



THE RUBRICS

Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies

Volume 4 Issue 1 February 2022

www.therubrics.in

ISSN 2454-1974



Sociological Relevance of Dalit Memoirs in Indian Literature in English

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ABSTRACT

The political independence of India brought about a sea change in the lives of made-dalits. The made-dalits before independence were subjugated to the arbitrary social order of Hinduism. The vast majority of the made-dalits could not enjoy social status and dignity as compared to the self-declared sawarns. The vast majority of the made-dalits was deprived of just human life who gained the fundamental rights through the Indian Constitution.

Keywords: *Dalit, Sawarna, Rights, Deprived, Indian Constitution*

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The political independence and the rule of law provided the made-dalits sufficient scope to nurture their selfhood. The democratic values such as equality, liberty, fraternity and justice, now, have become the guiding principles of the new society. The struggle for justice initiated by Jyotirao Phule, Rajarshee Shahu Maharaj and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is still continued by the made-dalits at the social and political fronts. The legacy of these social engineers has become the driving force of dalit writing. Dalit literature firmly opposes the division of man on the hollow notions of race, religion, gender and caste. It rebels against that culture, society or literature which attempts to degrade the human being. Rejection of the ideology of the oppressor and assertion of an ideology and culture based on equality and fraternity are dominant features of dalit writing in India.

The literary manifestation by the varied groups among the made-dalit surfaces profusely in Indian languages in the post-independence era. It is full of varied atrocities and exploitations of the made-dalits. Anguish and sorrow in a dalit literary text is not about the individual concerned but about his / her community in general. The motive of dalit writing is not to sing a song of sorrow but to bring about a change in the mindset of both the oppressor and the oppressed. Dalit discourse tries to raise the consciousness of dalits and non dalits simultaneously. Social, educational, political, economical and cultural emancipations of dalit are its chief objectives. The world is now being viewed as a global village. People of different faiths, castes and nations can be brought together with the principle of equality. This principle is a dominant feature of dalit writing. Dalit writing, therefore, can be called an unifying force of the new world.

The memories are written in the post independence era, however, their roots are deeply rooted in age-old socio, economic and religious structures of Indian society. The vast majority of Indian population was treated as subhuman, was treated as subhuman, as a result they remained unskilled, uncivilized and unproductive resource of the nation. It is the loss of humanity and loss of nation in many ways so the study of dalit memoirs, therefore, has

an inseparable social relevance. The memoirs in dalit literature explain socio, economic and religious ethos of Indian society. The memoirs *Balut* by Daya Pawar, *Athwaniche Pakshi* by P.E. Sonkamble, *An Outsider* by Laximan Mane, *The Branded* by Laximan Gaikwad and *Against all odds* by Kishor Shantabai Kale inspires and motivates reader to establish an egalitarian and cosmopolitan human society based on the principles of equality, liberty, fraternity and justice.

Memoirs by dalit writers in different Indian language are on the rise in India. It has appeared as an important literary genre of social record. It has richly contributed to Indian literature. Memoirs in Dalit literature are written by the peripheral caste writers who are treated as born criminals by the caste ridden ethics of Hindu society. Dalit memoirs attempt to regain the socio, economical cultural and religious background of dalit community. There is also an effect to analyze the caste consciousness, self assertion and search for identity in dalit memoirs. The significance of the memoirs in dalit literature is remained constant due to its value for humanism and democratic principles such as equality, liberty and justice. Dalit memoirs study the causes and consequence of degradation and subjugation of marginalized communities such as the Scheduled caste, Scheduled Tribes and the nomadic tribes. The role of dalit memoirs is to present social, economical, educational and cultural record of dalit, is significant in Indian literature.

The literary manifestation by the varied *awakened* social groups among the dalits in Maharashtra surfaced in the form of memoir in the second half of the 20th century. It was quite natural. A self awakened person, first of all, will naturally look at himself / herself. The memoirs *An Outsider* by Laxman Mane, *The Branded* by Laxman Gaikwad and *Against All Odds* by Kishor Shantabai Kale contribute significantly to the objectives aforesaid. The memoirs have richly contributed to the corpus of Indian literature. It has expanded the canvas of Indian literature by bringing to light the vast unexplored world of the made-dalits.

Dalit memoirs artistically portrays the sorrows, miseries, degradation and tribulations of dalits. At the same time it shows the oppressed the path of emancipation. The significance of dalit memoirs is to present the life lived and seen. Its realistic record is a characteristic feature of dalit writings.

The memoirs *The Branded* translated work of *Uchalya* by Laxman Gaikwad presents problems in the life of Nomadic tribe and criminal community. On one hand the tribes and criminals are denied all lawful living. They are forced to resort to thievery to satisfy the basic fundamental needs. On

other hand, so called respected and educated people brazenly indulged in looting and collecting crores of rupees. There are people in the society who are well off and blessed with comforts in their worldly life. They are indulging in immoral, unlawful and correct ways just to gratify their craze. Even though, they are not branded. But those who steal a paltry sum of ten or fifteen rupees just for their daily bread are branded as thieves and criminals.

There is attack on lawless system of the govt. There is hardly a project for the betterment and welfare of these people. If even one is launched it never reaches them. Their very fundamental right to live as human being has been snatched from these tribes. The poor and branded are rejected and forsaken and ruthlessly exploited and denied any opportunity of living an honest life. *The Branded* should be evaluated sociological rather than a literary one. Writer realized the life of tribes and expected the need for furthering of mission of transformation. The aim of the memoir is to help the movement for emancipation of deprived class.

Social life of Kaikadi Community is brought in the Memoir of Laxman Mane in 'Upa' translated as 'An outsider' The memoirs is record of social life of Nomadic Tribe and criminals. Writer asserts in this memoir that whatever life he lived, experienced and seen that is presented in the memoir. Problem of Kaikadi community is typically presented in the memoir. How they are victimized by various problems? He brings in our notice that thousands of people in the society are living in hut, on footpath and out of the village. They are thousands of miles away from main strata of the society. They have no freedom and rights, no shelter, no food and clothes submitted to their life. They are migrating from village to village for the sake of their survival.

It is an attempt of Laxman Mane to search the various problems in nomadic tribes. So he went different strata of the society and observed the life of wanderers. He attacks on careless system of govt. towards Nomadic Tribe. He provides lot of example where ignorant are punished in the name of cast and religion. Laxman Mane presents social, economical, political and cultural status of Nomadic tribe. He faced number of problem as a member of the community and tribes. People of Nomadic Tribe are victimized and exploited with the problems of superstition, illiteracy, unemployment and uncivilization. He also urges for the rescue of these people from wandering life on the back of the donkey. He wants to understand the basic problem of the community. He is not only writer but also a social worker.

The memoir of Kishor, Shantabai Kale entitled *Against all Odds* is a story of a poor and dishonored boy in Kolhati community. The boy himself is Kishor Kale neglected by parents as well as society. This mother is forced to be 'Natchrani.' The miserable life of 'Natchrani' is presented in the memoir. People enjoy the dance of the forced lady. Her family member responds to her act and live enjoyable life. The people hardly reject to call 'Natchrani' as prostitute. Brutal nature of the people towards 'Natchrani' is typically presented. The lady keeps the art live. She entertainment is mostly used by the people as an entertainment and enjoyment. Govt. has also shown disinterest towards the 'Natchrani' in the Kolhati community. Society and govt. also become irresponsible for the lives of such lady and her arts. The babies of 'Natchrani' have not been got patron from mother and father in Kolhati community.

Babies of Natchrani are not followed with them. The baby with the 'Natchrani' is considered as disgrace at her part. People are the responsible for the miserable life of 'Natchrani'. If the 'Natchrani' dies in her young stage, her baby has to live as orphan. The writer himself is treated inhumanly. He is dishonored due to his birth in Kolhati community. 'Natchrani' is surviving the art but she is labeled dancer and prostitute. There are many women belonging to poor and rich family are treated humanly and treated well whereas Natchrani who is keeping art living. But she is not treated equally. Though, Natchranis are honestly with their act and culture. Women in films earn crores of rupees within hours. They are honored and respected such discrimination hurts the writer. Natchrani who is struggling to survive. The act of Natchrani is considered as prostitute. The writer asserts that the women of the kolhati community are not prostitute rather they are honest with the person who possess them as partner. Writer blames to the people who look at Natchrani as prostitute. The dancer women of the kolhati community adorn the beds of men. These upper caste men disrobe the women who perform 'Nautanks'. The women dance to please patrons in order to survive. How can they be expected to show spousal loyalty?

Thus the discussed memoirs of the writer focused on social condition of nomadic Tribe. The real experience of the writer is one of the authenticities of the memories. The writers were the member of that community. So it is natural of the reality and objectivity of their community. The memoirs, therefore, have as inseparable social relevance in Indian literature.

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