

THE CASTE-LESS

Sneha. A. S,
Guest Lecturer
Department of English
Govt. Engineering College,
Thrissur

I stepped in,
holding mamma's hand,
I could hear my heart beat,
louder and faster than ever.
In a palace like room,
on a throne like chair,
my blurred eyes could spot,
a gown and a veil alone..
Sharing a talk so formal,
The woman in white asked,
with a smile playing on her lips,
"Tell me about you".
My little bulged eyes relaxed,
breath gained back its rhythm,
as mamma taught yesterday,
I proclaimed my name,
proudly my father's,
gently my mother's,
and
all about me and my home..
Pleased with the answers,
Turned to my mother
"the caste she belongs?"
Mamma whispered something.
"not even a religion??"
I traced a cloud on her face
that barred the smile shine
and saw it apparently made
a shadow on mamma's pale face.
With her final words,
mamma held my little hand,
forced me to follow,
I looked back and smiled,
I saw her sat on her throne,

radiating a look so hard,
again left my eyes bulged.
It's after years and years
that I came to know,
what she meant by,
my caste,
my religion..
It's after years over
that I came to realize,
being caste-less is/was a greater sin
than being an out-caste.

ABSTRACT

The poem *The Caste-less* was inspired by a real life incident in the life of the author. It questions the need for a specific caste and religion for an individual to live in society. The poem is written in the perspective of a child, who got confused before the question of the interviewer on her caste and religion when she was taken to the new school for admission. As she belongs to none of the castes and so to any religion, the institution refuses to admit her. Her pride of being a daughter of such great parents is crushed down by that question. The poet challenges the idea of caste as one of the essentials of an individual to live in Indian society and wonders how it marks one's identity. By placing a school as the setting and head of the institution as one of the characters, the poet tries to point out that education could hardly bring any cultural advancement at least to some of us. The paradoxical statement towards the end of the poem calls for the attention of society to look into such practices. It's a plea for secularism and oneness.