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Validating Dalit literature as a tool to awakening Dalit consciousness

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***Abstract*---**This paper attempts to understand the role of Dalit Literature and unravels the idea of consciousness as an arena for social protest. At the same time, the present study caters to underpin that concept of Dalit consciousness is a socially and culturally constructed reality which expresses, initiates, and engages social protest as a form of empowerment and emancipation discourse. Such social protests become a norm of social assertion for empowerment of the marginalized communities. This is especially the case in a society which is highly stratified in social, economic, political and cultural realms and where this stratification has been maintained through social and cultural engineering of dominationand subordination for centuries. The Dalit community, which has been pushed to the bottom in social ladder in the name of caste and untouchability, has inherently realized its sense of human dignity in recent times and started recapturing its lost identity in and through such protest movements.

***Keywords*---**consciousness, protest, education, Dalit, society, suffering, suppression, caste, movements.

Introduction

It could be nothing better than to say that the idea of Dalit consciousness lies in the nucleus of both the creation and evolution of Dalit writings. The term Dalit embraces all poor and oppressed people in India but the term has transformed itself into a new cultural context relating to Dalit literature and Dalit movement. Before the study is taken to next level, it would be reasonably essential to shed

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light on Dalit consciousness itself. Sharadchandra Muktibodh vehemently articulates in one of the essays that a sort of revelation against anguish of being marginalized in every walk of life clubbed with exploitation and segregation come down as Dalit consciousness. It is not a literature of caste but of a Consciousness. He, takes his observation further and come up with his views on Dalit Consciousness and states:

> The nature of Dalit Consciousness is obviously not subjective. It is true that pains and pleasures are lived and experienced by individuals alone but the sufferings of Dalits are common reasons. Hence, there content is essentially social. (Muktibodh, 1994, p.267)

However, there are many opinions regarding the first use of term 'Dalit' in different perspectives. Some critics are of the view that Dr. Ambedkarwas the first one to use this term, however, others say that it was the proponentand follower of Arya Samaj, Swami Sharaddhanand, bring this term into play.In either way, first time used in 1930s to denote the depressed classes later labeled as scheduled castes, the term became widely popular in the 1970s. In fact the very first instance of the representation of the Dalits on various platforms could be retrieved from the first manifesto of Indian Progressive Writers' Association in 1936. This bunch of writers called on all Indian writers to provide ample space and contents to the issues of socially discriminated people as well load their works with the scientific rationalism literature at that point of time. It further stated that:

> While claiming to be the inheritors of the best traditions of Indian civilization, we shall criticize ruthlessly all its political and cultural aspects, the spirit of reaction in our country and we shall foster through interpretative and creative work (with both Indian and foreign resources) everything that will lead our country to the new life for which it is striving. We believe that the new literature of India must deal with the basic problems of hunger and poverty, social backwardness and political subjection. All that drags us down to passivity, inaction and unreason, we reject as reactionary. (Manifesto, Progressive Writers Association, 1935).

However, the issues relating to Dalits and other oppressed communities remained on the periphery of their works because this group of writers were of the views that if these issues had dealt with on the basis of caste and class in radical waysthat would have ended up in dismantling the social harmony of Indian society. With a view to dig deep into the matters relating to Dalits, in 1924, Dr. B. R.Ambedkar founded the 'BahishkritHitkarmiSabha' to promote the cause of Dalits. Notwithstanding, the colonial government brought out some relief by implementing the Government of India Act, 1935 for upliftmentof socially and historically suffering people of India. Apart from playing up for their welfare, one of the most striking feature of this Act was that it properly worked out to identify the untouchables under the rubric of Depressed Class or the Schedule Castes or Scheduled Tribes. Along the similar lines, many other laws were brought into force in the postcolonial age to proclaim equality and justice but what transpired was next to nothing. Therefore, a large body of Dalit writers came forward and they dedicated themselves to raise Dalit consciousness to revive through their writings. They revived the spirit of Dalits and nowadays the term Dalit is used with pride and spirit of self-assertion and its movement denotes a unified class

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movement towards equality. However, there exists many barriers which are to be crossed over on order to achieve complete equality. Dr. S.K Paul asserts:

> Caste based society is immobile. If a chamar gets higher official position in the society, he will be still known as chamar in this society. He cannot fully adopt Brahimin's way of life. He can pretend to be Brahimin only. He cannot perform spiritual functions. The majority will never regard him as aBrahimin even if he does (Paul, 2012, p.17).

Digging deep the Dalit literature, one could easily get that this branch of literature owes to a serious observation of issues concerning with Dalits in India in terms of poverty, strength and weakness. Dalit writings are more than often fraught with suppressed people protests andspell out the common consciousness. Therefore, this paper attempts to focus on the Dalit consciousness brought about by the Dalit literature in India after independence. The status of Dalit people in India and the struggles they overcome to make themselves equal to other communities were pointed out. A long spell of period of denying basic rights to Dalits sparked Dalit consciousness and they determined to go against the system working in favor of upper caste people only.Glifford Bob rightly criticizes the unfair distribution of powers:

> In rural India, where the bulk of India's population continues to live, Dalits are excluded from village wells, temples, and teashops, forced to subordinate themselves before upper caste neighbors, discriminated against in land and housing allocation, and prevented from participating in local government institutions. Throughout India, Dalits continue to occupy the lowest rungs of the economic system, often living in dire poverty. (Bob, 1992, p. 9).

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Apparently, Dalit writings are the assorted views and perspectives that Dalit writers want to get across to the people who are set in their ways to lay down their own laws to exclude a major part of destitute and distressed community. Social exclusion of such castes may be understood in these terms:

> The social exclusion is the inability of an individual to participate in the basic political, economic, and social functioning of the society," and adds that it is "the denial of equal access to opportunities imposed by certain groups of society upon others" (Buvinic, 2005, p.5).

Therefore, without any exception, Dalit writers set on with their effort to shape up the society where no such exclusion on the basis of caste or class exits. In other words, it could be put down to Dalit writings because Dalit literature aims at generating new possibilities of representation in different modes of language. Simultaneously, various trends, emerging out of it, have been giving rise to social and political consciousness as well. At the outset, the distinction needs to be made that the emergence of Dalit literature as a literary phenomenon was more of social need to awakening Dalit consciousness than an aesthetic experimentation. However, in terms of Dalit aesthetics, Dalit literature sprouts out in many other forms, such as the literature largely taking into its periphery remonstration, antagonism, oddness, and confrontation simultaneously. Hemalatha accesses the central idea of Dalit literature in for expansion of collective consciousness:

> Dalit literature is a protest against all forms of exploitation based on class, race, caste or occupation. The dalit poets of Maharashtra, Gujrat and Andhra have drawn freely on regional forms, rural dialects and tribal languages. Thus giving their poetry an intensely native idiom. Since dalit literature is closely associated with the hopes for

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> freedom of a group of people, it is marked by revolt and negativism of untouchables who are victims of social, economic and cultural inequality. They rejected all role models, traditional literature, Eastern and Western critical theories and decided to create a literature of their own, an identity of their own. (Hemalatha, 2010, p. 29).

Therefore, Dalit literature could mean differently in metaphorical sense to a Dalit writer and a writer from mainstream literature. Any Dalit writer would emphasizethat Dalit writings should not be adjudicated merely resting on the traditional concept of aesthetics. To put it in other words, Dalit writers produce their works by reading between the lines and they demand literary maturity on the part of readers to study and take in their work.Limbale has rightly spelled it out in that context:

> The traditional theory of beauty seems abstruse and spiritualistic as it implies that the beauty of an artistic creation lies in its expression of world consciousness or otherworldliness. Dalit literature, void of abstraction and spiritualism, rejects this theory and demands for the materialist aesthetics which proposes that 'the beauty of a work of art is its rendering of reality (Limbale, 2004, p. 116).

As for now, this is apparent that Dalit literature is primarily intended for Dalits. The term Dalit further gained currency when Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the idol of scheduled castes in India, and his associates employed this expression to signify the Scheduled Castes. In the following decades, the term became more popular after the formation of the Dalit Panthers in 1972 because this organization became a mouthpiece for Dalit people and writers who were wrestling with social barricades to get their point across.GangadharPantawane, the founder of *the Asmitadarsh*unambiguously expressed his views on the term Dalit:

> To me Dalit is not a caste. He is a man exploited by the socialand economic traditions of this country. He does not believe inGod, rebirth, soul. Holy books teaching separatism, fate andheaven because they have made him a slave. He does believe inhumanism. Dalit is a symbol of change and revolution. (Zelliot, 1978, p.77).

It is quite obvious that assorted themes of creative literature come from the society and, therefore, when political leaders, social reformers and religious preachers undertook to voice the concerns of Dalits, they were instantly taken in by those who were well-read and fairly literate. Many of them sought to express in their works the evils of untouchability and caste discrimination. Therefore, Dalit writings by and large were taken by storm because Literature to them became a medium of expressing pain and more than that a way of resisting the existing oppression throughout history. This is what makes Arjun Dangle to come up with such comments that “The creation of Dalit literature is inevitable until the structure of society changes as long as exploitation exists.” (Dangle, 1992, p.266).

It goes without saying that the basis of the literature opposing the caste system and supporting the cause of Dalits was the role of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who fought for their entry into temples and participation in such public festivals as the worship of Ganapati. Besides editing MūkNāyak (1920) he also began to run BahiskrtHitkariniSabha and did a lot for the betterment and upliftment of Dalits. His efforts and those of Periyar E. V. RamaswamiNaicker (the person who launched the Self Respect Movement for Dalits) inspired men of letters to write in favor of the downtrodden. Periyar’s violent attack on Hindu gods and their scriptures became the expressions of suppressed anger and pain that had

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remained latent in theminds and hearts of Dalits for centuries. Their impact inspiredmany writers to churn out the literature that could raise consciousness against theprejudices the lower castes have been putting up with for long period of time. Some of these writers even downplayed the idea of caste speaking out that “Caste is not physical monster. It is more of a psychologicalphenomenon. Every Indian is imbibed with belief in fate andimplanted with caste consciousness.” (Bheemaiah, 2001, p. 454)

As this movement of literary assertion by Dalits grew stronger, the unseen side of India — the side that is brutal and inhumane — became visible to the world. Maharashtra was at the forefront of this revolution that has, over the last six decades, helped transform the worldview about Dalit lives. Almost all of the writers who shaped the early theoretical discourse of Dalit literature were from Maharashtra. Late start of literary activity kept the Dalit voice submerged and its consciousness in the background even till 1960s. But the Marxist ideology influenced the work of the next two decades. The writers of this period represented the Dalit as a worker and his oppression as the oppression of the working class but the situation changed later. The real Dalit literature rejected the romanticized and sentimentalized aspects of life and based itself on reality by preferring what was autobiographical. It gave the literature of Dalits an authenticity and affirmation. For instance, Sivakami, a Dalit woman novelist, published a novel which advocated the empowerment of Dalits and her vision to control intra-Dalit strife and ensure social justice to men. She also raised her voice against ill-treatment to women by their own husbands. Thus, she paved the way in times to come for a sustained critique of domestic violence and abuse of Dalit women at home by Dalit men, apart from sexual and occupational harassment faced by Dalit women outside their homes at the hands of upper caste men and the police. Her second novel sought to draw attention to the oppression of the feminine body inside and outside homes and opposed vehemently the violent containment and repression of their sexuality. Hence, other works entailing similar message emerged and attempted to transform the Dalit literature in terms of shape, size and form. Limbale in his outstanding work suggests so far as the rebellious nature of Dalit literature is concerned:

> Rejection and revolt in Dalit literature have been birthed from the wombof Dalits pain. They are directed against an inhuman system thatwas imposed on them. Just as the anguish expressed in Dalitliterature is in the nature of collective social voice, similarly,the rejection and revolt are social and collective.The Dalitconsciousness in Dalit literature is the revolutionary mentalityconnected with struggle. It is a belief in rebellion against thecaste system, recognizing the human being as its focus. Dalitconsciousness is an important seed for Dalit literature; it isseparate and distinct from the consciousness of other writers.Dalit literature is demarcated as unique because of thisconsciousness. (Limbale, 2004, p. 31-32).

Equipped with the pursuit of abrogating untouchability and discrimination, Ambedkar studied Hindu scriptures and questioned their wisdom and veracity. He never considered Rama and Krishna as Indian gods and believed that Hindu 'Varnavayastha' (caste system) had snatched the dignity of the Non-Brahmins. He used to lash out at the Hindu Law book in rigorous words. He believed that it was Hindu scriptures that kept on spilling over the rubbish that to be born as Dalit could be assigned to karmas of previous incarnation. Indraalso voices the similar point of views:

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> Although today they are fightingfor the restoration of their dignity as human beings, some peoplebelonging to such unprivileged strata have historically believedthat it is because of the karma in their previous births that theyhave been born so. For centuries, they have been denied entryinto the temple to have darshan of the deity. (Indra, 2003, p. xvi).

Ambedkar formed the Indian Labour Party and later Republican Party of India. For DalitsAmbedkar is everything, like the Moses for them, who led his people out of bondage and ignorance onto the right path and like a Bodhisattva in the pantheon of Buddhism. Ambedkar started participating in politics after World War 1, when Russian revolution was on its peak. It was a great age of social and political upheaval and increasing hegemony of the Marxist's socialism in liberation movements. Ambedkar led the liberation movement for the Dalits and rejected the ideological hegemony of non-Dalit socialists. It may be quoted here on Ambedkar's movement:

> Ambedkar's movement was the most important one that did not stress such an adi identity, yet the theme was still a strong one among Mahars. Ambedkar himself, in initiating the later conversion to Buddhism was in a way doing the same thing-rejecting Hinduism and attempting a return to an 'original' and equalitarian Indian religion. Along with this went a strong secular and rationalist stress on equality, the necessity of modern education, the rejection of traditional superstition and traditional ritual subordination. (Patankar, B. &Omvedt, G. 2004, p.16).

Gail Omvedt advocates that Dalit mobilization in India should be studied from a multi-dimensional perspective. She advocates that every movement is having initiation stage- consolidation stage-crystallization stage-maturity stage and disintegration stage. Multiple factors involving economic discrimination lack of social dignity, cultural isolation and alienation from decision-making process were responsible for initiation of Dalit mobilization prior to India's independence. The emergence of Republican Justice Party coincided with the emergence of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who held that Dalits needed an Amdedkar than a Gandhi for their liberation. This assumption gave rise to the consolidation of Dalit movement in India. It got crystallized when Constitution of India was designed to safeguard the interest of the Dalits in different facets of social life. But the domination of non-Dalit parties in Central and state politics weakened Dalit mobilization from 1960s to 1980s leaving marginalized sections more vulnerable. The growth of Dalit party is consolidation in different parts of the country sufficiently speaks about the maturity of Dalit mobilization in India. She equates Dalit mobilization with class mobilization advocating that Dalits were identified with depressed class identity because they did not have an effective participation in the productive processes of the nation-state. Even after the introduction of reservation policy the representation of Dalits in Class I positions of administration and government remained low as against their population. That clearly indicates that emergent Dalit consciousness is trying to have an effective say in different important platforms of social life into which their participation was historically denied.

The birth of Dalit movement in a way is the birth of awareness among Dalits, which could be termed as'Dalit Consciousness'. Dalit consciousness is a mental state of people that always believes in throwing away the rules of exploitation and marginalization. It may be in the sense of economic inequality, social inequality,

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or cultural inequality in the society. Dalit consciousness does not accept someone as superior than others. It does not believe in the rule concept of all in all but for all, by all and of all. Educated Dalits and intellectuals talk about the problems of poor and about exploitation and humiliations from the upper castes without any hesitation. Educated Dalits try to explain to the other illiterate brothers about the required reformation in the society. Dalit Movement has given rise to the birth of many writers and journalists and a lot of awareness. A Dalit thinker and activist AnandTeltumde adds:

> The Dalits in India struggled for human rights. Self-assertion, self-respect and Dalit empowerment are the major themes of the movement and it imparted the proletarian radical class identity to Dalits and also linked their struggle of all oppressed people over the globe. (Teltumde, 1997, p.16).

Many writers and journalists through their writing inspired Dalit mass to stand up to their oppression. Needless to say, the ardent readers devoted themselves to their writings and got carried away by growth of social consciousness among them. These writers and journalists are inspired by the consciousness of the Dalit community. Due to this new consciousness about the ideas of Ambedkar a new group of thinkers emerged among Dalit community. Thousands of students, lawyers, peasants, workers, officers, writers, and people of all occupations joined the Dalit movement to fight against the age old caste compulsion put on them. The leaders of the Dalit movement argued that our political leaders who were elected from reserved constituencies were unable to avoid the political marginalization of Dalits.

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Social protest as a form of constructing Dalit collective consciousness embodies other factors like education, exposure to multicultural and economic paradigms, and patterns of life as antecedent forces. Therefore the prime objective of his struggle for the deprived castes was to set Dalit free from the shackles of untouchability and to bring social equality and a sense of dignity among all. And the role of education in this as a major tool could not be questioned. JyotibaPhule, another activist and social reformerwas confident enough in his thoughts regarding the role of education in his struggle. He further believed that the idea of socio-economic upliftment and social equality could be materialized only through providing education for the downtrodden. Jaffrelot goes on saying:

> Phule believed that the lower castes, in order to advance, had to be the beneficiaries of an education comparable to that provided by the missionaries- who took particular care to attract Untouchables to their schools. Hence in 1853, he established a school that was intended above all to educate Mahars andMangs. Meanwhile, Phule poured out a torrent of documents and pamphlets about education in which he relentlessly depicted Brahmins as the oppressor, whether as greedy money-lenders or priests keen to exploit the ignorance and superstition of the most deprived sections of society (Jaffrelot, 2004, p.6).

During the subsequent years he brought out with his work entitled *Gulamgiri* (The Slavery). His inquisitive intellect always kept him abreast with the latest developments about the expansion of consciousness in the African American literature through writings of Black writers. He got carried away with virulent wave slave narratives which further sparked within him a strong sense to cast off all sorts of social and caste based discrimination. On the other hand, the

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proponents of Dalit movement functioned in assorted ways, making their own strategies, ideologies, approaches according to needs and requirements of the situation. In other words, it might be asserted that by and large, the strategy to spread consciousness kept on changing as and when different leaders perceived it in terms of place and time. That is why, Dalit consciousness manifested in the various forms. Some Dalit activists weighed up the significance of education and followed the process of growth and expansion of education among Dalit people. Education, as Dr.Ambedkar perceived of it, could serve to a large extent in abolishing untouchability and raising social and financial status of Dalits. He believed that if Dalits got education, they would give up their menial and odd jobs like leather tanning, cleansing of latrines and serving upper castes in various other similar profession. If they become literate they would get more opportunities to serve in respectable jobs. So, this approach would be serving at two levels. Not only it raises the literary rate in Dalits but also helps them raise their life-style with more income and more opportunities to enter into mainstream social order. Therefore, the practical aspect of education and life-style change has been to subside the more obvious reasons for anti-Dalit prejudice existing in the society. Ambdekar knew that the same social strategy was also implemented by Christian Missions over a century back.

Many other issues are worth to be judged which further churned over with emergence of Dalit consciousness in all aspects in society, the field of literature also witnessed a surge of awakening in the mindset of people. If Dalit movement and Dalit literature are to be extrapolated with a reasonable approach, one would get at conclusion that these two elements are not two different things, rather latter comes off as an evitable part of the former. As has been discussed, it also contributed in the field of Indian literature including the major writings in Indian languages like Kannada, Telugu, Marathi, Guajarati and Hindi. The term 'Dalit literature', which was first used in 1958 at the Dalit conference held in Bombay is like an identity marker for the marginalized community and it came into prominence in 1972, when a group of young Marathi writers-activists founded an organization called 'Dalit Panthers' and earned reputation and attestation in the life span of Dr. Ambedkar. The name expressed their intellectual relationship and solidarity with Black Panthers who were engaged in a literary struggle for African-American rights in the American. It emerged out of friction in religion, political, economic and social fields. That is why, Arundhati Roy asserts her views on the veracity of Dalit literature that led Dalits to play out to the voice of their consciousness:

> I do believe that in India we practice a form of apartheid that goes unnoticed by the rest of the world. And it is as important for Dalits to tell their stories as it has been for colonized peoples to write their own histories. When Dalit literature has blossomed andis in full stride, then contemporary (upper caste?) Indian literature's amazing ability to ignore the true brutality and ugliness of the society in which we live, will be seen for what it is: bad literature. It will become irrelevant. (Modern Dalit Literature, 2021).

Dangle, a Marathi Dalit writer and the thinker believed that the Dalit literature is not a literature of a particular caste or a literature of revenge. It does not spread hatred but it is associated with Dalit movement to bring about change and reformation. But what does Dalit literature mean? Is it a literature written by

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Dalits on their own lives or it includes the literature written by non-Dalits on Dalits. However, Mulk Raj Anand stood up for Dalit mass and he uttered in apparently conspicuous terms in one of his interviews to A. Anand:

> I hold that non-Dalit writers emerge as self-styled autocrats passing adverse judgments on Dalit life, or that they use Dalits as toys to tickle a few strange nerves of their regular readers. Else they like to play the role of saviors, though in reality they are not. (Anand, M. 2003, p. 25).

These thoughtful ideas of Anand gives rise to another logical and rational discussion. But it is very difficult to draw a boundary line in between these two claims. Dalit literature refers to the writings of Dalits on marginalization. As Sharankumar Timbale clearly spells out the definition and function of Dalit literature thus:

> By Dalit literature, I mean writing about Dalits by Dalit writers with a Dalit consciousness. The form of Dalit literature is inherent in its Dalitness, and its purpose is obvious; to inform Dalit society of its slavery, and narrate its pain and suffering to upper caste Hindus. (Jayaprada, 2009, p.81).

Dalit writers argued that the experience and the humiliation undergone by Dalits cannot be imagined or explained by non-Dalit writers. Those who wrote in the capacity of non- Dalit writers could not achieve the same rank because they failed to fathom the severity and magnitude of complexities being faced up by Dalits. Apart from that, those writers represent themselves moderately rebellious because they did not suffer untouchability. Nevertheless, they expressed their anger against the injustice of the society their ideas were more concerned with economic inequality. But the prime concern of Dalit writers is related with social injustice.

> A Dalit writer is the one who writes with the experience of his community, the pain of his past burden in his bones, who subverts mainstream cultural history, revitalizes the denigrated spheres of language and creates an alternate vision of future. Inspired by Ambedkar's philosophy, he seeks to raise the consciousness of the Dalits, by recovering their self-respect and challenging the traditional Hindu Value and institutional structures. The traditional aesthetics invested with the concepts of pleasure and beauty are found expressly inadequate to judge Dalit literature. (Jayaprada, 2009, p. 84).

Finally, as the corpus of Dalit literature came into its full blooming, Dalit writers loaded their writings with strong rebellious tone and gave a tough challenge to the dominant forces. They went down to a great length by offering their readers a new perspective that further raised the growth of consciousness among Dalits. Scores of such writers like: Baburao Bagul, NamdeoDhashal, Laxman Mane, OmprakashValmiki, NarendraJadhav, SharankumarLimbale, Arjun Dangle, Bama, Joseph Macwan, DayaPawar, DattaBhakat, and AnnabauSatheexpressed the realities of torturous world of Dalit in a communicable language. This must be worth mentioning here that the mainstream literature came out in 1992 with a phenomenal publication of translated version of Arjun Dangle's *Poisoned Bread'*, an anthology consisting Dalit writings. Meanwhile, down the years, a whole lot of Dalit writers emerged year after year to contribute to enlighten Dalit consciousness with their stories, poetries, prose, dramas in regional as well as English language. Taking these writers' contribution in evoking Dalit

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consciousness as a whole,M.N. Wankhedeattempts to define the relevance of Dalit Literature in the growth of Dalit consciousness as below:

> Dalit Literature considers man as its nucleus. It becomes one with the joys and the sorrows of human life and takes it forward to "Samyak" i.e. total revolution. It preaches a group of human beings that forms society, equality. It considers man noble. Dalit Literature has spread love and not enmity among human beings. (Wankhede, 1976, p.76).

While summing up the ongoing discussion, it would be apparently fair to state that Dalit literature has brought off its objectives though at slow pace. It has served its purpose and lived up to the expectations of not only of Dalit writers but also entire Dalit mass. The vast body of Dalit literature has its deep roots in the truthfulness of experiences. There are scores of attributes which are competently displaying Dalit consciousness collectively. In the Centre of these writings, represented through the platform of Dalit literature, there lies infallible focus on value and worth of human lives who are relegated to live as second class citizens. However, it must be added that this consciousness arises from thought and ideology of Dr. Ambedkar along with many other writers, activists and reformers who, in some ways, contributed to limitless growth of Dalit consciousness. Arjun Dangle revolutionary remarks might be taken to end the wrap up the discussion:

> Today we see a root -to —crown change. Crows-jackals-dog-vultures-kites
> Are our closest friends.
> The Upper Lane doors are closed to us.
> "Shout victory" to the Revolution "Shout victory"
> "Burn, burn those who strike at tradition." (Dangle, 1992, p.44)

Therefore, relentless efforts of such intellectuals add new dimensions and Dalit literature, of course, now has attained a reputable status and it is no longer a literature expressing voices of protest but also reconstructing the past. For that matter, the long strides of Dalit consciousness have now overstepped the national boundaries because many other groups and communities who are being discriminated across the world are now in its focus. Dalit consciousness dares to question the space for Dalits allotted and determined by upper caste people. There are numerous laws and acts that are made to protect the Dalit people in India. There are various acts that propose equality to all the people in India. Education, jobs, dressing, food and habitat have become common to every people in India excluding some rural areas in India. There are still some practices in some rural areas that threaten the peace of Dalit people. There are reservation quotas for Dalit peoples in all the aspects like education and job opportunities. This long series of reformations may be come down to the growing Dalit consciousness. On the whole, Dalit literature could be acknowledged as a major source of Dalit consciousness because it aims at narrating the experience of entire community. It is the same consciousness that makes Dalit people put a challenge to the contemporary society about their identity and freedom. Having got itself established as a legitimate branch of mainstream literature in the mid20th century, it is a constellations of scores of writers who are dedicated to fling themselves in the writings to express their bottled up experiences through numerous journals, books, pamphlets and other platforms.

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