

Dalit Autobiography: A Study of Dalit Women's Autobiographies

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Abstract

Autobiography is widely admired in the world as a literary genre. Its importance as a means of self-creation, self-examination, and self-regeneration has been identified by critics and creative authors. Autobiography is a Western tradition where people enjoy celebrating them self and are eager to prove their achievements. Indians have adopted this tradition of writing an autobiography from the West. Autobiography can be classified into two categories, life stories that inspire and prove one's achievements. Secondly, the life stories which not only describes the saga of the individual but also the society as a whole depicts sorrows, subjugation, sufferings, and socio-economic conditions. Dalit autobiographies belong to the second category. They have portrayed the socio-economic, cultural, and political conditions of Dalit Community under the control and influence of Upper Caste Hindu society. Contemporary Indian Society was divided under the wrong notions of 'Purity and Pollution'. Dalits were treated as untouchables and polluters to the High Caste Hindus because they were born in the low caste. They were intentionally kept ignorant and denied to take education and asked to live out of town in separate colonies by high caste Hindus to safeguard their control over Dalits. Autobiography came handy to them to demonstrate their age-old suffering, exploitation, and maltreatment. Writers like Shankarrao Kharat, Daya Pawar, Bandu Tupe, P. E. Sonkamble, Shrankumar Limbale, Laxman Mane, Laxman Gaikwad, and Kishor Kale came forward. They penned their experiences in the form of autobiographies. Like male autobiographies, female autobiographers like Baby Kamble, Shantabai Kamble, Urmila Pawar, Kumud Parade, Janabai Girhe, Bama, demonstrated their life stories and experiences of trivial exploitation based on caste, class, and gender.

Keywords: Dalit, Patriarchy, Oppression, Discrimination, Sexuality and Caste violence.

Dalit Literature

Dalit literature is a new dimension, is the primary concept of the literature of marginality. It was emerged in the 1960s, starting with the Marathi language, and soon arrived in Hindi, Kannada, Telugu, Bangla, and Tamil languages, through narratives such as poems, short stories, and, most, autobiographies, which stood out due to their stark portrayal of reality and the Dalit political scene. The term "Dalit" was used for the first time by Mahatma Jyotirao Phule in the 19th century.

Dalit literature in India over the past many decades has emerged as a separate and important category of literature in many Indian languages. It has provided a new voice and identity to the communities that have experienced discrimination, exploitation, and marginalization due to the hierarchical caste system. Dalit literature has also made a forceful case for human dignity and social equality. In the knowledge of the growing influence of the study of Dalit literature, this paper attempts to explore the origin, concept, and contributions of Dalit literature in India and the depiction of Anger and Agony in the writings of Tamil Dalit Writers.