

From Everyday Humiliation to Lethal Violence: Tracing the Continuum of Caste oppression from Joothan to Kavin Selva Case.

PREETHI K

II MA ENGLISH LITERATURE

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Abstract:

Caste oppression in India can take numerous different forms from anonymous and everyday opprobrium to undisguised and murderous acts of brutality. This essay examines this continuum through a discrepancy between *Joothan: A Dalit's life* by Omprakash Valmiki and the contemporary case of Kavin Selva Ganesh juvenile pupil whose death was linked to estate grounded demarcation. By drawing a comparison between cultural accounts from the late 20th century and a contemporary circumstance the study highlights how estate distinction continues despite legal proscribing and structural protections. growing as a taboo in pastoral Uttar Pradesh Valmiki's *Joothan* is an autobiographical account that discover the methodical and structuralized declination of being cut off from the community needed to clean the academy grounds and refused the right to sit in class. The subcaste of estate brutality is this micro aggression which prohibits access to respectability and versatility indeed though they are not fatal.

The story reinforces how an extreme established estate system which is generally excused as tradition sustains everyday declination. In discrepancy the Kavin selva Ganesh case illustrates the identical continuums durability deadly termination. The wide of bias in a supposedly ultramodern educational setting shows itself as botheration, insulation and the prohibition of equal treatment all of which leads to severe psychic pain and ultimately morality. The occasion indicates that estate influence has spread to new institutional surrounds generally taking on further secret delicate to trace forms and is no longer limited to pastoral or classical settings. This exploration shows that estate brutality is structural rather than periodic by surveying *Joothan* in conjunction with the Kavin selva case. Diurnal humiliations are not inoffensive leavings from a defunct period they form the ground work that enables and energies more visible and violent forms of estate grounded demarcation. The study uses an associative frame to check the connections between lived experience and narrative evidences over time drawing on sociological and Dalit literature. in order to end estate oppression both the overt acts of violence and the covert accepted declination that enable them must be addressed. India can only develop a society where equivalency is not just an abecedarian pledge but a diurnal reality by handling the entire span of estate grounded demarcation.

Keywords

1. Caste oppression
2. Kavin Selva Ganesh case
3. Honor killing
4. Dalit Literature
5. Social hierarchy in India

Introduction

Caste one of the worlds former systems of social hierarchy continues to exercise a keen influence on the lives of million in India. Despite the fact that Indian constitution formally prohibited ‘untouchability’ in 1950 caste oppression drags not only in villages but also in metro polytan cities workplaces etc... its exhibition ranges from precise acts of exclusion to extreme acts of physical violence harassment in which day to day humiliations and inequalities lay the groundwork for destructive consequences. This article explores that continuum by drawing connections between two seemingly different yet fundamentally linked narratives Omprakash Valmiki’s Joothan. a Dalits life is one of the most important literary polyphonies of such disgrace. at the other extreme lies the case of Kavin Selva Ganesh a 27-year-old Dalit software engineer homicide in 2025 in Tamil Nadu for loving a caste woman from a dominant caste. The two events were separated by decades, geography scale but share a same root. the systemic humiliation imposed by caste as a mechanism of social control. by examining these two cases side by side the caste oppression must be understood as a spectrum rather than a series of disconnected incidents. Acknowledging and deconstructing the entire continuum of oppression is essential for moving toward a society where equality is both an inherent guarantee and a lived reality.

Everyday humiliation in Joothan

In Joothan: A Dalits life Omprakash Valmiki put down the persistent and formalized degradations that interpret his childhood as a Dalit in Uttar Pradesh. These were not isolated incident of ore conception but routine practices implant the social fabric designed to remind him and others of their inferior place in the caste hierarchy. one of the worst examples is Valmiki’s treatment at school. As a child he was not allowed to sit with other students inside the classroom. He was assigned a place on the ground. Physically separated from the upper caste children. He was subjected to the indignity of sweeping the academy grounds. Outside the classroom, degradation continued in community life. Dalits were prohibited from drawing water from the same wells as upper castes, denied entry into temples. The title of this chronicle itself-Joothan- becomes a powerful metaphor for this enforced degradation showing how Dalits were made to live off the boundaries. These routine insults were not minor slights but the structural pillars of caste oppression."

This normalization creates an environment where depreciation of nobility becomes predictable.

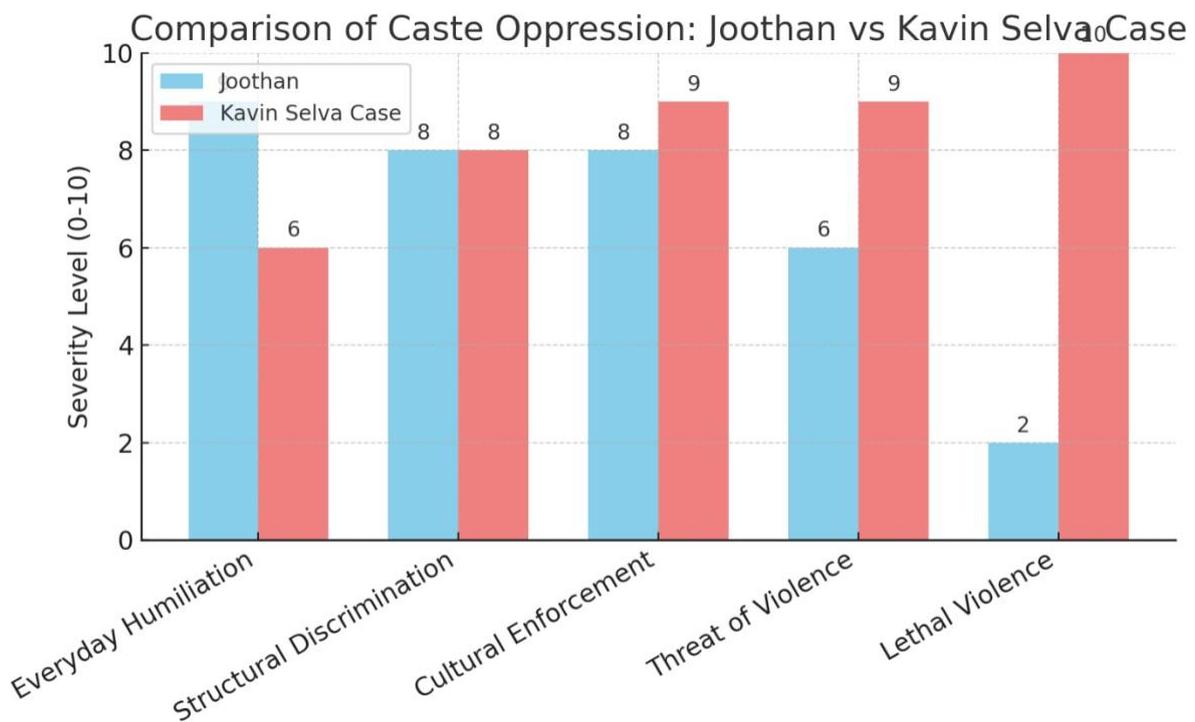
The Kavin selva case lethal violence realized

In July 2025 Kavin Selva Ganesh a Dalit software engineer employed by TCS was captivated and forced to death by Surjith brother of his partner Subhashini in Tirunelveli. The case revealed institutional collaboration both Sujith’s parents are sub inspectors suspected of

facilitating the murder Surjith and his father were arrested, and the case was transferred to the CB-CID. Kavin’s family initially refused to accept his body until the arrests took place; the murder ignited widespread outrage across Tamil Nadu. The cruelty was caste based, targeting his identity and relationship a tragic. “Lethal violence” is not only about a blow or a wound; it is also about the slow crushing of a person’s spirit, the steady erasure of hope, until life itself feels impossible to hold on to. What begins as everyday slights and humiliations — so common they become invisible to others — can grow into a pain so heavy it ends in the most irreversible way. The Kavin Selva case is a painful reminder that we open our eyes only when a life is gone. We call it a tragedy that struck without warning, but in reality, it is the last, heartbreaking chapter in a long story of wounds, humiliations, and silences we kept turning away from.

Continuum analysis: From humiliation to murder:

Kavin’s murder was not an isolated tragedy — it is one link in a long, unbroken chain where Dalits who dare to rise, through education, hard-won success, or love that challenges caste, are met with violent forces determined to pull them back down. Tamil Nadu’s past carries these scars. In 1997, the Melavalavu massacre took the lives of Dalit leaders whose only “crime” was stepping into political power. In 1995, Kodyankulam was attacked by the very police meant to protect it, punished for the pride of being a self-reliant Dalit village. In 2016, Udumalai Shankar was killed in an “honour” crime for doing something as natural and human as loving beyond caste. Despite the years that have passed, the same vicious thread unites these tragedies. They exposed a painful reality: Dalits face constant slights and silent humiliations, which are never inconsequential. Those unacknowledged wounds can burst into ruthless violence when caste boundaries are crossed.



From disgrace to brutality linking Joothan and the Kavin selva Ganesh Case:

The assassination of Kavin Selva Ganesh in Tirunelveli in 2025 and om Prakash Valmiki’s memoir Joothan reveal the ongoing clutch of caste in India. Valmiki’s book describes his childhood as a Dalit where he was compelled to eat leftover food (Joothan), sit separately in schools and face the persistent insults. His fight shows the concealed but influential walls of social banning that restricted his righteousness and opportunities.

Kavin’s story after a long haul shows how caste prejudice still controls personal choices. Despite being an educated IT professional his love for a woman from dominant caste led to his cruel killing. His death is a contemporary form of the same oppression Valmiki faced only the form has changed from everyday degradation to deadly ruthlessness. Both stories proves that caste bias has not vanishes; it has only displaced its appearance. Valmiki oppose it through education and writing turning pain into resistance. Kavin’s tragedy reminds us that without deep social change hatred can still claims lives. Together, these chronicles show that the fight for fairness is not just the past it is an incomplete struggle to day.

Conclusion:

The road from the quiet humiliations in Joothan to the brutal killing of Kavin Selva is not a sudden break — it's an unbroken chain stretching across time. At one end are the so-called “small” insults: a teacher who refuses to call a Dalit child by name, the plate of leftovers handed as if it were charity, the silent exclusion from public spaces. At the other end are lives cut short in the name of honour. Linking them is a long chain of social acceptance, silent complicity, and traditions that teach each generation to look away. Breaking this chain means taking action everywhere — in classrooms where respect must be taught, in courtrooms where justice must be swift, on online platforms where hate must be “questioned, and in cultural spaces where fairness and equal dignity are upheld. “We must stop treating humiliation as a harmless habit and recognise it for what it is — the seed from which greater violence grows. Only when even the smallest act of casteism becomes unthinkable will the most brutal ones become impossible.

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