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DALIT

DISCOURSE

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES IN INDIAN LITERATURE



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The Indian Dalit Literature: Roars of the Exploited Natives

Dr. Vitthal K. Jaybhaye

Introduction:

The pains, pangs, sufferings, distress, challenges, exploitations as well as the happiness, merrymaking, joy are the real exuberance of all types of writings and creations. It is found all over the World that literature is the discourse of the true conscience of everybody who is breathing with contemporary society. It is acknowledged that, from the diverse layers of the World, visionaries are exploring their contemplations and ideas through their literature. Among such sectors, the Dalit Literature is one of the famous literatures of India. The Dalit Literature is written throughout the India, where there are the feelings and emotions were overflowed through the Dalit writings. It is found that, from the last four centuries, the writers from various strata of the society are expressing their thoughts and reaction regarding the various stages and calamities from their lives. In ancient history of India, it is found that there was segregation on the basis of socio-cultural base of the society. Especially in Post-Vedic Period, strict class segregation was held in India and the whole system collapsed. The society was separated on the basis of the ability to perform the work, but later on the ability criteria disappeared and society was divided into four layers or *Varnas*.

The Roars of the Exploited:

The four layers or *Varnas* are *Brahman*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya*, *Shudra* or *Atishudra*. The rules of *Manusmriti* were forcefully injected into the minds of Indian society. These classes were turned into *Varnas* and strict walls of discrimination were stands between the four layers of the society. The last *Varna* i.e. *Shudra* or *Ati Shudra* were badly exploited by all the remaining three *Varnas* of the society till the freedom of India. This class of *Shudra* or *Atishudra* of India is known as the Dalits of the country and literature written by them or about them is known as the Dalit literature. As Dr. Babasheb Ambedkar has done the research and stated about this in his famous work *Who were the Shudras?* As

The *Shudras* were not a *Varna* but a community of the solar race. There was continuous feud between *Shudra* Kings and the Brahmins. As a result of the enmity, the Brahmins refused to perform the *Upanayan* ceremony for the *Shudras*. Due to the

denial of the *Upanayana*, the *Shudras*, who were equal to *Kshatriyas*, became socially degraded. (Ambedkar 242)

It is the studied clarification given by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar about the place of *Shudras* in Indian society. This class or *Varna* was banished from the main flow of the society. The rebellious and aggressive nature was the crucial characteristics of this class, but they were discriminated against in society. No social treatment was given to them. They were exploited by the above three *Varnas*. All human rights of this class or *Varna* were frowned upon by all the upper *Varnas* of the society.

But, after Independence, Dr. Babasheb Ambedkar, an architect of the *Indian Constitution*, raised the strong and lawful voice against the exploitation of this class. The socially exiled class was the major focus of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, where he reawakened the depressed people of India. Equality was the breath of the *Indian Constitution*. The freedom, fundamental rights and the power of equality has given rebirth to the dungeon class. The awakening after freedom has changed life and it has given rights to write and express. The spread of education and equality were major sources, where the scholars from the depressed class were writing literature. Universally, the quote of Plato regarding literature is that, 'Literature is the mere imitation of life' shows that every writer expresses his life and expresses it through his or her writings.

The right to expression and rules of the *Indian Constitution*, all the depressed class people started to express their revolutionary literature. That literature was the roars of the lions, who were living behind the bars for hundreds of years. All over the country, the Dalits were writing their literature and depicting the burning experiences with the past as well as the contemporary society. Exploitation, depressed life, defiled feelings, hunger, rape, degradation, many more pains and pangs were the major thread of the Dalit literature. "These Literature earned for them awe and veneration by propagating their superiority and immense capacity" (Singh, et al. 39). Their literature is the literature of the deprived, exploited, abused and oppressed landless class, as M. N. Wankhede expressed that, "all those who toil and exploited and oppressed" (Dangle 293) are subject as well as the writers of the Dalit literatures. It was greatly represented by the Dalit writers where they were successful to centralize the Dalit literary writings. The humiliation and inequality were the major aspects of the Indian Dalit literatures. Apart from this, "Dalit literature would tell us about the cultural conflict of the socially, economically and culturally deprived and disadvantaged group of people. So this literature would be revolutionary, didactic and doctrinaire (Singh, et al. 40). These are the central facets of the Dalit literatures, where the writer made the current to their feelings and emotions in their writings, which lighted the lights in the minds of the ruling *Varnas*, who exploited depressed people since last four centuries.

Nevertheless, the Indian Dalit literature is flourished in post-independence period of India, where it has become the voice of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, because these two are the true victims of the poverty, living below poverty line in the country. This was the real situation of the SC & ST's of the country, where there are many non-Dalit writers like Rabindranath Tagore, Premchand, and Mulk Raj Anand were successfully pen-pictured the pains and pangs of these exploited classes. These non-Dalit writers raised the voice against the casteism and pathos of the oppressed class of the country. The voice of immediacy, violence, exploitation, physical harassment and abusive status was strongly represented by the non-Dalit writers in their writings. But these writings do not have the genuine emotions of the hurts and aches of the Dalit victims. As S.P. Punalekar rightly writing in *Poisoned Bread*,

Dalit writer themselves are either victims or witness to social inequities and violence. Some have direct or indirect links with social, political and cultural organisations of Dalits. A few among them are staunch social activists and use literature a vehicle to propagate their views on Dalit identity and the prevailing social consciousness. (Dangle 243)

This shows that, the Dalit writing is the result of the through agony, arrows of the atrocities of the self validly outlined in it. These are first hand experiences of the writer, not twice removed from the truth. As Sharadchandra Muktibodh wrote in his essay entitled *What is Dalit Literature?*,

Dalit literature is the literature produced by the Dalit consciousness. 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 the Dalits are common and are attributable to common reasons. (Dangle 267)

It clarifies that, it is the real flow of the Dalit feelings, pains and pangs moving through the veins of the Dalit writer penned on the paper. The Dalit writings are the outcome of the individual experiences, and exploitations depicted by the self. As the international writer Eleanor Zelliot directly write regarding the Dalit literature,

Those in the Dalit School would say; yes there is Dalit literature. Only Dalit can write it because only they have experienced the social as well as economic problems of the lowest of the castes. And when educated and no longer poor, they not only remember their childhood, they also suffer from the idea of pollution which remains strong in the Hindu mind and they identify with their

village brothers and sisters who are still subject to outrageous treatment when they claim their full human rights. (Anand and Zelliott 18-19)

This sufficient and proper clarification by the foreign studied critic Zelliott regarding the Dalit literature its origin. This research has firmly stamped that no other writers can strongly able to write the Dalit literature. It is the literature which manifests the Dalit occurrences, agitations, costs and inquisitiveness can be called the Dalit literature.

Conclusion:

Though, it is very confront to say that, the Dalit literature is the literature which promisingly prospects the life experienced by the Dalit writers' self. It encourages the fundamental lineaments of the society, where it begins to interpret the challenging and pitiful victims, experiences from the society. The Dalit writings are the roars of the native Dalit writers, where it is fully filled with pride and confidence. The Dalit writings and philosophy have come into the world which explains the true visualization of existence and self-confidence. The voice of the Dalit literature aims to impart the dalitism through their writings. It is the literature of the fights and rights with the layered, discriminated Indian society. Hence, the Dalit literature endeavors the oppressed subalterns, who were historically muted for many years in the world. The Dalit writers and literature is truly successful to delineate the marginalized feeling to the central strata of the contemporary social system. The representations of the Dalit literary creations are very noticeable, where they are representatives of the common explications of the philosophy and socio-cultural history of the life itself. They are the true representatives of the factual identity and incessantly roaring for the privileges of man till the conclusion of humanity.

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