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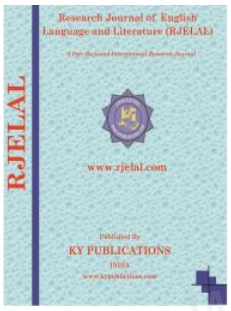
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LITERATURE OF DALIT AND AMBEDKAR

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ABSTRACT
Dalit writing is a post-Independence literary phenomenon. The emergence of Dalit literature has a great historical significance. The causes and effects leading to the age-old existence of oppression and despair of the lives of marginalized class of nation's vast population are also observed in many other parts of the world. it tends to be more realistic as it is the expression of the first-hand experiences, which the Dalits had been confronting in their lives. It opposes exploitation and oppression and craves for social equality and economic justice.
This paper would focus on how Dalit writers started writing and publishing their agonies, hardships and inhuman treatment, through pamphlets and small booklets. And this paper also attempts to dig out how Ambedkar, the architect of Indian constitution has made significant contributions to the anti-caste movement and shaped modern Dalit consciousness. On 14 October 1956 Ambedkar renounced the Hindu religion and converted to Buddhism. He took twenty-two vows on the occasion that have become credo and culture of belief for Dalit literature today. Dalit consciousness derives its energy from Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's world-view and philosophy.
Key Words: Dalit, Ambedkar, Social, Freedom & Justice

Introduction

In an era when issues relating to human rights have been under critical focus, literary depictions of the experiences of marginalized groups have acquired great significance. The recent spurt in Dalit literature in India is an attempt to bring to the forefront the experiences of discrimination, violence and poverty of the Dalit. The Hindus believe in *Varnashrama* system with its religiously oriented concepts such as the age old *Granthas,* Gods and priest-hood etc. which creates a hierarchal social order, which leads to slavery for the Dalit and marginalised communities in the society. Dalit literature denies this Hindu mentality and affirms humanitarian freedom. Tarachandra Khandekar, a Dalit writer says that "Man is the centrifugal force in the philosophy of Dalit literature. Man is supreme. He is above all God, sacred books and science. It is man who can make and unmake anything" Dalit literature believes that nothing is permanent. Everything is subjected to decay with every decayed there is a resurgence, new creation. It therefore does not accept the maxim Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram. On the other hand, it proclaims that nothing is true which is not applicable for man's sublime freedom and nothing is good if it is not useful for man's welfare; nothing is beautiful which is not useful for beautification of mankind.

Dalit literature also rejects canonical literature. Traditional aesthetics talks about three

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basic principles of literature, *Satya* (truth), *Shivam* (goodness) and *Sundaram* (beauty) are to be opposed. On the contrary, Dalit literature is to be based on reality and for it, man is superior even to God or the nation. Hence, when one evaluates Dalit text he can neither apply Bharata's concept of *Nayaka Dhirodat*, *Dhirlali*t. *Dhir Prasant* or *Dhiruddat*, nor can he apply Jagannath's definition of poetry "*Vakyam rasatamkam Kavayam*". Dalit literature rejects western theories like Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis, Roland Barthe's Structuralism or Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction theory, and it rejects Indian theories of rasa and Dhawni. C. B. Bharti in his article, 'The aesthetics of Dalit literature' talks about Dalit aesthetics. As he writes,

There was a movement in Maharashtra in 1970s, called as the Dalit Panthers, that movement was taken up by Namdeo Dhasal, J. V. Pawar, and Arun Kamble in Bombay this movement was influenced by Ambedkar's ideology. As we know that Dalit literature has arisen from cultural conflict. Since the 'downtrodden' hardly have any place in the established canonical literature of India In the influence of the movement Anna Bhau Sathe a renowned Marathi writer wrote 32 novels, 22 collections of short stories, 16 plays and folk dramas, a number of poetic compositions and a travelogue. He was one of the visionary writers who gave the first fully uninhabited expression to the Dalit consciousness in his writings. His penchant for minute observation, deep compassion and understanding of the life of the downtrodden and his irresistible gift for creativity made his novels like *Fakira* and *Warnecha Wagh*, remarkable creations in Marathi literature.

The Dalit literature emerged in Maharashtra, which subsequently spread to the neighbouring states like Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and others. Due course of time an increasing number of writers from Dalit communities in various Indian states have been producing literary works, such as poems, short stories, novels, dramas and autobiographies representing the caste based oppression, untouchability, poverty, repression and revolution. Their writings also contain powerful denunciations of and fierce attacks on the caste system.

Over the years there have been several terms used to describe the people of untouchable community, such as "Ati-Shudra,", "Exterior Castes," "Out-Castes," etc.

The Untouchables find that these terms are coined by the upper caste Hindus, officials and social reformers which are abusive in nature and synonymous with derogation, domination and paternalism. That is why the people belong to this category prefer to describe themselves as 'Dalit' even though there is an inherent denial of pollution, Karma, and justified caste hierarchy, as writes Eleanor Zelliot. The word "Dalit" is an old Marathi word found in *Molesworth's Marathi-English Dictionary* of 1975, reprint of 1813 edition meaning "ground, broken or reduced to pieces generally." (Zelliot 267)

Over the ages the connotation of the term, "Dalit" has been changing and there has been a new interpretation of the word. For example, Namdeo Dhasal, the well-known Marathi poet and one of the leading leaders of the Dalit Panthers movement, infused the term with a futuristic vision to include not just the Scheduled Castes but also the socially oppressed classes which also includes the Scheduled Tribes, Neo-Buddhists, landless labourers, and all those who are economically exploited.

Another Dalit thinker from Maharashtra, Gangadhar Pantawane, who is also the founder-editor of *Asmitadarsha* (Mirror of Identity), the chief organ of Dalit literature, the term 'Dalit' does not refer to a caste, but is a symbol of change and revolution. Whatever may be the definitions, the term 'Dalit' refers to the existential conditions of a group of people who are subjected to all forms of oppressions these are, social, political, economic, cultural and religious.

Since the late Nineteen Sixties and Seventies an increasing number of writers from Dalit communities in various Indian states have been producing literary works, such as poems, short stories, novels, dramas and autobiographies representing the caste based oppression,

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untouchability, poverty, repression and revolution. Their writings also contain powerful denunciations of and fierce attacks on the caste system and on brahmanical Hinduism. It has been pointed out that Dalit literature is considered to be a unique genre of modem Indian literature, for now Untouchables themselves using the traditionally-denied weapon of literacy, are exposing the conditions under which they have lived, as well as directly rebelling against the Hindu institution which has brought to them their perpetual subordination to the Varna order. This is the main thrust of Dalit literature.

"The literature, which does not rouse our good taste, does not provide us spiritual and mental satisfaction, does not produce in us activity and strength, which does not awake our love of the beautiful, which does not kindle in us the fire of resolution and the determination, to surmount our difficulties—is useless today. It does not deserve to be call literature.

Conclusion

In the concluding part, it has been pointed out that Dalit literature is considered to be a unique genre of modem Indian literature, for now Untouchables themselves using their knowledge and exposing the conditions under which they have lived, as well as directly rebelling against the Hindu institutions which has brought to them their perpetual subordination to the Varna order. This is the main thrust of Dalit literature. It can be pointed out that Dalit literature explored the voice of neglected sections of society and at the same time put the mainstream literary theories and elite ideologies under inquiry. Since Dalit literature reflects the stark reality of Dalit experiences, authenticity and honesty have become the hallmarks of Dalit literature. In the quest of literary substitutes, Dalit writers have re-discovered the marginalized voices of low-caste saints. They found relevance in ambedkar's philosophy and Buddhism, which celebrates equality among men. Through the folklores they calimed that Dalits were members of an ancient primitive society and were relegated to subordination by the upper class civilization. Dalit literature is now audaciously challenging the upper class hegemony of literature. The emerging force can challenge the Sanskritized and elitist Indian literature. In fact, Dalit literature is in the real sense Post-Hindu literature, which dares to dispense with Sanskrit symbolisms. This process was initiated by none other than Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar who looked down Sanskrit language as essentially casteist languages, which was known to only a handful of people in society, almost all of them belong to upper castes. The contemporary dalits are using books and pens to champion their cause. Dalit literature possesses the potential of changing social structure but Indian society is yet to see through and realize that potential. In present scenario, a multitude of publications is devoted to the delineation of Dalit situation in India. A separate body of literature termed as Dalit literature has successfully emerged and made its presence felt. Thus, Dalit literature has diverted the course from privileged to marginalized, idealistic to realistic and has left an indelible print in its journey so far. It has grown into a literary force that is here to stay. Dalit literature believes that nothing is permanent. Everything is subjected to decay with every decayed there is resurgence, new creation. It, therefore, does not accept the maxim 'Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram.' On the other hand, it proclaims that nothing is true which is not applicable for man's sublime freedom and nothing is good if it is not useful for man's welfare; nothing is beautiful which is not useful for beautification of mankind.

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