CHAPTER - III

An Outsider: A Study
3.1 The Oppressive Structures

3.1.1 Narration of Hunger

Hunger is one of the major problems of poor people. They wander in each direction to fulfill their hunger. Sometimes they forget their self-existence at all in their empty stomach. Hunger is a bitter experience in lower classes. If the problem of hunger is solved, half of the question meets to an end. Hunger remains one of the major barriers in the progress of down trodden people. The deprived people struggled for their life to complete their hunger from the beginning of their life. Dalit autobiographies narrated realistic picture of hunger of every marginalized group. Every member of this oppressed group went without food for days together. Most of these deprived classes had to live in inhuman conditions.

One and all the Dalit memoirs present a graph of agonies and trouble of lower classes. Sharankumar Limbale fulfilled his hunger through the grain collected from road side cow dung, by eating roadside banana peels, by snatching the flesh of dead animal from dogs clutches. Laxman Gaikwad roasted rats and pigs to fulfill his empty stomach. Sonkamble is another Dalit writer, had to drag dead animals to get a piece of bread. Laxman Mane and Kishor Kale also suffered the problem of hunger. One and all the Dalit writers have bitter experiences of hunger. They ate leftover food in the marriage parties for days together. The deprived and marginal people had to suffer from various diseases due to their lack of nutritional food. R. S. Jain rightly says:

Their health deteriorated due to the unavailability of nutritious food from their early childhood which never recovered in future. Scarcity of food affected women more seriously because they were the last in the list during the distribution of food in the family. Sometimes dirty food that they ate caused diehyria weakening their strength and sometimes killing them. Men community used to be addicted to
liquor, tobacco, drugs etc. Mainly, because they did not get sufficient food to eat. (Jain 09)

*An Outsider* is also one of the Dalit Memoirs written by Laxman Mane. It portrays the picture of hunger in Kiakadi community. There are innumerable hearts touching experiences of hunger depicted in this work. Mane had collected his experiences of life while living in his own community. He had noted the account of terrible hunger in Kaikadi community in his childhood. Every member of this community had gone through the problem of hunger. One notable incident of hunger with narrator’s family is narrated in the present work as:

All of us were terribly hungry. Mother had brought lots of Bhakri. Three of these were given by the village chief’s wife. She had also given the leftovers of the night before. In addition, the women whose baskets mother had mended had given her something or the other which she had packed in the loose end of her sari. All of us sat down to eat. Father held a bhakari and lentils on the palm of his hand. Mother skipped her own meal. I was given a Bhakri, some stale curry and some bits and pieces. (Mane 19)

Laxman’s mother used to sell some baskets in the village nearby and also mended the old baskets. In this exchange she collected some eatables such as buttermilk, some flat loaves, drum-stick curry, sauce, pickle and also stale food. They all together ate it and fulfilled their empty stomach. It was their everyday meal. Kaikadi community had no any proper village or any occupation. They had to beg for survive from one place to another. Mostly they had business of making basket out of canes. If the canes were not available where they stayed, they leave the same place in search of a place where they could get full canes. The children of the family had to go through unbearable starvation on their way of wandering from one place to another. Mane puts an account of his hunger, “We were hungry. Mother gave Sami and me bhakri with chillies. We ate it on the backs of the donkeys.”(29)
The Kaikadi community had to travel long distances. There had been no hopes of settlement in the life of Kaikadi Community. It can be observed in the reply of narrators mother, “We are poor nomads….We go wherever our eyes see and you father takes us.” (29) Here one can realize an uncertainty of destination in the life of Kiakadi community. Once, the parents of Laxman Mane settled at Palwan with their broken and damaged things. There were quite a few who knew father, mother and Jaisingea at this place. Wandering and hunger remained inseparable part in the life of Kaikadi community is rightly observed in the following communication between father of Laxman and the fellow persons of the village where Mane’s family was going to settle. The real world of Kaikadi community can be understood with this dialogue:

Eh, uncle you’re late! We thought you might not come at all this year,” Said one. “Sir ! How could we not come at all? Whatever the mother goddess bestows on us, we have to accept. What else can we do to fill our bellies? God makes us travel from place to place in search of food. Give your blessings! I assure you ….next year we’ll come early. (30)

The family members of the narrator were full of hunger. Mane’s mother opened the bundle of bhakri, a piece of bread and took out the dry stems of red chillies. She ground the chilies and salt into a paste, all the member ate the dry loaves with the chilli paste and drank plenty of water. There were innumerable incidents where the Kaikadi community is deprived of fundamental needs such as food, clothes and shelter.

It was the stay of narrator’s family at Palwan. Sami, a sister of the narrator was somehow recovered from throes of a fit. Father and mother of Laxman Mane did not appear in the morning. There were only children revolving around the hut. Sami Lali, Pushpi and Kisnya were the children in the family playing near the hut. They were very hungry. Sami came to Laxman and said, “Brother, I am very…very hungry.” So Laxman took a bowl in his hand and went from house to
house begging for food. He stood in front of each house and called out loudly: “Aunty, throw some crumbs of bhakti into my bowl … I beg of you… Grandma dear, throw the stale left-over into my bowl, please…for pity’s sake”. (Mane 35)

Hunger had made these children feeble and weak. Thus the children ate enough from the begging bowl and preserved the rest to eat later. The innocent children in the family of the narrator had to suffer a lot to fulfill the needs of their stomach. The parents of these children were not able to provide enough food. Actually it must be the responsibility of any parents to provide enough food. But it is falsified with the children of Kaikadi community. Even parents of these children were remained without food for days. Such tragic life of Kaikadi children who remained without food in democratic India is to be noticed.

Malvadi, a village, was one of the destinations of Mane’s family. It was a well-known village, where a big festival used to take place. The people of this community returned after having a look at the idol of the God at Malvadi. The mother of the narrator mashed the flour into dough and prepared thick breads. All the children of this family were very hungry. The smell of the fresh bread made their mouth water, Laxman took an opportunity and broke a piece of bhakri and put it into his mouth. Mother caught Laxman and gave him a resounding slap below on the ear while stealing a piece of bhakri. The mother shouted at Laxman, “You, the dead one! We have yet to do offering to the god and you tasted it… already.” (38) Such a constant hunger made Laxman Mane to steal a piece of bread. He is also beaten by her mother for mere stealing a piece of bread.

One day early in the morning, mother and father of Laxman Mane had gone to the neighboring village to sell their wares and baskets. All the children were at home. It was too hot to go out of the house. Nobody was appeared moving on the road. Mane narrates one of the incidents of hunger as:
I had kept the stale hard pieces of Bhakri in some tamarind water. My stomach burned with hunger and it was very hot outside too. Tears rolled down my cheeks. There was nothing to eat in the house, our patience was exhausted. We were eagerly, hoping that either of them would return any moment with some pieces of bhakri. (61)

The parents of Mane had to struggle to get their daily needs. They had to wander in search of canes from place to place. Once they were blamed for taking away the canes outside the boundary of the village. They were beaten inhumanly by the villagers. No body from the villages came to their help. They were put in the police van and taken to Phalten. All the family members of Mane got worried of the parents. When they came back there was nothing at their home to eat. Mane narrated one of the accounts of starvation in his family.

For the next eight days, father hardly spoke. Mother too was not seen smiling. Days passed. We had got used to partial starvation. There was no question of getting food from outside. We used to eat the pieces of stale bhakri dipping them in water in which either a little salt was dissolved or tamarind was soaked for some time. (65)

It was a business of narrator’s father to play the band at different place. The business helped to get certain money during wedding season. One day the father took Mane to school with a slate, a book and a pencil. It was a village school. The school teacher named Akuba knew them as he was from the same village. During the meeting between Akuba teacher and narrators father, the teacher asked of his age and place. The father replied with no any concrete answer of their place and Laxman’s age. How could these people know their place and age? They had no single place. They lived where they could manage to get food. Most of the time, they had not got a piece of bread. Nobody was literate to note the age of these people. Then how could they know their age. Basically they had no permanent
place to attend the school. Laxman Mane narrates his business when the classes were over:

I loitered all around the place at my will. There was an orchard on the outskirts of the village. I would raid it regularly, taking down someone’s papayas and breaking down some one’s banana tree…That was the way I spent my time until sunset. Sometimes I was beaten…Sometimes scolded. (67)

There were innumerable incidents of hunger occurred with Mane and his family. Whenever there was a wedding in the village, it could be a feast for this community. At this moment of wedding, no fire could be lighted in their houses as nothing was to be cooked. The member of the community had to swallow the saliva that gathered in their mouths almost the whole day. The server in the marriage placed a certain quantity of food on their plates. When there had been a lot of noise, the server went away leaving the others in the row high and dry. The people of the community and Mane himself used to gather together and demand for food. “Serve us, please! Have a mercy on the poor! Throw some bits on our plates”. Then some elderly people from the village community used to come and serve a variety of food.

The people of the community used to collect in their brass plate whatever they could receive in the form of food. Yet, they waited till the guests were going to get up from their meal. The people of Kaikadi community used to get up together at the same time. There had been a pile of plates made of jackfruit tree leaves with the left-overs food. The people of Kaikadi used to rush and pounce upon the food remained. Whatever eatable came to their hand they used to grab it and put it in a piece of cloth. They had to finish their job before these plates were licked clean by the street dogs.

Next day of the wedding ceremony they used to go and beg for the left over curry and rice. The items such as ‘khir’ and ‘rice’, used to be dried in the sun until
they became hard and ready to eat later. During the wedding season, nothing was cooked in the huts of Kaikadi people for several days; Laxman Mane raised a question against the established system, “All the other people were invited for the feast. Why we were not invited? (94-95) The people of Kaikadi Community were not invited for the function of village people. They were dishonored as born criminals. Purposefully these people were segregated from the main strata of the society. They were excluded from the opportunities and conveniences of Independence of India. The man made barrier such as caste was the main factor which segregated these people from the main stream society.

The student of the deprived class didn’t have the facility of midday meal. On the other hand the student of upper classes used to go home for their lunch. Laxman Mane and his friends of lower class used to go to an orchard to fulfill their hunger with banana, sugarcane, papaya and groundnut. They used to eat these eatable things until their bellies were full. It was a part of their daily routine during midday recess. It was time for Laxman to attend the examination. The hunger followed Laxman to every sphere of his life. So he narrates:

I went for my examination. When the tiffin of all the other students arrived, the teacher Akuba offered me some bhakri. I ate that and began writing the second paper. I did have his question nagging me at the back of my mind: why no Tiffin for me? After the examination other children would go out to eat. It someone shared something with me… I would eat. It not, I drank a few glasses of water and wrote my papers. (Mane 110)

Laxman Mane had to go from Somanthali to Phaltan and from Phaltan to Somanthali while he was studying in the 9th standard. The parents of Mane moved the family for their provision after the end of the season. As a result, it became very difficult for Mane to get food to eat. At this situation Mane had to flatter the boys to get a pinch of tobacco. Sometime he just drank water and slept either in the temple of Sanvata Mali or at the S.T stand.
Mane had to go through starvation from his child age to adult age. He had to live on leftover food frequently. He had lived on water for days together. At his schooling he had lived on without food where as other student of the village had plenty of food in their midday. It was usual for him to live with empty stomach. It was not only of his problems but also of all the people of the community called Kaikadi. Mane suffered hunger even after his marriage.

Once he was in Satara with his newly wife. He had a number of problems in Satara. Somehow he started his married life. He stayed in Muslim locality. There was a marriage of his neighbor’s daughter. So, both of them were invited for the wedding feast. Mane became happy to have the wedding feast. The wedding was going to be celebrated at noon. Mane and his wife thought that there was no need to eat anything in the morning. Nobody came to call them later on till at eight o’clock in the evening for the meal. Mane and his wife waited for a long time. Laxman Mane narrates the incident:

I had only four annas in my pocket. I could have purchased bananas but no bananas were available at that hour. I silently cursed my neighbor in the worst of terms… At long last, we came to Shanivar square, but there too everything was closed. Finally, at tea stall near a cinema house, I bought one cup of tea which we shared between the two of us. And then we returned to our room. (189)

Thus there are numerous accounts where Laxman Mane had suffered of hunger and starvation. It was not only his experience but also the entire Kaikadi Community. Mane challenged the established system throughout his life for the pitiable condition of Kaikadi Community. He is tried to liberate himself and his community from the various problem inflicted upon them.
3.1.2 Superstition and Blind Belief

The aspect of superstition and blind belief is frequently observed in Kaikadi Community through the present memoir. All the characters mentioned in this narrative are influenced by miracles and traditional thoughts. The people of Kaikadi community believed in superstition and God in their course of life. Laxman Mane represented the problem of superstition throughout the narrative. Nobody is released from the clutches of blind belief in Kaikadi community. Belief in God or superstition was the essential part of this community narrated by Mane. The people of this community followed their every ritual in the form of worshiping God and sacrificing goat. These people did not forget their God and Goddess even in their dire poverty. Mane has observed the domination of superstitious belief in the Kaikadi community throughout the memoir. Sharankumar Limbale a dominant Dalit writer has rightly observed the same problem in An Outsider, “An exploitation and the predicament of Kaikadi community is based on the dominant factor such as superstitious belief and Gods explained through the present work.”(Limbale 140)

There are a number of Gods and Goddesses referred, such as Khandoba of Malwadi, Kalubai of Kurwali. These people followed their God and Goddess in their every moment of happiness and sorrow. Even they borrowed money and celebrated their God and Goddess. They never thought their life without God. The people of Kaikadi promised God and Goddess to offer goat and sweets. One of the Dalit writers Waman Nimbalkar also rightly said about the present work, “There are many incidents in the autobiography that highlight ignorance, superstitions, faith in miracles, rampant in the community”. (Nimbalkar 143)
Once the father of Laxman Mane engaged in collecting canes and cut a snake suddenly. He thought for a while that if he let go the half dead snake could take revenge on him. Soon the creature disappeared. But father got shocked of this incident and started to invoke the names of Goddesses and the gods such as Kalubai, Yellamma, and Laman etc. The father threw some dust as holy ash in the air in the name of Gods to avoid any trouble with this accident.

There was no fixed place for the Kaikadi community. They had to move from one place to another in search of their provision. The father ever believed in God and Goddess while leaving the previous village. Once he left the village and turned back to look at the peaceful sleeping village and the temple of Shiva. He joined in reverence and whispered, “Give us your blessing…Let our women and children be safe and healthy…” (Mane 28)

Thus the strong belief in God is ever observed with the people of Kaikadi community in the present work. The carvan of Laxman’s family intended to halt at Palvan. At the outskirts of the village, father ordered the family members to stop and settle under a peepal tree. Mother of Laxman lowered the heavy basket from her head. Father removed the basket of the idols from his back and kept it carefully at the base of the tree. Then he joined his palms reverentially and prayed, “Bless us with good luck …”(30) He took a pinch of vermillion from inside the basket of the idols and threw it on the ground. He moved all the gods on to a metal plate. He washed the piece of red cloth. Then he washed his stone gods one by one and arranged them properly into the basket. He showered on them a few pinch full of vermillion. He started continuously muttering the name of Kalubai. The strong belief in rituals and customs is an essential part of this community observed by Laxman Mane

Sami, a younger sister of the narrator was in throes of a fit at Palvan where the family used to stay once in a year. Her jaws were locked in this attack. Her
limbs grew stiff. Her eyes showed white and she was writhing. Father brought a pinch of sacred ash from the basket of deities and applied it to Sami’s forehead. But she did not recover. So he went in a trance and began uttering terrible cries, “Leave me, leave me…hold me, hold me…speak! Who are you? Why have you come? Are you God or ghost? Speak!”(33) Such possession of God is superstitious belief which is commonly depicted in the present work. The applying sacred ash to Sami is also blind belief.

Actually there is no relation between the throes of a fit with Sami and worshiping God by applying a pinch of ash. Such extreme use of superstitious belief can be rightly observed in Kaikadi Community when there is a dialogue between Jaisingea and the father who was in a trance, “Oh my god! What wrong have we done? What do we owe you? And why have you caught hold of this little girl? (34) Here God in the disguise of narrator’s father continued to hum unconcerned. He emitted loud cries and then started howling. He replied Jaisingea, a relative of narrator, “Four miles from here… down there …I have been waiting for you. Have you forgotten?” (34) With this reply Jaisingea recalled something and said, “Oh my god! We’ll offer you a goat and a coconut on the fifteenth day of the month of ‘paush’ we won’t forget” (34) Jaisingea came to know the demand of God in the disguise of father and realized his mistake of not offering goat to the God. The family member released a breath of presser and became happy with the incident occurred with the father. At last the father offered some sacred ash to apply it to Sami’s forehead. There are several such accounts of superstitious belief in Kaikadi community noted in the present work.

The caravan of the narrator’s family descended the mountain of Palvan towards Malwadi. It was a torture for the donkey while coming down the mountain. At this moment father joined his hands in reverence before the village goddess. He took the responsibility of collecting his dues and praying of what he owed to the others. Malvadi is one of the well-known villages. Every year a big
festival takes place. Father of Laxman involved every kind of worship at the temple of Malvadi. The parents of Laxman strictly followed the ritual of worshiping the God. Once, Laxman ate a piece of Bhakri before offering to the God. Mother shouted at Laxman, “You, the dead one! We have yet to do offering to the god and you tasted it…already!” (38)

It was late in the night. The meat was ready. The children were not allowed to eat anything before the offering was made to the gods. The invocation of the Gods went on for a long time. Then the children were served meal. It was the ritual of Kaikadi community not to refuse to eat the offering. Yet the children were also forced to gulp down a bowlful of the country liquor. All the people of Laxman’s family shouted at him when he tried to reject the proposal of taking liquor in the form of offering, “You don’t have the right to say no. Shut your eyes and gulp it all down the throat in one mouthful. Nothing will happen to you”. (40) In the name of God and ritual, the bad practices prevailed in the Kaikadi community. Laxman Mane himself became a victim of such bad practices.

The family of Laxman finished the fair of Malvadi and moved towards Nirgudi. It was the rightful residents of Kaikadi community. There was a heap of big and small stones on the way. The father of narrator took all the acquaintance there and told each one of them to throw five stones on the heap. Thus there are numerous account of irrational things observed in the present work. We would not find any logic behind their certain traditional belief and rituals. The people of Kaikadi were crushed under such miracles and superstition. Thus they never came out from their age old habits and customs. They were victimized under the cruel practices and age old habits.

It was the festival of Kurvali where the goddess Kalubai was worshiped. It was obligatory to the Kaikadi community to celebrate the fair of Goddess Kalubai. They supposed that it could be God’s order to celebrate the fair. One of the
brothers of the father of narrator recommended for the forth coming festivals, “God willing…the festival will be celebrated by our three families.” (40) The father of narrator assumed to celebrate the festival of Kaikadi as God’s order. So he says, “From this year onwards, each of our families will celebrate the festival separately. That’s God’s order”! (48)

The narrator’s father believed that it was god’s will to celebrate the festival of Kalubai. So father went to the village nearby. He sold a bagful of jawar for forty rupees. Bajrangya and Dyanu, the brother of narrator’s father dug into their belongings and raised about fifty rupees. The father loaned two hundred rupees on interest from Dinkar patil. With that money he came home and told his brother’s that he had arranged the amount. Thus the entire kaikadi celebrated the festival of Goddess Kalubai. On the eve of the festival, the goddess received the offering of jaggery. The next day was marked for the offering of the goat. It was decided that one goat to be killed by each family. A disciple of the high priest informed the devotees about this ritual. On the main day of the festival everybody prepared to sacrifice a goat. The time was fixed for the offering. Everybody stood on line according to his status. But the execution of the goats had not begun as a dispute was going on. Who should offer the first goat? Balku Kaikadi had the honor for sacrificing a goat.

On the occasion of this festival the fellow was no more. So there was a dispute among his son to offer the first goat. Father suggested solution, “Make the deity speak by applying a flower to his body…whoever God chose, will kill the goat of honor” (51) The priest started the process of seeking an answer from the deity. The God gave his verdict in favor of the youngest son of Balku Kaikadi. Thus about two thousand goats were sacrificed. Such a belief in God and sacrificing a goat was common ritual in Kaikadi community analyzed in the present work.
In the temple of Kalubai all the devotees began dancing and invoking the various divinities such as Kalubai, Sata Asraya, Marie Aai, Laxmi Aai, Khanduba, Viruba, Mhasuba, Mhalsa Aai, Laman. The disciple raised the burning camphor from his palm, placing it in his mouth. Some invokers were eating the neem leaves while others were chewing the incense sticks. Each one began shouting and ordering the musicians to play the drums. Whenever someone had a problem he addressed Gods, “Oh my mother! My children are dead. The tragedy struck in four days. All my four children…Mother is sick, no earnings.” (53) The divinity could listen, then begin humming and talking in any language. At this juncture the disciple of the high priest could beg the divinity to speak and the divinity replied, “Do as I say. Hang up a cradle during the next festival…hum…hum…hum…two goats, four fouls…, pay my debt. You will be absolved” (53)

The man used to nod obediently before dieties to obey the goddess and then fell at the divinity’s feet. The people used to bring their problems before the God. Everyone was falling at the feet of the idol of the goddess and also at the feet of devotees who invoked gods. Men, women, children of Kaikadi community were all engrossed in this spiritual spectacal. This kaikadi community spends their money and time for their rituals and customs. These people were always away from modernization and transformation. R. S. Jain put his statement regarding the Kaikadi people as, “Life style based on superstitions and blind beliefs were the major hurdles in transforming their destiny towards progress.” (Jain 30)

The people of Kaikadi worshipped wayside stones by applying oil and vermillion on them. Laxmans father always carried stones in his basket and wherever they halt, he used to wash the idols and worship them. He used to sprinkle water all around the hut, while muttering of Kalubai. He offered the first bite of Bhakri to the stone deities. They worship Goddess for their protection and a provision for mouthful. They remembered Goddess on every celebration of festival in the Kaikadi community. The people of Kaikadi Community lived in the
world of superstition and blind belief. They believed in God for their spiritual power. It was their routine to live in their own world of ignorance, illiteracy. There was nobody to help them to come out from such practices. Even the main stream and educated people never tried to find out the problems of these deprived people. There were no attempts on behalf of the government and other agencies to bring this low class into flow of modern educated system.

Once narrator’s father saw a gigantic python on his way and was scared too much. No word emerged from his mouth. He felt that the creature was approaching him. In the meantime four or five bicycle riders happened to come from behind. They began striking their feet on the road. They beat their hands and were ringing the bicycle bells. As a result the python went down the edge of the road and disappeared in the wild bushes. The family members of Lxman Gaikwad expressed thanks to the God who saved Appa, narrator’s father. Everybody thanked God joining their palms in reverence. Father went to the basket of the gods, muttered a few words. He took a little vermillion and applied it to everybody’s forehead. He also sprinkled some on the hut. Thus these people of Kaikadi followed their god to protect their life. Such belief in God may be their potential to surpass every difficulty in their life. No doubt such blind belief was not helpful in their direct life. But believing in God and spirituality could be their strength to survive in critical conditions.

The Kaikadi families used to leave their own village Nirgudi after Dassera to earn their livelihood. So they assembled at Jejuri in the month of November. They came from different regions such as Pune, Maval, Shirval, londa. Jejuri was the meeting place of the friends and relations. They used to embrace affectionately and had the satisfaction of meeting each other after a long gap. Marriages were settled during their meeting. The devotees of Kaikadi community sought their worship of the deity at Jajuri. By offering the vermillion for their Gods at home, this entire clan of kaikadi community worshiped their God and Goddess.
The festival of Kurvali was also celebrated as usual by the Kaikadi community. Every year the fraternity of Laxman’s father had to offer the Goddess three goats and fowls. The narrator also offered the goddess sweets prepared with milk and sugar whenever he passed his examination. Laxman at his childhood used to make a vow before the goddess of kurvali, “Let me pass this year, and I’ll offer your sweets.” (Mane 124)

Thus nobody of the Kaikadi community had forgotten their deity in their sorroful and happy moments too. The superstitious belief of Kaikadi community laid them far away from physical world. They were slaves of all the rituals and customs of Kaikadi community. They had showed their disinterest toward education and modernization. They were happy in their ignorance of knowledge. Jain rightly put his opinion regarding the Kaikadi community, “Their belief in stone gods, demons, ghosts and witches blind them to the reality of existence.” (Jain 31)

**3.1.3 Practice of Untouchability and Casteism**

The Chaturvarna system was deeply rooted in Indian society since Vedic era. It has been given more importance in the Hindu religion and scriptures. The division of the people such as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras on the basis of caste system was systematically advocated by the Brahmin. The religious scriptures of the Hindus helped in making the caste rules fixed and permanent. The Untouchability has been practiced in Indian communities since long ago. According to Hindu scripture, untouchables are recognized as one of the lower classes of the society. The rules subjected the untouchables to untold miseries and disgraceful life. Manu made the rule,

The dwelling of chandals (shudras and untouchable) and their wealth shall be dog and donkeys. Their dress shall be the garment of the dead. Their food shall be in the broken dishes, and their ornaments shall be of black iron.” (Dr Khabade 85)
The Higher class people always condemned untouchables as a lower class of the society. The dominant Hindu people held the view that to come into contact with the untouchables meant to pollute them. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar believed that the Indian society is based on castes and Verna system. According to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, “Hindu society is a house of caste. Hindus are not a people. They are aggregates of groups of people framed into caste.” (Dr Surya 82) The castes and the Verna systems were rigid in Indian society. Dr. Ambedkar discussed the problems like religious, social, cultural, economic and political which are due to the Indian caste system. The Untouchability and casteism were equally supported by the Hindu scriptures and norms. The Hindu religion did not assume that the Untouchability is an inhuman and unlawful activity. On the contrary the Hindu scripture supposed that Untouchability is a practice to obey the Hindu religion.

Mahatma Phule and Dr. Ambedkar raised the problem of untouchability and castes system in the modern India throughout their writings and speeches. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar declared untouchability is indirectly a part of slavery. While comparing between untouchability and slavery, he concludes “untouchability is not only worse than slavery but is positively equal as compared to slavery.” (Dr Surya 83) The Untouchables were deprived of their fundamental human rights. Dr. Ambedkar struggled for the rights of untouchables throughout his life. The Untouchables were oppressed and suppressed from hundreds of years in our country in the name of caste and creed by the privileged higher classes.

The writings of Dr. Ambedkar revolutionized the minds of exploited and neglected group of people. In the course of time the suppressed class started to learn to react against established social order. The self-asserted people from lower class were inspired by the thoughts of Dr, Ambedkar. The motivated people of lower class revealed their agonies and pains. The problems of castiesm and untouchability were observed gradually in the writings of the exploited group. The Dalit memoirs are the outcome of an inspiration of Dr. Ambedkar’s writings and
thought. They depict the vivid account of untouchability and castiesm. If we study the memoirs of Dalit writer’s sociological point of view, we come across the miserable and the pathetic condition of the untouchables in the background of Hindu culture and scripture. The Dalit memoirs narrated the life of subjugated and marginalized group who faced the problems of untouchability and castiesm. Due to untouchability and castiesm, all the oppressed classes have gone through the painful and bitter experiences of life. The Dalit Memoirs such as Taral Antaral, Balut, Athwaniche Pakshi, Upara, Uchalya, Katha Mazya Janmachi, Akkarmashi, Mazya Janmachi Chittthararak Katha, Amcha Bap Ani Ahmi, Kolhatayachi Pore are all milestones to underline the caste system and untouchability in Dalit literature.

The research study is an attempt to bring out untouchability, castiesm, humiliation, injustice, exploitation of Dalits under the rigid laws of Hindu scriptures. Upara is one of the remarkable Dalit Memoirs written by Laxman Mane in 1980. It is translated as An Outsider by Kamat from Marathi into English. It is a landmark in Dalit literature that gives a vivid account of the writers struggle in life within the framework of Hindu society’s rigid stratifications. Laxman Mane narrated grief, pain, superstition, hunger, illiteracy, untouchability and castiesm in his journey of life from his childhood.

It is vividly portrayed the process of subjugation of Kaikadi community under the domination of the upper caste Hindus. The writer Mane presented how he and his family and his community were suppressed and oppressed by the established upper caste people. Mane writes about the Kaikadi community of the landless and homeless traveled from village to village selling baskets made of cane and repairing old baskets. The world revealed in this memoir is that of an outcast community forced to live in small groups, insecure and unprotected life. The community mentioned Kaikadi is a nomadic tribe living in temporary hutments on the outskirts of villages. The community lived in dire poverty by picking food stuff even from garbage. The kaikadi community is caught in the problem of
poverty, starvation, ignorance, insult, injustice, atrocities and the man-made untouchability and castiesm.

The untouchability and castiesm were common problems in Kaikadi community which are typically narrated through this representative Dalit Memoir. In the very outset of this Memoir Laxman Mane provided an account of caste discrimination in his actual life while receiving honour for his book *An Outsider*. Laxman Mane was offered a fellowship and a visit to the U. S. But in America too, he was an outsider. He could not adjust to the American life style. He had a distressing time there. Therefore, he met in America the Indian high caste Brahmins. He narrates the account as:

Three of the fans from such families treated me very well. When I write about my travel in the daily Sakal of Pune, I had some nice things to say about them. But one of them treated me very badly. He invited me for lunch but when he learned of the nature of my book and consequently my caste, he refused to entertain me. (Mane 09)

The writer Laxman Mane himself has faced the problem of untouchability not only in India but also in abroad from high caste Brahmins who settled in America. The problem of untouchability is faced by the writer is not only of an individual account but also of the hundreds of thousands of his community. One thing to be noted is that the writer himself was the victim of the caste system. It is needless to think about the position of the common people born in lower class. Laxman Mane raised the question of thousands of people and their existence in Kaikadi community as:

The question is of hundreds of thousands who are living in slums, on pavements on the outskirts of village and those who do not have even such places who are suffering in miserable conditions in the vales and valleys, hills and rocky planes. They have neither work nor opportunities, neither facilities nor support neither shelter nor protection (09)

Thus *An Outsider* is a detailed account of agonies and pains of Kaikadi community. The entire community was crushed under the manmade caste system
and its discrimination. The Childhood of anybody should not be controlled rather it should be enhanced for natural growth. But it has not happened in the real life of the writer. The writer Laxman Mane had to go through the teasing of the upper class children during his schooling. The narrator recollected his childhood experience in which he was dehumanized and felt suffocated.

All the pupils started teasing me in the way the hens do when a strange chick intrudes upon their privacy. Moreover, I had the look of a Mongrel straight from a dunghill ----No student would allow me near him. The poor schoolmaster! He was a good man. He asked me to sit near the door. The pupils were afraid of any physical contact with me. (20).

The harassment of narrator in school by the teacher and the boys of the upper class are typically narrated in the present memoir. The teacher used to ask the narrator to sit near the door keeping distance from the upper class pupil’s .The teasing of the saverna pupils was common for the narrator. They did not allow him to play with them and avoid his contact. The upper caste pupils always avoided any physical contact with the narrator. Such practice of discrimination is frequently observed in the case of lower class. Thus the treatment is given to the narrator is shameful and disgraceful on the part of humanity.

Palvan, a new place where the narrator’s father begged the school master to admit his son but the teacher refused by saying, “You funny guy!! Do nomadic beggars go to school? ---If they study, who will weave our baskets? Nothing doing! You want to study, huh!”(36) Such misbehavior of the teacher towards the narrator brings into our notice the attitude of the mainstream society towards lower class. To learn for a lower class was out of imagination in those days. It was supposed that education was meant for main stream society only.

The pupils of this community were scoffed by the teacher. Yet, the narrator was not allowed to play with the village urchins. The writer requested the village chief’s son Balya to allow him to play with them. But Balya ordered against the writer and abused, “Out! Filthy son of a bitch! Look at him! Want to play. Balya,
the son of the village chief looked at the writer and started teasing him, “Glandered lamb look at the glandered lamb!”(49).

The narrator is subjugated and dishonored on the basis of his lower caste. The dominant class in the village didn’t allow the untouchables like Kaikadi and others to touch water. When writer went to different villages with his mother to collect the provisions, they are not given permission to fetch water from well, tap and lake of the village. The practice of untouchability is observed with the writer and his mother when they visited the village to collect provisions. Writer puts an account, “Mother would make me sit in somebody’s Verandah. Some women would give me pieces of bhakri and curry. Mother and I would eat them. Then we would drink water poured by the women in hollows of our hands joined together (60).

The writer puts his own account of playing band in wedding ceremony of the dominant class of the village. The group of band party plays their band in the marriage pandal while applying turmeric to the bride and the bride groom. These musicians were given brutal treatment by the owner. This is typically narrated by the writer:

We musicians were served the meal only after all the invitees had finished theirs. We had to sit in a row far away from the marriage pandal. We had to take with us small narrow-necked pots for tea. Plates made of jac fruit tree leaves were placed before us but the food was not readily served. We had to clamour for it again and again. After the meal, we ourselves had to collect our empty plates and throw them away. (66)

The narrator used to eat sweets in such wedding procession while he had nothings to eat at home. So he was moving outside home, though it was tedious and dishonor, it was much better on the part of the writer. There are many such experiences of untouchability in the life of the writer mentioned in the present work.
The entry of kaikadi community in the village was usually prohibited. If they had to come in, they were to register themselves with the village head. Their faces were considered inauspicious. Generally the upper class people hesitated to see the faces of the community. Their women and children were driven from place to place. Jain rightly observed the condition of Mane and his community, “Laxman Mane and his community were kept away not only from other women beings but also from women settlements”. (Jain 28)

In short Indian caste system refused to accept these people as living human beings. Even the contact of these people supposed as pollution. Once, Laxman played musical instruments in a marriage party of his friend. There were a number of friends from his school and they treated him well in this ceremony. The guests took their seat in a row in the pandal for the wedding feast. Laxman was pressed by his friends to sit in a row of the guest inside the pendal. Everybody thought that Laxman was one of the invitees and so nobody said anything to him. His friend vouched that nobody would recognize him in such a crowd and insisted him to join them without fear. Half the meal was over. Upper caste Maratha noticed him and scolded him for defiling the wedding feast, “Son of a Kaikadi low caste! Have you taken leave of your senses? Get up and get out.” (Mane 107) Neither his education level nor his skills in music helped him to rescue from the stigma of his caste.

There are innumerable accounts of untouchability observed in the present work. Once, Laxman Mane played musical instruments with his father and other mates in his childhood in Sangvi. After playing the drum for a longtime, Laxman was thirsty. He went to water tank and requested the women for some water. The women poured water from above. Laxman couldn’t drink much water in this way. In the feat of drinking water his hand touched the tank. The women of upper class scolded Laxman, “You there! You carrion! You have polluted…our water! What are we going to drink now… your corpse?”(112) The news of pollution of water spread like a wild fire. The bridegroom’s people emptied the entire tank and sent
someone to fetch fresh water. Such inhuman treatment is given by the established people. Whenever mother of Laxman felt very low she used to say, “Even a dog’s life has a certain dignity, but not ours.” (67)

Once, Laxman was impressed by the college girl at Kolhapur. The love affair between them ran for many days. The girl belongs to Brahmin community. The communication between them strengthened by and by through letters. He disclosed everything between them before his friend Narayan. Initially the friend Narayan scolded Laxman about his love affair and reminded him of the reality of life. Narayan advised Laxman to ask her beloved whether she was ready to marry him. Laxman with the support of his friend he dared to ask about their marriage. The reply comes from her, “I had presumed that you might at least be a ‘Maratha’….Now that I know your caste. I don’t think I can marry you.” (161) Here once again the caste of Laxman discontinued his love affair. The girl was prepared to compromise on various aspects of life but turned her back on the issue of caste. This factor of caste interfered in every sphere of his life.

The love affair between Laxman and Shashi also created misunderstanding. Shashi belongs to Maratha. Laxman’s friend annoyed the proposal of marriage between Laxman and Shashi on the basis of caste distinction. Many friends advised that he should not undertake controversial activities with arranging his marriage. Yet, they suspected that he had a clandestine affair going on with his house owner’s daughter. When people discussed of his marriage with Shashi, the Maratha friends showed disinterest. Even they chided him, “You may do it elsewhere, not here this is not fair.” (163)

Laxman came to know the differences in opinion between his friends widened to such an extent that their friendship of many years came to an end. Laxman was hurt by the detachment of his friend from whose plates; he had shared the meals, kept him away on the issue of caste. Laxman in his disappointment blamed the caste system for all his failure, “I was so harassed by
my caste that I failed to understand why my caste was low.” (164) This question of narrator make us to realize the bad practices of casteism and untouchability.

The caste discrimination made narrators life miserable and helpless. He was frequently dishonoured and abused due to his lower caste. But the narrator stood firmly to come out from these barriers and accepted the challenge for liberation. Thus he actively participated in social work and motivated these people for self-assertion and dignity.

3.1.4 Nature of Jatpanchayat

The people of Nomadic tribe did not acquaint with the judgment of court based on democratic principles. They lived their life as if there is no concern to the established democratic system. The people of deprived class were far away from modernization and education. They were excluded from the benefits of Indian Independence. They lived in their conservative thoughts and under the influences of Hindu culture and rituals. They believed in their Jatpanchayat separately. There were obligations to these communities to follow the rules, regulation and traditional belief of their Jatpanchayat. There was the domination of Jatpanchayat on nomadic tribes.

There were many incidents of Jatpachayat occurred in An Outsider. Mane himself is victimized by the rules of Jatpachayat in Kaikadi community. The incidents such as ostricization of Gajari son, Jatpachayat of Madhi, ostracization of the narrator are the realistic account of the domination of Jatpanchayat. Nobody is rescued from the clutches of Jatpachayat observed in the present memoir An Outsider. R.S. Jain rightly analyzed the role of Jatpanchayat in Nomadic Tribes:

Jatpachayat is a team of selected members of castes who settle the disputes of the people in the caste. It mostly played a negative and at times destructive role in the overall development of the community. Though the Panchayats were constituted with high ideals of maintaining unity and harmony in the community, they in
reality created hurdles in the individual progress of ambitious men. Arbitrary
decisions of members of Jatpanchayat were aimed at suppressing the dissents of
the innovative youth rather than discharging their duties as impartial Judges. (Jain
10)

Mane has serialized the accounts of Jatpanchayat and its rule through the
present memoir. He is a witness of all the incidents of ostricization in the Kaikadi
community. He has narrated innumerable incident of ostricization and decision of
Jatpanchayat through the present narrative. Jatpanchayat held at the Fair of
Kurvali was famous in Kaikadi community narrated through the present work. All
the people of Kaikadi community moved from village to village and used to gather
at last to Kurvali to celebrate the fair and festival. At the end of the Kurvali
festival, Jatpanchayat used to settle on various issues such as complaints against
one community or the other, loans taken and returned, animals sold and
purchased. The cases were processed and disputes solved if the inter – community
Panchayat was present. Laxman Mane was a witness of Kurvali Panchayat where
Punnappa had mortgaged his wife to Dharmea. The guarantor said on behalf of
Punnappa before the panchayat:

I have mortgaged my wife to Dharmea these last four years. He gave me five
times fifty rupees … I had promised to return this amount to him in four years. I
remit it to day …. But the fellow is not willing to return my wife…(Mane 56)

The man who was saying this was the guarantor of the petitioner but he was
speaking in the first person singular as if it was his own case. After four years,
Punnappa claimed his wife by returning the money to Dharmia. The guarantor of
Dharmia replied to the panchayat against Punnappa:

Honorable members of the panchayat, you represent five gods. Whatever verdict
you give, I accept it. What punnappa says is true. He was in need of money, he
mortgaged his wife. She was good, I accept her Now, you know that when you
keep milk on fire, it boils and overflows, does it not? Can a young man and a young woman remain together without attracting each other? I didn’t take her in just to feed her. When the shoe fitted my foot, I wore it, Is that a crime? Four years have gone by she was a child by me. Let Punnappa return my money, I’ll return his wife. I am not refusing to that! (56)

Punnappa was claiming for his wife not for her child. Instead he blamed Dharmia to be responsible for begetting a child to his wife and keeping illicit relationship with his wife. The woman is used as a commodity. The wife of punnappa is victimized at both the places. On behalf of Punnappa’s wife the guarantor began his pleading to Panchayat.

Your honor! I submit before you that I am no better than a meek animal. When I saw the green grass, I ate it. What good are customs and traditions? My husband pawned me for four years for money. When I was pushed into his room, he naturally took me to bed. Why should he feed me free of charge! Moreover, women are like dumb cows. My husband tethered me at his door. It’s my husband who is the butcher. Oh men of wisdom and Reason! Let me be judged by the goddess of justice. How can I return now with this child and stay with my first husband? You are the very incarnations of the Almighty. Don’t crosses examine me further, I beg of you. I am like your own daughter. (57)

Thus there were discussions on behalf of all the verdicts in the Panchayat. At last the decision was taken in the evening of the session of the Panchayat. The younger of the two senior members of the Panchayat rose and announced the verdict, “The woman is not guilty. She is a helpless creature. She goes wherever her owner sends her. A man should keep his shoe on his foot only but Punnappa could not do it. Dharmia has done it quite systematically”. (58) In this decision of Jatpanchayat, Punnappa was denied justice. Humanistic point of view the wise person should be rewarded and guilty person should be punished. Dharmia was a guilty in in this affair. But he was not punished. This was a failure of Jatpanchayat
in Kaikadi Community. Nobody was felt guilty with the wrong verdict of Jatpanchayat in the case of Punnappa. The innumerable innocent people of this community were crushed under the rule of Jatpanchayat in Kaikadi Community.

It was routine of Kaikadi community to return from their work place to their home after their provision is settled and finished. The sealed lock of their home is opened after their coming back to home. The cow dung was removed and the door reopened. All the people of the Kaikadi community began to weave various types of baskets. The community chief had allotted a particular village for each Kaikadi family to sell the wares and collect its right of full share of yield from the farmers. Each family had to go to the allotted village. Anybody venturing to break this law would suffer the wrath of the community at night. The guilty person is excommunicated by the panchayat. Then nobody would eat with the victims. Apart from that nobody used to attend a wedding or even a funereal of excommunicated family members. This was a strict rule laid by the panchayat in Kaikadi community.

The family of Sadya, a relative of narrator fell victim and was excommunicated by the Kaikadi Panchayat. Sadya was a mischief maker who caused a number of disputes. These disputes placed before the Panchayat which solved them and punished the guilty. If a woman committed adultery, her entire family is excommunicated in Kaikadi community. An excommunicated person is forced to leave not only his house but also his village.

Thus there were many persons who were forced to leave their villages in Kiakakadi community under the rule of Jatpanchayat. The Kaikadi women had to return home before sunset, if not her husband would not allow her to enter his house and she would have to return to her parents. Nobody in the village had the right to shelter her. Then her father used to present her before the Panchayat and she had to receive the panchayat’s verdict. Only after that she is allowed to live.
with her husband again. R. S. Jain rightly observed the dominance of Jatpanchayat in Kaikadi community:

Existence of Jatpanchayat was an inevitable fall out of the social practice of untouchability and segregation. Circumstances in which Dalits were prevented from entry into the other social group naturally forced them to form their own caste groups. Somebody had to take the reins of the groups. Impartial punches of the first generation were replaced by the people with ambitious maneuverings and vested interests. Weak men and women were crushed underneath Panchayat. Women were the worst sufferers in the system. They did not get representation in the Panchayat. (Jain 11)

Most of the time innocent people of this community were blamed and punished under the rule of Japanchayat. The Kaikadi woman named Gajara was excommunicated by Jatpanchayat. Yet, her seven children were ostracized. Actually the children of Gajara were innocent as far as the blame is concerned. They had also been excommunicated. The people of the Kaikadi community were not only avoided the contact but also opposed to eat with them. Mane’s parents also insisted on him not to play with Gajara’s children. All the Kaikadi houses stood together whereas Gajara’s house stood apart. No one even attended the funerals in her family. Her sons were young and strong but their excommunication rendered them helpless. The people in the village looked upon them as if they were enemies. Nobody used to give them any work. Inside their own house, they were chastised by their community and outside by the village. When there was any theft in the village, or when some tree was cut down and carried off, Gajara’s children were the first to be suspected. A police search would first be carried out in her house, only then other houses. However after a few months, the communities Panchayat made her children pay a fine to absolve them of their crime and they were readmitted to the community.
It was the fair of Madhi when Mane was in VIIth class. He was the witness of a case going on before the Panchayat of Kaikadi. The guilty was made to carry an earthen pot on his head filled with shit. As he went around the idol of the god, each of the members of the Panchayat threw a stone at the earthen pot making a hole into it. Through such holes, the shit and piss in the pot fell on the body of the carrier, and the poor fellow was completely drenched in that. Mane expressed anger over inhuman practice of Jatpanchayat which lower human dignity. He challenged the established norm of this Kaikadi community to break some of the evil practices. For this he preferred to go for an inter–caste marriage with a Maratha girl and challenged regulation of his own community. He had always tried to liberate his own community from the various bondages of Jatpanchayat and its rule.

The people of Kaikadi were born musicians. There used to be competitions among the band players. Whenever a dispute took place among the different parties of the band, the Panchayat used to intervene to solve them. Sometimes a bandmaster contracted to play at two wedding on the same day, tricking his patrons. A man who did not know how to play musical instruments, used to be made to stand in the band group holding an instrument. Mane says that this exercise landed them in a fine mess. The band was hired for a wedding ceremony in Sangvi, a village. The wedding was being celebrated in a big way. There was the contract between the father of Mane and Khalata to play band in the wedding ceremony for Rs.125/- . There was an agreement to send seven musicians but had been sent only four by Mane’s father. The Panchayat was called on this issue against band party of Mane’s father. The member of the Panchayat expressed anger, “Sent their families away, throw their musical instruments into the river…” (Mane 127) The member of the Panchayat thus started abusing and blaming the family of Mane saying the kaikadi had no ethics. The verdicts of the Panchayat made the group of band on the behalf of narrator’s father in trouble. The band
player and Mane’s father went in great loss and realized their mistake. In this
regard Mane narrated one of the accounts as:

We played the band for four days. Neither contracts brought us anything. Not even fifty
rupees were recovered. On the contrary, father had to spend two hundred rupees to those
hired from Phaltan, a great loss. Other players in the band began attacking him for this
middle. A dispute ensued, people calling each other names. Over one silly mistake we
lost our whole season’s earnings. (127)

Mane recollected one of the incidents where a Kaikadi husband had been
lodged an unusual complaint against his young and good looking wife before the
Panchayat. His complaint was that his wife had taken a Vadari lover and had
abandoned him. Her husband declared before the Panchayat, “Up till now, she has
got herself aborted 4-5 times and now, she is pregnant, she is an adulteress … I am
not the father of the child she is carrying. I want to leave her, please, annul my
marriage with her.” (138) The husband had managed to get the verdict in his favor
by providing a huge quantity of country liquor to the members of the Panchayat.
In the result the woman was excommunicated by the Panchayat. They gave
permission to the husband to remarry, taking its full fees. The woman was decided
to be a victim. She went mad and never recovered from the incident. Mane
criticized some of the orthodox practices of his community. Yet, he attacked the
unjust practices of Panchayat in Kaikadi community. Raj Kumar added his
observation as far as Kaikadi Panchayat is concerned.

The panchayat was a manifestation of patriarchal order in which women hardly
expected to get justice. As a result, the kaikadi women were often the cross-
bearers of the community (Kumar 183)

Mane narrates an incident in which Jatpanchayat punished a guilty person
to carry a mud pitcher filled with human shit and urine on his head and go around
the temple. On lookers hit the pitcher with stones so as to make holes into it. Shit
and urine dripped down the face. Members of the community had no other way to
obey the judgment. Though verdict many times was arbitrary and whimsical nobody dared to disobey it for fear of being excommunicated. Mane himself is declared to be a victim by the Panchayat due to his inter-caste marriage. Yet, the parents of Mane were also excommunicated. Nobody dared to eat meal with them. So Mane was made to ask for pardon from Panchayat so that they can be taken back into the community. At last mane surrendered at the feet of the Panchayat members and begged them to resume the session for his help. Thus Mane’s father as a former member of the Panchayat supported Mane by the argument, “Our community accepts the adoption ….. The orphan, whose parents cannot be traced, can be adopted in our community. Such an adopted orphan can be married to a girl or a boy from our community which allows it……” (Mane 204)

Thus the ceremony of the adoption was carried out. Narrator’s maternal uncle and aunt performed the ceremony of Shashi’s adoption. Both were gone through remarriage by the rule of Panchayat and entered into the same caste. The burden of the panchayat was ever observed in Kaikadi community. It can be observed with statement of Mane’s father, “Oh, my dear lad! I would have been ostracized now, I have returned to the society.” (209) The influence of Jatpanchayat is rightly observed here. The domination of Jatpanchayat in Kaikadi community attracts our desirable attention to justify the age old habits prevailed in this community. The narrator tried to attack the Jatpanchayat of his community. He also wants to modernize the view of his community by providing education. He has sincerely attempted to focus on the problems of Kaikadi community

3.2 A Subaltern Narrative

Globalization has created a great impact on every kind of life. The revolution has taken place in social, political, economic and literary world. The thoughts of the people are changed in the course of time in the modern world. Transformation is occurred in every sphere of life. The concept of humanism and
cosmopolitan is aroused in the modern world. The subaltern and postcolonial theories revolutionized the traditional thoughts and looked forward to establish democratic principles such as liberty, equality, fraternity and justice.

Subaltern studies explored the experience of social, political oppression in post-colonial societies such as India. It is asserted that “Subaltern studies have great relevance to the understanding and interpretation of contemporary society in the third world country like India.” (Das 140) It challenged the discrimination in class, religion, language and gender etc. According to Antonio Gramsci the term ‘Subaltern’ underlines a subordinate position in term of class, gender, caste, race and culture. It is furthermore defined that the colonized and oppressed subject’s voice has been silenced. According to Spivak ‘subaltern’ means the oppressed subject. Gremsci’s account of the oppression aptly describes the continued operation of the rural peasantry, the working class and the untouchable in post-Independence Indian society.

The term subaltern has a relevance to the study of third world countries especially to India. The concept of subaltern has been defined by Julian Wolfreys the definition has composed the group that are marginalized oppressed and exploited on the cultural, political, social and religion ground. Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia defines subaltern as: “Subaltern is a term that community refers to person who are socially, politically and geographically outside of the hegemonic power structure.”(Web 22.04.2010) The term subaltern refers to the marginalized groups and the lower classes. It is used to denote the marginalized and oppressed people. Subaltern Studies borrow postmodern ideas and method to textual analysis. Subaltern Studies make a ‘new approach’ to restore history. It is theorizing that the elite in India played a dominant role.

The word ‘subaltern’ is derived from the Latin word ‘sublterns’. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary has following interpretation:
1. (n.) an officer in the British army below the rank of captain, especially a second lieutenant; 2. (adj.) of lower status (OALD 1434)

It means any officer in the British army who is ‘lower in rank’ than captain. The term covers the subjects, the masses, and the deprived and neglected section of the society. The subaltern provides the base for understanding the condition of the poor, the lower class and peasantry in India. The term has a relevance to the study of third world countries especially India.

Dalit literature can be studied under subaltern point of view, because subaltern studies bring into notice the suppressed, oppressed and downtrodden class. These deprived classes have been segregated in the name of caste, religion, untouchable and gender. Dr Milind Pandit says,

Subaltern is an area that attracts a lot of discussion. And if we apply this definition to Dalit literature, think subaltern can be taken for an Umbrella term. (Dr Pandit 44)

Dalit writing can be interpreted from subaltern point of view. Dalit literature is manifestation of agonies and suffering of Dalit. It is not only reflecting the pathetic condition of lower class but also providing the democratic values. Dalits are exploited socially, economically and politically. This exploitation of Dalit is artistically presented through Dalit writings. There is an attempt to depict suffering of marginalized people on different levels and between different people. It is concerned with the life of the lower strata of the society.

_Upara, a Marathi Autobiography by Laxman Mane_ is translated into English as _An Outsider_ by S.T. Kamat. It is a milestone in Marathi Dalit literature. The present subaltern narrative is an evidence of exploitation of Nomadic Tribe named Kaikadi. It is a typical realistic picture of Kaikadi community. This narrative can be studied subaltern point of view. The writer Laxman Mane tried to
reveal the sufferings of nomadic tribe. The nomadic tribe Kaikadi is moving from place to place for their lively hood. The narrator of the memoir is a representative of Kaikadi community. The narrator is one of the victims who come across a number of problems in his way of living. The writer Laxman Mane declares, “Whatever I say about the book? Whatever I lived, experienced and saw, I poured into my writing.” (Mane 06) This declaration bring into our notice that the memoir is based on the writer own experience of life. He reveals a realistic, picture of victimized Kaikadi community. The narrator draws our attention towards untouchability, poverty, hunger and superstition in nomadic tribe. The entire narrative presents humiliation, suffering and suffocation of Kaikadi community at the hands of the upper caste Indian society. The world portrayed in the present memoir is a miserable and deplorable one. All the micro experiences of kaikadi community can be analysed under subaltern point of view.

The picture of women in Dalit memoirs is very significant. They are subjugated as women by lover and upper class. It is discussed that “A Dalit woman carries the double burden of patriarchy and caste system and suffers doubly discrimination” (Dr. Patil 56) The problem of women can be interpreted from subaltern point of view. An Outsider also narrates the struggle of Kaikadi women. Laxman Mane clears that a woman is exploited not only because of her sex but also on the basis of her class, race and caste. The pitiable and helpless condition of women is notably mentioned in the present subaltern narrative. There are a number of incidents in this memoir where women have been given inhuman treatment. Punappa is the character talking before Panchayat and says,

I have mortgaged my wife to Dharma these last four years. He gave me five times fifty rupees. I had promised to return this amount to him in four years. I remit it today…. But the fellow is not willing to return my wife.(Mane 56).
The women are supposed as a commodity to be sold in exchange of money. She is portrayed as an object of suffering, contempt and hatred in the present narrative. She is neglected both in home and outside. She is tortured and ill-treated right from her birth. Such kind of status of women narrated in this memoir appeals for subaltern study to get equal justice for women.

The present representative subaltern narrative gives a realistic picture of down trodden class. The struggle starts from the very birth of a child in Kaikadi community. The beliefs of this nomadic tribes in their gods, goddess such as ‘Khandoba’ and ‘Kulubai’ is typically narrated in the present memoir. The cultural and religious picture of Kaikadi is well narrated to analyze the real world of this community. The Superstitious beliefs of this community such as offering goats to the gods and goddesses are realistically narrated. The picture of hunger also attracts our sympathy towards the tribe. Laxman Mane, the narrator struggles for carrying hearth and home on the back of the donkeys. The donkey of narrator strays through a fencing of women. As a result she abuses him in uncivilized language.

The People were not sympathetic towards Kaikadi community. Even they are branded as theifs. When the people of the community leave from one place to another place, the villagers check up their bags. They have to inform their stay, men, women, children, animals to the chief of the village where they want to stay. Many a time Kaikadi women are blamed and beaten as theifs. Humiliation and torture are common in the Kaikadi tribes. They have been given subhuman treatment by the established upper class. The children of this community are not been permitted to get education. When the narrator is admitted to the school, he is not allowed to sit in the classroom. He is to go out of the class because of his birth in lower caste.
Subaltern studies expect to bring downtrodden, marginalized and lower class in the main stream of the society. It revolutionized the ideas and thoughts of the self-asserted writers. The narrator is trying to create self-identity and existence among the subjugated and segregated class. *An Outsider* is representative memoirs of suffering and exploitation of Kaikadi community. It is observed as a subaltern narrative with its realistic account of marginalization and oppression in the name of caste, religion and gender.

The experiences and the daily accounts of the community are the subject of subaltern study. The problems created with this community are directly concerned to the subaltern study. The thematic concerns of this work are related to down trodden and marginal world. The world presented in this memoir is to be studied under subaltern point of view. It is an attempt at self-identity and self-assertion observed through the experiences of the narrator in the present work. The journey of narrator is towards the liberation of this community. Apart from that the narrator has tried to uplift Kaikadi people from the age old habits.

### 3.3 Subjugation of Woman

Indian women were subjugated in the name of caste, religion and gender. The equal status of women was usually denied by the so called Hindu philosophy. They were deprived of opportunity and freedom. In the result they were gone through painful and miserable life. It is ridiculous that on one hand Indian women were worshiped as goddess and on the other hand they were subject to the bonds of slavery and operation. In the case of Dalit women, the condition was even more critical. R. S. Jain assessed the real status of Dalit women:

Condition of Dalit women was deplorably pitiable. They faced dozens of problems simply because they were females. Upper caste people in society always looked at them as consumable commodity. Men and boys teased, molested, seduced them and at time misused their womanhood. Dalit women were treated in
a fashion as if they were public property like urinals and toilets. People satisfied their sexual hunger through immoral and forceful relations with them. Girls were sold and purchased like a beast in villages. (Jain 25)

As a woman belonging to lower category, she was lodged with double slavery by Dalit males and Hindu Savarnas. All the women were oppressed and deprived in Hindu patriarchal society. She was treated as a trivial object and an ignorable part of the society. She was supposed to tolerate the exploitation and sufferings. Dalit women toiled and worked hard day and night. She carried the double responsibility in her domestic life. She felt happy in her adverse situation with her husband. She was not disappointed with her worst situation because she was inculcated in the supremacy of patriarchy and traditional belief. Pushpa Bhave opines: “Dalit women also were under the spell of Hindu rituals, blind faiths due to ignorance and inferiority complex.” (Bhave 11)

Dalit women were overloaded with her family responsibility. She suffered a lot by her drunker and idle husband. She worked hard without any complaint and accepted suffering mutely. She was underestimated and demolished by her husband and dominant people in the village. She was frequently seduced and raped by the chief of the village. She was unnecessarily dishonored and brutally treated by the established Hindu people. The status offered to the women in Indian society was disgraceful on the part of humanity. Prof Rage in his study of Dalit women said, “Dalit women are more likely to face the collective and public threat of rape, sexual assault and physical violence at the work place and in Public.” (Rege 53) Thus Dalit women were victimized under the rigid laws of Hindu religion and the cruel patriarchal society. The pitiable and helpless condition of Dalit women is vividly observed in Dalit memoirs.

The reflection of Dalit women in An Outsider can be a major discussion in Dalit literature. The narrator Laxman Mane demonstrated the struggle of Kaikadi
women with the realistic account through the present memoir. The women portrayed in *Kaikadi* Community were exploited not only because of her sex but also on the basis of her class, race and castes. There were many incidents where women were tortured and oppressed in their domestic life. The women of this community were double slaved by Dalit male and dominant people. She was not offered any freedom due to her birth in lower class. She was dishonored and subjugated in every sphere of life. *An Outsider* is a typical Dalit memoir which presents the social status of wandering *Kaikadi* women. The narrator provides us with an account of sufferings and agonies of the women. The present work portrayed the pitiable and helpless condition of Dalit women on the basis of religion, caste and gender. The narrator communicated the pitiable and helpless condition of *Kaikadi* women from their birth to death. There are many notable incidents where *Kaikadi* women were tortured and subjugated on the various issues.

The oppressed and deprived women in the present memoir are mentioned such as narrator’s Mother (Anwari), Nani, Parumami, Gajara, The wife of Pingla Joshi, Sharda, Sari, Sari of Holar community and narrator’s aunt Pari. These women are strictly follower of their traditional norms and cultures. They are completely influenced by the rigid conservative thoughts. The women of Kaikadi community were deprived of all kinds of opportunity and freedom.

The mother of narrator is portrayed as a representative woman of *Kaikadi* community. Her role is significant in the life of narrator. She is shown as responsible person in the family. She is narrated as a bold, hard worker, submissive and devotional one. Many a time she played protective role in the life of the narrator. She supported every member of her family in one way or the other. Her supportive role can be observed in the case of the narrator as “Laksha take the donkeys out until it is time to go to school when I see the other children on their way to school. I will send Sami to look after the donkey so that you can go to
school. Don’t run away from school or else father will beat you to death.” (Mane 22) She always thought about the betterment of the family. She looked after every member of her family. She was frequently abused and beaten by her husband. She was given secondary position in taking any decision in the family. She did not get equal share in the family share. Many times she was abused and scolded in a rustic language by her husband as “You bitch of a wife! You don’t him to be a beggar? I will certainly send him to school and make him a teacher or an officer. Who are you to poke your filthy nose into my affair woman?” (22) The mother of narrator was influenced by her Kaikadi rituals and social norms. She was religious and followed every customs. She did not allow narrator to eat a piece of bread before offering to the God. She did not believe in inter-caste marriage. She opposed the narrator when he decided to marry with Shashi, an upper caste girl. She was portrayed as a submissive woman intended to live under the control of her husband. She was influenced by the age old habits and patriarchy.

Narrator’s Parumami was a beautiful and good looking woman subjugated and molested frequently. The birth in Kaikadi community was her only fault. By appearance she was beautiful. Whenever she bathed the young men used to hang around her. She was often humiliated in her course of life. She was not allowed to comb her tresses properly. Once the husband of Parumami noticed that her wife was combing her hair. As a result, he dropped her to the ground and sat on her chest snatching the mirror from her hand. He began hitting her face with the mirror. Here Parumami is beaten without her mistake by her husband. It is observed that the approach of male in Kaikadi Community towards women was negative. The women were treated as a trivial object. The women are not only exploited by male of their community but also the Hindu people. In the case of Parumami, she was raped brutally by the young men. Her painful condition is observed in her own words as “It was terribly painful. The wolves didn’t leave me …… my body has become a rotten log of wood now!”(84)
When mother of narrator reported the matter of rape to Maruti mama and father of the narrator, they did not show any sympathy towards her. Instead they blamed her and abused in rustic language: “This bitch was not going to be faithful to me. She has sacrificed her honor and she is crying now” (84) Here Parumami is doubted for her charity by her husband. It is observed that to be a beautiful woman in Kaikadi community was a worst on her part. The submissive nature of Kaikadi woman can be highlighted through the words of narrator’s mother. She advised that a woman of Kaikadi community should not have bath or make up. Parumami narrated the status of Kaikadi women as “A beggarly woman should always behave like a lady. She must not behave like a naucth girl from the tamasha in make-up. Otherwise, she will meet the same, fate as Paru.”(85) Thus women of Kaikadi community were subjugated and restricted under the norms of patriarchy and established Hindu culture. They were deprived from all kinds of freedom and modernization. These women were lodged every bondages of slavery in the name of religion, customs and rituals.

The next important women character is Shashi, the wife of narrator Laxman Mane. She stood firmly with narrator as an honest wife in their every critical situation. Actually, she was an upper caste Maratha girl. But she involved in Kaikadi community and their culture very boldly without any hesitation. Her real love towards the narrator Mane is confessed through her statement, “If we are to die, will die together. Whatever happen… I have prepared myself to live on the pavement” (174) Shashi’s fearless and bold personality is seen after her marriage with the narrator. Once, Shashi and the narrator came to Satara after their register marriage. They were caught in the bus-stand and investigated by the police. At this juncture she boldly replied to the police, ‘I am his wife.’(182)

Shashi is the dominant woman character bearing modern views. Once she had a serious argument with the women in the neighborhood on an account of the banyan tree. It was an occasion of early morning. Some women from the
neighborhood carried brass trays containing small brass oil lamp with five cotton wicks, cotton bells, sugar, a mango, a thread ball, betel leaves and arecanuts in their hands. These women urged Shashi to go with them to worship the tree. But Shashi was influenced by modern thoughts. She did not believe in rituals and blind belief. So she bluntly reacted with the women: “I am not observing the fast and I don’t share your views. I have no faith in such rituals. I don’t believe in the rebirth and by enacting this drama, I am not sure whether I’ll get the same husband in seven of my future rebirths!” (203)

She did not like caste discriminations. While observing caste distinction in Kaikadi community, she was surprised and said, “I thought that we Marathas alone were insanely proud of our ninety six generation of Maratha lineage but what I witnessed just now appears to be even worse”. (186) She attacked caste discrimination in Kaikadi community. It was unbelievable for Shashi to expect caste differences in lower category. She was disappointed with the discussion on caste issues by narrator’s Mother. The parents of the narrator meant that the cause of disturbance in their family is only Shashi. When narrator and Shashi settled at Satara after their registered marriage, the parents of narrator came to meet him and scolded Shashi in abusing words.

You curse women! You broke out house into two, you treated us in an inhuman way and on the top of that you are preparing tea for us? We won’t drink anything coming from your cursed hands! (184)

Actually Shashi was an innocent one. She did not play any kind of negative role in disturbing narrator’s family. The attitude of the people towards women was always negative in Kaikadi community. The women were blamed unnecessarily in lower community observed through the present work. Actually the women of Kaikadi community contributed in the nourishment of their family. Her contribution in their household activity was undoubted. Yet they used to get last
share of their family. The negative approach of the *Kaikadi* people towards the women was one of the major problems analyzed in the present work.

The next deprived women character is Pingla Joshi’s wife. She behaved very boldly and sacrificed for her husband. One day Pingle Joshi was suffering from high temperature. His wife came late after getting prescribed some herbal plant which had to be got from the hill. At this moment Pingle Joshi suspected his wife and abused her, “Bloody where! You brazen bitch! I’ll get your mother screwed by a donkey.” You old bitch! It is all over between the two of us ….Out! Get out! I cannot stand the sight of you! Have gone crazy in your old age.” (86)

Actually she looked after her husband in his illness. Yet, she was scolded in a rustic language due to her coming late. Once she had to bring herbal plant as a medicine for her husband to get relief from his illness. Pingla Joshi misunderstood her wife and blamed her. The women of *Kaikadi* community were always suspected by their male people. So she was a victim in the view of their family member and the village people on various issues. The status of the women was always degraded and subjugated. They were no more treated as human being. But the woman like wife of Pingla Joshi was not disturbed under the supremacy of different dominant group. She challenged her husband by saying, “I shall look after these four children as best I can”. The potential of the oppressed women in her domestic life is frequently realized in the present work. These depressed women of lower class proved self-sufficient in their way of life under the domination of patriarchal system.

Another important woman character is Gajara. She is victimized under the rigid rules of the community. She had been blamed as an adulterous. Her seven children were born from her illicit relationship with different people. As a result Gajara’s house was excommunicated by the community. No one sought to marry her daughter into her family. The people looked upon them as an enemy. The work
was also not allotted to the member of the Gajara’s family. The entire family members were victimized due to the misconduct of Gajara. The false charges were also lodged on them. They were tortured by the every people of the community. There were strict rule of community Panchayat. If a woman committed adultery, her entire family used to banish from their village. Many times excommunicated persons were forced to leave not only his house but also his village. The innocent son of Gajara left the village due to their excommunication by the Panchayat of Kaikadi community. Gajara was exploited and dishonored in her every sphere of life. Once, the narrator Laxman Mane entered in Gajar’s house with one of her sons to get drinking water. At this moment Mother of the Narrator shouted at him furiously as “Son of bitch! You drink water in this filthy house? Have you mortgaged your sense of propriety or what”(101) Yet, Mother warned narrator never cross the threshold of Gajar’s door and never see the face of the woman. The harassment of Gajar attracts our attention and made us to sympathize with her.

Ratna was the girl who belonged to upper caste Maratha narrated in the present memoir. Her marriage was broken on a trivial issue. Since, she was never seen out of her house, she was still in a state of shock. Many women used to see her and said that the girl was born under an inauspicious star. There was no settlement of her marriage after so many efforts by her parents and relatives. Once Laxman’s mother brought the news of death of Ratna and expressed sorrow for her generosity. The narrator raised the question to her mother about Ratna’s marriage. He knew the fact that women in Kaikadi community were allowed to remarry. In her answer Laxman’s mother replied, “We are low- caste nomads. These things are a way of life for us, not for them. For them, a woman’s honour is as delicate as glass……ware”(148) This clarification of mother brings into our notice the status of women in upper caste. They were lodged with different kinds of slavery under the domination of Hindu culture and patriarchal Indian system. The status of women in lower and upper class was equally worst and deplorable.
Sharda is one more deprived woman character used to jump on a rope and left stones with her locks. Many tempted young fellow impressed on the skill of Sharda and attacked her and fulfilled their sexual hunger. Later on she was thrown away in a deadly position. The father of Sharda narrated the incident occurred with her. He depended on the income source of Sharda. It is analyzed that Sharda’s father bothered about his loss of money from her daughter’s income source rather than her death. It is observed in the words of Sharda’s father: “Did I deserve this in my old age? Well, I would have earned a lot of money during the festival.”(42) If parents supposed their daughters as a source of income it is disgraceful and shameful on the part of humanity. The women in Kaikadi community were supposed as a commodity of income source. It is rightly observed the position of women in lower class as “It is doubtlessly true that men from upper caste section of the society ill-treated these ladies. But it is also true that they were not protected by their own men. Girls for them were a guaranted source of income.”( Jain 10)

The women in Kaikadi community were mortgaged in the exchange of money. This was one of the crucial things observed with the deprived women of Kaikadi in this narrative. Punnapa had mortgaged his wife to Dharmia for the last four years. He had promised to return the amount to Dharmia in four years. It was the day opened when Punnapa was ready to return the money to get her wife back. But the fellow Dharmia was not willing to return Punnappa’s wife. The discussion between these two fellow declared that the women were meant for a commercial object in Kaikadi community. The woman mortgaged here revealed her submissive nature under the supremacy of patriarchal tradition of Kaikadi community as “You honour I submit before you that I am better than a meek animal.”( Mane 57)

The women of Kaikadi community were also not allowed in some auspicious work. They were given lower status. They were restricted to worship God in the temple. The narrator asked his father to bring Nani with them to
worship God. On this occasion the father of narrator explained as “You see, my lad! The women have no right to come. God doesn’t allow it” (77) The illustration of father bring into our notice the lower status of women in Kaikadi community.

There are also some minor characters reflected in the present work such as Pari and Sari who were the wife of Pingla Joshi. They were selling the pots of silver and fulfilling their needs. Every Kaikadi woman narrated in the present memoir is a hard worker. Bagli Phaltankarin was a next minor woman character who demanded Sari as a bridegroom for her son Vasant. Balgli Phaltankarin was a relative of narrator’s father. Sari was the daughter of narrator. Tani Wadarin was helped Laxman when he ran at Phaltan. She advised him properly. Sari was one of the women characters who belonged to Hollar society. She lived in Satara with her eight to nine children. Her husband was a drunken card. He suspected Sari and doubted her virginity. She boldly behaved with her husband. Pari is another woman character, wife of Jayshingya. She played minor role in the present work. But her contribution is also significantly narrated in the present memoir.

Thus Kaikadi women were kept aside from their right and opportunity. They were supposed to be an ignorable part of the society. The women of lower class were gone through double slavery of their male and the dominant people. They were victimized under the norms of Hindu culture and excluded from every opportunities of Indian Independence. They were deprived of democratic principles such as liberty, equality, justice and fraternity. The present Dalit memoir is a little attempt to look into the marginal world of Kaikadi community. It also makes us to meditate with the problem occurred with this community. The narrator also expects the educated people to realize the marginal world of Kaikadi community.
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