

Dreams turned into Ashes: An Analysis of the Dreadful event of Kilvenmani through the Lens of Meena Kandasamy's novel "The Gypsy Goddess".

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Abstract--

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to analyse the socio-political scenario behind the massacre of Dalits in India. The non-fictional work of Meena Kandasamy, "The Gypsy Goddess" has documented the massacre of forty-four Dalit labours in the village of Kilvenmani on 1968 in Tamil Nadu, India. This novel illustrates the act of cruelty and misogyny of the upper caste landlords who brutally suppress the low caste agricultural labours by the act of communal violence and victim-blaming. This notion of colonisation is briefly discussed by the author in the novel. The study seeks to dismantle the idea of colonial thinking and behaving and focus on generating discussion on the aspects of de-coloniality.

Methodology: The study uses a qualitative approach to the case study. The study also focuses on the judicial handlings along with the historiography of Kilvenmani massacre and many similar massacres that took place in India

Main Findings: The main objective of the study is to analyse the trauma behind the massacre of Kilvenmani and compare and contrast with other similar massacres in the name of caste that took place in the notion attaining dominance.

Application of the study: The study aims to bring out the ethnic concern by retelling the trauma behind the massacre of Kilvenmani and other similar massacres. It also interrogates the humanitarian crisis faced by the Dalits in India are often threatened by internal political conflicts.

Key Words--(Discrimination, Decoloniality, Communal violence, Kilvenmani massacre, The Gypsy Goddess)

I. INTRODUCTION

The modern Dalit literature is led by an ideology, determined to invent and invest in the Dalit literary movement which is born out of humiliation and sacrifice. The human rights organization of Amnesty International India had documented almost 721 alleged incidents against Dalits in 2018 which include lynching, rape, massacres and murder. The organization has recorded 218 as alleged hate crimes, with Dalits being the victim in 142 cases and with 57 cases last year, Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest number of such incidents for last three year. It was followed by Gujarat with 22 cases, Rajasthan with 18, Tamil Nadu with 16 and Bihar with 14 cases. The report also

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includes 97 incidents of assault and 87 killings in 2018. The modern Dalit writers aim to unveil the anguish of the depressed class by retelling the past by sharing their own life experience. The purpose of the study is to analyse the socio-political scenario behind the massacre of Dalits in India. The non-fictional work of Meena Kandasamy, “The Gypsy Goddess” has documented the massacre of forty-four Dalit labours in the village of Kilvenmani on 1968 in Tamil Nadu, India. This novel illustrates the act of cruelty and misogyny of the upper caste landlords who brutally suppress the low caste agricultural labours by the act of communal violence and victim-blaming. This notion of colonisation is briefly discussed by the author in the novel. The study seeks to dismantle the idea of colonial thinking and behaving. Moreover, the study further focuses on generating discussion on the aspects of de-coloniality. The study uses a qualitative approach to the case study.

1.1 About the Author:

M.N Wankhede(1992) asserts that “The day of irresponsible writers is over”. He proclaims that “The Dalit literary movement was to protect the Indian democracy from falling into the clutches of tradition and backwardness again”(96-99). He also states that Dalit writer must write with social consciousness by eliminating the style of romanticizing the subject matter rather implement the Dalit experience through bold philosophical ideas. So, being a Dalit writer one should not focus on getting accolades, but be a herald in the revolutionary literature by being a responsible writer” (p.317). One such prolific writer is Meena Kandaswamy. She is a fanatical poet, fervent fiction writer, an avid translator and the zealous activist. She was born on 1984 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. She was an eminent scholar who was keen on the study of social- linguistics and also acquired a PhD in it from Anna University Chennai. Her passion for writing poetry made her join the University of Iowa. Later she moved to Canterbury and joined the University of Kent and become a fellow of Charles Wallace Indian Trust. Her first book which was a collection of poems, “Touch”, was published in 2006 followed by another collection of poems called “Ms Militancy” in the year 2010. These two poems gained her superfluous popularity as well as criticism. Even some critiques termed the poetess as a controversial writer just because she adopted a unique form in retelling the myths of Hindusim in the feminist perspective and she also espoused the anti-caste approach in her poems. Her voice in the poem created a sense of legitimacy and authority in expressing her incredulity over the patriarchal myth and also over the age-old practice of caste-based oppression. Through her poems, she articulated the feminist viewpoint in an assertive language. Her poems brought her both fame and criticism. She won prizes in all-India poetry competitions. Later her poems got published in various journals, including The Little Magazine of south Asia, Kavya Bharati of SCILET, and Indian Horizons by Indian council for cultural relations, Muse India and also in the Quarterly Literary Review of Singapore.

Meena was one of the editors of bi-monthly English magazine called “The Dalit”. She gave voice to the struggles of Dalits and often condemned the practice of caste in her writing. She was inspired by the works of Dalit activist, writer and scholar Thol. Thirumavalavan the leader of the *VidudalaiChiruthaigalKatchi* also known as *Freedom Dalit Panther Party* was a National party whose aim is to uplift the Dalits all over Tamil Nadu. Meena translated the writings and speeches of Thol. Thirumavalavan into English and contributed for the book “Talisman: the Extreme Emotions of Dalit Liberation” was published in the year 2003. She also worked alongside with the

Tamil Eelam poet Kasi Anandan a famous Tamil diaspora and translated his fables and poetry into English. he was a great inspiration for Meena to become a poet

Kandasamy always regarded her writing as a progression and identified it with her identity: her “womanness, Tamilness and low/ outcasteness”, and she is proud about it. Meena Kandasamy’s two poems “Touch” and “Ms Militancy”, gained more prominence as well as criticism. She was labelled as an angry poetess because her writings had a huge dose of rage to it. Some even condemned her poems as bad English which is not appealing for the readers. Notwithstanding this fact, Meena resisted all this criticism by accepting the fact that she is an angry young writer who is a woman, she even insisted that the world needs more of her kind. When men get angry they are considered as hard workers, some savvy angry men even join the politics and let that anger fizzle out however the Indian society will not allow the angry young women to exist they will be soon labelled as hysterics or crazy. She condemns the social conditioning of India which had even restricted women to let out a simple reaction of anger towards oppressing. In order to keep that fire of anger burning within her, she decided to write her first novel.

1.2. Her First Novel “The Gypsy Goddess”:

In the year 2014, she wrote non-fiction work, “The Gypsy Goddess” which re-ascertain the voice of the voiceless Dalit peasants in the district of Tanjore(Thanjavur). This novel was nominated in the independent newspaper’s debut of the year 2014 and was also short-listed as well as longlisted for several awards. The DSC Prize for South Asian literature was given to this novel. It also received the International Dylan Thomas prize from Swansea University and acknowledged by the Tata literature live first book award. The novel has been translated into so many languages such as German, Dutch, and French. The novel “The Gypsy Goddess” stands one among the best novels because the author had offered a bold perspective on the relationship between power and poverty, the tension between the have’s and the have-not is documented in an unusual style which makes the novel stand out to be the best among all the novels of recent times. The novel recorded the history of the oppressed class who are the exploited sections of Indian society. The novel is a documentation of the actual dreadful massacre of Kilvinmani. On 25th December 1968, the powerful landlords in the village Kilvenmani killed 44 people including five men, 16 women, and 23 children. The victims were Dalits workers on the fields of these landlords. In 1968, influenced by CPI (M), joined to form a union to seek better working conditions and the rise of wages. To mark their gratification and union the paddy field workers hoisted red flags in their villages in support of the communist party who supported them, which eventually annoyed their landlords. Soon things turned violent, at midnight around 10 pm, the landlords and their henchmen came surrounded the huts of the Dalit labourers. First, they destroyed all routes of escape and set fire to all the huts nearby them. Some were even shot dead whereas many were burnt alive. Even though this dreadful massacre shooked the whole country the case was closed due to lack of evidence. Meena Kandasamy wants to immortalise all the people who died in this dreadful attack so she dedicated herself to collect all the authentic information regarding this brutal massacre. She also points out in her novel that the Dalit labourers in Kilvenmani continue to face discrimination and exclusion in the form of violence and bloodshed, even though the law and the government policies in India provide them with firm protection. Meena in her novel unveiled that these

law of protection are not faithfully implemented by the local authorities and police as well. This attitude of negligence was not only shown in the case of Kilvenmai but it is common to all the similar cases of Dalit massacre. There were so many violent incidents against the Dalit all over India till this day.

II. A LONG HISTORY OF SILENCE

The atrocities against the Dalits had become a day to day event in India because it does not treat the minorities of its own population justly. Their sufferings had been silenced by an iron fist of the dominating castes. Lynching, murdering and raping assaulting of these downtrodden people become a casual event. The justice is either denied or drawn out to the Dalits, social justice is barely practised. Although the majority of the educated population believes that there is no caste system in practice, yet there are still so many incidents happening against the Dalits still now. This case study will sketch out the similarities in all the taken cases for study One such dreadful even in recent times is the attack on the Village of Ponparappi in Tamil Nadu, India.

2.1. Case:1

Caste discrimination and communal violence have become an important element in the Politics of Contemporary Tamil Nadu and Ponparappi stands as a perfect diagram of the palpable crime against the Dalits in modern India. On April 15, 2019, Ponparappi village in Ariyalur district of Tamil Nadu was attacked by the upper caste mob during the polling day and destroyed the residential area belonged to the Dalits. The mob attacked the Dalits belonging to all the age and left the village inhabited to live. This dreadful incident in the present reminds one of the past Kilvenmani.

2.2. Case: 2

On 1985 the Massacre of Karamchedu, Andhra Pradesh shooked the consciousness of the whole nation. The village of Karamchedu is located 7 km off from Chirala in Prakasam District of Andhra Pradesh State, India. On July 17 the Madigas of the village, six men were killed and three girls were raped and assaulted at the same time, the act brutality had not captured by the figures of casualties. Kathi Padma Rao recalls this dreadful incident on its 26th remembrance on 2011 says, Caste domination ruled the village of Karamchedu. The upper caste Kammas owned several acres of land and mala and madigas (Dalit communities) toiled their lands. These Kamma landlords often ill-treated, humiliated as well as used violent attacks on these labourers. On July 16th 1985, the village of Karamchedu was raided by the Kammas. They drove all the Madigan's youngsters into the open field and attacked them violently. They chased and hunted the Madigas for 7 km and attacked them. Meanwhile, they also raped women in the village and violently assaulted them. Justice was delayed for the case of Karamchedu (Rao Kathi, 2011).

2.3 Case:3

On 1990 in Tsundur, Andhra Pradesh, a young Dalit graduate was beaten up after his feet unintentionally touched a Reddy man in a Cinema hall, which eventually led the Dalits of Tsundur village in Guntur district supported their youth. Irked by this, the dominant caste of the village massacred 13 Dalits who belong to the same village to seek vengeance for their attitude. This act of cruelty was a well-planned attack report Jonathan (2013), the Dalits in Tsundur were dead due to the deadly attack by the upper caste mob. They even lynched some of the Dalits and stuffed their bodies inside the gunny bags. Some were even killed by police open firing in the village but justice was prevaricated for them. (The Hindu, 2013)

2.4 Case:4

On 1996, 21 Dalits were butchered by the upper caste gangster in Bathani Tola, Bhojpur, Bihar. Among them, one man, eleven women, six children, and three infants, were deliberately singled out by the attackers and took their lives mercilessly. More than 60 members of the private hoodlum of upper caste in Bihar set fire to 21 houses in the village. The reason behind these heinous attacks was the Dalit agricultural labourers asked for extra wages with the support of Communist party India. The communist party reports that the attack carnage took place for 3 hours but the police couldn't come on time (communist party of India, 2018). The victims report that it was an organised communal massacre and the terrible nature of the caste massacre had horrified the nation and the international community. The killings went on for more than two hours from 2 p.m. on that day. There were three police pickets within a range of one kilometre, including one in the village itself, but no action was taken to prevent the crime (The Hindu, 2012).

2.5 Case:5

On July 5, 2013, a Dalit boy married an upper-caste girl which triggered the annoyance of the upper caste and led to the torching of 296 huts belonged to the Dalits of Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu recalls Christian Chinnappan. (Feminism in India, 2019). The judicial tardiness is the response to the crime against upper caste in all these cases. When it comes to the administration of justice the Dalits are always discriminated. First, they are silenced second they are also accused. Meena Kandasamy in her novel has addressed these issues of Kilvenmai in her own style by documenting this tragedy in an atypical lucid and haunting memory.

It is evident that even now in this modern era caste-based cruelty takes place every now and then. According to the National Crime Record Bureau India, the crime rate are high but the conviction rates are very low says Theja Ram (2019). For instance in Andhra Pradesh there 9,588 cases are registered but only 25 cases appeared in the limelight for conviction it is a rate of 0.26% only. All the cases are against the Dalits, these cases are either overlooked or completely rejected (News 18, 2016). It is obvious that justice is not only delayed but it is completely rejected for Dalit people.

III. THE NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED BY THE AUTHOR

The history of mankind always represents the man as a superior being who had triumph, power and dominance over all the living being in the whole world but history had failed to elaborate his misdeeds and the silenced memories which was endured by others. This silenced memory is never brought into the limelight. So the author narrates the tragic events of Kilvenmani alongside the history of Tamil Nadu itself to trace the record of this hidden massacre. The author narrates the novel in a sarcastic tone saying “most people are tired of history and also tired of history repeating itself”(Kandasamy,2014,p.14). In today's world, social exclusion and segregation are still ubiquitous. Significantly this social system becomes highly resistant to change and transform from its old social order though it calls itself a modern society which is free from all the conservative school of thought. This novel does not explore into the inner worlds of characters or it posses an actual protagonist because the author senses a robust desire to deliver the story of Kilvenmain to the present generation in the chicest way possible, like old wine in a new skin. So she adopts the modern way of storytelling. She explains why she wants to deliver her notion derisively, “I perform these narratives gimmicks to amuse myself”(Kandasamy 28). By saying so, the author challenges the reader that she could launch into an enumerative explanatory list of tricks which are commonly employed to tell any story in the magic realism mode, instead she rejects that particular mode of writing because she wants the reader to trot back to realism in the reality while they read it. She also calls her narrative as degenerate narratives which mirrors the facts and facts only in a fictional manner. Though she writes in a fragmented form, she continues to seize the attention of her readers by explaining the whole situation of Kilvenmani and also by making them feel responsible for the misery faced by the people of Kilvenmani.Meena compares her novel with western literature(Kandasamy 32).Ironically enough, by rejecting her novel as a postmodernist novel she makes it a postmodern novel, as the novel through its narrative technique and style aptly proves it.Kandasamy uses the postmodern technique to expose the presence of such political horrors at the grass-root level in rural India. The author wanted to name the novel “1968” to retell the history of the dreadful massacre of Kilvenmani and also to maintain a rational encounter of reality that is reflected in all her narration. But later she named it as “The Gypssy Goddess”(Kurathi Amman) to maintain the curiosity of the readers(Kandasamy 41).

3.1. Iconoclastic Narrative Voice:

Kandasamy used an iconoclastic narrative voice in the novel. The iconoclastic narrative voice is used to let lose the conventional dogma of writing. This narrative voice is used to comment on the most accepted belief in the world with the hint of subtitle satire to it. It also refers to an unorthodox form of writing. It is to be noted that an iconoclastic approach is used in all forms of arts to create new genres and new style by avoiding the conventional way of writing. The author uses powerful idiomatic phrases which are used to criticize the old school of narratives. For instance, she starts her narrative by saying “our deities live the happily- ever- after fairy tale while we drift around with the poetry and politics to numb and dissolve our pain”. The author here ridicules the post-modern writers because the reality is often hidden to deliver an aesthetic sense in the postmodern writings.

3.2. The Technique of the Stream of Consciousness:

Kandasamy also uses the technique of the stream of consciousness to record all the adverse events in the novel. She channelizes the multitudinous thoughts and feelings into an uninterrupted flow of consciousness by delivering it in the mode of objective description. As the novel does not have a protagonist, the author herself describes all the associative leaps in her novel with the special form of interior monologue. She records the condition of untouchables who live in the outskirts of the city 'Cheri'. She explains, that they do not own a foothold of land, that they are mired in debt, they had lost their young to starvation and their elderly to diseased because of the insufficient food and medicine(Kandasamy, 84). As she strongly believes that history has a role in the plight of common man's struggle so she stresses the importance of supporting the 'proletarian struggle'. She observes that history in the textbooks will not teach about the lives and the daily struggle of these people or the lament of petty-bourgeois writers. But we must learn history because history will set us free, a history that we can harvest(Kandasamy 85). Kandasamy recalls the Kalappal Agreement and Mannargudi agreement signed on 25th December 1944. The two consecutive victories of the working people rallied around the Communist. Which lead to secured holiday for the agricultural labourers who work from sunrise to sunset(Kandasamy 87). She also reminds the rule of Kamarasar and also how he was overthrown out of power because of Famine and salvation. She indicates how cotton mills, rubber plantation, paper mills, rice mills, sugar mills textile mills were closed and left twenty thousand weavers jobless and bought absolute penury to the people(Kandasamy 91). The author ironically states that the political atmosphere of Tamil Nadu now and then. She seizes the followers of the Dravidian ideology for making no attempts to give uncorrupted rule in Tamil Nadu so far.

IV. SOCIO-POLITICAL SCENARIO OF KILVENMANI

Meena Kandasamy describes the most terrible condition of the Dalits in the Tanjore district. She describes that the landlord builds a shelter for their cows but they do not care about these people who are huddled under a coverlet of the night sky because they are considered as 'untouchables'. These greedy landlords do not mind killing these poor peasants for their own benefits she records that, three men have died in the farms because of the poisonous effects of spraying polydol. Though it was proven in the medical reports the landlords did not mind to provide compensation to the families of these victims These people were swindled in the name of God, religion and caste for centuries, and now they are ripped off thoroughly in the name of growth and development in this new era because they are discriminated on every grounds(Kandasamy 93). The condition of the oppressed 'untouchable' caste is even worst. The majority of them were working as a lower caste peasant have no security for their life and they even have no rights to any type of social justice. In the middle of these atrocities, the communist party proclaimed to create a better life for the entire world tomorrow they also declared to eradicate oppression. So the people of Nagapattinam district adorned the 'red flag' in their houses(Kandasamy 96) which made the socio-political scenario of kilvenmani chaotic as it evoked the annoyance of the upper caste landlords.

4.1. The Notion of De-coloniality in the Socio-Political Setup of Kilvenmani:

The Kilvenmani incident shooked the entire nation because it is considered to be the most constructed atrocity against the Dalits of India. This incident questioned the national integrity in various different levels as the caste politics played a vital role in exposing and establishing power autonomy. The reason behind this political murder is to teach the parents a lesson for raising their voice for extra wages and week off. Meena brings before the readers, the voice of the common peasants who are threatened by the landlords, “He went wild. He promised to burn our village and kill our people and wanted to teach us a lesson. He wanted us to go hungry so that we would be forced to beg food. He ordered that anybody from our village should not be given a job. We starved. The landlords did not give us work. They did not give us loans. It was complete social boycott”(Kandasamy108-109). The author strongly condemns the social injustice and torture and starvation which was forced upon the poor peasants of the village. She does not want her readers to feel sorry rather she wanted to recreate the sense of responsibility and awareness in their minds. MeenaKandasamy reminds her readers, that the history books have recorded Periyar’s Self Respect Movement in great detail and even the anti- God activities and anti-Hindi movement find mention but they all left behind the incident of Kelvinmani in shrouded silence. The people of Kilvenmani decided to resist the landlord’s threat. They continued to strive for their demand. On 15th on December the Paddy Producers Association declared the public threats and warnings saying, “ ten days deadline to Kilvenmanu to reform itself and give up the red flag and also to pay rupees 250 as a fine for their absence in the paddy field. But the people were not amused” (Kandasamy 115). But the people of Kilvenmani were very determined not to heed to the landlords because they knew that their life will not change if they give in to the coercion. They were very well aware of the caste feudalism which uprooted centuries ago so they encouraged each other to be brave for they believed that “Oppression must be met with transgression” and “transgression will be met with more oppression”(Kandasamy 120).

4.2. The Dogma of “Untouchability” :

Meena Kandasamy denotes that the practice of untouchability and slavery is practised hand in hand by the upper castes of society. She says that “ the system of slavery in these parts has its own hate- list: latecomers, talk-backers, work- shirkers. This system of slavery believed discipline and punishment and immediate enforcement”(Kandasamy 122). Because through the Paddy Producers Association The labourers were not fully benefited, because they just were just promoted from being bonded labourers to being highly exploited daily wage labourers. The people of Kilvenmani were continuously tortured so they wrote a letter to the CM of Tamil Nadu seeking protection from the havoc that was being wreaked by the Paddy Producers Association. Learning this the landlords also wrote a letter to the CM of Tamil Nadu for extra protection the police supported the rich Landlords and followed their orders. Eventually, the landlords bought henchmen from the neighbouring village to attack the people of Irinjiyur and Kilvenmani. At first, the open fire was shot on the people of Kilvemani. The people rushed everyone was to hide from the attack of the henchmen.They burned all the huts in the vicinity. Many of them were women and children and some old men who sought protection in a hut were also burnt down.

Kandasamy records the dreadful day as “Battleground” because it was a battle of life or death for the people of Kilvenmani. The henchmen set fire to the huts with people alive inside knowing there are children, women and old helpless people. They locked the door outside so they could not escape. In desperation, women threw away

her one-year-old child was caught by the henchmen chopped into pieces and thrown back inside the burning hut (Kandasamy 164). but these descriptions came much later. In the article titled 'The Gentlemen Killers of Kilvenmani' reveals that "the burning hut were surrounded by bloodthirsty murderers with lethal weapons, of two children thrown out from the burning hut in the hope that they would survive, but thrown back into the fire by the arsonists, of six people who managed to come out of the burning hut, two of whom were caught, hacked to death and thrown into the fire, of the fire systematically stoked with hay and dry wood, of the leading lights of the PPA, who led the rioting, going straight to the police station and demanding protection against reprisals and getting it. They were arrested much later after the matter had got out of the hands of the local police"(Sriraman, 1973). The women of Kilvenmani reflect the valour of Dalit women in large. They were not meek but they were bold. They were not afraid rather they were valiant through their plight they moreover reminded as an unsung hero of Kilvenmani.

V. THE WOMEN OF KILVENMANI AND THEIR PLIGHT

Kandasamy describes women as the most strong and intriguing figures in the novel. They take part in the protest, they die an untimely death by drinking polydol as a sign of protest. Sometimes they kidnapped and raped brutally, they are punished equally like men of the village. She further says "The women demanded daily wages instead of weekly wages, they demanded to take breaks to attend to their infants in the sari cradle. As a result, they were arrested including with their infants but they were not afraid of being hurt they can outweep the wailing police sirens. But the women are adept to all of this: for the last three years, they have been punished by the landlords (Kandasamy 75-76). Sometimes they are stripped naked and sometimes they are tied to the trees and whipped in front of the whole village. The police also punished them by making them kneel and walk a few miles on their knees until they have no choice but to crawl. The women of kilvenmani are bold beyond the bruised skin and bleeding knee. These Women were always stripped bare by the landlords as well as by the police before they were beaten black and blue. These helpless women shrivelled in shame. But the ones who died from the beatings were silently buried and those who survived swallowed their shame like a poison. She even records that the women of Kilvenmani are paid less when compared to their male counterparts (Kandasamy 114). The women of kilvenmani are also strong followers of the communist party. They say, " if the men wanted their mother and wives and sisters and daughters to live with some honour and dignity, they should stand by the communist and continue to fight against these rowdy landlords" (Kandasamy 117). The author appreciates these brave women of Kilvenmani by saying, "these shows they are not lesser than men of Kilvenmani. The women spoke in outlines, under the condition of animosity, buying into the belief that their trust would not be broken and hoping I would be spared the horrors they had faced"(Kandasamy 142). Even after the dreadful incident women of the village continued to show their valour. The author describes, "Thangamma had to survive for the sake of the village. She had to go to the hospital to look after her husband. but whenever the journalist sauntered into Kilvenmani she also joined with the others and witnessed the massacre. Some times they lived a life of a nightmare and even traumatized beyond recovery(Kandasamy 205).

VI. VICTIM BLAMING

After the brutal incident, the whole village was terrorized. The author explains the horror-stricken situation on the title “Burial Ground”. She explains “Life, weighed down by death. So many women of the village have been wiped out there is no one to sing the dirge of death”(Kandasamy 195). They were told that the government is willing to grant compensation but the villagers said: “ We did not want compensation, we wanted justice”(Kandasamy 213). While the Chief minister of those times Annadhurai strongly registered his condemnation as he said: “ This incident is so savage and sadistic that words falter and fail to express my agony and anguish”. He added, craning his neck: ‘people should forget this as they forget a feverish nightmare or a flashing of lighting”(Kandasamy 216). The people were marvelled at his unceasing alliterative notion which asked to forget the dreadful event. Soon after the upper cast landlords took the rival procession to show their strength. They said, “ Pallan- Paraiyanpeasants were ungrateful dogs. They warned everybody to give up the dream that the sickle could find work after the landlords came to ruins” they added that “the world would witness a hundred kilvenmani”(Kandasamy 220). Even the police were on the side of the landlords were meticulous in their investigation. They do not want to offend the landlords so they recorded the deaths as accidents. They framed a case and accused the peasants of killing IrukkaiPakkirisami Pillai. The massacre was reduced to a connected arson case and the peasants were sent to jail. They muted the dying declaration of the survivor Palanivelu by projecting him as one of the accused in the murder of Pakkirisami Pillai. The poor peasants realized that justice becomes unattainable fruit for them.

6.1 The Discriminatory treatment of the Judiciary:

Justice was denied to the people of Kilvenmani on the ground of no evidence found against the accused landlords. There was so many evidence against the Landlords but they overlook the case and found it to be a baseless accusation as well as non-punishable offence. Even the media failed to bring the issue into the limelight the popular National newspaper The Hindu wrote: “42 Persons burnt alive in Thanjavur Village are “Harijans”(Gandhian term for Dalits) (The Hindu, 1968). The Indian Express said, “Kisan Feud Turns Violent, 42 burnt alive in Thanjavur” (The Indian Express,1968) Even Tamil Local newspaper Dinamani said, “Clashes between Kisans- 42 burnt alive” (Dinamani, 1968). Caste identity was used as a cover to hide all the atrocities that were meted out to the villagers of Kilvenmani. The author mocks the media, “like the newspaper that wrote that we had set fire to own huts, we know that the cinema (media) changes the truth: it takes our eyes by the arm and shows them around. It conceals and reveals”(Kandasamy 237). The prosecution did not accept to represent the poor untouchable peasants of Kilvenmani. The judiciary responded to the case of as “Kilvenmani massacre is an undeniable ugly truth, but it does not lend itself to clarity due to the various versions of the truth. The police, for instance, claimed that it came to know of the incident only the morning after, this, despite the fact that there was a police station barely three miles from Venmani. Discrepancies arise in the basic details of the case itself, like the number of people killed. While police records and post mortem reports fix the number at 42, the villagers and the union that took a census of the survivors the next day pin the number at 44 – 45 men, 20 women and 19 children (Krishnakumar, 2005). The tardy of verdict still remained for the people of Kilvenmani.

6.2. The Most awaited Verdict:

The author narrates the first verdict through the voice of people of Kelvinmani, “the court rejected all our testimonies they found everything we said to be a fault, unreliable, contradictory, smacking of falsehood, lacking in credibility and an afterthought, so they refused to accept it”(Kandasamy 254). They were thwarted to know that “they could capable of rage but incapable of revenge. We learnt it from the high court”. The judge said: It is truly regrettable that the forty-two agricultural labourers who sought refuge in the hut of PandariRamayyalot their lives because that house was set on fire. However, it is a little comforting to learn that the accused did not have any intention to burn them to death”(Kandasamy,255).The government came forward to give compensation but the people of Kilvenmani refused to say: “We told that we did not want compensation. We also did not want their justice”(Kandasamy,256).

Meena Kandasamy explains Caste, “caste is about having one set of people to read books, one set of people to be crooked, one set of people to misbehave, one set of people to slave”(Kandasamy, 263). The act of butchering social justice has been made common until now. Caste plays a vital role even in modern India. Incidents like Kilvenmani still takes places in many parts of the country.

VII. CONCLUSION

The author traces a history of feudal torture to bring out awareness about the dreadful incident of Kelvinmani. The authors trace the history of feudal torture to bring awareness to her readers. Through this novel the author exposes the situation of all the Dalits living in India. Meena Kandasamy makes her readers realize that the history of subjugation is not only hidden but it is erased as well. Through this novel she awakens the senses of the readers and also makes them responsible by making them understand that “The Dalit lives matter”. She gave every minute details to strengthen her argument with a realistic note to it. In the Novel the Voice of the author was not meek and gentle but it was more potent with a commanding tone. The reader is not spared for being passive. It is evident through the voice of the author in the novel that, the true democracy has not been achieved still. In this novel all the poor Dalit peasants ask and dream is to fill their stomach with enough food and also to live with dignity. But the iron grip of caste distinction and caste violence is so powerful that it can only provide violence rather than showing a little gesture of humanity. The caste system and caste-based deprivation is not the newer form of oppression and exploitation that had rejuvenated after the colonial oppression and become an everyday discourse and interaction of Dalits in India to this day. It was an age-old practised which allows subjugating one sector of people to starve for the other to gain dominance. It continued to have a cumulative and longstanding impact on the Dalits until now consumed the livelihood of the Dalit people.

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