



Conceptual Insights of Neo Dalitism in the Light of Recent Dalit Writings

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ABSTRACT : Dalits are the marginalized people who are suppressed even today in the twenty-first century. In contemporary India, the word Dalit writings have been changing its meaning from caste to social and cultural functionality. Focusing only on caste would distort its collective meaning. Writings from the margin stands for globalization. The paper dissects the realities of today's Dalit community, what the word means today and how it is different from its earlier meaning. Dalit literature has its roots in the Ambedkarite thoughts. These writing have its own genre in Indian texts which emerge with its regional languages. First, this genre fights for its rights and equality in society. A traumatic realism is the principle cause of oppression and suppression of the community. Is it still a caste based or community or is it differentiated with other strata, and who are responsible for making such demarcation in the society. The Indian diaspora is differentiated on various stratas whether it is on regional, religious, caste, cultural lines. Dalit diaspora is also a part of a big umbrella term Diaspora, which raise the voice of the community fighting against the violation of Dalit rights at the international level. The objective of this paper is to analyze the importance and the very need to research on this part of a community which have always been discriminated on caste and culture basis and not on economic basis. This paper also discuss various text like Jhoothan by Om Prakash Valmiki. The concept of Neo Dalitism is the need of present world to understand. A compromise between the leaders of Hindu caste and the depressed classes was reached on September 24, 1932, popularly known as Poona Pact. The resolution announced in a public meeting on September 25 in Bombay confirmed -" henceforth, amongst Hindus, no one shall be regarded as an untouchable by reason of his birth and they will have the same rights in all the social institutions as the other Hindus have"

Keywords : Globalization, Marginalization, Traumatic Realism, Contemporary India, Neo Dalitism, Dalit Diaspora.

INTRODUCTION- Dalit movement originated with the birth of the concept of untouchability, a term coined by Mahatma Gandhi. It refers to the darkest spot of Hindu social structure. To reform this structure many reformists contributed a lot. Mahatma Gandhi and Dr.B.R Ambedkar were the two messiahs who voiced the voiceless Dalits. The first round table conference proved disastrous , when the British government under their divide and rule policy, decided to provide separate electorate for the oppressed classes. Dr.B.R Ambedkar favored this move of Britishers whereas Gandhiji opposed it because he feared that it would eventually lead to the disintegration of the Hindu society. Gandhiji went on a hunger strike from Sept 20, 1932 against this decision of granting communal award to depressed classes in the constitution by the British India. The Indian public prevailed upon Ambedkar and he was compelled to soften the stand. As a result of which there was the Poona pact on sept 24, 1934, . This is the landmark marked the beginning of a phase of Dalit movement. Dalit movement changed its meaning because the ideologies set by the originators of the movement was not acceptable to the community of post ambedkarine and post Gandhian era.

The activists of post-Gandhian and post-Ambedkar re-invented the direction of their movement and these direction focussed on developing new and progressive ideas in their dark room. Ambedkarite ideology advocated political power so that the Dalit community could enjoy the rights as compensation for humiliation since ages. The post ambedkar age activists of the community changed the ideology and focused on the positive change. This was a step towards Neo-Dalitism. But due to lack of forums, political empowerment and some personal ambitions of individualistic power, the wave of neo-Dalits could not attain the dream of a egalitarian society as envisaged in the Indian constitution.

The ideologies of the beginners of Dalit movement fail somewhere and post-activists gave a new wave to neo-dalitism, where they are not clear whether they are interested in ensuring the material prosperity or equal status in hindu social order Dalits are now enjoying the benefits of all the reservation in jobs and educational institutions; they are not unequal at all in any perspectives. Education is the only medium and source for any community to form an equality in the society. We are living in the age of competition, not in the age of community biasedness.

Dalit were the silent sufferers earlier but after getting education they first settled down and then stood for injustice, they raised their voice for human identity. They struggled for their acceptance as a human being and not for any anarchy. Education plays the role for their empowerment. They struggled for human identity and human dignity. They took the medium of literature also. The autobiographies and self-stories, the strong Dalit movement and Dalit literature for social equality and for the safety of the community led the government of India to amends laws and the schedule castes and tribes Act 1989 has includes the reservation policies in education and employment also. . The common people whether in dalit or in any communities are the marginalized people because these people are margined by the leaders of all community. Dr. Prakash luis said, “there is a sense of vertical divide within the community between the socially mobile ‘Brahmanical Dalits and the real Dalits among Dalits’

An author’s source of inspiration is the real social life that is depicted in his literary work. He or she assembles the message in his or her literary work to express purposively the social phenomena. Dalit literature is a type of evolution of the consciousness of human minds . The various influence of Dalit writers are the various western writers and literature. These writers pen down their soul-numbing experiences of

their acquaintances. Dalits are the caste victimized people. Their autobiographies play the role of an agent to bring about a positive transition or transformation for ending their exploitation. Many national and international writers contributed a lot to Dalit literature like John C.B Webster, Josiane Racine, Jean-Luc Racine, Dr.Gail moved, Eleanor Zelliot, Christophe Jaffrelot, Rabindranath Tagore, Jyotiba Phule, M.K Gandhi, Dr Ambedkar, Premchand, Mmulk Raj Anand, Vijay Tendulkar. According to John C. B. Webster, the term Dalit is not a new word. The word Dalit in the 20th century came into existence in 1958 in the first conference of Maharashtra Dalit Sahitya Sangha. The main thinker of this movement was Dr.B.R.ambedkar and Jyotiba Phule . It was later used in the year 1980s as a hindi and marathi translation for depressed classes. The term used by the British what is now called the scheduled castes came to be constitutionally recognized. M.E.Prabhakar in the following words said that.

“Dalits have been the most degraded, downtrodden, exploited and the least educated in our society. They have been socially and culturally, economically and politically subjugated and marginalized through three thousand years of our history and remain so, even after a half-a century of protective discrimination(as scheduled castes) under the aegis of the government of India. Even today they are denied individual and social identity (self-respect and status). The Dalits from the inner core of poverty which is birth-ascribed.”

Josiane and Jean-Luc-Racine’s work *Viramma: the life of an untouchable*, is an autobiographical story of a woman who is a Dalit, married at the age of eleven and before puberty giving birth to twelve children of which only three survived. In this, we directly see the double fight off the women as a Dalit feminist. The other prominent writer of Dalit literature is Gail Omvedt, an American writer, and activist. She has published numerous books on anti-caste movement.

India is a land of various castes, religions, communities, sects, creed, cults etc. The leading castes are the Hindus, Buddhist, Jain, Islam, and Christian. These communities strictly adhere to the teachings and doctrines of their religion. They tried their best to bring about a social change in the society. These efforts however led to the formation of two groups -one of the exploiter and other of the exploited one. The ever widening socio economic divide resulted in the emergence of this group called Dalits.

Dalit literature is a protest literature which shows the mirror to the reality of dalit situation. The first Dalit writer of the Dalit literature is Chokhamela, poet of Maharashtra. Dalit literature as an account about the broken class has emerged as an important and separated part of literature. The ambadkarite thought is the lifeblood of the Dalit literature. Dr. B.R.Ambedkar wrote

“ it is disgraceful to live at the cost of one’s self-respect. Self-respect is most vital in life. Without it man is a chipher to live worthily with respect one has to overcome difficulties. It is out of hard ceaseless struggle alone that one drives strength confidence and recognition”

Dr B.R Ambedkar in the above mentioned line states that self-respect is the most vital thing for all human beings for a worthwhile survival. Dalit people must fight for their respect for their respectful recognition. The prejudices and biasedness of the people seen in the caste system of India is compared to the African American literature because the issues of segregation and prejudices are reflected in the slave narratives also .Thus Dalit literature voiced the sufferings and struggles of the depressed, the suppressed and the marginalized groups of the Indian society. Dr. B.R Ambedkar published a book under Marathi title *Ostracized Bharat* and he defines dalithood as.

“a kind of life condition that characterizes the exploitation, suppression, and marginalization of Dalit people by the social, economic, cultural and political domination of the upper castes brahminical ideology.”

Dalit literature is a medium for the communities which are exploited for ages and humiliated. It is studied in mostly regional language. The prominent writers of Dalit literature are Om Prakash Valmiki (Joothan: A Dalit's life), Baby Kamble (Our Existence), Imayan (beats of burden) and much more. The author of Joothan(1997) himself belongs to the Dalit community. In his text, he depicts hard life and the discrimination faced by the Dalit people. The title describes that Dalit people are considered as equal to the ruminant of the food left in the plate after consuming the food. Valmiki depicts the struggle he faced as a child and as an adult. He considers himself as marginalized one from the community but his struggle is not for himself only but for the whole community. Other works like Bas! Bahut Ho Chuka(1997) and Ab Aur Nahin(2009) are very touchy titles which give a direct vision of the raised voice of the community who were humiliated a lot .

Dalit writers have made their voice in the 1960s. It waged a war against injustice not for a community or castes but for humanity. Linbale in an interview notes: “the span of my autobiography is my childhood. I won't write about the suffering of my community. So I cannot give importance to my personal life. I am writing for a social cause. My autobiography is a statement of my war against injustice”.

Neo-dalitism raise question on the literature which appreciates the caste system. Today Dalit assertion has reached the international level. Dalit diaspora is a part of Indian diaspora which is differentiated along many lines like regional, religious, linguistic or castes. It means that if there is any crisis in India it directly affects the Indian Diaspora. To understand the relation between the diaspora and the community better it should be analyzed in the light of the earthquake in Gujarat and its impact on the whole community inside and outside the country. Dalit paradigm has changed and morphed into Dalit diaspora. Dalit diaspora is an integral part of the Indian diaspora. The people of Indian diaspora whether Sikhs South Indians di, Gujaratis, etc living in countries of the world like UK, USA, Fiji, south Africa, Canada etc are now known and understood as one community irrespective of and above the narrow divisions of individual castes

There is an inferiority complex attached with the term as 'being Dalit'. Time is changing and so is the society. The dalits have realised their role and responsibility as the catalyst of change for a more unified India. They are now asserting themselves in every field whether it is a political, educational, business etc. They are making their presence everywhere. So the earlier meaning of the word Dalit- the depressed and suppressed class is changing its meaning by time. And when we speak about Indian Dalit literature, it now encompasses the changing role of Dalits- as catalyst of change, as the new face of a composite and vibrant India ,as the true representative of a democratic India and as the apostles of peace upholding the vedic injunction of Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam ie Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of man as taught by Bhagavad Gita towards a new social order of peace and harmony.

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