

DALIT LITERATURE BY NON DALIT WRITERS

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ABSTRACT

Postmodern era, globally, gave a voice to all unheard agonies, sighs and tears of oppressed through literature. In India, regional literatures mainstream and marginalised streams are also influenced by the new literary trend. As a result a multicolored art is created and among them Dalit literature plays a major role, obviously from the meaning Dalit literature, it clearly portrays the voice of agony, oppressed or Dalits. This might be penned by Dalit and non Dalit writers. In India the Dalit Movement started in the year 1958 by the thinkers as Bhimrao Ambedkar and Jyotiba Phule. The word Dalit has a large periphery and it speaks about every type of domination that any group faces. It has the healing power to cure the traumas of the past. This paper will throw light on the history of suppression and how these themes of Dalit suffering can be well portrayed even by the non Dalit writer.

KEYWORDS: Marginalized, Periphery, Traumas

INTRODUCTION

Today Dalit Literature includes not only the writings about Indian suppressed people but also other groups throughout the world that are relegated to a secondary position by the privileged classes. Dalit Literature might include writings about the exploitation of nature and environment, the racial discrimination of Afro Americans in America, the women subordination, the negligence of old age people. The word Dalit has a large periphery and it speaks about every type of domination that any group faces. It has the healing power to cure the traumas of the past. This paper will throw light on the history of suppression and how these themes of Dalit suffering can be well portrayed even by the non Dalit writer.

Etymologically speaking, the term Dalit has originated from Sanskrit, dalita meaning 'oppressed' and it means (in the traditional Indian Caste System) a member of the caste that is considered the lowest and has the fewest advantages. Postmodern era, globally, gave a voice to all unheard agonies, sighs and tears of oppressed through literature. In India, regional literatures mainstream and marginalized streams are also influenced by the new literary trend. As a result a multicolored art is created and among them Dalit literature plays a major role, Dalit literature is an important stream of Indian writing in English and other languages of India. Dalit literature emerged in the 1960s, starting with the Marathi Language and soon appeared in Hindi, Kannada, Telugu and Tamil language, through narratives such as poems, short stories, and, most autobiographies, which stood out due to their stark portrayal of reality and the Dalit political scene.

When caste society became prominent in 500 BC - 500 AD a conflict between higher class and lower class became prominent in our society. Ancient Dharma Shastra and Rig Veda both gave priority to caste system and they had only two castes one is higher class Hindu caste called Bharamana and other one is called as lower class called as Dasa. According to Ancient Hindu Dharma Shastra, there are a series of so many restrictions like economic, social, political and

religious restriction for the lower class people were prevailed. Those caste is been named in different names such include like Dasa, Rakasa, Asura, Avarna, Panchama, Chandala and so on. The British had called them as "Depressed classes", and after independence they were called as "Scheduled Caste" and this caste entirely belongs to Dalit communities officially. Dalit were called by different names in different parts of India, invented by caste people and all entailing insult and contempt. To classify, include or to incorporate in a more comprehensive category or in a general principle: the Dalit was represented as a worker and their oppression has been well portrayed. Dalit life is the source of Dalit literature, so, Dalit writers prefer to portray the dismal life of the Dalit; Dalit writers from all states of India have enriched Dalit literature. Dalit writer have presented Dalit milieu of their region faithfully in its actual condition

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Mahatma Gandhi was then working at Durban in South Africa, experienced the insult and humiliation under the apartheid regime. It was from Durban station that Mahatma had embarked on the fateful journey. Gandhi was boarded the train on June 7, 1893 in order to travel to Pretoria, where he was due to meet legal clients. A first class seat was booked for him and when the train reached Pietermaritzburg station at 9:00 p.m. A white passenger entering the compartment could not control his anger for being travelling with Gandhi since, he was colored person. So he went out and returned with two officials, who ordered Gandhiji to move to the van compartment. When Gandhiji resisted as he had valid ticket to travel in that compartment, a white constable took Gandhiji by hand and pushed him out of the train. His luggage was also thrown out, and the train continued its journey without him.

This worst experience of Gandhiji was shared by A.P.J. Abdul Kalam in an essay "A Personal Crisis May Change History". But after this great humiliation Gandhiji vowed to stay and fight against so called disease of Racial Prejudice. Gandhiji even said "*..... my active non-violent began from that date.*"

If you take life of Buddha, the founder of Buddhist, He was called as Buddha Shakyamuni, was born as a royal Prince in 624 BC in place called Lumbini, which we call as Nepal. Buddha in his visit to the capital city of his father's Kingdom, he saw people who suffer due to oppression these encounter left a deep impression on his mind and led him to realize that all living being without exception have to experience the suffering of birth, sickness, aging and death. Seeing how all living being are trapped in this vicious circle of suffering he felt deep compassion for them, and he developed a sincere wish to free all of them from their oppression. He himself thought to resolve to leave the palace and retire to solitude and he lived for oppressed, even Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who struggled all his life for the dalits, has brought in a huge amount of literature about Dalit History, their origin, their aspirations and their course of action to emancipate themselves. He had declared in 1935, that though born as a Hindu, he would not die as a Hindu, and in 1956, he denounced Hinduism

along with millions of his followers and got converted to Buddhism and declared boldly, that he would bring whole of India to the path of Buddha.

Life of Jesus is a best example for oppression; his ministry totally identified himself with the dalits of his time. The dominant religious leaders of his day accused him of eating and drinking with publicans, tax collectors and sinners (MK. 2:15-16). Jesus' attitude toward the people the society considered as outcasts (The Samaritans and women of his society could fit into this category), his mixing with them freely, his table fellowship with them demonstrated powerfully that he loved and cared for them - the dalits. He showed them that he was one with them. He assured privileged places for them in the Kingdom of God - a new social order he came to establish. (Mt. 21: 3 1-3 2)

In Isaiah 53 its clearly said that Jesus suffered greatly on our behalf as the prophet writes that Jesus “*was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth*”

It's to be noted that most of the leaders have faced or experienced the humiliation and contributed their experience and suffering of oppressed through writing which pave way for most Dalit Literature'. So many non Dalit writers like Tagore, Anand, Karnad have depicted about the curel and buring oppression of dalits. A traditional of Dalit writing can be traced to eleventh century writer Cekkilar's “Periyapuranam”. Modern Dalit writings are founded on the works and ideological insights of Ambedkar, the chief architect of the constitution of India.

Criticism aroused saying that Dalit Literature is not the literature written by anybody on the dalit, but only by those who are by birth Dalits. Anyone else, not born as a Dalits, even though writing on the socially downtrodden with sympathy or empathy cannot be considered as a Dalit writer or his or her literature cannot be considered as Dalit Literature. Now let us move to some controversies regarding Dalit Literature. In this sense, the greatest work by Rabindranath Tagore “Gitanjali” (1913) expresses the condition of Dalit, being a non Dalit writer he expresses how the untouchables are humiliated and oppressed in our country. Shashi Bhushan Upadhyay pointed out that “*Dalit Literature is not a literary movement in ordinary sense of the term. It is, like Black Literature, therefore is not the Literature written by anybody on dalits. Anyone else, not born as a dalit, even though writing on the socially downtrodden with sympathy or empathy, cannot be considered as a Dalit writer nor will his or her literature be taken as Dalit Literatur*”.

CONCLUSIONS

Now let us move to some controversies regarding Dalit literature. If we criticize a work by dalit or non dalit writers then nothing could become good literature. Then they can criticize Shakespeare for writing about king when he is not a king and Milton about God or Angel when he was not the same. The real aim of these writers is not to bring the lowerness of dalit society but they are presenting the situation as they saw or reported to them by the others, and doing so, they bring close about their oppression and real imagery, this is obviously true in case of non Dalit writer.

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