



DALIT LITERATURE: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION



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ABSTRACT

In India everybody is equal in front of the constitution. This liberty and impartiality are a gift of doctor Babasaheb Ambedkar. As the maker of the constitution of India, he tried to give liberty and equal opportunity to Dalits. He rejected the notion that God has made caste system as described in Manu smriti and other ancient Indian Vedic books. Dalits have suffered from centuries that's why they were not satisfied with equality in terms of political and economic but the demand for religious and creative activity was the main reason that they created a literature of their own.

Keywords Constitution, Babasaheb Ambedkar, Manu smriti, impartiality, liberty

INTRODUCTION

Hunger

Which came first, seed or tree?

Hunger you make things too difficult

Hunger just tell us what breed this monkey is

And if you can't

Then we will screw

Seventeen generations of you

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Hunger, you and your mother...¹

From ancient times Upper caste people are in a process to suppress Dalit. This is done by them by depriving Dalits from basic necessities such as food, clothes and shelter. They not only suppress them physically but also try to crush their soul. This tyranny has continued for centuries but now the situation has changed. After receiving such oppression from centuries now the Dalit starts to protest the upper-class people. Now, they are in search of their identity. Their oppressed feelings are shown in Dalit poetry.

In India everybody is equal in front of the constitution. This liberty and impartiality is a precious and most cherished gift of doctor Babasaheb Ambedkar. As the maker of the constitution of India, he tried to give liberty and equal opportunity to Dalits. He rejected the notion that God has made caste system as described in Manu smriti and other ancient Indian Vedic books. Dalits have suffered from centuries that's why they were not satisfied with equality in terms of political and economic but the demand for religious and creative activity was the main reason that they created a literature of their own.

Baburao Bagal says:

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 an historic necessity.

We can find the origin of the Dalit literature from ancient times. Buddha, Chokhamela, Mahatma Phule etc talk about the flight and predicament of oppressed class in their works. But the modern pioneer of the Dalit literature is no doubt, Doctor Ambedkar. In Maharashtra the Dalit literary movement found its roots. This literary movement is a movement of self-respect, impartiality, freedom, and rights of the Dalits.

The origin of term Dalit can be found in Rigveda. In Rigveda the caste was divided as Brahman, Kshatriya, Vashya and Shudras. In doing this the basis of work was taken as a consideration but this caste system is also based on birth. After sometime this system got imbibed in religious beliefs and this made Shudras an outcast.

Arjun Dangle writes:

Dalit is not simply; it is associated with a movement to bring about change. It represents the hopes and ambitions of a new society and new people.³



Every civil society think that man is born free, and everybody has human rights. every human struggle for his existence but sometimes might be comes right
Gangadhar Pantwane defines the term Dalit as:

*To me, Dalit is not a caste
He is a man exploited by
the social and economic
traditions of this country.
He does not believe in God,
Rebirth, soul, Holy books teaching
separatism, Fate and Heaven
because they have made him
a slave. He does believe in
humanism. Dalit is a symbol
of change and revolution ⁴*

Dalit literature never get its identity as a mainstream literature. It is a literature of revolt. It challenges mainstream literature and asks for equality, freedom, and human birth rights. In India mainstream literature never shows common man's suffering so Dalit literature strongly rejects such literature, and it presents the harsh reality of life and shows us a promise land in which the problems of untouchability and casteism will no more. The main theme of Dalit literature is to show candid reality of untouchability, the exploitation of Dalits by upper class. Dalit literature always shows a real depiction of the downtrodden people, and it writes to uproot the evil present in minds of upper-class people. It challenges the evil prevalent in society and advocates equality freedom and wellbeing of Dalit.

Arjun Dangle writes :

The creation of Dalit Literature is inevitable until the structure of society changes and as long as exploitation exists.

Dalit literature tries to challenge the culture and aware the people about the injustice done to them. It realistically depicts the harsh and candid social life in native language based on realistic experience. In presenting the harsh realities change music nuisance and myths. They reject western and Indian theories.

Dr. C. B. Bharati writes:



The aim of Dalit Literature is to protest against the established system which is based on injustice and to expose the evil and hypocrisy of the higher castes. There is an urgent need to create a separate aesthetics for Dalit literature, an aesthetics based on the real experiences of life⁶

Dalit literature movement progressively bring changes in society. It is an outcry for constant struggle for survival and a struggle to search a person's own identity.

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