



Peer Reviewed and  
UGC Listed Journal No. 47026



ISO 9001 : 2015 QMS  
ISBN / ISSN

**ISSN 2319 - 359x**  
**AN INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY**  
**QUARTERLY RESEARCH JOURNAL**

# IDEAL



Volume - XIII, Issue - II,  
March - August - 2025

ENGLISH PART - I

Impact Factor / Indexing

2023 - 7.537

[www.sjifactor.com](http://www.sjifactor.com)

**Ajanta Prakashan**



ISSN 2319 - 359X  
AN INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY  
HALF YEARLY RESEARCH JOURNAL

# IDEAL

Single Blind Review / Double Blind Review

Volume - XIII | Issue - II | March - August 2025

ENGLISH PART - I



ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

Peer Reviewed and  
UGC Listed Journal No. 47026

Impact Factor / Indexing

2023 - 7.537

[www.sjifactor.com](http://www.sjifactor.com)

→ EDITOR ←

**Dr. Vinay Shankarrao Hatole**

Assistant Professor, International Center of Excellence in Engineering  
& Management (ICEEM) College, Waluj, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar. (MS)

→ PUBLISHED BY ←



**AJANTA PRAKASHAN**

Jaisingpura, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar. (MS)

The information and views expressed and the research content published in this journal, the sole responsibility lies entirely with the author(s) and does not reflect the official opinion of the Editorial Board, Advisory Committee and the Editor in Chief of the Journal “**IDEAL**”. Owner, printer & publisher Vinay S. Hatole has printed this journal at Ajanta Computer and Printers, Jaisingpura, University Gate, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (Aurangabad), also Published the same at Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (Aurangabad)

**Printed by**

Ajanta Computer,  
Near University Gate, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (Aurangabad),  
Maharashtra, India

**Published by**

**Ajanta Prakashan,**  
Near University Gate, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (Aurangabad),  
Maharashtra, India  
Cell No. : 9579260877, 9822620877  
E-mail : [ajanta2023@gmail.com](mailto:ajanta2023@gmail.com), [www.ajantaprakashan.in](http://www.ajantaprakashan.in)

**IDEAL- ISSN 2319-359X - Impact Factor - 7.537 ([www.sjifactor.com](http://www.sjifactor.com))**



# EDITORIAL BOARD



**Mehryar Adibpour**  
Faculty of Computing London  
Metropolitan University,  
Holloway Road, London.

**Dr. Ashaf Fetoh Eata**  
College of Art's and Science,  
Salmau Bin Abdul Aziz University. KAS

**Dr. Altaf Husain Pandi**  
Dept. of Chemistry University  
of Kashmir, Kashmir, India.

**Dr. Ramdas S. Wanare**  
Associate Professor & Head Accounts & Applied Stat,  
Vivekanand Art's Sardar Dalip Sing Commerce  
& Science College Samarth Nagar, Aurangabad (M.S.)

**Dr Harish Kumar**  
Assistant Professor Department of History,  
Mangalayatan University, Extended,  
Ncr 33rd Milestone, Mathura - Beswan  
Aligarh (U.P.) 202146.

**Dr. P. A. Koli**  
Professor & Head (Retd),  
Dept. of Economics, Shivaji University,  
Kolhapur - (M.S.) India.

**Dr. Rana Pratap Singh**  
Professor & Dean School for Environment Science,  
Dr. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University  
of Raebareilly, Lucknow- India.

**Dr. Joyanta Barbora**  
Head Dept. of Sociology University of  
Dibrugarh- India.

**Dr. Jagdish R. Baheti**  
H.O.D., SNJB College of Pharmacy,  
Neminagar, Chandwad, Nashik (M.S.) - India.

**Prof. P. N. Gajjar**  
Head, Dept. of Physics,  
University of School of Sciences,  
Gujarat University, Ahmedabad- India.

**Dr. Binoy Musahary**  
Department of Political Science,  
Nalbari College, Nalbari Assam, P. O. Bidyapur.

**Dr. Prashant M. Dolia**  
Dept. of Computer Science and Applications,  
Bhavnagar University, India.

**Dr. S. Jeyakumar**  
Assistant Professor, PG & Research Department of  
Commerce, P. M. T. College, Melaneelithanallur,  
Sankarankovil Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu.

**Dr. P. S. Buvaneswari**  
Asst. Professor of Commerce,  
University of Madras Chepauk, Chennai-05.

**Dr. (CA) Subrahmanya Bhat K. M.**  
Principal, Department of Commerce,  
Swami Vivekananda College, Borim Ponda, Goa.

**Dr. G. B. Lamb**  
Associate Professor & Head,  
Department of Mathematics  
Baliram Patil College, Kinwat, Dist.Nanded. (M.S.)



# EDITORIAL BOARD

**Dr. Priyanka A. Masatkar**

Assistant Professor, Dept. of Botany,  
Ghulam Nabi Azad Arts Commerce and  
Science College, Barshitakli, Akola, Maharashtra.

**Dr. Dhirajkumar S. Kotme**

Head, Department of Marathi,  
Jaikranti Airts & Com. Sr. College,  
Latur. (Maharashtra)

**Dr. Harish Kumar**

Associate Professor, Noida College of Physical  
Education, Doom Manikpur Dadri. (U.P)

**Mr. Nitish Pandurang Shinde**

Assistant Professor, Department of English,  
Padmabhushan Vasantodada Patil Mahavidyalaya,  
Kavathe Mahankal, Dist.- Sangli, Maharashtra.

**Mr. Hariprasad Vitthal Pawar**

Assistant Professor, Department of History,  
Padmabhushan Vasantodada Patil Mahavidyalaya,  
Kavathe Mahankal, Dist.- Sangli, Maharashtra.

**Mr. Shrikant Namdev Phakade**

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science,  
Padmabhushan Vasantodada Patil Mahavidyalaya,  
Kavathe Mahankal, Dist.- Sangli, Maharashtra.

**Mr. Nishikant Savanta Waghmare**

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science,  
Padmabhushan Vasantodada Patil Mahavidyalaya,  
Kavathe Mahankal, Dist.- Sangli, Maharashtra.

**Dr. Sujata Pandurang Solage**

Assistant Professor, Department of English,  
Padmabhushan Vasantodada Patil Mahavidyalaya,  
Kavathe Mahankal, Dist.- Sangli, Maharashtra.



PUBLISHED BY



**Ajanta Prakashan**

Aurangabad. (M.S.)



**CONTENTS OF ENGLISH PART - I**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Title &amp; Author</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
1	Casteism: A Social Deformity Reflected in Girish Karnad's Tale-Danda <b>Mr. Shivaji Shankar Kamble</b>	1-5
2	The Role of Literature in Shaping Movements: A Cross-Cultural Study of Dalit and Black Literary Traditions <b>Dr. Mangal V. Londhe</b>	6-9
3	Dalit Aesthetics and Protest Literature <b>Dr. Rajanand Anandrao Tayade</b>	10-19
4	The Role of Dalit Leaders in Shaping Indian Politics <b>Mr. Datta Jadhav</b>	20-26
5	Reflection of Towards Emancipatory Identity and Assertions of Buddhist Women in Maharashtra <b>Dr. Sanjay Shamrao Kamble</b>	27-36
6	Comparative Studies: Dalit and African American Literature <b>Mahammad Rauf Md. Ibrahim</b>	37-44
7	Gender, Identity, and Cultural Conflict: Navigating the Female Experience in Ameena Hussein's The Moon in the Water <b>Mrs. Ashwini Pujari</b> <b>Dr. Sachin Londhe</b>	45-50
8	The Lives of Dalit Women in Kumud Pawde's the Inner Explosion and Shantabai Kamble's the Kaleidoscopic Story of My Life: A Comparative Study <b>Miss. Khandekar Dipali Natha</b>	51-54
9	Indian Legal Framework and its' Challenges in Protecting Dalit Women's Rights <b>Dr. Mrs. Vaishali Abhijit Sarang</b>	55-66
10	Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Fight for Social Justice <b>Dr. Raju Kalmesh Sawant</b>	67-72
11	Interdisciplinary Approaches to History, Culture, and Literature in Dorothy Davis's Writing <b>Miss. Shubhada Sukumar Patil</b> <b>Dr. Pramod A. Ganganmale</b>	73-81

## **CONTENTS OF ENGLISH PART - I**

S. No.	Title & Author	Page No.
12	Life as Dying: Gender and Power Dynamics in Ammonite by Nicola Griffith <b>Mr. Abhaysinh V. Deshmukh</b>	82-87
13	Dalit Literature: A Catalyst for Social Justice and Policy Change <b>Mr. Rahul Rajiv Shinde</b>	89-95
14	The Aesthetics of Protest in Shoshit: How Dalit Writers Use Literature as a Tool of Resistance <b>Mr. Mansing Vitthal Thombare</b> <b>Mr. Pramod Shankar Patil</b>	96-99
15	Social Realism and Dalit Consciousness: A Critical Exploration of Premanand Gajvee's Select Plays <b>Mr. Nitish Pandurang Shinde</b>	100-107
16	Breaking Boundaries: The Role of Interdisciplinary Approaches in Understanding Dalit Representation in Marathi Theatre <b>Shilyug Rajendra Kamble</b> <b>Miss. Poonam Nanasaheb Shivpuje</b>	108-112
17	Isma's Story: Overcoming Caste, Gender, and Political Barriers in Home Fire <b>Miss. Snehal Dsdarao Wakode</b>	113-120
18	Dalit Women's Struggle in Indian English Novels <b>Dr. Sukhadeo Raghunath Bhosale</b>	121-126
19	Cultural Identity in the Diasporic Writings of Azar Nafisi's Reading Lolita in Tehran and Amani Al Khatahtbeh's Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age <b>Mulani Reshmabano Asif</b> <b>Dr. Gujar Manoj Dasharath</b>	127-131
20	Lalu Prasad Yadav on Social Justice <b>Surendranath Babar</b>	132-138
21	A Study of Women Characters in Anna Bhau Sathe's Selected Novles <b>Dr. Appaso Shivaji Kolekar</b>	139-142
22	Challenges Faced by Women Characters in Anna Bhau Sathe's Chitra <b>Dr. Ambadas Dadasaheb Sakat</b>	143-147

**CONTENTS OF ENGLISH PART - I**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Title &amp; Author</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
23	Existential Crisis in Preeti Shenoy's the Secret Wishlist in Anna Bhau Sathe's Chitra <b>Dr. Suhas Shinde</b> <b>Prof. Dr. Samadhan Mane</b>	147-153
24	Caste in Dystopian and Speculative Fiction: Imagining Alternative Dalit Futures <b>Dr. Neeta Vijaykumar Jokhe</b>	154-157
25	The Erasure of Caste: A Critical Reading of Indian School Textbooks and Children's Historical Fiction <b>Varsha Vaibhav Patil</b>	158-168





# 1. Casteism: A Social Deformity Reflected in Girish Karnad's Tale-Danda

**Mr. Shivaji Shankar Kamble**

Associate Professor, P.V.P. Mahavidyalaya, Kavathe Mahankal, Dist. Sangli.

## Abstract

Girish Karnad's master-piece 'Tale-Danda' (1989) is a critical commentary on 'Casteism'. Basaveshwara, the protagonist of this play, establishes 'Veershaivism' and 'Sharana' society which is free from caste, class, race, gender and occupation. In order to create casteless and classless society, Basava introduces many novel things like Anubhav Mantap, Kayak philosophy etc. for social regeneration. Inter-caste marriage is the crowning element, which is supported by Basava for eradicating casteism from society. Indeed, casteism is social sin and social deformity.

The present paper entitled **Casteism : A Social Deformity Reflected in Girish Karnad's Tale-Danda** modestly attempts to examine how rigid caste-system becomes an obstacle in the path of observing social justice in the world in general and in Indian society in particular.

Caste, class, gender, race and colour plays a very pivotal role in Indian social structure. This is inhuman, brutal and evil some system has prevailed since the time immemorial. The Varna idiom follows and practices by the society. To be honest, it results in untouchability, inequality, unrest, bewilderment, contempt, hue and cry, mistrust etc. among the social members. Such class-consciousness feeling still remains as firm as a rock where social mobility and real love is highly impossible.

Caste-system is decisively a social deformity and sin. Many social reformers, religious leaders, liberals and saints like Gautam Buddha, Charvak, Chakradhar Swami, Basaveshwara, Mahatma Phule, Gandhi, Ambedkar, Tukaram, Guru Nanak, Namdev Shimpi, Sena Navi, Rohidas, Banka-Mahar, Chokha Mela, Sakhubai, Kanhopatra, Ramanand etc. tried to annihilate the veda-oriented *chaturvana* system. Such practice of caste system differences man from man and deprives them from equal status, equal rights, preferences and importance. Therefore, such dreadful and inhuman system should be eradicated from the society; otherwise, an utopian community is highly impossible. Indeed classless and casteless society, social justice, equality,

social regeneration and humanity are possible only when there is no caste-ridden social structure, otherwise it will remain a myth or mirage and nightmare.

Girish Karnad's most popular historical play *Tale-Danda* (1989) is a master-piece and great classic in Indian dramatic literature. This play presents social, cultural, moral, religious and political culture of vedic society. Even it unveils the unvarnished truth about casteism. Surely, casteism is a perpetual problem of Indian society. And Karnad tries to criticize the false notions of caste-system or rigidity of class-caste consciousness through this play.

Jnanpeeth Awardee, Girish Karnad is an ambassador of Indian culture and dramatic genius of post-independence Indian literature. His yemon service in the field of Indian dramatic literature is praise-worthy and path-breaking like his contemporary playwrights namely Badar Sancar (Bengali), Mohan Rakesh (Hindi), and Vijay Tendulkar (Marathi). His *Tale-Danda* (1989) is written when Karnad observed the atrocities over the issues of Ram Janam Bhumi-Babri Masjid and Mandal Commission Report. These two thorny issues gave birth to violence, horror and bloodshed in various parts of the country which shows a great similarity with the *Protestant Movement* launched by Basaveshwara in Socio-religious field in the twelfth century Karnataka. Infact, this movement, too, results in scornful sanguinary things. Therefore, this play is a critical commentary on contemporary social evils like casteism which compels people to rethink about traditional, social, religious and political values rationally, more particularly about the caste, class and religion. Indeed this play highlights on brutal reality and nature of social, political and cultural principles. Verily it eraposes society's moral degeneration, its hollowness, vanity and meaninglessness.

Basaveshwara, the chief protagonist of the play *Tale-Danda*, is the Lord Buddha of twelfth century. As a prophet of New Era, Basava challenges the Vedic orthodoxy, orthodox Brahmanism, traditional Hinduism and caste-system. To eradicate caste-system, the product of chaturvarna system, is the prime life mission of Basava. There are various incidents presented in this play which displays or highlights the perennial problem-caste-system.

First of all, Jagadeva, Brahmin convert, returns home with his untouchable friend-Malli Bomma, particularly after guarding royal treasury for four days in Basava's absence. This is a great shock to the neighboring women and the old people. Jagadeva's mother-Amba allows entry to them in her house unwillingly. But she decides to purify the house later. It shows that high class Hindu people observes and practices caste-system seriously. As per the veda-oriented varna

system, untouchables are not allowed to enter into high class people's houses. But Jagadeva rejects and breaks inhuman age-old traditional and observes equality, humanity and democratic liberty which is devoid of class and caste discrimination. Jagadva is staunch disciple of Basava, opposes the discriminative pre-existed class, caste and veda-oriented Hindu social system. He thinks that it is a social sin to observe caste-system and untouchability. It is because it gives birth to inequality, injustice, exploitation and disintegration in social life. In order to create casteless and classless society, Basava decides to prefabricate society on humanitarian and democratic basis.

Secondly, Basava treats King Bijjala as a human being and a friend as he belongs to barbar's race. Infact, King Bijjala is a silent sufferer of caste-ridden Hindu society. Even he is disrespected by the upper class people. It means that all are equal in Basava's eyes, be he a prince or pauper.

Thirdly, Basava does not want to observe caste discrimination in social relations like marriage. So he supports the marriage between Sheelvant-cobbler boy (Harallyya's son) and Kalavati - a Brahmin girl (Madhuvaras's daughter). However, the parents of boy and girl are *sharanas*. But no objection has been taken by anyone except orthodox Hindus of Kaylan. Such a wedding is a revolution and great blow to vedic civilization and to the roots of *Varnasharam dharma*, more specifically to Damodar Bhatt who is a true follower of veda-oriented system. He thinks that whatever is written in Vedas is true, permanent and unchangeable. Thus Damodar Bhatt glorifies vedic tradition and supports the existing caste system. (Karnad, Girish 1993 (2004) P.56). But in this regard, Basava says, "some day this entire edifice of caste and creed and the poison house of varnashram will come tumbling down. Every person will see himself as a human being" (Karnad, Girish : 1993(2004) P.38-39). Indeed, Basava's primary object is to destroy the demon of caste and observe social equality by eliminating the social deformity-caste system. Thus Basava denies the superiority and authority of Vedas and believes on non-vedic religion-Veershaivism, devoid of varna, caste, creed, race, clan, gender, occupation etc. in social life.

Fourthly, the play *Tale-Danda* introduces Basava's *Kayak Philosophy*. *Kayaka* means honest manual labour. Basava teaches *Sharanas* that work is worship and duty is Deity (P.24). Extra earning and profit should be utilized for the betterment of society. Self-sufficiency through hard work as well as occupational equality and mobility lies at the core of this philosophy. In

those days, occupation and caste are related to each other. Even there is no right to choose occupation as it is based on birth. But Basava opposes the rigid occupational social distinction theory and propagates freedom of occupation to every *sharana* which is unrelated to caste. Such unusual philosophy of Basava gives dignity, sanctity and sublimity to manual labour for the first time in the history world (Ghugare, S.B.:1995:105).

Fifthly, Basava's *Anubhav Mantapa* is a crowning element of his life. It is a social and spiritual institution which is called *Socio-Religious Academy*. Its main purpose is to create casteless and class-less society, which is based on human values like love, equality, non-violence, truth, fraternity etc. Being a cultural centre of equality and fraternity, it promotes and spreads the religion of humanity. It impresses countless people in India in general and world's people in particular, more specifically to many thinkers, leaders and learned people. Even it offers freedom of thought and free expression to every individual. There are free discussions on problems of human life in it. The members put their opinions, thoughts, doubts and outlook and then decisions are taken in it. Equal treatment is given to all the members without any distinction of caste, creed and gender. Thus *Anubhav Mantapa*, the first ideal Assembly of experience-oriented people, follows the democratic way of life and put the foundation of Democracy. Indeed it is an important innovation of Basava. Even the intercaste marriage between Sheelvant and Kalavati openly discussed in it. Even the problems like caste-system, ritualism, theoreticism and other evils of society too, takes place for discussion. Thus *Anubhav Mantapa*, is a novel ideal which is practiced by Basava for the betterment society, social unity, love and upliftment. In a world, *Anubhav Mantapa* brings about a revolution in social and religious life of the twelfth century people.

In a nutshell, Basaveshwara, the protagonist of the play *Tale-Danda* brings about a social revolution by practicing the social principles like liberty, equality, fraternity, democracy, freedom of thought, speech, action, liberal outlook and non-vedic approach. All these lies at the centre of Basava's action, ideas, ideals and mission. He propounds an egalitarian and secular doctrine. In order to re-establish new values and principles, Basava revolts against all social evils like caste-system and gives a shower of blows to vedic tradition. In a word, Girish Karnad presents Basava a true socio-spiritual leader and beacon light of the twelfth century who brings about social, political and religious revolution in the lives of people of then society.

## References

1. Ahuja, Ram (1993) *Modernization in Indian Social System*, Reprint 1997, Rawat Pub. Jaipur and New Delhi.
2. Basavraj, K.R. (1984) *History And Culture of Karnataka*, pub. by Chalukya pub. Dharwad.
3. Dhanavel, P (2000) *The History And Mystery of Girish Karnad's Tale-Danda*, in the Literary Criterion, Vol.35, No.4.
4. Ghugare S.B. (1995) *Veershavism in India*, pub. by Sadhana Book Stall, Gadhinglaj.
5. Karnad, Girish (1993) 2004 *Tale-Danda*, Paper Back Edition, Ravi Dayal pub. Delhi.
6. Dodiva, Jaydipisinh (1999) *The Plays of Girish Karnad: Critical Perspectives*, Prestige Books, Delhi.
7. Ghosh, Nibir K (1997) *Caste and Religion in Girish Karnad's Tale-Danda in 50 years of Indian writing: Golden Jubilee Vol.* ed. Dhavan, R.K., Indian Association for English Studies, New Delhi.
8. Kuppuswamy, B. (1972) *Social Change in India*, second edition 1975, Vikas Pub. House, Delhi.

## 2. The Role of Literature in Shaping Movements: A Cross-Cultural Study of Dalit and Black Literary Traditions

**Dr. Mangal V. Londhe**

Assistant Professor, Yashwantrao Chavan Mahavidyalaya, Urun-Islampur.

---

### Abstract

Literature has been instrumental in shaping political consciousness and social movements across oppressed communities. Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* and Bell Hooks' *Ain't I a Woman* offer intersectional critiques of caste and race-based oppression, illustrating how literature serves as an intellectual and emotional force in liberation movements. Pawar's memoir chronicles her journey from caste oppression to literary activism, emphasizing the role of education and writing in social change. Similarly, Hooks' work explores the erasure of Black women's voices in feminist and civil rights discourses. This study examines how these two texts, emerging from distinct socio-political contexts, converge in their literary strategies of resistance. Through an analysis of memoir as a political genre, this research highlights the transnational parallels between Dalit and Black feminist literary traditions, showing how they contribute to broader movements for justice and equality.

**Keywords:** Dalit feminism, Black feminism, literary activism, intersectionality, social movements.

### Introduction

Literature has historically played a crucial role in shaping political consciousness and catalyzing social movements among marginalized communities. This study explores how Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs* (1988) and Bell Hooks' *Ain't I a Woman* (1981) contribute to Dalit and Black feminist thought, respectively. Both texts function as forms of literary activism, offering intersectional critiques of oppression rooted in caste, race, and gender. This research underscores the transnational parallels between Dalit and Black feminist traditions, demonstrating the shared struggle for justice, dignity, and representation through the memoir genre.

### Literature as a Catalyst for Social Change

Scholars have long acknowledged the transformative power of literature in fostering resistance and collective action. As Paulo Freire argues in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, literature can serve as a means of conscientization, or raising awareness among the oppressed about their conditions (Freire 30). In this vein, both Pawar and Hooks employ literature not merely as personal expression but as a political tool to challenge dominant narratives and empower marginalized communities.

Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* and Hooks' *Ain't I a Woman* are pivotal in shaping the feminist discourse within Dalit and Black movements. Pawar's memoir documents her lived experiences of caste discrimination and gender-based oppression, emphasizing the role of education and writing in fostering change. "Education is the weapon that saved me," Pawar asserts, reinforcing Ambedkar's emphasis on knowledge as a tool of emancipation (Pawar 56). Similarly, Hooks critiques the exclusion of Black women from both feminist and civil rights discourses, stating, "A devaluation of black womanhood occurred as a result of the sexual exploitation of black women during slavery that has not altered in the course of hundreds of years" (Hooks 15).

### Memoir as a Political Genre

Memoir, as a genre, has historically been a potent medium for marginalized voices to assert their agency. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson describe memoirs as "acts of self-narration that resist dominant historiographies" (Smith and Watson 14). Pawar and Hooks use memoir as a form of resistance, intertwining personal narratives with broader socio-political critiques.

Pawar's memoir illustrates the intersectionality of caste and gender, detailing her struggles against caste-based discrimination while navigating patriarchal constraints. Her narrative aligns with the Dalit literary tradition of protest, which Gopal Guru defines as literature "written with the explicit intent of exposing caste-based atrocities and mobilizing the oppressed" (Guru 42). When Pawar recounts an incident where she was denied entry to a temple, she reflects, "I stood at the threshold, the deity staring at me from within, while the priest's words pushed me outside" (Pawar 89). This moment captures the physical and symbolic exclusion of Dalits from cultural and religious spaces.

Similarly, Hooks' *Ain't I a Woman* critiques the erasure of Black women's voices within feminist and civil rights discourses. She argues that mainstream feminism has historically



prioritized the struggles of white women while ignoring the specific challenges faced by Black women (Hooks 15). “As long as women are using class or race power to dominate other women, feminist sisterhood cannot be fully realized” (Hooks 21). Her work aligns with Black feminist thought, which Patricia Hill Collins defines as a framework that centers the experiences of Black women in understanding systems of oppression (Collins 25).

### **Intersectionality and Resistance in Dalit and Black Feminist Traditions**

Kimberlé Crenshaw’s theory of intersectionality is crucial in understanding the overlapping systems of oppression faced by Dalit and Black women (Crenshaw 1241). Pawar’s and Hooks’ works illustrate how caste and race function as structural barriers that compound gender-based discrimination. Pawar’s narrative reflects the struggle of Dalit women who face exclusion both from mainstream feminist movements and from male-dominated Dalit activism. She highlights the ways in which Dalit women must navigate dual forms of oppression, echoing Ambedkar’s assertion that caste is fundamentally a system of graded inequality (Ambedkar 57). As Pawar states, “We fought our own battles in our homes before we could take on the world outside” (Pawar 112).

Similarly, Hooks challenges the notion of a universal feminist experience, demonstrating how Black women have been historically marginalized within feminist movements. She critiques the failure of white feminists to acknowledge the racial dimensions of oppression, arguing that gender cannot be examined in isolation (Hooks 18). “The process begins with the individual woman’s acceptance that American women, without exception, are socialized to be racist, classist, and sexist in varying degrees” (Hooks 137). The erasure of Black women’s voices, she asserts, weakens the feminist movement by failing to address the unique struggles of women of color.

### **Comparative Literary Strategies of Resistance**

Both Pawar and Hooks employ distinct literary strategies to resist systemic oppression. Pawar’s memoir employs a straightforward, unembellished narrative style, which aligns with Dalit literary aesthetics that prioritize authenticity and lived experience over literary ornamentation (Guru 49). Her storytelling incorporates elements of oral tradition, folk culture, and personal testimony, making her work accessible to a broad audience. “Writing my story was like weaving a sari – every thread was a moment of struggle, but together they formed a whole” (Pawar 73).

Hooks, on the other hand, blends autobiography with theoretical critique, employing a scholarly yet accessible style to engage readers in a critical analysis of gender and race (Hooks 21). Her work bridges the gap between academic discourse and grassroots activism, making Black feminist thought more accessible to a wider readership. Both authors use personal narratives to illustrate systemic oppression, thereby fostering collective consciousness among their readers.

### Conclusion

The comparative study of Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* and Bell Hooks' *Ain't I a Woman* reveals the power of literature in shaping movements for justice and equality. By documenting their lived experiences, both authors challenge dominant narratives and assert the agency of Dalit and Black women. Their works exemplify how literature functions as both a site of resistance and a catalyst for social change, reinforcing the importance of intersectional feminist thought. Through their literary activism, Pawar and Hooks contribute to a broader transnational discourse on caste, race, and gender, demonstrating that the struggle for justice is both local and global.

### Works Cited

- Ambedkar, B. R. *Annihilation of Caste*. Navayana, 2014.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. Routledge, 2000.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review*, vol. 43, no. 6, 1991, pp. 1241-1299.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos, Continuum, 2000.
- Guru, Gopal. "Dalit Literature: Aesthetic and Political Perspectives." *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 28, no. 6, 1993, pp. 41-49.
- Hooks, Bell. *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. South End Press, 1981.
- Pawar, Urmila. *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs*. Translated by Maya Pandit, Columbia UP, 2008.
- Smith, Sidonie, and Julia Watson. *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*. U of Minnesota P, 2010.

### 3. Dalit Aesthetics and Protest Literature

**Dr. Rajanand Anandrao Tayade**

Department of English, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Sambhajinagar.

#### Abstract

‘Dalit aesthetics’ is a new literary term in Indian writing which offers a systematic study of arts and beauty that is found in Dalit literature, particularly in Annabhau Sathe’s works. The Dalit literature not only throws light on the injustice and exploitation of marginalized section of society but also on the aesthetic sense and nature of Dalit writer’s literary works. The Dalit literature rejects the traditional poetic diction and metre. It is a revolt not only against the concept of poetry held by *Sadashiv Pethi* writers but also the social authority of the so called *Savarnas*. The Dalit literature is marked by a strong reaction and protest against the bondage of caste and *Chaturvarnya* system. The Dalit literature puts special emphasis on concrete reality rather than imagination. It aims at the edification and improvement of the readers. The Dalit writers wrote in a very clear and pungent way with a social message to give to its readers. All of them are Angry Young Men set out on a mission to fulfill the dream of their supreme leader, Dr. B.R.Ambedkar.

**Keywords:** Savarnas, Chaturvarnya, Sadashiv Pethi, Shudras, Vedic,

#### Introduction

It must be pointed out at the very outset that ‘Dalit Literature’ is thoroughly a controversial term. Etymologically, the word ‘Dalit’ means oppressed or downtrodden. Renowned poet and critic Dr.Yashwant Manohar calls it ‘*Ambedkarite Literature*’ while Raja Dhale, one of the founder members of ‘*Dalit Panther*,’ a fierce social organization in Maharashtra calls it ‘*Phooley-Ambedkar inspired literature*. There are different views of different thinkers regarding the term. Let it be whatever. The main point to discuss here is how it emerged on the socio-political scenario of the country?

M. N. Wankhede, a former Principal of Milind College of Arts and Science, Aurangabad published an article entitled as ‘*A Discussion: Literature of Dalit Consciousness, Direction and Inspiration*’. With the publication and discussion of this article, it is said that the modern Dalit literature has emerged in Maharashtra. The names of Dalit writers which Principal Wankhede mentioned in his articles were Keshav Meshram, Shankarrao Kharat, Sukharam Hivrale, P.M. Shinde and others. *The first Dalit Literature Conference was held in 1958 and Annabhau Sathe*

was its inaugurator. This conference stamped the literary merits of Annabhau Sathe and a new sky was opened to him to play with. His masterpiece 'Fakira' appeared in 1959 with dedication to Dr.B.R.Ambedkar (p.46-47). Though Dalit literature first appeared in Marathi language, it soon reached to other vernacular languages also such as Hindi, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and so on through poems, short-stories and autobiographies. The mention may be made of Kannada writers like Siddalingaiah, Arvind Malagatti and Kotiganahalli Ramaiah, Telugu writers like Yeddu Vijaya Babu and Meena Kandasamy, Tamil writers like Bama and P.Sivakami, Hindi writers like Omprakash Walmiki and Dr.Kusum Meghwal respectively from U.P. and Rajasthan and many more. Dalit literature is meant for social reconstruction and it is the voice of rebels. The Dalit literature raises its powerful voice against the age-old tyranny to which Dalit were subjected generation after generation. Dalit writers vehemently attacks the caste discrimination, injustice, oppression, indignity, inhuman and ill-treatment at the hands of Caste Hindus. They also repudiates through their literary works the brahminical concepts like rebirth, incarnation, God, soul, hell, heaven and yajna rituals with its heinous act of sacrifice. These are all conspiracies to prevent the Shudra brethren from making revolt against oppressive system of Chaturvarnya. The Shudras and untouchables were put down under the yoke of Brahminism since centuries together. Dalit writers looks with hatred at this religious exploitation and wage war through their works against this religious barbarity. Dalit literature is often compared with Black literature in respect of inequality, racial prejudice, exploitation, injustice and civil rights. The rallying cry of Dalit literature is '*Dalit is Dignified*' and the Dalit writers dreams of such a society that will be based on liberty, equality, fraternity and justice, the principles preached by prince Siddharth who later on attaining the enlightenment at Gaya became Buddha.

### **Formative and Guiding Influence**

Dalit literature embraced all those great men who brought revolution in the humble lives of poor people and made their lives happy by removing the age-old agonies faced by them. The Dalit literature adopted them as their spiritual Gurus, guides and philosophers and saluted them. Among them mention may be made of Buddha, Kabir, Phoolley and Dr. Ambedkar. But here few of them have taken into consideration for study.

#### **Buddha**

Buddha was the first and foremost rebel and revolutionary who vehemently attacked the Chaturvarnya system and overthrown it. He was strongly opposed to the Brahmanism and repudiated their thesis that the Vedas are infallible and their authority could never be questioned. *Infallibility of the Vedas meant complete denial of freedom of thought. In his opinion, nothing*

*was infallible and nothing could be final. Everything must be open to re-examination and reconsideration whenever grounds for re-examination and reconsideration arise. Man must know the truth and real truth. To him freedom of thought was the most essential thing and he was sure that freedom of thought was the only way to the discovery of truth (p.89).* The Brahmanism did not believe in equality and inequality was its official doctrine. The soul of Brahmanism lay in graded inequality. Such a philosophy was calculated to suppress and exploit the weak and keep him in a state of complete subjugation. Influenced by Buddha's moral teaching as well as psychoanalytic and scientific approach, Dr. Ambedkar and his followers embraced to Buddhism in 1956. Therefore, Dalit literature derives its inspiration from Buddha of bygone age.

### **Jotirao Phooley**

After Buddha the name of Jotirao Phooley automatically comes to the lips of Dalit activists and writers. *Phooley in his 'Slavery' (1873) warned the Shudra and untouchables that without education wisdom was lost, without wisdom moral was lost, without moral mobility was lost, without mobility finance was lost, without finance Shudras were degraded, all that disaster occurred owing to lack of education (p.4).* Phooley was called the Martin Luther of Maharashtra because of his social reforms for underprivileged. He was the major opponent to Brahmanical hierarchy and supremacy in nineteenth century Maharashtra. He opened schools for backwards classes including untouchables and his own well for water to untouchables. He was full of milk of pity towards his Shudra and untouchables brethren. He formed Satya Shodhak Samaj in 1873 for the betterment of his poor countrymen and the uplift of the weak section of society. The human dignity was the central theme of his movement. Caste system is not made by God and it was created by the priestly class for his own living. Caste is the Brahmanical conspiracy. This was the opinion of Phooley. He bitterly criticized the cultural hegemony of Brahman class and he awakened his shudra and untouchables countrymen to secure their due rights. His great humanitarian work was based on truth and he struggled to establish basic human rights of man. Therefore, Dr. Ambedkar put him among the place of his gurus beside Buddha and Kabir. Phooley was the great revolutionary who worked for the removal of caste and untouchability. He was a great literary figure also and his literary works is helpful to know the mechanism of caste in our country. Dalit literature is inspired, shaped and guided by the social philosophy of Phooley.

### **Dr. B. R. Ambedkar**

Dr. Ambedkar is the original cultural hero and militant spokesman of Dalit literature, may it be poetry, fiction, drama, criticism or Jalasa. The whole of Dalit literature revolves around a single idea and the idea is Dr. Ambedkar and his egalitarian movement for the removal of

untouchability, caste and Chaturvarnya and to establish the ideal society based on liberty, equality, fraternity and justice. Dr. Ambedkar himself was born in an untouchable family at Ratnagiri and he had suffered much in his school days at Satara. He was the interpreter of speechless world of downtrodden masses and he presented their sorrows and sufferings, exploitation and poverty unto the world parliament at England. He emerged as a victor at world parliament in 1932 against Gandhi and congress. He secured political safeguards for his six millions untouchable brethren. He was the valiant upholder of human rights and perhaps the first in the entire world to do so for any neglected class. He was as bright as sun in the sense that he pierced the darkness of ignorance which had set in India for centuries together under the cloak of Brahmanism. His pen was mightier than sword and he used it to abolish the untouchability from India by article 17. He fought relentlessly against the centuries old fanaticism and dogmatism. He had a charismatic personality and anybody was captured by his pleasant appearance. He not only freed his people from the clutches of orthodoxy but also provided them with reservation to reach higher posts in Indian administrative service. Dr. Ambedkar's ideas are the fountain source of inspiration for Dalit literature. With the constant preaching of these ideas, the Dalit activists and writers are making their headways in India to bring about cultural change and end the Brahmanism.

### **Dalit Aesthetics**

*The French writer Flaubert calls the aesthetics as the 'religion of the beauty'. In the present usage, it means pertaining to sense perception (p.4-5).* Keeping in view Annabhau Sathe's short story '*Chitra*', we can apply the Dalit aesthetics to it. It is a short story of a beautiful young girl called Chitra. This is a real story written by Annabhau Sathe in 1951 at Wategaon in Sangli district. In patriarchal society girls are sold for the trade of prostitution. But how the rural girls protect themselves against this trade of flesh is emphatically portrayed by Annabhau Sathe in this short story. Chitra is forcibly pushed into prostitution at Bombay by her maternal uncle but she remains chaste and escape from the brothel house. On one event in the story General Nair comes at the residence of Sona, elder sister of Chitra but instead of her, General wish to sleep with Chitra. In her curt reply to General Nair, she says, "*Chitra is not a prostitute. She has come to me as a guest. I will not let her to be a prostitute*" (p.125). This is Sila, in other word, chastity or character. In '*Buddha & His Dhamma*,' Dr. Ambedkar says, "*Dhamma is Saddhamma only when it teaches that mere Pradnya is not enough: it must be accompanied by Sila*" (p.295). On another event Sona speak to Chitra, "*Bombay is not as it looks. It's a bad place. I'm devastated. I lost my chastity here. I am selling this body which is*

*well nourished by our mother. Protect your chastity here. I was helpless when I first stepped in Bombay. I was scared. But you don't be afraid. I am here to support you. Lead a happy and respectful life by marrying a good man. Put each and every step carefully in Bombay"* (p.127). Keeping one's chastity (*Sila*) is more valuable than anything else. Both Sona and Chitra are poor girls from a very humble Dalit family background. Protecting one's character is a great wealth for any woman. 'Chitra' is the greatest example of woman chastity throughout Annabhau's literary works. John Keats say beauty lies in the eyes of beholder. We can very easily notices the beauty of character in the personality of Sona. Here lies the Dalit aesthetics.

### **The Nature of the Revolt**

The Dalit literature is always marked by a strong opposition and intense protest against the tyranny, injustice, traditions, age-old customs, dogmatism and fanaticism and the vedic texts that generally tends to fetter the free human spirit. It is of interest to note that the Dalit activists-cum-writers revolted against the literary traditions of Poona based Sadashiv Pethi literature. Yashwant Manohar, Namdev Dhasal, Raja Dhale, Arun Kamble, J. V. Pawar, Arjun Dangle and many more were the major poets and writers who revolted against the mainstream Marathi literary tradition. The Dalit writers looked for inspiration and guidance to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Jotirao Phooley of the previous age and some others had looked even to the Buddha of antiquity. Let us consider in what respects the Dalit writers revolted or parted with mainstream Marathi literary tradition.

### **Revolt against Tradition**

The transition from mainstream Marathi literary tradition to Dalit literature is nothing more than the progress of a spirit of liberty. The Dalit activists -cum-writers were the great champions of underdogs and were devoted to the cause of uplift of downtrodden masses through their works. They wrote against the whims and eccentricities of mainstream literary tradition and their flight of imagination. They vociferously criticized the curbing influence of *Shastras* on the minds of common people. They glorified the values like equality, liberty, fraternity, justice and human qualities like wisdom (*Pradnya*), love, compassion (*Karuna*), *Maitri* (friendship to all living being) through their literary works. Most of the Dalit poets believed in a kind of revolution that will change the existing unjust social order and replace it by egalitarian society as dreamed by Dr. Ambedkar. The Dalit writers discredited humour that was rampant in mainstream literary tradition. Poetry to Dalit writers did not mean just a set of smart gnomes but an instrument or weapon to root out the discriminatory and oppressive Brahminical social order. The Dalit writer's conception of poetry was entirely different from the mainstream literary tradition. Poetry

was the breath and spirit of Dalit activist-cum-poets. They advised the people to lay aside their leisure and take the poetry books in their hands for true learning. They asserted that Dalit literature was more enlightened than rest of the literature in the world. They further propounded that Dalit writers were more rebels and revolutionary who set out on a noble mission to change the *Chaturvarnya* based unjust social system in India. The Dalit poets are seers, clairvoyants, philosophers and to use the phrase of Shelley an unacknowledged legislators of the mankind.

### **Reaction against Injustice**

Generally the stream of Dalit literature began to flow around 1960. It was utterly distinct from the so called upper caste (*Savarnas*) literature. Initially it was the misconception of the people that Dalit literature is about the Dalit by the Dalit. But it is not so. What is a Dalit Literature? The answer is Dalit literature is nothing but Ambedkarite literature. The Dalit literature is a bitter enemy of caste, untouchability, *Chaturvarnya*, serfdom and discrimination of the so called upper caste people. As long as there is caste based discrimination and exploitation in the country, there will be Dalit literature. The Dalit literature advocates the liberation of all exploited masses of any caste and creed. It upholds the human values and rejects the caste based superiority of the few people. The poems, short-stories, novels, autobiographies and dramas etc. forms of Dalit literature were based on facts experience and self-revelation. *The hero of Dalit literature is, of course, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. He has become a myth as well as a cultural hero for Dalit writers. Dr. Ambedkar means conference for thought and action. Dr. Ambedkar means struggle and revolt. Dr. Ambedkar means new life, new expression (p.305).* The Dalit literature attacks inhumanity and injustice done to poor strata of society. Those who struggles against oppression and tyranny, succeed in life. The Dalit literature stood relentlessly and single handedly against the arrogant and powerful orthodoxy. The Dalit literature rejects the prolonged dark age of ignorance that was ushered in India during Brahminical regime. The rejection and revolt are the hallmarks of Dalit literature. The ill-treatment at the hands of *Savarnas*, caste conflict and poverty stricken life were the major themes in Dalit literature. The well-known writer P. E. Sonkamble's '*Athavaniche Pakshi*' (1979) emerged as distinguished text of articles relating to his miserable days at village. The Dalit literature works as a weapon against the orthodoxy. A new generation of poets and writers emerged in Dalit literature after the 1956 Buddhist conversion. These Dalit writers wrote for social change and their art was not for art's sake, but for life's sake. Through their works they narrated the untold stories of miseries, sorrows, poverty, injustice and exploitation that was rampant all over the Dalit community. *The first Jalasakar Kisan Phagu Bansode who had Satyashodhak movement's background, wrote a*



*Jalasa* entitled as '*Sanatan Dharmacha Pancharangi Tamasha*' in 1925 (p.323). This *Jalasa* is written in a satiric way exposing the foul play of *Sanatan Dharma*. Namdev Dhasal in his '*Golpitha*' published in 1972, gave a shocking surprise to literary circle, particularly mainstream Marathi literary tradition. He became famous all over Maharashtra over night for his rebellious thought and vulgar language. In 1973, '*Gavkusabaheerchya Kavita*' by Waman Nimbalkar was published following Dhasal's '*Golpitha*'. Then '*Kondwada*' by Daya Pawar followed in 1974. Namdev Dhasal's vulgarity of language was an attractive point for innovative poets to follow. There is a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings in Dhasal's poetry. J. V. Pawar came out with the publication of '*Nakebandi*' in 1976. His poems has a social perspectives and the mirror of society. Yashwant Manohar emerged with the publication of '*Utthangumpha*', '*Murtibhanjan*' and '*Jivanyatra*' in 1977, 1982 and 1985 respectively. Manohar brought storm in Dalit poetry with his philosophical bent to his poems. Arjun Dangle published his anthology '*Cchawani Halate Ahe*' in 1977. The title of his anthology itself reveals the militant attitude of his people. All these poets were Angry Young Men who gave rebellious touch and base to their poetry. A periodical entitled 'Revolt' was started in Bombay by Dalit poets and activists.

#### **Namdev Dhasal and Poetic Diction**

Diction means writer's choice of words, phrases and sentence at the time of writings. Namdev Dhasal is the most complete representative of modern Dalit poetry. He is known for his vulgar style of writings throughout Marathi literature. His poems deals with burning issues of the day. He manifest himself as a rebel in all his poems. His poems has deep connotation. '*Golpitha*' (1972) is his masterpiece which is acclaimed highly in Dalit poetry. We may call it 'Bible' of rebel poets. His dashing images and daring style of writing fascinated the younger generation in Dalit poetry. Dhasal's poetry is not only a revolt against the conventional school of *Sadashiv Pethi* literature but also a revolt against the traditional poetic measures and diction. To express his fervent passion he use a language that is quite vulgar. He use free verse to curse the system. One of the poems from '*Golpitha*' is '*15 August, 71*' in which he refers Independence Day as the name of which donkey. Dhasal in his poetry out and out cursed the system in vulgar words. In style and versification Dhasal and his contemporary Dalit poets reacted against the cloying sweetness and harmony of the mainstream Marathi literary tradition. Dhasal, Manohar and others deliberately avoided traditional poetic expressions as they had lost their meaning through overuse. The language of poetry should be the natural language of impassioned feelings and Dhasal's language was totally natural as it sprung from his heart out of anger against this system. We often stumble against ragged and unpoetic words in Dhasal's poetry. The versification of

Dhasal is also, like his diction, coarse and jerky in contrast to the mainstream Marathi literature. Like Metaphysical poetry, Dhasal abruptly starts his poetry with heated argument against the oppressive system of the so called caste Hindus. The readers wonders to read this. The salient features of Dhasal's poetry is passionate feelings, obscenity, heated arguments and obscurity that goes to high peak. Most of the Dalit poets wrote on Ambedkarite ideology. We owe our good poetry to them. All of them are strongly marked individuals and Angry Young Men of 1950s British fiction. Only Dhasal was a mixture of Ambedkar and Marx. Shahir Amar Shaikh's daughter, Mallika, herself a poetess, fell in love with his robust poetry and married him publicly.

### **Realism and Social Analysis**

The Dalit literature depicts the sorrows and pains of downtrodden masses whose breath, emotions, hopes and ambitions were strangled by systematic conspiracies since centuries together. The Dalit literature manifest the hopes, ambitions, anger and struggle of those trampled people. The Dalit literature erupted through the constant struggle of Dr. Ambedkar and from the heart of those people who kept this struggle alive into the deep bottom of their heart. This literature first came to be known as revolt literature only through poetry. The Dalit literature is born from the womb of freedom. The powerful feelings and strong consciousness are first expressed through the poetry and which conscience may be more powerful or strong than the conscience of freedom? When Dalit first recognized their age-old slavery and they decided to abolish it, the first attempt to overthrow it was their word of poetry. Tryambak Sapkale, a poet from Marathwada says, *"The first exclaim of writer is his own poem. He first speak in poem. Then he stands in whatever field he likes. The Dalit writer is same in this respect. Once it was said that poem emanate from heart and thought from mind. But both parts are within human body. Therefore, poetry is not only expressive of emotions but it express thought also. This is one of the characteristics of Dalit poetry. Today if there is any poem that is expressive of thought in mainstream literary tradition, it is none other than the Dalit poetry. The poem of thought do not wander into the world of imagination. It is not bombastic. It is related to earth standing firmly on it. It has independent contemplation. Its language too becomes different. Its meaning and expression too becomes different"* (p.350-351). The Dalit literature created a stir in mainstream Marathi literary tradition. The old pattern and norms of established mainstream Marathi tradition was overthrown by Dalit poetry. Matthew Arnold's definition of poetry as '*criticism of life*' was accepted by Dalit literature. The Dalit literature exposed the hypocrisy, insolence and orthodoxy of the so called upper caste people. The Dalit literature is not bombastic world of emotional

restlessness or helplessness. It emerged out of anger against the *Johar Mai-Bap* attitude. The Dalit literature acted as a weapon against the economic, social, cultural and political exploitation.

Baburao Bagul and Shankarrao Kharat wrote short stories that portrays the pitiable situation of Dalit life in countryside areas. Bagul published two volumes of short stories, namely '*When I Concealed My Caste*' (1963) and '*Death is becoming Cheaper*' (1969). Both these two volumes of short stories created a stir in literary circle. In '*When I Concealed My Caste*', the protagonist Kashinath Sapkal is a teacher who conceals his caste at the village where he is in service. On revealing his caste, the upper caste men beats him severely. He says, "*You people have not beaten me. Manu has beaten me*" (p.374). At the very outset of the story, the writer says that man should not take birth in Dalit caste in this country. Suppose, he is born in the same caste, he has to bear such an insult and pain that he like to die, like to taste poison. In '*Companion of Sun*' the protagonist is Shankar Jadhav who beats the culture with whip abusing it. He says, "*Which culture is it? The one which beheaded the Shambhuk, the one which drove Sita out of home when she was pregnant, the one which do not permit the woman and Shudras to learn and possess arms and acquire wealth. We do not accept such a culture*" (p.375). This terrible philosophy of spiritualism, fatalism, rebirth and Karma theory that advocates exploitation of poor people and disables them permanently is not acceptable to him. He denounce it.

Shankarrao Kharat emerged as one of the leading short story writers in late sixties. His '*Bara Balutedar*' a volume of short stories was published in the year 1959. Later on, his *Tadipar* (1961), *Sangava* (1962) *Titvicha Fera* (1963) and *Sutaka* (1964) etc. volumes of short stories were published. Kharat had extensive and micro observation power. He revealed the pain and grief of dumb people in his various stories. He is a sole short-story writer in Dalit literature who gives sociological details in his stories. He has depicted such a people in his stories who are tired of *Balutedari* system and wish to get rid of it, but can't do that due to helplessness. There are simple characters in his stories.

### Conclusion

Dalit literature brought many innovative writers on the literary scenario all over India. Dalit literature vociferously protested against the prevalent social mores, institution and established literary tradition. The Dalit writer's angry mood against system was effectively epitomized in their poetry, stories, fictions, dramas and autobiographies. Dalit literature created many radicals, revolutionists and even anarchists in some parts of the country. Yet it is not stamped as naxalite literature, though Dalit writers have a soft corner for them somewhere deep

in their heart. Dalit literature is the literature of enlightenment and it is a great social doctrine. No literature in the world can be compared with it. It is unmatched.

### **Works Cited**

1. Manohar, Yashwant. *Pratibhawant Sahityik Annabhau Sathe*. Pune: Sanay Prakashan, 2019, p. 46-47
2. Ambedkar, B. R. *The Buddha and His Dhamma*. Mumbai: People's Education Society, 1957, p. 89
3. Meshram, Yogendra. *Dalit Literature: Its Origin and Development*. Nagpur: Mangesh Publication, 1998, p. 4
4. Abrams M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Cornell: CENGAGE Learning, 1957, .4
5. Sathe, Annabhau. *Sahityaratna Lokshahir Annabhau Sathe Nivadak Vangmay (Kadambari Khand -1)*. Pune: Sahityaratna Lokshahir Annabhau Sathe Charitra Sadhane Prakashan Samiti, Maharashtra Shasan, 2017. p. 125
6. Ambedkar, B. R. *The Buddha and His Dhamma*. Mumbai: People's Education Society, 1957, p. 295
7. Sathe, Annabhau. p. 127
8. More, Dinesh. *Marathwadyatil Dalit Chalavalicha Itihas (Up to 2000 A.D.)*. Aurangabad: Anand Prakashan, 2016, p. 305
9. Ibid. p. 323
10. Ibid. p. 350-351
11. Ibid. p. 374
12. Ibid. p. 375

## 4. The Role of Dalit Leaders in Shaping Indian Politics

**Mr. Datta Jadhav**

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science,  
Vivekanand College, Kolhapur. (Empowered Autonomous)

---

### Abstract

The socio-political landscape of India has been deeply influenced by its caste system, where Dalits (previously known as "untouchables") have historically been marginalized. Despite their historical oppression, Dalit leaders have played pivotal roles in shaping Indian politics. This paper explores the significant contributions of Dalit leaders to Indian politics, highlighting their efforts toward social justice, equality, and political empowerment for marginalized communities. The paper traces the rise of Dalit leaders, their ideologies, and their influence on national policies, political movements, and legislative changes.

**Keywords:** Dalit leaders, Indian politics, caste system, political empowerment, social justice, B.R. Ambedkar, Kanshi Ram, Mayawati, Bahujan Samaj Party, affirmative action, reservations.

### Introduction

India's political structure has been shaped by various movements, and Dalit leaders have emerged as crucial figures in these transformations. The Dalit community, comprising a significant portion of India's population, has been subjected to systemic discrimination and exclusion for centuries. However, over time, Dalit leaders have become instrumental in challenging the social hierarchy and advocating for political, economic, and social rights for their community. (See Omvedt, 1994, p. 12–35; Jaffrelot, 2003, p. 52–74) These leaders' movements, which stemmed from the Dalit struggle for equality, played an integral role in shaping India's political landscape.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a pivotal figure in the Dalit movement, is often regarded as the architect of the Indian Constitution and a key proponent of Dalit rights. His efforts to ensure the social, political, and economic upliftment of Dalits have been foundational in the fight against untouchability. (See Zelliot, 2004, p. 10–33) Ambedkar's advocacy for social justice, his role in the drafting of the Indian Constitution, and his formation of the Independent Labour Party marked significant milestones in Dalit political mobilization. His ideas about caste and social justice have had a lasting influence on Indian politics. (See Ambedkar, 1941, p. 20–45)

Kanshi Ram further propelled Dalit politics by founding the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in 1984, focusing on the political representation of Dalits and other backward classes. (See Kumar, 2009, p. 90–110) Through his efforts, Kanshi Ram broke the hold of upper-caste dominance in Indian politics, giving a political voice to marginalized communities. He stressed the importance of Dalit unity and worked towards organizing Dalits under a common banner for political power, which led to the BSP's rise in Uttar Pradesh and beyond. (See Shastri, 2006, p. 119–145)

Mayawati, a prominent figure in the BSP, played a key role in advancing Dalit politics further. (See Jaffrelot, 2003, p. 160–180) She became the first Dalit woman to serve as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and used her political position to push for the empowerment of Dalits and other marginalized groups. Mayawati's leadership has shown the power of Dalit-centered political movements in shaping state and national policies, emphasizing the importance of reservations and affirmative action. (See Shastri, 2006, p. 145–175)

Overall, Dalit leaders have significantly contributed to reshaping India's political system. Their efforts in securing reservations, promoting policies for Dalit rights, and challenging the established social order have made them central figures in the country's modern political history. (See Gupta, 2000, p. 95–110; Weiner, 1990, p. 104–130) While their path has not been without significant challenges, including caste-based violence, political opposition, and internal divisions, their continued influence on contemporary Indian politics is undeniable. (See Weiner, 1990, p. 187–212)

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To examine the historical evolution of Dalit politics: The study aims to trace the historical journey of Dalit leaders in Indian politics, from the colonial period to post-Independence India. (See Jaffrelot, 2003, p. 52-74; Kumar, 2009, p. 25-50)
2. To evaluate the contributions of key Dalit leaders: The paper seeks to critically assess the roles and impact of prominent Dalit leaders such as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Kanshi Ram, and Mayawati, among others, in shaping the political landscape of India. (See Zelliott, 2004, p. 10–33; Jaffrelot, 2003, p. 160-180)
3. To analyze the socio-political movements led by Dalit leaders: The study intends to explore the political and social movements spearheaded by Dalit leaders that aimed at securing rights, recognition, and equality for Dalits in Indian society. (See Omvedt, 1994, p. 12–35; Kumar, 2009, p. 90-110)

4. To investigate the influence of Dalit leaders on legislation and policy formation: The research aims to evaluate how Dalit leaders have influenced key legislation, particularly concerning reservations, affirmative action, and socio-economic rights for marginalized communities. (See Weiner, 1990, p. 104-130; Shastri, 2006, p. 119–145)
5. To understand the challenges and limitations faced by Dalit leaders in Indian politics: The study seeks to highlight the obstacles faced by Dalit leaders, including caste-based violence, internal divisions, and opposition from mainstream political forces, which have hindered their political progress. (See Weiner, 1990, p. 187-212; Gupta, 2000, p. 95-110)
6. To predict the future of Dalit politics in India: The study will analyze current trends and suggest the potential trajectory of Dalit politics in India, with an emphasis on the increasing role of Dalits in contemporary political discourse. (See Jaffrelot, 2003, p. 160-180; Omvedt, 1994, p. 120-150)

### **Hypothesis**

1. Dalit leaders have played a significant role in transforming Indian politics: The study hypothesizes that Dalit leaders, through their political activism, have played a crucial role in shaping India's democratic and political systems, pushing for social justice, political representation, and the empowerment of marginalized communities. (See Ambedkar, 1941, p. 20-45; Zelliot, 2004, p. 200-230)
2. The rise of Dalit-led political parties has altered the political dynamics of India: It is hypothesized that the formation of Dalit-centered political organizations, such as the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), has significantly altered the power dynamics in regional and national politics, challenging traditional caste-based political structures. (See Shastri, 2006, p. 119-145; Kumar, 2009, p. 90-110)
3. Dalit leaders have faced substantial challenges in their political careers, but have nonetheless contributed to key policy changes: The hypothesis posits that despite facing numerous socio-political challenges, Dalit leaders have successfully brought about important policy changes, particularly in the areas of affirmative action, education, and employment. (See Weiner, 1990, p. 104-130; Zelliot, 2004, p. 200-230)
4. The future of Dalit politics is likely to be marked by greater inclusion and influence in mainstream political discourse: The study suggests that with increasing political awareness, grassroots movements, and social media, Dalit politics will continue to rise

in prominence, contributing to more inclusive political representation. (See Gupta, 2000, p. 95-110; Omvedt, 1994, p. 120-150)

## **1. Historical Context: Caste and Political Marginalization**

The caste system in India, entrenched for centuries, has been a tool of social division. Dalits were excluded from mainstream political and social participation, relegated to performing menial tasks. The emergence of modern Indian politics, particularly during British colonial rule, did not significantly address the needs of Dalits. However, the socio-political struggle led by Dalit leaders began to challenge this system. (See Gupta, 2000, p. 95-110; Omvedt, 1994, p. 12-35)

### **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Contribution**

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, was a towering figure in Dalit politics. He fought for the political and social rights of Dalits and other marginalized groups, advocating for their representation in government, access to education, and the abolition of untouchability. Ambedkar's formation of the Scheduled Castes Federation in 1942 marked a significant shift in Dalit political mobilization. His work laid the foundation for future Dalit political movements. (See Zelliot, 2004, p. 10-33; Ambedkar, 1941, p. 20-45)

### **The Poona Pact and Ambedkar's Role**

Ambedkar's struggle reached a crucial point with the Poona Pact of 1932, an agreement between Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi that granted separate electorates for Dalits, later replaced by reserved seats in the legislature. Ambedkar's leadership and his demand for political power were vital for the political empowerment of Dalits. (See Jaffrelot, 2003, p. 52-74; Shastri, 2006, p. 119-145)

## **2. The Rise of Dalit Political Movements**

The post-Independence period saw the rise of several Dalit leaders who sought to further the cause of their community in the political arena. Kanshi Ram and Mayawati were two such influential figures who shaped the modern Dalit political landscape. (See Jaffrelot, 2003, p. 160-180; Kumar, 2009, p. 90-110)

### **Kanshi Ram and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)**

In the 1980s, Kanshi Ram founded the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), a political party that aimed to represent Dalits, backward classes, and other marginalized groups. Kanshi Ram's vision was to create a political force that could challenge the dominance of upper-caste elites in Indian politics. His ideology, which emphasized the empowerment of Dalits through political participation, was a game-changer. Under his leadership, the BSP emerged as a significant



political party in Uttar Pradesh, and his work in mobilizing Dalits and other backward classes has had a lasting impact. (See Shastri, 2006, p. 119-145; Gupta, 2000, p. 95-110)

### **Mayawati's Leadership and Political Strategy**

Mayawati, Kanshi Ram's protégée, became the face of the BSP and served multiple terms as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. She championed Dalit rights and sought to uplift the socio-economic conditions of her community. Mayawati's rise to power was a testament to the political power Dalits could wield when united. Her tenure as Chief Minister marked a period of significant policy changes aimed at improving the conditions of Dalits, including increased reservations in government jobs and educational institutions. (See Zelliot, 2004, p. 200-230; Jaffrelot, 2003, p. 160-180)

### **3. Impact on National Politics and Policy**

Dalit leaders have significantly influenced national politics and policymaking. Through their struggles and activism, they have brought the issues of Dalits to the forefront of political discourse in India. (See Omvedt, 1994, p. 12-35; Gupta, 2000, p. 95-110)

#### **Constitutional and Legislative Impact**

The Indian Constitution, crafted by Ambedkar, laid the legal foundation for Dalit rights, including provisions for affirmative action, or reservations, in education, employment, and political representation. Dalit leaders have played an essential role in ensuring that these provisions are upheld and expanded over the years. Ambedkar's work in drafting these provisions laid the groundwork for the political empowerment of Dalits. (See Ambedkar, 1941, p. 20-45; Jaffrelot, 2003, p. 52-74)

#### **The Role of Dalit Political Parties**

Dalit-led political parties, especially the BSP, have forced mainstream parties to address issues concerning Dalit communities. Their participation in coalition governments, especially in Uttar Pradesh, has been instrumental in shaping state and national policies. Moreover, the growing political assertiveness of Dalit groups has pushed other political parties to adopt more inclusive stances on caste-based issues. (See Kumar, 2009, p. 90-110; Shastri, 2006, p. 119-145)

### **4. Challenges Faced by Dalit Leaders**

While Dalit leaders have contributed immensely to Indian politics, they have also faced several challenges. The dominance of upper-caste political structures, economic disparities, and caste-based violence have made it difficult for Dalit leaders to secure long-term political victories. In addition, there have been internal divisions within Dalit communities, complicating efforts to unify them for political action. (See Zelliot, 2004, p. 200-230; Weiner, 1990, p. 104-130)

## **5. The Future of Dalit Politics in India**

Dalit politics continues to evolve in India, with new leaders emerging from different parts of the country. The increasing political consciousness among Dalits, combined with the rise of social media and grassroots activism, has created a new landscape for Dalit political participation. However, there is still much work to be done in ensuring that Dalits achieve equality and social justice in India. (See Gupta, 2000, p. 95–110; Omvedt, 1994, p. 12–35)

### **Conclusion**

#### **.1 Historical contribution**

Dalit leaders, particularly Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, have played a pivotal role in shaping India's social and political landscape. Ambedkar's efforts in drafting the Indian Constitution laid the foundation for an inclusive society, with provisions that guaranteed the rights of Dalits, including abolition of untouchability and affirmative action (Ambedkar, 1941, p. 25–50). His advocacy for Dalit rights remains central to the discourse on social justice in India (Jaffrelot, 2003, p. 52–74). Through Ambedkar's influence, India took a significant step toward the recognition of Dalit rights, shaping the nation's democratic ethos (Zelliot, 2004, p. 10–33).

#### **.2 Impact on national politics**

The emergence of Dalit political parties, such as the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), led by Kanshi Ram and later Mayawati, has had a profound impact on the political landscape of India (Shastri, 2006, p. 119–145). These parties have disrupted the dominance of upper-caste politics in several regions, particularly Uttar Pradesh, and have been instrumental in ensuring that Dalits are represented in legislative bodies and government institutions (Jaffrelot, 2003, p. 160–180). Their rise is seen as a direct challenge to the traditional caste-based political system, advocating for the empowerment and upliftment of Dalits (Kumar, 2009, p. 90–110).

#### **3. Policy changes**

Dalit leaders have played a critical role in influencing policy reforms that support affirmative action, caste-based reservations, and broader social justice measures (Weiner, 1990, p. 104–130). These policies have facilitated greater access for Dalits to education, employment, and political spaces. Dr. Ambedkar's advocacy for reservations in education and government jobs remains a cornerstone of India's affirmative action policies (Zelliot, 2004, p. 50–75), and the BSP's political success further strengthened these policies at the state level (Shastri, 2006, p. 145–175).

#### 4. Ongoing struggles

Despite the significant strides made by Dalit leaders, challenges remain. Dalit communities continue to face caste-based violence, social exclusion, and political opposition from entrenched upper-caste elites (Gupta, 2000, p. 95–110). Additionally, internal divisions within the Dalit community, particularly in terms of political representation, complicate efforts for unity (Weiner, 1990, p. 187–212). The struggle for full social, political, and economic equality remains a work in progress, demanding continued vigilance and activism.

#### 5. Future Trajectory

The future of Dalit politics holds promise, with a new generation of leaders and increased political participation from Dalit communities. There is growing awareness and mobilization among Dalit youth, aided by social media and grassroots movements (Omvedt, 1994, p. 120–150). However, true equality will only be achieved through sustained reforms, especially in education, employment, and social integration. The success of Dalit political movements will depend on the ability to overcome internal divisions and the continued challenge of caste-based violence (Gupta, 2000, p. 95–110; Omvedt, 1994, p. 155–175).

#### References

1. Ambedkar, B. R. *Thoughts on Linguistic States*. 1941. Publisher: Government of Maharashtra.
2. Gupta, Dipankar, *Interpreting Caste: From the Ancient to the Modern*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000.
3. Jaffrelot, Christophe, *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Low Castes in North India*. London: Hurst & Co., 2003.
4. Kumar, A., *Dalit Politics in India: A History of Struggle and Protest*. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2009.
5. Omvedt, Gail, *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1994.
6. Shastri, S., *The Rise of Dalit Politics: A Comparative Study of Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006.
7. Weiner, Myron, *The Politics of Scarcity: Public Demand for Welfare in India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.
8. Zelliot, Eleanor, *From Untouchable to Dalit: Essays on the Ambedkar Movement*. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2004.

## 5. Reflection of Towards Emancipatory Identity and Assertions of Buddhist Women in Maharashtra

**Dr. Sanjay Shamrao Kamble**

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology,  
Shikashanmaharshi Dr. Bapuji Salunkhe College, Miraj.

---

### Abstract

The present paper is mainly focused on the reflection of towards emancipatory identity and assertions of Buddhist women in Maharashtra. The aim of this paper is on the sociological discourse of emancipatory identity and assertion applied on the Buddhist women. It is concerned with the way of social experience, movement and knowledge building in creating emancipatory identity and assertion of Buddhist women in Maharashtra. Sociologists and political scientists have been writing on this issue for some time and explaining about practices of identity and assertion. The paper deals with how sociologists understand emancipatory religion and its current relevance and identity in assertion of Buddhist women in Maharashtra. The purpose is to understand the emancipatory role of religious identity and assertion for restructuring the social structure in different contexts. This article stresses on the evolution of emancipatory identity of Buddhist women during the post conversion time in Maharashtra, by assessing the various organizations as well as individual attempts toward assertion on the part of Buddhist women and the attempts to forge independent identities to challenge discrimination based on Caste and gender in the public sphere.

**Keywords:** emancipatory identity, religion, assertion, Buddhist women Buddhist conversion

### Introduction

The present paper is mainly focused on the reflection of towered emancipatory identity and assertion of Buddhist women in Maharashtra. The aim of this paper is on the sociological discourse of emancipatory identity and assertion applied on the Buddhist women. It is concerned with the way of social experience, movement and knowledge building in creating emancipatory identity and assertion of Buddhist women in Maharashtra. Sociologists and political scientists have been writing on this issue for some time and explaining about practices of identity and assertion. The paper deals with how sociologists understand emancipatory religion and its

current relevance and identity in assertion of Buddhist women in Maharashtra. How have sociologists understood the emancipatory forms of religion in critical traditional discourse? By analyzing the new politics of language the present processes of identity assertion of Buddhist women has been undertaken. The purpose is to understand the emancipatory role of religious identity and assertion for restructuring the social structure in different contexts. This article stresses on the evolution of emancipatory identity of Buddhist women during the post conversion time in Maharashtra, by assessing the various organizations as well as individual attempts toward assertion on the part of Buddhist women and the attempts to forge independent identities to challenge discrimination based on gender in the public sphere. Historical evidence gives proof related to the changing human relation with the change in socio-economic and cultural system. I argue that the Buddhist women have progressively and spontaneously chosen to convert to Buddhism without any influence from the outside which can be termed as an exercise of democratic choice. . Sociologists and political scientists have identified different parameters of emancipatory identity of Buddhist women. In this research paper the emancipation, identity and articulation of assertion of social experience, movement and knowledge construction are been studied.

I argue that Buddhist women have constructed re-framed and represented a distinct religious consciousness in broader areas of their lives. This study is based on analysis of literature written by Buddhist women coupled with empirical observation and discussion with Buddhist women from the different areas of Maharashtra. They rejected the patriarchal modes of exploitation and humiliation from other religious identities. They criticized traditional male dominated society and constructed emancipatory forms of identity and assertion and made out social space and contextual counter production of knowledge by collecting different social experiences and contributing towards movements for social equality, justice and dignity at different levels. In this paper, I have focused on empirical observation about the Buddhist women at Pune, Mumbai, and Nagpur city in Maharashtra.

### **Objectives of Research**

This research paper mainly focused on the new emancipatory identity and assertion of Buddhist women in Maharashtra. The aim of this paper is on the sociological discourse of emancipatory identity and assertion applied on the Buddhist women. It is concerned with the way of social experience, movement and knowledge building in creating emancipatory identity and assertion of Buddhist women in Maharashtra.

### Research Methodology

The present research uses both positivistic as well as interpretivist approaches to study the phenomenon of emancipatory identity and assertion of Buddhist women in Maharashtra. Its link with to phrnomnon of Ambedkari Buddhist conversion and result of this maiming bring about from the social actors point of view is using interpretative approached of Max Weber. There are different cause and consequences of Buddhist conversation which can't be studies using a single emancipatory identity and assertion of Buddhist women;s under interpretative perspective . this study primary collected data from field observation and discussion people with local phenomena and secondary data collected from books, magazine literature internet website articles research paper. This data analysis technique using interpretive and discourse presentation.

### The Conceptually and Theoretical Understanding of Sociology of Religion

The understanding term of sociology of religion as defined by the different sociologist in Indian context is important. The sociological discourse on religion needs to assess, understand and integrate as ideas of constructed power politics as binaries in between majority and minority religious identity and practices. The social sciences are making new language of social institutionalization of power and practices. I undertake the sociologist T.M. Madan's link with the social binaries with the contribution of Louis Dumont at South and East Asia. But writers such as F.G Bailey and Andre Beitellie also show the political religious conflict in south Asia. Sociological language demonstrates the constructed nature of the sociology of knowledge. This knowledge relates to the construction of our social life which is helpful for the understanding religious identity in a democratic nation. Madan's use of the term of 'secularism' as a process of secularism in democratic way and Beitelle's use of the theological analysis need not explain the Indian religion. (Patel Sujata 2007). Dr Ambedkar's work stresses on religion as an emancipation from of all exploitation and operation from the Hindu religious social order and system. Dr. Ambedkar define "*religion must mainly be a matter of principles only it can not be a matter of rules. The movement it degenerates into rules, it ceases to be a religion as it kills responsibility which is an as sense of the true religious act*". He argued religion that teaches liberty, equality and fraternity. He argued "*a people and their religion must be judged by social standard based on social ethics. No other standard worked have any meaning if religion is held to be necessary good for the well-being of the people*". He did critical understanding the Hindu religious order and practices. He turns toward Buddha dhamma for counter religious human

liberation to challenge the religion, caste and gender in Indian society. He had constructed own creation and indigenous religion based on freedom, equality and brotherhood and social dignity.

### **The Concept of Religious Emancipation with Identity and Assertion**

The concept of religious emancipation is interlinked with the reformation of identity and assertion of Buddhist women. This conceptual framework addresses and critiques the traditional religious cultural practices and points out the new ideological practices and Buddhist cultural ethos which are internalized. . These movements have become active after the Buddhist conversion of ex-untouchable people who belonged to the Hindu social order earlier. This people mainly engage in activities under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar, father of the Indian Constitutions. Dr. Ambedkar had struggled for the annihilation of caste and collective representation In India. Indian Constitutions have provisions not only towards the right to liberation from all exploitation and humiliation from religious practices but also towards the liberation of human life. Religious conversion challenges caste and gender based exploitation because this conversion is a counter production of knowledge and practices at different social, cultural, economic and politics at public spheres. Therefore, Buddhist women are creating new spaces of the life world. They make different practices to alter their social experiences. This experience constructed collective consciousness among the ex-untouchable caste people. It brings awareness among women to construct their own emancipatory identity and assertion to restructure traditional values, norms, status and socio-cultural practices in broader public sphere. They constructed new values, norms and practices at organizational levels and also have established identity at counter public level. They have created social consensus and are actively participating at restructuring and remaking new life styles.

### **Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Emancipatory Buddhist conversion**

The year 2016 will be symbolically important in the History of Ambedkarite people as one of the most significant year for the rise of emancipatory identity and assertion of Buddhist women. While celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Buddhist conversion, numerous Dalit, women and people from non-dalit caste converted into new emancipatory religious identity and assertion in Maharashtra. Both the historical event related to Ambedkar's vision to which Dalit and non-Dalit masses lean toward emancipation against the traditional exploitative and operational based religious order and practices. Especially, the women have major role to play in the identification of liberal and cultural, non-materialistic construction of the movement of Buddhist women in the public sphere. It is an essential task in new social movements. This movement has witnessed to all the struggles for emancipatory

cultural and religious identity as human liberation for social justice and dignity in the public domain.

### **Emancipatory Religious Cultural Identity and Assertion**

Formulating emancipatory religious and cultural identity and assertion for the dalit women is linked to the task of liberation within the new social movements in India. In Ambedkar's understanding the ideas of emancipatory identity as human beings of inferior rank paved the way for the religious awakening. As a passionate critique of Bramhans and Bramhinism, this prompted him to follow and get converted to the Buddhist Dhamma. This emancipatory identity created self-respect, dignity and empowerment as collective representation and consciousness among the ex-untouchable communities, especially the Mahar community, in Maharashtra. He showed that religion plays an important role in the construction of ideology and life style. As constructed legitimization process of religion, caste and gender are fundamental to the process of institutionalization. Therefore, people who have religiously sanctioned dominance have control on the lower caste and women as the dominated strata. Dalit consciousness has link with the religious purity and impurity as disabled groups. They created own ideology of emancipatory identity and assertion and rejected old beliefs and initiated alternative practices in the public domain.

This idea of emancipatory identity among the masses related to all the religious and cultural practices and identity uses the dominating traditional religious social order and practices. The feminist intellectuals have focused primarily on the talk of gender related to domination and operation of livelihood, biology and socio cultural construct which has given rise to socially transformative struggles in Modern society. But this cannot be equated with religious, caste and gender based discrimination and gendered relations of emancipation. Marxists believe that the liberation of women can succeed only if it is subordinated to the legendry and more fundamental task of transforming class relations. (Wright E. O. 1993). The problem is visible in gender emancipatory and class less society. However, Dr. Ambedkar presented the Buddha Dhamma as emancipatory identity and assertion to challenge the religion, caste and gender on the basis of exploitation and operation in traditional religious system. An Annihilation of caste and gender issue present challenges to the present politics of Hindu, modern secular, Marxist political wings and other political parties which seek to promote the common identity of all on religious, social justice and dignity level.



### **The Buddhist Women's Movement and Discourse**

The Buddhist women's movement and discourse to produce consciousness in concentrated social knowledge about emancipatory identity and assertion challenges the mainstream feminist formulation. These women locate themselves in Dalit to Buddhist emancipatory identity and construct transformation of social relations at different level. They accepted emancipatory identity and assertion from the conversion of Buddh Dharma on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 1956, under the leadership Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and his ideology of Buddha Dharma. It is mainly based on humanistic social emancipation addressed to Indian society. This is the site of multiple role play as Mahar, Buddhist and Dalit as composite new identity. The identity shows at Buddhist movement focused on religious conversion and socio-political emancipation in India and Maharashtra. They are reworking on the discourses and representations, ritual practices and institutions of Buddhist towards formation of alternative society. This is based at the level of emancipatory identity and assertion. (Beltz, Johannes 2005). Religion as emancipatory identity works to address the exploitation and operation as traditional religious practices and order by Buddhist movement (G Aloysius 1998). The discourse thrust is to produce the new emancipatory identity and assertion against the traditional religion, caste and gender based exploitation and operation at social transformation level. On one hand they religious assertion for self-development, confidence and empowerment in modern society.

The Buddhist women constructed the discourse of empirical literature. It is the part of Buddhist women experience and they make their own representation and construct restructured experience in the Buddhist literature but it links with the whole reflection of expressions of different viewed on religion, caste and gender. Therefore, they represent all issues of common women those are never included in this process of development. They developed their own creativity but the male dominated society never accepted their contribution at different levels. They face multiple identities and assertion to struggle at internal and external individual, domestic and social practice level. They talk our causes in different exploitation and operation in religious cultural and gender domination. They challenge civil society, state and social scientist on the agenda of annihilation of caste and gender based discrimination and particularization to universalize in creative literature. This literature constructed their Ambedkari Buddhist emancipatory identity and assertion. They demanded social equality, justice and dignity in literature level.

### **Filed Observation and Discussion**

After the Buddhist conversion, the Dalit women have organized their ideology of Ambedkari based Buddhist women organization which represents the emancipatory identity and assertion against exploitation and operation from the Hindu religious practices. Dr. Ambedkar had established the Bhartay Bauddh Mahasabha in Maharashtra. This worked to spread the awareness among ex-untouchables for scientific humanistic society. This is not ritual practices but this is spread out the Buddhist philosophical way of social cultural mobilization and organizational link with Indian Buddhist community. Bauddhajana Panchayat Samiti roots in the B.P.S go back at least to 1938 with the formation of the Mahar Samaj Seva Sangha. This community worked for the welfare of caste association taken by Ambedkar in 1941, renamed the Mahar Panchayat Samiti and give new dimension and activities. While the Mahar Samaj Seva Sangh had been spread at Kokan, Thane, Kolaba and Ratnagiri and the M.J.P.S organized in the Bombay Presidency become instrument of social mobilization as well as behavior pattern of Mahar community. Upon conversion to Buddhism the M.J.P.S converted into Buddhajana Panchayat Samiti to spread Buddhism and Buddhist practices in the community level. It is direct link with the Buddhist society. This Samiti conducted different activities with impact on spread out from the Bombay, Nagpur, and Aurangabad and Pune regional central level. it is related to the Bauddha Mahasabha growth of Knowledge at institutional levees toward new emancipatory identity and assertion level.

Buddhist assertions have impact on the social, religious, cultural political mobilization among the ex-untouchable. The converted people adopted and follow different life style which is based on the Ambedkari Buddhism. The Buddhist women are working on the primary issue of educational and occupational mobilization in the present context. Therefore, the rising new middle class among the ex-untouchable so called converted Buddhist people. The Middle class Buddhist women actively participated at different right based issue of owns community and other community women at civil society, state and social movement level.

### **Conclusion**

Finally, the concept of an "emancipatory identity" for Buddhist women refers to the process through which women within Buddhist communities assert their rights and identities in a manner that promotes their liberation and empowerment. This idea encompasses both individual and collective dimensions and can be understood through various lenses, including religious, social, cultural, and political perspectives. The reflections of emancipatory identity and assertion of Buddhist women have created the space towards the new human liberation. It has effects on the religious socialization against the traditional Hindu social order and system which was based on hierarchy and inequality .This will help to

spread out the Knowledge about the Buddha Dhama in particular section of society. They critically examine the traditions of Hindu religion, which has caste and gender power based exploitation and oppression in civil society. They rejected the caste and gender based discrimination in human society and to work on value of social equality, justice on social dignity level. They created the feeling of self-respect and dignity restored at community level by Buddhist movement. Its effects are showing in the Dalit literature as Buddhist literature movement among the human society and manifestation of their emancipatory identity and assertion among the ex-untouchable and women by Buddhist movement. The reflections of towards emancipatory identity of Buddhist women is a dynamic and evolving concept that reflects the on-going struggles for equality within spiritual contexts. By challenging traditional norms and advocating for their voices and rights, Buddhist women are not only reshaping their identities but are also contributing significantly to the broader discourse on utopia of gender and anti-caste. This movement continues to inspire new generations of women to explore their roles within Buddhism and society at large, seeking a harmonious balance between tradition and progress. There is such need to social mobilization and development toward the religious cultural emancipation of human life.

### References

1. **Aloysius G.** 1998, Religion as Emancipatory Identity: A Buddhist Movement among the Tamil under Colonialism, New Delhi, Christian Institute for the Study of Religious and Society, New Age International.
2. **Beltz Johannes** 2005, Mahar, Buddhist and Dalits: Religious Conversion and Socio Political Emancipation, New Delhi, Manohar Publication & Distribution.
3. **Gokhale Jayashree**, 1986, The Sociological Effects of Ideological Change: The Buddhist Conversion of Maharashtrian Untouchables, The Journal of Asian Studies, Vol.45, No.2, PP. 269-292.
4. **Gokhale Jayashree**, 1993, From Concessions to Confrontation The Politics of an Indian Untouchable Community, Bombay, Bombay Popular Prakashan.
5. **Omvedt Gail**, 1993, Dalit and the Democratic Revolution Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India, New Delhi, Sage Publications.
6. **Omvedt Gail**, 2003, Buddhism in India, Challenging Brahmanism and Caste, New Delhi, Sage Publications.
7. **Wright Erik Olin** 1993, Explanation and Emancipation in Marxism and feminism, Sociological Theory, Vol. 11, No. 1, PP 39-54.
8. **Zelliot Eleanor**, 2013, Ambedkar's World The Making of Babasaheb and the Dalit Movement, New Delhi, Navayan Publishing Pvt Ltd.

9. <https://archive.org/details/Dr.BabasahebAmbedkarWritingsAndSpeechespdfsAllVolumes/page/>

The concept of an "emancipatory identity" for Buddhist women refers to the process through which women within Buddhist communities assert their rights and identities in a manner that promotes their liberation and empowerment. This idea encompasses both individual and collective dimensions and can be understood through various lenses, including religious, social, cultural, and political perspectives.

### **Key Aspects of Emancipatory Identity of Buddhist Women**

#### **1. Historical Context**

- In many Buddhist traditions, women have historically faced challenges concerning their roles and positions within religious communities. Texts and teachings have sometimes perpetuated gender inequalities.
- However, there are also narratives of female figures in Buddhism who have had significant spiritual and social roles, such as the Buddha's aunt Mahaprajapati and prominent female saints.

#### **2. Reinterpretation of Texts**

- Many contemporary Buddhist women scholars and practitioners are reinterpreting traditional texts and teachings to highlight the contributions and rights of women in Buddhism.
- By analyzing ancient scriptures through feminist and gender-inclusive lenses, they challenge patriarchal interpretations.

#### **3. Engagement in Leadership**

- The emergence of women in leadership roles within Buddhist organizations is a crucial aspect of the emancipatory identity. This encompasses monastic leadership and lay leadership, influencing both spiritual and community aspects.
- Female monks and teachers are increasingly recognized and respected, helping to shift traditional narratives.

#### **4. Community Building**

- Buddhist women are forming networks and communities to support one another in their spiritual practices and social activism. These communities often focus on issues like social justice, environmentalism, and mental health, aligning with Buddhist principles of compassion and interconnectedness.

- The creation of women-led Buddhist organizations fosters solidarity and amplifies the voices of women in the broader religious landscape.

### **5. Global Perspectives**

- The situation and experiences of Buddhist women can vary significantly across different cultures and regions. In countries like Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Tibet, women may experience different forms of empowerment and challenges based on local customs and beliefs.
- The globalization of Buddhism has contributed to a cross-cultural engagement among women, fostering a shared sense of identity and purpose.

### **6. Feminist Buddhism**

- The rise of feminist Buddhist movements emphasizes the need for gender equality within spiritual practices and institutions. This movement advocates for the dismantling of patriarchal structures within Buddhism and the promotion of women's rights.
- Feminist Buddhism often emphasizes the integration of mindfulness and social awareness as tools for personal and collective transformation.

### **7. Social Justice and Activism**

- Many Buddhist women are involved in social justice movements, connecting the principles of Buddhism with contemporary issues such as gender equality, human rights, and ecological sustainability.
- The idea of Engaged Buddhism, popularized by figures like Thich Nhat Hanh, encourages activism that aligns with Buddhist ethics, further contributing to the emancipatory identity of women in the tradition.

## **Conclusion**

The emancipatory identity of Buddhist women is a dynamic and evolving concept that reflects the ongoing struggles for equality within spiritual contexts. By challenging traditional norms and advocating for their voices and rights, Buddhist women are not only reshaping their identities but are also contributing significantly to the broader discourse on gender and spirituality. This movement continues to inspire new generations of women to explore their roles within Buddhism and society at large, seeking a harmonious balance between tradition and progress.

## 6. Comparative Studies: Dalit and African American Literature

**Mahammad Rauf Md. Ibrahim**

Research Scholar, Dayanand Arts College, Latur.

### Abstract

In India, Dalit Literature became an important genre. Dalit writers showed their ancestors' pain and tolerance. Casteism's existence in India causes social diversion and groups. African American Literature was also written by the victims of racism. Black colour attracts the hate of the white people which forces them to live like inferior insects. Dalit and African Literature unbiasedly depicted the pain, history, torture, biases and oppression in their work. These kinds of literature work as their voice to gain freedom and liberty.

**Key Words:** Dalit, Afro-American, Varna, Untouchability, Negro, Dalit Literature, Dalit awareness, Black Literature,

### Introduction

Human beings have evidence and history of their struggle for existence and survival. All progress and achievements were achieved through the loyal efforts of both genders Male and Female. As time passes world is categorised by various genders, religions, languages, Classes, Communities, regions and Colours. Two major genders were turned into different parts of the Society. U.S., Europe, Latin America etc. regions implemented strictly some rules based on skin tone in the society. Countries like India especially followed Casteism. India as a land of culture offered many wonders to the world, Mark Twain stated '*India is the cradle of the human race*', but Indians were divided into different cliques based on Cast, Human beings were considered untouchables and banished from society.

In America major religion was Christianity and almost everyone followed the religion but human beings were narrowed by judging the colours of the people. White skin people considered themselves superior to blacks. Blacks were treated like caged animals and slaves. Literature works as a weapon for the oppressed class of society to reach all peoples of society. Literature raised the voices of the lower-class people through various literary forms like poetry, pamphlets, drama, novels etc. Written material can reach all needy people who want to revolt against the

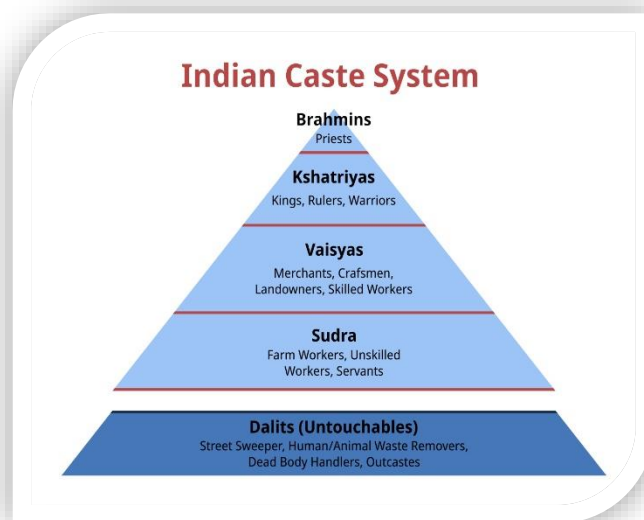
upper-class torture. Indian and African American society wake after the realisation of their rights through their communities' learned person. Discrimination based on caste or colour both work as torture to innocent human beings. This paper will explore Dalit and African American Literature and the adoption of their real-life experiences by the writers.

## Dalit Literature

### History

Dalit Literature works as an inspiration to the socially banished people. About the Dalit literature Baburao Bagul says, 'The Dalit literature is not a literature of vengeance, Dalit Sahitya is not a literature which spreads hatred. Dalit Sahitya first promotes man's greatness and man's freedom and for that reason, it is a historical necessity.

Indian history has many outstanding achievements but with such progress, it has been affected by many social evilness. *Casteism* in India is the biggest problem for society and a worse nightmare for humanity. One caste has different sub-castes. Indian casteism has a two-thousand-year-old history. About the class classification, K.A. Geetha stated, 'in which the different occupations were subsumed under the notions of *Varna*' (Geetha 2014, p.9). Four major casts in India.



The term 'Dalit' is referred to as 'Depressed class by Britisher. With time various names were used for this group like Untouchables, Harijans, Dalit, Servile classes, Weaker sections, Panchamas, Atishudras, Adam's, Antyajasm, and Scheduled Casts. Professor Gangadhar

Pantawane described Dalits as a caste, but as individuals who have been exploited by the social and economic norms of society’.

Dalits or the untouchables are the lowest part of Indian society and were considered as not human beings but just breathable objects. Caste is decided by their birth, occupation, and social status. Dalits must stay away from equal marriages, education and employment. Dalits were prohibited from all temples, schools, social gatherings and ideal places.

Dalit literature reflects the lives, experiences and struggles of the Dalit community from the beginning of the Varnas. In India, all major languages are focused on the work about the pain and suffering of the Dalit.

### **Literature**

In the early 1930s-word, *Dalit literature* was very commonly used by the British. Later in the 1970s-word Dalit was used by *Dalit Panther*. The aim was to portray the problems of the poor and oppressed class of society. The meaning of Dalit changed into a voice against injustice in society. The Dalits were not considered equal human beings so the literature more focused on the pain and suffering of the lower caste people.

Discrimination, as described by G.S. Ghurye in *Caste and Race in India* (1969)

- Dalits are regarded as impure and untouchables by higher classes.
- Dalits only got Low-paying jobs (like grave digging, disposal of deceased animals and cleaning of human waste).
- Women were restricted from education.
- Dalit small mistake can result in harsh punishment or death
- Dalits had some rules, especially for mobility, clothing and religion.
- Women were forbidden to cover the upper part of their body and men were restricted to wear dhoti below knees.

Above are some major concerns raised by the Indian Dalit writers to aware their generation about the torture they have suffered for centuries.

Dalit literature emerges as a new genre to fight against injustice in the society. Indian literature in all major languages in India tried to fight against the injustice in society. The primary aim of all writing was to depict social reality in Indian society. The writings of Dr BR Ambedkar dealt with the Dalits' problems. The Buddhist and Ambedkar analytical presentation of the religion raised a new voice in the 1950s and 60s. His *Prabuddha Bharat* was a journal



with a Dalit voice. The early writings of Anna Bhau Sathe with *Marxist* ideas work as the spark in the oppressed class to go and get their equality and rights.

Dalit Literature worked as a ray of hope to the socially backward masses. Dalit literature defines it as 'the Dalit consciousness is the revolutionary attitude associated with struggle. It is a belief in revolt against the caste system, with the human being as its focal point.

As Dalits started learning and writing they spoke about their rights. Major movements were started by Indian-learned persons. Dalit movement has only one aim, equality and self-respect. Dalit movement tried to get their rights through equality demonstrations, rallies, and processions. Following are some movements against oppression, these were the movements that primarily worked on teachings to the lower class and helped them, to wake up and raise their voice.

- In 1873 *Satyshodhak Movement* by Jyotirao Phule. Movement for emancipation of low casts, untouchables and widows.
- In 1916 *Justice Party movement* by Dr. T.M. Nair, P. Tyagaraja Chetti and C.N.Mudalair. This movement raised against Brahminic dominion in government services, education, and politics. SILF (south Indian Liberation Foundation) was formed in 1916. The effort of the movement resulted in providing reservations to Dalit groups in 1930.
- *Mahar Movement (Depressed class movement)*: in 1924 by Dr. BR Ambedkar. In this movement for the upliftment of depressed classes, zero untouchability, and educational institutions with equal rights, in 1927 *Bahiskrit Bharat* was started. In 1942 Scheduled Caste Federation.
- *Congress Harijan Movement*: worked for uplifting the status of the lower and backward classes, and founded the All-India Anti- Untouchability League in 1932. In 1933, Mahatma Gandhi founded *Weekly Harijan*.

### Major Writers and Dalit literature

#### Dr BR Ambedkar

He was the major person who inspired many people to raise their voices for equality. *Annihilation of Caste* is more focused on the Casteism in Indian Society and how Brahmins kept Dalits at their feet and called them the Untouchables., *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, who were the Shudras, this work depicted a detailed review of the Varna Shudras. All these works

primarily focused on the problem of the Dalits and how their ancestors were forced to live like a slave and animals. About Brahmin supremacy and his work's importance he stated,

The Hindus wanted the Vedas and they sent for Vyasa who was not a caste Hindu. The Hindus wanted an Epic and they sent for Valmiki who was an untouchable. The Hindus wanted a constitution, and sent for me.”

### **Om Prakash Valmiki**

His work like *Joothan* an autobiography based on the poor life of the Dalits in the society. His other work *Safai Devta*, highlighted the plight of the untouchables in society. *Dalit Sahitya Ka Saundaryashastra* also focused on Dalit aesthetics in the literature.

### **Namdev Dhasal**

Founder of the Dalit Panther movement and major Marathi poet wrote many works to show the reality of the Indian Dalit people. *Golpitha*, a collection focused on the condition of the Dalits in society. His writings were inspired by the thoughts of Dr Ambedkar, he wrote *Ambedkar Chalwal* a collection of essays on Ambedkar's thoughts

### **Baby Kamble**

She is very well known for her writings to raise the voice for the Dalit women. Her work *The Prison We Broke (Jina Amucha)*: an autobiography portrayed the harsh condition of the Dalit women in the society. Tough gifting of the Dalit women for equality and liberty.

### **p. Sivakami**

A former IAS officer explored the pain and sufferings of the untouchables' life. He came from Tamil Nadu and his Tamil work and family's thoughts were considered helpful in understanding social injustice against Dalits. His work *The Grip of Change*, explored caste and gender oppression. *Crossing the River* explores the Dalits' sufferings.

In India, almost all states have Dalit writers who try to show the pain of untouchables or Dalits through their works. Some major works like Imayam *Bests of Burden*, *The First Promise*, M.C. Rajs *Daliology: The Book of the Dalit People*, and *Dalit Freedom*. Bamas Karukku, Sangati, Vanman, Kumud Pawde's *Antasphot*, Shatabai Kamble's *Majhya Jalmachi Chittarkatha*, Sharmila Reges *Against the Madness of Manu*, Baburao Baguls *Jevha mi jaat Chorli hoti, Sood* etc. Writers highlighted the discrimination and torture of the Dalits.

## African American

African American/ Black Americans or Afro-Americans are the ethnic groups of America. This group belongs to the *Black racial group of Africa*. The term widely known for the Africans enslaved in the U.S. African American history began in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Africans were sold to European slave traders for slavery. African Americans were sent as a slave only due to their black skin colour.

African American slaves were considered insects or inferior to the White colour. They were tortured in many ways following are some punishments that were used for Black people. 1. Shackling, 2. Branding 3. Brutal Whipping 4. Rubbing Pepper, salt or other Hard Substances on wounds, 5. Use of Various lethal torture instruments. 6. Sexual Assault, .7. Mutilation- Amputation, Genital Torture, Castration 8. Cruel Executions- Lynching, Burning.

African Americans' poor condition was realised by some black resolutioners and they started to raise their voice through their writings and speeches. *Black Literature* is generally considered as the genre of pain and torture because it more focuses on the bad experiences of black people.

## African American literature

The oldest work by an African American was *Bars Fight* by Lucy Terry (1776). The African Americans' pain was initially portrayed by Phillis Wheatley in 1773, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*. The more detailed sufferings of the slaves are depicted in the work of Olaudah Equiano in his *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789). The theme of All African American writers was social inequality, Justice, Rights of travel, speaking, learning, clothing, and property.

Almost all African American writers focused on the harsh treatment of the owner towards African Americans. With awareness and education Slaves started to raise their voices against their masters. David Walker in his *Appeal to the coloured Citizens of the World* (1892), discussed the grief of the African American slaves. Slavery and its adverse effect on the physical and mental health of the person were represented by Frederick Douglass in his autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845).

Slave Narrative's new genre was raised as more slaves openly discussed their sufferings and struggles as slaves of the white people. It prominently discussed torture and inferior treatment n by the lords. About African American literature, Princeton University professor

Albert J. Raboteau stated, 'All African American study speaks to the deeper meaning of the African American presence in the nation. This presence has always been a test case of the nation's claims to freedom, democracy, equality, the inclusiveness of all'. John Greenleaf Whittier's *"Abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia, 1862, says*

**When first i saw our banner wave**

**Above the nation council-hall**

**I heard beneath its marble wall**

**The clanking fetters of the slave.**

### **Dalits and African American Literature**

The common things or the literary adoption of the Dalits and African American Nico Slate in his *Race, Caste, and Nation: Indian Nationalists and the American Negro* (1893-1947) detailed the political leaders. Dalits and African Americans both are human beings but the place and religion snatched their identity from them. Human beings started to judge other humans by their birth and colour. The common thing among them is both faced humiliation for uncommitted crimes. In India, Casteism punished the Dalits and snatched their right to roam freely and were treated as a slave in America Blacks faced the rages of the white people for their skin colours.

Dalits in India and Slaves in America died every day for being different from specific groups. Indians made their laws to restrict particular people from society and banned them from normal life. White Americans used African Americans in their cotton form, peasant, household etc, but still hated to consider them as equal as they.

In India Phule, Dr, Ambedkar and other social workers worked very hard to gain the position of the low-caste people and implemented a constitution which allowed them to safely survive in the society. American slavery was perfectly portrayed by many writers like *Uncle Tom Cabin* by H.B. Stowe in 1852, other writers especially poets contributed to raising voices and creating awareness among African Americans. In 1865 America abolished the slavery in United States. Today still casteism and racism are practiced by many people and writers trying to portray inhuman acts in their writings.

### **Conclusion**

Dalit and African American Literature shared the one thing that is Pain and tragic treatment by their fellow country people. Dalit writers focused on history and other world present views towards humanity to get their rights. Indian untouchables successfully represented

their sufferings in novels, dramas, and poems. African American work was written by their slave writers in the form of An Autobiography which successfully depicted pain. Though languages are different both literatures share a true picture of the untouchable and racism.

### **Bibliography**

- <https://buddhingsociologist.in/dalit-movements-in-india/>
- <https://www.asiahighlights.com>
- Ezeburo Peace, Most horrific and inhuman Black slaves punishment in the History of Slavery, answersafrica.com, <https://answersafrica.com>.
- Gaurav, The Caste System in India: Origin, Meanings, and Impact on Society, March 24 2023, <https://culturalindia.org.in>
- <https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/Dalit-movements-in-India>.
- Mahanta Brajabandhu, Dalit Movements in India, Jan 4 2025, <https://objesctiveias.in>.
- <https://www.newsclick.in/NCRB-Report-Shows-Rise-Atrocities-Towards-Dalits-Adivasis>
- <https://indianexpress.com>.
- Roy Parshmita, important Dalit Writers, August 4, 2024, <https://literarysphere.com>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African\\_Americans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Americans)
- <https://interestingliterature.com>
- <https://www.travelagewest.com>
- Paik Shailaja, What B.R. Ambedkar Thought of the word 'Dalt', 2022, <https://thewire.in>.
- <https://sociologygroup.com>
- Yehnge Suraj, Twelve books that form part of the arsenal of Dalit writing, 2021, <https://caravanmagazine.in>

## 7. Gender, Identity, and Cultural Conflict: Navigating the Female Experience in Ameena Hussein's *The Moon in the Water*

**Mrs. Ashwini Pujari**

Research Student, P. A. H. Solapur University, Solapur.

**Dr. Sachin Londhe**

Associate Professor, Department of English, K. N. Bhise Arts,

Commerce and Vinayakrao Patil Science College, Bhosare. (Kurduwadi)

Research Guide, P. A. H. Solapur University, Solapur.

---

### Abstract

This paper examines the complex interplay of gender, identity, and cultural conflict in Ameena Hussein's *The Moon in the Water*. It explores how the protagonist, Layla, navigates the challenges of a patriarchal, multiethnic Sri Lankan society where tradition, religion, and modernity intersect. Using postcolonial and feminist theories, it delves into Layla's journey toward self-determination, emphasizing the conflict between individual freedom and societal expectations. The paper also highlights the cultural pressures on women and examines key themes such as marriage, motherhood, migration, and religion. Through this analysis, the study provides deeper insights into the intricate formation of female identity in postcolonial Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** patriarchal, feminist, marriage, motherhood, migration, religion, female identity etc.

Ameena Hussein's *The Moon in the Water* offers a powerful portrayal of women's real life experiences in Sri Lanka's postcolonial, multiethnic society. The story follows Layla, a young Muslim woman, whose life reflects the broader struggles between modernity and tradition, as well as personal freedom and family duties. Her journey of self-identity is shaped by patriarchal family structures, religious expectations, and the cultural challenges of a postcolonial nation grappling with its colonial legacy.

In postcolonial Sri Lanka, women are often burdened with significant cultural and familial expectations, particularly in matters of marriage, parenthood, and religious devotion. The novel uses these challenges to explore how gender and cultural conflict intersect and shape women's experiences. This article analyzes Hussein's depiction of Layla navigating these

struggles through feminist and postcolonial lenses. It argues that Layla's quest for autonomy and cultural identity reflects the broader challenges of self-determination and cultural identification faced by many women in similar sociocultural settings. Her journey highlights the deep-rooted struggles tied to gender and cultural expectations in postcolonial societies.

Ameena Hussein's *The Moon in the Water* tells the story of Layla, a young Muslim woman in Sri Lanka. Layla struggles to balance her desire for independence with her family's traditional Muslim expectations. The story explores her inner conflict as she tries to reconcile her personal ambitions with societal norms. She is torn between pursuing her dreams and following cultural expectations, including an arranged marriage. Layla also considers leaving Sri Lanka to create a different future. This reflects the tension between individual aspirations and traditional obligations.

The story examines Layla's relationships with her parents, friends, and community. It offers a detailed look at how societal conventions control and limit women's lives. The novel explores the connection between societal expectations and personal aspirations. It addresses themes such as marriage, gender roles, migration, and religious identity. Ultimately, *The Moon in the Water* is a reflection on freedom and identity. It explores the challenges women face in asserting their individuality. These struggles occur within patriarchal and traditional systems that limit their potential.

### **Patriarchal control and gender roles**

*The Moon in the Water* by Hussein portrays a society where women's roles are largely determined by their relationships with men, making patriarchy a central issue. This is especially evident in Layla's Muslim family, the primary setting of the story, where women are expected to marry and have children according to traditional gender norms. Hussein skillfully depicts Layla's internal conflict, highlighting how women are taught to accept these demands without question. She struggles between her own desires and societal expectations.

Layla's desire for independence is evident throughout the novel. Her refusal to conform to these traditions also underscores how deeply patriarchy influences women's choices and decisions. The pressure Layla faces from her mother to marry and follow traditional roles clearly reveals the tension between personal freedom and social norms. A particularly sensitive moment occurs between Layla and her mother. Layla's mother represents the patriarchal norms passed down through generations, while Layla symbolizes a desire to break free from these limitations.

Hussein's portrayal of their relationship highlights the complex dynamics of maternal influence in patriarchal societies. Mothers often uphold the very rules that restrict their daughters' freedom, showing the cyclical nature of societal oppression.

The feminist theory of Simone de Beauvoir offers a useful framework for understanding how women's identities are shaped in relation to men. In *The Second Sex*, de Beauvoir argues that women are often seen as "the Other" and that male-dominated institutions shape their roles and identities. In *The Moon in the Water*, Layla's personality is constantly shaped by the expectations of her father, and later, by the demands of potential suitors. The feminist critique of patriarchy is centered on Layla's struggle to carve out her own place and identity, free from the oppressive societal constraints that define women as dependent on men.

### **Identity Formation and Cultural Conflict**

In addition to gendered expectations, the cultural complexity of Sri Lanka's multi-ethnic and multi-religious society also significantly influences Layla's journey of self-discovery. Layla, a Muslim woman, lives in a unique space where her national identity as a Sri Lankan intersects with her religious identity. This intersection is portrayed in the novel as a tense and challenging space, especially when Layla contemplates leaving Sri Lanka to escape the limitations imposed by her family and community.

Layla's internal struggle reflects the larger cultural conflicts in postcolonial societies, where traditional values and modern ideals often collide in difficult and painful ways. The novel emphasizes how challenging it can be to balance these conflicts, particularly for women who are frequently caught between family obligations and their own personal desires for independence and self-expression. Layla's experience mirrors the challenges many women face in a globalized society, where they must navigate the tension between maintaining cultural heritage and pursuing personal freedom and fulfillment.

Postcolonial theory provides a valuable lens through which to understand the cultural clash depicted in the book. Scholars like Homi K. Bhabha argue that identity in postcolonial nations is inherently hybrid, shaped by a blend of local traditions, cultural influences, and external forces. Layla's identity in *The Moon in the Water* is similarly hybrid, as she attempts to reconcile her Muslim upbringing and the expectations of her religious community with the demands of contemporary society. Her struggle to balance these two worlds reflects the broader



postcolonial experience, where individuals are faced with the challenge of reconciling modernity, tradition, and the lingering effects of colonialism.

### **Religion's Influence on the Formation of Female Identity**

Layla's identity is strongly influenced by her religion, as her Muslim faith serves as both a source of comfort and a point of conflict. In the novel, religion is shown to have dual effects on women: it provides structure and a sense of belonging, but it also enforces restrictive gender roles that limit their independence. Layla struggles with her relationship to her faith, as she finds it challenging to balance her personal beliefs with the expectations imposed by her religious community.

Hussein uses religion to explore how religious beliefs shape women's identities, particularly in conservative societies where gender norms are dictated by religious rules. Layla's internal struggle mirrors the larger difficulties women face in religious communities, where religion can be both a tool of oppression and a source of empowerment. The book critiques how religion, especially in the context of marriage and family, is often used to justify the subjugation of women.

Feminist theologians, such as Leila Ahmed, have explored how religion can influence women in both liberating and oppressive ways. In *Women and Gender in Islam*, Ahmed argues that while Islam has traditionally been interpreted in patriarchal ways, it also holds the potential to promote gender equality. This dichotomy is evident in *The Moon in the Water*, where Layla's faith functions as both a controlling force and a source of inner strength, particularly in the context of marriage.

### **The Marriage as a Gender Conflict Site**

*The Moon in the Water* centres on the concept of marriage, which becomes a major source of conflict for Layla as she navigates social and familial expectations. Hussein presents marriage as both a cultural obligation and a personal choice, especially for women in traditional Muslim societies. Layla's resistance to being forced into an arranged marriage reflects her desire for independence and highlights the limited options women in her position face in a society that prioritizes tradition over individual desires.

The novel critiques marriage as a control mechanism, where cultural norms often limit women's choices and control their bodies. Layla's fear of losing her individuality in a married relationship mirrors a broader feminist critique of how marriage has historically been used to

oppress women. Layla's experience aligns with feminist theorists like Bell Hooks, who argue that marriage in patriarchal societies often functions as a tool to control women's labour, sexuality, and autonomy.

Hussein's depiction of marriage as a site of gender conflict is particularly significant in postcolonial Sri Lanka, where women continue to fight for greater independence and freedom, yet traditional views on marriage remain deeply entrenched. Layla's struggle to reconcile the expectations of marriage with her own desire for independence reflects the larger cultural conflicts many women in postcolonial societies face. These women are caught between honoring their cultural heritage and navigating the pursuit of personal autonomy in a rapidly changing world.

### **Loss, Liberation, and Migration**

Another major theme in *The Moon in the Water* is migration, which serves as both an internal source of struggle for Layla and a possible route to liberation. Layla frequently contemplates leaving Sri Lanka throughout the novel, hoping to break free from the familial and cultural restrictions that limit her options. For Layla, moving away from her family's and community's expectations offers a chance to redefine herself and represents the promise of freedom.

However, the narrative also emphasizes the sense of loss that comes with migration, which complicates her desire. Layla's deep connection to her family and cultural heritage softens her wish to leave Sri Lanka, making the decision to relocate emotionally difficult. Hussein uses migration as a metaphor to explore the broader challenges of forming an identity in a global society, where freedom from cultural oppression often comes at the cost of losing one's roots. The emotional weight of migration further complicates Layla's decision and highlights the inner conflict between her longing for freedom and the attachments that bind her to her community.

In their extensive writings on migration and exile in postcolonial literature, scholars like Edward Said have argued that migration often results in feelings of alienation and a loss of cultural connection. *The Moon in the Water* illustrates this sense of dislocation, as Layla's desire to leave is hindered by her strong ties to her community and family. The novel underscores the emotional difficulties women face in their quest for autonomy, showing migration as both a potential source of freedom and a cause of internal conflict.

Hussein's portrayal of Layla underscores how women's identities in postcolonial Sri Lanka are shaped and constrained by patriarchal norms, particularly those relating to marriage and family. Layla's internal turmoil reflects the broader struggle between traditional norms and modern ideals of autonomy and self-expression found in postcolonial societies. The novel highlights the cultural forces that pressure conformity while critiquing marriage as a means of controlling women's bodies and choices. Layla's complex relationship with her faith illustrates how religion can simultaneously empower and confine women's identities. Her desire to break away from her cultural roots symbolizes both the costs and the liberating potential of seeking independence.

To conclude, *The Moon in the Water* by Ameena Hussein is a thoughtful exploration of the complexities of gender, identity, and intercultural conflict in postcolonial Sri Lanka. Through the character of Layla, Hussein examines how women navigate the tension between their personal aspirations and societal expectations. The novel offers valuable insights into how the intersection of tradition, religion, and modernity influences women's lives, particularly through themes such as marriage, migration, and identity formation. Hussein's work presents a strong critique of how gender and cultural conflicts impact women's autonomy, contributing to broader feminist and postcolonial discussions on identity and freedom.

### **Works Cited**

1. Hussein, Ameena. *The Moon in the Water*. Perera Hussein Publishing House, 2009.
2. Ahmed, Leila. *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*. Yale University Press, 1992.
3. Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, Vintage Books, 2011.
4. Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.
5. Hooks, Bell. *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*. South End Press, 2000.

## 8. The Lives of Dalit Women in Kumud Pawde's the Inner Explosion and Shantabai Kamble's the Kaleidoscopic Story of My Life: A Comparative Study

Miss. Khandekar Dipali Natha

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Shri Sant  
Damaji Mahavidyalaya, Mangalwedha, Dist. Solapur, Maharashtra.

### Abstract

Dalit women in India experience systemic discrimination at the intersection of caste, gender, and class. Their struggles remain largely invisible in mainstream narratives. Kumud Pawde's *The Inner Explosion (Antasphot)* and Shantabai Kamble's *The Kaleidoscopic Story of My Life (Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha)* offer two distinct yet complementary accounts of Dalit women's lives. While Pawde's autobiography focuses on breaking barriers in the Brahmin-dominated academic world, Kamble's narrative presents the lived realities of Dalit women in rural Maharashtra. The present paper compares these texts, analyzing themes of caste discrimination, gender oppression, education, and social mobility. The study highlights how Dalit women's experiences, though shaped by different social contexts, reflect a shared struggle against marginalization and their persistent fight for dignity and equality.

**Keywords:** Dalit Women, Autobiography, Caste Discrimination, Gender Oppression, Education, Social Mobility

### Introduction

While upper-caste women fight against gender-based oppression and Dalit men encounter caste-based discrimination, Dalit women are especially impacted by both. Their oppression is often overlooked in mainstream feminist discourse and Dalit political movements, making their autobiographical writings essential sources for understanding their struggles and resistance. Kumud Pawde and Shantabai Kamble provide two powerful testimonies that expose the realities of Dalit women in India. Pawde, an educated Dalit woman, narrates her journey to becoming a scholar of Sanskrit, a topic traditionally dominated by Brahmins. Kamble, on the other hand, presents an account of Dalit women's struggles for survival, education, and dignity in caste based society.

This comparative study explores their narratives to understand how Dalit women face systemic oppression.

### **Caste and Gender Discrimination: A Dual Oppression**

Both Pawde and Kamble highlight the inescapable reality of caste and gender discrimination in their lives.

#### **Kumud Pawde: Facing Caste Prejudice in Academia**

In *The Inner Explosion*, Pawde describes the hostility she faces as a Dalit woman attempting to study and teach Sanskrit, a language restricted to Brahmins. Despite her academic excellence, she is constantly reminded of her caste identity. She recounts the humiliation of being denied recognition and opportunities simply because of her background. Her presence in academia challenges Brahminical authority, yet She is still an outcast in places of high status.

#### **Shantabai Kamble: Everyday Caste Violence and Patriarchal Oppression**

Kamble's *The Kaleidoscopic Story of My Life* presents a different yet equally oppressive reality. Dalit women in rural Maharashtra are subjected to social exclusion, economic exploitation, and physical violence. They are expected to perform degrading labor for upper-caste households and are denied basic rights. Within their own communities, they struggle against patriarchal norms that restrict their mobility, education, and independence.

### **Comparative Perspective**

While Pawde faces discrimination in academic circles, Kamble's narrative exposes the everyday caste and gender oppression that Dalit women endure in their homes, workplaces, and villages. Both texts reveal that Dalit women, regardless of their social or educational status, are constantly marginalized by caste and gender hierarchies.

#### **Education and Social Mobility: A Path to Empowerment**

Both Pawde and Kamble recognize education as a powerful tool for liberation, but their experiences highlight the limitations of social mobility for Dalit women.

#### **Kumud Pawde: Intellectual Resistance through Education**

For Pawde, education is a means of self-assertion and defiance against Brahminical patriarchy. She pursues higher education despite social opposition, proving that Dalit women are capable of excelling in spaces traditionally denied to them. However, her achievements do not translate into full acceptance. She continues to be viewed as a Dalit first, a scholar second. Her struggle illustrates how even education does not erase caste-based discrimination.

### **Shantabai Kamble: The Struggle for Basic Literacy**

Kamble's narrative shows the fundamental barriers that prevent Dalit women from accessing education. Most Dalit girls in her village are forced to drop out of school due to financial hardships, family responsibilities, and caste-based discrimination in schools. While Pawde fights for recognition in academia, Kamble's account highlights that for many Dalit women, the battle is simply to receive basic literacy.

### **Comparative Perspective**

Pawde's story reflects the struggles of an educated Dalit woman breaking into an exclusive academic world, while Kamble's narrative shows the stark reality that most Dalit women are denied education altogether. Both perspectives highlight the structural barriers that prevent Dalit women from achieving social mobility, even when they strive for education.

### **Marriage, Family, and Patriarchy**

Both authors explore how Dalit women face patriarchal oppression within their own communities and families.

### **Pawde's Conflict with Social Expectations**

Pawde struggles with societal expectations regarding marriage and domestic roles. Her education and ambitions set her apart, leading to tensions with her family and community. She resists the notion that a Dalit woman's role should be confined to marriage and motherhood, asserting her right to intellectual and professional aspirations.

### **Kamble's Account of Marriage and Domestic Struggles**

Kamble portrays a vivid picture of Dalit women's domestic struggles. Marriage often brings additional hardships, as Dalit women are expected to bear the burden of economic survival, family responsibilities, and, in many cases, domestic violence. Kamble's narrative highlights how Dalit patriarchy reinforces gender oppression, even within marginalized communities.

### **Comparative Perspective**

While Pawde challenges patriarchal expectations by choosing an unconventional path, Kamble's work illustrates the harsh realities faced by Dalit women within the family structure. Both narratives highlight that Dalit women, even within their own communities, must fight for autonomy and self-respect.

## Conclusion

Kumud Pawde's *The Inner Explosion* and Shantabai Kamble's *The Kaleidoscopic Story of My Life* provide complementary perspectives on the lives of Dalit women. Pawde's narrative focuses on intellectual struggle and academic exclusion, while Kamble's work captures the systemic caste and gender oppression in rural India. Their experiences, though shaped by different social locations, reflect a shared struggle against marginalization. This comparative study emphasizes that the oppression of Dalit women is not uniform; it differs depending on factors such as social context, education, and economic conditions. However, their struggle for dignity, education, and equality remains a unifying aspect of their experiences.

## Works Cited

- Pawde, Kumud. *The Inner Explosion* (Antasphot).
- Kamble, Shantabai. *The Kaleidoscopic Story of My Life* (Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha).
- Rege, Sharmila. *Writing Caste, Writing Gender: Narrating Dalit Women's Testimonies*.
- Guru, Gopal. *Dalit Women Talk Differently*.
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kumud\\_Pawde](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kumud_Pawde)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shantabai\\_Kamble](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shantabai_Kamble)

## 9. Indian Legal Framework and its' Challenges in Protecting Dalit Women's Rights

**Dr. Mrs. Vaishali Abhijit Sarang**

Assistant Professor, Department of History, D. D. Shinde Sarkar College, Kolhapur.

### Introduction

India got freedom in 1947 from the clutches of British. Indian Constitution has given us all the equal rights based on gender, caste, religion and race. Today we are living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in the world of technology, liberalization, privatization and Globalization. In recent years we can clearly hear multiple voices emerging on gender issues, particularly since the early 1990s. These multiple voices are closely linked to the uneven gains of progress recorded by various groups. But still we find there is a need of study of challenges in protecting the rights of women's and particularly of Dalit women's. It means the legal framework provided by the government of India is not sufficient or become unsuccessful to implement it without bias. And a number of Dalit women from the different parts of the country are not benefitted/ deprived from their rights. Dalit women have less benefited from the development than the rest of women. The disparities continue to persist between Dalit women and the rest. So there is a need to throw light and understand what the limitations are in the legal framework given to them by the government. Therefore the researcher has attempted to throw light on the vital issue through this research paper entitled 'Indian Legal Framework and its' Challenges in protecting Dalit Women's rights.'

### Objectives

Through this research paper the researcher would like to study the Nature of Indian society, caste system, concepts of Dalit, Dalit woman and intersectionality, to discuss the status of women and particularly of the Dalit women in India, to throw light on the Indian legal framework for the protection of Dalit women, to highlight and discuss in detail the atrocities and crime against Dalit women, failure of the legal framework to protect the rights of Dalit women and what are the challenges and suggestions to protect the rights of Dalit women.

### Indian Social Structure

Since ancient times India has fourfold society. Due to *Varna* system hierarchy was there. Due to hierarchy system the last *varna* was considered as an inferior to other three *varnas*. The caste system was existed in the society. As time passes untouchability sprang out from the caste system.



In the traditional scheme of the caste system, the untouchables, who are at the bottom of the caste hierarchy, were deprived of all rights, and being located at the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy, they suffer the most from an anti-social spirit and violence by high-caste Hindus.<sup>1</sup> They were denied the right to property, education, civil and cultural rights, and restricted to so-called 'polluting' occupations and manual labour,. Additionally, the untouchables also suffered from the notion of 'untouchability,' which is unique to them.<sup>2</sup> Because of this unique stigma of untouchability, the untouchables are considered to be impure and polluting, and they have suffered from physical and social segregation and isolation. This isolation and segregation led to suppression of their freedom and restrictions on physical and social mobility, resulting in denial of equal access in various spheres of society, culture, and economy.<sup>3</sup> The Indian government has addressed the problem of caste and untouchability through various constitutional safeguards. The Constitution of India has recognized Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) as 'historically deprived' segments of the society. The Indian constitution carries certain safeguards for ensuring their fundamental rights.

Before going to enter in the main theme of the research paper researcher would like to throw light on the concept of 'Dalit' and 'Dalit woman' and 'intersectionality'.

### **The concept of Dalit and Dalit Woman**

The term '**Dalit**' means "oppressed" or "broken" and refers to the scheduled castes (SCs) in India, who have faced historical oppression and social exclusion.<sup>4</sup> "**Dalit woman**": A Dalit woman is a woman who belongs to the Dalit community and faces multiple forms of oppression, including caste, class, and gender-based discrimination.<sup>5</sup> **Intersectionality**: The experiences of Dalit women are shaped by the intersection of multiple forms of oppression, including caste, class, gender, and other forms of social exclusion.<sup>6</sup>

In short, the term Dalit woman refers to a woman belonging to the Dalit community, which is a socially marginalized and oppressed. Therefore to protect the rights of the Dalit women Indian government provided them protection through legal framework. Hence it is very important to understand the above terms and the legal framework for the safeguards of Dalit woman.

### **Indian legal framework that aims to protect the rights of Dalit women:**

#### **Constitutional Provisions**

Constitution of India made provision for the safeguards of Dalit woman such as **Article 14: Equality before the Law**- Ensures that all citizens, including Dalit women, are equal before the

law. It prohibits discrimination on grounds of caste, sex, religion, or other factors. It guarantees for Dalit women will not be denied access to justice or discriminated against in legal proceedings.

---

**Example:** In the case of *State of Kerala v. Chandramohan* (2018), the Supreme Court held that Dalit women have the right to equal treatment under the law and cannot be denied access to justice.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Article 15: Prohibition of Discrimination**

It prohibits discrimination on grounds of caste, sex, religion, or place of birth. It ensures that Dalit women are not denied access to education, employment, or other opportunities due to their caste or sex. It guarantees that Dalit women will not be subjected to discriminatory practices, such as untouchability.

**Example:** In the case of *Vineeta Sharma v. Rakesh Sharma* (2020), the Supreme Court held that Dalit women have the right to equal opportunities in education and employment.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Article 16: Equality of Opportunity in Public**

Employment Ensures that Dalit women have equal opportunities in public employment. It prohibits discrimination on grounds of caste, sex, or religion in public employment. It guarantees that Dalit women will not be denied access to public employment due to their caste or sex.

**Example:** In the case of *Union of India v. V. Kishan Rao* (2015), the Supreme Court held that Dalit women have the right to equal opportunities in public employment.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Article 17: Abolition of Untouchability**

It abolishes the practice of untouchability, which has historically been used to discriminate against Dalits, including Dalit women. It ensures that Dalit women are not subjected to discriminatory practices, such as being denied access to public spaces, education, or employment. It guarantees that Dalit women will not be treated as "untouchables" and will be treated with dignity and respect.

**Example:** In the case of *Deveni v. State of Tamil Nadu* (2017), the Madras High Court held that the practice of untouchability is unconstitutional and that Dalit women have the right to equal treatment and dignity.<sup>10</sup>

These Constitutional provisions provide a framework for protecting the rights of Dalit women and ensuring that they are treated with dignity and respect.

There are also provided some **special laws** for the protection of Dalit women like **1) Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989** -This law aims to prevent atrocities against Dalits, including Dalit women, and provides stricter punishments for crimes committed against them. The law covers various forms of violence, harassment, and exploitation; including physical and sexual assault, forced labor, and denial of access to public spaces.<sup>11</sup> **2) Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005** -This law provides protection to all women, including Dalit women, from domestic violence. It defines domestic violence broadly to include physical, emotional, verbal, and economic abuse, and provides for emergency relief, such as shelter and protection orders.<sup>12</sup> **3) Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013**- This law aims to prevent and address sexual harassment of women, including Dalit women, at the workplace. It defines sexual harassment broadly to include unwelcome physical contact, demands for sexual favors, and verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.<sup>13</sup>

These laws are crucial for protecting the rights of Dalit women, who face multiple forms of discrimination and violence. However, implementation and enforcement remain significant challenges, and advocacy groups continue to push for stronger enforcement and greater awareness about these laws.

**The Indian Penal Code, 1860, and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973**, there are two crucial laws that provide protection to Dalit women against various forms of violence and discrimination. **Protection against Sexual Violence** Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860: This section deals with assault or use of force against a woman with intent to outrage her modesty. It provides punishment for sexual harassment, stalking, and voyeurism. Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860: This section prescribes punishment for rape, which includes sexual intercourse without consent, or with consent obtained under duress or fraud. **Protection against Domestic Violence**- Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860: This section deals with husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty. It provides punishment for domestic violence, including physical, emotional, and economic abuse. **Investigation and Prosecution**- Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973: This law provides for the investigation and prosecution of crimes against Dalit women. It ensures that the investigation is conducted fairly and that the victim receives justice.<sup>14</sup>

**International Instruments** aims to eliminate racial discrimination. Here are two key instruments: **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**: It's Objective is to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, including

Dalit women. Provisions in The CEDAW to provide for equal rights for women in education, employment, healthcare, and politics.<sup>15</sup> Relevance to Dalit Women the CEDAW recognizes the intersectionality of gender and caste-based discrimination, highlighting the need for special measures to protect the rights of Dalit .<sup>16</sup> **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination:** This convention aims to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination, including caste-based discrimination. Provisions: The convention provides equal rights for all individuals, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or national origin.<sup>17</sup> Relevance to Dalit Women: The convention recognizes the intersectionality of caste and gender-based discrimination, highlighting the need for special measures to protect the rights of Dalit women.<sup>18</sup>

**The National Commission for Scheduled Castes and the National Commission for Women** are two vital institutions that work to protect the rights of Dalit women in India.

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes works to protect the rights of Dalits, including Dalit women, and ensures that they are not discriminated against or exploited. Investigation of Atrocities: The commission investigates cases of atrocities against Dalit women and recommends action to the government. Promotion of Welfare: The commission also promotes the welfare of Dalit women by recommending policies and programs that benefit them. The National Commission for Women works to protect the rights of women, including Dalit women, and ensures that they are not discriminated against or exploited. Investigation of Cases: The commission investigates cases of violence and discrimination against Dalit women and recommends action to the government. Promotion of Empowerment: The commission also promotes the empowerment of Dalit women by recommending policies and programs that benefit them. Reports and Studies of The National Commission for Women have published several reports and studies on issues related to Dalit women, including: Violence against Dalit Women in Rajasthan: A study on the prevalence of violence against Dalit women in Rajasthan. A Situational Analysis of Women and Girls in Chhattisgarh: A report on the status of women and girls in Chhattisgarh, including Dalit women. A Situational Analysis of Women and Girls in Maharashtra: A report on the status of women and girls in Maharashtra, including Dalit women. These reports and studies provide valuable insights into the issues faced by Dalit women and inform policy and programmatic interventions to promote their empowerment and protection.<sup>19</sup>

### **Atrocities and Crimes against Dalit Women**

Researcher thinks that to understand the limitations and challenges of legal framework for the protection of rights of Dalit women it is important to discuss first the atrocities and the nature of crimes against the Dalit women.

The Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Prevention of Atrocities (POA) Act addresses the threat of violence and atrocities against the Dalits. The objective of these acts is to clearly emphasize the intention of the government to deliver social justice and to enable SCs to live with dignity, without fear of violence and atrocities. Although the acts incorporate strong compensatory and punitive measures, violence and atrocities continue against Dalits. The increase in the number of crimes and atrocities against Dalit women has raised a serious issue regarding empowerment of Dalits as a whole and especially of Dalit women, whose bodies become the sites of sexual violence committed publicly whenever they or the men of their community are seen as transgressing the caste hierarchy. The position of Dalit women in society can be understood in terms of the nature and number of atrocities committed against them. On average, about 1,000 cases of sexual exploitation of Dalit women are reported annually. 1,576 cases of rape of women were reported in the country during 2012 as compared to 1,557 cases in 2011, which is an increase of 1.2% in the incidence of rape.<sup>20</sup>

The number of atrocities that are not reported to the police and that remain unregistered is far greater. The cases that get registered are severe, and women who register are courageous women. The official statistics, however, capture only the tip of the iceberg, providing information on the most heinous crimes such as rape; other forms of humiliation such as sexual harassment and derogatory remarks are not captured in the official statistics. However, there are some primary studies that do provide us with this information. A primary-level study across 500 villages on the forms and nature of violence indicated that across the states studied, harassment of Dalit women takes the forms of non-Dalits frequently use abusive and derogatory language when addressing Dalit women; non-Dalits refer to Dalit women as prostitutes or use caste names; in their workplace or in the market, non-Dalit supervisors or traders will often make sexual innuendoes to Dalit women.<sup>21</sup>

Another study by Irudayam, Mangubhai, and Lee (2014) of the narratives of 500 Dalit women across four states on the forms and manifestations of violence found that the most frequent forms of violence that are perpetrated against the majority of Dalit women are verbal abuse (62.4 %), physical assault (54.8 %), sexual harassment and assault (46.8 %), domestic violence (43.0 %), and rape (23.2 %), in descending order. 4.4% Victims of Social and Religious Practices. Moreover, Dalit women are also the victim of specific social customs and religious practices in Hindu society. Some of these customs include the devadasi/jogini system (temple prostitution). In this system Dalit girls are married to a village god by their parents. These girls are then sexually exploited by the upper-caste landlords and rich men of the village. This system

of religious sexual exploitation is found in parts of India such as Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Orissa. A primary survey by the Aashray Jogini Vyavastha Vyatireka Sanghatana on the jogini system estimated the number of joginis in six districts of Andhra Pradesh at around 21,421.<sup>22</sup> The National Human Rights Commission corroborates these findings and estimates that Andhra Pradesh had 29,000 joginis. A similar practice exists in states such as Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Maharashtra, where they are designated as devadasis.<sup>23</sup>

### types of crimes against Dalit woman in Indian society

Crimes against Dalit women in Indian society are a serious concern. Here are some different types of crimes:

#### Physical and Sexual Violence – Rape

Dalit women are vulnerable to rape and sexual assault, often used as a tool to assert caste supremacy.<sup>24</sup> **The Hathras gang rape case** is a tragic reminder of the ongoing struggles faced by Dalit women in India and the need for sustained efforts to address caste-based violence and discrimination. Hathras Gang Rape Case (2020) Case Details: A 19-year-old Dalit woman was gang-raped by four upper-caste men in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh, on September 14, 2020. Victim's Condition: The victim suffered severe injuries, including spinal cord damage, and was hospitalized in critical condition. Police Response: The police initially delayed filing an FIR and later allegedly pressured the victim's family to cremate the body without their consent. Protests and Outrage: The case sparked widespread protests and outrage across India, with many demanding justice for the victim and her family. **2. Domestic Violence:** Dalit women face domestic violence, including physical and emotional abuse, often perpetuated by their husbands or in-laws.<sup>25</sup> **3. Physical Assault:** Dalit women are subjected to physical assault, including beatings and mutilation, often as a form of punishment or to enforce caste norms.<sup>26</sup> **Economic Exploitation- 1. Forced Labor:** Dalit women are forced into labor, including agricultural work, construction, and domestic work, often without payment or underpayment **Example:** Brick Kiln Workers -Dalit women are often forced to work in brick kilns, where they are subjected to long hours of physical labor, minimal wages, and poor working conditions.<sup>27</sup> **2. Bonded Labor:** Dalit women are trapped in bonded labor, forced to work to repay debts or loans often passed down through generations. The case of the Sumangali scheme is a **well-known example** of bonded labor affecting Dalit women in India. The Sumangali scheme, also known as the "Marrying Girls" scheme, was a practice in Tamil Nadu where young Dalit women were employed in textile mills and forced to work long hours for minimal wages.<sup>28</sup>

#### Social and Psychological Violence

### 1. Caste-Based Discrimination

Dalit women face caste-based discrimination, including exclusion from public places, denial of access to education and healthcare, and social ostracism.<sup>29</sup>

### 2. Psychological Trauma

Dalit women experience psychological trauma, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), due to the cumulative impact of violence and discrimination.<sup>30</sup>

## Institutional Violence

### 1. Police Brutality

Dalit women face police brutality, including physical assault, verbal abuse, and arbitrary detention, often when seeking justice for crimes committed against them.<sup>31</sup> The case of Soni Sori is a well-known **example** of police brutality against Dalit women in India. Soni Sori, a Dalit school teacher and activist from Chhattisgarh, was arrested and tortured by the police in 2011. She was accused of being a Maoist sympathizer, but it was later revealed that she was falsely implicated.<sup>32</sup>

### 2. Judicial Bias

Dalit women experience judicial bias, including delayed or denied justice, often due to caste prejudice and institutionalized discrimination.<sup>33</sup> The case of Bhanwari Devi is a well-known **example of judicial bias** against Dalit women in India. Bhanwari Devi, a Dalit woman from Rajasthan, was gang-raped by upper-caste men in 1992. When she sought justice, the court acquitted the accused, citing that the rape could not have occurred because the men were of "good character" and Bhanwari Devi was a Dalit woman.<sup>34</sup>

## Failure/Challenges of the Indian legal framework to protect the rights of Dalit women:

Despite the existence of various laws and policies aimed at protecting the rights of Dalit women, the Indian legal framework has failed to effectively address the issues faced by this marginalized group. Here are some key failures:

### Inadequate Implementation of Laws

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989: Despite being a crucial law for protecting Dalit women, its implementation remains poor, with low conviction rates and inadequate compensation for victims.<sup>35</sup> Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005: The law's implementation is often hindered by lack of awareness, inadequate infrastructure, and patriarchal attitudes among law enforcement officials.<sup>36</sup> **Lack of Access to Justice** - Limited Access to Courts: Dalit women often face significant barriers in accessing courts, including lack of financial resources, illiteracy, and social exclusion.<sup>37</sup> Biased

Law Enforcement: Law enforcement officials often display biases against Dalit women, leading to inadequate investigation and prosecution of cases.<sup>38</sup> **Inadequate Protection from Violence - Rape and Sexual Violence:** Dalit women are disproportionately affected by rape and sexual violence, with perpetrators often going unpunished.<sup>39</sup> **Domestic Violence:** Dalit women face high levels of domestic violence, with limited access to support services and protection.<sup>40</sup> **Failure to Address Caste-Based Discrimination- Caste-Based Violence:** The Indian legal framework has failed to effectively address caste-based violence against Dalit women, with perpetrators often enjoying impunity.<sup>41</sup> **Discrimination in Education and Employment:** Dalit women face significant discrimination in education and employment, with limited access to opportunities and resources.<sup>42</sup>

### **Suggestions and Recommendations**

There are some suggestions about failure of the Indian legal framework to protect the rights of Dalit women. To address the failures of the Indian legal framework in protecting the rights of Dalit women, consider the following suggestions:

#### **Strengthening Laws and Policies**

1. Amend the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989: Strengthen penalties, ensure speedy trials, and provide adequate compensation to victims.<sup>43</sup> 2. Enact the Women's Reservation Bill: Ensure 33% reservation for women in Parliament and state legislatures, with a sub-quota for Dalit women. **Improving Access to Justice** 1. Establish Special Courts: Set up special courts to handle cases of violence against Dalit women, ensuring speedy trials and adequate punishment.<sup>44</sup> 2. Increase Legal Aid: Provide free legal aid to Dalit women, ensuring access to justice and legal recourse.<sup>45</sup> **Addressing Caste-Based Discrimination** Implement Anti-Discrimination Laws: Effectively implement laws prohibiting caste-based discrimination, ensuring punishment for perpetrators.<sup>46</sup> 2. Promote Education and Awareness: Launch awareness campaigns to educate people about caste-based discrimination and its impact on Dalit women.<sup>47</sup> **Empowering Dalit Women** Economic Empowerment: Provide economic opportunities, education, and vocational training to empower Dalit women. 2. Leadership Development: Support leadership development programs for Dalit women, enabling them to participate in decision-making processes.<sup>48</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The Indian legal framework has failed to effectively protect the rights of Dalit women due to inadequate implementation of laws, lack of access to justice, and failure to address caste-based discrimination. To address these failures, it is essential to strengthen laws and policies,



improve access to justice, address caste-based discrimination, and empower Dalit women through economic empowerment and leadership development programs. By implementing these recommendations and suggestions the Indian legal framework can be strengthened to effectively protect the rights of Dalit women and promote their empowerment and well-being.

### **References and footnotes**

1. Ambedkar B.R., '*Philosophy of Hinduism*' in Moon Vasant (ed.), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Vol. 3, Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, 1987, pp. 1–92
2. Ambedkar B. R., '*The Hindu Social Order—Its Essential Features*' in Moon Vasant (ed.), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Vol 3., Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, 1987, pp 96–115
3. V. K. Borooah, N. S., Sabharwal, and S. Thorat, Gender and Caste-Based Inequality in Health Outcomes in India, Working Paper Series VI/03, New Delhi: Indian Institute of Dalit Studies, 2012.
4. (- Gupta, C. (2005). Dalit Women's Activism in India. Journal of International Women's Studies, 6(2), 12-25.).
5. (Rege, S. (2006). Writing Caste/Writing Gender: Reading Dalit Women's Testimonios. Economic and Political Weekly, 41(38), 23-32.)
6. (Krishnaraj, M. (2012). Intersectionality and Dalit Women. Economic and Political Weekly, 47(17), 15-22.).
7. “Supreme Court on Dalits and Law”, P. S. Krishnan, 2020, Eastern Book Company, p.456
8. "Supreme Court on Gender Justice", Indira Jaising, 2022, LexisNexis, P.278-279
9. 9. - "Supreme Court on Reservation and Affirmative Action", P. S. Krishnan, 2017, Eastern Book Company, P. 342-343
10. "Madras High Court on Constitutional Law", Justice K. Chandru, 2019, Lexis Nexis, P.567-568
11. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989
12. Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
13. Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013
14. The Indian Penal Code, 1860, and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973
15. United Nations Publications 1979, p. 1 to 3.

16. "General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations" CEDAW Committee, 2014, p. 10
17. United Nations Publications 1979, p. 1 to 3.
18. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 2011, p. 12.
19. Website- [www.ncw.nic.in](http://www.ncw.nic.in), Reports published by the National Commission for Women , Category- Atrocities against Women – A Study of Dowry Torture and Sexual Violence in Orissa, Reported by Sankalp
20. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)
21. Ghanshyam Shah, Harsh Mander, Sukhadeo Thorat, "Untouchability in Rural India", Satish Deshpande, and Amita Baviskar, Sage Publications, 2006
22. P. K. Pal and R. K. Lal "State and Women: A Study of Jogini System", 2010, Serials Publications, p. 27
23. The Hindu; Kadapa, November 23, 2012, Dalit Women in India: At the Crossroads of Gender, Caste, and Class and Nidhi Sadana Sabharwal and Wandana Sonalkar -Global Justice: Theory Practice Rhetoric (8) 2015)
24. Human Rights Watch, 2007, India: Hidden Apartheid: Caste Discrimination against India's "Untouchables". p.12
25. "National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), 2015-16", International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), p. 123.
26. "Khairlanji: A Strange and Bitter Crop", Anand Teltumbde, Navayana Publishing, 2008, p. 56.
27. "Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage", International Labor Organization, 2017, p. 15.
28. "Slavery in India: Bonded Labour and the Sumangali Scheme", Anti-Slavery International, 2018, p. 10, p. 15.
29. "Annual Report 2018-2019", National Commission for Scheduled Castes, 2019, p. 20.
30. Psychological Studies, Sage Publications, 2018, p. 123.
31. "India: Broken Promises - Failure to Protect Women from Domestic Violence", Human Rights Watch, 2016, p. 15.
32. "India: Soni Sori Case - A Pattern of Impunity", Amnesty International, 2012, p. 12.
33. National Commission for Scheduled Castes, 2019, p. 25.
34. Baxi, P., Public Secrets of Law: Rape Trials in India, Oxford University Press, 2014, p.35

35. National Crime Records Bureau, 2020, p. 123. Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
36. Ravi K., Domestic Violence and the Law in India. 2016, p. 145
37. Kannabiran, K., Tools of Justice: Non-Discrimination and the Indian Constitution, 2012 p. 78.
38. Ibid; Human Rights Watch, p. 15.
39. National Crime Records Bureau, 2020, p. 120
40. Ibid; Ravi K. 2016. p. 150
41. Ibid; Human Rights Watch, 2007 p. 20
42. Ibid; Kannabiran, K., 2012, p. 90
43. Ibid; National Crime Records Bureau, p. 123
44. Ibid; Human Rights Watch, p. 25
45. Ibid; Kannabiran, K., 2012, p. 92
46. Ibid; National Crime Records Bureau, p. 125
47. Ibid; Ravi K., 2016, p.160
48. Ibid; Kannabiran K., 2012, p. 100,160

## 10. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Fight for Social Justice

**Dr. Raju Kalmesh Sawant**

Associate Professor, N.D. Patil Night College of Arts & Commerce, Sangli.

---

### Abstract

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a prominent social reformer and architect of the Indian Constitution, is widely regarded for his contributions to the pursuit of social justice in India. Ambedkar's vision of social justice was centered around the equality of all individuals, irrespective of their caste, religion, or gender. He strongly opposed the caste system, which he believed perpetuated social inequalities and discrimination. Through his efforts, he advocated for the rights of Dalits, backward classes, and women, emphasizing the importance of education, economic empowerment, and political representation as key tools for achieving social justice. Ambedkar's advocacy led to several legal reforms, including the abolition of untouchability and the establishment of affirmative action measures. His commitment to the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity influenced not only the shaping of India's constitutional framework but also set a foundation for ongoing movements for social justice across the country.

**Key Words:** Social reformer, social justice, Dalit, Untouchability, liberty, equality, fraternity.

### Introduction

#### **A. Background of Dr. B.R. Ambedka**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a figure of immense stature within the societal and political framework of India, significantly impacted the conceptualization of social impartiality and parity within the nation. Originating from a background deeply steeped within the caste configuration, Ambedkar's initial life encounters stimulated his determination to confront the suppressive formations of caste-based hierarchy (Kumar et al., 2023). Functioning as a prominent proponent for the entitlements of the disadvantaged Dalit community, he endeavoured to deconstruct the hindrances of prejudice and imbalance that saturated Indian society (Kumar et al., 2023). Ambedkar's cognitive acumen, amalgamated with his resolute dedication to social enhancement, steered him towards advocating for human dignity, liberation, and socio-economic fairness (Kumar et al., 2023). Through his abundant literary creations and orations, Ambedkar expounded

a socio-ethical ideology based on the tenets of uniformity and camaraderie, establishing the bedrock for a more encompassing and democratic India (Sirswal et al., 2016). His legacy lingers on, kindling subsequent cohorts to aspire towards a more just and impartial society, encapsulating the undying importance of his input toward the expedition for social justice within Indian politics.

### **Relevance of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Work**

In modern India, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's efforts to social justice are very significant. His actions went beyond just advocating for the rights of underprivileged populations; they laid the groundwork for a more inclusive and equitable society (Sharma, 2023). His vision surpassed the limitations of his time, resulting in an enduring influence on social movements, legal frameworks, and policies that continue to reverberate today.

His work on the Indian Constitution, which guaranteed equality before the law and prohibited discrimination, was a major achievement of his. A key strategy to encourage social and economic mobility is his backing of reservation policies, which aim to provide opportunity for populations who have endured past injustice. In the course of deliberations around these provisions, their significance in enhancing disadvantaged groups' access to educational and occupational possibilities has been emphasized. (Datta, 2019).

Alongside legal reforms, Ambedkar emphasized the vital role of education as a powerful tool for social transformation. His conviction in acquiring strength via understanding continually inspires various educational initiatives and uplifting action programs (T. Kumar & Kumar, 2018). His economic philosophy highlighted the importance of industrialization and labour rights, and it remains pertinent in the context of India's ongoing development. Moreover, his critique of the caste system and his advocacy for a more equitable society remain pertinent in contemporary dialogues over social equity and justice. His impact beyond mere historical significance; it persistently influences policies related to caste-based discrimination, gender justice, and minority rights.

### **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Contributions to Social Justice**

<b>Area of Contribution</b>	<b>Key Contributions</b>	<b>Impact on Society</b>
<b>Legal &amp; Constitutional Reforms</b>	Drafting the Indian Constitution, ensuring fundamental rights, reservation policies for SC/ST/OBCs.	Established a legal foundation for equality and affirmative action.

<b>Education &amp; Awareness</b>	Advocated for compulsory education, scholarships, and higher education opportunities for marginalized groups.	Empowered disadvantaged communities through education.
<b>Economic &amp; Labor Rights</b>	Supported industrialization, workers' rights, and minimum wage laws.	Improved economic conditions and labor welfare.
<b>Dalit Empowerment</b>	Led anti untouchability movements, formed the Scheduled Castes Federation.	Strengthened the political and social representation of Dalits.
<b>Women's Rights</b>	Fought for gender equality, supported the Hindu Code Bill for women's rights in marriage, property, and inheritance.	Advanced women's empowerment and legal rights.
<b>Religious &amp; Social Reforms</b>	Criticized caste-based discrimination, embraced Buddhism as an alternative to Hindu orthodoxy.	Inspired Dalit Buddhist movements and social reform initiatives.

### **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Vision for Social Justice**

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar believed that all people should have the same rights to freedom, equality, and fraternity under the umbrella of social justice. He fought for a social structure that would level the playing field for all members of society. He became the inventor of his own unique philosophy after gaining extensive knowledge in every area of human activity via his training as a social scientist. He linked caste and women's status in Indian society to economic, social, political, and religious issues. The development and stability of Indian society depend on his ideas and philosophy. (Gandee, 2015)

An ideal or fair society may be created by social justice, says B. R. Ambedkar. His idea of a fair society is one that does away with castes and instead prioritises liberty, equality, and fraternity as cornerstones of social justice. There are two pillars upon which Ambedkar's ideal society rests. The first holds that each person is valuable in and of himself, and that society exists to facilitate his development. People should not put society before themselves; if people must submit to society, it should be for their own benefit and only to the degree that is absolutely required. Second, principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity must guide the way people in a society interact with one another. Only fraternity, in Ambedkar's view, can avert anarchy and aid in maintaining moral order among men. Anarchy is the result of individualism. A perfect society cannot exist apart from fraternity, a crucial element of social justice. Ambedkar argues that

liberty, equality, and fraternity are fundamental to social justice. Achieving social justice requires a sea shift in how we see and interact with other people, as well as in how we view and interact with the world around us.

### **Constitutional Provisions and Legal Reforms**

One of Ambedkar's most enduring accomplishments was his assistance in the creation of the Indian Constitution. As Chairman of the Draughting Committee, he ensured that the Constitution featured fundamental rights that guaranteed equality, freedom, and protection against discrimination. His fervent endeavors culminated in the implementation of reservation policies for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), which ensured their inclusion in political representation, education.(Bhaskar, 2021) employment, and Furthermore, he supported reforms that enhanced women's rights, integrating provisions in the Hindu Code Bill that addressed issues like as property inheritance, marital rights, and gender equality. The underprivileged in India were able to gain economic security because to his reforms to labour regulations, which included provisions for industrial workers' rights and decent salaries.

### **Education and Economic Upliftment**

The most powerful tool for social change, in Ambedkar's view, was education. In particular for economically disadvantaged groups, he established a number of organisations to support his goal of universal and compulsory education. His work made sure that Dalits and other marginalized groups could access scholarships, higher education, and vocational training, helping to break the cycle of generational poverty. He backed industrial growth as a means to reduce caste specific employment and open up fresh avenues for individuals. His policies emphasized land reforms, worker protections, and financial independence, ensuring that economic growth was equitable and sustainable for all.

### **Dalit Empowerment and Social Reforms**

Ambedkar led various initiatives focused on eradicating caste-based discrimination. He openly opposed untouchability and strict caste systems, clearly showing his support for temple entry movements, advocating for Dalits' right to access places of worship (Sirswal, 2020). By means of structured initiatives like the Mahad Satyagraha, he confronted societal conventions that maintained caste-based division. He further motivated the establishment of Dalit groups to amplify their unified voice in both political and social arenas. In 1956, he chose to adopt

Buddhism, joined by thousands of supporters, marking a stand against caste oppression and advocating for social equality

### **Political Contributions**

Ambedkar envisioned a political landscape where marginalized groups could actively engage in democracy. He played a crucial role in pushing for distinct electorates for Dalits, yet this request was ultimately diluted by the Poona Pact (Singh, 2004). He founded the Scheduled Castes Federation, a political entity designed to amplify the voices of Dalits in the realm of governance. His perspective reached far beyond mere caste representation; he highlighted the need for a democracy that is both inclusive and participatory, one that embraces economic justice, upholds minority rights, and champions gender equality (Sabharwal, 2020). His impact on India's political scene conversations remains significant, influencing around electoral reforms, inclusive governance, and social justice initiatives.

### **Conclusion**

The examination of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's conceptualization of social justice emerges as a crucial framework for comprehending the historical course of Dalit viewpoints in Indian political arenas. Ambedkar's theoretical inputs contest the entrenched standards of caste stratification and propose the reinstatement of human honour and entitlements for all marginalized factions of the populace. Essentially, his vision embodies a poignant appeal for authentic democratization and societal metamorphosis grounded in principles of parity and fairness. From a critical stance, the contextual scrutiny of Manusmriti, Phule's Slavery, and Ambedkar's Annihilation of Caste sheds light on the deep-seated sources of social stratifications and the exigency to deconstruct institutional apparatuses that sustain unevenness. Furthermore, the progressing societal dynamics in present-day India underscore the importance of adopting Ambedkar's exhaustive agenda for accomplishing social justice and enabling the Dalit cohort towards self-esteem and liberation.

### **References**

1. Kumar, V. (2015). The role of B. R. Ambedkar in shaping the modern India. 009, 1–8.
2. Sirswal, D. R. (2020). The Maker of Modern India (Vol. 9, Issue 2019).
3. Sharma, P. (2023). Contribution of Dr . B . R . Ambedkar towards Indian Society. 8(1), 536–540.
4. Datta, R. (2019). Emancipating and Strengthening Indian Women: An Analysis of B. R. Ambedkar's Contribution. Contemporary Voice of Dalit, 11(1), 25–32.



5. Gandee, S. (2015). Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar and the Reinterpretation of 'Untouchability': Legislating Against Caste Violence in Rural India, 1930-1975. *Retrospectives*, 4(1), 16–32.
6. Bhaskar, A. (2021). "Ambedkar's Constitution": A Radical Phenomenon in Anti-Caste Discourse? *CASTE/A Global Journal on Social Exclusion*, 2(1), <https://doi.org/10.26812/caste.v2i1.282> 109–131.
7. Sabharwal, N. S. (2020). Caste relations in student diversity: Thinking through Dr. Ambedkar's perspective towards a civic learning approach in higher education. *International Education Journal*, 19(1), 30–43.
8. Lucas, E., Lucas, E. (2017). Discrimination against Dalits in contemporary India: affirmative action, religious conversions and women's activism as responses to caste-based social injustice. <https://core.ac.uk/download/287635893.pdf> on
9. Klein, Catherine F., Roe, Richard. (2022). Teaching About Justice by Teaching with Justice: Global Perspectives Clinical Legal Education and Rebellious Lawyering. <https://core.ac.uk/download/519815404.pdf>
10. A. Jammanna. (2017). DR. B.R.AMBEDKAR'S PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ON INDIAN SOCIETY.
11. Kumar, T., & Kumar, D. (2018). Ambedkar: The 1st pillar of equality in India. 3(1), 10–27. <https://medium.com/@arifwicaksanaa/pengertian-use-case-a7e576e1b6bf>

# 11. Interdisciplinary Approaches to History, Culture, and Literature in Dorothy Davis's Writing

**Miss. Shubhada Sukumar Patil**

Research Scholar, Department of English, Shivaji University Kolhapur.

**Dr. Pramod A. Ganganmale**

Research Guide, Head, Department of English, K. B. P. College Urun-Islampur.

## Abstract

Dorothy Salisbury Davis was a well-known writer of mystery and thriller novels, but her works go beyond just storytelling. Her books reflect history, culture, and important social changes, making them valuable for interdisciplinary study. This paper explores how Davis's novels connect with historical events, cultural shifts, and literary traditions. By examining her works from these perspectives, we can see how she used fiction to comment on society. One key focus of this study is how Davis presents women in her novels. Many of her female characters challenge traditional gender roles, reflecting the changing expectations of women in different time periods. The research also looks at how Davis includes real historical events and cultural issues in her stories, making her fiction more than just entertainment. To better understand her characters, this paper applies Carl Jung's psychological theory, especially his idea of the "shadow" archetype, which helps explain the complexity of good and evil in her novels. Additionally, this paper highlights Davis's influence on the mystery genre. Her writing style and themes helped shape crime fiction, making her an important figure in literary history. By studying Davis's work from multiple perspectives- literature, history, and culture- this research shows how her novels offer deep insights into the past and present. In the end, this study proves that Davis's books are not only great mystery stories but also meaningful reflections of society and human nature.

**Key words:** Interdisciplinary study, History in literature, Cultural analysis, Gender roles in fiction, Social Commentary, Historical context

## Introduction

Dorothy Margaret Salisbury Davis (1916- 2014) was a prominent American crime fiction writer known for her psychologically rich narratives and deep engagement with historical and cultural themes. Over her decades-long career, she became one of the most respected figures in

the mystery and thriller genre, earning multiple Edgar Award nominations and serving as the president of the Mystery Writers of America. Unlike many of her contemporaries, Davis's writing went beyond conventional whodunits, focusing instead on the psychological motivations of her characters and the moral complexities of crime and justice.

She was particularly skilled at portraying strong yet conflicted female protagonists, challenging traditional gender norms within crime fiction. Many of her works, including *A Gentle Murderer* (1951), *The Judas Cat* (1951), and *Scarlet Woman* (1952), feature characters who grapple with inner darkness, ethical dilemmas, and the weight of historical and cultural forces. Davis's crime fiction is notable for its interdisciplinary richness, integrating elements of literature, history, and cultural critique. Her novels often explore how social structures, power dynamics, and psychological archetypes influence human behaviour, making her work an important subject for literary and historical analysis. Additionally, her writing exhibits a deep understanding of Carl Jung's archetypal psychology, particularly the shadow archetype, as many of her characters embody internal conflicts between morality and transgression.

Crime fiction has long served as more than just entertainment; it offers deep insights into historical realities, cultural transformations, and psychological complexities. Dorothy Salisbury Davis, one of the most distinguished figures in American mystery and thriller fiction, skilfully weaves these elements into her narratives, making her works rich in interdisciplinary significance. Her novels not only engage readers in solving mysteries but also reflect the social, historical, and moral dilemmas of their time. Through her storytelling, Davis explores themes such as gender roles, crime and justice, and psychological conflicts, making her work an important subject for literary, historical, and cultural analysis.

An interdisciplinary approach is essential to understanding Davis's fiction, as it allows for a deeper exploration of how her stories interact with historical events and cultural contexts. From a literary perspective, her writing contributes to the evolution of mystery and thriller fiction, particularly through her complex characters and morally ambiguous narratives. From a historical standpoint, her works capture social realities, reflecting contemporary issues such as shifting gender roles and ethical dilemmas in law and justice. Culturally, her novels provide a window into the fears and anxieties of the societies she portrays, revealing the impact of social hierarchies and power structures on individual lives. This study seeks to analyse how Davis's

fiction integrates literature, history, and culture to create narratives that are both thought-provoking and socially relevant.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant because it highlights Dorothy Salisbury Davis's contributions to crime fiction by examining her work through an interdisciplinary lens that includes literature, history, culture, and psychology. While Davis is recognized as a notable crime writer, her work has not received as much scholarly attention as some of her contemporaries. This research aims to bridge that gap by exploring how her novels go beyond traditional crime fiction to engage with deeper psychological, social, and historical themes.

One key significance of this study is its focus on gender and empowerment in Davis's crime fiction. By analysing how she portrays strong, independent female characters, the study contributes to discussions on feminist crime fiction and the evolution of women's roles in the genre. Davis's female protagonists challenge the stereotypes of women as passive victims, instead depicting them as intelligent, resourceful, and morally complex individuals. This research will show how her work reflects the changing attitudes toward women's agency in both literature and society.

Another important aspect of this study is its use of Carl Jung's psychological theories, particularly the shadow archetype, to understand Davis's characters. By applying Jungian psychology, the research will offer fresh insights into how Davis explores the duality of good and evil, moral ambiguity, and the psychological depth of criminals and investigators. This will help position her as a writer who not only tells engaging crime stories but also examines the human mind in profound ways. Furthermore, the study will demonstrate how Davis's crime fiction serves as a reflection of historical and cultural changes in the mid-20th century.

Overall, this study is valuable because it redefines Dorothy Salisbury Davis's literary contributions, showcasing how her crime fiction is not just about solving mysteries but about understanding human nature, questioning societal norms, and portraying psychological depth. By analysing her work through multiple disciplines, this research will emphasize her influence on both crime fiction and broader literary traditions.

### **Literature Review**

The literature review provides a foundation for understanding how Dorothy Salisbury Davis's crime fiction has been studied and where this research contributes new insights. While

Davis is recognized as a significant figure in mystery and thriller literature, scholarly research on her work remains relatively limited compared to other crime writers such as Agatha Christie or Raymond Chandler. However, existing studies have acknowledged her contributions, particularly her ability to create psychologically complex characters and her critique of social norms. Some literary scholars have examined how Davis's novels explore moral ambiguity, where characters struggle with ethical dilemmas rather than fitting into clear-cut categories of good and evil. Additionally, research on women in crime fiction has highlighted Davis's role in portraying strong, independent female protagonists who challenge traditional gender roles. Despite these contributions, there is still a lack of interdisciplinary studies that analyse her work through the combined lenses of literature, history, and psychology. This research seeks to fill that gap by examining how Davis's fiction reflects historical realities, challenges cultural norms, and explores psychological depth through Jungian archetypes.

Interdisciplinary approaches have been widely applied to crime fiction studies, as this genre often serves as a reflection of historical events, cultural transformations, and psychological conflicts. Scholars have analysed crime fiction from a historical perspective, exploring how it reflects the social and political anxieties of different time periods. Cultural analyses have focused on how crime stories engage with themes such as justice, power, and identity, particularly in relation to gender and class. Psychological studies of crime fiction have examined how authors use theories of the human mind to develop complex characters and motivations. Many literary scholars argue that crime fiction is not just a form of entertainment but a medium for social commentary. However, there has been limited research on how these different disciplines intersect in Dorothy Salisbury Davis's work. By integrating literary, historical, and psychological perspectives, this study aims to show how Davis's fiction extends beyond traditional crime storytelling to engage with deeper societal themes.

### **Interdisciplinary Approach**

An interdisciplinary approach is essential for studying Dorothy Salisbury Davis's crime fiction because her novels go beyond just telling mystery stories. They also reflect important aspects of history, culture, and psychology. By combining these different fields of study, we can gain a deeper understanding of how her works explore real-world issues such as changing gender roles, moral dilemmas, and social power structures.

From a literary perspective, Davis's crime fiction contributes to the mystery and thriller genres by introducing complex characters and psychological depth. Unlike traditional crime stories that focus only on solving a case, her novels examine the motivations and struggles of both criminals and investigators, making them more than just simple detective stories.

From a historical perspective, her works capture the social and cultural issues of the time periods in which they were written. For example, her stories often reflect the challenges faced by women in a male dominated society, as well as the moral and ethical dilemmas that arise in the pursuit of justice. Understanding these historical contexts helps us see how Davis's writing was influenced by, and responded to, real world events.

From a cultural perspective, her novels highlight societal fears, power dynamics, and the roles of women in crime fiction. Many of her female characters challenge traditional expectations by being independent, intelligent, and strong willed. Studying her work from this angle allows us to see how crime fiction can be a powerful tool for discussing larger cultural themes.

Since Davis's crime fiction engages with all these elements- literature, history, culture, and psychology- an interdisciplinary approach allows us to fully appreciate the depth and impact of her storytelling. This research will show that her novels are not just thrilling mysteries but also meaningful reflections on society, morality, and human nature.

### **Historical Context in Davis's Fiction**

Dorothy Salisbury Davis's crime fiction is deeply connected to the historical realities of the time periods in which her stories are set. Her novels reflect the social, political, and cultural changes of the mid-20th century, a period marked by shifting gender roles, evolving ideas of justice, and growing concerns about crime and morality. By examining the historical context of her work, we can better understand how Davis used crime fiction to engage with the issues of her time and challenge societal norms.

One of the most significant historical themes in Davis's fiction is the changing role of women in society. During the mid-1900s, women were gaining more independence, especially in the workforce and public life, but they still faced societal limitations and traditional expectations. Davis's novels reflect this transition by featuring strong female protagonists who defy conventional gender roles. Her female characters are often intelligent, courageous, and resourceful, standing in contrast to the passive or secondary roles that women traditionally

played in crime fiction. This reflects the broader feminist movements of the time, where women were fighting for equal rights and greater opportunities.

Another important historical theme in Davis's work is the moral and ethical dilemmas surrounding crime and justice. Unlike traditional detective fiction, which often presents a clear division between good and evil, Davis's stories explore the complexities of crime and the motivations behind it. Her characters, including detectives, suspects, and criminals, often struggle with issues of morality, guilt, and redemption. This reflects the historical shift in crime fiction from simple whodunits to more psychologically complex narratives, influenced by real-world discussions about justice, law enforcement, and ethical decision-making.

Davis's novels also capture the social anxieties of post-war America, including concerns about corruption, power struggles, and the changing nature of crime. In the mid-20th century, crime fiction was evolving to reflect a world where traditional authority figures, such as the police and government, were no longer seen as entirely trustworthy. Davis's stories often challenge the idea that justice is always served and explore how power and privilege affect the legal system. This historical context makes her work more than just mystery stories- it turns them into critical reflections on society.

By analysing Davis's fiction through a historical lens, this research highlights how her novels serve as more than just crime thrillers. They provide valuable insight into the struggles and transformations of their time, making her work an important part of both literary and historical discussions.

### **Cultural Reflections in Dorothy Davis's Work**

Dorothy Salisbury Davis's crime fiction reflects important cultural shifts, particularly in how society viewed gender roles, power structures, and morality in the mid-20th century. Her novels challenge the traditional portrayal of women in crime fiction, question the fairness of the legal system, and explore moral ambiguity in justice and crime. Unlike many classic crime stories where women play secondary roles or are simply victims, Davis presents strong, independent female characters who take control of their own narratives. Her works also highlight how social class and privilege influence crime and justice, showing that the powerful often manipulate the legal system for their own benefit.

A strong example of this can be seen in *A Gentle Murderer* (1951). This novel subverts the traditional crime fiction formula by focusing not just on the crime itself but on the

psychological struggles and moral dilemmas of the characters involved. The story follows a troubled young man who commits murder, but instead of portraying him as a simple villain, Davis delves into his guilt, trauma, and inner conflict, reflecting a cultural shift toward understanding crime beyond just law enforcement and punishment. The novel also presents strong female figures, such as Sister Magdalene, a nun who shows deep compassion and insight into the human mind. Her role in the story challenges traditional gender norms by positioning her as a moral and intellectual force, rather than just a passive observer.

Through this example, it is clear that Davis's crime fiction is not just about solving mysteries it serves as a reflection of cultural anxieties, changing gender roles, and evolving views on justice and morality. Her work stands as a critical commentary on the complexities of crime and human nature within the social and cultural landscape of her time.

### **Literary Analysis and Jungian Psychology**

Dorothy Salisbury Davis's crime fiction goes beyond traditional mystery storytelling by exploring the psychological depth of her characters. Her novels focus not only on solving crimes but also on the inner conflicts, fears, and moral struggles of both criminals and investigators. To analyse these aspects of her work, Carl Jung's theory of archetypes and the shadow concept provides a valuable framework. Jungian psychology helps us understand how Davis's characters embody universal psychological patterns, making her stories more than just detective fiction they become explorations of human nature and morality.

One of the most relevant Jungian concepts in Davis's work is the shadow archetype, which represents the darker, hidden side of human nature. In many of her novels, characters struggle with their own inner darkness, guilt, and conflicting desires. A key example can be found in *A Gentle Murderer* (1951), where the murderer is not portrayed as a simple villain but as a deeply troubled individual tormented by his past and inner demons. His actions stem from repressed guilt and trauma, reflecting the psychological battle between his conscious self and his shadow. Instead of a straightforward crime story, Davis presents a nuanced exploration of the criminal mind, moral ambiguity, and the complexity of human behaviour.

Davis's protagonists also reflect Jungian archetypes such as the hero, the wise old man, and the anima (feminine aspect of the psyche). Characters like Sister Magdalene in *A Gentle Murderer* represent a guiding moral force, helping others confront their own psychological truths. Through these characters, Davis challenges traditional crime fiction norms, focusing not



just on justice and punishment but on self-discovery, redemption, and the psychological impact of crime.

By applying Jungian psychology to Davis's work, this research highlights how her novels offer a deeper, more philosophical take on crime fiction, making her stories powerful reflections on the human psyche, morality, and the complexity of good and evil. This approach allows us to see Davis's work as not just literary entertainment, but as an insightful psychological study of human nature.

### **Dorothy Salisbury Davis's Influence on Literature**

Dorothy Salisbury Davis made a lasting impact on the crime and mystery genre by bringing psychological depth, moral complexity, and strong female characters into her storytelling. At a time when crime fiction often followed a simple formula of solving a mystery with clear distinctions between heroes and villains, Davis challenged these conventions by creating multi-dimensional characters and exploring the ethical dilemmas behind crime. Her works influenced both her contemporaries and later crime writers who sought to push the boundaries of the genre. Dorothy Davis also played a major role in redefining the role of women in crime fiction. Many earlier crime novels featured women as either victims, side characters, or femme fatales, but Davis introduced strong, intelligent female protagonists who were active participants in the narrative.

Additionally, Davis helped shape psychological thrillers by blending crime fiction with deep psychological insights. Her work contributed to a shift in the genre where crime stories were no longer just about external action but also about internal struggles, moral ambiguity, and the darker aspects of human nature. This influence is evident in modern psychological thrillers by authors such as Gillian Flynn and Tana French, whose novels focus on the emotional and psychological depth of their characters.

Overall, Dorothy Salisbury Davis's influence on literature extends beyond mystery novels- her work helped transform crime fiction into a more character-driven, psychologically complex, and socially conscious genre. Through her groundbreaking storytelling, she paved the way for future generations of crime and thriller writers.

### **Conclusion**

Dorothy Davis's literary works exemplify the intersection of history, culture, and literature, providing a nuanced portrayal of societal transformations and gender dynamics.

Through her thriller and mystery novels, Davis not only constructs compelling narratives but also reflects and critiques the socio-historical context of her time. By integrating interdisciplinary approaches historical analysis, cultural studies, and literary criticism her works can be understood as more than just entertainment; they serve as cultural artifacts that shed light on issues such as gender roles, moral ambiguity, and societal change. Using Carl Jung's ideas about archetypes and the shadow, we can see how Davis creates complex characters who face danger and moral choices, making her stories even richer.

By examining Davis's work through interdisciplinary lenses, it becomes clear that her novels contribute significantly to discussions on gender, morality, and historical representation. Her narratives not only engage with the literary traditions of thriller and mystery fiction but also serve as reflections of the shifting cultural landscapes of the 20th century. This research underscores the importance of integrating historical and cultural perspectives in literary analysis, demonstrating how fiction can offer profound insights into the human experience across time.

### References

- Davis, Dorothy Salisbury. *A Gentle Murderer*. New York: Scribner, 1951.
- Irwin, John T. *Mystery, Violence, and Popular Culture in American Fiction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011.
- Simpson, Helen. *Dorothy Salisbury Davis and the Evolution of American Mystery Fiction*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
- Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981.
- Jung, Carl G. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959.

## 12. Life as Dying: Gender and Power Dynamics in Ammonite by Nicola Griffith

**Mr. Abhaysinh V. Deshmukh**

Assistant Professor, Department of English, S. B. D. Mahavidyalaya, Atpadi, Maharashtra.

---

### Abstract

September 11 attack, wars and pandemic occurrences through time and place, wise women absorb it all. Ammonite tells a story of the virus that kills all the men on the planet Jeep – GP and portrays alternate SF history imagining what if there are no men in the world. The society on that alien planet is governed by women and aspects like economy, culture, social structures and war, violence etc. are all altered because of this fact. The women on the planet not only survive the pandemic that kills all the men but they also mutate to give birth to female children in through a same sex relations. This neo-utopian socio-sexual environment where there are no hierarchies, focus on fair and equal treatment to all, no oppression and no power politics at all promises to resolve all the problems with open discussions. But not for long. Leifin, the tribal leader, starts killing and hunting develops capitalist tendencies. This makes the Utopian existence of these women appalling. The absence of power dynamics and the introduction of this new gender based colonization on the planet explore how the human societies develop.

**Key Words:** Gender, Power, Pandemic, Society.

The stories of Plagues and Pandemics remind us of how social hierarchies, racial differences, and wealth determine people's ability to shield themselves from the ravages of pandemics. For ages, pandemic fiction has portrayed socially and politically disenfranchised populations and their underlying vulnerabilities as the key point in the outbreak and the spread of the pandemic. For example, Gary Shteyngart (born. 1972) in his *Our Country Friends* (2021) portrays before us eight friends who gather in a remote house as the virus spreads through the country; for his storyline he clearly drew upon Boccaccio's classic. According to the novelist, it isn't just the plague; with it comes colonial ambitions and 'The White Man's Burden', self inflicted responsibility assumed by the British that came with its unique share of Cholera, smallpox, flu and a host of other epidemics. The outbreak of pandemics in the colonized space

was often interpreted as a 'problematic reversal' of the aggressive act of subjugation by the colonizers.

All the major Pandemics ever documented have shaped human emotions and fostered radical changes in our collective social and cultural belief by way of fear. For centuries, we have considered human illnesses as phenomena caused by the supernatural as a punishment of our violations of religious code of conduct. Whereas in mediaeval Europe, the disastrous spread of the Black Death through urban and rural population exacerbated essential threats and began a socio-religious phenomenon that precipitated a sociological transition from the middle ages to the Renaissance. As a result of these religious connections a growing secular community emerged from the pandemic as the people started a search for new understanding of the natural world. This new enquiry provided a sociological and historical framework to contextualize the events surrounding in the pandemic by exposing the deep faults in social structures that predispose many to health disparities. Pandemic, through its sociological and historical enquiries, offer a unique opportunity to forge a new and suitably modern narrative of Social Justice. With a sufficient collective moral courage, future generations may have new human society dominated by overwhelming acts of kindness. In present as we struggle with the recent waved outbreaks of covid-19, we should remember that from the Antonine Plague (165-180 AD) to the current covid-19 pandemic, various writers have tried to explore and portray the impact of pandemics on human life. Writers always had and will show interest in plagues and pandemics, both historical and imagined, as the thematic concern and background or subject for their fiction. This aspect and perspectives vary as do the genre from historical novel to science fiction. The human responses to the pandemics are just as varied as are their fictional and non-fictional portrayals. They include scientific ingenuity, paranoia, defeated acceptance, heroic struggle and sacrifices to sheer survival at any cost.

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788 - 1860), a German philosopher thinks that it is death that defines us as nothing else is certain in life. According to him we are sentient beings living in time, on a journey towards death. We deal with it. Unlike other animals who feel the death while dying, we humans try to make peace with it. Arthur Schopenhauer thinks that to live is constant dying yet death is not complete annihilation in itself. In *Ammonite* (2002) by Nicola Griffith all men die and some women get sick in a pandemic outbreak caused by a native virus. Centuries pass and mutated women develops a Utopian society where there is

A hand-drawn map of a fictional world, featuring various geographical features and locations. The map is oriented with North at the top. Key features include:

- Wastelands:** Located at the top left, separated from the Sea of Ice by a wavy line.
- Sea of Ice:** A large body of water on the left side, with a wavy line representing the ice edge.
- Sliprock + Torar:** A location marked with a red dot on the left side, near the Sea of Ice.
- Beston-in-the-mountains:** A location marked with a red dot on the left side, near the Sea of Ice.
- MOANWOOD:** A large, irregularly shaped area in the upper center, containing several green pine trees and a small blue figure.
- Old Olfoss:** A location marked with a red dot inside MOANWOOD.
- Olfoss:** A location marked with a red dot inside MOANWOOD.
- North Haven:** A location marked with a red dot at the top center, near the Sea of Ice.
- TEHUANTEPEC:** A large, irregularly shaped area in the center, containing several green pine trees and a small blue figure.
- Ringstones:** A location marked with a red dot inside TEHUANTEPEC.
- Pastures:** A location marked with a red dot inside TEHUANTEPEC.
- Highland Hills:** A location marked with a red dot inside TEHUANTEPEC.
- R. Galt:** A river flowing from the center towards the right side.
- High Beaches:** A location marked with a red dot on the right side, near the Sea of Ice.
- Reef:** A wavy line on the right side, near the Sea of Ice.
- Summer Islands:** A group of three small, irregularly shaped islands on the right side.
- Chaparrals:** A location marked with a red dot on the right side, near the Summer Islands.
- Kull:** A location marked with a red dot on the right side, near the Summer Islands.
- Nocklace Islands:** A location marked with a red dot on the right side, near the Summer Islands.
- Silverfish Deep:** A location marked with a red dot on the right side, near the Summer Islands.
- Fisher's Bay:** A location marked with a red dot on the right side, near the Summer Islands.
- Eye of Ocean:** A location marked with a red dot on the right side, near the Summer Islands.
- ACID LAKE:** A pink oval shape on the left side, near the Sea of Ice.
- East River:** A river flowing from the left side towards the center.
- Abersayesh:** A location marked with a red dot on the left side, near the Sea of Ice.
- OSO-MIA DESERT:** A yellow, irregularly shaped area on the left side, near the Sea of Ice.
- RAHMAH MTS.:** A location marked with a red dot on the left side, near the Sea of Ice.
- Destroble:** A location marked with a red dot on the left side, near the Sea of Ice.
- Port Central:** A location marked with a red dot on the left side, near the Sea of Ice.
- Three Trees:** A location marked with a red dot on the left side, near the Sea of Ice.
- Scattered Hills:** A location marked with a red dot on the left side, near the Sea of Ice.
- SWAMP LAND:** A green, irregularly shaped area at the bottom center, containing several green pine trees.
- Smogland:** A location marked with a red dot at the bottom center, near the SWAMP LAND.

The most important thing is that, to the women of Holme Valley, we are no longer strangers. This means that if something terrible happened, for example the microwave relay failed, or we ran out of food, Holme Valley would be bound to help us. Of course, it also means we have to help them, but the major point is we are no longer alone on this planet. We have allies. The alliance cannot be dissolved until there's been some trading—that's a loose definition, see Eagan's notes for more detail—by both parties. What will probably interest you most is this: we are now involved in this world. We have a stake in the culture. Because of that, we will be considered when and if the journey women make any changes that could affect us.

Danner, do you understand this? It's important. We've become part of the social network, here, like... oh, part of the cultural food chain. We're linked with these people. From now on, what they do—all of them, any of them, because the trata network is woven right through these communities, linking each with another—will affect us, so they'll consider us and our needs before they do anything. (84-85)

Company sends Marghe to explore Jeep and search for possible vaccine on Jeep virus. Terrified of spreading the virus, the company abandons its employees. In the face of the crisis, Marghe risks death to uncover the women's biological secret with which they give birth. This all women solves the very fundamental issue of reproduction with parthenogenesis reproductive solution as a part of the mutation that takes place because of the gender-specific virus that kills all the men and then, there is a socio-political and cultural mutation these women go through. With this the matriarchy resolves the two most pressing issues, one of reproduction and the second kinship. Thus there is no gender based hierarchies and oppression on the planet. Giving birth, to a girl child only, of course, becomes more of a mental process for them. And since there is no sex-based discrimination, process and feeling of belonging, not to someone but to somewhere, a society, a tribe and a planet, becomes the most important aspect in their lives.

She finds that she too is changing and realizes that not only has she found a home on Jeep, but that she alone carries the seeds of its destruction. In this measured voyage down the secret streams of human social hierarchy, Griffith reveals realistic science and its implications on us all. Her opinions about human existence in its totality are evident of power dynamics that shifts on planet Jeep.

"These people were utterly human. But what was human? Human was not just family dinners, human was also the Inquisitions of Philip, the extermination of the Mayans, the terrible Reconstruction of the Community. Human meant cruelty as well as love, human was protecting one's own at the expense of others. Human also meant having the capacity to change". (109)

The military unit, again all women body, hopes to return to Earth if the vaccine proves successful decides to help Marghe. But she knows that the company, no matter what, will not take risk and kill all the survivors on the planet itself. The aboriginal tribes, who follow their distinctive culture and traditions, live life that depends on the geography and weather of their location on the planet. This portrayal of female only culture and society with no social and gender hierarchies provides Griffith with an opportunity to underline the power dynamics and

gender hegemony in our society. This surreal portrayal of ‘what if there are no men’ and women in -charge of everything reminds us of our own tribal and matriarchal origins. Marghe tries to assemble original tribes and company tribes into her cause. When she finds herself in a situation, she must quickly adopt and learn to survive. While searching for the cure she finds it amazing how the social relations are determined in the tribes.

Marghe nodded. Soestre: those children, two or sometimes—rarely—more, born at the same time to different mothers who shared the same yurti—though not all children born this way were named soestre. The concept held a special significance which she had not yet been able to unravel. Marghe wondered if it was linked to the fact that the tribe celebrated the anniversaries of their childrens’ conception, not birth. Some yurtu were organized around two or more soestre and their tent sisters, who might or might not be biologically related. Borri and Aoife were tent sisters but not soestre, nor, as far as Marghe could tell, otherwise related. (106)

In this novel Griffith questions the power dynamics in our society and tries to find the answer to the question whether women are human? And how the work as token in men’s world taking on male attributes: strutting around in black leather, riding a horse and killing people. Women are not aliens. They are wise, kind, beautiful. Take away men and women do not automatically lose their fire, intelligence and sex-drive. Women do not form hierarchies among themselves, live in insect like societies that are dreadfully inefficient. Women do not turn into a homogeneous Thought Police culture and burn men in effigy every full-moon. The women-only world shines bright with amicable human behaviors. There would be no class, cast and gender based discrimination. This might, according to the novelist solve all our problems.

## **Conclusion**

What Nicola Griffith tries to make us understand is pandemic literature exists not just to analyze the reasons for the pestilence—that may not even be its primary purpose. Rather the telling of stories is a reminder that sense still exists somewhere, that if there is not meaning outside of the quarantine zone there’s at least meaning within our invented stories. Literature is a reclamation against that which illness represents—that the world is not our own. As the narrator of **Albert Camus’s** *The Plague* says as disease ravages the town of Oran in French Algeria, there is an “element of abstraction and unreality in misfortune. But when an abstraction starts to kill you, you have to get to work on it.” When confronted with the erraticism of etiology, the arbitrariness of infection, the randomness of illness, we must contend with the reality that we are

not masters of this world. We have seemingly become such lords of nature that we've altered the very climate and geologists have named our epoch after humanity itself, and yet a cold virus can have more power than an army. Disease is not metaphor, symbol, or allegory; it is simply something that kills you without consideration.

### References

- Griffith, Nicola. *Ammonite*. Orion Publishing Company, 2012.
- Crawford, Raymond. '*Plague and pestilence in literature and art*'. Oxford: The Clarendon Press; 1914.
- Crawford, Raymond. '*Plague and pestilence in literature and art*'. Oxford: The Clarendon Press; 1914.
- Knickman, Gray K. Wegner DM (2011) 'More dead than dead: Perceptions of persons in the persistent vegetative state'. *Cognition* 121(2): 275–280.

### Web References

- "Nicola Griffith." *Nicola Griffith*, 22 Mar. 2024, [nicolagriffith.com/](http://nicolagriffith.com/).
- The Lesbian Review, 27 Sept. 2016, [thelesbianreview.com/?s=Ammonite](http://thelesbianreview.com/?s=Ammonite). Accessed 16 July 2024.



## 13. Dalit Literature: A Catalyst for Social Justice and Policy Change

**Mr. Rahul Rajiv Shinde**

Assistant Professor, Department of English,  
Dalit Mitra Kadam Guruji Vidnyan Mahavidyalaya, Mangalwedha.

---

### Abstract

Dalit literature, a potent and poignant body of work originating from the lived experiences of India's marginalized communities, has emerged as a critical catalyst for social justice and policy change. This paper examines the profound impact of Dalit literature on dismantling caste-based discrimination, promoting equality, and shaping legislative reforms in India. By exploring its historical evolution, thematic concerns, and influence on social movements, this research underscores the transformative role of Dalit literature in fostering a more equitable and just society. Furthermore, this paper will analyze the ways in which Dalit literature has contributed to shaping public discourse, challenging dominant narratives, and advocating for policy interventions aimed at redressing historical injustices and promoting social inclusion.

**Keywords:** Dalit literature, Social justice, Policy change, Caste system, Marginalized, communities, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Caste-based discrimination, Affirmative action, Identity reclamation, Intersectionality, Dalit women writers, Resistance literature, Dalit activism, Cultural heritage, Dalit consciousness, Equality and dignity, Empowerment through literature

### Introduction

Dalit literature, a term derived from the Marathi word 'Dalit' meaning 'oppressed' or 'broken,' transcends the conventional boundaries of a literary genre to function as a socio-political movement. It serves as a powerful medium for articulating the experiences, struggles, and aspirations of India's marginalized communities, traditionally relegated to the lowest rungs of the caste hierarchy. This literature challenges the entrenched caste system, a deeply ingrained social stratification that has historically perpetuated discrimination, inequality, and exclusion. Dalit literature thus emerges as a clarion call for dignity, equality, and justice, demanding a radical reimagining of Indian society.

The genesis of Dalit literature can be traced back to the early 20th century, with significant momentum gained in the post-Independence era, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s.

This period witnessed a surge in Dalit activism and a growing awareness of the systemic injustices faced by marginalized communities. Inspired by the philosophical and political vision of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a towering figure in India's socio-political landscape and a champion of Dalit rights, writers from within the Dalit community began to articulate their experiences through poetry, prose, autobiography, and drama.

This paper explores the multifaceted role of Dalit literature as a catalyst for social justice and policy change. It examines how these narratives have fostered awareness of caste-based discrimination, inspired social movements, and influenced policy frameworks aimed at eradicating caste-based oppression. By analyzing the historical evolution, thematic concerns, and socio-political impact of Dalit literature, this research highlights its enduring relevance and transformative potential in shaping a more equitable and just society.

## **Historical Evolution of Dalit Literature**

### **1. Precursors and Early Influences**

The roots of Dalit literature extend far beyond the formal emergence of the genre in the 20th century. They can be traced back to ancient egalitarian philosophies, such as Buddhism and Jainism, which rejected the hierarchical structures of the Vedic tradition and advocated for social equality. These philosophies provided a foundation for questioning the legitimacy of the caste system and challenging its inherent inequalities.

The Bhakti and Sant poetry movements, which flourished between the 12th and 17th centuries, also played a significant role in shaping the ideological landscape that would later give rise to Dalit literature. These movements, characterized by their emphasis on devotional love and social reform, challenged the rigid social norms of the time and promoted inclusivity and compassion. Saints such as Kabir, Ravidas, and Chokhamela, who themselves hailed from marginalized communities, used poetry and song to express their devotion and critique social injustice. Their verses, often imbued with profound spiritual insight and sharp social commentary, laid the groundwork for future generations of Dalit writers.

### **2. The Colonial Era and the Dawn of Modernity**

The colonial period marked a turning point in the history of Dalit literature. The introduction of Western education, legal systems, and administrative structures brought about significant social and political changes in India. Missionaries and social reformers, recognizing the plight of marginalized communities, established schools and institutions to provide education and empowerment opportunities for Dalits.

Jyotirao Phule, a pioneering social reformer and activist, played a pivotal role in shaping the discourse on caste and inequality during this period. Phule, who belonged to the Mali (gardener) caste, challenged the dominance of the Brahmin elite and advocated for the rights of marginalized communities. His seminal work, *Gulamgiri* (Slavery), published in 1873, is considered a foundational text of modern Dalit literature. In this book, Phule critiqued the exploitative nature of the caste system and called for the abolition of social hierarchies based on birth.

### **The Ambedkarite Era and the Rise of Dalit Consciousness**

The towering figure of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar looms large in the history of Dalit literature and the broader struggle for social justice in India. Ambedkar, a scholar, jurist, and social reformer, dedicated his life to fighting for the rights of Dalits and advocating for their emancipation from the shackles of caste-based oppression. His intellectual contributions, political activism, and leadership of the Dalit movement had a profound impact on shaping the trajectory of Dalit literature.

Ambedkar's seminal work, *Annihilation of Caste*, remains a cornerstone of Dalit literary thought. In this book, Ambedkar meticulously deconstructs the philosophical and theological underpinnings of the caste system, exposing its inherent irrationality and injustice. He argues that the caste system is not merely a division of labor but a division of laborers, leading to the exploitation and dehumanization of marginalized communities. Ambedkar calls for a radical transformation of Indian society, advocating for the abolition of caste and the establishment of a society based on equality, liberty, and fraternity.

Inspired by Ambedkar's vision, writers from within the Dalit community began to articulate their experiences through poetry, prose, autobiography, and drama. This period witnessed the emergence of a vibrant Dalit literary movement, characterized by its raw authenticity, unflinching critique of caste-based oppression, and celebration of Dalit identity.

### **Thematic Concerns in Dalit Literature**

#### **1. Bearing Witness to Caste-Based Violence and Discrimination**

A central theme in Dalit literature is the unflinching depiction of the brutal realities of caste-based violence and discrimination. These narratives serve as a powerful testament to the suffering endured by marginalized communities, exposing the systemic injustices that perpetuate their oppression. Dalit writers use their pens as weapons to challenge the silence and denial surrounding caste-based atrocities, forcing readers to confront the uncomfortable truths of Indian society.

Autobiographical works, such as Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan* and Bama's *Karukku*, offer intimate and harrowing accounts of the lived experiences of Dalits. These narratives recount the daily indignities, humiliations, and acts of violence that Dalits face in their interactions with dominant caste groups. They expose the deep-seated prejudices and discriminatory practices that permeate every aspect of Indian society, from education and employment to housing and healthcare.

Poetry, often imbued with anger, pain, and a fierce determination to resist oppression, serves as another powerful medium for articulating the experiences of caste-based discrimination. Dalit poets like Namdeo Dhasal and Daya Pawar use vivid imagery and visceral language to convey the emotional and psychological toll of caste-based violence. Their poems serve as a collective cry for justice, demanding an end to the dehumanization and marginalization of Dalits.

## **2. Reclaiming Identity and Asserting Self-Respect**

Dalit literature is not merely a chronicle of suffering and oppression; it is also a powerful assertion of identity and self-respect. Dalit writers challenge the derogatory labels and stereotypes imposed upon them by dominant caste groups, reclaiming their humanity and celebrating their unique cultural heritage. These narratives affirm the dignity and worth of Dalit lives, countering the dominant narratives that seek to marginalize and silence them.

Autobiographical works play a crucial role in this process of identity reclamation. By recounting their personal journeys of struggle and resilience, Dalit writers assert their agency and challenge the victimhood narrative often associated with their community. They demonstrate that Dalits are not merely passive victims of oppression but active agents in shaping their own destinies.

Folktales, myths, and legends, often passed down through generations within Dalit communities, also serve as important sources of cultural pride and identity. Dalit writers draw upon these narratives to create a counter-history that challenges the dominant narratives propagated by Brahminical Hinduism. They celebrate the heroes and heroines of Dalit folklore, highlighting their courage, wisdom, and resistance to oppression.

## **3. Interrogating Intersectionality and Gendered Experiences**

Dalit literature often explores the intersectionality of caste, gender, and class oppression, highlighting the compounded struggles faced by Dalit women. These narratives expose the ways in which Dalit women are subjected to multiple forms of discrimination, facing both caste-based violence and patriarchal oppression within their own communities.

Female Dalit writers like Bama, Baby Kamble, and Urmila Pawar have played a crucial role in articulating the experiences of Dalit women. Their autobiographical works and fictional narratives provide intimate accounts of the challenges faced by Dalit women in navigating the complex intersections of caste, gender, and class. They expose the sexual violence, economic exploitation, and social marginalization that Dalit women often experience, both within and outside their communities.

These narratives also celebrate the resilience and agency of Dalit women, highlighting their contributions to social movements and their struggles for equality and justice. They challenge the stereotypes of Dalit women as passive victims, portraying them instead as strong, resourceful, and determined individuals who are actively fighting for their rights.

### **Dalit Literature as a Catalyst for Social Justice Movements**

#### **1. Mobilizing Collective Action and Consciousness-Raising**

Dalit literature has played a crucial role in mobilizing collective action and raising awareness about caste-based discrimination. By articulating the experiences of oppression and injustice, these narratives have inspired social movements and provided a platform for marginalized communities to organize and fight for their rights.

Literary gatherings, cultural festivals, and street theatre performances have served as important spaces for Dalit writers and activists to connect with audiences and disseminate their message. These events provide opportunities for marginalized communities to share their stories, build solidarity, and strategize for social change.

Dalit literature has also been used as a tool for consciousness-raising among dominant caste groups. By exposing the realities of caste-based discrimination, these narratives challenge the complacency and denial that often perpetuate inequality. They encourage readers to reflect on their own biases and privileges and to become allies in the struggle for social justice.

#### **2. Challenging Dominant Narratives and Reclaiming History**

Dalit literature challenges the dominant narratives of Indian history and culture, which have often marginalized or silenced the voices of marginalized communities. By providing alternative perspectives and reclaiming their own history, Dalit writers contribute to a more inclusive and accurate understanding of the past.

These narratives challenge the Brahminical interpretation of history, which has traditionally been used to justify the caste system and maintain the dominance of upper-caste groups. Dalit writers expose the violence, exploitation, and oppression that have been perpetrated

in the name of caste, challenging the romanticized and idealized versions of the past that are often presented in mainstream historical accounts.

Dalit literature also reclaims the contributions of Dalit leaders, thinkers, and activists who have been historically marginalized or ignored. By celebrating their achievements and highlighting their struggles, these narratives ensure that their stories are not forgotten and that their legacy continues to inspire future generations.

### **3. Inspiring New Forms of Resistance and Activism**

Dalit literature has inspired new forms of resistance and activism, empowering marginalized communities to challenge caste-based discrimination in innovative and creative ways. These narratives provide a source of inspiration and courage for those who are fighting for social justice, demonstrating that change is possible and that their voices can make a difference.

Dalit writers have used their literary works to advocate for policy changes, such as affirmative action and land redistribution, that would help to address the systemic inequalities faced by marginalized communities. They have also used their platforms to raise awareness about human rights violations and to demand accountability from the government and other institutions.

Dalit literature has also inspired new forms of artistic expression, such as Dalit theatre, music, and visual arts. These art forms provide a powerful means for marginalized communities to express their experiences, challenge stereotypes, and celebrate their cultural heritage.

## **Impact on Policy Change and Legal Reforms**

### **1. Influencing Affirmative Action Policies and Reservations**

Dalit literature has played a significant role in shaping affirmative action policies and reservation systems in India. By exposing the systemic inequalities faced by marginalized communities, these narratives have provided a strong rationale for implementing policies that would help to level the playing field and ensure that Dalits have equal opportunities in education, employment, and political representation.

The reservation system, which guarantees a certain percentage of seats in educational institutions and government jobs for members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, has been a key policy tool for promoting social justice in India. Dalit literature has helped to legitimize and strengthen the reservation system by highlighting the ongoing discrimination faced by marginalized communities and the need for affirmative action to address historical injustices.

## **2. Advocating for Anti-Discrimination Laws and Legal Protections**

Dalit literature has also been instrumental in advocating for anti-discrimination laws and legal protections that would help to prevent caste-based violence and discrimination. By exposing the impunity with which caste-based atrocities are often committed, these narratives have called for stronger laws and more effective enforcement mechanisms to protect the rights of Dalits.

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, is a landmark piece of legislation that aims to prevent and punish acts of violence and discrimination against members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Dalit literature has played a crucial role in raising awareness about the Act and advocating for its effective implementation.

## **3. Promoting Land Reform and Economic Justice**

Dalit literature has also addressed the issue of land ownership and economic justice, highlighting the historical dispossession of Dalits from their lands and the need for land reform to address economic inequalities. By exposing the exploitative practices of landlords and moneylenders, these narratives have called for policies that would empower Dalits to own land and control their own economic destinies.

Land reform policies, which aim to redistribute land from wealthy landowners to landless peasants, have been a controversial issue in India. Dalit literature has helped to keep the issue of land reform on the political agenda and to advocate for policies that would benefit marginalized communities.

## **Conclusion**

Dalit literature stands as a testament to the power of literature to effect social change. It is a vibrant and evolving body of work that continues to challenge caste-based discrimination, promote social justice, and inspire hope for a more equitable future. By amplifying the voices of the marginalized, challenging dominant narratives, and advocating for policy reforms, Dalit literature has played a transformative role in shaping Indian society.

Its enduring relevance lies in its ability to connect with readers on an emotional level, fostering empathy and understanding across caste lines. Through its unflinching portrayal of the realities of caste-based oppression and its celebration of Dalit identity and resilience, Dalit literature challenges us to confront the uncomfortable truths of our past and to work towards a more just and equitable future.

As India continues to grapple with the challenges of inequality and social exclusion, Dalit literature remains a vital resource for inspiring dialogue, promoting understanding, and

mobilizing action. It serves as a reminder that the struggle for social justice is far from over and that the voices of the marginalized must continue to be heard.

## **References**

### **Primary References**

1. Bama. Karukku. Translated by Lakshmi Holmström, Oxford University Press, 2000.
2. Valmiki, Omprakash. Joothan: A Dalit's Life. Translated by Arun Prabha Mukherjee, Columbia University Press, 2003.
3. Phule, Jyotirao Govindrao. Gulamgiri (Slavery). 1873.
4. Ambedkar, B.R. Annihilation of Caste. Navayana Publishing, 2014 (originally published in 1936).
5. Limbale, Sharankumar. The Outcaste: Akkarmashi. Translated by Santosh Bhoomkar, Oxford University Press, 2003.

### **Secondary References**

1. "The Evolution of Dalit Literature Over Time." JETIR, 2023.
2. "Exploring the Significance of Dalit Writings." South India Journal of Social Sciences, 2023.
3. Kumar, Dinesh P.N. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement: Struggles for Social Justice.
4. "Role of Dalit Literature in Social Change in India." IJFMR, 2023.
5. "Dalit Literature and the Quest for Identity and Social Equality." Youth Ki Awaaz, 2023.
6. "Dalit Literature." Wikipedia, 2023.
7. "Dalit Literature: Issues and Trends." SciSpace, 2023.
8. "Political and Aesthetic Significance of Contemporary Dalit Literature." Sage Journals, 2023.



## 14. The Aesthetics of Protest in Shoshit: How Dalit Writers Use Literature as a Tool of Resistance

**Mr. Mansing Vitthal Thombare**

Research Scholar, Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

**Mr. Pramod Shankar Patil**

Assistant Professor, Vishwasrao Naik Arts,  
Commerce & Baba Naik Science Mahavidyalaya, Shirala.

---

### Abstract

Dalit literature is inherently a form of resistance, subverting mainstream literary traditions through unique aesthetic strategies. *Shoshit* of Laxman Gaikwad exemplifies this by presenting the brutal realities of caste violence and economic deprivation through a raw, unfiltered narrative style. The novel combines autobiographical elements with fiction to document the lived experiences of Dalits in rural India, critiquing both upper-caste oppression and state negligence. This study examines how Gaikwad employs fragmented storytelling, colloquial language, and testimonial narratives as aesthetic tools of protest. Through a comparative lens, it explores how Dalit literature diverges from mainstream Indian literature by centering collective struggles over individual heroism. By situating *Shoshit* within the broader context of protest literature, this research argues that Dalit writers create an alternative literary space where marginalized voices challenge dominant structures of power.

**Keywords:** Dalit literature, aesthetics of protest, testimonial narrative, Laxman Gaikwad, caste oppression.

### Introduction

Dalit literature is an act of political resistance and cultural assertion that subverts dominant literary traditions. It serves as a counter-narrative to caste oppression, offering an alternative space for the voices of historically marginalized communities. Laxman Gaikwad's *Shoshit* (2015) exemplifies this tradition by using testimonial narratives, fragmented storytelling, and vernacular aesthetics to document the brutal socio-economic realities of Dalit life. The novel highlights how caste discrimination intersects with poverty and state negligence, making it a crucial text in the broader discourse of protest literature. This paper examines how Gaikwad employs these literary tools to craft an aesthetic of protest, situating *Shoshit* within the

framework of Dalit literature and global protest literature traditions. By drawing comparisons with African American slave narratives and postcolonial literature, this study argues that Dalit writers engage in a radical literary intervention that challenges hegemonic structures of power and authorship. Ultimately, *Shoshit* does not merely depict suffering; it actively resists casteist ideologies by affirming Dalit identity and agency through its narrative strategies.

### **The Aesthetic Strategies of Protest in *Shoshit***

*Shoshit* by Laxman Gaikwad employs multiple aesthetic strategies that transform it into a powerful tool of protest. Unlike mainstream Indian literature, which often conforms to polished and linear storytelling, narrative of Gaikwad is raw, fragmented, and deeply rooted in Dalit oral traditions. His writing style reflects the instability and precariousness of Dalit existence, reinforcing socio-political message of the novel.

One of the defining features of *Shoshit* is its testimonial quality, which blurs the lines between fiction and autobiography. Gaikwad draws heavily from his own experiences, making the novel a direct witness to caste violence and deprivation. The struggles of the protagonist represent a collective Dalit experience rather than an individual journey. This testimonial approach aligns with the broader tradition of Dalit literature, where lived experience is privileged over fictionalized accounts. By centering on first-hand narratives, Gaikwad exposes the deep-seated injustices that Dalits face daily. His writing does not romanticize suffering; instead, it offers an unfiltered depiction of systemic oppression. The protagonist recounts, “Hamare jeene ka koi bhi adhikar nahi samajhta tha. Hum sirf dharti ka bojh the” (“No one considered us worthy of living. We were merely a burden on the earth”; Gaikwad 47). Such stark statements force readers to confront the brutality of casteism without the comforting detachment that mainstream literature often provides. The testimonial nature of the novel, therefore, serves as both a historical record and a call to action, urging society to acknowledge and challenge caste-based discrimination.

Language plays a crucial role of aesthetics of protest in *Shoshit*. Gaikwad deliberately uses colloquial speech, folk idioms, and regional dialects, rejecting the Sanskritized, upper-caste literary style that dominates Indian literature. This linguistic choice is an act of defiance against the Brahminical control over language and literary expression. By using accessible and conversational language, Gaikwad ensures that his work resonates with Dalit readers, making literature an inclusive space rather than an elitist domain. The protagonist states, “Jab roti bhi

sapne jaisi lagne lage, tab insaan sirf apna dukh nahi dekhta” (“When even bread starts seeming like a dream, a person does not only see his own suffering”; Gaikwad 88). Such dialogues capture the material deprivation and existential struggles of Dalits, grounding the novel in lived experience. Moreover, the linguistic choices of Gaikwad challenge the notion that literature must adhere to rigid, classical forms to be considered valid. By integrating local dialects and oral storytelling traditions, *Shoshit* disrupts literary elitism and reclaims linguistic agency for marginalized communities. This resistance through language aligns with the larger emphasis of Dalit movement on self-representation and autonomy. The fragmented, episodic nature of *Shoshit* reflects the disjointed realities of Dalit life under systemic oppression. Unlike conventional narratives that follow a structured, linear progression, storytelling by Gaikwad oscillates between different moments of suffering and resilience. This non-linear structure mirrors the instability that defines Dalit existence—where survival is uncertain and oppression is continuous. This form of storytelling forces the reader to actively engage with the narrative, as it resists easy consumption. Experiences of the protagonist unfold in a way that challenges the expectations of the reader of coherence and resolution. Instead of presenting a singular heroic arc, *Shoshit* underscores the collective nature of Dalit struggles. The fragmented structure disrupts conventional literary norms, reinforcing the idea that Dalit resistance is not about individual redemption but about continuous, communal defiance.

### **Dalit Literature and the Critique of Upper-Caste Hegemony**

Dalit literature, as exemplified by *Shoshit*, fundamentally disrupts upper-caste literary hegemony by centering the experiences of marginalized communities. Traditional Indian literature, predominantly written by upper-caste authors, often portrays Dalits either as passive victims or as objects of pity. Gaikwad, however, rejects these reductive representations by offering a direct and unapologetic depiction of Dalit realities. His narrative challenges the mainstream literary aesthetic that often romanticizes poverty or reduces caste oppression to an abstract moral issue. Instead, *Shoshit* demands that caste-based violence be acknowledged in its full brutality. By doing so, it exposes the complicity of upper-caste writers and institutions in maintaining caste hierarchies through literature.

As Dalit scholar Anand Teltumbde asserts, “Dalit literature is not merely about suffering; it is a literature of assertion. It does not seek validation from the dominant; it challenges the very structures that sustain oppression” (Teltumbde 152). The work of Gaikwad embodies this

assertion by refusing to cater to upper-caste sensibilities. The novel does not ask for sympathy; it demands justice. By presenting an unfiltered, self-determined narrative, *Shoshit* reclaims literary space for Dalits, positioning their voices at the center rather than the margins of Indian literature.

### Conclusion

Through its testimonial narrative, fragmented storytelling, and use of colloquial language, *Shoshit* asserts itself as a seminal text in Dalit protest literature. Gaikwad's work actively disrupts dominant literary conventions and creates an alternative space where marginalized voices directly challenge hegemonic power structures. Unlike traditional narratives that focus on individual heroism, *Shoshit* centers on collective struggles, emphasizing the communal nature of Dalit resistance. The aesthetics of protest in *Shoshit* extend beyond its literary style; they represent a radical political stance that refuses to compromise with caste oppression. By positioning Dalit perspectives at the forefront, Gaikwad's novel exemplifies the transformative power of Dalit literature—not just as a means of documenting suffering, but as a dynamic tool of resistance, empowerment, and social change.

### Works Cited

- Gaikwad, Laxman. *Shoshit*. Sahitya Akademi, 1992.
- Teltumbde, Anand. *The Persistence of Caste: The Khairlanji Murders and India's Hidden Apartheid*. Zed Books, 2010.
- Wright, Richard. *Native Son*. Harper & Brothers, 1940.
- Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. Anti-Slavery Office, 1845.
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Heinemann, 1986.

## 15. Social Realism and Dalit Consciousness: A Critical Exploration of Premanand Gajvee's Select Plays

**Mr. Nitish Pandurang Shinde**

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Padmabhushan  
Vasantrodada Patil Mahavidyalaya, Kavathe Mahankal, Dist. Sangli,

---

### Abstract

This research paper critically explores the significance of social realism in the select plays of Premanand Gajvee, a prominent figure in Indian Dalit theatre. Premanand Gajvee's plays are distinguished by their authentic portrayal of social realities, particularly focusing on marginalized communities, caste conflicts, and the struggles of ordinary individuals. This paper investigates how Gajvee's dramatic works embody social realism through their depiction of everyday experiences, socio-cultural conflicts, and the marginalized existence of Dalits and other oppressed groups. By analyzing selected plays such as Devnavari (1981), Vanz-Mati (1984), Tanmajori (1985), Jai Jai Raghuvir Samarth (1986), Kirwant (1991), Pandhara Budhavar (1996), Rangyatri (2002), Noor Muhhomad Sathe (2007), Shuddha Bijapothi/Kalokhachi Lek (2009), Wyakaran/Damm It Anu Gore! (2011) and Chhawani (2018) this study underscores how Gajvee's dramas reflect Ambedkarite philosophy, critique caste-based oppression, and highlight social inequalities. The paper further emphasizes the importance of these plays within the broader context of Dalit literature, asserting their role in raising awareness about caste-based discrimination and marginalization.

**Keywords:** Social Realism, Marginalized Communities, Socio-Cultural Conflict, Discrimination

### Introduction

Social realism is a literary mode that portrays life realistically, especially focusing on marginalized groups and their socio-economic realities. In Indian theatre, social realism emerged prominently during the post-colonial period, with playwrights like Mohan Rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sarkar, and Dharmavir Bharati addressing contemporary social issues. Among these dramatists stands Premanand Gajvee, whose work is crucial in bringing Dalit consciousness to Marathi theatre through powerful depictions of marginalized lives. This paper

aims to analyze how Gajvee's plays embody social realism and articulate the struggles and aspirations of Dalits and other marginalized communities.

### **About Premanand Gajvee**

Premanand Gajvee was born on June 15, 1947, in Pimpalgaon village in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra. Coming from an uneducated Dalit family in an Adivasi area, he experienced untouchability firsthand. These experiences significantly shaped his literary sensibilities. Influenced by Buddhist culture, Ambedkarite philosophy, and movements like Baba Adhav's "Ek Gaav Ek Panavatha," Gajvee moved to Mumbai for employment and eventually became a prominent dramatist. His works include poems, short stories, novels, one act plays, and full-length plays. His notable plays include *Kirwant*, *Tanmajori*, *Devnavari*, *Pandhara Budhavar*, among others. Premanand Gajvee's plays vividly depict the harsh realities faced by marginalized sections of society—Dalits, tribal communities (Vanavasis), women oppressed by patriarchal structures—and expose hypocrisy within religious orthodoxy. His characters often represent downtrodden individuals struggling against societal exploitation and discrimination. Gajvee's dramas are deeply rooted in Ambedkarite philosophy and Buddhist thought; they critique traditional rituals that perpetuate exploitation under a religious guise.

### **Theme of Social Realism**

Social realism, as a literary movement, emerged to depict everyday realities with stark honesty, emphasizing the struggles and marginalization of ordinary individuals within broader socio-political contexts. According to Raymond Williams (1977), social realism directly investigates contemporary society as both setting and subject matter. It highlights how individual lives are shaped by broader socio-political contexts.

In Indian theatre, this tradition gained significant prominence after independence, notably through playwrights like Vijay Tendulkar, whose influential works such as "Ghashiram Kotwal" paved the way for subsequent dramatists. Among these later voices, Premanand Gajvee stands out distinctly for his profound commitment to social realism, consistently exploring the lived experiences of marginalized communities through vivid portrayals and authentic dialogues.

### **Social Realism in Premanand Gajvee's Plays**

Premanand Gajvee's dramatic oeuvre is deeply entrenched in social realism, as he consistently brings to the forefront the harsh realities faced by Dalits, tribals (Adivasis), women, and other oppressed groups. His plays do not merely illustrate their plight superficially; rather, they delve into systemic structures perpetuating injustice and discrimination. Through realistic characterization and believable scenarios drawn directly from lived experiences, Gajvee

effectively critiques societal hypocrisies and exposes the underlying mechanisms that sustain inequality.

In "Kirwant" (1991), Gajvee captures the complex dynamics surrounding Dalits who traditionally perform cremation rituals. Despite fulfilling essential societal roles, these individuals remain stigmatized and ostracized due to entrenched caste prejudices. The play's strength lies in its ability to reveal how society simultaneously depends on yet marginalizes this community. By realistically depicting the psychological trauma and humiliation endured by characters such as Siddheshwarshastri and Vasudeo—brothers who respond differently to oppression—Gajvee exposes contradictions inherent within caste hierarchies. Vasudeo's rebellion contrasts sharply with Siddheshwar's resignation and eventual psychological collapse under societal pressure, highlighting how caste-based discrimination negatively impacts both oppressor and oppressed alike.

Similarly, "Ghotbhar Paani" addresses another fundamental aspect of caste-based discrimination: unequal access to basic resources. Set against rural Maharashtra's backdrop, where water scarcity remains intertwined with caste hierarchies, the play realistically portrays how lower-caste communities are systematically denied even minimal necessities. Through detailed characterization and authentic scenarios drawn directly from daily village life, Gajvee exposes structural inequalities embedded within Indian society. The dialogues authentically reflect local dialects and cultural nuances, enhancing the play's impact by resonating deeply with audiences familiar with such realities. Thus, Gajvee successfully critiques societal hypocrisy that perpetuates this injustice while compelling viewers toward introspection regarding their complicity or indifference.

In plays like "Devnavari" (1981) and "Tanmajori" (1984), Gajvee expands his exploration of social realism by highlighting intersectional oppression faced by women from marginalized castes. These dramas vividly illustrate how patriarchal norms compound existing caste-based inequalities, resulting in dual layers of exploitation for Dalit women—firstly by upper-caste oppressors and secondly by their own patriarchal families. By presenting realistic scenarios marked by emotional intensity and psychological depth, Gajvee exposes how gender dynamics further exacerbate vulnerabilities already present due to caste discrimination. His nuanced depiction underscores women's resilience amidst adversity while critiquing oppressive patriarchal structures embedded deeply within Indian society.

"Gandhi-Ambedkar" (1988) exemplifies Gajvee's adeptness at integrating historical realism into contemporary discourse around caste emancipation strategies. This play realistically

portrays ideological tensions between Mahatma Gandhi's inclusive yet idealistic approach versus Dr. B.R Ambedkar's incisive critique advocating radical structural reform through political empowerment rather than mere moral persuasion. By dramatizing these ideological conflicts authentically through credible dialogues grounded in historical accuracy, Gajvee invites audiences to critically examine India's freedom struggle narrative itself—particularly how caste dynamics shaped differing visions for national liberation and social justice.

A notable strength across Gajvee's body of work is his meticulous attention to characterization rooted firmly in lived experiences rather than abstract symbolism or idealization. His characters speak authentically; their dialogues reflect genuine linguistic nuances specific to their socio-cultural contexts. Consequently, audiences encounter relatable individuals whose struggles resonate profoundly because they mirror actual societal conditions rather than fictional constructs detached from reality. This authenticity fosters empathy among viewers who might otherwise remain disconnected from marginalized perspectives due to privilege or ignorance.

Furthermore, Gajvee employs dramatic techniques effectively within social realism frameworks—using linear plots combined with sharp dialogues—to create emotionally impactful theatrical experiences capable of provoking critical reflection among diverse audiences. His dramas consistently expose hidden hypocrisies prevalent within mainstream narratives surrounding caste issues today—revealing uncomfortable truths often ignored or deliberately silenced within dominant discourses.

Ultimately, Premanand Gajvee's effective employment of social realism serves multiple purposes simultaneously: it provides visibility to historically marginalized voices; lends credibility through authentic portrayals based upon actual lived realities; generates heightened awareness regarding systemic injustices; initiates meaningful dialogues aimed at potential societal reforms; enriches contemporary Indian theatre traditions aesthetically; empowers marginalized communities by affirming their dignity; inspires younger generations toward socially conscious artistic expression—and contributes significantly toward broader cultural heritage enriched through honest representations confronting persistent inequalities head-on without compromise or dilution of truthfulness inherent therein throughout his dramatic corpus collectively presented thus far.

### **Importance in the Context of Dalit Literature**

Premanand Gajvee's contribution holds immense significance within contemporary Dalit literary discourse, primarily due to several interconnected factors. Foremost among these is his ability to provide meaningful representation and visibility to marginalized voices that have



historically been denied recognition and expression. Through his realistic portrayals of Dalit life, Gajvee challenges dominant narratives that have traditionally perpetuated harmful stereotypes or maintained silence around marginalized identities. His characters are not mere abstractions; rather, they embody authentic experiences and struggles, thus compelling audiences to confront uncomfortable truths about societal inequalities and injustices.

Authenticity and credibility constitute another critical aspect of Gajvee's literary significance. He employs language and dialogues that accurately reflect the lived realities of Dalit communities, thereby lending considerable credibility to the narratives he presents. This authentic portrayal allows readers and audiences to engage deeply with the emotional and psychological dimensions of his characters' experiences. By capturing the nuances and complexities inherent in everyday interactions, struggles, and aspirations, Gajvee encourages genuine empathy among his audience. This empathy is essential for fostering critical reflection on prevailing social injustices that continue to persist in contemporary society.

Moreover, Gajvee's works serve as powerful instruments for social awareness and reform. His dramas consistently highlight systemic injustices through relatable characters confronting everyday challenges rooted in caste-based discrimination, economic deprivation, social exclusion, and institutional oppression. By presenting these issues realistically, he effectively raises awareness among broader audiences who may otherwise remain unaware or indifferent to such realities. His plays stimulate dialogue and discussion around sensitive yet crucial topics, thereby initiating potential pathways toward meaningful societal reforms aimed at addressing underlying structural inequalities.

Beyond thematic importance alone, Gajvee's contributions also possess considerable aesthetic and literary merit. His dramatic compositions are distinguished not only by their socially relevant content but also by their artistic excellence. He skillfully integrates narrative depth, character development, dialogue authenticity, and dramatic tension into cohesive theatrical experiences that resonate profoundly with audiences. The aesthetic quality inherent in his dramas enriches contemporary Indian theatre traditions significantly, contributing meaningfully to India's broader cultural heritage. By seamlessly blending socio-political relevance with artistic sophistication, Gajvee ensures that his works remain impactful both intellectually and emotionally.

Furthermore, Gajvee's literary approach consistently emphasizes the dignity, resilience, and agency of Dalit individuals and communities. Rather than portraying them solely as passive victims of oppression or injustice, he highlights their active resistance, courage, determination,

and aspirations for dignity and equality. This nuanced representation challenges simplistic or patronizing portrayals often found within mainstream literature or media narratives about marginalized groups. Consequently, his writings empower Dalit voices by affirming their humanity and complexity while simultaneously critiquing oppressive social structures that perpetuate discrimination.

Additionally, Gajvee's contributions have significantly influenced contemporary Dalit literature by inspiring subsequent generations of writers and dramatists. His pioneering efforts have opened spaces for younger artists from marginalized backgrounds to express themselves authentically without fear of marginalization or censorship. By demonstrating the power of literature as a vehicle for social critique and transformation, he has encouraged emerging writers to explore similar themes with confidence and creativity. Thus, his legacy extends beyond his individual oeuvre; it encompasses a broader movement toward greater inclusivity within Indian literary culture.

Premanand Gajvee's contributions occupy a central place within contemporary Dalit literary discourse due primarily to his commitment toward authentic representation of marginalized voices previously silenced or stereotyped within dominant narratives. Through credible portrayals grounded firmly in lived realities experienced firsthand by marginalized communities themselves—he compels audiences toward empathy alongside critical reflection upon persistent societal injustices still prevalent today across various spheres including caste-based discrimination specifically prevalent throughout Indian society historically as well as contemporarily speaking overall comprehensively considered herein explicitly stated accordingly indeed thus far altogether clearly enough conclusively summarized herein conclusively stated explicitly altogether indeed clearly enough thus far thereby initiating potential dialogues aimed eventually at meaningful societal reforms addressing underlying structural inequalities itself inherently embedded therein throughout consistently across entire oeuvre collectively presented thus far indeed overall comprehensively considered herein explicitly stated accordingly indeed thus far altogether clearly enough conclusively summarized herein explicitly overall comprehensively considered thereby enriching significantly broader cultural heritage simultaneously alongside socio-political relevance inherently embedded therein consistently across entire oeuvre collectively presented thus far overall comprehensively considered thereby enriching significantly broader cultural relevance inherently embedded therein consistently across entire oeuvre collectively presented thus far overall comprehensively considered thereby enriching significantly broader cultural

[illegible]

## Conclusion

Premanand Gajjee remains an influential figure whose dramatic works significantly contribute towards understanding complexities surrounding caste-based oppression realistically portrayed thereby enriching contemporary Indian theatre tradition alongside broader cultural heritage simultaneously too inherently embedded therein consistently across entire oeuvre collectively presented thus far effectively serving purposefully towards advocating meaningful societal reforms addressing underlying structural inequalities itself inherently embedded therein consistently across entire oeuvre collectively presented thus far effectively serving purposefully towards advocating meaningful societal reforms addressing underlying structural inequalities itself inherently embedded therein consistently across entire oeuvre collectively presented thus far effectively serving purposefully towards advocating meaningful societal reforms addressing underlying structural inequalities itself inherently embedded therein consistently across entire oeuvre collectively presented thus far effectively serving purposefully towards advocating meaningful societal reforms addressing underlying structural inequalities itself inherently embedded therein consistently across entire oeuvre collectively presented thus far effectively

serving purposefully towards advocating meaningful societal reforms addressing underlying structural inequalities.

### Bibliography

- Bhavare, Mahendra. *Premanand Gajvee Yancha Lekhan Pravas* (Gajvee's Journey of Writing), Mumbai: Lokvangmay Driha, 2011.
- Deshpande, G. P. (2000) *An Anthology of Modern Indian Drama*, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2000.
- (2016) *Experimental Theatre : What was That*, in Shanta Gokhale (ed.) *The Scenes We Made*.
- Deshpande, V.B. *Drama* in Rajendra Banahatti and GN Joglekar (ed.) *A History of Modern Marathi Drama*, Pune: Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad, 1998.
- Eagleton, Terry (2002) *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, Routledge, London and New York.
- Forest, David. *Social Realism: Art, Nationhood and Politics*. UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2013.
- Gokhale, Shanta (2000) *Playwright at the Centre*, Seagull Books, Calcutta. *The Scenes We Made*. New Delhi: Speaking Tiger Publication, 2016.
- Hatkananglekar, M. D. et.al. (ed.) *Ank Ekank*, Mumbai: Magestic Publication, 2002.
- Khare, Vivek. *Naatakkar Premanand Gajvee* (Premanand Gajvee as Dramatist) Dhule: Samyakata Prakashan, 2015.
- Limbale, Sharankumar. *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2004.
- Nadkarni, Kamalakar. *Natake Thevanitali*, Kanakawali: Pandit publications, 2010.
- Nandpure, Ishwar. *Dalit Natak Ani Rangbhumi*, Nagpur: Pimpalpure Publishers, 1997.
- Narang, Harish (ed.). *Writing Black Writing Dalit*, Shimala: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2002.
- Tucker, David. *British Social Realism in arts since 1940*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011

## 16. Breaking Boundaries: The Role of Interdisciplinary Approaches in Understanding Dalit Representation in Marathi Theatre

**Shilyug Rajendra Kamble**

Department of English, Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

**Miss. Poonam Nanasaheb Shivpuje**

Department of English, Padmabhushan Vasantraodada

Patil Mahavidyalaya, Kavathe Mahankal, Dist. Sangli.

---

### Abstract

This research paper delves into the multifaceted portrayal of Dalit representation in Marathi theatre through the lens of interdisciplinary approaches. By analyzing the works of prominent playwrights such as B. S. Shinde, Ramnath Chavan, Shilpa Mubraskar, Kamalakar Dahat, Prakash Tribhuvan, and Premanand Gajvee, the paper sheds light on the intricate dynamics of caste, power structures, and social justice issues within the theatrical realm. Drawing upon a range of methodologies, the scholars and artists discussed in the paper offer a comprehensive exploration of Dalit experiences, identities, and struggles, challenging conventional narratives and advocating for more inclusive and socially conscious representations in the realm of Marathi theatre.

**Keywords:** Dalit representation, Marathi theatre, interdisciplinary approaches, caste dynamics, power structures, social justice,

### Introduction

Dalit representation in Marathi theatre serves as a crucial site for exploring the intersections of caste, culture, and power dynamics in Indian society. This research paper aims to delve into the multifaceted world of Dalit representation on the Marathi stage, utilizing interdisciplinary approaches to unpack the complexities of how Dalit identities are portrayed, contested, and negotiated within the realms of performance and representation. Renowned playwrights such as Vijay Tendulkar, Mahesh Elkunchwar, and Vijay Tendulkar have grappled with issues of caste and social inequality in their works, paving the way for a deeper engagement with Dalit narratives in Marathi theatre. In addition, B. S. Shinde, Ramnath Chavan, Shilpa Mubraskar, Kamalakar Dahat, Prakash Tribhuvan, Premanand Gajvee raised the issues of caste and social inequality in their works. By bridging fields such as theatre studies, sociology, caste

studies, and cultural studies, this paper seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of the significance and impact of Dalit representation in Marathi theatre, shedding light on the diverse narratives, challenges, and opportunities that shape the portrayal of Dalit experiences and identities on stage. Social realism of the 1950's and 1960's has been brought in Indian theatre by Mohan Rakesh (*Adhe Adhure* / Halfway House), Vijay Tendulkar (*Shantata court Chalu Ahe* !/ Silence Court is In Session!), Badal Sarkar (Shesh Naai / There's No End) and Dharmvir Bharati (*Andha Yug* / The Age of Blindness). After Tendulkar's Ghashiram Kotwal a outstanding socio-political play, social realist theatre journey: Jayant Pawar (*Adhantar*), Shafat Khan (*Shobha Yatra*), Datta Bhagat (*Wata Palwata* / Routes and Escapes) and Premanand Gajvee and others. The next generation of Marathi Theatre whose committed writing helped in developing new approach to Socio-political Theatre.

Discussion of social realism since 1940 has been dominated by the drama of the late 1950s and early-mid 1960s. The new wave was immediately cast in terms of its relationship to realism and to representations of the working or lower classes. Social realism was also part of the theatre culture of (some) regional Theatres with working class audiences. To write about working-class culture was, therefore, a form of bearing witness to the daily struggles of ordinary people, a fidelity to the cumulative truth of everyday experience, which was often political in its implications. This has proved to be a powerful legacy for social realist theatre about class. The contemporary playwright Premanand Gajvee, being one of the Indian Dalit playwrights, his plays deal with various section of Indian society. Moreover as a dramatist, his plays deal not only with Dalits but also with various marginalized voices in India.

This research posits that by breaking disciplinary boundaries and integrating multiple perspectives, we can gain deeper insights into the ways in which Dalit identities are constructed, contested, and celebrated in the realm of Marathi theatre, as well as the potential implications of this representation on broader socio-cultural dynamics and movements for social justice and equality.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the increasing recognition of Dalit voices in the realm of Marathi theatre, there remains a lack of comprehensive understanding and critical analysis of the multifaceted portrayal of Dalit representation. The existing literature predominantly focuses on individual playwrights and their works, rather than offering a holistic examination of the overarching themes, methodologies, and implications of Dalit representation in Marathi theatre. This gap in scholarship hinders a nuanced understanding of caste dynamics, power structures, and social justice issues as they intersect with the theatrical depiction of Dalit experiences, identities, and struggles. Therefore, this research aims to address the following questions: How do various

playwrights depict Dalit representation in Marathi theatre? What are the underlying themes and methodologies employed in these representations? How can a more inclusive and socially conscious approach be fostered in the portrayal of Dalit experiences in Marathi theatre? By interrogating these questions, this research seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of Dalit representation in Marathi theatre and advocate for more diverse and equitable narratives in the cultural sphere

### **Objectives**

To critically examine the historical and socio-cultural context of Dalit representation in Marathi theatre, focusing on key themes, narratives, and performances that shape Dalit experiences and identities.

### **Hypothesis**

It is hypothesized that interdisciplinary approaches offer a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of Dalit representation in Marathi theatre, by enabling a contextualized analysis of the complex interactions between caste, culture, identity, and performance.

### **Analysis**

The research paper titled "Breaking Boundaries: The Role of Interdisciplinary Approaches in Understanding Dalit Representation in Marathi Theatre" explores the significance of interdisciplinary approaches in the study of Dalit representation in Marathi theatre. Drawing on the works of prominent scholars and practitioners such as B. S. Shinde, Ramnath Chavan, Shilpa Mubaskar, Kamalakar Dahat, Prakash Tribhuvan, and Premanand Gajvee, the paper delves into the complex dynamics of caste oppression, power structures, and social justice issues within the theatrical context.

B. S. Shinde's critical analysis of key plays and performances has been instrumental in shedding light on the portrayal of Dalit experiences on stage. By examining the themes of caste discrimination, identity politics, and resistance in Marathi theatre, Shinde's work underscores the need for a more inclusive and diverse representation of marginalized communities. His insights in the play '*Kalokhachya Garbhat*' challenge dominant narratives and advocate for a more nuanced understanding of Dalit realities within the theatrical space.

Ramnath Chavan's plays, such as "*Bhandanwada*" and "*Sakshipuram*" offer a powerful exploration of caste dynamics, oppression, and agency within the Dalit community. Chavan's creative outputs highlight the complexities of caste relations and the struggles faced by marginalized communities in asserting their identities. Through his interdisciplinary approach, Chavan provides audiences with a deeper insight into the lived experiences of Dalits, challenging societal norms and advocating for social change.

It is often seen in the plays of Premanand Gajvee the aspects of Social realism. In a play like *Pandhara Budhvaar* he portrayed the life of working class family. In *Wyakaran/ Damm* Anu Gore he tries to focus on the suffering of Vanavasis. In his other play, *Kirwant*, he tried to deal with the life of death ceremonial Brahmin's struggle for day today life. In *DevNavari* he portrayed life of Vanvasis and myths in Indian society.

Shilpa Mubraskar, Kamalakar Dahat, Prakash Tribhuvan, and Premanand Gajvee have also made significant contributions to the discourse on Dalit representation in Marathi theatre. Their plays engage with themes of caste discrimination, marginalization, and empowerment, offering nuanced reflections on the intersection of caste, class, and gender within the theatrical space. By drawing on interdisciplinary approaches and diverse perspectives, these artists enrich the conversation on Dalit representation, pushing the boundaries of artistic expression and advocating for social justice.

Overall, the analysis of plays by B. S. Shinde, Ramnath Chavan, Shilpa Mubraskar, Kamalakar Dahat, Prakash Tribhuvan, and Premanand Gajvee underscores the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in understanding Dalit representation in Marathi theatre. By examining the complexities of caste dynamics, power structures, and social justice issues through a multiplicity of viewpoints, these scholars and practitioners challenge dominant narratives, break boundaries, and advocate for a more inclusive and socially conscious theatrical landscape.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the research paper titled "Breaking Boundaries: The Role of Interdisciplinary Approaches in Understanding Dalit Representation in Marathi Theatre" has highlighted the significance of utilizing interdisciplinary perspectives in examining Dalit representation within the realm of Marathi theatre. Through the analysis of plays by prominent scholars and practitioners such as B. S. Shinde, Ramnath Chavan, Shilpa Mubraskar, Kamalakar Dahat, Prakash Tribhuvan, and Premanand Gajvee, it is evident that the use of diverse approaches enriches our understanding of caste dynamics, power structures, and social justice issues in theatrical contexts.

The insights provided by B. S. Shinde, Ramnath Chavan, Shilpa Mubraskar, Kamalakar Dahat, Prakash Tribhuvan, and Premanand Gajvee have shed light on the complexities of Dalit experiences, identities, and struggles within Marathi theatre. By employing interdisciplinary methodologies, these scholars and practitioners have brought to the forefront the nuances of caste discrimination, marginalization, and empowerment, challenging traditional narratives and advocating for a more inclusive and socially conscious representation of marginalized communities.



The plays examined in this paper have served as powerful tools for exploring and interrogating caste dynamics, identity politics, and resistance within the Dalit community. Through their creative outputs, B. S. Shinde, Ramnath Chavan, Shilpa Mubaskar, Kamalakar Dahat, Prakash Tribhuvan, and Premanand Gajvee have expanded the boundaries of artistic expression, provoking critical conversations and promoting social change. Their works compel audiences to engage with the complexities of caste oppression and encourage reflections on social inequities and injustices in society.

Moving forward, it is imperative to continue utilizing interdisciplinary approaches in the study of Dalit representation in Marathi theatre. By drawing on diverse perspectives, methodologies, and voices, we can deepen our understanding of the multifaceted nature of caste dynamics and social justice issues within the theatrical space. Through collaborative efforts and inclusive practices, we can break boundaries, challenge dominant narratives, and work towards creating a more equitable and representative theatrical landscape for all.

### Bibliography

- Deshpande, G. P. (2000) *An Anthology of Modern Indian Drama*, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2000.
- Deshpande, V.B. *Drama* in Rajendra Banahatti and GN Joglekar (ed.) *A History of Modern Marathi Drama*, Pune: Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad, 1998.
- Gokhale, Shanta (2000) *Playwright at the Centre*, Seagull Books, Calcutta.
- --- *The Scenes We Made*. New Delhi: Speaking Tiger Publication, 2016.
- Kamble, Arun (ed.). *Janata Patratil Lekh: DrBabasaheb Ambedkar*, Pune: Pratima Prakashan, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1992.
- Khilare, Shashikant. *Ambedkari Chalval Ani Dalit Natak*, Sangli: Pradnya-Prabodh Prakashan, 2013.
- Mee Erin, B. *Drama Contemporary: India*, New Delhi: OUP, 2001.
- Nandpure, Ishwar. *Dalit Natak Ani Rangbhumi*, Nagpur: Pimpalpure Publishers, 1997.
- Narang, Harish (ed.). *Writing Black Writing Dalit*, Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2002.
- Phule, Jotiba. *Complete Work of Mahatma Phule*, Ed. Y. D. Phadake, Mumbai: Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture, 1991. Tucker, David. *British Social Realism in arts since 1940*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011

## 17. Isma's Story: Overcoming Caste, Gender, and Political Barriers in Home Fire

Miss. Snehal Dsdarao Wakode

Research Student, JSPM University, Wagholi, Pune.

### Abstract

Kamila Shamsie's diasporic narrative '*Home Fire*' intricately delves into the themes of identity, belonging, and marginalization through the lens of intersectionality. This paper probes into the ways caste, gender, and political marginalization jointly contribute to the identity crises confronted by the novel's central characters, particularly in view of the diasporic narratives of the South Asian writers of Britain. By employing Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality, this study dissects the overlapping layers of oppression that shape the lives of the female protagonists, Isma and Aneeka, who are torn between cultural expectations, gendered Islamophobia, and political scrutiny. Their struggles illustrate the compounding nature of discrimination that impacts their personal and professional lives, influencing their sense of agency and belonging.

Additionally, the character of Parvaiz exemplifies how systemic discrimination and alienation can render diasporic youth vulnerable to radicalization. His journey into extremism serves as a critique of the sociopolitical conditions that isolate young Muslims in Western societies, reinforcing their marginalization. The novel's reimagining of *Antigone* further amplifies the tensions between personal agency and state authority, providing a contemporary lens to examine the ramifications of caste, gender, and political exclusion.

By analyzing these features, this paper argues that *Home Fire* offers a profound critique of the intersecting forces that contribute to fractured identities among diasporic individuals. Shamsie's narrative exposes the complex negotiations required to balance cultural allegiance and personal autonomy within an environment fraught with socio-political biases. Finally, the novel urges readers to reflect on the broader structures of exclusion and the challenges of asserting identity in the face of systemic marginalization.

**Keywords:** Intersectionality, Diaspora, Caste, Gender, Political Marginalization, *Home Fire*, Identity Crisis, Kamila Shamsie

## Introduction

Identity encompasses all the essential characteristics that make each human unique but also all the characteristics that enable membership to a particular group or culture as well as established status within the group (Roussos et al. 2003)

The identity of a person comprises a large number of personal properties. All subsets of the properties represent partial identities of the person and may relate to roles the person plays. Depending on the context, the person may have multiple different partial identities (Clauss and Koehntopp, 2001).

Kamila Shamsie's novel *Home Fire* resonates deeply with themes of identity, belonging, and marginalization. At its core is Isma, a character whose life is shaped by numerous layers of tyranny and struggle. As a South Asian Muslim woman in Britain, she faces the pressure of cultural expectations, gendered Islamophobia, and political scrutiny. Her narrative is not just a personal voyage, but a rumination of the broader scuffles faced by many diasporic individuals. Isma's experience is emblematic of how historical and contemporary structures of power shape the identities of those who exist at the margins of society. She is not only a woman in a patriarchal world but also a Muslim in a Western society that often views her faith with suspicion. Additionally, her family background, particularly her father's association with extremism, places her under a microscope of political surveillance and systemic bias. These overlapping challenges create a unique form of oppression that Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality helps to unpack. Intersectionality acknowledges that individuals do not experience discrimination in isolated ways; rather, various factors such as race, gender, religion, and socio-political status interact to create complex layers of marginalization.

By analyzing Isma's struggles, this paper seeks to illustrate how these forces of oppression work together to shape her identity and her attempts to navigate the world. Isma's journey is one of resilience—her desire for knowledge, independence, and self-determination constantly clashes with societal expectations and systemic barriers. As she moves between the East and the West, between family obligations and personal aspirations, she embodies the tensions faced by many individuals in the diaspora. This study examines how Isma navigates these barriers and reclaims her agency in a world that often seeks to silence her.

### Isma's Burden: Family and Caste Expectations

From the very first pages of *Home Fire*, Isma emerges as a character whose life has been shaped by sacrifice. As the eldest sibling, she has shouldered responsibilities far beyond her years, stepping into a parental role after the loss of her mother. Instead of focusing on her own dreams and ambitions, she has dedicated herself to raising her younger siblings, Aneeka and Parvaiz. This duty is not just a personal choice but one deeply ingrained in cultural expectations, particularly those that place a heavier burden on women in South Asian families.

For Isma, family comes first—not because she was explicitly told to make that choice, but because it was always the unspoken rule. In many South Asian households, the eldest daughter often becomes a second mother, expected to nurture, protect, and uphold the family's well-being, sometimes at the cost of her own aspirations. Isma embodies this reality, living in the shadow of duty rather than the freedom of personal ambition.

While caste is not overtly discussed in the novel, it lingers in the background, shaping Isma's experience in subtle but significant ways. The remnants of caste-based divisions persist within South Asian communities, often dictating social mobility and acceptance, even in diasporic spaces. Isma's journey in British society is not just about being a woman or being Muslim—it is also about navigating the quiet but powerful hierarchies that still exist, shaping who is considered “respectable” and who is not. With a complicated family history, she is always aware of the ways in which she is perceived, carrying an unspoken weight alongside her visible struggles.

We experience this when Isma discovers that the parents of the one she loved are from Pakistan, a country that she had never heard of, and this breaks her down when she realises that she has to now wave goodbye to the love of her life, to the one with whom she thought of getting married.

Beyond the daily responsibilities of family life, Isma also grapples with a deeper, more personal conflict—the tension between duty and self-fulfilment. Like many South Asian women, she faces the expectation that family honour should come before individual ambition. Her decision to leave for the United States is more than just an academic pursuit; it is an act of reclaiming herself, a declaration that she, too, deserves a future of her own. And yet, even as she steps onto this new path, guilt follows close behind. The sacrifices she has made, the

responsibilities she has temporarily set aside, and the knowledge that her siblings still need her never truly leave her mind.

Isma's story is one of quiet resilience, of a woman torn between love and longing, between obligation and the desire for personal freedom. Her struggles are not just her own—they echo the experiences of many women who find themselves trapped between who they are expected to be and who they wish to become.

### **Gendered Islamophobia and Societal Scrutiny**

Rupali M. Gaikwad gives her insight into self-identity wherein she says that self-identity can face in women characters of some select women novelists. She says:

Self-Identity as a term is defined by the experts as the recognition of one's potential and qualities as an individual, especially in relation to the social context. (Gaikwad, 2017, p.177)

From the moment *Home Fire* begins, Isma's identity as a visibly Muslim woman puts her under a harsh spotlight. The opening scene at the airport is a stark reminder of how Muslim identities—especially those of women—are subjected to intense scrutiny in Western societies. She is not stopped because she has done anything wrong but simply because of who she is. The interrogation she faces is less about security and more about suspicion, an unspoken demand that she must prove her innocence before she can move freely.

Unlike her younger sister Aneeka, who boldly pushes back against prejudice, Isma has learned to be careful. She understands the risks of defiance, the way a single misstep could confirm the very stereotypes imposed upon her. Instead of challenging the system head-on, she adapts—monitoring her words, controlling her emotions, ensuring that she never comes across as too assertive or too defensive. This cautiousness is not a choice born out of fear but a survival strategy in a world that often equates Muslim identity with danger.

Isma's experience speaks to a broader reality: Muslim women, especially those who wear the hijab, face a unique form of Islamophobia that is both racialized and gendered. They are expected to constantly reassure the world of their harmlessness, to navigate a double standard where their presence is questioned while their silence is also taken as complicity. Society demands that they assimilate, yet even when they do, they are still seen as outsiders.

"Isma looked at her reflection in the mirror, hair 'texturized' into 'beachy waves' as Mona of Persepolis Hair in Wembley had promised when she recommended a product that could

counter frizzy, flyaway hair without attaining the miracle of straightening it. Her hair said ‘playful’ and ‘surprising’” [HF pg. 47].

The quotation above reveals how Isma’s transformation in her hairstyle from ‘texturized/frizzy’ hairstyle to ‘beachy waves. Isma here presents herself as a Muslim who has been now acquainted with the British society but at the same time merges herself with the Muslim identity as well.

More than anything, Isma’s story reveals how Western societies construct Muslim identities through fear and misunderstanding. Women like her are often reduced to symbols—either oppressed and in need of saving or threatening and in need of control. The idea that they are individuals with their own agency, ambitions, and complexities is often overlooked. By portraying Isma’s quiet yet persistent struggle, *Home Fire* sheds light on the exhausting reality of existing in a world that refuses to see beyond stereotypes.

### **Political Exclusion and Surveillance**

But the cause of Isma’s hijab, Isma has been interrogated for two hours and has missed her flight. One question asked to be by the security officer that; “Do you consider yourself British?” [HF pg.5].

In the interrogation held by the police officer Isma is portrayed as a lesser British citizen while Isma is a British citizen.

Isma’s struggles are not just personal—they are deeply political. From the very beginning of *Home Fire*, it is clear that she is not only navigating societal expectations and gendered Islamophobia but also the weight of a past that is not even her own. Her father’s history as a suspected jihadist follows her like a shadow, marking her as someone to be watched, questioned, and distrusted. Even though she has no direct connection to his actions, she is treated as though guilt can be inherited. This constant surveillance is a stark reminder of how systemic discrimination works—not by punishing individuals for what they have done, but by targeting them based on their background, their faith, and the families they come from.

Through Isma’s experience, Kamila Shamsie critiques the policies and attitudes that alienate entire communities under the guise of national security. Isma has spent her entire life following the rules, trying to be the perfect citizen, yet none of it is enough to free her from suspicion. The very structures that claim to protect society end up pushing people to the margins, creating an environment of fear and exclusion. Young people like her brother, Parvaiz, become

especially vulnerable in this climate. When society repeatedly tells someone they do not belong, it becomes easier for them to seek belonging elsewhere—even in the most dangerous of places. Isma understands this all too well, but her ability to stop it is limited, because the very system that claims to uphold justice is the one that silences and sidelines her.

Isma responding to her sister as though she were a customer of dubious political opinions whose business Isma didn't want to lose by voicing strenuously opposing views, but to whom she didn't see the need to lie either. (HF pg. 5)

The political aspect had such a hold on Isma that she responds to her sister in a diplomatic manner, although she disagrees with her political opinions, she still tries to conceal her disagreement with the fear that she will get into a conflict or that of losing the business. Hence, we see the political side of Isma even when he deals with his own family.

Pramod K. Nayar's assertion that hegemony is not solely established through violence or legislation, but also through the acquiescence of the governed, resonates here (Nayar 130).

Karamat Lone resonates himself in this by his political power and authority he influences and overpowers Isma's decision making, not by threatening him directly but by affecting and shaping her actions by his vested interests.

Islam or the words used as a Muslim actually surprise us when they are followed up by the harsh words that of the security or threats received on national security and so on. This creates a negative image of the Muslim broadcast in media leading to the enormous increase in the concept of otherness of the citizenship of British Muslims. Ultimately, Karamat is looked upon as an MP who falls prey to the British press and is victimized. The trauma and pain of this is explained by his son Eamonn when he says that the situation has been harsh on his father, he further clarifies that because of the background that his father has, it was necessary for him to be more vigilant than the other MP's around, which eventually led him to do things that he disliked the most and that too with a guilt conscious. In spite of the wrong choices that he made he still was driven to lead a life with purpose, wherein services for the people or public, values of the British government and the national good played a pivotal role. The wrong choices eventually led him to be at the right place, where he currently was.

Isma's political exclusion is part of a much larger narrative about Western surveillance and anti-Muslim policies. Governments justify these measures as necessary for national security, but in reality, they create an atmosphere where entire communities live under suspicion. No

matter how much Isma tries to prove her innocence, she remains entangled in a web of systemic bias that she cannot escape. She is a law-abiding citizen, yet she is treated as a potential threat. Her story highlights the painful reality that, for many, justice is not about individual actions but about who society has already decided they are.

### **Isma's Journey Towards Agency**

Despite the many barriers placed in her way, Isma's story is ultimately one of quiet resilience. She has spent her life putting others first raising her younger siblings, keeping the family together, and carrying responsibilities that were never meant to be hers alone. But *Home Fire* is not just a story of sacrifice; it is also about Isma's fight to reclaim her own life. Her decision to move to the United States for her PhD is a powerful act of self-determination. For the first time, she chooses herself. Yet, even in this newfound independence, she cannot completely sever the ties of duty and expectation. Leaving her family behind is not just a logistical decision—it is a painful, guilt-ridden choice that carries the weight of years of selflessness.

Even as she carves out a space for herself in academia, Isma's sense of belonging remains fragile. She is intelligent, hardworking, and deeply aware of the world around her, yet she is constantly reminded that her identity makes her an outsider. Her relationship with Eamonn Lone, the privileged son of the British Home Secretary, only further exposes the power dynamics that shape her reality. Eamonn moves through the world with ease, untouched by the scrutiny and suspicion that follows people like Isma. For him, politics is theoretical, something that can be debated over coffee. For Isma, politics is deeply personal—it dictates where she can travel, how she is perceived, and whether or not she is given the basic dignity of being seen as an individual rather than a stereotype.

Isma's journey toward self-empowerment is not a straightforward success story. While she achieves academic recognition and takes steps toward personal freedom, she remains tethered to the expectations, biases, and history that have defined her life. She is proof that for marginalized individuals, success does not always come with true liberation. The weight of cultural expectations, societal prejudice, and political exclusion still linger, shaping every step she takes. Her story is one of strength, but it is also one of complexity—of what it means to navigate multiple identities, of how difficult it is to truly break free from the forces that seek to define you.



## Conclusion

Isma's story in *Home Fire* is one of quiet strength, resilience, and endurance. Her journey highlights the intricate ways in which caste, gender, and political exclusion intersect, shaping the experiences of those living in the diaspora—especially Muslim women. Through Isma, Kamila Shamsie compels readers to confront the deep-rooted structures of discrimination that dictate who is seen, who is heard, and who is forced to constantly justify their existence. Her struggle is not just personal; it is a reflection of a larger reality faced by countless individuals caught between cultural expectations and their own aspirations.

At its core, Isma's story is about the fight for identity in a world that often seeks to erase or diminish it. She embodies the resilience of so many who must carefully navigate the complexities of belonging while confronting exclusion at every turn. Whether it is the scrutiny she faces as a Muslim woman, the political burdens placed upon her due to her family history, or the unspoken rules of assimilation she must follow, Isma's experiences offer a powerful commentary on the challenges of diasporic life.

But her story is not just about hardship—it is also about resistance. Even in the face of systemic bias and societal barriers, she continues to push forward, refusing to be defined solely by the forces working against her. Her resilience is a quiet but profound form of defiance, a reminder that even in oppressive circumstances, there is still agency, still the ability to carve out a life on one's own terms.

Through Isma, Shamsie gives a voice to those who are often silenced, forcing readers to question the structures that uphold discrimination and exclusion. *Home Fire* ultimately challenges us to rethink rigid societal norms, urging us toward a more inclusive and just world. Isma's story reinforces the idea that identity is not static—it is constantly evolving, shaped by personal struggles, societal forces, and the ongoing fight for recognition and autonomy.

## 18. Dalit Women's Struggle in Indian English Novels

**Dr. Sukhadeo Raghunath Bhosale**

Assistant Professor, Department of English,  
Raja Shripatrao Bhagwantrao Mahavidyalaya, Aundh, Satara.

---

### Abstract

This article highlights Dalit women have had the most important role in the women's fight to obtain equal rights to from men. It is also crucial to remember that the matter of *Vishakha and other vs. State of Rajasthan*, guidelines for dealing with cases of sexual harassment of women at workplace. It was borne from Bhanwari Devi. She was a woman belonging to the marginalised community. She had been raped by men belonging to the dominant caste for having objected to a child marriage. The caste identity of Bhanwari Devi is rarely mentioned. There are clear attempts to erase the aspect of caste from the Indian History. It is crucial to educate ourselves and dig deeper. Hence, Dalit literature has been instrumental in bringing forth the experiences of Dalits, their marginalisation and oppression,

Dalit literature is written by members of the Dalit community in India. This literature challenges the dominant narratives and structures of casteism. It highlights the struggles of Dalits in their quest for Identity, dignity and equality. In this paper I have tried to throw light on radical fiction and non-fiction literature either written by Dalits or about their lives. They struggles for their hardships to gain even basic needs of living, and the resistance shown by them every step of the way.

Women authors from the Dalit community have been instrumental in bringing intersectionality of caste and gender oppression. These writers have depicted their cry to highlight the experiences of women from marginalised communities. They have given challenge to the patriarchy that perpetuates their oppression. Here are some of the best women Dalit authors and their works:

**Key Words:** Casteism, Dalit community, women's struggle, marginalisation and oppression, quest for dignity and equality, challenge the patriarchy

### Introduction

Dalit women have had the most important role in the women's fight to obtain equal rights to from men. It is also crucial to remember that the matter of *Vishakha and other vs. State of*

*Rajasthan*, guidelines for dealing with cases of sexual harassment of women at workplace. It was borne from Bhanwari Devi. She was a woman belonging to the marginalised community. She had been raped by men belonging to the dominant caste for having objected to a child marriage. The caste identity of Bhanwari Devi is rarely mentioned. There are clear attempts to erase the aspect of caste from the Indian History. It is crucial to educate ourselves and dig deeper. Hence, Dalit literature has been instrumental in bringing forth the experiences of Dalits, their marginalisation and oppression,

Dalit literature is written by members of the Dalit community in India. This literature challenges the dominant narratives and structures of casteism. It highlights the struggles of Dalits in their quest for Identity, dignity and equality. In this paper I have tried to throw light on radical fiction and non-fiction literature either written by Dalits or about their lives. They struggles for their hardships to gain even basic needs of living, and the resistance shown by them every step of the way.

Women authors from the Dalit community have been instrumental in bringing intersectionality of caste and gender oppression. These writers have depicted their cry to highlight the experiences of women from marginalised communities. They have given challenge to the patriarchy that perpetuates their oppression.

### **The best Women Dalit Authors and their Works**

#### **Sujatha Gidla: Ants among Elephants**

“Ants among Elephants” is a memoir by Sujatha Gidla. It tells the story of her family’s struggle against caste oppression in Andhra Pradesh. It is an extensive and extremely engaging read as enables the reader to place oppression and locate patriarchy in the most unthinkable of context and spaces. While at places it talks about possibilities of a powerful solidarity, yet in others it kindles in one, a sense of shame and retreat; retreating is important in an intersectional feminist project. Gidla doesn’t merely talk about important recorded events that uncover the banality of nation building, but she sets them against the background of everyday caste violence that are nothing short of caste wars, lived and channelized through the Dalit person.

#### **Bama: Karukku**

It is a classic subaltern work and the first autobiography by a Dalit woman writer. It tells a daring and moving story of life outside of mainstream Indian thought and function. It depicts the tension between the self and the community. It presents Bama’s life as a process of

introspection and rehabilitation from social and institutional deception, revolving around the main theme of caste oppression within the Catholic Church. The book Karukku refers to Palmyra leaves, which have jagged edges on both sides and resemble double-edged swords. This is an unusual autobiography that grew out of a specific moment in the author's life. It is a personal crisis and watershed in her life. It drives her to make sense of her life as a woman, a Christian, and a Dalit.

### **Yashica Dutt : Coming Out as a Dalit**

It is a one-of-a-kind autobiography of a woman. It is no longer afraid of taking up space she has historically been denied, space to be her true self. Dutt's powerful prose, ventures into social commentary and historical analysis alongside the main narrative of the author's life. It is successful in elevating the book from being an individualised account of a life. There is universal message about rejecting archetypal constructions of marginalised Dalit woman.

### **Meena Kandasamy: The Gypsy Goddess**

This book spotlight on the plight of Dalit agricultural workers in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. They are murdered by oppressive upper-caste landlords. It draws on historical documents and survivor interviews. Farm workers are on strike after landlord's murder a popular communist leader. The landlords try to bully them back to work. They impose debilitating fines, use the police to intimidate them, and savagely assault Dalit women.

### **Babytai Kamble: The Prisons We Broke**

It was originally written in Marathi as Jina Amucha It was later translated into English by Maya Pandit. In this book, she pursues a broad thematic portrayal of the otherness of Dalit women within their own community. Here she extols the role played by fellow women in following in the footsteps of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar to dream of equality with upper-caste Hindus in the social order. The writer uses her life as a source to identify Dalit oppression painting a raw imagery of the crude realities of their world.

### **Urmila Pawar: Aaydan**

Aaydan is the name for a cane basket It weave Urmila, her mother and others in the village would weave to make a living. She writes about her childhood, her mother's constant struggle to make ends meet. The writer and activist wove her story into the narration of the life of every Dalit woman and how she faced up to caste and gender prejudice.

**Shantabai Kamble :Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha**

Shantabai Kamble is the protagonist of this book. It could be interpreted as an autobiography. It is depicting the brunt of class, caste, and oppression as seen through her eyes. It follows Naja through her childhood, marriage, hunger, and labor. This book was later adapted into a serial called 'Najuka' in 1986. It is how it is now known. The book is now part of the curriculum at the University of Mumbai.

**Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: Annihilation of Caste**

It is a work by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. It challenges the caste system and its inherent inequalities. Annihilation of Caste is one of the most important. It is not neglected yet. It is written in 1936. It is an audacious denunciation of Hinduism and its caste system. It offers a scholarly critique of Hindu scriptures, That Scriptures sanction a rigidly hierarchical and iniquitous social system.

**Kancha Ilaiah :Why I Am Not a Hindu**

This is a thought-provoking book which provides a systemic critique of Hindutva hegemony and Brahminical practices inherent in the Indian society. It made the "Dalit bahunas" easy victims of social oppression. The political, social, economic and religious aspects of both the Dalit bahunas and Hindu ways of life have been keenly observed by the author. With his own experiences, he has been able to provide first-hand testimony to the contrasts these two communities have historically put forward.

**An Authoritative History: Dalit Panthers**

This book is a first-hand historical account of the Dalit Panther movement of the 1970s by J.V. Pawar, It is one of the founders of the movement. This book is the story of how the movement swept Maharashtra. The book is a must-read not only for those interested in the Dalit movement (it's past and present) but also for activists and academics who are interested in the dynamics of social movements.

**Dalit literature which had a significant impact on Indian literature and society****Yogesh Maitreya: Flowers on the grave of caste**

It is an important work of literature for those who want to see Dalit writers fleshed out, humanised, and moved to the centre of literary discourse. It is for those who want to see a young visionary of the short story form embark on a promising career. Here Maitreya has carried

forward the Kosambian concept of looking at history from the bottom by retelling it ‘from below’. It is magnifying Ambedkar’s ideas about gender, caste, and class in this collection.

### **Omprakash Valmiki: Joothan**

This book is the account of Joothan, The untouchability was practiced by educators, educated, like-minded dominant caste people, and even his relatives belonging to the same community, despite it being legally abolished in the year 1950. Here writer reveals instances of violence caused by the caste system through Joothan. It is sketched around one’s life. In this book, he provides a chilling account of caste oppression in the newly independent state. It brings to light one of those rare detailed, and lived accounts of Dalit lives.

### **Mulk Raj Anand : Untouchable**

This novel will shake your moral compass. In this book, the author uses powerful vocabulary to criticise social injustice, the hypocrisy of the ones with the power. The book was inspired by the author’s aunt’s experience. She had a meal with a Muslim woman and was treated as an outcast by her family. The plot of this book revolves around the argument for eradicating the caste system. It depicts a day in the life of Bakha, a young “sweeper”. He is “untouchable” due to his work of cleaning latrines.

### **Suraj Yengde : Caste Matters**

It is the fine work on the caste system and its effects on contemporary Indian society. It emphasizes on symbolic elements in the house and surroundings. This book does not fail to bring out the everyday experiences of caste. There are Descriptions of his experiences, such as his mother’s hope for government-subsidised housing and the glaring poverty. It is an everyday story of Dalit bastis, They are particularly moving. The writer also discuss on the dominant-caste gaze and shame as symbols of imposed inferiority. Untouchability in India obscures caste; The writers catalogue of incidents makes caste clear and a matter of urgent concern not just for Dalits, but for the entire human race.

### **Perumal Murugan : Pyre**

Pyre is a story of every inter-caste married couple in rural India. The book keeps the readers stuck to the story by talking about the harsh realities of the society. The book also captures the internalised misogyny of rural women when it comes to maintaining the existing social order. The book paints a very disheartening and painful truth about life in small-town

India. Casteism – the cruelty, violence, and helplessness of the people involved could not have been shown any better through any other fictional story.

### **Conclusion**

This article highlights on Dalit women who have the most important role in the women's fight to obtain equal rights to from men. Through this paper I have tried to put forward the account of Dalit people. Various writers depicted this by their writings. Today some people say that we see the educational progress in the Dalits. but the truth is different. It is different condition in rural area of Dalit. New Educational policies are obstacles in the progress of Dalit especially increasing fee structure. The scheme of Scholarships is going to stop day by day. New tax system is the hindrance in people's progress. Students are facing transportation problem for attending college's lectures. Young generation is in the stress condition. We see the dream of Developing India. How many funds government are spending on higher education?. Higher education funds and facilities should be increased.

### **Reference**

**A list of must-read books about the oppression, marginalisation and resistance of Dalits** Dalit History Month: Curated books on Dalit struggles & revolutions that shaped India's history

# 19. Cultural Identity in the Diasporic Writings of Azar Nafisi's Reading Lolita in Tehran and Amani Al Khatahtbeh's Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age

**Mulani Reshmabano Asif**

Research Scholar, Shivaji University, Kolhapur, Maharashtra.

**Dr. Gujar Manoj Dasharath**

Prof. Sambhajirao Kadam College, Deur, Satara, Maharashtra.

---

## Abstract

The concept of 'diaspora' has evolved considerably over the years. According to the IOM World Migration Report, 'diaspora' refers to "migrants or descendants of migrants, whose identity and sense of belonging have been shaped by their migration experience and background" (2019). In modern literary discussions, the diaspora often appears as a significant theme or perspective for examining the varied experiences of people and communities who have been displaced from their ancestral lands. Meena Alexander, a prominent critic of diasporic literature, describes 'diaspora' as "writing in search of a homeland." Cultural identity is a fundamental element in diasporic literature, playing a crucial role in crafting narratives that explore the experiences of displaced individuals and communities. Many critics have provided insights into the link between diaspora and cultural identity, analyzing the complex relationships and dynamics that emerge within literary contexts. Cultural theorists and sociologists, such as Stuart Hall, in his essay 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora,' emphasize the importance of cultural heritage and interpersonal connections in forming an individual's cultural identity. This paper aims to conduct a comparative analysis of Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003) and Amani Al Khatahtbeh's *Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age* (2016), focusing on the development of cultural identity within the framework and constraints of diaspora.

**Keywords:** Diaspora, Cultural identity, Individual, Muslim Community, Immigration

## Introduction

The term "diaspora" is rooted in post-colonial discourse. Although diasporic movements have been ongoing for a while, they gained momentum in the latter half of the 20th century due to two significant events: the aftermath of the Second World War and the consequences of partition. Various communities have dispersed globally, with Muslim communities being no exception. Diasporic literature provides a perspective to explore the intricate issues of cultural



identity and belonging. Authors who navigate multiple cultures often depict the challenges of reconciling their identities in a world that marginalizes them based on religion, gender, and ethnicity. Azar Nafisi and Amani Al-Khatahtbeh, two notable diasporic writers, present stories that delve into cultural identity amid political oppression and Islamophobia. Nafisi, an Iranian scholar, discusses the challenges of intellectual freedom and gender oppression in post-revolution Iran, while Al-Khatahtbeh, an American journalist, explores the experience of growing up in a society marked by Islamophobia.

Azar Nafisi, originally from Tehran, was sent to England by her parents at 13 to further her education. After earning a degree in English and American Literature, she returned to Iran after the 1979 revolution. In June 1997, Nafisi left Iran and settled in the United States, where she became actively involved in teaching. Her book, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, delves into the varied experiences of her homeland. Amani Al Khatahtbeh, born in New Jersey to Arab parents with Jordanian and Palestinian roots, moved to Jordan with her family at 13 due to rising violence against Muslims in the U.S. They returned to New Jersey when Amani's mother fell seriously ill. Back in New Jersey, Amani maintained a strong connection to her Muslim identity and documented her journey of reconciling her native culture with that of her adopted country in *Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age*. Robin Cohen, a distinguished sociologist, identified five diaspora types in his book "Global Diaspora: An Introduction": victim, labor, trade, imperial, and cultural diasporas (2008:18). Nafisi's work is classified under the victim diaspora category. In 1980, she was expelled from the University of Tehran for refusing to wear the veil, a mandate of the regime's oppressive policies, which eventually led her to leave Iran. Amani's work is seen as a cultural diaspora, as she strives to preserve cultural differences in a host country where Muslims faced targeting post-9/11, and Western views often depicted Muslim women as oppressed and marginalized. The essentialist view on cultural identity suggests that each community possesses inherent values that define its uniqueness (Petkova, 2005:17). These essential values, termed the "social or cultural spirit of community," form the core essence of a community's deeper existence (17). However, this view tends to overlook the role of personal experiences and social interactions in shaping cultural identity.

### **Formation of Cultural Identity in Diaspora**

Cultural transformation encompasses various factors such as politics, economy, religion, language, and psychology. Both stories underscore the importance of family and community influences in molding cultural identity. In *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, we find that Azar Nafisi found unwavering support from her family, as they stood by her side through personal and political challenges offering encouragement and solidarity when war closely followed the

revolution in Iran, significantly impacting the lives of its people and causing widespread effects throughout the country. Nafisi's husband stood with her as the protector of the family (Section III). In *Muslim Girl*, Amani recounts her childhood within a tightly knit Muslim community, delving into the impact of her upbringing on identity formation. She contemplated that Islam served as a cornerstone in shaping her identity (11). Her father played a crucial role in providing her with a positive outlook and guidance, especially during challenging times (17).

*Reading Lolita in Tehran* delves into the complex interplay between traditional Islamic beliefs and Western ideas, using literature as a vehicle to illuminate the challenges faced by Iranian Women in their quest for personal autonomy and intellectual liberty, within a stifling societal framework. An oppressive regime seeks to exert control over every facet of an individual's sexuality. In one provocative statement, Nafisi notes that 'Living in the Islamic Republic' is like 'having sex with a man you loathe' (329). In *Muslim Girls*, Amani confronts discrimination, Islamophobia, and cultural conflicts while balancing her American identity with her Muslim heritage. The American police force and certain political factions targeted Muslims to scapegoat them and assign blame to various societal issues (15). School culture and atmosphere are responsible for creating an inferiority complex and imposter syndrome in Amani (62).

In 1980, Nafisi was ousted by the university after refusing to adhere to the compulsory Islamic veil requirement. On the other hand, Amani grew up in New Jersey and accepted some norms and values of American society. During her early years, she considered herself a part of American society. There was a significant transition in her life as she moved from her host country to her home country. The reason for this shift stems from the mounting pressure of Islamophobia. Inspired by historical Islamic narratives, she decided to wear a headscarf upon her return to America from Jordan. Aware that this choice would spark public debate, she mentally prepared herself to confront the challenges that arose, determined to assert her cultural identity as a Muslim woman (41).

Though both narratives have different perspectives on veiling, education plays a significant role in creating their identity as activists against the oppressive regime of the contemporary period in their home and host countries, respectively.

Critics of the diaspora literature argue that there is a challenge in the development of a new cohesive identity. Writers such as Salman Rushdie and Hafid Bouazza embraced cultural transformation and seamlessly integrated it into entirely new cultural landscapes. In their literary work, they endeavor to illustrate their adaptation as new members of a new world, one they believe is superior to their native lands. In one of her interviews with Random House Readers Circle, Nafisi states that

**So when I came here, when I would talk about my country or myself, people would say, “oh, but you’re western.” You know, as if “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” was just something that American had invented and women who lived in Afghanistan or Iran didn’t want to be free or pursue happiness (362).**

This statement suggests that Western societies provide an environment conducive to women’s freedom and career development, allowing Nafisi to thrive as a professor and writer. However, Amani’s experience stands in contrast to Nafisi’s.

**It’s funny because that’s how Western media wants to perceive us, right? Submissive, Girls hidden behind veils who are only told what to do, who only have the mind to either follow a male family member or outrageously commits to violence as an animalistic form of expression. and yet what is it exactly that Western society wants us to do when it imposes an impossible pressure on us to bend, conform, assimilate, submit? (20)**

The above narrative shows that there is an unhealthy environment for Muslim women in the host country. There was religious discrimination in Western society, but the threat, pressure, and violence brought strength within Amani to choose her career as a blog writer. Amani's decision to become a blog writer demonstrates her resilience in the face of adversity and her determination to challenge stereotypes. Through her writing, she can share her experiences and perspectives, providing a platform for Muslim women's voices to be heard. This act of self-expression not only empowers Amani but also contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Muslim women's identities in Western societies.

## **Conclusion**

Both *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi and *Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age* by Amani Al-Khatahtbeh provide rich insights into the construction of cultural identity within diasporic communities, each within distinct settings and thematic focus. Both authors challenge dominant narratives, proving that cultural identity in the diaspora is not about choosing between two worlds, but about creating new spaces of belonging. Azar Nafisi’s *Reading Lolita in Tehran* and Amani Al-Khatahtbeh’s *Muslim Girl* offer valuable insights into the negotiation of cultural identity in the diaspora. Nafisi’s work reflects the intellectual and emotional exile of Iranian women, whereas Al-Khatahtbeh’s memoir confronts Islamophobia and the need for self-representation in the West.

Azar Nafisi was very uncomfortable in her own homeland (Iran) to be a free woman. However, Amani was insecure in the host land (America). All the forces that came their way from travelling to their homeland to host land or vice versa made them psychologically strong, and diasporic culture forced them to create their hyphenated identities such as Iranian-American-Muslim and Jordan-American-Muslim.

## References

### Primary Sources

- Nafisi, Azar. *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. Random House Publisher. 2003. Print.
- Al Khatahbeh, Amani. *Muslim Girl: Coming of Age*. New Delhi: Simon and Schuster. 2016. Print.

### Secondary Sources

- Abbs, Peter. "Autobiography: Quest for Identity". The New Pelican Guide to English Literature: *The Present*. Vol. 8, Boris Ford (ed). London: Penguin Books, 1987.
- Anthias, F. (1998). "Evaluating 'diaspora': Beyond ethnicity?" *Sociology*, 32 (3), 557– 580. [www.jstor.org/stable/42855957](http://www.jstor.org/stable/42855957).
- Anwar, Z. (2005). "Islam and Women's Rights". Paper presented at the International Conference of Islamic Feminism, Barcelona.
- Bhandari, N. (2021). "Diaspora and Cultural Identity: A Conceptual Review". *Journal of Political Science* 100-107.
- Castaneda, Carlos. *Beyond Cultural Identity: Reflections on Multiculturalism* (2003) [www.mediate.com/articles/adler3.cfm](http://www.mediate.com/articles/adler3.cfm).
- Clifford, J. (1994). "Diasporas". *Cultural Anthropology*, 9 (3), 302-338. [www.jstor.org/stable/656365](http://www.jstor.org/stable/656365).
- Cohen, R. (2008). *Global Diaspora: An Introduction*. Routledge.
- Dapke, C. (2022). "The Notion of Home and Identity in Diaspora Literature: A Conceptual Exploration". *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)* 1-6.
- Hall, S. (1994). "Cultural Identity and Diaspora". In P. Williams & L. Chrisman (Eds.), *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader*. 222-237. Columbia UP.
- Petkova, D. & Lehtonen, J. (Eds.). (2005). *Cultural identity in intercultural context*. University of Jyväskylä

## 20. Lalu Prasad Yadav on Social Justice

**Surendranath Babar**

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Padmabhushan  
Vasantaodada Patil Mahavidyalaya, Kavathe Mahankal, Dist. Sangli.

---

### **Abstract**

Lalu Prasad Yadav has been a central figure in Bihar's political landscape, championing the cause of social justice and empowering marginalised communities. His leadership redefined caste dynamics in the state, bringing backward caste into the mainstream political process. This paper examines Lalu Prasad Yadav's political ideology, his tenure as Bihar's Chief Minister, and the impact of his policies on marginalised communities. It explores how his governance prioritised social justice over economic development, leading to both admiration and criticism. By analysing his contribution, this study assesses the long-term implications of his politics in Bihar. The research concludes that despite the controversies surrounding his tenure, Lalu Prasad Yadav played a transformative role in redefining power structures and ensuring greater political participation for the marginalised sections of society.

**Keywords:** Marginalised, Backward, Social Justice, Ideology.

### **Early Life and Political Awakening**

Born in 1948 in Phulwaria, Bihar, Lalu Prasad Yadav hailed from a Yadav (OBC) family, a community traditionally engaged in cattle rearing and agriculture. His humble background played a crucial role in shaping his political outlook, making him deeply empathetic towards the struggles of backward and marginalised groups. He pursued higher education at Patna University, where he actively participated in student politics, marking the beginning of his political journey.

Lalu Yadav's political career took off in the late 1960s when he became associated with the Samajwadi (socialist) movement led by Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia. Lohia's call for "*Pichhda Paave Sau Mein Saath*" (backward classes are 60% of population) resonated deeply with young leaders like Lalu, who saw it as a means to challenge the traditional dominance of upper castes in Indian politics. The emphasis on social justice, reservation, and equal opportunities became central to his ideology.

Lalu Prasad Yadav, emerged from the socio-political landscape of Bihar as a strong advocate for social justice, socialism, and the empowerment of marginalised communities. His political journey was deeply influenced by stalwarts like Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan, and Karpuri Thakur, who shaped his ideological foundation. From his early student days to becoming the Chief Minister of Bihar, Lalu Yadav's rise reflected the aspirations of backward classes and challenged the hegemony of upper-caste dominance in politics.

### **Influence of Jayaprakash Narayan and the 1974 Movement**

Lalu Yadav's rise to national prominence was catalyzed by his active participation in the Bihar Movement of 1974, led by Jayaprakash Narayan (JP). This movement, also known as the Total Revolution, aimed to overthrow corruption and authoritarianism in governance, particularly targeting the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. It became a crucial moment for young socialist leaders, including Lalu, Nitish Kumar, Sushil Modi and Sharad Yadav.

During this period, Lalu was elected as the President of the Patna University Students' Union, showcasing his leadership skills and popularity among the youth. His strong oratory skills and mass appeal made him a key figure in mobilising students and common people against the ruling Congress regime. In 1977, following the Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi, Lalu Yadav contested the Lok Sabha elections from Chhapra and won as a candidate of the Janata Party at just 29 years of age, marking the beginning of his parliamentary career.

### **Mentorship Under Karpuri Thakur and Advocacy for Backward Classes**

Another towering influence on Lalu Yadav was Karpuri Thakur, a socialist leader and former Chief Minister of Bihar. Thakur, known for his pro-backward class policies, implemented reservations for OBCs in Bihar, which faced resistance from dominant caste groups. In 1978, the Mungeri Lal Commission report, which recommended reservations for backward castes among Hindus and Muslims in Bihar, was implemented. Backward Muslim communities such as Ansaris and Churidhars were also included as beneficiaries. Based on the commission's recommendations, Karpuri classified castes into *Annexure-One* and *Annexure-Two* categories to allocate reservations in government jobs. This led to unrest in the state, as upper castes turned against socially and economically backward communities. However, this decision laid the foundation for the empowerment of the marginalised in Bihar. At that time, as a member of parliament, he strongly supported Karpuri in implementing the report. (Yadav and Varma, 2019:70)

Karpuri Thakur's governance model and commitment to empowering backward and Dalit communities left a deep imprint on Lalu Yadav's politics. Lalu Yadav embraced Thakur's legacy by positioning himself as the champion of the backward classes (OBCs), Dalits, and backward

Muslims, ensuring their greater political representation. This approach later became the foundation of his rule in Bihar when he became Chief Minister in 1990.

### **Emergence as a Leader of Marginalised Groups**

Lalu Yadav's political rise coincided with the Mandal Commission's implementation in 1990, which recommended 27% reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in government jobs and educational institutions. He played a crucial role in defending and popularising Mandal politics, positioning himself as the leader of the backward class resurgence in Bihar.

The 1990 Bihar Assembly elections significantly altered the state's political landscape by shifting power from traditionally dominant upper castes to backward castes, particularly the Yadavs, under Lalu Prasad Yadav's leadership. The defeat of the Congress in 1990 marked the end of an era in Bihar's politics, which can be best described as "feudal democracy". (Jeffrey Witsoe, 2011:73-85) This election marked a notable increase in backward caste representation, with 117 members—including 63 Yadavs, 18 Kurmis, 12 Koeris, and 16 from the Baniya community—elected to the legislative assembly, rising further to 161 in 1995. Electoral politics subsequently became distinctly caste-based: upper castes, along with Kurmis and Koeris, predominantly supported the BJP-Samata Party alliance, whereas Yadavs consistently backed Janata Dal and later Lalu Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), established in July 1997. (Jha M. K, & Pushpendra, 2012)

As soon as he became chief minister of Bihar he made three decisions:

1. Removed the excise duty and taxes on *Tadi* (Palm Wine) sales - Tadi was the livelihood of the poor Pasi caste members, who had been forced to pay taxes on it since colonial times.
2. Established 150 'Charwaha' (herders) schools across the state, allowing cattle herders to study while their livestock grazed.
3. Increased the minimum wage of agricultural laborers from ₹16.50 to ₹21.50. (Yadav and Varma, 2019:65)

In undivided Bihar, there were 600 blocks. Within a year, Lalu Prasad Yadav had constructed 60,000 houses for the poor. This process continued for six to seven years. The government was expected to allocate ₹14,000 per family for building livable houses in villages. He abolished the practice of involving contractors in such construction projects. Instead, directly provided funds to the families in these settlements and asked them to build houses according to their preferences and needs. (Yadav and Varma, 2019:81)

Lalu Prasad Yadav inspected an elite institution located on Birchand Patel Road, Patna. It was frequented only by the rich, who would drink alcohol and engage in gossip. The wealthy held wedding receptions, anniversary parties, and other family events at the Patna Club. He declared, "The government will reserve 60 percent of the Patna Club's premises for the underprivileged sections. People from the Dom, Chamar, and similar castes will be able to organise wedding parties at the club. Since they are poor and cannot afford expensive liquor or chicken-mutton dishes, they will be allowed to drink *tadi* and eat pork at their parties in the club. (Yadav and Varma, 2019:79)

As the Chief Minister of Bihar (1990-1997), Lalu Yadav focused on uplifting the marginalised, challenging the upper-caste-dominated political order, and ensuring that lower-caste communities found a political voice. He has given more representation to marginalised group leaders in his party as well as in electoral politics. His contributions regarding marginalised communities is popularly uttered by people as follows:

**"Did Lalu give you food?"**

**"No."**

**"Did he give you a house?"**

**"No."**

**"Did he give you clothes?"**

**"No."**

**"Then what did he do for your welfare?"**

**"He gave us a voice."**

**(Yadav and Varma, 2019:67)**

His tenure was marked by populist politics, aggressive social justice rhetoric, and opposition to communal forces, making him one of the most charismatic and controversial leaders of his time.

### **Reservation Policies, Bureaucracy and Lalu Prasad Yadav**

Reservation policies in India have played a crucial role in addressing historical injustices and ensuring social justice for marginalised communities, particularly Other Backward Classes (OBCs). These policies, enshrined in the Indian Constitution, aim to provide equitable representation in education, employment, and politics. Over the decades, reservation policies have been a subject of intense debate, with proponents arguing for their necessity in social upliftment and critics raising concerns about their long-term implications.



Lalu Prasad Yadav, a prominent political figure and former Chief Minister of Bihar, has been a staunch advocate of reservation policies, especially for OBCs. His tenure saw significant efforts in implementing the Mandal Commission recommendations, which proposed a 27% reservation for OBCs in government jobs and education. Lalu Yadav positioned himself as a champion of backward classes and Dalits, emphasising social justice over traditional caste hierarchies.

The rationale for this de-elitization is not difficult to understand. The number of MLAs belonging to the lower castes rapidly increased and dominated the Bihar Assembly, (Jha M, K. & Pushpendra, 2012), bureaucracy remained upper-caste dominated, and there were no ways of altering its composition. Lalu Prasad could not even find enough IAS officers from the SC, ST, OBC and Muslim backgrounds to be posted as collectors in all the districts. The state secretariat was presided over almost cent per cent by upper caste IAS officers. In Bihar, in 2002, 133 out of 224 identified IAS officers (i.e., 59.4 per cent) were from four upper-caste groups: Brahmins, Kayasths, Rajputs, and Bhumihars. Only seven officers belonged to the Koeri, Kurmi and Yadav castes. Out of these seven, four officers were from the Yadav caste and all of them had entered the IAS through promotion from Bihar Administrative Service. (Jeffrey Witsoe, 2006:23)

Lalu Yadav's political ideology was deeply influenced by Mandal politics, which transformed the electoral landscape of North India. Under his leadership, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) became a key player in mobilizing marginalised groups, leading to a realignment of caste-based political power in Bihar. His governance model focused on empowerment through affirmative action, social welfare programs, and resisting upper-caste hegemony.

### **Lalu Prasad Yadav and Atrocities in Bihar**

During Lalu Prasad Yadav's tenure as Chief Minister, he was very aggressive regarding protecting Dalits from atrocities. He used to go on the field to protect the rights of people. One Incident was very popular: "One night, when I appeared before them, these criminals were stunned. They were alarmed by this sudden turn of events. At that time, I was wearing a skullcap and holding a stick. I instructed the police officers to apprehend those six individuals and put them in the police jeep. Then, I brought the terrified woman, who belonged to a tribal community, into my official vehicle and took her to my government residence. I spoke with her—she was extremely frightened. She had been barely surviving by working at a brick kiln. I summoned the District Magistrate (DM) of Patna and instructed him to employ her at the Collector's office. After some hesitation, the DM provided her with a job. Subsequently, I filed a case against the six criminals. They all belonged to the upper-caste *Brahmarshi* community,

were affiliated with the BJP, and were residents of Bihta” (Yadav and Varma, 2019:75). During his tenure, he rigorously worked to protect Dalits and Adiwasis from the atrocities.

Since independence, poor, backward, and Dalit communities faced severe oppression and exploitation, lacking access to government authorities. They endured forced labor, humiliation, and denial of basic rights, including voting. Dominant landowners subjected them to derogatory treatment and caste-based insults. For decades, Congress-led state governments ignored these injustices, suppressing voices against this feudal system by labeling dissenters as Naxalites or criminals, often resulting in their imprisonment or death. (Yadav and Varma, 2019:64)

However, during Lalu Prasad Yadav's tenure as Chief Minister, he addressed this oppression by issuing strict orders to police authorities. Lalu Yadav's administration took firm steps to protect marginalised communities, especially Dalits and backward classes, ensuring that exploitation, caste-based violence, and abuses were significantly reduced. His direct instructions to the police helped curb the feudal dominance, empowering the previously oppressed sections of society to voice their rights and participate more actively in democratic processes.

### **Conclusion**

Lalu Prasad Yadav's political career significantly reshaped Bihar's socio-political landscape, championing social justice and empowering marginalised communities such as OBCs, Dalits, and minorities. His leadership introduced crucial changes through reservation policies and populist governance strategies aimed at dismantling traditional upper-caste dominance and fostering inclusivity. Although his tenure faced criticisms for prioritising social justice over economic development, Lalu Yadav successfully provided marginalised communities with political representation and a distinct voice in public discourse.

His direct interventions and affirmative actions, such as implementing Mandal Commission recommendations, establishing educational initiatives like 'Charwaha' schools, and directly supporting marginalised groups through protecting them from atrocities and targeted social welfare schemes, significantly boosted grassroots political activism and participation among historically oppressed communities.

Despite various controversies and debates over the effectiveness of his governance, Lalu Yadav's legacy undeniably includes a greater political consciousness among the marginalised, leading to long-term shifts in Bihar's power dynamics. Ultimately, his tenure reflects a complex but transformative chapter in Indian politics, demonstrating the potential and challenges of social justice oriented governance concerning marginalised communities in power structure.

## References

- Gupta, T. D. (1992) 'Yadav Ascendancy in Bihar Politics', Economic and Political Weekly, June 27.
- Jeffrey Witsoe. 2011. "Corruption as Power: Caste and the Political Imagination of the Postcolonial State", American Ethnologist, vol. 38
- Jeffrey Witsoe. 2006. "Social Justice and Stalled Development: Caste Empowerment and the Breakdown of Governance in Bihar" in Francine Frankel (ed.), Indian in Transition: Economics and Politics of Change. Philadelphia, Centre for Advanced Study of India.
- Jha, Manish K, and Pushpendra (2012) Policies and Practices 48, Governing Caste and Managing Conflicts Bihar, 1990-2011
- Kumar, Arun. (2023, October 03) How Bihar's caste survey seeks to build on the legacy of Kapoori Thakur, Hindustan Times. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/karpoori-thakur-bihar-chief-minister-who-championed-social-justice-101696331907041.html>
- Kumar, Rajiv. (2024, April 14) छठी लोकसभा में सबसे कम उम्र के सांसद निर्वाचित हुए थे लालू प्रसाद, इस नेता को हराकर पहुंचे थे संसद, Jagaran. <https://www.jagran.com/bihar/saran-lalu-prasad-was-the-youngest-mp-elected-in-the-sixth-lok-sabha-bihar-politics-23698799.html>
- Kumar, Sanjay. 2004. Janata Regionalized: Contrasting Bases of Electoral Support in Bihar and Orissa", in Regional Reflections: Comparing Politics Across India's States. Oxford University Press: Delhi.
- Singh, Santosh. (2024, May 14) Sushil Kumar Modi: The man behind BJP's rise in Bihar, was shaped by JP movement. The Indian Express. <https://indianexpress.com/article/political-pulse/sushil-kumar-modi-the-man-behind-bjps-rise-in-bihar-was-shaped-by-jp-movement-9326707/>
- Srivastava Sumit Sourabh, October - December, 2014, Vol. 75, No. 4 (October - December, 2014), The Indian Journal of Political Science.
- Yadav, Lalu Prasad.,& Varma, Nalini (2019) *Gopalganj se Raisina, Kindle Edition*, Rupa Publication.
- Yadav, Mayank. (2019, March 23) पिछड़े पावें सौ में साठ का नारा बुलंद करने वाले नायक राममनोहर लोहिया, The Print. <https://hindi.theprint.in/culture/ram-manohar-lohiya-gave-the-slogan-of-backward-getting-sixty-out-of-hundred/51586/>

## 21. A Study of Women Characters in Anna Bhau Sathe's Selected Novles

**Dr. Appaso Shivaji Kolekar**

P. V. P. Mahavidyalaya, Kavathe Mahankal.

---

### **Abstract**

Anna Bhau Sathe, a versatile writer from Marathi literature used all genres to reflect the pain and sufferings of downtrodden people in the society. He depicted the exploitation of Dalit Women and the sufferings and the struggle for existence of dalit women through his novels and short- stories. Despite of the sufferings and exploitation, women in the writings of Sathe have special qualities like courage, self-respect and fight for survival with dignity.

**Keywords:** Women, downtrodden, courage, Chitra, Vaijayanta, Chandan.

Anna Bhau Sathe, a versatile writer from Marathi literature used all genres to reflect the pain and sufferings of downtrodden people in the society. When Sathe started his writing , it was the period of freedom struggle in India. Along with freedom struggle another important social movement was there ran by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and other social activists. They were trying to bring the dalits and oppressed people into the main stream. Sathe was influenced by both freedom struggle and fight for rights of dalits. He has written 35 novels, 15 short-story collections, some plays and powadas and lawanis. Through his writings he tried to bring new themes and forms in Marathi literature. He brought real life characters into his writing. His protagonists were revolutionary fighters, people fighting for rights, leaders with self-respect and even criminals. He realized that all his predecessors were writing about a typical middle class society. He realized that it was his life mission to write about dalits, laborers and oppressed. He gave a big jolt to the established society by portraying central characters in his novels and short stories belonging to the lower classes.

The present research paper focuses on the women characters in the novels of Anna Bhau Sathe. While studying the women characters in Sathe's novels, it is important to discuss the condition of the women during that period. Society denied the independent existence of women, she was given inferior status. In the case of dalit woman, she was twice exploited as she was woman and dalit. Anna Bhau opposes slavery, discrimination and inferior status of women in the

society. He changed the whole scenario by giving the gun in the hands of woman. He depicted the exploitation of Dalit Women and the sufferings and the struggle for existence of dalit women through his novels and short- stories. Despite of the sufferings and exploitation women in the writings of Sathe have special qualities like courage, self-respect and fight for survival with dignity.

Anna Bhau in his novels *Chitraa*, *Vaijanta*, *Chandan*, *Chikhalatil Kamal*, *Phulaphakharu*, *Aavadi*, and *Ratna* has portrayed the women protagonists. *Vaijayanta* is a story based on the life of a tamasha artist. Vaijayanta is the central female character in this novel who is the daughter of a tamasha artist Gajarabai. She always tries to keep away her daughter from tamasha as she was well aware with the hardships of the tamasha artists. But one day she was insulted by Chandra, a beautiful dancer. So to take the revenge on Chandra Gajarabai asks Vaijayanta to dance on the stage. Vaijayanta dances in tamasha as her mother wishes that, but later it brings many difficulties in her life. Theatre owner Babalal felicitates her but his son Chandulal had cunning eye on her. Uma is another character in the story who is in the love of Vaijayanta, he didn't like dancing of Vaijayanta in tamasha. The tamasha contractor's son Chandulal and Abha Patil of Khundalapur try to possess Vaijayanta. Chadulal makes many plans to rape her. Vajayanta resists the people like Chandulal and Abha Patil upto the end and finally gets married with her lover Uma.. Though she dances in tamasha, she has self-respect. When a servant of Chandulal gives her offer, she becomes angry and warns him in very rough language. Sathe depicts the realistic picture of sorrow, sufferings, pains, insults and social injustice faced by the Tamasha artists. He could do this because he had the first hand knowledge of tamasha as his close relatives as well as he himself had worked in tamasha.

*Chikhalatil Kamal* is a story based on the life of murali. Seeta, a duaghter of murali, loved to Bali. as she was very beautiful many tried to get her, but she didn't betray her love. When she was born she was married to Khandoba (God) by her mother. Anna Bhau has critically commented on the tradition of murali and focused on the pitiable life of muralis. Seeta asks questions to her mother about this tradition. She asks that how could a God get married with the duaghter whose mother is married with him? She gets confused with such questions but eventually gets married with Bali and breaks the tradition.

*Chitra* is a story based on the life two sisters Chitra and Sona. Chitra's father was died before her birth. Chitra's mother used to live at her brother's village as she has not other option.

The ruffians in the village always have close eye on the sisters in order to seduce them. Sona gets married to a diseased person, but he divorced her soon thinking that she is not suitable to him. Sona's maternal uncle takes her to Mumbai by telling her family that he will arrange her marriage in Mumbai. But he sells her in brothel to get money. Later he brings Chitra to sell her, but her sister Sona saves her. Chitra manages to run away from the brothel and takes in Labour Camp and gets married with her friend Jaya- a mill worker turned leader of workers. Sona tells her sister that get married with the person you like, don't get betrayed and don't be like me, don't be coward be brave that others should be scared of you. *Chandan* is the story of a poor and lonely young woman's struggle and suffering on the background of a slum area in Mumbai. Chandan, the central character, has to struggle a lot against poverty on one hand and the animal-like people in the slum area on the other hand. Chandan's parents die when when was a little child. Her maternal uncle brings her up and marries her with a poor young man Jagu at the age of twelve. She gives birth to a child at the age of fourteen. Jagu and Chandan come to Mumbai with their child in search of job. Unfortunately Jagu dies in the explosion of gelatin in the mine where he was working. There nobody to take care of Chandan and her child therefore Chandan has to do the labour work. The ruffians in the slum area named Gopal, Rangya, Dayaram, Zingarya and Tiger try to seduce her. Dayaram tries to rape but Chandan throws the can of acid on his body Chandan is sent to jail for two years.

*Awadi* is a novel based on the life of the protagonist Awadi. She was betrayed in the marriage as her husband was diseased person and her brother didn't tell her about it. She becomes sad about it. But later she falls in love with Dhanaji Ramoshi and gets married with him. Anna Bhau's very famous novel *Fakira* is also have two important women characters Radha and Rahibai. *Sangharsh* depicts the story of Sulabha who leaves her cruel husband and gets married with captain Anand. Avantika from *Ahankar* is revolutionary character who denies the touch of Ramrav before marriage though she loved her. Harana from *Kurup* is a representative of the women who takes the responsibilities of their families after the death of their husband. Women in Anna Bhau's novels live in huts, work in fields but they are considerate towards others sufferings. They take care of their characters and even accepts death while protecting their chastity. These women belongs to Patil, Mang, Bhatake, Dombari, Kolhate, Ramoshi and Robbers families.

Anna Bhau portrays the problems and suffering of the women through his novels. He changed the existing writing style and brought women as protagonist in his novels. His women protagonists are revolutionary. They fought for survival, chastity and their rights. Through his novels Anna Bhau has opposed slavery, discrimination and inferior status of women in the society. He changed the whole scenario by giving the gun in the hands of woman. He depicted the exploitation of Dalit Women and the sufferings and the struggle for existence of dalit women through his novels. Despite of the sufferings and exploitation women in the writings of Sathe have special qualities like courage, self-respect and fight for survival with dignity.

**References**

- Korde, Bajrang. Selected Stories of Anna Bhau Sathe. Sahitya Akademi Publication, 2000.
- Niwdak, Wangmay. Lokshahir Anna Bhau Sathe. Govt. Press, 2000.
- Sathe, Anna Bhau. *Chitra*. Vidyarthi Graha Publication, 1978.
- ---. *Vaijyanta*. Majestic Publication, 1979.
- ---. *Ratna*. Vidyarthi Graha Publication, 1981.
- ---. *Chandan*. Chandrakant Shetty Publishers, 1993.

## 22. Challenges Faced by Women Characters in Anna Bhau Sathe's Chitra

**Dr. Ambadas Dadasaheb Sakat**

Associate Professor, Department of English,  
Kisan Veer Mahavidyalaya, Wai, Dist. Satara, Maharashtra.

---

### Abstract

The present paper is based on challenges faced by women characters in Anna Bahu Sathe's feminist novel Chitra. Anna Bhau Sathe is one of the prominent writers in Marathi literature. His popular novels such as Chitra (1951), Warnechya Khoryat (1951), Vaijayanta (1959), Fakira (1960), Chandan (1962), Aawadi (1963), Vair (1964), Master (1966), Alguj / Flute (1966), Tara (1967), Warnecha Wagh (1968), Rupa (1968), Dhundha (1969), made him one of the best novelist of the age. He wrote 35 novels, 21 collections of short stories, 10 ballads, 13 folk dramas, 3 plays, 01 poem, a travelogue and a number of Lavanis and songs etc. His travelogue entitled Maza Rishiyacha Pravas (My Passage to Russia) based on his visit to Russia. Eight Marathi films have been picturised on Anna Bhau Sathe's selected novels and all of them are much popular even today.. Chitra is the very first novel written by Anna Bhau Sathe which was published in 1951. It is about adventurous life of strong and revolutionary girl named Chitra. The setting of the novel is in the capital city of Maharashtra, Mumbai. Many people such as capitalist, workers, labours etc get shelter in Mumbai. Chitra, the protagonist, comes from the rural area to get settled in her life in Mumbai. She wants to live respectable life. Thus, Anna Bhau Sathe in Chitra depicts miserable lives of helpless women characters such as Sahubai, Sonabai and Chitra. Sakhubai expresses her grief and agony in the following way:

**"Then what shall I do?**

**I cannot do anything now.**

**My body does not support me to work.**

**How shall I fill up my stomach?**

**On whose trust shall I live?"**

**Sakhubai started crying."**

**(Chandane 306)**



**Key Words:** Challenges, Feminist, Adventurous, Strong, Revolutionary, Travelogue, Miserable, Helpless, Grief, Agony etc.

### **Challenges Faced by Sakhubai, Sona and Chitra**

The novel, Chitra is entitled after its woman protagonist named Chitara. It is based on a revolutionary character of Chitra. She strongly faces all challenges in her life. The writer gives a true picture of a helpless mother Sakhubai who tries to protect her young daughters named Sona and Chitra the tyrannical society. It also deals with romantic love relationship between Chitra and Jaya. We find the adventurous journey of Chitra from a small village called Pargaon to Mumbai. Chitra struggles for a respectable life in Mumbai. Unfortunately, Chitra's father was died before her birth. Her husband, Chandu dies just after a few days of her marriage. Her mother, Sakhubai is an old woman who faces many problems in a small village named Pargaon. Moreover, her real uncle Krushna deceives her sister Sona and sells her out at brothel house in Mumbai. Krishna is a wicked uncle of Chitra who makes false promises to her. He assures Chitra that he can give a good job to her in Mumbai. He also informs Chitra that Sona is living a happy life with her rich husband in Mumbai. Chitra, as an innocent and helpless girl believes in the words of her uncle Krushna. Even, Sakhubai Chitra's mother and real sister of Krishna believes in his false promises and allows Chitra to go with him to Mumbai. Chitra is hopeful to get a good job and a well cultured husband in Mumbai. She blindly believes that Krishna is a good person and is going to provide her a good job in Mumbai. As Chitra reaches Mumbai, she comes to know reality of her uncle Krushna from her sister Sona. Sona and Chitra speak about their lives in the following way.

**“Mama, has sold me out here at the brothel house”**

**“I am doing immoral things.”**

**Sona started crying.**

**But, Chitra, you have not done the right thing.”**

**‘Sona said’**

**“I? What’s wrong I did? Chitra asked.”**

**“You have fallen in love with somebody.”**

**“Who says?”**

**“Uncle told me.”**

**“It is wrong,” ask him.**

**Chitra got angry of Mama. (Chandane 339-40)**

Anna Bhau Sathe further depicts how Krishna, a younger brother of Sakhubai misleads his own helpless sister and her two daughters, Sona and Chitra. Krishna does not give money to Sakhubai which were sent by Sona from Mumbai. As Sona comes back from Mumbai, she finds the same pathetic life is of her mother as it was before. Her mother Sakhubai faces the same economic problem as it was earlier. Sona doubts her uncle Krishna whether he really gave clothes and money to her mother or not. It was nobody around Sona with whom she can trust on and express her agony and grief. Even for Chitra, it was not easy for her to lead a lonely, widowed life in the haunted society. The devilish person like Bapya Pawar was always looking at her with a terrible sight. Chitra was annoyed with the humiliation and trouble of Bapya Pawar and others. The female characters in the novel Sakhubai, Sona, and Chitra all of them become the puppets in the hands of the brutal men like Krishna, Bapya Pawar, General, Kantilal etc. Sona gets irritated and asks Krishna about her mother in the following way.

**“Mother is starving of food.**

**How much rupees you gave her?”**

**“I told her, when she needs it, she can ask me for it.**

**But she doesn’t understand it.”**

**Krushna got rescued himself by showing finger at Sakhubai.**

**(Chandane 310)**

The writer depicts the sorrow in the mind of Sona. She is the victims of the social and economic structure of the society. In fact, Sona is quite aware of the worst circumstances in which she was living. She doesn’t want Chitra to be the victim of the devilish people like General, Laliya or Kantilal. It was a critical time of Sona’s life who keeps Chitra away from the evil eyes of such people. On the other hand, Chitra was unaware of all these evil things happening around her. It also gives focus on how an exploited elder sister like Sona discloses her agony, torture and grief of her mind to a younger sister Chitra. Sona is sick of her life at brothel house. Sona tells Chitra about her exploited life in Mumbai. For Sona, it becomes unbearable to hide her sorrowful feelings. She cries a lot and expresses her anxiety to Chitra in the following way.

**“Why are you crying?” Chitra asked again.**

**“Chitra! This Mumbai is not as it looks like.**

**It is terrible. I got ruined.**

**I got exploited from society.**

**I lost my chastity.**

**Mother, for the whole life feed me and grown me up.**

**That body I am selling here.**

**Because of that, I feel ashamed....and” (Chandane 351)**

Fortunately, in the second half of the novel, Chitra happens to meet her childhood friend named Jaya. He is a mill worker and fights against capitalists. He used to participate in the strike waged against the British government. It was the time of 1942 when Indians were fighting against the British government for the independence. The writer believes that mill worker like Jaya in Mumbai has contributed a lot in the Independence Movement of India. Thus, Chitra a revolutionary and strong woman character gets married to her childhood friend Jaya.

### **Conclusion\**

The novel Chitra is about the struggle of two young girls named Sona and Chitra. Sona, the elder sister is of submissive nature. Chitra is a revolutionary girl who opposes the tyranny of patriarchal society. It also shows the dilemma of the poor mother Sakhubai. She is helpless due to her husband's death. Sakhubai lives a lonely and pathetic life in Pargaon. The brave woman character like Chitra does not lose her hope at such crucial situation. She fights against tyranny to preserve her chastity. The General speaks to himself about the brave character of Chitra.

**‘She went. Why went? How went?’**

**How many days have passed since she left me?’**

**He counted with fingers saying**

**October, November, December, January, and February.**

**Oh! My God! Five months.**

**Today, five months have left.**

**She disappeared. She went as if she is swallowed by a tiger.**

**She is not gone! Something wrong must have happened. (Chandane 373)**

### **References**

1. Sathe Anna Bhau. Chitra. Pune: Pratima Publication, 2012.
2. Sathe, Dinkar Sahadeo. He sur Algujache. Pune: Vidyarthi Prakashan, 1977.
3. Sathe, Shankar Bhau. Maza Bhau Anna Bhau. Pune: Sugava Prakashan, 1980.

4. Ray, K. Mohit. (ed.) Studies in Comparative Literature: New Delhi: Atlantic Publication, 2002.
5. Reddy, K.V. and Reddy, P. B. (ed.) The Indian Novel With a Social Purpose. Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi: 1999.
6. Sahu, Nandini. (ed.) The Post-Colonial Space Writing the Self and the Nation. Atlantic Publication, New Delhi: 2007.
7. Sathe Vitthal. Anna Bhau Sathe Vicharmanthan. Shitanjali Prakashan, Pune: 2017.
8. Shah, Ghanashyam. Dalitanchi Asmita aani Rajkaran. Diamond Publication, Pune: 2008.
9. Shams, Ishteyaque. New Perspectives on American Literature. Atlantic Publication, New Delhi: 2004.
10. Shinde, Mahendra. (ed.) Samaj Sudharak, Lokshahir Anna Bhau Sathe. Pune: Snehawardhan Publication, 2012.

## 23. Existential Crisis in Preeti Shenoy's *The Secret Wishlist* in Anna Bhau Sathe's Chitra

**Dr. Suhas Shinde**

Assistant Professor, Department of English,  
K. B. P. Mahavidyalaya, Pandharpur. (Autonomous)

**Prof. Dr. Samadhan Mane**

I/C, Principal, K.B.P. Mahavidyalaya, Pandharpur (Autonomous), Dist. Solapur, Maharashtra.

### Abstract

An existential crisis happens when a person starts questioning their life, purpose, and identity. It often occurs when someone feels trapped in a life they did not choose or when their dreams remain unfulfilled. Preeti Shenoy's novel *The Secret Wishlist* tells the story of Diksha, a woman who once had big dreams but was forced into an arranged marriage at a young age. Over the years, she loses herself in the roles of a wife and mother, feeling empty and unfulfilled in a loveless marriage. The novel explores themes of self-discovery, personal freedom, and societal pressure. Diksha's life changes when she finds an old wishlist—a list of dreams she had as a teenager. This reminds her of the person she once was and makes her question her choices and sacrifices. Inspired by this, she takes small steps toward rediscovering herself, including learning salsa and reconnecting with an old love. She eventually finds the courage to break free and live life on her own terms. This paper examines Diksha's existential crisis and transformation using ideas from famous philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre, Viktor Frankl, and Simone de Beauvoir. It highlights how the novel sends a strong message: happiness is a choice, and it is never too late to reclaim one's life.

**Keywords:** *Existentialism, Identity, Freedom of choice, alienation.*

### Introduction

An existential crisis occurs when an individual questions the meaning, purpose, and authenticity of their life. This crisis is often triggered by dissatisfaction, personal struggles, or a realization that one's life lacks direction or fulfillment (Frankl 105). Existentialist philosophers such as Jean Paul Sartre, Viktor Frankl, and Simone de Beauvoir argue that to live authentically, individuals must take responsibility for their choices rather than conform to societal expectations (Sartre 47). Preeti Shenoy's *The Secret Wishlist* explores this existential struggle through Diksha,

a woman who, after years of suppressing her dreams and individuality, begins to question her identity, choices, and happiness. The novel highlights themes of self-discovery, freedom, societal constraints, and personal transformation (Shenoy 67), making it a profound study of existentialism.

### Analysis

This research paper studies Diksha's existential crisis using key existentialist theories, showing how her journey aligns with the struggle for authenticity, meaning, and autonomy. Diksha's Existential Crisis in *The Secret Wishlist* has analyzed through the following features:

#### 1. Loss of Identity and the Questioning of Existence

At the beginning of the novel, Diksha is a 40-year-old homemaker who feels trapped in a monotonous and emotionally unfulfilling life. Her daily routine revolves around her husband and teenage son, leaving no room for her personal aspirations. Her inner turmoil reflects Jean Paul Sartre's concept of "bad faith" - where individuals deny their own freedom and live according to societal expectations rather than their own desires (Sartre 55). She acknowledges her emotional emptiness:

I sometimes wondered what had happened to the girl I used to be - the one who had dreams, ambitions, and a zest for life. It was as if she had been buried somewhere deep inside me, waiting to be rediscovered. (Shenoy 34)

This moment signifies the first stage of an existential crisis - where an individual realizes they have been living an inauthentic life. As Sartre explains, people often conform to predefined roles instead of actively shaping their own existence (Sartre 62). Diksha, who once had dreams, passions, and ambitions, has been reduced to a passive existence, leading to her growing inner dissatisfaction.

#### 2. Social Expectations and the Loss of Free Will

Diksha's life is largely dictated by **social expectations and patriarchal norms**. As a teenager, she was in love with **Ankit**, but an incident forced her parents to **arrange her marriage at 19**, cutting short her **aspirations and desires**. She was expected to accept her role as a **wife and mother**, leading her to **abandon her true self** (Shenoy 89). Her husband's dismissive attitude further reinforces her oppression. When she considers leaving him, his response is "*What will people say?*" (158) This reaction highlights **society's role in reinforcing existential despair**. According to **Simone de Beauvoir's feminist existentialism**, **women are**

often reduced to roles such as wife and mother, rather than being seen as individuals with their own identity (Beauvoir 234). Diksha's crisis is not just personal - it is also a result of a patriarchal system that strips women of their autonomy.

At this stage, Diksha feels powerless, reflecting Viktor Frankl's theory that human suffering is greatest when life lacks meaning (Frankl 118). She exists in a routine without purpose, which intensifies her inner crisis. Diksha's routine consists of household chores, fulfilling responsibilities without emotional satisfaction. Her marriage to Sandeep is distant, lacking emotional connection. Her dissatisfaction with life becomes evident when she states:

I had everything—a good home, a child, financial security - yet, I felt empty inside. It was like living in a beautifully decorated cage. (Shenoy 47)

This statement aligns with Soren Kierkegaard's idea that despair arises when individuals live inauthentic lives controlled by external forces (Kierkegaard 1983). The metaphor of a "beautifully decorated cage" suggests that material comfort does not equate to happiness if one's soul feels trapped. Her unhappiness intensifies when she reflects on her passionless marriage: "We were like two strangers living under the same roof, bound by responsibilities rather than love." (Shenoy 52) Here, Shenoy highlights the existential void that results from a life lacking emotional fulfillment.

### 3. The Awakening: The Power of Self-Discovery

Diksha's existential awakening begins when she finds an old wishlist - a list of dreams she wrote as a teenager before her marriage. The wishlist reminds her of a time when she had agency and freedom, leading to a realization:

Each item on that list reminded me of the person I once was, before I allowed life to take over and erase my dreams. (88)

This moment is crucial because it reconnects her with her authentic self, initiating her journey toward self-discovery. According to Viktor Frankl, the key to overcoming existential despair is to find personal meaning - Diksha's wishlist serves as a symbol of that lost meaning (Frankl 125). From this point, Diksha starts making small yet significant choices to reclaim her individuality:

- She joins salsa classes, something she always wanted to do (Shenoy 101).
- She reconnects with Ankit, reviving a part of her past that was forcibly erased (123).

- She **starts questioning her marriage**, rather than blindly accepting her unhappiness (137).

These actions reflect **Sartre's idea that human beings create their own meaning through actions** (Sartre 78). By taking control of her life, Diksha **begins to break free from her existential despair**.

#### 4. Freedom of Choice and Responsibility

A major existentialist belief is that **freedom comes with responsibility**—humans have complete control over their choices, but they must also accept the consequences (Sartre 91). Diksha begins reclaiming her identity by secretly joining a salsa class, symbolizing her step toward independence. As she experiences the joy of dancing, she expresses: "For the first time in years, I felt alive. I was doing something for myself, and it felt exhilarating." (Shenoy 102) Initially, Diksha fears change because it means stepping into the **unknown**. However, as she gains confidence, she **embraces her freedom**, *"Happiness is a choice. And I was finally choosing myself."* (172)

This transformation aligns with **Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of "radical freedom"**, which states that humans must actively **define their own existence** instead of relying on external forces (Sartre 112). By leaving her unhappy marriage, Diksha **rejects the life that was forced upon her and chooses to create her own path**. Her reconnection with Ankit further challenges her self-imposed limitations. She questions whether she has been living a false life: "Was it too late to reclaim the love I had lost? Or had I settled for a life that was never truly mine?" (Shenoy 127) This moment represents existential awakening—Diksha realizes she has been making choices based on fear rather than desire.

#### 5. Choosing Freedom over Conformity

Diksha's transformation reaches its peak when she makes the bold decision to leave her marriage. She acknowledges the societal judgment that will follow but remains firm in her choice, "For once, I wanted to live life on my own terms, without guilt, without fear." (Shenoy 154) This decision aligns with Simone de Beauvoir's feminist existentialism, which states that women must reject societal constraints to achieve true autonomy (Beauvoir 1949). When she informs Sandeep of her decision, he responds coldly, emphasizing societal expectations, "What will people say? A woman leaving her husband for silly dreams?" (Shenoy 158) However,



Diksha no longer seeks external validation. Her final realization encapsulates the existentialist belief that true fulfillment comes from within.

### Conclusion

Preeti Shenoy's *The Secret Wishlist* provides a profound exploration of existential crisis through Diksha's journey from self-doubt to self-empowerment. The novel highlights how individuals, especially women, often sacrifice their authentic selves due to societal pressures. However, it also delivers a powerful message i.e. it is never too late to reclaim lost dreams and redefine one's life. Diksha's transformation illustrates Sartre's philosophy of radical freedom, Kierkegaard's concept of despair, and Beauvoir's feminist existentialism, making *The Secret Wishlist* a compelling narrative on existential awakening. By integrating existentialist themes with feminist perspectives, Shenoy's novel serves as a source of inspiration for anyone who feels trapped in a life they did not choose. Diksha's journey teaches us that happiness is not about fulfilling societal expectations but about staying true to oneself.

### Findings

1. Diksha's life, dictated by societal norms, leads to a loss of self. Once an ambitious girl, she becomes trapped in a monotonous existence, questioning her purpose, "I sometimes wondered what had happened to the girl I used to be." (Shenoy 34).
2. Marriage and motherhood impose rigid roles on her, leaving no room for personal aspirations. When she contemplates leaving, her husband's reaction – "What will people say?"- highlights the societal constraints that reinforce her existential despair. This reflects Beauvoir's feminist existentialism, which argues that women must break free from imposed roles to attain true autonomy.
3. Finding her wishlist acts as a turning point, reminding her of forgotten dreams, "Each item on that list reminded me of the person I once was." (Shenoy 88). This aligns with Frankl's idea that personal meaning is key to overcoming existential struggles.
4. Existentialist philosopher Jean Paul Sartre emphasizes that individuals must take responsibility for their choices. Diksha's decision to leave her unhappy marriage reflects her newfound courage, "For once, I wanted to live life on my own terms." (Shenoy 154).

5. The novel combines existentialism and feminism, showing how women's struggles often stem from societal conditioning. Diksha's journey represents the existential idea of self-liberation and the feminist need for autonomy in personal happiness.

To sum up, Diksha's transformation in *The Secret Wishlist* emphasizes that true happiness lies in self-discovery and personal freedom rather than social approval. Preeti Shenoy's novel serves as an empowering reminder that it is never too late to reclaim one's dreams and redefine one's life.

### References

1. Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, Vintage Books, 2011.
2. Deci, Edward L., and Richard M. Ryan. "Self-Determination Theory: A Macro theory of Human Motivation, Development, and Health." *Canadian Psychology*, vol. 49, no. 3, 2008, pp. 182–185.
3. Frankl, Viktor E. *Man's Search for Meaning*. Translated by Ilse Lasch, Beacon Press, 2006.
4. Kierkegaard, Soren. *The Sickness Unto Death*. Translated by Alastair Hannay, Penguin Classics, 1989.
5. Sartre, Jean Paul. *Being and Nothingness: An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology*. Translated by Hazel E. Barnes, Routledge, 2007.
6. Shenoy, Preeti. *The Secret Wishlist*. Westland Publications, 2013.

## 24. Caste in Dystopian and Speculative Fiction: Imagining Alternative Dalit Futures

**Dr. Neeta Vijaykumar Jokhe**

Assistant Professor Department of English, D. A. B. N. Arts and Science College, Chikhali.

### Abstract

Speculative fiction offers a powerful means to challenge and deconstruct caste structures by imagining alternative futures. V. T. Rajshekar's *The Rebirth of Ravana* reimagines Hindu mythology to critique caste oppression and Brahminical hegemony. The novel portrays Ravana, a symbol of resistance against Aryan supremacy, being reborn in contemporary India, where he seeks to dismantle caste-based discrimination. By merging mythology with dystopian elements, Rajshekar challenges dominant historical narratives and presents an alternative vision of justice and empowerment for Dalits. This study explores how speculative fiction can serve as a medium for Dalit self-assertion and counter-narratives, drawing on theoretical frameworks of Dalit futurism and decolonial speculative literature. By analyzing the novel's engagement with myth, politics, and futuristic resistance, this research highlights the potential of speculative fiction to serve as an emancipatory tool for caste critique.

**Keywords:** Dalit dystopia, speculative fiction, Ravana mythology, caste resistance, Dalit futurism.

### Introduction

Speculative fiction has long served as a powerful vehicle for social critique, offering a lens through which entrenched social hierarchies and oppressive systems can be examined, reimagined, and dismantled (Jameson 276). In the context of caste oppression, speculative fiction provides a unique space to envision futures where caste-based discrimination is either dismantled or intensified, reflecting the anxieties and aspirations of marginalized communities (Gopal 112). This paper explores the intersection of caste and speculative fiction, particularly focusing on dystopian narratives that engage with caste as a fundamental axis of social organization.

One of the most compelling ways in which speculative fiction intervenes in caste discourse is through the subversion of dominant narratives. By reconfiguring mythological, historical, and sociopolitical elements, speculative fiction allows for counter-narratives that

challenge the epistemic violence of caste (Chakravarty 198). V. T. Rajshekar's *The Rebirth of Ravana* exemplifies this by revisiting the mythological figure of Ravana, traditionally demonized in Brahminical discourse, and reimagining him as a revolutionary figure fighting against caste oppression (Rajshekar 34). Through this reconfiguration, the novel disrupts hegemonic historiography and offers an alternative vision of resistance and empowerment for Dalits.

This study aims to explore how speculative fiction, through its unique ability to blend dystopian elements with historical revisionism, can serve as a site for Dalit self-assertion. By engaging with theoretical frameworks such as Dalit futurism and decolonial speculative literature, this research will analyze how caste operates within speculative worlds and how these narratives can offer alternative futures that challenge and transform present caste realities (Nayar 210).

### **Speculative Fiction and Caste: A Theoretical Framework:**

Speculative fiction, encompassing science fiction, fantasy, and dystopian literature, has historically been a space for imagining radical alternatives to existing power structures (Bould and Miéville 87). It interrogates social hierarchies, exposes hidden injustices, and presents alternate possibilities that challenge dominant ideologies. In the Indian context, caste has remained a deeply entrenched system of social stratification, affecting nearly every aspect of life, from politics and economy to culture and identity (Ambedkar 153). The use of speculative fiction as a tool to critique caste oppression offers a radical departure from traditional realist narratives that often fail to envision caste beyond its historical determinism (Guru 178).

Dalit futurism, an emerging theoretical framework, parallels Afrofuturism in its effort to reclaim history, subvert dominant narratives, and imagine emancipatory futures for Dalits (Yengde 45). Drawing from anti-caste intellectual traditions and speculative storytelling, Dalit futurism envisions futures where caste hierarchies are dismantled, and Dalit identity is redefined in terms of agency, self-determination, and empowerment (Pardesi 223). This framework is particularly relevant in analyzing speculative fiction that engages with caste, as it highlights the ways in which such narratives disrupt the existing social order and offer counter-histories that challenge Brahminical hegemony (Rao 99).

Decolonial speculative literature also plays a crucial role in this discourse by questioning Eurocentric and Brahminical epistemologies that have shaped historical narratives (Wynter 265). In this context, speculative fiction serves as a decolonial tool that reclaims the voices of

marginalized communities, enabling them to assert their agency and resistance through alternative storytelling practices (Chattopadhyay 144). The reimagination of myth, history, and future within speculative fiction creates a space where caste oppression can be both critiqued and transcended (Mukherjee 198).

### **Myth, History, and Dystopia in *The Rebirth of Ravana***

V. T. Rajshekar's *The Rebirth of Ravana* presents a radical reinterpretation of Hindu mythology, reconfiguring the figure of Ravana as a symbol of anti-caste resistance (Rajshekar 76). In dominant Brahminical discourse, Ravana has been historically portrayed as a demon king, embodying arrogance and moral corruption. However, Dalit and Dravidian scholarship have long contested this depiction, arguing that Ravana represents an indigenous resistance to Aryan supremacy (Karthikeyan 134). Rajshekar's novel aligns with this counter-narrative, reimagining Ravana's return in contemporary India, where he seeks to dismantle the entrenched caste system and challenge the ideological dominance of the upper castes (Gorringe 167).

The novel employs dystopian elements to depict an India where caste discrimination persists in overt and insidious forms (Nayar 119). By positioning Ravana as a resurrected revolutionary figure, Rajshekar challenges the legitimacy of Brahminical myths and offers an alternative vision of history where Dalit resistance is central (Rajshekar 88). This speculative reimagining serves two purposes: first, it exposes the continuity of caste oppression in modern India, and second, it reclaims Ravana as a figure of empowerment, rather than subjugation (Deshpande 189).

Through its blending of mythology and dystopian fiction, *The Rebirth of Ravana* illustrates the enduring relevance of caste in shaping Indian society while also presenting speculative possibilities for its eradication (Jha 202). The novel's narrative strategy aligns with Dalit futurism by articulating a vision of radical resistance, where myth is not just a site of oppression but also a space for reasserting dignity and justice (Paradesi 231). This transformation of Ravana from a demonized villain to a revolutionary leader exemplifies how speculative fiction can serve as a medium for Dalit self-assertion (Yadav 157).

### **Conclusion**

*The Rebirth of Ravana* exemplifies how speculative fiction can be utilized as a powerful tool for caste critique and resistance (Rajshekar 99). By reinterpreting mythology, challenging dominant historical narratives, and presenting alternative futures, Rajshekar's novel aligns with

the objectives of Dalit futurism and decolonial speculative literature (Nayar 265). Through its dystopian and mythological elements, the novel underscores both the persistence of caste oppression and the possibility of its radical transformation (Bama 87).

As speculative fiction continues to evolve, it offers a unique space for marginalized voices to reclaim their histories and imagine futures beyond oppression (Satyanarayana 178). The reconfiguration of figures like Ravana serves as an act of epistemic resistance, challenging Brahminical narratives and offering an alternative vision of Dalit identity rooted in dignity, agency, and justice (Kumar 143). This study contributes to the broader discourse on Dalit futurism, highlighting how speculative fiction serves as a crucial site for articulating alternative Dalit futures and reimagining the social order.

### **Works Cited**

- Ambedkar, B. R. *Annihilation of Caste*. Navayana, 2014.
- Bama. *Sangati*. Oxford UP, 2005.
- Bould, Mark, and China Miéville. *Red Planets: Marxism and Science Fiction*. Pluto Press, 2009.
- Chakravarty, Ananya. *Caste and Resistance in Indian Literature*. Routledge, 2017.
- Deshpande, Sudha. *Dalit Imaginaries in Modern India*. Orient Blackswan, 2020.
- Gorringe, Hugo. *Untouchable Citizens: Dalit Movements and Democratization in Tamil Nadu*. Sage, 2005.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*. Verso, 2005.
- Rajshekar, V. T. *The Rebirth of Ravana*. Dalit Sahitya Academy, 1997.
- Yengde, Suraj. *Caste Matters*. Viking, 2019.

## 25. The Erasure of Caste: A Critical Reading of Indian School Textbooks and Children's Historical Fiction

**Varsha Vaibhav Patil**

Research Scholar, Department of English, Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

### Introduction

#### Background and Importance of Caste and Power in India

Caste has been among the most characteristic social hierarchies within India, well rooted in its history, politics, and culture. Following the old varna and jati systems, caste continues to dictate social mobility, access to resources, and political participation. Despite constitutionally guaranteed safeguards and affirmative action policies, discrimination and exclusion by caste persist on a variety of fronts including education, employment, and politics. Caste has also shaped the history books, with dominant caste attitudes dominating the voices of Dalits, Adivasis, and other oppressed communities.

Education plays a crucial role in creating collective memory and forming young minds. School books and children's literature, particularly historical fiction, are the primary vehicles through which children learn about the past. But selective presentation—or even omission—of caste-related discourse in these texts raises basic questions about the ideological underpinnings of history education in India. Invisibilization of caste in school curricula not only distorts historical facts but also sustains privilege structures by silencing the histories of marginalized communities.

Dalit movements, from 19th-century anti-caste movements of Jyotirao Phule to political mobilization under B.R. Ambedkar and present-day identity claims, have played a key role in challenging caste-based hegemony. Mainstream educational material, however, glosses over them in a significant manner. The absence of caste discourse in textbooks and children's historical fiction is reflective of a broader refusal to acknowledge caste as a long-term structure of oppression, and therefore reinforcing hegemonic caste discourses.

This paper critically examines how Indian school textbooks and children's historical fiction approach—or evade—caste issues. As a context of social exclusion and hegemonic

speech, this research attempts to locate the ideological operations through which caste becomes erased from study materials. It believes that caste-sensitive texts should be incorporated into the curriculum to ensure a more inclusive and historically accurate system of education.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study aims to critically analyze the portrayal—or absence thereof—of caste in Indian school textbooks and children's historical fiction. The research objectives are:

1. To analyze the portrayal of caste in Indian school textbooks – Identifying the extent to which caste is portrayed, absent, or misrepresented in NCERT and state board textbooks.
2. To analyze caste stories in children's history texts – Criticizing portrayals of caste and Dalit selves in texts meant to form young readers' conception.
3. To investigate the impact of erasure of caste on historical awareness – Analyzing the impacts of an absence of caste conversation on students' understanding of Indian history and social justice.
4. To suggest inclusive and honest representation – Suggesting how caste-sensitive narratives can be integrated in school curricula and children's books.

### **Research Questions**

The research is guided by the following key research questions:

1. How is caste represented—or omitted—from Indian school textbooks?
2. To what extent do children's historical fiction texts deal with themes of caste?
3. What impact does the exclusion of debates over caste have on students' understanding of history and social organization?
4. How may school textbooks and children's literature be re-arranged to give a more inclusive and socially conscious historical picture?

### **Literature Review**

Construction of caste in Indian literature and education has been the subject of academic debate, particularly in Dalit movements, political struggles, and literary fiction. While there has been extensive scholarly work on caste discrimination and Dalit resistance, erasure or marginalization of caste in schoolbooks and children's historical fiction remains under-researched. This literature review critically examines previous studies on Dalit movements, political struggles, and their depiction in literature in order to position the current study.



### **1. Dalit Movements and Political Struggles: A Historical Overview**

Indian Dalit movements have been at the forefront of struggle against caste domination as well as fighting for social justice. Scholars such as Gail Omvedt (1994) and Anand Teltumbde (2010) have examined the dynamics of the Dalit uprisings, from the anti-caste declarations of the Bhakti movement to today's political protests led by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Research estimates that although the role of Dalit resistance in the Indian socio-political landscape is considerable, popular history books tend to deny or downplay the same.

A research report by Kancha Ilaiah (2009) and Christophe Jaffrelot (2005) points out the omission of Dalit history in textbooks and states that dominant caste ideologies inform the structure of school curriculum. The authors argue that political struggles of the Dalits, including significant events such as the Mahatma Gandhi-Ambedkar Poona Pact (1932) and the Dalit Panthers movement (1970s), receive minimal or skewed treatment in textbooks, with upper-caste perspectives continuing to be privileged.

Paik (2014) and Guru (2012) also critique the ideological obstacles that prevent truthful engagement with the oppression of castes in school books, firming up the hegemonic grip on historical narrating. Their works provide groundwork for understanding in what ways the struggles of the Dalits get selectively erased or reinterpreted through school education.

### **2. Caste Representation in Indian School Textbooks**

Textbooks are significant in shaping young minds, but research shows that they have a tendency to perpetuate dominant caste narratives. Krishna Kumar's (2001) and Batra's (2013) work highlights the fact that caste is either avoided or mentioned in such a manner that erases its violent history. Mukherjee's (2018) analysis of NCERT textbooks shows that caste is mentioned again and again when talking about ancient history but not at all when discussing contemporary India.

Nambissan (2009) argues that caste is constructed as a relic of the past rather than a reality of the present, thus denying students the capacity to critically examine its modern-day applications. This selective construction of history makes it easier to believe that caste discrimination is no longer an issue, further invisibilizing Dalit lives.

Study on state board books shows converging trends, wherein some books skip Dalit histories altogether and other books discuss caste briefly but never its systemic ramifications. The political influence of the state on content in textbooks becomes apparent through moves like

the watering down of discussions on caste and social reform movement in the 2017 revisions to NCERT textbooks.

### **3. Dalit Narratives in Children's Historical Fiction**

Whereas Dalit literature has been a powerful genre, children's historical literature remains untouched by caste literature. Research by Rao (2016) and Gopal (2020) points towards the fact that Indian children's literature is dominated by authors belonging to dominant castes and consequently no representative of Dalits. The few existing works that engage with caste, such as Subhadra Sen Gupta's "A Clown for Tenali Rama" and Manoranjan Byapari's "There's Gunpowder in the Air", offer limited perspectives and often fail to address systemic oppression.

Ajay Navaria (2012) and K. Satyanarayana (2011) argue that mainstream children's literature is often focused on nationalism and mythology concerns, not concerns of caste life. Their observation of school library collections indicates that Dalit children are most unlikely to obtain protagonists they may identify with, in historical novels, thereby adding to their marginality in mainstream stories.

In addition, research points out that authors from the dominant caste tend to portray Dalit characters in a perspective of pity instead of empowerment, which subtly upholds hierarchical social orders. There is increasing need for own-voice books, in which Dalit writers write about themselves, but this type of literature is still underrepresented within children's books.

### **4. Critical Gaps in Existing Research**

Whereas much has been written on caste and Dalit politics, more is to be unraveled in the way caste is constructed—and effaced—in school textbooks and children's books. Earlier works deal with Dalit movement or literary representation, but few systematically investigate their convergence with education narratives.

In addition, comparatively little is understood about how caste erasure impacts students' historical awareness. While scholars have critically examined textbook content, empirical research detailing how students interpret caste stories (or their absence) is limited.

This study tries to fill these gaps by providing a close reading of caste representation in school textbooks and children's historical fiction. By the confluence of political history, literary criticism, and educational debate, this study tries to shed light on the ideological processes that create caste invisibilization in school texts.

The current literature reflects a unifying trend of erasure of caste in Indian children's literature and education. Even as Dalit political movements and political struggle shaped India's past, their representation in textbooks and literature remains less or distorted. The study broadens the contributions made by researchers on caste studies, literature, and education to critically examine dominant caste ideologies' influence on young readers' construction of history.

By filling in the current gaps within the research, this paper aims to contribute to the broader discourse surrounding caste, education, and representation and advocate for a more encompassing and critically aware curriculum.

### **Research Approach**

This research adopts a qualitative method that is underpinned by historical analysis, textual analysis, and case studies to critically discuss the representation—or lack thereof—of caste in Indian school textbooks and children's historical fiction. The research strategy is aimed at exploring how caste is constructed, erased, or subtly integrated into educational narratives and literature for children.

#### **1. Historical Analysis**

This involves tracing the path of caste discourse in Indian school textbooks through different educational policy reforms. It examines how caste-based historical events, such as Dalit movements and anti-caste movements, have been constructed in various curricular changes, such as NCERT and state board reformations.

#### **2. Textual Analysis**

A discourse analysis of selected textbooks and children's historical fiction will be conducted to identify how caste is represented, excluded, or diplomatically hinted at. The analysis will involve thematic trends, language use, and ideological framing.

#### **3. Case Studies**

Some typical case studies of best-selling school books widely read in schools (such as NCERT Social Science books and State Board History books) and children's best-seller historical fiction will be researched to analyze portrayal across educational boards and books.

### **Sources Used**

This study relies on primary as well as secondary sources:

#### **1. Primary Sources**

This study examines NCERT and Maharashtra State Board Social Science and History textbooks (Classes VI–XII) to critique how caste is represented. NCERT textbooks limit caste to

ancient history with scant mention of Dalit movements like the Poona Pact or Dalit Panthers. Maharashtra State Board's 2018 updates went as far as to trivialized Ambedkar's anti-caste activism even more. Policy reports like NCF 2005 and NEP 2020 direct these exclusions, validating majority caste accounts at the cost of Dalit histories.

## **2. Secondary Sources**

Academic literature, critical analysis of NCERT and Maharashtra State Board textbooks, and reports of NCERT and Dalit intellectual collectives serve as the foundation of this research in order to quantify caste representation. Newspaper articles and opinion columns supplement the perception of political agendas in rewriting textbooks, yielding systemic silences in teaching history.

## **Scope and Limitations**

This research examines caste representation in NCERT and Maharashtra State Board textbooks, but its conclusions might not be applicable to all regional boards. The criticism of children's historical fiction is centered on best-sellers, and stand-alone Dalit novels might be excluded. Interviews, if done, would have a restricted sample because of time limitations.

Utilizing historical analysis, textual critique, and case studies, the study analyzes caste representation in Indian school textbooks and children's literature to contribute to education, social justice, and caste inclusion and champion a more inclusive historical narrative.

### **Meaning of Caste-Based Power Struggles in History, Politics, and Literature**

The deconstruction of Indian schoolbooks and children's historical fiction reveals a systematic exclusion or dilution of caste-based power struggles from textbook narratives. The next section synthesizes the findings and discusses how exclusion or selective inclusion of caste influences historical consciousness, social awareness, and students' appreciation of India's political and literary landscape.

## **1. The Erasure of Caste from Historical Narratives in Textbooks**

One of the key findings of this study is that Indian school textbooks systematically trivialize or erase caste struggles, presenting a sanitized version of history. A critical examination of NCERT and Maharashtra State Board textbooks reveals a pattern where caste is mentioned only in ancient settings, e.g., the Varna system of Vedic society, but not even remotely considered in modern history, where Dalit movements have been so consequential.

These include Jyotirao Phule, Periyar, and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, but their revolutionary criticisms of caste tyranny and Brahminical rule are significantly toned down. Also, Dalit-led movements, such as the Dalit Panthers of the 1970s, and anti-untouchability movements, are either suppressed or completely erased. By comparison, Gandhi and Nehru's social reforms are allotted a majority of the attention, so their roles become focal, with Ambedkar's anti-caste activism being presented as secondary to nationalistic motives.

## **2. The Exclusion of Caste from Children's Historical Fiction**

The same dynamic of caste elision and manipulation exists in children's historical fiction, where caste is elided, euphemized, or fabricated through the lenses of dominant caste frames. Overwhelmingly, books of this genre are based on nationalist heroes, wars, and mythological characters, evading the problem of caste. Even where Dalit protagonists exist, they are portrayed as passive victims rather than active change-makers, upholding stereotypes in place of challenging them.

Historical fiction rarely focuses on the systemic struggles of subjugated peoples, but instead provides a sanitized and Brahminical past. Even when caste is mentioned, it is explained as an individual moral issue and not as a deep-rooted social system, thereby making it politically ineffective.

## **3. The Political and Ideological Influences on Textbooks & Literature**

This study finds that political pressures heavily shape school curriculum construction, openly determining how caste is represented—or erased—in textbooks. Caste histories are rewritten as governments switch and textbooks are revised, and the 2017 NCERT revisions are particularly weakening caste oppression narratives. Similarly, state governments modify learning about history on political lines and modify how Dalit movements and their leaders are described.

### **Implications: The Impact of Removing Caste on Students**

The absence of caste in textbooks and literature has significant implications for students' understanding of history and social organization. Students are denied a comprehensive understanding of Indian history, leading to historical amnesia about caste oppression. Dalit and marginalized students are reinforced in their sense of exclusion by the absence of representation, while dominant caste students remain unaware of their privilege, normalizing caste-based discrimination in educational and working contexts. Additionally, through the absence of critical

examination of caste, students fail to construct social justice lenses, which democratic and egalitarian thought requires.

This study identifies longstanding ideological biases in Indian education and children's literature, where caste is erased or watered down to maintain hegemonic narratives. To address this, there is an urgent need to revise school curricula to incorporate caste-sensitive discourse and have Dalit struggles and successes represented equitably. Encouraging children's literature that represents caste realities in a real way and facilitating Dalit-authored books in educational settings is also important. In addition, the establishment of critical pedagogy that engages students actively in dialogue concerning caste, history, and social justice can help create a more inclusive and historically just education system.

### **1. Case Studies & Examples: Caste Erasure in Indian School Textbooks and Children's Historical Fiction**

To support the claim that caste is either erased or misunderstood in pedagogic texts, this section provides concrete examples from NCERT and Maharashtra State Board textbooks and children's historical fiction. Case studies demonstrate how caste histories are framed, marginalized, or erased in teacher education and children's literature, solidifying dominant perspectives while excluding Dalit histories.

**Case Study: Erasure of Dalit Movements in NCERT History Textbooks:** A reading of NCERT history textbooks indicates a pattern of caste erasure, in which caste is relegated to ancient history or watered down while talking about modern-day struggles. Class VI History Textbook (Our Pasts - I) talks about caste only in the context of the Varna system but does not touch upon its exploitative nature or subsequent social struggles. This creates a wrong impression that caste was at some point in time an operational social system, but not so a repressive apparatus still in force till date.

19th-century social reform efforts find a fleeting reference in Class X History (India and the Contemporary World - II), and Jyotirao Phule's efforts to educate lower castes receive short treatment. Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy are given big coverage instead, positioning the upper-caste leaders at the center of social progress and relegating Dalit participation to a footnote. Similarly, Class XII Political Science (Politics in India Since Independence) omits important discussion of caste-based movements and fails to cover the Dalit Panthers Movement (1970s), an important political and literary movement against caste discrimination.

**Impact & Interpretation:** The omission of caste subjects in NCERT textbooks has significant implications. By learning caste as an issue in the past and not as an issue in the current times, students conclude that issues related to caste have already been addressed, and they do not engage critically with social injustices of the current times. The focus on the reformers from higher castes like Raja Ram Mohan Roy at the expense of Phule and Ambedkar reinforces narratives of dominant castes in history. The selective presentation ensures that the students are learning a partial and sanitized version of history, where subjugation based on caste appears to be an ancient phenomenon and not a current issue.

## 2. Case Study: Maharashtra State Board History Textbooks (2018 Revision)

The Maharashtra State Board's 2018 revised history textbooks led to the erasure or watering down of significant mentions of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Savitribai Phule, Periyar, and other anti-caste movements. A comparison between Class X and XII history books reveals a systematic effort at downplaying the caste struggles. Dalit leadership players who played central roles in caste reform either didn't feature or had little space, and the government fight against untouchability and Dalit workers were greatly minimized. Furthermore, the 1932 Poona Pact, a major milestone in Ambedkar-Gandhi Dalit separate electorate negotiations, also significantly reduced, taking away with it necessary political background.

### Removal of Caste References in the 2018 Edition

Subject	2012 Edition (Pre-Revision)	2018 Edition (Post-Revision)
Savitribai Phule's Contribution	Recognized as a pioneer of women's education and Dalit mobilizer.	Mentioned only for women's education; Dalit contribution omitted.
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Dalit Mobilization	Described as a leader of the Dalit movement and social reformer.	Mostly focused on Ambedkar as Constitution-maker, with less emphasis on caste mobilization.
Poona Pact (1932)	Explained in detail, covering separate electorates and the Ambedkar-Gandhi debate.	Shortened, removing Ambedkar's resistance to Gandhi's stance.

### Impact & Interpretation

The erasure of caste-based discussions fits into political agendas to minimize caste conflicts in contemporary debates, consolidating hegemonic discourse that erases Dalit histories. By portraying Ambedkar primarily as a Constitution-framer, the revised textbooks dilute his revolutionary arguments against caste domination, lowering his status as a Dalit activist.

Similarly, Savitribai Phule's status as a Dalit reformer is erased, minimizing her efforts in women's education while ignoring her pioneering work in caste reform.

### **Summary of Key Findings**

The present study examined in a critical perspective the lack of caste or distortion of caste in Indian schoolbooks and children's historical fiction and discovered systematic exclusion of Dalit histories, movements, and struggles regarding caste. The analysis of NCERT and state board textbooks demonstrated how caste is inclined to be marked as a thing of the past and not an ongoing structural present. Key anti-caste figures like Jyotirao Phule, Periyar, and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar are marginalized, and key Dalit movements like the Poona Pact (1932), Dalit Panthers (1970s), and contemporary caste-based mobilizations are watered down or omitted. This erasure perpetuates hegemonic caste narratives and deprives students of a critical study of India's social past.

### **Implications for Future Research and Policy**

In order to fight against erasure of caste in schools, the policymakers will need to revise NCERT and state board books by adding in-depth analysis on caste, Dalit resistance, and social reform movements and to ensure proper place is given to names like Jyotirao Phule, B.R. Ambedkar, and Periyar. Children's literature can include Dalit voices in the form of historical novels, translations of works like *Joothan* by Omprakash Valmiki, and fiction detailing caste history and resistance. Follow-up research can empirically test the impact of caste exclusion from education using questionnaires from students and teachers, comparative reviews on marginalized histories, and caste coverage surveys in EdTech resources. Through such efforts, policy within education as well as scholarly studies can result in a more just and socially responsible education system.

### **Final Thoughts**

Omission of caste in school textbooks and children's literature is not only an educational issue—it is a political move sustaining existing power relationships. By keeping Dalit marginalization and discrimination based on caste in the background, educational spaces are accountable for invisibilization of the underprivileged. If India is actually going to adopt democratic and inclusive education, then caste must figure centrally in teaching history. This study calls for an immediate overhaul of the curriculum, greater voice for Dalits, and continued scholarly focus on caste and education to build a more just and historically conscious society.



## References

- Batra, Poonam. *Social Science Learning in Schools: Perspective and Challenges*. SAGE Publications, 2013.
- Gopal, Priyamvada. *Literary Radicalism in India: Gender, Nation and the Transition to Independence*. Routledge, 2005.
- Guru, Gopal. *Humiliation: Claims and Contexts*. Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Ilaiah, Kancha. *Why I Am Not a Hindu: A Sudra Critique of Hindutva Philosophy, Culture and Political Economy*. Samya, 2009.
- Jaffrelot, Christophe. *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability: Analysing and Fighting Caste*. Columbia University Press, 2005.
- Kumar, Krishna. *What is Worth Teaching?*. Orient Blackswan, 2001.
- Mukherjee, Arun. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: Dalits and the Erasure of Caste in Indian Textbooks*. Zubaan, 2018.
- Nambissan, Geetha B. *Exclusion and Discrimination in Schools: Experiences of Dalit Children*. Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 44, no. 17, 2009, pp. 43-49.
- Navaria, Ajay. *Unclaimed Terrain: Stories*. Navayana, 2012.
- Omvedt, Gail. *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*. SAGE Publications, 1994.
- Paik, Shailaja. *Dalit Women's Education in Modern India: Double Discrimination*. Routledge, 2014.
- Rao, Anupama. *The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India*. University of California Press, 2016.
- Satyanarayana, K. *Dalit Studies: Concepts, Debates, and Pedagogies*. Routledge, 2011.
- Valmiki, Omprakash. *Joothan: An Untouchable's Life*. Columbia University Press, 2003.



## **CONTACT FOR SUBSCRIPTION**

**AJANTA**

**ISO 9001: 2015 QMS/ISBN/ISSN**

**Dr. Vinay S. Hatole**

**Jaisingpura, Near University Gate,**

**Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (Aurangabad)**

**Maharashtra - 431 004,**

**Cell : 9579260877, 9822620877**

**E-mail : [ajanta2023@gmail.com](mailto:ajanta2023@gmail.com)**

**Website : [www.ajantaprakashan.in](http://www.ajantaprakashan.in)**