

DALIT LITERATURE: A CULTURAL STUDY OF SUBORDINATES*Dr. A. T. Gavhale, Kisan Arts, Commerce and Science, College Parola, Dist. Jalgaon (M.S.), India***Abstract:**

In the cultural studies of Dalit Literature, the present paper attempts to illustrate a cultural transaction between Dominants and Subordinates. In fact, the subordinates create a new voice and special cultural identity with experiencing discrimination, exploitation, inequality, disrespect, injustice and economic exploitation. The credit goes to Dalits' struggle, endurance, pains, patience and discourse for compromise with anti-socio-political atmosphere. Today putting aside their pains, Dalits makes cultural reconciliation with suvarnas on the grounds of human dignity, social credit and national dignity like the Black Writers - Alice Walker, James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison and Toni Morrison. Really, Dalit is not a caste but a socio-economic category of discriminated belonging to many castes and societies speaking many languages. Therefore it needs to study and illustrate the socio-cultural concern between Dalits and Dominants on grounds of human cultural icons and literature.

Key Words: *Discourse, Cultural identity, Pains, Patience and compromise.*

Like Black American literature, Dalit literature has achieved its own cultural existence for social justice-ignorance, slavery, sorrows and sufferings. Dalit literature has acquired forceful status for human dignity and social equal rights like Human Rights for celebration of humanity and the universe. It has created a new voice and cultural identity to people who experienced exploitation, discrimination, and marginality. Today with respect to cultural studies, all academic faculties in India have given place to Dalit Literature. It is therefore to understand how does Dalit literature reconcile with other culture fundamentally for celebration of humanity? It becomes literature of social and political commitment that challenges socio-racial issues and compromise with other cultures as a part of human dignity and national credit like Black Americans. As Baburao Bagul agreed, "Dalit Sahitya is not literature of vengeance; Dalit Sahitya is not literature which spreads hatred. Dalit Sahitya first promotes man's greatness and man's freedom and for that reason it is an historic necessity..... Anguish, waiting, pronouncements of sorrows alone do not define Dalit Sahitya. We need literature heroically full of life to create a new society." (VOL I 53-57)

Sur-realism is a major phase of Dalit literature which in calculate pains and passions of Dalits in blue song at the margin and challenges mainstream of social issues. These are not pure passions of pseudo-romanticists but epical agonies are unified in ghosts of discrimination and exploitation. So, pains and patience become sources of Dalits where they aware about a roots of dominants in the anti-climate of Indian Society. The higher caste writer were creating their special voices which were haunted the Dalits. We see, the novelists like Mulk Raj Anand was constructing socially polluted climate for Dalits in the label of untouchables. After experiencing living ill treatment of dominants, Dalits started revolution in writing which was credited by unaccepted and colloquial language in main stream of society. For individual, social and national dignity, Dalit writers followed a few theories on the grounds of Dalit perspectives. They imitated Marxist and Ambedkarite Ideology in literary reformation to reform a new society with cultural discourse. Consequently, Dalit literature came on international platform to celebrate human and human values in cultural compromising human for present-future generation of dominants and our own. In that sense Dalit literature has achieved quantity and quality in mainstream literature which clarified surrealism

in general walks of life and the characters' central theme in their own dignified world.

Untouchability is a racial state of mind where subordinates are treated as in inhuman mode calling them slaves/ untouchables. Really, like the Blacks, untouchables have cross currents in their mind. The primary motive of Dalit literature is the liberation of Dalits. Dalit Literature in India “owes its origin to a revolutionary struggle for social and economic changes. This liberation is closely associated with the hopes for freedom of a group of people, who as untouchables are victims of social economic and cultural inequality” (Dangale 237). A social Reformer in Maharashtra, Jyotiba Phule coined the term related with exploitation of out castes-*shudra*, as he was deeply pained from low status of *shudras and atishudras*. These terms do not indicate particular task but focuses on people and commodities that are racially and economically suppressed and neglected from main torrent of society. It clarifies that, Dalit is not caste; it is an umbrella term which naturally covers socio-economic group of oppressed people belonging to many castes, colours and creeds speaking multi linguistic dialects. On official ground, the word 'Dalit', culturally transferred in depressed classes and today we use scheduled castes. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar used to pay respectful birth based identity to Dalits as *untouchable castes*. In view of Janardan Waghmare, “The untouchability was the worst of slavery imposed upon the Atishudras by the Brahmin thralldom”. (The Quest XX). In real, untouchables had suffered from the most dehumanizing treatment by the Brahmins like Negroes from the White Brahmins of U.S.A. Naturally, the Brahmin Chaturvarna system is the source of all evils of Dalit literature. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar observed Negro-slavery in USA and compared it with Indian Untouchability. In this anti-climate the untouchable could not develop cultural roots over Indian land. The main stream literature has treated Dalits as subhuman. It has treated them as “drunkards, criminals, thieves, quarrelsome....etc.” (Trivedi 52).

With the legacy of Mahatma Phule, Dalit literature has achieved a special place in 1960 in form of Renaissance and Reformation. Prior to the 1960s, the socio-political movement of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar gave rise to Dalit literature: says Rajesh Karankal, "His (Dr. Ambedkar) writings in periodicals contained the seeds of Dalit literature". (14). Then Baburao Bagul, Bandhu Madhav and Shankarrao Kharat started to express Dalit corners and issues in their literature. Dalit Renaissance turns citizens of India to review issues of untouchables in a new social phenomenon. Apart from past pains and patience the said reformers writers started cultural revolutionary movements to compromise dominants on social political and rational ground. The Dalit Remissance collected intellectual energy from Dr. Ambedkar's ideas and Thoughts (The Quest-XXI). Throwing all the said bias and barriers on the road like the Blacks, Dalit writers started quest their roots to compromise with Democratic Laws and Liberal Humanism in Dalit Literature. Like Pseudo Romanticists they started to elaborate their injustice, exploitation, inferiorly in liberal manner with incalcing and honoring values of Equality, Liberty and Fraternity in their literature. It becomes literature of social commitment and compromise to aim to promote socio-cultural equality and Justice to suffering, discrimination and socio-political economical exploitation. Namdeo Dhasal founded on organisation named as Dalit Panther and expanded the Dalit Literature movement in India. Dalit writers like Daya Pawar, Laxman Gaikwad, Arjun Dangale, Narayan Surve started cultural discourse and earned to review their lost cultural identities with their autobiographical records as prominent voices of Dalit writers. A poet - like Namdeo Dhasal experimented political language of his living untouchable experiences in the poem “*Hunger*” (914). Again his “*Golpiha*” (1973) becomes part of Dalit Renaissance in grim plight of outcaste and exploitation of women of lower castes in the system prostitution. While asserting realities of society, Dalit Literature created cultural compromise with dominants voices. Due to aesthetics and cultural discourse it connects with universal human emotions and creative voices. Dr. C. B. Bharati writes: “The aim of Dalit Literature is to protest against the established system which is based on injustice and to expose the evil and hypocrisy of the higher castes. There is an urgent need to create a separate aesthetics to Dalit Literature, an aesthetics based on the real experiences of life.” (The Aesthetics).

Removing all shackles of tradition and exploitation, Dalit writers started cultural revolution for their ideology with using subversive idioms, obscenity and low cultural words. However, they are searching their ethics in mankind to celebrate Golden Age-Equality, Humanity, Culture, Dignity.....etc. Like democratic norms, Dalit writers had their own ideology and ethics before Indian citizens. Like American dream, their dream had gone through variations today and make optimistic note for future generations - *If winter comes, can spring be far behind..... (Waghmare XXII)*. Due to these potentialities, Dalit writers have searched cultural identity in the world like the Blacks. Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin and Toni Morrison. Both literatures are sailing in the same boat and facing journey from inhumanity to humanity, insecurity to security, untouchability to touchability and violation to struggle.

Today Dalit Literature is classed with upper community literature and challenged Brahminical heredity for national and universal creditability. The Telgu Dalit poets hope for “a nation, which doesn't have the caste system and all forms of inequality.” (Trivedi 147). All scholars agreed, Dalit literature does not play only role of contribution to all literatures but really credits ethical standards forever. Even Dalit literature has given a special place to Dalit women writers as responsible citizens of Indian Democracy. After searching own identity and assuring realities, it has got a vision for The New Dalit to make a New Dalit society in The New Dalit century India. Even a few narrow scholars try to neglect Dalit Literature from valuable trends and aesthetic aspect of major forms of literature of dominants. At last, Dalit aesthetics are unable to farewell universal human emotion and their blue productivity for constructing a new literature and society.

Thus, Dalit Renaissance is concerned with cultural revolution. It shows struggle for Human Rights in a new dimensions imitating racial cultural atmosphere. They had proved their cultural identity before savarnas - 'We are rational citizens of Indian democracy and culture'. Like doctrine of Gautam Buddha, *Atma Deepa Bhava' (Be your own Light)*, Dalits have vanished darkness from their minds and bridged human relations through cultural studies for present -future generations with *Celebration of Humanity*.

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