

A Thematic Analysis on Dalit Women Writers and Their Remarkable Contribution for a Social Change Through Literature

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Abstract

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, literature is a category of artistic work that mostly consists of plays, poetry, and novels. There are several literary genres, including poetry, fiction, short stories, and theatre, but among all of them, drama is the most important one when it comes to connecting people's performances. In this context, the Dalit literature's origins are revealed to be a revolution and a struggle to bring about socioeconomic change together with the ontology-based establishment of a Dalit identity in society. It elaborates on various facets of the true meaning of Dalit literature. Therefore, the Dalit literature works to dismantle the conventional, reactionary, and conservative attitude associated with the downtrodden sector, i. e. Dalits of India. There are many different and distinctive philosophies that emphasise women's dominance, their marginalisation, and their drive for freedom because of the "dissimilarity" in their communal, political, and educational contexts. Though feminism has gained recognition as an ideology with global significance, the vitality of various feminist groups is handled in various social & enriching contexts in a variety of ways. The present article is an overview of Dalit literature and how far the female Dalit authors' contribution to literature paved way for modification of current trends.

Keywords: *Dalit Identity, Dalit Women Writings, Conventionalism and Conservatism, Communalism, Feminism and Social Issues.*

Generally, Untouchable people in India have adopted the term "Dalit" to identify and describe themselves. As with Adivasis, landless homestead workers, labourers, the enduring masses, migrant and criminal clans, and ladies, "Dalit" encompasses the defenceless segment of Indian society that lives at the outside of the town. It is material to everyone who is lagging behind socially and financially in the nation's formative process, not just the untouchables. Different researchers have different interpretations of the term "Dalit." There will be an ongoing discussion on potential Dalit authors as part of the fictional analysis process.

Even the most progressive and ground breaking writers, including Prem Chand, Mulk Raj Anand, T. S. Pillai, V. S. Khandekar, and some other people who were supposed to symbolise the Dalit energies, are undoubtedly underappreciated. According to Dalit authors, only a Dalit by genetics may possess the power and

expertise necessary to be considered a true Dalit musician. Their writings are the literature that gives them life; as a result, opinions and ideas have become jumbled over many centuries. The battle for social transformation served as the inspiration for Dalit writing. After colonisation, during the postmodernist era of the 20th century, a democratic movement rose up that aimed to create a fair society in which people would be treated equally regardless of their caste, colour, or nation. The underprivileged, downtrodden, and indigenous segments of society were motivated by the desire for equality and human rights. India wasn't far behind and the humanist movement also had an impact there. In opposition to the traditional and stigmatised societal mindset and culture, social reform movements have accelerated.

The caste system, which has been the primary cause of societal oppression and injustice to the Dalit people for decades, was challenged by the revolution. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Jyotiba Phule were among the leaders who spoke out against prejudice and repression. Dalit literature developed into a fruitful tool for expressing their opinions. Dalit literature was originally written in the Marathi language, but from the 1960s, various other languages, including Gujarati, gained popularity. Following the Gujarat anti-reservation agitation, it gained considerable prominence in the 1980s. Gujarati Dalit literature is currently a well-established genre. This kind of writing incorporates unique ideals, forms, styles, and aesthetics due to its primary goal of voicing Dalit issues and frustrations.

The primary medium, regional or vernacular languages, captures the very essence of the social environment at the grassroots level. Contrarily, despite being published in regional languages, the primary aim of Dalit literature is to let everyone understand their plight, their aspirations, and situations all over the world. Even, translation significantly contributes to this in many ways. The world is introduced to Dalit literature through a competent and accurate translation. Their problems can be heard by millions of people around the globe. English's status as a universal language makes it a key component in achieving this goal. An English translation of Dalit literature not only expands its readership but also adds to the canon of popular literature.

Due to collaboration and the growth of movements like the US Black Panthers and the Indian Naxalite movement, Maharashtra was the birthplace of Dalit writing. In addition, the anti-Vietnam War movement and the Leftist upheavals played a significant role. The Black Panthers movement also had an impact on the Dalit Panthers. In this situation, some little magazines served as a platform to open up a previously untapped market for aspiring Dalit authors. Baburao Bagul, Namdeo Dhasal, Sharan Kumar Limbale, Yashwant Manohar, Arjun Dangle, Daya Pawar, and Shankarrao Karat were a few notable individuals who were active during the time. Such uprisings greatly encouraged Indian Dalit writers, who became the "voice of the people."

Beyond this list, there are some writers who are Dalit women who were also active participants in the development started writing and experimenting with various structures. The suppressed conditions of hundreds of years was released in sonnets, short stories, and memoir collections. In Maharashtra, the writing presented by women was known as "Sri Dalit Sahitya." Journalists including Baby Kamble, Kumud Pawde, Urmila Pawar, and Sumitra Bhavare wrote about or depicted their experiences as a result. Also, Bengali writers Manju Bala and Kalyani Thakur Charal contributed to Dalit literature.

During that period, some women have become prominent artists in various parts of India, particularly the southern region. These artists include activists Ruth Manorama and Swathy Margaret, as well as scholars Bama, Sivakami, Sukirtharani, and Meena Kandasamy (all four from Tamil Nadu), Gogu Syamala, Challapalli Swaroopa Rani (from Andhra Pradesh), and Du Saraswathi (from Karnataka). Additionally, there has been a surge in the creation of abstract journals that support Dalit compositions like Hans. There has been an increase in Dalit composition interpretations during the last couple of years. These include analyses of specific works by Dalit scholars, as well as Treasuries with a variety of authors and types. More recent copies of one of the earlier interpretations from *Marathi Poisoned Bread* (1994) have been published.

A few clear examples include the compilations *Writing Caste/Writing Gender* (2006), *No Alphabet in Sight* (2011), *An Anthology of Gujarati Dalit Literature* (2011), *Oxford India Anthology of Malayalam Dalit Writing* (2012), and *Steel Nibs are Growing* (2013). Another emerging area in English-language literature is the treatment of Dalit characters' conditions. One of the major projects involves *A Fine Balance* by Rohinton Mistry (1995). Other works include *Serious Men* by Manu Joseph and *Hitchhiker* (2005) by Vinod George Joseph (2010). It should be noted that, with the exception of a few essayists like Meena Kandasamy and writers like Sivakami, who have deciphered their own original works, the majority of journalists trying to describe the experiences of them.

There has been an uncharacteristically prolonged period of Dalit abstract, social, and political articulations over the past two decades. This has simultaneously encouraged greater accessibility to such literature, a fascination with the different tools. Dalit society has developed for expression, and a crucial input from society to the government, journalists, experts, activists, and parliamentarians. It is important to point out that the term "Dalit" is a conversation that is just now beginning to take shape. The specific pressures of the author, essayist, or legislator are conveyed in each story, work, and political discussion while also creating a shared social space for Dalits.

The possibility of the Dalit is handled on the shared understanding of forbiddance and suffering, as well as on the norms of populist change. It must be understood through the given variances in vernacular, locale, sub-standings, and class. Therefore, every articulation conveys the Dalit voice, and doing so while keeping this in mind also makes this Dalit voice's strategy. Therefore, the Dalit style must structure itself within this dynamism. Its conception is capable of verbalising experience, understanding moral position, and expressing future. The ideal ways to address the genuine comprehension of Dalits are the main focus of the Dalit literature.

By flame-broiling the edges, a portion of the recent work on continuous events has had the capacity to examine the position class influences. Another key characteristic of Dalit literature is that it isn't initially and fundamentally an exercise in abstraction. They are comparative social wonders that go beyond academic events to represent socio-social interaction as an abstract act of execution.

Since Dalit scholars don't use writing in the same way as a constructive tool (making the emancipatory conversation about the Dalit more effective), subjectivity in these personal histories is hindered by the crucial relationship between the individual self and the open self. The writing of Dalits has dynamism. In addition to

conveying the heinous brutalities of the past and the deceptive brutality of the present, Dalit short stories give the embodiment of the current experience of a type of Untouchability. They explain the moral principles, such as greatness, reliability, honesty, and value, and they explore and unearth the process by which Dalits are transformed into fully developed creative humans.

The primary goal and message of Dalit literature, which aims to liberate people from oppression, demonstrates that it is only capable of addressing a small number of real ambiguities and uncertainties while also meeting a more pressing need to impart the most modern libertarian faction, solidarity, and character to a larger and more comprehensive society. This need has been exposed by Dalit writers over the course of their necessary self-improvement. Over the course of their self-recovery, the Dalit creator similarly discovered a unified and incredibly ordinary stream of thought, code of morals, and consecrated image structure with which significant ideological linkage could be made without obfuscating their recorded truth.

This brings their entire effort's epistemological foundation and strong predominance to light. Maharashtra was the birthplace of Dalit writing, which later expanded to other states like Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and others. The term "Dalit" comes from a Sanskrit word that means "pounded" and is cognate to all Sanskrit-derived Indian languages. The term "Dalit" is more frequently used than "untouchable." There are a few phrases that have been used for a while to describe the general populace of a distant society, such as "Ati-Shudra," "Outside Castes," "Outcasts," "Depressed Classes," "Scheduled Castes," "Ex Untouchables," etc.

Untouchables saw that such phrases, which are damaging and akin to stigmatisation, dominance, and paternalism, were created by upper class Hindus, specialists, and social reformers. Due to this, the general public who identify with this class must identify as "Dalits" despite the distinctive rejection of sully, Karma, and supported caste order noted by Eleanor Zelliot. An ancient Marathi word called "Dalit" that means "ground, broken, or crushed to bits" may be found in Molesworth's Marathi English Dictionary from 1975.

Dalit workers do similar things and toss out common literature. Traditional feeling primarily considers the Satya (fact), Shivam (goodness), and Sundaram (superiority) qualities of literature, which need to be reversed. Despite what would be expected, Dalit work entails dependence on the real world and movement within it. Humans are more equipped to do this than God or a country.

Dalit works reject contemporary ideas like Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction theory, Roland Barthe's structuralism, and Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, and it even rejects Indian conjectures like rasa and Dhawani. C. B. Bharti discusses Dalit style in his work, *"The Feel of Dalit Literature."* The goal of Dalit labour, according to him, is to criticise the established system that depends on unfairness and to expose the wickedness and insincerity of the upper classes. There is a pressing need to create a distinctive aesthetic for Dalit poetry, one that is based on real-world experience. The issues affecting upper-caste and upper-middle class women worried the feminist movement in India almost from the outset. They were regarded as "female's evidence" since they occurred. Gopal Guru asked Brahminical Feminism's hegemonic urge to speak for "Indian Female" in his piece *"Dalit female Talk in a different way."* In conventional feminist discourse, the problems of Dalit women were either not addressed or just given a symbolic voice. This little representation has always made me think of Dalit

women. According to Guru's contention during the argument, "communal setting that demonstrates the insight of reality is a major feature that makes the portrayal of Dalit female difficulties by non-Dalit female less acceptable and less genuine."

While anti-feminists in India have examined where class and gender intersect, the relationship between caste and gender has not yet been resolved. According to Uma Chakravarti, "class, caste, and gender are intricately interwoven, they interrelate with and form each other, and the caste system is based on the organisation of marriage, sexuality, and procreation." Caste and gender socio-cultural categories are so intertwined in the fabric of Indian society that is impossible to evaluate them separately. The traditional approaches that eliminate caste and gender concerns have already been researched. Anupama Rao notes that a study of the shared histories and educational experiences of Dalit Bahujan feminists and theorists is necessary to understand their recent advances.

Understanding how building is planned and who controls it on the basis of class is important, but it is also crucial to understand how procreation is determined and who controls it on the basis of caste. Through the laws governing sexual relations and marriage, the caste concept legalises and permits the domination of women. It is necessary to restrict women's sexual freedom in order to preserve the distinctiveness of their caste. A ban on inter-caste marriages is intended to protect the purity of caste, which makes the caste system rigid and unfair. So, women's movements stay away from caste-related issues. Feminists advocate that class and caste are irrelevant, and that all women are equally victimised by the patriarchy. It's done in an attempt to foster an unreal sense of female oneness. It is therefore falsely believed that if patriarchy is eliminated, all types of women's issues will vanish. Capitalism supports both caste and patriarchy, and they are adamant that if patriarchy is addressed, caste would follow suit. The foundation of this argument is the analogy between oppressive women and oppressive members of lower castes. Women's movements in India did not put much effort into addressing the problems faced by Dalit women.

Class issues and the subjugation of Dalit women cannot be grouped together. To understand it, though, a unique framework is required. Every woman who has experienced oppression has a unique tale to share, and it is not simply restricted to caste and class systems. The type of situation they are in is what determines it most. Although it can be argued that violence against women occurs frequently throughout the world, societal and economic factors also play a significant impact. For instance, dowry has been linked to numerous incidences of murder, torture, and other forms of abuse, particularly against middle- and upper-class women, in India. Violence against upper-class and middle-class women is a rare occurrence.

The patriarchal problems are more prevalent in upper class women than Dalit women. The Hindu mythology of Sita, Savitri, Draupadi, and other figures who exemplified ultimate sacrifice for a husband and children served as the foundation for patriarchy. Dalit women do not "worship" their husbands since patriarchy is not as prevalent among them as it is among higher caste women. In the Dalit community, women have their own identity and operate independently, free from gender bias to some extent. They are not referred to by their husbands' names. Dalit activist Ilaiah claims that women have greater social and economic independence in her culture.

In comparison to other communities, Dalit Feminism is at the top of the list. The ladies are discriminated against twice: as women and as Dalits. Bama was the first Dalit woman to emerge from the shadows. In "*Sangati*," she presented the autobiography of the Dalit community in Tamil. In the beginning of the book, women are shown as wretched and despairing, but by the end, they are shown to be courageous and fearless despite all the awful things that occur. Talking and laughing with others is the strategy for preventing these issues. They take pleasure in their increased power and fame. In the book, the narrator breaks out from the exclusive ties to the neighbourhood and works and lives by herself.

She did become independent, which is a noteworthy feat, but she had to give up her caste name in order to do so. Because she continued to worry about discrimination. Dalit women have higher levels of education and independence, yet the violence never stops. Raising their voice—protesting against bias and discrimination by leaving behind their frail selves and continuing on while carrying a pen and paper is the answer to this injustice.

After the Ambedkar era, the Dalit literary branch has advanced to become a significant literary area. In a Dalit community that is open to numerous social and economic reforms, this has led to many revolutionary issues. The goal of awakening the consciousness that is damaged due to the identity breach has been achieved. If the voyage began in the 1960s with Marathi, it has now extended to other languages and geographical areas. The Indian literature, which is rich in literary, social, religious, political, historical, and economic factors, is where this has currently established its branch.

In the margins of the Marathi literary canon, the Dalit literature has gone unnoticed and unrecognised. India has treated this poorly, particularly in Maharashtra, where members of the higher caste have demonstrated a great deal of bigotry and neglect. A person's social life has been adversely impacted by the intensity of the texts. Dalit literature is exclusively concerned with the life of Dalits. Simply put, it is impossible to judge on aesthetic grounds; instead, one should take into account true, genuine expressions based on experiences. Hence, this paper clearly exposes the power of Dalit writings that too by women as it has changed the society and led to significant changes in people's hearts and thoughts.

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