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7. Dalit Literature and Dr: B. R. Ambedkar

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Dalit struggle against inequality operation and caste tradition has a long history. Dalit literature got its momentum due to the writings of Mahatma Phule and Ambedkar. Baburao Baghel and Bandhu Madhav contributed to dalit literature before Mahatma phule and Ambedkar. The present article makes a picture of dalit literature tracing the themes and issues related to dalit literature. The dalit literature is one of its most significant recent trends since the sixties and the trend is still alive possibly on the increase and a matter of literary debates and dissemination in score of specialized journals academic studies literary conference and seminar regular reports and articles. The term dalit was used by the British before the Indian independence the term dalit came into practice officially in 1958 at the first conference of the literature in Mumbai. during 1974 Dalit panthers revitalized the term across the country in general and predominantly in Maharashtra. This panthers gave a wider meaning to the term dalit.

Dalit have been considered as scheduled castes. In broader sense this term includes scheduled tribes, poor peasants, women and all those being exploited politically economically and the name of religion. Today the term dalit is treated as a symbol of change and revolution. Dalits are neglected marginalized and subjugated group of society since the ages. Dalit literature is writings written about dalits or oppressed. It describes pains, torments anguish and experience of dalits. Post independent literary world witnessed the origin and development of dalit writing. Chandrakant langare rightly observed the origin of dalit writing can be traced to deep rooted long longing for equality and fuelled by Anguish and anger at the denial of personal and social political dignity of dalits. The oppressed class or dalits in the Indian caste system creates a very significant and distinctive part of Indian literature. Dalit literature remarked a great historical significance. Oppression in many ways is notice in India as well as in other parts of the world. The noted dalit writer Arjun dangle defined dalit literature as "dalit literature is one which acquaints people with the caste system and untouchability in India.... ..It matures with sociological point of view and is related to the principles of negativity, rebellion and loyalty science, thus finally ending as revolutionary". Caste plays a vital role in India, inequality is

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foremost cause of exploitation and marginality. it leads to injustice insecurity and subjugation. Marginalized people are completely distanced from the power centers.

Dalithood is a kind of life condition that characterizes the exploitation suppression and marginalization of Dalit people by the social economic cultural and political domination of the upper castes Brahminical ideology. Ambedkar does not use this category very often in his writings depending upon the changing context as he will use depressed classes term acceptable within the Imperial official setting. scheduled castes a term of obtaining in the field of competitive politics and policies of social welfare, it is mainly since 1960 is of this century that in practical parlance the word dalit becomes an explosive catchword for social cultural and political revolutionary movements launched by untouchable castes, essentially the Mahars, in such expressions "dalit literature" (Anand 1992, Dangle 1992 Lanjewar 1995 Gros 1996) and Dalit movement (/jogdand 1991, Gopinath 1994, Kshirsagar 1994 Ommwedt 1994, 1995; Pendse) The use of the word actually tends to be appropriated by the castes traditionally discriminated as untouchable and referred to their specific conditions of cultural in dignity and social subalternity.

Dalit writers were usually written in regional languages of India. Few of these have been translated into English. Dalit writers focus on and expose harsh, bitter realities of Dalit life and depict the struggle of an individual and his community for assertion of human values. *Laxman Mane's An Outsider*, *Laxman Gaikwad's The Branded*, *Kishore Shantabai Kale's Against All Odds*, *Sharankumar Limbale's An Outcaste*, *Narendra Jadhav's Outcaste*. A Memoir and are Dalit works translated from Marathi into English. They aim at social awareness, transformation, and reform. The titles of all these Dalit works are metaphors of Dalit existence. The protagonists are dehumanized and denied existence by nihilistic, indifferently world. Shalini Ramachandra views Dalit "texts as a dynamic of evolving identities each of which provides an insight into the brutal parameters of caste society.

Indian Literature virtually started a new chapter, with the publication of Arjun Dangle's *Poisoned Bread*, which was the first ever attempted to anthologize Dalit writings in English. He involved the genre available in Marathi Dalit literature-poetry, short stories, essays, autobiographies excerpts and public speeches. As a result, today we have several collections of Dalit writings coming out in both Indian languages and English. Following are some of the most widely read writers of Dalit literature that are available in English translation - Bamas's *Karukku and Sangati*, *Narendra Jadhav's Untouchables: My Family's Triumphant journey Out of the caste system in Modern India*, *Sharankumar Limbale's The Outside: Akkarmashi*, *Om Prakash Valmiki's Joothan: A Dalit's Life*, *Baby Kamble's Our Existence and Urmila Pawar's The*



Weave of My Life. Some of the prominent Dalit writers are Daya Pawar, Arjun Dangle, Baburao Bagul, Rabi Singh, Namdeo Dhasal, Dutta Bhagat, Lakshmana Mane, Neerave Patel, Palamalai, Sudhakar.

I take one example "Tamil Dalit writer Bama woman writer has contributed many literary works to Dalit literature such as novels, short stories, poems etc. According to Bama, Dalit literature is "Liberation literature like Black literature, Feminist literature and Communist-Socialist literature". Bama's contribution to dalit literature is Significant in the use of her people which is familiar to society in her works. According to her "there are traces of the agony and ecstasy of the dalits, the direct and emotional outbursts, the collective identity, the mockery and caricature of the immediate oppressors, the supernatural powers of oracle and the mythical heroism; these are the several elements for the reconstruction of a conscious Dalit literature.

The first essential characteristics feature of the Marathi dalit literature is that it is not originally and essentially a literary exercise. The practice of writing does not aim at achieving an anesthetic performance in literature as an art. It serves purposes of social intervention and accordingly carries strong militant conations. This holds well in Maharashtra as in other areas of India. The nature of these conations varies and takes different shades depending upon the writer's personalities, changing socio-cultural contexts, motives and inspiration to write. All the writers explicitly insist on the decisive impact on their lives of the firm directive received from Ambedkar. "Take education!" they nature the extraordinary efforts made to attend school against all odds as the most significant step of social protest and assertion. Their biographical performance is in line with these initial efforts as it's off-shoot.

Dalit Literature and Social Movement

The importance of literature for a social movement like the *dalit* liberation movement was clearly perceived by Ambedkar in the years before his conversion and death (1956). A movement cannot become strong and last till it has not generated its own literary tradition. Ambedkar saw as a deficiency of his movement the fact that in the 50s the *dalit* movement had not yet paid attention to literature and built up its own literary assets. He clearly wished to launch such a literary drive, and felt somehow frustrated of not having been able to achieve this too. In the 60s, at Aurangabad, where he had created educational institutions for the *dalits*, his dream began to take shape in circles of young *dalit* professor and newly educated middle class youth from untouchable castes. We used to read in the press critiques stating the later, viz..., during the last two decades, the *dalit* literature movement in general has lost momentum and has no future, being



repetitive and confined to limited personal testimonies, short of wide human and social perspective, having not contributed to the growth of Marathi literature with significant works.

A basic formula of Ambedkar is magnificent. "Caste System is not merely division of labour. It is also a division of labourers" (*Anihilation of Caste, vol. 1:47*). To this crucial definition, two other propositions are equally essential to qualify that social division: No society has an official gradation laid down, fixed and permanent, with an ascending scale of reverence and a descending scale of contempt. The scheme of the Purusha Sukta is unique, in as much as it fixes a permanent warrant of precedence among the different classes, which neither time or circumstances can alter. The warrant of precedence is based on the principle of graded inequality among the four classes. (*Who are the Shudras*)

It is within that conceptual framework that we should conceive of untouchability and explain why it persists and why one could not get rid of it soon and easily. Ambedkar strongly states that Brahmins have succeeded "to idealize the real and to realize the ideal" (vol. 7: 31-32). "Caste is divine", "Caste is sacred", and the practice of Untouchability is a *dharmic* conduct, nothing of a sin. It seems that the new concept of graded inequality was first defined in *What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables* (1945, vol. 9:170,215).

It is of course the whole of the political action of Ambedkar which is questioned here, its limits, and maybe his own ones (Burra 1986). That "graded inequality"—with its sacred sanction—helps to understand many things: the perpetuation through the centuries of the Hindu social order; the impossibility of thinking of a real social revolution uniting all the down-trodden and exploited, and a specific mentality which is the result of it. For that social order implies or rather creates a social psychology. "Untouchability is an aspect of social psychology: it is a sort of nausea of one group against another group" (*Who are the Untouchables? Vol 7:370*). "Caste is a notion, it is a state of the mind" (*Anihilation of Caste, vol. 1:68*), but it is too "a disease of the mind" Ambedkar repeats this everywhere and all his life: in 1936, in *What Path Salvation* (p. 38) and lastly, maybe, in Rajya Sabha, on September 6, 1954: "Untouchability is a kind of mental disease of the Hindus", repeating again: "Every Hindu believes that to observe untouchability is the right thing. Untouchability is a most sacred thing", with no answer other than of Dr. P. C. Mitra: "Untouchability is only a custom and usage" (vol. 15: 909- 910).

With regard to *dalit* literature, it is worthwhile to insist and comment upon the sentence of *Who were the Shudras* (1946): "an ascending scale of reverence and a descending scale of contempt," The formula is present through out Ambedkar's life but with a significant variation, In January 1919, with the Southborough Comitte (vol. 1: 257), he says that "the gradation of castes

“creates in the minds of all an “ascending scale of preference and descending scale of hatred”. Here the word “preference” is directly related to choices made in elections. In November 1930 (1st Round Table Conference, (vol. 2 :5060), he speaks of reverence and contempt. “Hatred” has quite logically disappeared of the “descending scale”: how could you “hate” the ones it is your *dharma* to consider “filthy” and inferior to you :there is nothing “in humane” in the behavior of the cast Hindu with the Untouchables—it is then a stupidity to say that Untouchability is “an ugly blot on the fair name of Hinduism” (*What Path Salvation, page 30, 1936*). Of course , you cannot either “love” them –and therefore he considered the (Gandhi) social worker “as a professional with “ no inner sympathy”, because, as he said in the Rajya Sabha on that same day ,September 6 ,1954 ,quoting the most revered Tolstoy , “ before you serve ,you must learn to love “(vol. 15:1910).

Dr. Ambedkar called the farmer dalits with a tremendous strength and appeal to usher, at all cost, into a new world , through exodus from the repressive socio –cultural structures of the villages , access to education and new occupational opportunities offered in urban areas by the modernization process . Many of the newly educated generations definitely turned their back to the past and hurried to simply forget a history of humiliations ,physical harassment and mental tortures. Once settled in shanty towns and slums at the periphery of modern cities, and surviving on a variety of odd jobs or employments in public services, oblivion became one of the strategies to kill the trauma of past memories; they were bound to come back to the mind as an unbearable burden ,a ghost of death. The simple record of yesteryears in dignity and squalor was bringing shame ; guilt and suffering. To gather strength one has to never look back again but only ahead with a clear and fresh sight. Such words as ‘dalit’ , ‘Mahar’ , and former names ‘Kacaru’(garbage), ‘Dagadu’ (stone), etc. became anathema. Dalit literature overcomes these fears and courageously , though with anger , purposively looks back again.

Various types of reaction display significant narrative figures when memories of the past are called to serve different discursive purposes. On the whole, as long as one can still vividly remember, reporting is perceived as an urgent duty with regard to the next generations and mankind; society and humanity are to be reminded; they should not be allowed to conveniently forget. We distinguish fourteen driving motives behind the will to put the past on record. The present article is an attempt to explore the marginalization and subjugation in Dalit literature.



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Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad affiliated and
Department of History, Sociology & Zoology, Vaidyanath College, Parli-Vaijnath
organized Two Days National Level Interdisciplinary Online Seminar on

THOUGHTS OF DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

Certificate

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This is to certify that Mr. M. I. Biradar, Assistant Professor, M. G. V. C. Arts, Commerce and Science College Muddebihal, Dist Vijayapur, Karnataka. has participated and presented a paper titled "Dalit Literature and Dr: B. R. Ambedkar" in the Two Days National Level Interdisciplinary Online Seminar on "Thoughts of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar" organized by Dept. of History, Sociology & Zoology, Vaidyanath College, Parali-Vaijnath, Dist.-Beed (M.S.) on 06 & 07 June, 2020.

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