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TRANSLATION OF *KUSUAMABALE*: CASTE, GENDER, COLLOQUIAL AND DALIT
SENSIBILITY

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the translation of *Kusuabale* by Devanoor Mahadeva and challenges to translate with the issues of Caste, Gender, Colloquial and Dalit Sensibility. The novel exposes the nativity of Chamaraja Nagar and Nanjungud language and questions the existed hegemonic linguistic barrier of colloquial. Looking at these aspects with social problems and the process of translation is an important argument in the paper. The paper also uses the other contemporary texts *Samskara* by Ananth Murthy, *Chomanadudi* by Shivarama Karantha. Devanoor Mahadeva, being a Dalit writer succeeds in narrating the social issues like caste, gender, and poverty throughout his writings.

Key Words: Translation, Caste, Gender, Colloquial and Dalit Sensibility

Dalit literature in Indian, after the many social movements from Savitri Bai, Jyothi Bai Pule and Ambedkar, has emerged as an important literary discourse in Indian writing in English and in many vernacular languages. Many Dalit writers write in particularity in regional languages predominantly from the Marathi language as very much influenced by Ambedkar movement and writings to Hindi, Panjabi, Kannada, Tamil and Telugu, and other languages. These writings not only represent the Dalit writings but equally enrich Indian writing. Some of the recent writings are writing in English which is good development of the present scenario. Many of these writers are first-generation writers and write from point of view of protest and keep their identity stronger. Dalit writings by projecting the issues of poverty, discrimination of caste, and gender, it also develops its own aesthetics. Sharanakumar Limbale also critically discusses on Dalit aesthetics in his book *Dalit Aesthetics*.

There is always a comparison between Black Writing / Afro-American writing in the present research. Both writings have discussed hegemonic dominance by powerful people. But there is a noticeable difference between these two writings: Afro-American writing debates and narrates on the discrimination based on colour and colonial imperialism/ white supremacy, whereas Dalit writing exhibits the discrimination based on the caste which is created by upper caste people. Both of them express the suppression and oppression by politically, socially and hegemonically discrimination by two kinds of people: discrimination by the same society noticeable in the caste system, discrimination by the other society noticeable in the apartheid system. Thus the comparison between Dalit and black writing is a meaningful exercise.

The influence of Kannada Dalit writing rooted in the Ambedkar writings and movement, Afro-American writings and movement, Black Panther movement and particularly Marxism in India. In Kannada having

influenced by these, Devanoor Mahadeva, Siddalingaiah, Aravinda Malagatti, and many others write in the Kannada language. Devanoor Mahadeva has written very less compare to his contemporary writers. But he has written in such a way which remains forever His writings include short stories and novels and essays. Kusumabale is his known novel which confronts the issues of caste and gender in a lucid but strongly colouring with colloquial.

Susan Denial, freelance writer has taken up the challenge of translating the *Kusumabale* from Kannada to English. She writes in the introduction that it is a great challenge I took up to translate the epoch text of a Dalit novel. Prithvi Datta Chandra Shobhi in his article published in Indian Express Newspaper writes on the poetic capacity of Devanoor Mahadeva:

The publication of the Kannada classic Kusumabale was a milestone in Kannada literary history. By the time it was written in 1984, the Dalit-Bandaya (or Rebellion) school had established a robust presence. Its author, Devanoor Mahadeva, had already been recognised as the most talented Kannada writer of his generation, despite his modest literary output. Along with other early Dalit writers, Mahadeva had made Shudras and Dalit life worlds appropriate subject matters for literary exploration and had fashioned a new literary language to describe them. Yet, despite emerging from within the mainstream Dalit literature, Kusumabale is a major departure, as it constituted a challenge to the form of the novel itself. In this slender novel, Mahadeva attempted to imagine the political through the aesthetic, thus reversing the basic tenet of Dalit literary imagination. (The Indian Express, 02)

Prithvi Datta Chandra Shobhi reaccredits the writings of Mahadeva and his Dalit literary imagination. He also appreciates the writing capacity of the writer and his power to examine the caste-based society prevailed during the nineteen eighteen.

Translation is a challenging task as this text denotes the caste, gender, and Dalit aesthetics together. Susan Danial succeeds in bringing all together without balancing the sensible issues. She has retained the poetic aesthetics of Mahadeva in her translation without fail. She gives justice to as Prithvi Datta Chandra Shobhi finds it innovative:

Mahadeva's the most significant, and perhaps most controversial innovation, was to use the spoken language of the Chamarajanagar region, not just for dialogues, but for narrative purpose as well. This move alienated even Kannada litterateurs, some of whom demanded that Kusumabale be translated into Kannada. In dismissing Mahadeva's linguistic innovation, his critics missed how a regional dialect had been transformed into a literary language.

These narratives of the novel have encouraged many young writers in the Kannada language not only Dalit but many non-Dalit young writes have followed the methods used by Devanoor Mahadeva which can be witnessed in the recent writing of Kannada novels.

Mahadeva introduces the strong and new narrative techniques in his writings: the novel begins with a discussion between lamp and mat in the night. He personifies the lamp and mat which also creates interest in the reader. This novel introduces the four-generation family: Akkamahadevamma and her struggle for existence in the casted based society. But she established herself as a metaphor for a strong woman. But the next two generations: Yada and Somappa are weak characters as they do not much identity in the novel. The process of weakening the male characters proves the democratization of feministic approaches. But Somappa's daughter Kusumabale emerges as important characters and the novel titles as Kusumabale

Susan Daniel succeeds in translating the text. She is a sensitive translator. The below piece of writing shows the quality of the translation of Daniel:

Nervously holding down the live cockroach she caught at a favourable moment, the thumb of her left hand pressing down on it, she squirted the life out of it, saying,

'Ah this life, go to that life' and so on three times

All of her body in one mind and intent

And past those clenched blackened teeth again.

'Ah this life, go to that life' and so on three more times

And after that pulling herself erect.

she gave of her offerings to the Goddess. (29)

The blending of the colloquial language and keeping it in English is a challenging job one can do. But Daniel powerfully establishes herself as an important translator by this text.

. Kusuamabale as a protagonist, though she is an upper-caste woman, equally suffers in the clutches of the caste. She has to lose her lover who is a Dalit and suffers in the family and society. She is a metaphor who loses her identity in the caste-based society. The gender issue is strongly discussed throughout the novel, in the four characters: Akkamahadevamma, Kusumabale and Yada, Somappa. But Chenna remains as a victim of both caste and gender in the novel. Dalit identity is fractured and disturbed in the novel. Devanoor Mahadeva evaluates this with the Dalit sensibility.

Thus this novel emerges as an important text of Dalit writing in Kannada and Indian writing. As a text of translated, it stands in the world-class. Devanoor thrives in bringing the issue of both caste and gender successfully. He also uses new narrative techniques in narrating the novel. His Dalit sensibility is more powerful in creating a Dalit aesthetic.

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