



The Endeavour for Civil Rights in Githa Hariharan's 'I Have Become the Tide'

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Abstract— This is a novel which lime lights on a long-established social problem which is endemic in the country. Several castes and religions are common in the diverse nature of our nation. The rituals and customs are the way of our living which is a part and parcel of our lies. Although India attained independence, develops in every field socially and economically in spite of that the evil deep rooted casteism in the mental attitude of man is not deviated and its consequences influence unpropitious on civil rights, education. existence and moral values of men. 'I Have Become the Tide' is the anecdote of three different stories of unlike periods.



Keywords— Civil rights, Fraternity, Gender revolution, Humiliation, literacy, social equality, Submissiveness.

I. INTRODUCTION

Though India is a secular state, the citizens of it are still under grieve, thrives for the secular freedom. 'I Have Become the Tide' deals with the caste and caste-based society of India and how the roots of caste circulate in the blood of people and resist in their minds. The long pressure and submissiveness, sacrifices, gender revolution in the minds of effectuate race is well-proved in the novels.

Chikkiah character in I Have Become the Tide is an example for the struggle for existence. Chikkiah who lost his father, in search of his home finds a village where all the people are treated equally but later became aggravate due to unversed of casteism. Krishna, a true professor works for the reality existed in the history and tries to bring into the present genuinely, put to death on the name of violation of one's categories and beliefs. Ravi, Satya, Asha undertake unfairness of caste as a mark of 'Pariah'.

II. THE ENDEAVOUR OF VARIOUS CHARACTERS FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND AGAINST CASTEISM IN 'I HAVE BECOME THE TIDE'

Chikkiah is an innocent fellow lives along with his father at the outskirts of the village. He could not understand why he resides at the border of the village where dense bushes covered as a wall. He is called as an untouchable; beats a drum for the funeral of the people. He is called to the village to climb the coconut trees, to lift the baskets, to remove dead cows and other animals in the upper cadre people's streets and to does other works in the village. He wonders the water he takes from the pond is also an untouchable pond. Hariharan comments on the people's attitude on untouchability through Chikkiah as:

He gazes at the pond without a label, the untouchable pond, he and others like him, cannot do without it. The pond means water for people and animals to drink; water for living beings and animals to bathe; water to wash clothes and swim in; water to play in; water to dump dead and living refuse into; water to be filled in pots and taken to home. It is a pariah

pond they touch all the time, a pond that touches their lives like a lover, devoted to them, performing his duty day and night. There is nothing Chikkiah does not know about this hush water body. (IHBT 4)^[1]

Casteism is dominant in our country since the ancient time. The people are categorized on the basis of work they do and mostly poor, downtrodden are treated as untouchables and isolated from the civil locality. They are utilized for various purposes but often humiliated. Outcast people are prevented to take food along with other men, they are seated separately, prohibited to enter or use public places, common properties. They are treated as thralldom and embargo from the social inter course.

According to the research journal on "Constitutional flaws of India's attempt to promote equality and a look at the United States constitution as a solution" by Siely Joshi states that:

The caste system is divided in to four well-defined vocational groups like the Brahmins which contains priests and teachers, the Ksyatriyas are the rulers and warriors, the Vaishyas consist of merchants and traders, and laborers and artisans are considered as Shudras. The intial three classes are considered as 'high caste' which dominates the potentiality and purpose of the Indian community. The last division is Shudras are meant to be in the service of all other classes, importantly serving as retainers. The Shudras are called as 'Dalits', who are even considered as the 'untouchables' as they are contemplated to offshoot of the four acknowledged castes. (Siely 200)^[2]

Chikkiah often remain starved for many days. His father is a cattle skinner, beats drum and drinks liquor with little earnings and infuriates on him one day his father becomes overtired of beating drum, remains silent and never wakes up. His death made Chikkiah to be silent for a long time. He runs away from his father's funeral site. He tolerates a hefty cognitive hassle of being alone. He could not leave anything except the unhappiness. He has no friends, neighbours or relatives. The only father is also isolated him with his death. Chikkiah has experienced a lot of despair. He feels at his shack as:

How empty! A whole life and this is what remained to prove his father had lived: a couple of bent vessels; a few rags; a drum; a reeking lota; and the smell of vomit, shit, death. How else do we keep living? He had longed for his father to be quiet then. But now that the old man was silent, Chikkiah felt furious with the

hut, its empty place where his father used to be, it's miserable lota, and the drum finally gone mute. (IHBT 7, 8)^[3]

He is unbearable to the silence of his father's absence and runs out of the hut. He feels that his father is alive and things of the song which his father used to sing always. He recalls his father's song though he could not understands it properly.

"Where is that land

Where water flows free?

Tell me. Tell me.

Where is my land

Where water flows free?" (IHBT 9)^[4]

Chikkiah in a boat with two strangers who consoles him and be haves in a natural manner. No person interrupted him while he is in the boat journey. Chikkiah has to light up on his self-life which maybe present outside of the river bank. He moves away from the journey of cattle skinner on the other side of the river and reaches Anandagrama.

Chikkiah observes that new world where geezers like him are multitude in that reason who treats him as a brother and friends. Putamma introduces the strangers to Chikkiah as:

There is Siddha the potter, Chenna the cobbler, Gundanna the toddy tapper. And in Anandagrama, where we are going now—you will meet weavers and sweepers and shit-carriers and farm workers. But you will also meet city officials and scholars and poets, other elder brothers and sisters, and our wise Prabhu. (IHBT 68)^[5]

The people are differentiated based on the work or occupation from the ancient time. They are classified as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudhras. The Brahmins raised and brought up the idea of Varna who are considered as low class whose occupation are like hunters, weavers, farmers, laborers, sweepers who are deprived economically works under the commands of high cadre men. Brahmins and Kshatriyas are honoured and enjoy their social position. Whereas Sudhras are out cast people knock around in the society.

According to the report of "Human rights Watch against Racism, Racial Discrimination" as:

Caste is an incline-based and inheritable in nature. It is attributed firmly by one's birth into a specific community, despite of the belief

practiced by the independent person. Caste designates a system of unbending civil stratification into graded groups defined by descent and work. Under several caste systems all through the world, caste discordness also domineer in families, marriages and common social communication and divisions that are reinforced through the practice and hazards of social rejection, financial outlaws, and even physical assault. (Human rights Watch)^[6]

Sidda, one of the friends of Chikkiah baffled why some people are wealthy and some are odious, substandard and suffer merely for the minimum necessities of life though every living being is made of some kind of flesh. The difference itself is created in the hands of super natural power.

Chikkiah marries Mahadevi, daughter of basket weaver, becomes the washer man, he knows all the streets and places of the city. He never strains to visit the houses of officials and upper caste people. He works at the river, washes clothes, rinses, spread it and allows it to dry. He sinks while washing clothes, describes various walks of life.

“This potter hums with spinning wheel,
that cobbler drones a note for each nail.
The weaver’s song twines thread
with thread.
I too sing when cloth slaps stone.
But you, you don’t raise your voice.
My lord, my friend:
You’re the song,
the song that sings itself,
O river of a thousand faces.” (IHBT 124)^[7]

Chikkiah leads a simple life with his family in his limited world although he is treated as an out-caste member prohibited to mingle with general people, he leads a joyful and satisfactory life in Anandagrama. A remarkable incident takes place which brings drastic changes in his life. When his daughter dies of natural calamity, he becomes perturb and muted. He sits at the bank of river and sings in his mind as:

“In a past life I was untouchable.
they smelt my shadow and fled.
the meat I ate was rotten.
I bathed in a stagnant pond in a past life.
That was the past.
Tie me, tether me so I do not stray there again.

Keep me here, in current and whirlpool,
O river of a thousand faces.” (IHBT 157, 158)
^[8]

Chikkiah lives through emotional disturbances when his father and daughter deceased. He is much dejected when he is alone and discriminated from the village people. He runs into ebbs and flows of destiny. Githa Hariharan delicately knitted rational grapple of Chikkiah at various stages of life in I Have Become the Tide.

Asha, Ravi and Satya are friends belong to schedule castes. Mother of Asha, a tailor, parents of Ravi are daily wage laborers and Satya’s mother is an agricultural labour. All belong to backward families, wish to get good education and starts their journey of career.

Over fifty years, since constitution of India promises of free, and mandatory, elementary education for every child till the age of fourteen with specific care and consideration to be given to provide the academic development of scheduled castes. Uneducation constantly contaminates nearly two-thirds of the Dalit population when compared to one-half of the common population. The literacy gap among Dalits and the rest of the population is at the rate of 39 percent between 1961 and 1991. Various government schools in which Dalit students are enrolled are inadequate with basic facilities like classrooms, teachers, and teaching aids. A majority of Dalit students are registered in regional schools where students undergo serious disadvantages in the employment when compared to those who study in English speaking schools. In spite of state assistance in elementary level education, Dalits also undergo a drastic drop-out rate. (Human rights Watch)

As they could not spend money for coaching, studies themselves and share notes to one another. Asha joins in a nursing college as her parents convinced to do that course. Satya takes admission in a medical college and Ravi takes seat in B.Sc, zoology. They enter in to a college with hope of recognition as humans rather than the label of caste, but they confess as Dalits and humiliated. When they meet at the beach after three months of college, hesitates to speak on their experiences as others maybe hurted and disappointed. Hariharan remarks on their mental status as:

Already it is stubborn for them to describe one another what those days are apart have been. Possibly Satya, Ravi and Asha are afraid that if they say anything aloud, say ‘This is what they speak to me,’ or ‘This is what they treat to me,

this is what happened to me,' they will all may lose heart. It is just the starting of the war; the first semester and the very first year. Who knows what more they would have to tolerate? (IHBT 33, 34)^[9]

Asha admits in the college after the verification of all the original certificates but still she has to attend an interview as she is from weaker section, requires scholarship to continue her studies. The interviewer criticized her as she has born to serve people naturally being and outcaste, selected nursing course. Even the list in the admission chart on the notice board also mentioned to the students name attached with the category as common quota, specific caste and handicapped quota.

Asha allotted her room in analphabetic manner. She accompanies her room with Priya. When Priya takes to her aunt's house for lunch, when they come to know that she is Harijan, their attitude towards her changes. Priya's aunt does not allow her to enter in to kitchen, she says, "No, no, don't come into the kitchen.' Her smile wavered. 'You're a guest, after all.'" (IHBT 41)^[10] Asha senses awkward as she is mis-treated as being untouchable, though in every first page of text book it is disclosed in a highlighted lines as; "Untouchability is a sin, Untouchability is a crime, Untouchability is inhuman." (IHBT 42)^[11] Every civilized person knows it is a sin, crime, inhuman to discriminate on the name of caste but the lines are restricted in the pages of book and do not applies practically. Asha wrestles inwardly on the differentiation of people on the name of social class.

It has become common to Asha to get segregated. Mrs. Kumari always embarrasses Asha with her department. She makes students into various groups to perform the practicals but leaves Asha solitary. She declares to students in different batches and assigns the work like to maintain home and ward neatly, make them to practice in a proper way and she is given to clean all the washrooms. Mrs. Kumari assigns Asha to "Take care of the sanitary wing is much important. Wipe all the bedpans and urinals entirely, after that the walls and floors of the bathroom." (IHBT 141)^[12] It indicates the miserable condition of students often abused and ill-treated by the high caste people though they are well educated. In the education system where should not find any place caste repeatedly suppressed through the medium of it.

Asha comes to know that Satya is no more. She could not digest or imagine his absence and becomes stony. But a layer of water passes from her eyes like a small stream. Hariharan remarks Asha's bewail as:

When she comes to know, that she doesn't require to open the book to learn why it has return to her? She has to sit. Her legs are hollow—no, they are filled with gravel, cement, and stone. She limps back to her room carrying herself such an old woman. She holds the thin book as if it is a heavy, as heavy as a limp body. (IHBT 264)^[13]

Satya's excitement in a medical college is transient. He needs to select a room beside wash rooms row. In the class, he is alone, no person sits beside him. He could not take seat at the back of the class as he is unable to understand the lecturers and take notes. Even professors neglect his responses in the class being he is from reservation category, snatched the seat from the standard students. Satya sits alone, reads his diary, and takes his food single in the dining hall and as to stay lonely in his room aside. Hariharan talks about Satya as:

The only dream Satya wants to keep in view current is the immediate goal-surviving, anyhow, all the four and a half years in college and then one year of internship, so that can get the degree. In the meantime, all he has to do is hard work, work to survive the loneliness, and the hundred of pinpricks a day. (IHBT 91)^[14]

Dr. Sharma detest Satya, he never calls him by his name, only uses pronoun 'he' or 'noun' Sharma always attempt to molest Satya with his words. He makes him to sit at the back while he listens the class and even when attempting the exam. Satya quietly bends his head and writes the test. But all his efforts are useless as he is just passed in the examination. Dr. Sharma reacts towards Satya as, "You may think you have brains,' you have just about passed this time. Next time, you would fail." (IHBT 136)^[15] Satya begins to concentrate on anatomy books to write the examination in a better way. Dr. Sharma calls him to the cabin and blames him that he has copied all the other exams as he achieved good marks in them. He frequently demean Satya whenever has a possibility.

He reads a small book of Ravi which is about the family of Kannadeva belongs to Anandagrama poets. The book discusses on the ancestors, their agony, sufferings and experiences. The time travels from long years ago to the current period of but the socio-financial conditions are not remarkably varied. The people are illiterates at that time and present they can educate their wards at least for school level but could not attain high position. Satya can understand the raised voices, protests, struggles of the people and priests during the Kannadeva period for the identity, fraternity and social equity. The concept of egalitarianism is still in dilemma.

Dr. Sharma indicates him to wait after completion of the anatomy class and enquire about his attendance. He becomes furious on Satya as appearance to his class is not up to the mark and behaves with him harshly. The conversation between Satya and Sharma is:

Dr. Sharma gestures Satya to wait. he said that. 'Your attendance is not sufficient what it should be? Satya is puzzled as have never skipped a single anatomy class. Dr. Sharma shows his eyebrows with anger. 'That is what you say, but in my attendance, sheet has a different fable. But now, let me give you a casual warning.' The word 'casually' has never sounded so unfriendly before. 'Murthy in the office was said to me your scholarship may be held up for some time because of poor appearance. There are certain rules, you know. You could not get rid of the rules.' (IHBT 200)
[16]

Satya in his room takes his diary and writes his internal turmoil that he is against the caste and prevents to look back in the history about it. He writes that all the human beings are one and alike but the roots of caste prevailed deep in the system that it cannot be uprooted from the society easily. He desires to consider the persons of low caste as other ordinary humans. Hariharan point out the craves of Satya in his words as, "We have already gone beyond caste; caste is history. But caste has been existing for many long years. It may not convert in overnight, can it?" (IHBT 190) [17] Satya needs to send scholarship money to his mother. Earlier he borrowed some money from Ravi and even Rahul. He goes to an account section to collect the endowment from Mr. Murthy but Murthy insults him that money is simply granted for him and provides the attendance sheets where he has slipped two classes of anatomy in a week. And due to the poor presence in the class, his scholarship is put on hold. Satya sells his bicycle and post the money to his mother, diary and blue note book has parceled to Ravi and Asha through courier post. He possesses hard work, honesty, has love of his mother and other family member, a true friendship of Asha and Ravi, motivation of Chikkiah's words, yet he endures trauma.

He writes his heart rendering emotions in a note book as:

"This is a cobbler's child.
Do not sit next to him.
This is a washer man's child.
Do not speak to him.
This child's mother lifts buckets of shit.

Run away from him.

My tears for these children have dried up.

Must my voice too grow silent?" (IHBT 257)
[18]

With the mistreat of professor and suppression of every act of him make Satya to get depressed, annoyed and leads to end his life. By means of Satya's character, Hariharan portrays how castaway people are subjugated, put to shame and make them difficult to survive in their lives. They are treated as untouchables where they are not permitted to attain sophisticated position in their lives. This causes an obstacle to the right to equality, ethnicity, right to self-defense of the nation.

Ravi studies in Government College; he has roommates called Ramesh and Harsha. The three members belong to backward classes two are Schedule Caste and one is schedule tribe. As animals are divided in two different groups like class, phylum and kingdom based on their diverse life styles and relationships with one another; human beings are also classified in to lower and upper classes, Jatis and Varnas. Ravi thinks that the lower castes so called 'Dalit' are related to one another. Their houses are same at one particular reason. They know each other and discuss about one's problems and happiness. The Harijans live unitedly and have same blood and similar groups. He recalls his grandfather's words about the manner of high categorized people as:

'They take us for all the undignified works. Carrying carcasses of dead cows, shoveling shit and carrying basketfuls of it. Burying dead bodies. 'He stopped then mused aloud, 'Death is as important as birth. I know that, but there is something I do not understand. Why should your brother's body or your father's body become something polluting?' (IHBT 106, 107)
[19]

Ravi is motivated with the words of Senthil, a physics lecturer come across Bhim Shakti meeting. He is mesmerized with the loud, clear pitch of Senthil, who speaks about Ambedkar, education, agitation and organization. He uses the word 'Bahujan' which adds inner strength to Ravi. Senthil holds on to a flag in his hand roars as 'Jai Bhim', which is followed by each and every individual over there. Senthil not just delivers speech, he also sings to inspire others. He sings as:

"Just yesterday I read their history
and found I was missing.
My grandfather in his soiled dhoti,
my mother working on all fours,

my brother beaten to death.
 I couldn't find them.
 All I found were words like walls.
 Today I tell you:
 Your history has too many missing people.
 My words, my history, will break your walls.
 My people will break your walls." (IHBT 133, 134)^[20]

He begins to read the books related to the history of caste. He spares much time on the internet center or in the library engaged with the books other than zoology. He gathers a lot of information from the medieval history. He acknowledged from Professor Senthil and his grandfather that all the minor works such as leather works, sanitary, skin carcasses, cobblers are granted to the lower caste people.

Ravi is energetic with motivational thoughts. He does not want to waste his time, he studies a lot on social science than his biological science. He studies about Indian constitution, About Ambedkar and his speeches on caste, refers English dictionary and reads the messages uploaded in social media. He takes appointment of Senthil and goes to meet him. The security stops and enquires about him. Ravi answers proudly that he is 'Dalit'.

Mr. Krishna, a professor writes on Kannadeva. Some of the monotheists make it controversial that Kannadeva saint has depicted as poet and reformer. Krishna is in quest of truth makes a journey of research for the details of Kannadeva's life. He reads H.L.Nrasimhaiah and others books in the library, he meets many people travels to numerous places in search of facts on Kannadeva. As a part of his journey of research he observed that the actual name of Kannadeva is Kannappa. He belongs to 'pariah' family who is the first person goes to school, takes education and later turns to Kannadeva. He preaches peace and the way of living. Krishna discovers palm leaves where he observed the inscription about Kannadeva's life. Krishna interacts with number of people in his voyage. While he communicates with village persons, perceives through the songs they sing in a mild flow about the reformer as he was a symbol of peace. The intensity of search on truth makes Krishna scuffles to afford meticulous efforts to acquire the genuine elements of the hypothesis.

III. CONCLUSION

Githa Hariharan portrayed Anandagrama as a place where people live despite caste they live with unity with different occupations for their livelihood. It resembles

unity in diversity of the nation. Besides Anandagrama, priests are to be considered as superiors after God. Their words are precious. Everyone including king follows the priests as they are regarded as messengers of God. But Brahmins and priests treats Anandagrama people as 'impure'. They assign all kind of inconsequential works to them and considered as polluted people. The degradation of the moral values towards same genesis is shambling block to the secular state like India. Chikkiah and his family, many tribes of Anandagrama and Satya are humiliated perpetually in the contest of survival they adopted mortality. Krishna puts his hard work to reveal that Kannappa is an actual Kannadeva who has secular thoughts, Endeavour for the equality, liberty and existence of the underprivileged people.

Thus the novel exhibits of how human characters struggles at critical situations and survived. The novel educates the wretched condition of sinless people as a consequence of the inhuman and non-secular measures of certain rabbles. It created a psychic sympathy on the various characters among the readers. It also spotlighted on the creation of new cultures accompanied by modern values with a realistic approach.

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