

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN THE MARATHI DALIT WOMEN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHIES: A STUDY

G.D. Suresh

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Government Arts College (Autonomous), Chitradurga, Karnataka, India

Received: 22 Mar 2020

Accepted: 27 Mar 2020

Published: 31 Mar 2020

ABSTRACT

Dalits commonly live in distinct areas, away from the caste Hindu societies, and they are regularly prohibited to access public wells. Caste and discrimination have much seen in studied subjects, particularly, this article discovers the nature and role of education and its connection to empowerment on rural Dalit women. The emergence of autobiographies by female Dalit writers changed and reshaped the perspective of Dalit women in our society "Jina Amucha" The Prisons We Broke and Aidan translated by Maya Pandit as The Weave of My Life by eminent Dalit writer Baby Kamble and Urmila Pawar.

KEYWORDS: Caste, Gender, Dalit, Empowerment, Patriarchy, Autobiography

INTRODUCTION

Dalit

The term Dalit is used today as a systematically essential grouping of that segment of Indian society that is socially, culturally and physically subjugated its subjugation as a result of the Untouchability finds confirmation from the textual culture of Brahminical India that still preserves itself in the contemporary society. However, many Dalit social thinkers and writers have deliberately chosen to broaden the reach of the term to include various other subaltern sections of the society like women, religious minorities and the working class.

The Dalit is a term that is now-a-days more accurately applicable to those sections of the Indian society is a caste-based hierarchical order that inscribes them as perennially polluted and however common in usage now, the term Dalit was popularized much later in the twentieth century and various other descriptions were previously deployed to define those who were believed to outside the fold of the varna system. It is unsuitable to integrate here those whose exclusion from the centres of power and honour is due to other forces of oppression and exclusion like modernity, gender or economics.

One of the first categories ever used was anti-shudra, coined by Jyotirao Phule in the nineteenth century and fittingly evoking the marginality of this section of the population. Mahatma Gandhi, in the early decades of the previous century, used the term 'Harijan' give restore the human kind and self-assurance of those who were brutalized by centuries of oppression. Later, Schedule Castes became the official category of political and social agreeing achievement taken by the Indian state and its agencies for the uplift of the former untouchables. Though, many Dalit intellectuals found the term condescending and humiliatingly comforting and discarded it quickly. Ambedkar, perchance the most significant Dalit leader of the previous century and a challenging scholar, used several other terms to bring forth the brutal social reality of the existence. He similarly used the designation of the Depressed Classes, given by the imperial government for official settings.

Women Empowerment

By Women Empowerment, they will be equally powerful as far as Social and Political Rights, Economic and judicial stability and all other rights are concerned. There must not have any kind of discrimination between men and women in the society. Women will enjoy all kinds of stability in their lives as the men get. Dignity, safety, security, freedom, and equality are very important to women empowerment. Women's empowerment is a dangerous aspect of achieving gender equality in the society. It covers increasing a woman's sense of self-esteem, her decision-making power, her access to chances and possessions, her power and control over her own life inside and outside the yet gender issues are not focused on women alone, but the relationship between men and women in society. Dalit women are socially, economically, and politically deprived in Indian society. Caste is a major factor which determines the process of empowerment. Women's empowerment shows a spirited role in bringing any social change. No society or nation can be viewed as advanced without empowered women. Exploitation, discrimination, and violence are some of the keywords associated with disempowerment. The core concept of empowerment is rooted within power. Power itself expects that it should be executed by both the gender equality. The issue of empowerment of women demands for a thorough discussion on the question of power from top to bottom. There is no doubt that women should be able to enjoy the natural freedom as well as the Constitutional one. It is the process of self-power, self-control, self-confidence, self-reliance, self-choice, self-respect, and self-dignity void of social, political, economic, cultural and religious pressures.

Dalit Literature

In the 20th century, the term Dalit literature came into existence in 1958 when the first conference of Maharashtra Dalit Sahitya Sangha (Maharashtra Dalit Literature Society) was held at Mumbai. A dalit movement was movement driven by dalit thinkers Dr B R Ambedkar and Jyothiba Phule. Ambedkar, pioneer of Dalit writings in Marathi were Baburao Bagul (1930 to 2008) and his first collection of stories Jevha Mi Jat Chorali (When I had Concealed My Caste) was published in 1963 created a thrash in Marathi literature with its fervent portrayal of a brutal society and brought in new energy to Dalit literature. Gradually, with other writers like Namdeo Dhasal, these Dalit writings paved the way for support to Dalit.

It is medium of the most ancient literature of the Indian sub-continent which knows a remarkable modern development. The new trend is still alive on the increase major themes in literary debates and particular journals academic studies, conference and seminars. The word Dalit signifies the depressed and suppressed. Presently, 'Dalit' is used by most of the Maharashtra former untouchable as a comprehensive revolutionary category specifically designating those social sectors of Indian society which Marathi is not only the language spoken in Maharashtra by the majority of the people of a state which was fixed out on linguistic basis in 1960.

The Dalit literature is one of its most considerable topical trends since the sixties. But it is used in ways which are different from the specificity of background. culturally, physically socially and for radical Dalit thinkers (for instance Baburao Bagul major ideological of the Dalit Panther Manifesto of Dalit Panther, 1972) the category is constructed and extended as to carry the history of the revolutionary struggles of all Dalit people and has the ontological ability to define itself with all the lower caste, tribal people and women.

A study of Dalit autobiographies seems to carry a notable contribution to answer the question within an anthropological and sociological outline. The term represents those who have been broken and ground down by those above them in a deliberate manner. When Eleanor Zelliott with most Dalit literary figures defines Dalit in a very specific

sense that involves only the caste and religious dimensions of Dalit exploitation other scholars would preferably seek to understand the category in a broader way which allows for instance to include converted untouchables and others. The term Dalit is in such a wider sense which applies by priority but not exclusively to the untouchable castes.

Dalit Women's Autobiographies

In India, only a few women Dalit women have written their autobiographies. Generally these writers have been written in regional languages and many of have been translated into English. That's why, perhaps, Dalit women's autobiographies are still unidentified and unnamed in the so-called mainstream literary circles and more so in the fields of English literary criticism. But they are few in numbers and not many readers know about their existence. This situation has led some upper caste literary critics to comment that the position of Dalit women writers are as marginalized in Dalit literature as they are in their community. Like male writers, Dalit women also have raised their voice through the autobiographies expressing their angst of deprivation, social exclusion, and humiliation.

Bama Faustina Soosairaj, Baby Kamble, Urmila Pawar, Kumud Pawade and Janabai Girhe explored their experiences of exploitation, discrimination through their life stories. Bama's autobiography *Karukku* deals her early childhood to adulthood with issues of oppression faced by Dalits. Baby Kamble's *Jina Amucha* (The Prison We Broke), a personal narrative of visualizes the difficulties of Dalit women in a patriarchal community, and the feelings and helpless situation of Mahar women in their society.

Urmila Pawar's *Aaydan* (The Weave of My Life) describes the exertion of three generations of women. She highlights the complexities of the life of the Dalit community, especially of Dalit women in her autobiography. The works of these writers echo the common idea that the Dalit women suffer from the double oppression of caste and gender. As has been mentioned earlier, few Dalit women who are fortunate to get some education have written their autobiographies in Indian languages because English is still a language of dominant caste and class. Dalit autobiographies address various issues related to subaltern section, their protest, and effort for political assertion and empowerment.

Some influential autobiographies translated to English are Sharan Kumar Limbless *Akkarmashi* (The Out Caste), Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan* (A Dalit's Life) and Balbir Madhopur's *ChangiyaRukh* (Against The Night). Daya Pawar, Arjun Dangle, Baburao Bagul, Rabi Singh, Namdeo Dhasal, Dutta Bhagat, Lakshman Mane, Neerave Patel, Polamalu, Sudhakar, D. Gopi, T.K.C. Vaduthala (T.K.C. Vaduthalayude Kathakal) and Narayan (Kocharayathi) are the other prominent Dalit writers. Like male writers, Dalit women also have raised their voice through the autobiographies expressing their angst of deprivation, social exclusion, and humiliation. Bama Faustina Soosairaj, Baby Kamble, Urmila Pawar, Kumud Pawade and Janabai Girhe explored their experiences of exploitation, discrimination through their life stories. Bama's autobiography *Karukku* deals with issues of oppression faced by Dalits. *Jina Amucha* (The Prison We Broke), a personal narrative of Baby Kamble visualizes the difficulties of Dalit women in a patriarchal community, and the feelings and helpless situation of Mahar women in their society. Urmila Pawar's *Aydan* (The Weave of My Life) describes the struggle of three generations of women. She highlights the complexities of the life of the Dalit community, especially of Dalit women in her autobiography. Pawade's autobiographical work *Antasphot* tells about the obstacles created by various socio-political institutions in her life and how she overcame them during her life-journey. In her autobiography, *Maranakala* (Death Pains), Girhe focuses on the problems, suppression, and oppression of women of the Gokul community. The works of these writers echo the common idea that the Dalit women suffer from the double

oppression of caste and gender. Dalit women in India experience domestic violence, gender discrimination, and oppression not only from the outside society, but also within their community. The situation of the women in Dalit communities is adverse as they are doubly exploited, first as women and then as Dalits.

In most of the families, women uneducated and exposed to intellectual experiences as in the case of women born in noble families. Hence, the Dalit women are deprived of all the privileges enjoyed by their counterparts. They even face gender discrimination and male domination in the society, as well as within their own family. The present paper analyses the distressing effects of the caste-based social system on Dalit women. It also highlights the harsh realities of oppression, violence, and discrimination against gender and caste faced by Dalit women.

Marathi Dalit Women's Autobiographies

Dalit autobiographies additionally question the larger system for its anti-Dalit stance. As is that the case, the Dalit women flow freely in their autobiographies. This is often as a result of their comparatively liberating from the formation of their body by the Dalit patriarchy. This early arrival to modernness wasn't impulsive because the socio-economic conditions had pushed these women out from their ancient role. Kumud Pawde, Shantabai Krishnji Kamble, Urmila Pawar, Shantiba Dani, Mukta Sarvagod and Baby Kamble square measure some vital Dalit women writers United Nations agency wrote their autobiographies.

Baby Kamble's *Jina Amucha* originally in Sanskrit (serialized in 1982 and revealed as a book in 1986) that is translated by Maya Pandit because the *Prisons we have a tendency to skint* (2008) and Urmila Pawar's *Aidan* translated by Maya Pandit because the *Weave of My Life* (2007).

The *prisons we have a tendency to skint* recounts that the lives of the Dalits begin with mud and soil and even when a lifetime of incessant toil and labour ends within the same place and condition while not a minimum of trace of progress and gain. As explicit by Maya Pandit within the introduction that the vital facet of *Jina Amucha* is Baby Kamble's Dalit feminist critique of patriarchy. She diagrammatically describes the physical and psychological violence women need to bear in each the general public and personal spheres.

If the Mahar community is that the 'other' for the Brahmins, Mahar women become the other for the Mahar men. Baby Kamble demonstrates however caste and patriarchy bear to carry on consumptive apply against women's. Baby Kamble remains the scout for the not noted plenty.

The *Prisons we have a tendency to skint* however education and vanity will redeem the Dalit women's from the sort of domestic and social issues that they need to confront. Urmila Pawar may be a noted Dalit author and feminist. Her memoir *Aidan* (*The Wave of my life: Dalit woman's memoir*) is originally written in Sanskrit and later translated into English by Dr. Maya Pandit and Urmilatai become a global temperament. During this daring and intimate memoir, Pawar shares her tragedy as well as social and inter-communal relative clashes and tolerance. It problematizes major problems with caste, class, and gender within the Indian context. In her inventive writings, Urmila Pawar perpetually offers illustration to Dalit women's. For several years, Dalit male writers are indifferent to those problems.

Thus, once Urmila started writing concerning the plight of Dalit women's there have been protests from Dalit men. Pawar has given terribly minute details of oppression and exploitation of children and women and women. Typically the humiliation is most that it's biting to the reader with his/her sensibility. She has narrated her experiences of sexual

exploitation at her early adulthood and concerning her schoolmates. This narration and incidents of sexual exploitation square measure evident in her memoir. Thus, with the exception of being marginal, Dalits are denied education for quite a while within the Indian caste society. Now, that they're obtaining educated, a number of them are victimisation writing as a weapon for his or her social assertion. So writing a private narrative may be a legislative act for the members of this cluster United Nations agency use the genre to attain a way of identity and The discrimination and force of Dalit women in their self-narratives, like Baby Kamble's "The Prisons we have a tendency to skint" and Urmila Pawar's "The Weave of My Life". Just like the higher caste men, Dalit male self-narratives ne'er say force.

Baby Kamble and Urmila Pawar, primarily, the narratives construct Dalit women as a private dowered justifiably, inherent dignity, and human rights. Their works discuss the difficulty of social, political and economic justice with ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, arousal in each reader a consciousness of the oppressed people. The terribly act of writing by these women becomes an act of assertion of identity and empowerment and conjointly a veritable gesture of defiance, subversion, and resistance. These writings serve as a tool of restoring lost voices, reclaiming one's identity and declarative human rights in a society which politically renders them in a and voiceless.

This increasingly developed self-assurance and positiveness will inspire the women to enunciate their racial and social identities as powerfully that they'd become successful in building a way of happiness to the land, to their people, and their heritage. Dalit women suffered huge oppression, not solely on through caste, however gender conjointly from that there is no escape, it's same that being a Dalit may be a reason enough to be able to face a life packed with miseries, sufferings, degraded and unhuman means of life and being a woman means that a lifetime of exploitation within the name of sex, a weak kind of humans subordinating to man, unwanted burden since birth for her parents and a domestic servant for a life for her husband. Most the folks acknowledge such reality of the lifetime of Dalit and women's. Dalit women are to be seen because the most oppressed of their cluster. Dalit women to make their own identity in the non-Dalit similarly as Dalit community.

REFERENCES

1. *Kemble, Baby. Jian Mocha. Trans. Maya Pundit. The Prisons We Broke. New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2009. Print.*
2. *Kumar, Raj. Dalit Personal Narratives Reading Caste, Nation and Identity. New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2010. Print.*
3. *Power, Urmila. Acadian. Trans. Maya Pundit. The Weave of My Life: Dalit Woman's Memoir. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009. Print.*
4. *Mukherjee, Alek. Reading Shoran Kumar Limb Ale's Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature: From Erasure to Assertion (Orient Longman, Hyderabad: 2004)*
5. *Rage, Smarmily. Writing caste, writing gender: Reading Dalit women's Testimonies. Zurbaran, 2006.*
6. *Paik, Shalala. Dalit women's education in modern India: double discrimination. Routledge, 2014.*
7. *Jordan, P.G. 1995(ed.) Dalit Women in India: Issues and Perspectives. New Delhi: Gina Publishing House, p.1.*

