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Analysis of *Vanmam* in the Light of Mikhail Bakhtin's Theories

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Abstract:

Vanmam is a novel written by Bama. In Bakhtinian terms it is a critical utterance to the Hindu Caste Structure in India. The novel shows the drama of caste differences, instigation of enmity among lower castes in a fictional village of Kandampatti, Tamil Nadu. Bama was inspired to write this Novel based on a real situation of riots in a village of Tamil Nadu. It is very courageous to write about a vivid picture of reality of power politics, vote politics, divide and rule policies and oppressive norms of governance. It shows how women at the lowest periphery suffer the most. Mikhail Bakhtin and his theories pave a way of deconstructing the structure through dialogue, carnival and heteroglossia. The research paper is an attempt to unfold the layers of Dialogue in the novel and to see the hidden mechanism of oppression and subjugation in India. It helps to understand the outside forces that work to create disharmony and finds out ways of understanding the “others” in India.

Keywords: Bama, *Vanmam*, Bakhtin, Dialogism, Carnival, heteroglossia and Polyphony.

Introduction

Vanmam is a third book written by Bama who is Tamil Dalit writer. Her first work is her autobiographical novel *Karukku* (1992), which chronicles the life of a Dalit converted to Christianity in Tamil Nadu. Her second novel, *Sangati* (1994) is also autobiographical in nature and her third novel *Vanmam* (2008) focuses on the inter-caste rivalry within Dalit communities. Bama has become a celebrated writer. She has faced lot of criticism but yet there is a sense of admiration towards her writing.

Vanmam is a story of riots and violence among Dalit castes. She was inspired by the real-life events that took place in one of the villages of Tamil Nadu and she decided to write a novel based on it. She has faced lot of criticism for the story that she has dared to tell, but that did not concern her at all. Caste system penetrates to deepest and the lowest levels of the Structure of Hindu religion. Even among Shudras, there are groups of caste that consider themselves higher and other group of caste that are seen as lower. Though they both face discrimination from the upper three castes of Brahmin, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, they practice the same discrimination within the shudra fold as well. Those who themselves are damned, have desire to damn others. Those who themselves have faced atrocities, traumatize people below them. This is the very basic animalistic nature, present in humans and caste ideology play with the same. The desire to rule subalterns and to not allow inter-caste marriages are the two important lifelines for the caste-system to survive and prevail in India.

Most of the Dalit Novels, focus on the centrality of atrocities on Dalit by upper castes, *Vanmam* on the other hand focuses on the issue of caste rivalry in the lower-castes of India. It is an issue about which no Dalit writer talks about because it reveals the weaknesses of the Shudras themselves.

Vanmam deals with the animosity between two communities in the village of Kandampatti, Tamil Nadu, the one is Pallars (Hindu shudras) and Parayars (mostly christian converts): Eventhough the parayars are Christian convert their states of Dalithood does not annihilate. As Ambedkar has said,

...the change in the social status of the convert can be the result of a two fold change. There must be a change in the attitude of the Hindus. Secondly, there must be a change in the mentality of the convert. Status is a dual matter, a matter inter se between two persons and unless both move from their old position there can be no change (Ambedkar .470)

Thus, the mindset of the society does not change towards a particular person because of his/her conversion. It can change only when the upper as well as lower caste people together change their views on what is pure and impure, high and low.

Indian caste system is hierarchical and oppressive in nature and it gives powers to upper castes to dominate and exploit lower caste poor people. Thus, in Caste-based

Indian hegemonic social structure, Women, Dalits and Dalit women form the periphery of the structure. The lowest of the low that have the status of subaltern. The status of being a subordinate who is not the part of whole but the marginal, the other. Dalit women are at the receiving end of the antagonism from three structures: caste, class and patriarchy.

Mikhail Bakhtin and his theories

Mikhail Bakhtin, Philosopher of the twentieth Century, Russian in his native, lived through the most troubled times of civil wars and world wars in Russia. Bakhtin was arrested on the charge of corrupting the minds of young and was sent to Kustanai in Kazakhstan for six years. The importance of morality, thought, act, deed and art is seen throughout the works of Mikhail Bakhtin.

Bakhtin throughout his works is exploring the interface between a stasis imposed from above and a desire for change from below, between old and new, official and unofficial. As Bakhtin notes,

“Every age has its own norms and official speech and property, and every age has its own type of words and expression that are given as a signal to speak freely, to call things by their own names, without any mental restrictions and euphemisms... all people have enormous spheres of speech that have not been made public and are non-existent from the point of view of literary written language” (Bakhtin. Rabelais.212).

There are six works which are considered to be solely written by Bakhtin. They are 1. *Towards the Philosophy of Act* 2. *Art and Answerability* 3. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* 4. *Rabelais and His World* 5. *The Dialogic Imagination* 6. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Bakhtin wrote some of his works from his friends name like Medvedev and Voloshinov, but the writing style, the references and the footnotes give away the authorship of Bakhtin. The most significant work by Medvedev called *The Formal Method of literary Scholarship* is now attributed to Bakhtin. The two works of Voloshinov, one being *Marxism and the philosophy of the language*, which is one of the foundation book on the theory of language and another being *Freudianism: A Critical sketch* and Two of his articles: “*Beyond the social*” and *Discourse in life and discourse in art*” are also noted to be Bakhtin’s work.

His theories like “Self-Others”, “Art-Responsibility/Addressivity”, “Author-Hero”, “Ideologism”, “Polyphony”, “Dialogism”, “Carnival”, “Grotesque Realism”, “Parody”, “Novelistic discourse”, “Heteroglossia” and “Speech Genres” are derived from his full corpus of work.

All the texts of Bakhtin can be read at many levels, at same texts they are the scholar's own ideologue and at some level they are read from a particular political perspective and the voices keep having their meaning more enhanced and changed in Indian context, Bakhtin can be read as a critic and philosopher whose theories, can work as tool to minutely disrupt the monological discourse of Brahmanism by introducing dialogue between the various communities of India. India is a heteroglot world in the sense that variety of regional language exist and they have a literary heritage of their own each region and culture has its own literature dominated by the Upper caste Male Chauvinism and where Women, Dalits and others are at periphery. The effort is to bring them in dialogue with the main Indian English literary structure, provide a space in the historical literary canons, in pedagogies and academia thereby and bring about change of perspectives.

Further we will learn and understand theories of Bakhtin and we will apply them as tools in the novel of *Vanmam*:

Heteroglossia in *Vanmam*:

Heteroglossia is a terminology used by Bakhtin in his essay *Discourse in the Novel*. Primarily Hetero- means many types of and glossia here means tongues and glossaries. Thus heteroglossia means coexistence of many glossaries of same language as well as different language. Many languages exist in a nation, and each language has different speech genres that used in daily everyday life or for some serious recreation of works of science, commerce or arts. Thus this variety is reflected in the twentieth century literature and this is called Heteroglossia.

The novel *Vanmam* was firstly written in Tamil by Bama, it is translated into English by Malini Sheshadri. It shows the interaction between two languages in the text. In the translated version the Tamil world and village is presented in English language which quite objectifies places of importance which would rather look unimportant in regional language. The translation has been authentic in capturing, the tone-mood and

rhythm of the Tamil original. Thus, as translation, Malini Sheshadri, makes a dexterous attempt to translate the Tamil. “It should be possible to let the people of Kandampatti speak in a strange tongue without losing the familiarity of their roots! (Bama X). The novel has various characters that speak differently in various tones and cadences which are pejorative, sarcastic, abusive and teasing.

Chronotope in *Vanmam*:

The concept of chronotope is explained in the essay “Forms of time and Chronotope in the novel”. It is a Greek word which literally means, “time-space...the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationship that is artistically expressed in literature.” (Bakhtin. Chronotope. 84). And in fundamental sense:

They are the organizing centers for the fundamental narrative events of the novel.

The chronotope is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied. It can be said without qualification that to them belongs the meaning that shapes narrative. (Bakhtin. TDI. 250)

In this first, restricted use of the term, it refers to particular combinations of time and space as they have resulted in historically manifested narrative forms. It is important to understand that it expresses the inseparability of space and time and it uses the imaginary talent of the reader to see the whole as a space in time. A number of examples are given, demonstrating how the term may be applied as a technical constituent of plot. It is a unit of analysis for studying texts according to the ratio and nature of the temporal and spatial categories representable.

Bakhtin defines Artistic Chronotope as follows:

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one, carefully thought out concrete whole. Time as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible, likewise space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope. (Bakhtin. TDI. 84)

Vanmam is set in a fictional town of Kandampatti, situated in Tamil Nadu. It is like a microcosm of a bigger world, it mirrors the whole nation, their nature, their prejudices and their emotion and the acts.

The introduction begins with a quotation by Mikhail Bakhtin: 'A context' is potentially unfinalized, it shows the aptness of analyzing Dalit literature from Bakhtin's point of view. Even the writer of the introduction, to *Vanmam*, R. Azhagarasan, fits to begin with quoting Bakhtin as he is so relevant in Indian context with his theories of polyphony, Heteroglossia and dialogism. Thus, the context of the action that takes place in *Vanmam* is unfinalized, meaning the milieu, the attitudes, the world keeps on growing, changing every minute, with every thought, word, every tone and every emotion.

The village of Kandampatti, the streets, chavady and fields belong to the space and the time of last decade of twentieth century, where the awakened Dalits have started educating their children. The last generation of uneducated serfs are in their fifties and the new generation educated Dalit youth, who have gone ahead to cities and have become graduates and have enlightened themselves. It is the time that this new generation does not look up to these landlords as Gods. As one of high caste Naicker says:

It's not as if we wanted them to progress. They are no longer respectful to us and no longer willing to serve us the way they used to. They speak rudely. If we tell them anything, they threaten to stop away from work. We have to depend on these fellows to get the work done in our fields. We can't step into the mud and filth ourselves, can we?..... It's not only the educated youngster nowadays even the elders among them don't give us respect. (Bama 19)

The Parayars have educated themselves, are slowly but steadily becoming more successful and they detest the practice of behaving like serfs which they thought was humiliating. They even stopped going to the landlords on the day of pongal to get a mere morsel of pongal from them. Parayars thought.

"What's there so special about you people? If you're here, we shouldn't laugh, is it? We shouldn't talk? This is a free country we will talk anywhere we like. We will laugh, we will play. And we will win." (18)

Thus, the parayars are converted Christians, Dalits in the status, the older generation works as labourers in Naicker's farms but the younger generation is educated, revolutionary and have readiness to bring change.

The place of Kandampati village is big and there are forest covered mountains that surround it. From east to west, the caste status steadily rises from Parayars, Pallars, Kakkalayar, Chakaliyars, Moopananar and Pannadis. On the western area, there are Thevars, Chittiars, Aasaris, Pillais, Nadars and Naickers. To the west, there are agricultural fields and they all belong to Upper-caste people.

Carnival in *Vanmam*

‘Carnival’ is one of Bakhtin’s most influential concepts, second only to ‘dialogic’. In one way it can be seen as yet another term for a social centrifugal force which opposes the centralizing imposition of the monologic word. It is the spirit to free oneself from Hierarchical Structure, leading to free and familiar contact of people, freedom of expression and equality prevailed through it. Carnival brings the sense of festival where the free spirit can bring about change and retaliation of centripetal forces of the society

In the novel, there is a sense of carnival in the beginning itself. Jayaraju is one such boy who converted and dedicated himself completely to church, he would dress up in trousers and shirts, he would never smoke beedis and cigarettes and he never like to attach himself to his community. He was kind of cut off from his own people while Saminathan liked to be a part of his community, so even though he wore pants and shirts in college, he would go to chavady wearing a lungi and sitting among people.

Saminathan, knows how to involve Jayaraju, among the youth and he decides to do something fruitful with his vacation. The young boys who are so full of energy and knowledge and a desire to bring change decide to create a club. They named it Kazhani Arts Troupe. Kazhani means fields. These young boys like to attach themselves to fields, to earth to crop and to life. They are more attached to the folk-culture and though they have been converted to Roman Catholics, they do not identify themselves with it. It is just a window to escape caste system for them, otherwise they are very much Paraiyar.

Saminathan encouraged Jayaraju to become the leader of the group as he was good with arts like singing songs and donation, as he was more disciplined than others. They all joined together and decided to celebrate Vaigasi festival by doing cultural programmes. So, they decided to put a play, an elocution, a dance competition, a song

competition, a debate on social scene and all such events. They also decided to plant neem trees in their streets and around.

“According to these plans, they started work in real earnest the very next day... The chavady took on a new beauty after receiving a coat of whitewash. To the light on the top of chavady they attached a multicoloured flags. A whole week before the big day, the entire village had got into a festive mood, lively, joyful and eagerly awaiting the event.” (41) The young boys filled the streets with exuberance and titled themselves as well. They performed dance and sang songs. Everybody laughed at funny dance done by some boys who were shaking and twitching their bodies. An old man sang a love song to which everybody was shocked to listen to the melodious tone. The young girls and women danced to Kummi, it's a traditional folk dance of Tamil women and danced till their hearts drenched. Fields and folk-culture are important motifs of carnival which are seen in *Vanmam*.

Dialogue of Enmity between Parayars and Pallars:

Dialogism is the interchange of thoughts, ideas, expressions and thematic knowledge within the text and between various texts. Dialogism is the principle through which word finds its meaning in the changing social chronotope; it is the principle on which the mind and the world relate to each other.

It is the key to open the structures and to let the margin journey towards the center through interchange of dialogic levels, responsibility of writer and Understanding of the reader. Every artistic activity has dialogical implications at various levels of mind, life, art, history and literature.

The concept of Dialogicality starts from words, utterance, and has impacted on interdialogicality of literary texts and criticism and readership, along with the readers responsibility of addressivity and understanding. The model can be applied to existence, language, novelty, history, and authoring. Thus, it is a theory derived from linguistics and having implications to language and then literature. It is a wide-ranging concept.

According to Bakhtin, language lives on dialogue and dialogic interaction and linguistics studies language itself but not the usage of it. Thus, for Bakhtin, the everyday usage of language is more important than linguistics of the same. Now we will look at the nature of dialogism in *Vanmam*, and its multi-layered meaning.

In the village of Kandanpatti two castes, Paryars and Pallars live close to each other with bitter enmity. There has been incident of one killing the men of another and mostly the flame of vengeance is ignited by the high-caste landlords-Naicker. “They are the ones who are plotting to make sure our two castes never unite. This has been going on for ten or twenty years now. In fact, even in your forefather’s time there has been this enmity. I don’t know how many lifetimes it will take for our two castes to come together as friends.” (12)

The Naickers are afraid that if the people of two castes come together and unite and then if all of them voted together then they could become the President of the Panchayat. “They thought all these years these people have been coming and standing before us with folded hands, ready to serve us; we mustn’t get to a situation where we have to bow before them, and so the Naickers made plans to destroy the unity between the Pallars and the Parayars. (15)

To make sure that the people of both the caste keep fighting with each other, one-time people of Pallar caste, came together and tried to kill. Mannangatti, who got free toddy from the shop, but it so turned out that Mannangatti was a strong man and so he killed the men of pallars instead and that is how enmity started.

The second incident is the killing of Marraasu. He watered the fields of Ranga Naicker and right next were the fields of Palanivelu Naicker. That field was watered by a Pallar named Karuppusamy. Both of them kept fighting about their turns to water the fields. At night, when Marraasu was drunk, Karuppusamy and he had an argument, in which they went ahead to hitting each other and in turn Karuppusamy took advantage and killed him. Pichamurthy who worked on another field nearby had seen this and tried to take it to police, but he was silenced with the threat that rather he would be blamed for the murder, so they dug up and buried him. Palanivelu, the Naicker, paid off the police and the matter were quieted off. Thus, Parayars felt that Pallars are against them.

Saminathan, the nephew of Marraasu always got angered thinking about the way his uncle died. He is the protagonist of the novel, who has just come to village after completing his college from the city. He thinks that “We should get ourselves an education, qualify as lawyers, and come back to put an end to this sort of injustice... If

we go on like this, believing in spirits and ghosts and demon, we can forget about any progress. (Bama 12)

This is the opening conflict of the novel where a new generation is trying to bring awareness about the power politics in the village. The low-caste young boys are very good at playing volleyball and Kabaddi. They are good at sports; teamwork and it also infuses brotherhood in them.

Dialogue between Naickers and Pallars:

Post celebration Anthony was filled with inner drivenness to resurrect a statue of Ambedkar in front of Bus stand. He involved himself in public causes and never hesitated to stand up for justice. (56)

Anthony gathered people and took permission of street head of Parayars as well as Pallars, united the two castes, got donations, and got a statue of Ambedkar from Madras for this he did not seek the support of the church, rather he sought support from all the lower caste people and they contributed to his dream. There were more women than men. "The Parayars and Pallars sat there happily, listening attentively to speeches. When the Ambedkar statue was unveiled, every one clapped, and the women made the traditional ululating sounds of celebration. The noise they made was enough to cause gooselumps in everyone." (Bama 60)

It was a terrific task and Anthony did it very well. He gave a speech which was very inspiring to people and intimidating to some.

Educate! Organize! Agitate! That was the great Ambedkar's magic slogan. We must all get an education. We should be aware of social realities. We must realize how society has marginalized us, discriminated against us. And, having realized that, we must unite and fight the injustice. We must not be afraid to fight because we are not goats..... we are lions! Only goats get slaughtered, isn't that so? We will stand firm. We shall strive together to see that justice prevails. This statue of our great leader, facing east with his arm raised... What is it telling us? Arise and face the new dawn. Don't remain docile. You have been born to rule, to live like human beings... that's what it says. Let us follow in the footsteps of the revolutionary leader Ambedkar. Let us follow in the footsteps of the revolutionary leader Ambedkar. We will make a new world. We will create an equitable society

free of caste. Today, this very hour, let us pledge ourselves to this task. Jai Bhim!
(Bama 61)

All the low-caste people were inspired by this speech and then Naickers started instigating Pallars saying that they live right beside you and that how can you tolerate them, at night:

“When the chakkiliya fellows are keeping their mouth shut. Why are you fellows joining with those Parayars and talking rubbish about getting rid of caste and things like that? Fellows who are scratching around for their next meal..... and they are grandly putting up Ambedker’s statue! Just because they’ve got a bit of an education they are doing all this drama!” (Bama 61)

This kind of dialogue changes the discourse of the people. The Authoritative discourse takes everything in charge and demolishes every small word voice or dialogue present in the world.

Change of discourse between Parayars and Pallars:

According to Bakhtin, novels should be stylistically three-dimensional, the change of discourse between the Pallars and parayars show that with the dimension of Naicker everything changes and It has maximum contact with the present and reality with all its openendedness.

One parayar women came to know about this and she says. You know that old saying, if a village is split into two, only the mischief-maker will celebrate. It’s very true. Instead of being sensible and cooperating, the Pallars and Parayars are confronting one another with weapons drawn. Naturally the other caste people are only too delighted to stand by and watch. (63)

The discourse of friendship between the two castes was evident when they resurrected the statue of Ambedkar and now the same was changing into enmity. The main reason was that the Pallars thought that they belong to Hindu-fold and Parayar belong to Christian fold so pallars became more attached to Naickers who use them to diminish Parayars because they were getting educated, more civilized had unity and did celebrations.

The small events that led to extreme violence, were the first is killing of Marraasu, uncle of Saminathan, second was bathing at the well of a Naicker named Sreenivasan Ayya, where a pallar Panchmalai Anna was a guard, who ended up beating an eighth-class boy. Throwing of stones during the evening programme. All this came to its height when Sevanu's son chinnappan, got a trashing for eating a mango from the orchard because he was hungry. He was only ten to twelve years old. Even birds and animals bite on mangoes and guava orchards, but a dalit child is thrashed for eating a mango. There is no humanism left in the Pallars, they have become demon like ready to swallow humanity. Bama described them as vultures screaming and circling around the carrion.

Naicker landlords had started the discourse that why should Pallars join the cause of parayars by helping them in the task of raising the statue of Ambedkar. So now pallars start thinking of raising the flagpole beside the statue of Ambedkar. This led to an argument about a wire touching the statue of Ambedkar which will not let them built a shelter on the statue. This led heated exchanges about killing each other. Sesurathnam, a tall, courageous but illiterate fellow went and cut the wire. This was it and pallar gathered and were instigated by Naicker and they planned to murder Sesurathnam. They knew that killings would happen on both sides so they sent their women and children to other villages for safety and killed Sesurathanam brutally.

State of Dalit women in *Vanmam*

Women did laborious task in field and looked at their houses. They were allowed to participate in cultural programmes but they were not allowed to seat in Panchayat and listen to the problems of the people and give advice to solve them. When servanu's son chinnappan was thrashed, the women were not allowed to seat in the public meeting rather they were asked to peacefully go to their homes. Selvarani remarked that

“They take pride in being reformists. But when it comes to a public meeting, they ask the women to leave. That's not fair, is it?

It would be madness to allow women to attend the village meetings. Whatever happens? Here they will go and repeat everywhere adding their own exaggeration it will cause some fight or other every day.

Who says so, di? Maybe you're like that! People who can't control what they talk shouldn't attend the meeting in the first place. For everything else they want the help of women so why not for this also? You seem to know all about the law and everything.... Can't argue with you. Still..... just because a woman studies a little, can she become better than a man? After all a woman's a woman and a man's a man. (Bama 66)

We can see from the above quotation that women are stereotyped to be gossipers or those who keep on exaggerating and doesn't have a sense of what to speak, how to speak and when to speak.

Later in the novel, we see that, it is these women who work for the emancipation of young educated boys of Parayars. Thus, this kind of stereotyping is false and has been done for centuries to exclude the women out of important topics and discussions, so that they don't take the seat of power with accuracy of judgment. They are always asked to behave according to the code of behavior for the village. The code of behavior for Dalits is to bow down to Naickers and the code of behavior for women is to bow down to all men. The code of behavior, lessens one's self-respect, they are not allowed to assert their identities and views, judgments and to behave in a suppressed manner to satisfy other's superior selves.

The Constitutional and the Religious law:

For Parayars there is no help either from priest or police. The Christian priest would talk, about suffering, forgiveness like a Jesus Christ which won't work in a situation like this where you are oppressed and it will become worse if you bear it. The landlords will think that it is correct to threaten the lower-castes and shut them up.

The police on the other hand are in the pockets of landlords, they are paid for creating riots and violence. This has always been the case in India that police work on the orders of those in power and against those that are subjugated so when the authoritative discourse decides, there is violence and bloodshed.

The Plight of Women

The Parayars initially didn't kill the Pallars, first they learnt that Sesurathnam was attacked, then they got the news that he was killed. In retaliation, they burnt the

houses of Pallars, which were empty. In the fields two Pallars were slaughtered to death. In reaction, they killed one more parayar-Lourdursammy and Verghese. All the men, both from pallar and parayar fled to other villages but the women of parayars were in their streets. The police who were given money to create havoc on Parayars had no other but only women at their hand and they manipulated them to come to police station. They beat the women with lathis.

Of These women, one was pregnant, one had two months old infant with her, and one had kept her six-month old baby at home. Chellakili was the only one educated she spoke to the main inspector about how they were tricked and inspector ordered release of Sesurathnam's wife and the mother of infants and old women. To this the policemen got angry and kicked Chellakili in the lower belly and hit her with boot and lathi. She had abortion right there on the other hand the young educated girls of the parayar street gathered to rescue these women. Women speak out their pain, "These police fellows, the dirty dogs...they are keeping an eye on us. They are not letting us move about for in any direction. (86)

Rosemary was also educated and courageous she decided to go to police-station. Meanwhile police brought three dead bodies, women wailed and then they did something courageous. "The women gathered together, took the bodies in the cart to the graveyard, dug a big grave all by themselves and buried all these bodies in that single grave. The policemen were astounded to see the women doing the burial themselves." (87)

Rosemary alongwith a group of women, went to meet the women in jail, this led to brutal lathi-charge over women in village including infants and aged. The beating went on and on relentlessly and the wounds were very deep.

When the 'others' are hushed up, and killed the society becomes dead, the humanism dies, there is no life. The society is structural, which must be inclusive tolerant and understanding must be of the values and it must be free from authoritative discourse rather dialogism and polyphony must prevail. Violence is a word on the side of the powerful to end all the voices of the society in order to rule and prevail. The word is endless even in violence it is repressed and crushed but it does not die.

Rosemary released six women from the lock-up and got a Putthuru priest for help and got some rice for the wounded parayar women. Twenty men from the parayar street surrendered and so all the women were allowed to go home.

The Dialogue of Vengeance:

The violence led this people to become more strong for their right of emancipation. Some became determined to kill the pallars, some became determined to kill the police while some became determined to become police so that they can have arms and ammunition so that they can legally use it on a whoever they want in. “I should study and become a D.I.G. and protect our people ,..... No, you should become D.I.G. and beat up their women folk. Someday, I will finish off those who killed my father swear it. (98)

Thus, the dialogue of *Vanmam*, *i.e.* Vengeance kept on going. No body celebrated Christmas or easter. In easter vacation again the young boys and girls decided to take out a procession. It was the women who were strong and they said. “It doesn’t matter what happens..... whatever God above wishes, we’re ready to take it.” (105)

There is a unique sense of strength and life in Dalit women who are more courageous and are ready to move ahead in life and who have strong desire to live life fully. On the other side the upper-caste had determined to not allow them to live their life. During this procession, Savariappan was killed to death. In due course few pallars were also arrested. When the parayar men did not retaliate the pallars started mocking them They started provoking them.

“When any of the parayar boys passed by, the pallar youngsters would twirl their moustaches, of fold and tie their lungis up high as though for a fight. They would come on bicycles and brush against the parayars or push handcarts on them. They would stand as a group across the width of the street blocking the way. (Bama 111)

This is how Indian men are, they have to show their chauvinism. This made the parayars more angry and then three men who were present when Sesurathnam was killed were so much agitated that they killed four pallar man and asked everybody to run away again some parayars were killed and few men were arreste.: “Whenever a parayar had been

murdered, the government had turned a blind eye so had the upper-caste people and politicians now that the murder victims are pallars, they were constantly coming to convey condolences and support. (119) They were instigating pallars to take revenge, and so the streets became silent and they became graveyards. The Naickers were delighted to see these and they kept reminding the pallars to be revengeful.

Change of Discourse and peace treaty:

Saminathan, Anthony and Jayaraju made great efforts to trace people from hiding and to surrender the criminals to police. The Sesurathnam murder case, came up in court, they had no money to pursue the case and pallars wanted to come out of jail so both the castes agreed for peace, the pallars tried to involve the Naicker but parayars did not allow, they sworn for peace till eternity and said it will never happen again.

Fear lingered in people's minds but the spirit of vendetta had by and large gone... in its place was the determination that come what may, the people of the two castes must live in harmony. (Bama 131)

Thus, peace happened when both the castes got what they wanted and compromised a little as well. In the panchayat elections, the pallars, parayars and Chakkiliyars put up Kaalaiyan as their candidate, voted unanimously for him. This was the dream of Ambedkar to see Dalit Men, as part of leaders and rulers. It was a dream come true for parayar youngsters who were campaigning from street to street. "On the day of election, all those who were entitled to vote skipped going to work. Instead, they went as a crowd and voted for Kaalaiyan." (133) Kaalaiyan won the elections, parayars organized a felicitation function, they united and gave a fitting answer to Naickers.

The Dalit voice must resonate in the state legislatures and in the national parliament. If any small problems crop up between us, we will set up a committee and settle things that way. As Ambedkar, the champion of the downtrodden, said we must capture the lever of government power. Let this be the first step towards the goal. (Bama 137)

Thus, after the authoritative word had taken toll over the Parayars and Pallars, they united and produced an authentic word and continued the discourse of Ambedkar.

Polyphony in *Vanmam*:

“A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices is in fact the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky novels” (Bakhtin. PDP.6)

It is here that Bakhtin uses the word polyphony, to describe the multiplicity of voices in novels for Bakhtin each voice is equally valid and has equal right and they combine but do not get merged in the unity of the event Dostoevsky’s novels are not authors imagination of a single objective world, but there are multiple worlds around each characters and they are fully explored.

Thus, poly means many or multi and phony means sounds or voices and thus polyphony means multi-voicedness as it is a term that describes artistic works as polyphonic in nature. The heroes of a polyphonic novel are, “not only objects of authorial discourse but also subjects of their own directly signifying discourse” (7)

The novel encompasses several voices. The first among them is the voice of the educated youth of Dalits like Saminathan and Anthony, who are progressive in nature. They want the men, women and children to educate themselves and free their minds of fear and. They want their parents and children to live an enlightened and free life.

The second voice is of converted Christians like Jayaraju who have become devout Christian and who talk of sacrifice and forgiveness which does not work as a solution to enmity between the two castes.

The third voice is of elders and wise aged old men from both pallars and parayars who always calmed the aggressive youth and retracted them from fighting and violence and condemned the bloodshed Kandasamy alone was sad. “Do we need this? We could have just gone about our lives and minded our own business instead we are hiding in a corner like this. What’s good about this? (91)

We also hear voices of Naickers who instigate the pallars and who are unhappy by the development of Parayars. Naickers of Kandampatti were still full of negative remarks. All this unity will last only for a few days. Just wait and see what happens. All the stabbing and killing will start again. These fellows can’t keep from fighting they said mockingly. (135)

Lastly, we hear the voices of women who suffered from violence, their men run away and they bear the grunt of the policemen she says.

You fellows do your deed and run away. But it is we women who have suffer beating from the police and cringe in fear of them. At the same time we have to live in dread of the pallars. Not able to go to work... Struggling for our daily kanji... chee... what a life... even a dog's life would be better... can't live and can't die either..." (113)

The violence is suffered by women, infants and aged the most. They work hard to bring everything back to regular life starting from field work, daily wages, food, cattle, children and their education. Men just have to sit under chavady and talk about killing and vengeance but women really go through it. They are the life of the street which became a graveyard. They themselves buried their people and wailed and cried. They still had the courage to celebrate easter and to support each other and live together.

The novel is polyphonic and each character voice is an Ideologeme, the dialogue between different ideologemes lead to deeping of the dialogic essence leading to widening of the horizons of the sphere and the work mirroring reality in completeness. Thus, Bakhtin's theories provide light and illuminates the dark path of slavery with carnival and folkloric culture, and his theory of dialogism paves way for further dialogues to come and respond to this body of work. It truly helps us understand the literature written by Dalit Women Writers of India.

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Abbreviation:

TDI : The Dialogic Imagination.