

The Outcast

by Sharankumar Limbale

Sharankumar Limbale was a Marathi novelist, poet, critic and short story writer. He was selected for the 2020 Saraswati Samman, a prestigious literary recognition conferred annually by the K. K. Birla Foundation. He has authored 40 books of novel, poetry, stories and criticism.

He was born on June 1 1956 in Maharashtra's Solapur district. He obtained his masters degree in Marathi literature and did a Ph.D in Comparative study of Marathi Dalit literature and American Black literature from Shriji University Kolhapur. He has penned more than 40 books. His best known work is his autobiography "Akkramashi" published in 1984. It has been translated to several other Indian languages and English. His notable works:

- 1) Akkramashi (1984)
- 2) Towards an Aesthetics of Dalit literature (2004)

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taken from 'The Outcast' is an extract from the famous autobiographical novel 'The Outcast' written by Sharankumar Limbale. Firstly it was written in the Marathi language with the name 'Akkarmashi'. Later in 2005, Santosh Bhoomkar translated it to English with the title 'The Outcaste'. The outcaste is considered as one of the important works which exposes discrimination against the Dalit Community. As it is an autobiographical story, Limbale draws many painful incidences from his own life. He was illegitimate son born to an Untouchable outcast mother and upper-caste father. He faced several discriminations, as an untouchable, in different phases of his life. Here 'The Outcaste' reflects the conditions of a particular oppressed class, the Mahar Community.

As a member of the Mahar Community, he faced much discrimination during his time at school. This extract tells us about his experience at a school picnic when he was in the third standard. In the extract, caste politics is reflected in different ways and means. The upper caste students were always protected by their teachers. They were already informed about their picnic. Therefore, all the upper caste students came with preparations. At the same time, the outcaste students were not informed before. Therefore again they had to back home to bring their tiffin.

Another discrimination took place in the form of game politics. These were separate games assigned for upper-caste and outcast students. The Upper Caste Vari and Brahmin boys played Kabaddi. But being a member of the Mahar Community, they could play simple games like touch and go.

Discrimination can be seen in the form of food politics also. After the games, they were asked to sit separately under the different trees. The Outcast students did not have good food to eat, they had brought dried bhakari and chutney and bombil fish curry. At the same time, the Upper-Caste students brought varieties of fried and tasty food. At the end of the lunch, teachers asked the Upper-Caste boys and girls to collect the leftovers on a paper and give it to them.

On the next day of the picnic, the teacher asked both third and seventh standard students to write an essay about their picnic. Senior boys and girls were swiftly started to write the essay. Limbal as a 3rd standard student. Could not start writing as other students. When the teacher noticed him, he shouted "You son of a bitch, come on, start writing! You like eating an ox, don't you? He didn't know how to write and what to write. But

he started to remember the incidences that happened the day one by one. Here the teacher abused him without giving any consideration as a third standard student. It shows the mentality of the upper class those who see everything in the eyes of the caste system, they never leave even the children.

Themes of this Novel

- * Discrimination
- * Hypocrisy
- * Identity
- * Sensibility
- * Protest
- * Freedom.