

# The theory of Dalit literature

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**Abstract :** The article deals with Dalit literature, language, and aesthetics, views on Dalit writings, literature by main stream literary society. The views and the role of dalit writers for awakening their society through their writings and discussions on Dalit literature which is born on the basis of political movement framing that equality, fraternity, and solidarity. Moreover, it talks about that the different kind of social perspectives that are transformed into a language. In addition, it also discuss that this literature only meant for social activism; hence, it does not follow the classical language rules and regulations, moreover, it is not at all fit into the classical literary framework.

**IndexTerms - Keywords:** Dalit language, literature, theory, aesthetics, mainstream.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The literary works constructed and celebrated by/through mainstream Indian literature and criticisms have been largely silent on marginal peoples, like Dalits, Muslims, Backward Classes and Women have increasingly come under scrutiny. Theorizing a counter-aesthetic is an essential part of such a project. Mainstream literary discourse has constantly claimed that Dalit literature does not have any aesthetic sense, standard language and does not follow universal criteria of literature. But Dalit writers have insisted that their writing has a particular purpose and audience and claim that these have an important bearing on literary and aesthetic evaluations, therefore, their work, instead of being assessed by “universalistic” criteria, should rather be used to critique such universalistic claims and their ideological underpinnings. The concerns of Dalit literature, language and aesthetics would, hence, appear to be of an entirely different order from that of the mainstream.

Dalit writers claim that their literature, like their lives, is liminal in nature and has its own unique characteristics that have to be seriously studied and enumerated. Mainstream critics have been nonplussed by the content and form of Dalit literature. The form and literary devices of Dalit literature are lucid. Unlike Hindu upper caste literary works, Dalit literature gives more importance to freshness rather than beauty and tenderness.

Dalit experiences and expressions are positing the history in quotidian. Though they may appear as alien and anathema to the “upper” caste sensibility, they can be read as embodying the political in all its dimensions. They are political, in that way they not only expose the ideological underbelly of the mainstream eclectic valorization of an Indian cultural-aesthetics but also moves towards a more egalitarian organization of society.

There is an urgent need to re-theorize notions of literary merit and aesthetics from marginal locations. Since Dalit literature is based on ideas of equality, liberty, justice, and solidarity rather than pleasure, it is important for Dalit critics to find a new imagery of “beauty and truth”, which is more responsive to contemporary lived realities. Otherwise, Dalit literature will forever be condemned for its lack of merits and the taste within the overarching framework of traditional aesthetics. The Dalit writers’ rejection of the hegemony of a caste-based universalism challenges the neat binary world of postcolonial literary theory and calls attention to the internal contradictions of Indian society.

Dalit literature is born on the basis of political moment framing that equality, fraternity, and solidarity. Moreover, different kinds of social perspectives had transformed into a language that is never read or heard. In addition, this literature is only meant for social activism; hence, it does not follow the classical language rules and regulations. Moreover, it is not deemed fit into the classical literary framework. A different perception and work from marginal people, in which the main content is the hegemonic ideology in the society, created inequalities among the people and also among the Dalits. There is more research to be done on Dalit language and culture otherwise, it will remain unspoken language. In the contemporary period, there are a number of literary theories and they have their own ideological grounds. These multi theories and multicultural studies reveal subaltern studies and marginal literature. The scholar could select which theory can be suitable for evaluating for his/her literary work. The selection of your theory and particular theoretical approaches should not lose the sight at any point of time in the process of adopting the theory. In Holmes's and Meyer Hoff's words ‘It is essential to avoid adopting narrow paradigms which are potentially damaging the spirit of enquiry’(p8), it is reiterated that ensuring resistance to the pressure towards the development of restrictive and limited orthodoxy in the kinds of theoretical frameworks and research methodologies are judged to be acceptable. Also, while adopting the theory to evaluate Dalit literature, the scholar has to be open minded to accept merits and demerits of a particular chosen theory. Focusing on how mainstream literature denied and demoralized Dalit literature and claiming that it is a stage of writing agony and nothing crucial is present in the Dalit literature. And if we examine how the language is used in mainstream society and Dalit society, there is a vast difference between these two sects. The language usages in Dalit society, the men and women do not dominate each other and have equal priorities. Moreover, this research does not concentrate on how language is used by mainstream literature and Dalit literature rather it examines how language functions in Dalit society and mainstream society and complex interpretation of both the societies.

Dalit adventures and expressions are as positing, as in the quotidian. Admitting they may arise as adverse and abomination to the “upper” caste sensibility, they can be apprehended as embodying the politics in all its dimensions. They are political, in that way they have not abandoned betrayal the brainy aspect of the boilerplate all-embracing valorization of an Indian

cultural-aesthetic, but also move arise in an added charge less alignment of society. An able archetype of an appearing counter-aesthetic is the allegory angle of the mother in Dalit poetry:

My mother never sang lullaby for me  
Her voice was long ago choked with hunger  
My mother never lulled me to sleep  
Her hands had long ago become agricultural tools.<sup>1</sup>

In these lines from Nagesh Babu, the non-brahminical mother, coarse and harsh because of her daily hard work, emerges as more real than its counterpart, the “upper” caste illusion of fondness and tenderness.

Untouchability is one allotment of the assorted beastly aspects of its system. Sudhakar tries to talk about the assorted sufferings of the Dalits whose abundant answerability is none added than that of accepting built-in in a lower caste. In his poem ‘Nethuti Prasna’(Bloody question), he presents the actuality that the Dalit in India feels suffocated for abridgment of freedom, joy, and dignity:

I am still a prohibited human being  
Mine is an expelled breath  
Tying a barb tree leaf to my waist  
And a tiny spittoon to my mouth  
Manu made me a wretched human animal among others  
The moment he left a mark of prohibition on my face  
My face  
Was gradually  
murdered.<sup>2</sup>

Since its inception on Dalit literature has faced many challenges, it emerged, while shaping a different perspective of literary form and critical views and it demands separate critical perspective and aesthetic evaluation. And there were debates on social power, hegemonic role in the construction of unequal society, which has been benefited to upper-class people. The power and hegemony is difficult to conceptualize and exercise societal power. The hegemony assumes that the culture is social power. In recent research, it depicts that culture plays a key role in shaping elite society and margined society, which dominates the marginal society. This can be seen in the writings of classic literature, and fixes that privileged society’s culture. Their language is textual and respective, other cultures and languages are underestimated. The recent revolutions in literary theories like feminism, Marxism, and Afro-American have questioned, what standard language has?. The arguments and critical views opened new perception in literature and literary theories. Crucial point is that the interplay between language, culture, and caste needs to be examined alongside other crucial social identity variable in a range of different internal contexts.

If we observe keenly, the language usage in our society is the language which dominates our everyday social life. One can examine how language plays a key role in society and that creates social inequalities. But if you see public speaking it, it could show the dominance, the exploitation of public culture is observable through analyzing media and advertising language (for example in movies hero, heroine characters portrays only dominant groups like family, their culture, language, the way they dress, and food habits (whose priority is mostly vegetarian), entirely different from marginal societies culture language).

In the process of socialization and modern perspective and in the field of social sciences and humanities, it is understood that the close relationship between language and the social forces like ideology, power and culture exist and it plays key roles in shaping the society, as an equal and dependent on individual and group mechanisms of people. These things vary on contracting identities and cultures. It is a politically important language, culture and identity research.

#### Conclusion:

This article intended to focus on marginal literature and mainstream literature, its language usage and the way they it represents and how language is creating a sustainable and perpetuating unequal society, caste politics and discrimination against the Dalit literary works. Litosseliti argues that ‘we need to recognize that campaigns around the language have to be posed alongside other campaigns; it is not sufficient, simply to campaign about language. Effective change has to come at both the personal and institutional level’. And language is concerned on how the power and privilege play a key role in the society and using these tools to control the other group and dominating their cultural politics. My research examines language and politics to readdress the language imbalances and emancipate the language barricades and focus on margined literature survivable. Shrvan Kumar Limbale, in his famous book, *Towards Aesthetics of Dalit Literature*, defines different levels of Dalit’s language. It seems that different outcomes of research on language and literature can be utilized to full fill the broader goals of Dalit and other marginalized literature. Recent Dalit literature mainly posits poetry and absorbs amiable attention to social activism and draws attention to broader theoretical shifts in Indian literary theories. The discipline of language and culture is entering a new phase and it is debating particularly how this new literature can be seen a theoretical and methodological practice.

<sup>1</sup> Madduri Nagesh Babu: ‘What’s your caste’ : What’s your caste ,Sreeja publications, Narasaraopeta,1998,P.127,tr. G. Lakshmi Narasaiah.

<sup>2</sup> Sudhakar Endluri : ‘varthamanam’ (The Present) (Manasa publications : Rajahamundry : 1992)P.53  
Translated by G.Lakshmi Narasaiah.

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