Indian Dalit Literature

Exploring the Marginalised Voices

नमूना • SAMPLE

नमूना • SAMPLE

Indian Dalit Literature

Exploring the Marginalised Voices

SAMPLE

Edited by
Dr. Abhisarika Prajapati

AKHAND PUBLISHING HOUSE
DELHI (INDIA)

Published by



AKHAND PUBLISHING HOUSE

Publisher, Distributor, Exporter having an Online Bookstore

Head Office : L-9A, Ist Floor, Street No. 42,
Sadatpur Extension, Delhi-110094 (INDIA)
Phone No.: 9968628081, 9555149955 & 9013387535
E-mail : akhandpublishing@yahoo.com,
akhandpublishinghouse@gmail.com
Website : www.akhandbooks.com

Indian Dalit Literature
Exploring the Marginalised Voices

© Editor
Ist Edition 2020
ISBN 978-81-948850-4-7

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner Author/Editors. Application for such permission should be addressed to the Publisher and Author/Editors. Please do not participate in or do not encourage piracy of copyrighted materials in violation of the author's rights. Purchase only authorized editions.

The responsibility for facts stated, opinion expressed or conclusions reached and plagiarism, if any, in this book is entirely that of the author. Neither the publishers nor the editor will be responsible for them whatsoever.

Printed in India

Published by Jhapsu Yadav for Akhand Publishing House. Cover Designed and Laser Typesetting at VM Graphic and Printed at Aarna Enterprises, Delhi.

FREE SAMPLE

Educate, Agitate and Organise…...

—Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

नवयुग • SAMPLE

नमूना • SAMPLE

Foreword

Dalit literature has traversed a long way from its early beginnings across multiple regions and cultures. In the process it has moved beyond being life stirring autobiographical narratives to include nuanced mappings of a contemporary world. Multiple possibilities of Dalit writings emerge from a variety of marginalized experiences from across the plural landscape of India today. Dalit consciousness is an integral part of Dalit voices that emerge in various languages across the Indian sub-continent. Despite the specific local or regional characteristics reflected in these writings, yet they are bound by commonalities of their experiences and their attempts to look for progressive alternatives. These voices of dissent have universal resonances with literature of the oppressed world over ranging from voices of the Blacks, Latin Americans to Palestinians to name a few.

Indian Dalit Literature: Exploring the Marginalised Voices walks through the landscape of Dalit narratives and explores the 'othernesses' of subalternized existences, their quest for socio-cultural identities and contextualising caste distinctions. The work gains currency and relevance through its engagement across genres with various dimensions of caste and its subsequent impact on human lives. In the process, commonalities of oppression and marginalization across spaces are explored and

SAMPLE

negotiated in order to understand their self-hood and identities. Dr Abhisarika Prajapati's scholastic expertise is foregrounded in the tidy compilation of relevant works by varied writers making it a significant addition to the area of subaltern writing in general and Dalit literature in particular.

Dr Beena G
Registrar
REVA University
Bengaluru-64
India

SAMPLE

Preface

Caste is a form of social stratification categorized by endogamy, inherited program of a bravura of life which often comprises a profession, ritual status in a hierarchy, and habitual social interface and exclusion based on cultural notions of purity and pollution. Braham. single spiritual power that Hindus believe lives in everything. The caste system rifts Hindus into four main classes - Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Shudras. Many believe that the groups originated from Brahma, the Hindu God of creation. Outside of this Hindu caste system were the 'achhoots' - the Dalits or the untouchables.

A caste system is a class construction that is resolute by birth. Insecurely, it means that in some societies, if your parents are poor, you're going to be poor, too. ... The phrase caste system has been around since the 1840's, but we've been using caste since the 1500's.

The 60-page report, Caste Discrimination: A Global Concern, focuses on the Dalits or so-called untouchables of South Asia - including Nepal, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan - as well the Buraku people of Japan, the Osu of Nigeria, and certain groups in Senegal and Mauritania who also suffer from caste-based norms in their society.

According to one long-held theory about the origins of South Asia's caste system, Aryans from central Asia invaded South Asia and introduced the caste system as a means of controlling the local

SAMPLE

populations. The Aryans defined key roles in society, then assigned groups of people to them. The Brahmanas were created from his naval; the Kshatriyas from his hands; the Vaishyas from his thighs and the Sudras from his feet. According to the social historical theory, the origin of caste system finds its origin in the arrival of Aryans in India. The Aryans arrived in India in around 1500 BC.

The caste system, as it actually works in India is called 'jati'. The term jati appears in almost all Indian languages and is related to the idea of ancestry or relationship group. There are perhaps more than 3000 jatis in India and there is no one all-Indian system of position them in order of status. Yet in each local area jati ranking exists and is very much related to purity and contamination. Each jati has some exclusive occupation, but not everybody in the jati achieves it. Thus, there are barbers who do not shave, carpenters who do not build, and Brahmins who do not act as pastors. A jati is recognized in a home-grown setting by whom its associates will receive food and water from and to which jatis its associates will give food and water. People will try to marry their sons and daughters to members of their same jati and will give their major faithfulness to their jati. A jati will habitually be prearranged into a biradari (a brotherhood), and this society carries out the occupational and superintends the working of the jati and has the power to exclude an lawbreaker from the jati.

If a Hindu person were asked to explain the nature of the caste system, he or she might start to tell the story of Brahma — the four-headed, four-handed deity worshipped as the creator of the cosmos.

According to an earliest text known as the Rigveda, the division of Indian society was based on Brahma's divine appearance of four groups.

Priests and educators were cast from his mouth, monarchs and fighters from his arms, wholesalers and brokers from his thighs, and workers and farmers from his feet.

In addition to the varnas, there is a fifth class in Hinduism. It incorporated outcasts who, literally, did all the dirty work. They were referred to as "untouchables" because they carried out the

miserable tasks associated with disease and pollution, such as cleaning up after funerals, dealing with sewage, and working with animal skin.

Brahmins were painstaking the quintessence of purity, and untouchables the personification of pollution. Physical interaction between the two groups was unquestionably forbidden. Brahmins followed so powerfully to this rule that they felt grateful to bathe if even the shadow of an unattainable fell across them.

Although the political and social force of the caste system has not vanished entirely, the Indian government has officially outlawed caste discernment and made extensive transformations. Predominantly through the efforts of Indian nationalists such as Mohandas Gandhi, rules thwarting social flexibility and cross-caste blending have been loosened.

Gandhi renamed the untouchables Harijans, which means "the people of God." Adopted in 1949, the Indian Constitution provided a legal framework for the emancipation of untouchables and for the equality of all citizens.

In recent years, the Untouchables have become a politically active group and have adopted for themselves the name Dalits, which means "those who have been broken."Efforts are being made to confront the uncomfortable truth about this social structure, with the Ayushmann Khurrana-starring 2019 movie Article 15 seen as the first Bollywood blockbuster to tackle the issue of caste-based atrocities head-on.

And in southern India, it is usual to find people categorizing themselves by only a single name in a denial of the caste associations that so often come with surnames. Relationships between castes have become more relaxed today. There is more food distribution between castes and a lot more eating done at local restaurants where caste distinctions are less likely to be made. One of the biggest changes that took place in India was occupational pursuits among men (Sekhon, 43) (and women later on). Earlier, most men did not veer away from their caste-linked occupations, such as blacksmithing and pottery making. Many have now taken up newer

professions that do not relate to their caste, such as government jobs, teaching, retail and services, and machine repair. Affluence and power in the village is now less accompanying with caste than before, and landownership has become more differentiated (Sekhon, 44). Also, the idea that purity and pollution is caused by the lower castes has moderated a good amount. It has, however, only somewhat contracted in the public, whereas behind closed doors and on ceremonial occasions, decontamination rituals related to caste status are still observed. Endogamy is still enforced among families, but not as stern as before.

नमूना • SAMPLE

Acknowledgement

I do not have words to express my inexpressible gratitude to God, the Almighty who directed and triggered in my heart to undertake a project like this on Dalit Literature which is the dire need of our time. A society and the entire humanity can only survive on the mantra of equality, fraternity and liberty without which we will keep on chasing a wild goose in the name of scientific advancement and technological growth.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thankfulness to Dr Beena G, Registrar, REVA University whose humanitarian approach towards every problem and issues encouraged me to take this challenge and many more. I appreciate and value her support and encouragement from the bottom of my heart. REVA university is a place which inculcates in its scholars, students and in teaching fraternity as well an everlasting attitude of commitment, involvement, ownership and ethics in all the ventures of life.

At this juncture I would also like to convey my humble gestures to all the contributors and authors of the insightful and very informative papers and articles which would definitely be fruitful and useful for students, scholars and academicians who are interested in Dalit voices from India.

With the blessings of
(Late Basawan Ram & Jhari Devi)

SAMPLE

नमूना • SAMPLE

Contents

	Foreword	*vii*
	Preface	*ix*
	Acknowledgement	*xiii*
	Dalit Literature-An Introduction	*xvii*
1.	Socio-Cultural Identity, Displacement and Law with Special Reference to the Tribes Politics of Jharkhand: A Critical Analysis *—Ms. Anuja Mishra & Dr. Ajay Barnwal*	1
2.	Dalit Literature and Aesthetics with reference to Kusumabale by Devanoor Mahadeva *—Hemavathi B C*	12
3.	Depiction of 'Motherhood' in select Dalit poems- An Interplay of Weakness and Strength- A New Critical Perspective *—Sompurba Basu*	22
4.	Dalit Literature and Black Literature: A Comparative Approach *—Dr. Sudarsan Sahoo*	33
5.	A Study of the Aesthetics of Dalit Literature in Dalit Kannada writers, with Reference to	

SAMPLE

Siddalingaiah Devaiah's A Word with you, World: The Autobiography of a Poet 40
—*Kiranmayi M*

6. Status of Dalits in the Nepali Community under the caste-based System 52
—*Priscilla Konyak*

7. A Critical Study of Dalit Literature in India: Then and Now 59
—*Mrs. Sameera Jabeen*

8. Reforms: Inside-Outsider-Conflict-Contextualizing Caste Distinction in India 71
—*Ms. Mala. Narayanaswamy*

9. Women and Wellness: Overlaps of Gender Discrimination and Alterity in Urmila Pawar's The Weave of my Life and Baby Kamble's The Prisons We Broke 78
—*Dr. Abhisarika Prajapati*

10. Marginalisation and Trepidation; Understanding Om Prakash Valmiki's Amma and Other Stories & Joothan 88
—*Medoleno Seyie*

11. Post-partition trauma and Existential Crisis of a Dalit refugee; A Study of Manoranjan Byapari's Interrogating My Chandal Life 100
—*Dr. Abul Foyes Md Malik*

12. Cultural Identity : Belief System in Perumal Murugan's One Part Woman 108
—*B. Infancy Reena & Dr. Beena G.*

Short Notes on Authors *115*

SAMPLE

Dalit Literature: An Introduction

Literature is the mirror of society. This is the simplest ever written definition of society. Nonetheless the role and function of literature do not exhaust here as it also records human history and refines the theory of human mind. Prof. Waman Nimbalkar says that Dalit literature is a product of Dalit consciousness dealing with a kind of rejection and acceptance. The system of caste division and caste hierarchy sounds absurd for a person who does not belong to India but for an Indian it changes the meaning of life and his or her social status completely regardless of ones' talent and human rights. Since the ages Caste system which is based on birth in a particular family determine ones' fate and generates tremendous vacuum in the social and cultural life of Indian society leaving behind all its declarations to be an emerging superpower on the International level. Every society in human history was divided or witnessed a sort of class conflict and discrimination but in Indian society caste decides one's class keeping aside its democratic and constitutional values if not everywhere.

The word Dalit gained currency as a self-chosen, proud name with the early 1970s development of the Dalit Panthers and Dalit literature. In fact, Dalit literature empowers Dalit community and gives them confidence and self-esteem. It does not portray Dalits as victims but as victorious who struggle against all the oddities of life and overcome the hurdles.

SAMPLE

Dalits are a section of Indian society who on the basis of their birth in a particular family or caste are marginalised and exploited in the hands of so-called upper caste which manifests in fact a well-woven machinery of power politics. Though any discussion about caste and Dalit usually create sensation among people and in academia as well. It often leads toward a hot debate in the contemporary time though succeeds to drag serious attention. The academic world and men of letters tend to explore and investigate the concerns, issues and challenges of Dalits in Indian society to offer a possibly influential solutions to eradicate this social evil which has become a stigma on the national pride of our country. Dalits were considered as subhuman and downtrodden and struggled enormously. The suppressed section of society known and addressed as Dalits had to undergo a terrible phase to resist against the oppression and subjugation to raise their voice and to establish their identity.

Dalit literature provides a crystal-clear image of exploitation, episodes of torture and traumatic experiences of Dalits in Indian society. It proclaims and deconstruct the dominant views of the dominant. Dalit literature is often compared to Black literature due to their shared affinity in terms of experiences devoid of any human rights and marginalisation. C. D Narasimhaiah writes in "India and the literature of Common wealth",

"Not long ago there were Negro women who were ashamed to say their race created it. They didn't care for Negro paintings because they were 'too Negro'. I want to be a poet, not a Negro poet was what one heard. And today they have gone so far in asserting their identity that without it they have nothing to stand up to the Whiteman. And some of their rebels rightly assert that Negro children are born into a white world and if they are to survive in it they need to achieve blackness. The black writer shouts 'The statue of liberty must go' the bitch must vacate our minds'. He says, 'it is more important to know how to cry,sob,laugh,stare and startle than to learn how to smile, grimace archly and wink' The writers want to define the world in their own terms."(Narsimhaiah,33)

Dalit literature is not a product of a sudden revolution but is a consequence of Dalit consciousness and resistance against caste hierarchy but it created a surge with a stalwart figure of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, a phenomenal thinker and expanded his thoughts as a movement. Therefore, it proliferated not only in one language but sprouted and bloomed in almost all the languages of India. The major concerns, issues and stories of Dalit literature tell the similar kind of experiences with a new and realistic portrayal of the picture of society. Dalit writers contributed their writings in numerous genres of literature as non-fiction, fiction, short fiction, plays and poems. Their literature debunks a brutal side of Indian society where a section of society in the name of caste was considered untouchable and thrown on the margin of society deprive of education and basic necessities of life and living.

In our contemporary time Dalit literature has emerged as a distinct branch of Indian literature tat subverts the philosophy and role of literature altogether on various grounds. Undoubtedly Dalit writers have prepared a firm ground for Dalit identity and have used literature as a vehicle to resist against discrimination and marginalisation. They advocate that financial compensation is not the final solution for this problem and issue of caste hierarchy but a respected place in mainstream society and social justice are the purpose of Dalit literature. Dalit literature does not only relevant as a discipline in the field of literature but it contributes a lot in other academic fields as well like sociology, poilitics and economics. To a greater extent Dalit issues and concerns often change the face of politics and are manipulated also for political gain in India. Dalit writers include women writers too who have raised the voice of 'she' and empowered the movement of feminism in Indian context. The voice of the marginalised and subaltern was not completely absent in the history of Indian literature but one notice and trace the Dalit identity and their voice in the works of no Dalit writers also like R. K. Narayan,Mulkraj Anand,Premchandra,Raja Rao, Arvind Adiga, Rohinton Mistry and Arundhati Roy.

Arjun Dangle say, "Dalit literature is marked by revolt and negativism, since it is negatively associated with hopes for the

freedom of a group of people,who,as untouchables ,are victims of social, economic and cultural inequality." (qtd in Misra 275) Dalit literature encapsulates the angst and agony, torture and trepidation, pain and pathos. Dalit writer use writings as a vehicle to educate, organise and agitate to eradicate this social evil. According to Surinder S Jodhaka, "The question of caste today is also complicated by the fact that it has remained deeply embedded in the questions of Indian Modernity. This is evident from the ensemble of words through which the category of caste is invoked-tradition, nativity, custom, ritual backwardness or exclusion-all of which generate strong political effects. The words that are often invoked in oppression to caste such as development, progress, merit or inclusion and citizenship also generate equally strong political effects. This complicate the nature of the relationship of caste with modernity has continued to be a source of contention in the writings and discussion on the subject even today." (xii)

The prime target of Dalit literature is to protest and react against the established caste hierarchy of Indian society which is absolutely illogical, ridiculous and hypocrite. Dalit literature has already acquired a prestigious place in contemporary India literature and inspires academia to initiate more reformation in this field to prevent atrocities and violence against Dalits. Its objectives are also to bring change in the behaviour of people to give them respect and accept Dalits voice as one of the voices of Indian society blurring the line of demarcation, discrimination and marginalisation. The research articles included in this book aim to explore Dalit voices across the country as they record and document episodes of struggle and suffering. Autobiography is the favourite genre of Dalit writers as it presents a realistic picture of the life the writer without any flavour of fantasy and imagination. In a nutshell Dalit literature is not an armchair reading of fiction rather they are excruciating and brilliantly though provoking.

1

Socio-Cultural Identity, Displacement and Law with Special Reference to the Tribes Politics of Jharkhand: A Critical Analysis

Ms. Anuja Mishra
Dr. Ajay Kumar Barnwal

Abstract:

Tribal community is one of the most deprived communities of India, which continue to suffer from various deprivations, though there are many special legal frameworks in the constitution of India, number of targeted policies, initiatives and enabling provisions in various legislations; The rights of tribal communities are grossly violated. Meeting with all the interest and objectives of the population of tribes, the legislature enacted "The Bihar reorganization of State Act" which resulted in creation of state of Jharkhand as 28th state of India on 15th November, 2000. The main reason for which Jharkhand state was demanded that to

Ms. Anuja Mishra, Research Scholar, Department of Public policy, Law & Governance, Central University of Rajasthan, Ajmer.
Dr. Ajay Kumar Barnwal, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.

SAMPLE

have a separate state to recognize the tribal identity and culture articulated from the geographical and other features of the state. As after creation of state the situation became more critical on certain issues like land. To provide protection related to the land some specific legislation like The Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act (SPT), Chhotanagpur Tenancy Act (CNT) has been enforced. But these laws either being relaxed or not applied in the affecting manner as it was. These all affected the socio-economic identity of Tribes of the state.

Through this paper the authors have tried to analyse the status of Tribes of Jharkhand by analysing the Constitutional goal, special legislations and displacement. The objective of the study is to explore the political stigma behind deprivation of particular community of newly created state of Jharkhand.

Keywords: Displacement, development, SPT, CNT.

Introduction

Jharkhand, the 28th state of India was carved out of the southern part of state of Bihar on 15th November 2000 through the Bihar reorganization Act. The state is bordered by Bihar in the north, Uttar Pradesh and Chattisgarh in the west, Orissa in the south and West Bengal in the east. The state is famous for its rich mineral resources and forests which occupy more than 29% of the state's area. In fact, Jharkhand is a state always known in the country for its resources, distinct culture as well as various forms of deprivation and exploitation. The state was formed with eighteen districts eleven years ago and even after several promises and assurances for betterment the situation in the state is depressing because of multiplication of negative aspects of development (Toppo). Total population of the state is around 38 million where the share of tribal population is 26.30%. Jharkhand contributes 8.4% ST population to the total ST population of the country. The major concentration of tribal population is in the six districts of Ranchi, Lohardaga, Gumla, West Singhbhum and Dumka.

SAMPLE

"Any tribe or tribal community or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community as deemed under Article 342 is Scheduled Tribe for the purpose of the Indian Constitution". Like others, tribal society is not quite static but dynamic; however, the rate of change in tribal societies is rather slow. That is why they have remained relatively poor and backward compared to others; hence, attempts have been made by the Government to develop them since independence. Still, even after so many years of numerous attempts the condition of tribals in Jharkhand presents scenario of deprivation rather than development (Prakash "Rethinking 'Regional Developmental Imbalances'; Spatial Versus the Socio-Political 'Region': The Case of Tribals in Jharkhand"). The 2011 Human Development Report argues that the urgent global challenges of sustainability and equity must be addressed together and identifies policies at national and global level that could mutually spur reinforcing progress towards these interlinked goals. Bold action is needed on both fronts for the sustained progress in human development for the benefit of future generations as well as for those living today. The state is at a very slow pace of development in relation to its potential and expectations. As per the 2001 census 46.2% of the population is below the poverty line (some estimates put it at 54%) (Ahmad). The incidence of poverty is higher than Bihar whose per capita income is around half of that of Jharkhand. The state has one of the richest mineral reserves yet there is vast social and regional disparity. It is a paradoxical situation of a primitive and marginalized society on the verge of extinction juxtaposed with the modern western world. The per capita income of the state is approximately Rs.15000 which is almost equal to that of other states where incidence of poverty is much lower. Since the state has a large tribal population it is quite obvious that they are the most deprived section of the society. The history of last two decades has been marked by the process of development in general and economic transformation in particular in India. As in other parts of the world, in India, the last two decades have witnessed a major transformation in the nature and process of development activities.

However, the Western Model of Development based on the market economy and minimal role for the state as followed in many parts of the developing countries has been facing challenges in many parts of the world. Developing countries today face serious challenges resulting from economic change and industrialization, which affect in particular indigenous people who live in isolation and are often forgotten (Singh et al.). However, the path of development that many countries have adopted, especially in India, cause forcible displacement of an increasing number of people inevitable. This leads the issues related to the identity crisis, cultural degradation and law and order situation. When it comes to survival, culture and religion comes at rescue. They are the same in essence as cultural practices culminate in to religious orders over time. In the tribal state of **Jharkhand**, the roots of cultural diversity have been threatened by developmental forces of the so-called government policies and missionaries. It has been difficult for the ethnic clans to safeguard their **culture**, as such is not a crime to devoid individuals from practicing their cultural believes. The culture revere forest as God and when indiscriminately in the name of development the forest are ruined which is a criminal act of a degree where individual independence is at stake (Halavath).

When the choice is between breathing and development, one might choose to breathe first. The encounter with the developmental dragon happened to be in the state of Jharkhand. Where in the name of development what has been witnessed is a chaotic environmental sabotage, be it by the massive mining projects or the widening and construction of highways or by the decreasing water table around. All these issues might look a separate agenda but they are closely interlinked. The agony which grows in the heart is that, they cut the trees along the highway which served as a micro niche for many flora and fauna around. Concretization of the city without any urban planning of ground water recharge and rain water harvesting leaves a critical situation of water runoff thus creating shortage of water; further this has its ecological implications too with no proper monsoon from last two years (Singh et al.).