

# Dalit Literature and Aesthetics

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**Abstract – Dalits, the so called marginalized segments of the India have been looming large in the creative consciousness of Indian writer since 1960 when it was initially noticed in Marathi literature. Dalit literature has today taken substantial shape in a variety of Indian languages such as Gujarati, Kannada, Telugu, Punjabi, Tamil, Hindi and Malayalam. A large number of these texts are translated for the benefit of a wider audience within and outside India. Telling literary depictions of the exercise of discrimination, violence and poverty of these suppressed groups have gained special importance on recent times and Dalit literature has acquired a distinct character of its own.**

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Dalit literature is the writing about dalits by dalit writers with a dalit consciousness. It is precisely that literature which artistically portrays the sorrows, tribulations slavery, degradation, poverty and ridicule endured by dalits. These literatures recognized the mentality of human being and are thoroughly saturated with humanity's joys and sorrows. Dalit literature is not simply literature. It is associated with a movement-ambekarite movement to bring about change. The stirred into action all the dalits literature is nothing but the literacy expression of this awareness.

Dalit literature is marked by suffering, rejection, revolt and negativism. The anguish seen in the literature is not pain of one person, nor is it of just one-day it is the anguish of many thousands of people, experienced over thousands of years. Therefore it is expressed collectively. The anguish of dalit literature is not that of an individual but of the entire outcast society. This is the reason why it has assumed a social character. Rejection is aimed at the unequal social order which has exploited dalits. Its form is double-edged; rejecting the unequal order and demanding equality, fraternity, justice and liberty. Revolt is stage that follows anguish and rejection.

Dalit literature is purposive. This purpose is variously described as revolutionary, transformative and liberator. In as much as transforming the condition of the dalits and challenging the cast system, it has a revolutionary cause. Dalits speak about themselves i.e. their experience in language which is their own. The radical function of dalit literature is served through it authentic representation of the dalit reality. Dalit literature portrays the seamier side of dalit life. Life outside the boundaries of the villages is marked by a scene of community, sharing, warmth and physically. But it is often wretched. There is in it ignorance, sexism, violence, internal rivalry and

conflict, competition for survival darkness and death. Authentic representation, then involves an unromantic zed and un pitying reflection in literature of the materiality of dalit life in all its dimension.

The reality of dalit literature is distinct and so is the language of the reality. It is the uncouth, impolite language of dalits. It is the spoken language of dalits. This language does not recognize cultivated gestures and grammar. Dalit writers make their personal experiences the basic of their writing. In fact, their writing expressed the emotional and commitment of activities. Dalit consciousness in dalit literature is the revolutionary mentality connected with struggle. It is a belief in rebellion against cast system, recognizing the human being as its focus. Because of the form, purpose and role of dalit literature, many accusation have been made against it has been charged that dalit literature is propagandist, univocal and negative, that it does not represent the individual person and the excessive resentment is heard in dalit literature.

Although various genres are noted in dalit literature, the most popular and widely accepted form is the autobiography. Here the author realistically depicts the traumas of being an untouchable and the target of upper-caste ideology and machinations and questions the institutions and ideologies that have placed him at the margin. Major dalit writers of today includes Narendra jadavh (Marathi), Sharan kumar limbale (Marathi), om prakash valmiki (Hindi), Burma (Tamil), Jooher Gowri Shankar (Telugu), Joseph Maewann (Gujarathi), and Narayan (Malayalam).

Marathi dalit writer activist Sharan Kumar Limbale's towards aesthetic of dalit literature: history, controversies and consideration (translated by alok mukhaerjee) is the first critical work by an eminent

dalit writer to appear in English is an extensive and though provoking account of the debates among dalit writer on how dalit literature should be read. According to him, the aesthetics of dalit literature rests on first, the artists social commitment second the life affirming values present in the artistic creation and third, the ability to rise the reader consciousness of fundamental values like equality, freedom, justice and fraternity.

Limbale also proposes a framework for reading and evaluating dalit literature. The following standards are set down by him.

- 1) Artists must be motivated by their experiences.
- 2) Artists must socialize their experiences.
- 3) Artists experiences must have the strength to cross all boundaries.
- 4) Artists experiences must seem relevant to all time.

Dalit writers should best express ambedkarite thought in their literature. They will need to acquire a heightened consciousness of literature in order to give literacy expression to their inspiration and their experiences of life. The deeper the relationship of readers with a dalit writer inspiration, the greater will be their liking for the work. The artist, the artistic creation, and the personality is reflected in the readers personality is unified with this reflection, artist and the reader undoubtedly become one in the artistic creation.

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