the society from prejudices and discrimination has been further explored.

Keywords: Dalit; Casteism; Oppression; Discrimination; Prejudice

I. INTRODUCTION

Dalit: The word, origin and meaning

Dalit literature has reflected the oppressed and subjugated class as a distinct part of Indian Literature. It gained its eminence after 1960, when several self narratives like autobiographies, short social narratives and poems emerged in Marathi, Tamil, Kannada, Hindi and Tamil languages. Although the then prevailing romanticism and the bourgeois society denounced Dalit literature as petty and insignificant. Gradually, Dalit literature got social acceptance and Dalit life was presented from Dalit point of view. It represents their constant fight for right of equality and justice. The discrimination and humiliation rendered on Dalit is ongoing from past till present. After ages of silence, Dalit writers felt the need to express themselves to come out of centuries of mental slavery and disregard. Autobiographies propelled out to be the best form of expression. It's a way to directly connect to the masses. Dalit consciousness was aroused through Dalit writing. *Karukku*, a semi autobiographical work by Bama stands tall as a powerful voice of Dalit consciousness. It is the incredible work of Bama which mirrors the irate encounters of her and those who were victims of social and racial discrimination.

Dalit literature focuses on oppressed class under Indian caste system which forms a significant and discrete part of Indian literature. Though Dalit narrations have been a part of the Indian social narratives since 11th century onwards, with works like Cekkilar's *Periyapuram* portraying Dalit women life half naked and sexually exploitable and praising the killing of thousands of Dalit on "Kazhumaram" in the hands of Gnanasambandan, Dalit literature emerged into prominence and as a collective voice after 1960, starting with Marathi and soon appeared in Hindi, Kannada, Telugu and Tamil language through self narratives, like poems, short stories and most importantly autobiographies known for their realism and for its contribution to Dalit politics.

Bama's *Karukku* : A Caste Discord of Dalit Women

Bama began her career as a writer of the oppressed classes with the publication of her first novel *Karukku*, a semi autobiographical sketch in 1992, for which she received Crossword Award. This novel was followed by 'Kisumbukkaran' in 1994, 'Sangati' in 1996 and 'Vanman' in 2003. Bama with her experience and exposure to the miserable life of her 'Paraiyar' community tries to expose the perennial issues like caste, religion and gender in all her novels. Her stories and novels give a glimpse into the lives of the subalterns. Bama gives expression to the inhuman treatment meted out to the lowest of the low castes – the Paraiyars. Her work is the powerful voice of a subaltern subject who reflects the vivid experiences of herself and of those who are victims of social and linguistic marginalization. Bama records some of her own personal bitter experiences

that moulded her character and made her what she is today. The pain and emotional suffering she had been subjected to since her childhood made her write in the preface of her book 'Karukku': "In order to change this state of affairs, all dalits who have been deprived of their basic rights must function as God's word, piercing to the very heart. Instead of being more and more beaten down and blunted, they unite, think about their rights and battle for them". She further continued "the driving force that shaped this book are many: events that occurred during many steps of my life, cutting me like 'Karukku' (rugged edged palmyra leaf) and making me bleed..." (p. xiii).

Bama is one of the finest contemporary Indian writers and a powerful voice of Dalit consciousness. She won the crossword prize in 2000 for *Karukku*. Her father worked as a sepoy in the Indian Army. Therefore they were little better-off than other Dalit households who still live in extreme penury. Bama has other identities as writer, teacher, woman, Christian, Tamil but her Dalit self shapes and brings together all her other identities. Her mother, an illiterate *coolie*, supported her with sensitive advice. Her brother encouraged Bama to reach for everything almost impossible for a young Dalit woman. The afterword added to this autobiography is a kind of suggestion that suggests her zeal for liberation of Dalits and her sympathy for them. She says, "I have met several people who work with zeal for the single objective of Dalit liberation. And it has been a great joy to see Dalits aiming to live with self-respect, proclaiming aloud, "Dalit enrdi sollad; talai nimirndu nillada" : " Say you are a Dalit, lift up your head and stand tall" (106). Bama opines that women writers have another tale to tell as Dalit women writers have double marginalization to narrate. India is a male-dominated society and accepting woman as an equal to man surely hurts the ego of males. She feels that Poona Pact has done a great harm to Dalits and women. This could have been the changing moment for them. The purpose of Bama's writing is to liberate Dalits, women and children. Bama regrets that although many Dalits became Christians, but their caste did not go off. Even today Dalits are not allowed to sit with other castes inside the churches in Kanchipuram district and even the graveyards are separated on the basis of caste. In spite of triple marginalization and subjugation, Bama advises all her community members to hold their heads high to achieve respect they deserve as human beings. After centuries of silence, when the Dalit writers felt the need to express themselves, they could only turn inward and talk about their own experiences. Autobiography thus became a fitting vehicle for this expression. The depiction of the life of the Dalit individual symbolized the whole community. A public rather a private gesture, "me-ism" gives way to "our-ism" and superficial concerns about "individual subject" usually give way to "the collective subjection of the group". Dalits no longer consider themselves inferior to the members of the other caste and feel equal. Dalit writing has placed the Dalits on the tracks of self-realization and equality. Bama faces lot of problems because of lower caste but she fights courageously: "Anyway I finished there and went to a different college in order to take a B. Ed. degree: It was the same story there too. Yet because I had the education because I had the ability I dared to speak up for myself: I did not care a toss about caste. Whatever the situation, I held my head high. And I completed whatever I took up, successfully" (20). Throughout her life Bama has been struggling hard. She says: "If you are born into a low caste every moment of your life is a moment of struggle" (23). In the last part of the autobiography, Bama describes her sadness and sorrows. She retorts: Now, many thoughts come crowding to me I am like a bird whose wings were broken. After its wings have been broken it is protected only if it stays within its cage, but if it comes out it can only flap its wings uselessly unable to fly. And that is the state in which I am now (104).

Karukku is a document of lived experience of poverty, violence, dejection and misery that every Dalit woman experiences in rigid caste hierarchies. It is also a narrative of reconstruction of self that a Dalit woman achieves after going through the traumatic experience of Brahmanic hegemony on the one hand, and Christian religious hegemony on the other hand. The life narrative of Bama details her experiences from childhood to the present time when she attains some kind of understanding of self. The understanding of self is only achieved by going through the process that unravels the casteism of an Indian village. The narrative presents a powerful critique of Brahmanic hegemonic caste structure, Indian civil society, the education system, and the church as a symbol of religious hegemony. The marginal position of Bama in Indian social structure makes the narrative more challenging because she is speaking for those who have remained voiceless for centuries in casteist, patriarchal Indian social structure. According to Mini Krishnan, "Readers may find Bama's expose of certain aspects of our society shocking" (n.p). For the translator Lakshmi Holmström, *Karukku* "questions all oppressions, disturbs all complacencies, and, reaching out, empowers all

those who have suffered different oppressions...argues so powerfully against patriarchy and caste oppression" (xiv).

Through their writings, the dalit women writers sum up their mental and physical agony, their domestic problems and issues, brutal behaviour, inhuman treatment, miserable state of condition, in their own style and squabble that dalit feminist problems are understood only by dalit women, as dalits' problems are understood only by dalits and not by non-dalits. Dalit share their own experiences with realization that other dalit women must have also felt the same." *Karukku* is the first Tamil dalit autobiography written by Bama, a dalit Christian woman, is a narrative of atrocities committed on dalit Christian women" (5). Bama born in 1958, known as Bama Faustina Soosiraj, is a Tamil Dalit writer, and belongs to a Roman Catholic family. She has published her autobiography, *Karukku* (1992) in Tamil and is translated into English by Lakshmi Holmstrom, who gives the meaning of the term "*Karukku*" in her translated work:

Karukku means palmyra leaves, which, with their serrated edges on both sides, are like double-edged swords. By a felicitous pun, the Tamil word *Karukku*, containing the word *Karu*; embryo or seed, also means freshness, newness. (vii)

Karukku is the first autobiography to appear in Tamil, for Dalit writing. The writing is in first person narrative, in which the events of the narrator's life are not arranged in a chronological order. The narration is a reflection of own sufferings and journey of her own life. The episodes can be grouped thematically, such as education and work, games and recreation, and religion and belief. In all these patriarchal atrocities and women subjugation are predominately depicted. Within these circumstances, Bama confirms that her endeavor to surface the woman power in her.

In *Karukku*, the narrator gives an elaborate sketch of the games played by children in a Pariayar village. The boys of the colony play act as Naickers (upper caste landlords) and the girls follow suit as Pannaiyaars (farmhands). Alternately the boys would pretend to keep shop and the girls would 'buy' grocery from them; the boys would pose as priests, the girls would submit as sisters; the boys would act a drunken husband returning home and the girls as wailing wives receiving the blows. Thus, even at play, Dalit girls are located in a subordinate position. In relation to the Dalit boys, the girls are placed as victims, as passive receivers who could be counted upon to legitimize the male authority (as husband, as landlord or as priest). Girls in Dalit homes are left to fend for themselves. Poverty pushes them to unprotected spaces, often in search of food. The narrator in *Karukku* recalls that children roam around in the streets, in the fields or go fishing in rain filled ponds. They dig up earthworms or net small fishes which they roast over a fire kindled out of trash and rags. While they rejoice over this rare picnic, they are always under constant fear of being caught and roughed up by the upper caste guard lurking around the pond. The guard would not only snatch away their catch but also break their fishing rods. Boys and girls would roam the streets together at a younger age. But boys had greater share of the fun. They are allowed to play in the pond, ride on buffaloes' backs or hunt water snakes. Schooling for Dalit children is located within the context of their survival tactics. It is a paradox that poverty deprives them of their right to education in a sustained, continued form. Yet it is also poverty that pushes them towards the school premises. As soon as the clock strikes twelve, Dalit children race towards the school to get their share of mid-day meal. The girl child in Dalit homes gets an assured meal once a day only in such a context. A meal that would enable her to struggle, fight and make a great effort to fill a pitcher of water at the village hand pump site in the evenings. Dalit girls who are lucky to attend school regularly - for instance Bama - are subjected to caste discrimination at various points in their school life. Bama recounts vividly in *Karukku* that she came to "realise, recognize and felt humiliated" about being born in an untouchable caste when she was studying in third standard. The trip back home from school was always an enjoyable one for Bama and her friends. They could saunter through the bazaar, watch various forms of typical rural diversions like monkey dance, snake charmer's skill, smell the aroma emanating from the various eating stalls, and interact with gypsies selling beads and strings. They could also witness on occasion, magic shows, Therukootu, puppet shows or hear party workers holding forth their leader's virtues and glory and so on. Such a fun filled trip littered with innocent joys, probably typical in any rural child's routine, however, is undulated by dominant caste's practice of untouchability that leaves a lasting scar on these Dalit girls.

It is because of utter poverty and poor education that has driven the Dalits to accept higher caste domination. Bama records her experiences of being victimized at school and college in her *Karukku* which is

simultaneously an intense personal experience and that of the community she belongs. Though Harijan children were considered untouchables, they were used for cheap labour like carrying water to the teacher's house, watering the plants and they were made to do the entire chores that were needed for the school. The much maligned Paraya community is often considered to be dirty and 'naturally' prone to criminal activities. When Bama was in her seventh standard, she was wrongfully accused of having stolen a coconut from the tree which stood in the school compound. Hence, when the headmaster said, "You have shown us your true nature as a Paraya" or when the priest said, "... after all you are from the Cheri. You might have done it. You must have done it" (*Karukku* 17), they were voicing the negative opinion propagated about the Paraya community or Dalits as such. There were similarly discomfiting situations which restated their miserable condition.

Bama, after graduation, began to look for jobs and it was then she realized that "even with an education one has to face many difficulties when trying to earn a livelihood. Being a Dalit creates a problem" (*Sangati* 119). It was sad to note that Bama, being an unmarried Dalit woman was not easily accepted into the fold of society. Employment and lodgings were both difficult to get, "People hesitate to rent houses to Dalits" (*Karukku* 120).

Bama's *Karukku*: The predicament of Dalit Christians

Bama also illustrates the way the Dalit Christians are dealt in our country. The Church becomes partial and supports and encourages the upper class and upper castes, while it denounces the lower classes and lower castes, and thereby it refrains from its true duty, distorts the real image and teachings of Christ and instead preaches only docility, meekness and liberal teachings of Jesus. Some of the Dalit communities like the Parayas converted to Christianity only to escape casteist oppression but had been greatly disillusioned as they were unable to tolerate the oppression, humiliation and disrespect within the church to the extent of not being allowed to bury their dead in the cemetery within the village or behind the church. The Government reservation policy does not benefit the Dalit Christians; and Dalit Christians face the brunt of it.

The critique of practice in Catholic Christianity occurs in *Karukku* at two levels. One is from the point of view of a young girl belonging to the religion and other from the vantage point of a Dalit woman. Both are inter-related in that as a young girl she is 'taught' the religion by the clergy that she later joins, in the hope of using the church as a platform, for social work. However, as an adult when she recounts the childhood experiences it shows certain insensitivity to children's feelings which marked the clergy. The Dalits who desire to be priests or nuns are thwarted by marginalization from the initial stage itself, "It is because of this that even though Dalits like me might wish to take up the path of renunciation we find there is no place for us there" (*Karukku* 69). She is very hard at the Christian missionaries, not the visiting foreign missionaries but their colonial cousins, the caste-conscious nuns and monks, and she recounts the discriminatory attitude of the nuns at the convent extensively. The position of the women, especially of the oppressed class, is very precarious both within and without the church. The Church does nothing to eliminate superstitious beliefs, nor does it instruct the poor Dalits how to lead a fearless and peaceful life.

Discrimination is also seen among girls of Paraya community who were not allowed to go to school because of poverty and oppression. Bama, going to express the pathetic condition of Dalit girls, narrates, because of poverty, the girl children cannot see the sense in schooling, and stay at home, collecting firewood, working for home, caring for the young ones, and doing household tasks. Dalit girls who took regular classes like Bama were made to feel underprivileged class. Bama lamented inwardly that there was no place that was free of caste. That is why after completing her education Bama went to become a nun. But there she found that the sisters of the convent too spoke very insulting words about low caste, as if they didn't even consider low-caste people as human beings. This kind of humiliations on daily basis makes her ask, "Are dalits not human beings? Do they not have common sense? Do they not have such attributes as a sense of honour and self-respect?" (*Karukku* 24). Bama felt that authorities in the church are not compassionate to understand the problems of Dalit girls. Dalit Christians are not allowed to sing in the church choir, are forced to sit separately, away from the upper caste Christians. They are not allowed to bury their dead in the cemetery within the village, behind the church, but are made to use a different graveyard beyond the outskirts. Bama traces her personal disillusionment with the church and her walking out of a nunnery after seven years of stay, as she found the unjust, unchristian, and discriminatory conduct of church authorities towards Dalit Christians. Bama's work points out that the church distorts the real image and teachings of Christ and preaches docility, meekness and subservience to the faithful while suppressing the teachings of Jesus. She hence urges Dalits to

be aware and educate themselves and understand the underlying theme of Bible as Jesus is a defender of the oppressed.

Karukku points out that Dalit Christian women suffer from an identity crisis apart from being discriminated for their low social order. That is why she develops a strategy of resistance that will speak to the muted and create a space from where the subaltern as a female could speak. She explains what writing is for her: "I experience writing as the breaking of the unbroken and forced silence of the victims and letting the victims and the militants in the victim to speak up". Thus, *Karukku* becomes a tale of pain and suffering of a Dalit woman. This autobiographical work is a bare, bald but bold account of Dalit woman's struggle against the hegemonic structure of the society. At the same time it can be considered as the record of some mesmerizing incidents of the life of a Dalit woman, who is ready to bear all the pangs and sufferings in order to get a better future. When Bama went for further education against her father's wish, her father refused to give her money. Bama's firm conviction encouraged her to go ahead and to endure all shame and humiliation. *Karukku* is not only the portrayal of the struggle of Bama against poverty, oppression, ignorance and illiteracy, it transforms into the common story of every Dalit woman who has the dream to overcome all the obstacles and cross all the boundaries, which she faces on a daily basis.

Bama's *Karukku* : Deliberations on Dalit Writing

Karukku is a part of the body of Dalit writing that has uncovered the dominant versions of history and society that has been advocating the caste system. *Karukku* also exposes the hypocrisy of the Catholic Church, which while claiming to care for the Dalit convert, exploits them, as much as the rest of society. It asserts the Dalit's being self, past practices, and carry on customs.

Bama's *Karukku* does not limit itself to being merely a treatise on casteist atrocities and a woman's solidarity with the other members of her marginalized community, it strides ahead to become a manifesto of protest as well as self-emancipation for the victimized Dalits across India; thereby seeking to establish itself at the forefront of 'resistance literature' written in India during the post-independence era. She aims at the liberation of Dalits through her writing. Interpellating the 'dignity of labour' done by the Dalits and their role in an Indian society that has never even acknowledged their contributions in nation-building, Bama's book is a gem in post-independence 'resistance literature'. The word 'resistance' is derived from the Latin root-word "resistere" meaning to take a stand against. Conceptually, the idea of 'resistance' becomes an effective weapon for the subaltern or marginalized sections of any particular society to react against hegemonic power structures and subversive norms. Resistance literature has ample potential to awaken the dormant psyche of suppressed classes and become a viable instrument at the hands of the subaltern to subvert the hegemony. "We are never given any honour or dignity or respect. We are stripped of all that. But if we study and make progress, we can throw away these indignities." (9) This suggestion from her elder brother gave Bama as a beacon light of hope. Quite early in life, Bama had realized that intellectual advancement is the key to elevating oneself on the socioeconomic ladder; hence she herself made her academic excellence the tool and weapon with which she incessantly fought against all odds, and ultimately succeeded in being able to throw off the yoke of subjugation and the shame of inferiority. Bama calls on her fellow folk – the Dalits, and particularly the Dalit women, to trust their inner strength which has become stronger through prolonged subversion and take the first step to re-discover, re-define, re-affirm and re-establish their identities as well as their rightful place in the Indian social order through educational and entrepreneurial initiatives, thereby resisting their victimization at the hands of hegemonic powers. To oppose exploitative power structures or to question the validity of a dominant tradition at the linguistic level is the ultimate end which 'resistance literature' aspires to achieve, and *Karukku* is no exception in this regard.

To fight against the domination of caste, class and gender discrimination, Bama joins the convent and becomes a teacher and a nun. But there too, she discovers that the church has been influenced by the Hindu caste system and her dream remains unfulfilled. There is a wide lacuna between the biblical teachings and the practices in the church. Bama has to confront discrimination and oppression in the church for her Dalit background. The senior nuns daunt her to stand and to work for Dalits who are actually meant to serve. Bama joined the convent to work for the welfare of Dalit poor children. She tells, "the convent I entered did not even care to glance at the poor children." (Bama 66) In the convent, as a teacher, she is to teach wealthy students

where she observes that the Dalits “were looking after all the jobs like sweeping the premises, swabbing and washing the classroom and cleaning out lavatories.” (Bama 25) She served the convent for seven years. Bama is disappointed by the pathetic condition of Dalit workers are forced to tolerate the slang language of the upper-class nuns. After leaving her job in the convent, she has to suffer for her insecure life as an unemployed lady.

Bama shared her nerve wrenching experience of travelling in bus. Upper caste women would never sit along with the Cheri women or low caste women even in buses. They would either move to other seats or stand in the bus all the way. Bama’s experience with a Naicker woman in this regard has become an unforgettable one. She recounts sadly. “How is it that people consider us to coarse even to sit next to when travelling? They look at us with the same look they would cast on someone suffering from a repulsive disease. Wherever we go we suffer blows and pain” (24). She further adds, “Are Dalits no human beings? Do they not have common sense? Do they not have such attributes as a sense of honour and self-respect? Are they without wisdom, beauty, dignity? What do we lack? They treat us in whatever way they choose, as if we are slaves who don’t even possess human dignity” (24). This string of questions voiced reveals the pent up feelings of anguish, suffering, humiliation and endless haunting memories.

Bama became aware that those who have got money can gain some authority, status and prestige and lead a comfortable life. Bama explains the reasons for the domination of upper castes and their subaltern position: How is it that we have been denigrated? They possess money: we do not. If we were wealthy too, wouldn’t we learn more, and make progress than they do? But when it comes to it, even if we are as good as they are, or even better, because of this one issue of caste alone, we are forced to suffer pain and humiliation. (24) She is thus reluctant to accept the denigrated subaltern status that is assigned to the hapless victims of caste hierarchy. Bama attacks the church and the representatives of Christianity for misguiding the lower caste for their personal benefits. The Dalits are taught by priest to adhere to the rules of religion in order to avert the wrath of God. Bama seeks justice in the court of God. Is God always keeping his eyes on them? Does God always have fury for the poor? The answer is in negative. This distorted picture of God as represented by the priest to the Dalits is only to frighten them and to make them act according to their wishes. The priests rather than teaching the oppressed about God, only taught in an empty and meaningless way about humility, obedience, patience and gentleness.

Bama’s Karukku : A saga of pain and agony

The psyche of Bama from her childhood to her adulthood craves to erase her identity of low birth. She is enraged with anger whenever she is dealt as Dalit. Such is the mental trauma of many Dalits in India. Even after nearly seven decades of independence, the Dalits in India are still treated as non-human beings in many parts of India. Even though activists and reformists like Ambedkar and Periyar worked for the cause of Dalits, the Dalits are still experiencing all kind of humiliations in the socio-political sphere. Hence Bama wanted to become a nun and joins a convent to overcome the humiliations. But, her entry into the convent, opened her eyes to the dark and bitter reality that even the spiritual centers like convents which preach that all are equal before God are in no way different from the worldly and materialistic centers like slums and educational institutions. She expresses her dismay that in the convent all the menial jobs are done by Dalit girls, still, they spoke very insultingly about low-caste people. They spoke as if they didn’t even consider low-caste people as human beings. They did not know that I was a low-caste nun. I was filled with anger towards them, yet I did not have the courage to retort sharply that I too was a low-caste woman. I swallowed the very words that came into my mouth; never said anything out aloud but battled within myself. (*Karukku* 22) The mental trauma results into a kind of psychic tension when the Dalits encounter ill-treatment at every step. The upper caste people think that the Dalits have “no moral discipline nor cleanliness nor culture” (23). Such sweeping generalization of upper caste makes Bama lament: “listening to all this and dying several deaths within” (23) which ultimately vigours the psychic tension in her. Hence, Bama makes a strong plea to the people of her own community to establish their identity in society: We who are asleep must open our eyes and look about us. We must not adhere to injustice done on us. We should not accept things as our fate. We need to erase the concept high or low from the society. Those who have found their happiness by exploiting us are not going to let us go easily. It is we who have to place them where they belong and bring about a changed and just society where all are equal. (*Karukku* 25) As the champion of Tamil Dalits especially the Tamil Dalit women, Bama openly records inner fury in her writing. She assesses the strength and weakness of her community in an

impartial manner and thereby makes the world understand the feelings of the dormant community of India namely the Dalit.

II. CONCLUSION

Bama emphasizes that Dalits should break free from the socially constructed prison in order to fight against the force of oppression and segregation. In *Karukku*, Bama shows her anger about the unfulfilled hopes of Dalit people who are still in gloom of exploitation and discrimination. Dalits were marginalized and lived in the state of enslavement. Despite of their pain, sufferings, discrimination and struggles they should come up in future. Bama stands up against the traditional hierarchy of caste prevalent in India. Bama's *Karukku* thus portrays the marginalization and subjugation of Dalit people at a social, political, economical and cultural level in India. Bama's *Karukku* brought with it the force of whirlwind to whip the literary world with its quintessentially Dalit theme and language. Bama gives a clear picture of the caste oppression meted out to the Dalit Christians not only by the upper caste society but more so within the catholic church itself. As a result of her humbling experiences as a Dalit, Bama realises that through the right type of education the whole community of Dalit can be empowered and can gain human dignity. The life portrayed in *Karukku* thus throws light on the most agonizing and hapless lives of the Dalits, the marginalized sector of the society.

REFERENCES

1. Anand, S. (ed.), *Touchable Tales: Publishing and Reading Dalit Literature*, Chennai: Narayana Publishing, 2007.
2. Bama, Faustina. *Karukku*, (trans.) Lakshmi Holmstrom, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992.
3. Bama, Faustina. *Sangati Events*, (trans.) Lakshmi Holmstrom, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.
4. Basha, S.M. and M. Farida Begum, "Image of Woman in Telugu Dalit Literature", *Journal of English Language Literature (Joell)* . Vol. 2, Issue 2, 2015. (110-113).
5. Chakravarti, Uma, *Gendering Castethrough Feminist Lense*, Calcutta: Stree, 2003.
6. Dangle, Arjun, "Dalit Literature, Past, Present and Future" (trans.), Avinash S. Pandit and Daya Agarwal, *Poisoned Bread*, Bombay: Orient Longman, 1992.
7. Holmstrom, Lakshmi, *Feminism In India*, Oxford University Press, 2012.
8. Kejiya, Dasari and Sampathbabu Tokala, "The Representation of Dalit Feminism Writings as Contention to Patriarchy", *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Translation Studies*. Vol. 3. Issue 1, 2016 Jan.-March, pp. 397-408.
9. Limbale, Sharan Kumar, *Towards an Aesthetics of Dalit Literature: History, Controversies and Considerations* (trans.) Alok Kumar Mukherjee. ND: Orient Blackswan, 2005.
10. Nayar, K. Pramod, *Bama's Karukku: Dalit Autobiography as Testimonio*, Sage Publications, 2006.
11. Pantwane, Gangadhar, "Dalit: New Cultural Context of an Old Marathi Word", *Asian Studies* XI, 1977-78.
12. Rajesh, Patchala, "Dalit Women Writing: An Unheard Voice", www.ijells.com. Vol. 6, Issue 3, pp. 2078-0742.
13. Rani, Challapalli Swaroopa, "Dalit Women's Writings in Telugu", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Issue 33 (17) 1998. pp. 21-24.
14. Rani, Challapalli Swaroopa, "Forbidden History", (trans.) by T.S. Chandra Mouli. *Impressions: A Bi-Annual Refereed E-Journal of English Studies* . Vol. 6, Issue 1, Jan. 2012.
15. Santhi, V. Jeya, *Reconstruction of the Self In Bama's Karukku (Elevation From Being a Victim to a Brave Warrior)*, Research Gate, 2009.
16. Shyamala, Gogu, Nallapoddu: Dalitha Sthreela Saahithyam 1921- 2002. Hyderabad: Hyderabad Book Trust, 2003.
17. Singh, K., *Dalitism and Feminism: Locating Women in Dalit Literature*, Creative Books, 2011.
18. Yadav, Shalini. *Unheard Voices and Gender Construction of Dalit Women in Bama Faustina's Sangati*. IJEL. Vol.7, Issue 2, Apr 2017, pp.9-24.