

Glance Of Dalit Literature and Feminism by Indian Female Authors

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Abstract :-

Literature is a mirror of society. It reflects certain issues of the time in which they produced. We discuss here about Indian women writers and their contribution in literature. Their purpose of defending political and social economical rights and equal opportunities for women. They struggle for their identity because Indian is male dominated and patriarchal society. Their voice suppressed by male dominated society. They treat to women like a DOLL. Women have been facing many issues of discrimination. There has emerged a disturbing trend of female foeticide or sex selective abortion a modern form of "Dudhpiti Or Sati Pratha". They only focus on aristocratic, ignored and exploit to poor women. Indian women writers are those who mainly talk about patriarchal society and women's desire for freedom.

Through their works we can see position of women in society. They depict the injustice, anguish, gender inequality, thirst for freedom and justice issues of child marriage and child labour. They raise their voice through these works. They really need basic human being rights, love, affection, support, respect, freedom and many more for develop their existence. Indian women writers never attempted to adopt any masculine role to achieve themselves as equal as men but through their writings they came across all barriers of class, gender, and space boundaries. In late 20th century many issues raised and challenged during this period included domestic violence, divorce laws, custody, rape and political representation. Dalit feminism is an onslaught on the social evils prevailing in our society such as caste system, untouchability, oppression on women, and cultural hegemony. Dalit fiction explores the axes of caste, class & gender and brings forth vivid everyday lived realities of Dalit women. They express harsh and bitter reality of Indian patriarchal society.

Keywords : Patriarchal Society, Dalit Literature in Feminism, Self-respect, Class Consciousness, Materialistic Marriage Life. Gender inequality.

Introduction:

India is a patriarchal society where men have power, voice, and dominated positions as compared to women. Indian women writers' works come out as an urge for freedom and to break all those oppressive forces. They present women's life who are trapped between constricting forces of patriarchy and their own aspirations. The most important thing about **Indian feminist movement** is that they have been initiated or started by men later on joined by women. Their main purpose was to abolish the custom of

sati, child marriage, disfiguring of widow, remarriage of upper caste. Hindu widows, promoting women's education, legal rights for women to own property. The 19th century is a period when most of the issues of women were taken up.

Every year, December 10 is observed as Human Rights Day, the day in 1948 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) – a comprehensive document that talks about the rights everyone is entitled to as a human being. Malala Yousafzai: the world's youngest Nobel Peace Prize laureate (at 17 years old) having survived a Taliban attack on her school in Afghanistan. She says that **“I raise up my voice – not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard. ... We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back.”**

In India there are lots of women writers like :

- *Shashi Deshpande*
- *Nayantara Sehgal*
- *Arundhati Roy*
- *Kamala Das*
- *Kamala Markandeya*
- *Bharati Mukherjee*
- *Geeta Hariharan*

These writers expressed roles and position of women through their writing and they have explained the real oppression and suppression and fight of women to achieve Gender Equality, Self-respect and identity.

Shashi Deshpande grew up in an intellectual environment in Karnataka and recipient of the Sahitya Akademy Award for that long silence in **1990**. Her novels dealt with the problems of patriarchal society through her works she gave a true picture of women's problems like emotional and spiritual crisis they encounter about male dominated society.

“That Long Silence” published in **1988**. That long silence tells the story of **JAYA**, an Indian upper middle class house wife who always keeps herself silent in Bombay. Jaya's grandmother encourages her to expertise at household chores like cooking and cleaning. Teaches her to adjust well after Marriage i.e. to never disagree with her in-laws and husband. She always tells her to keep quiet when she disagrees, Gradually Jaya moulds herself as a submissive person, ready to obey others. She talks about marriage and its power to destroy the freedom of women. Through this work she not only exposes the fact women bare level of oppression male centred society but also within the family.

Shashi Deshpande says that:

“A wife should always be few feet behind her husband. If he is an MA you should be a BA. If he is 5'4'tall you shouldn't be more than 5'3'tall. If he is earning five hundred rupees you should never earn more than four hundred and ninety nine rupees. That's the only rule to follow if you want a happy marriage...No partnership can ever be equal. It will always be unequal, but take care it is unequal in favor of the husband. If the scales tilt in your favor, God help you, both of you.”

That Long Silence presents the story of Jaya And Mohan who live together as husband and wife in spite of their Disparate attitude towards some of the fundamental issues of life. Novel argues that woman is

assigned a secondary role and relegated to secondary position. The title of the novel *That Long Silence* implies that women do not raise their voice against suppression. The central character Jaya was so named by her father because it meant victory, but victory never came to her in life. Jaya, Kusum, Mukta, Vartamami, Jeeja, NayanaMarda, Nilima are all characters in the women-centric novel *That Long Silence* by Shashi Deshpande, Everyone of them is a victim of male malevolence. The male characters in Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* are presented as devoid of feelings and sense of responsibility. Rajarama is a drunkard who earns nothing, and threatened to throw out his wife Nayana, if she gave birth to a girl baby again.

In *The Binding Vine* (1993) Urmi chances upon the diaries of **Mira**, her dead mother-in-law, who had been a budding poet and an eager student caught in the shackles of a patriarchal society. By reading about Mira's suffering in her diaries, Urmi attains self-realization. The central theme of the novel *The Binding Vine* is the binding vine of feelings and emotions between people, through the characters Mira, Shakutai and Kalpana, Shashi Deshpande exposes the sexual wrongs done to women in a patriarchal Indian society. This novel highlights the despair of two women one mira who victim of marital rape and other is kalpana, who is a brutally raped outside marriage.

In another novel ***Roots & Shadows* (1983)**, tells the story of the intricate relationships within a traditional joint family and discusses the conflict between tradition and modernity. **Mini, Indu and Akka** are the important women characters. The story is narrated from the perspective of Indu. A society with equal rights and opportunities for women is always wanted and there is no denying the fact that consistent struggles and voices raised for women empowerment over the years have reduced gender biasedness to a great extent. However, the skills, the strength and intelligence a woman showcase has never fallen back to make a change in the society and always stand out raising high the prestige of the society. In almost all novels of Deshpande dealt with a crisis in the heroines' life. This novel depicts the pain and suffocation of the protagonist Indu in the male dominated society. She tries to escape from an adulterous relationship with Narendra to find herself.

Kamala Das received the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award in the year 1969. Her poetic output is contained in four volumes of poems which include *Summer in Calcutta*, *The Descendants*, *The Old Play House* and *Other Poems and Strange Time*. **My Story**, the autobiography of Kamala Das, was published in **1975**, and is controversial for its free treatment of sexuality. **The Old Playhouse** is a personal and autobiographical poem of protest against the restrictions of married life, against the pressure of domesticity and against male domination which involves the routine of the husband's lust. She in the poem **"The Old Playhouse"** compares herself to a swallow and her husband to a captor who wanted to tame her and keep her fully under his control by the power of his love-making. Her mind has become "an old playhouse with all its

lights put out". She advocated women to voice for their inherent right and protest against the society if they hinder the growth of her personality. She protested against the patriarchal society as a feminist she tried to recover the character of woman. Her works of literature gave a voice to female feelings and emotion.

NayantharaSeghal is also another writer who portrayed the image of women who suffered due to the sexist bias in the patriarchal society. Through her writings she envisions a world which is based on equality and the virtues of women to be equally valued as that of men. Her feminist voice is strong and louder which is the result of her unhappy married life. Saghal's woman from *A Time to be Happy* (1957) to *Mistaken Identity* (1988) is all about the journey of women's struggle for towards self-discovery. Her focus is more on women and value structures. She is a member of **Nehru-Gandhi** family and the second of the three daughters born to Jawaharlal Nehru's sister, VijayaLaxmiPandit. *Rich Like Us* is a historical and political fiction novel which won the SahityaAkademi Award in **1986**. It follows the lives of two female protagonists, Rose and Sonali, and their fight to live in a time of political upheaval and social re-organization.

Kamla Markandaya's *Nectar in a sieve* (1954) first published work, which depicts the life and sufferings of farmers in rural India. Many of her novels explore the urban-rural divide. The title of *Nectar in a Sieve* was taken from **ST Coleridge's** poem "**Work Without Hope**". The sub-title of Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* is "a novel of rural India". *Nectar in a Sieve* portrays the story of Rukmani, her husband Nathan and their children in India during a period of intense urban development. Rukmani tells the story in the first person, from her arranged marriage to Nathan at the age of twelve to his death many years later. Social realism and Cultural realism. These types of realism are well portrayed by Kamala Markandaya in her novels, especially in *Nectar in a Sieve*, *Possession* and *a Handful of Rice*. This novel depicts women's issues and problems very deeply. She explores and interprets the emotional reactions and spiritual responses of the women and their predicament with sympathetic understanding and shows that women are not lesser than human; rather they are sometimes more dignified than men due to their greater human virtues, qualities and creativity. They suffer heroically, though they are strong willed. A number of women sublimate their desires in religious faith. She describes that an Indian woman has to face between tradition and modernity. Her Rukmani, no doubt, may be a triumph of the spirit of tradition.

Bharati Mukherjee is an award-winning Indian-born American writer. *The Tiger's Daughter*, *Wife*, *Jasmine*, *The Holder of the World*, *Leave It to Me*, *Desirable Daughters*, *The Tree Bride*, *Miss New India* are works written by Bharati Mukherjee. Tara is the central character in Bharati Mukherjee's *The Tiger's Daughter*. The novel explores Tara's sense of culture shock when she travels back to India, intertwined with the political situation in Calcutta and West Bengal. The novel *Jasmine* narrates the story of a 17-year-old Indian woman Jasmine who travels to the United States after her husband's murder by Sikh extremists. Trying to adapt to the American way of life in order to be able to survive, she takes up numerous roles and identities at different times. Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters* is a brilliant story of three Indian-born Brahmin upperclass sisters in Calcutta, Padma, Parvati and Tara, renowned for their beauty, intelligence, wealth and privileged position in society.

Most of the Indian women writers portrays bitter scenerio of frustrated and plight of Indian women. These writers gave heroins who were stand for their own individuality and idetity. They are fearless, powerful, liberal human being and voice of Indian women, they represented harsh reality of Indian women which quitly not acceptable by male dominated society. In the British literature, Jane Austen who gave true picture of women in her time, She emphasised about finacially politically, socially and economically explore the condition of women, and bitterly critisize to married life of women at that time. Her works are too prefect to portray situation. Women could now write in clauses, in loose sequences.

About Dalit Literature:

The literary creations by the writers who are born and brought up in Dalit communities are called Dalit literature. It also means the writing about dalit community and this might be written by dalit or non-dalit. But writing of non- dalit is not accepted as 'Dalit literature' by dalit community. Dalit consciousness is the core concern of Dalit literature.

It is the literature of the ex-untouchables of our country who were, like the American Blacks, socially estranged culturally alienated, economically exploited, physically annihilated and psychologically mutilated and were ke for centuries in their "place" which was, of course, at the bottom of the Hindu society.

History of Dalit Literature:

MadaraChennaih, an 11th century saint is believed to be one of the earliest Dalit writers. DoharaKakkaiah was another Dalit poet whose six confessional poems still survive. Dalit literature can be traced back to Buddhist literature and Marathi Bhakti poets like Gora, Chokha and Tamil Siddhas etc. They used to explain the condition of the Dalit in their poems. Modern Dalit literature began as a part of the Dalit movement led by **Dr. B.R Ambedkar** and earlier inspired by **Mahatma JyotibaPhule** in 13th century. In 1958, the term "Dalit literature" was used for the first time, when the first conference of Maharashtra Dalit Sahitya Sangha (Maharashtra Dalit Literature Society) was held at Mumbai.

Features of Dalit Literature:

Dalit writers initiated a realistic, experience based and authentic literature which threatened the upper class hegemony in society and in literature. Dalit literature goes hand in hand with Dalit liberation movement. It began on Marathi literature then infiltrated on Hindi, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam and Tamil literatures. Dalit caste organizations like 'Dalit Panthers of India' in Maharashtra, 'Dalit Mahasabha' in Andhra Pradesh, 'Dalit SangharshaSamiti' in Karnataka, and 'Arundhatiyar'in Tamil Nadu were formed in response to mainstream atrocities. Dalit issues were recorded in different genres and a large portion of these writings were through the modes of autobiographical narrative. In all the genres one common characteristic was confessions made by the authors themselves. Mulk Raj Anand with his Untouchable pioneered the movement.

Mahasweta Devi, NamdeoDhasal, BasudevSunani, Bama, SharankumarLimbale, LakshmanGaikwad, Sivakami, Poomani, Om Prakash Valmiki, Marku, Paul Chirakkarode and Arundhati Roy walked after him.

Women in Dalit Literature:

They faced triple discriminations-by colonial rulers, by upper caste people and by their own Dalit men. MohiniChamarin was the first Dalit women writer. She wrote a short story named Thieves of the Subordinated published in a Hindi magazine named KavyaManorama.

Urmila Pawar

Aaydaan is Urmila Pawar's drama about Dalit women in India. Moreover, the "Aayadan" reflects on woman's struggle for self-identity and a sense of fulfilment in the background of caste inequalities and patriarchal attitudes of community and family towards women. Another autobiography is "JinaAmucha" (Translated as "The Prisons We Broke") by BabytaiKamble. It is a collective account of Dalit women and their ordinariness. We find a quest for gaining self as well as communal identity out of patriarchal domination here. BabytaiKamble narrates the differences they had between them and high caste women regarding clothing and accessories. Dalit women were restricted even to copy and use the things in the same manner as wearing saris with borders. Other points she highlighted are superstitions in Dalits, how daughters-in-law were tortured inside the house as well as outside and physical violence. In fact, she had to hide her autobiography for twenty years from her husband as he would not have tolerated her idea of writing. She mentions that it was an Ambedkarite movement that brought them out from their prison. Self-identity can only be achieved through selfexploration and consciousness. Thus she has written autobiography to encourage women to fight against patriarchy to build their own identity. There are many incidents from her personal life included in Aaydaan. She was introduced to the women's organisation, 'Matrini' through her friend, HeeraBansode. This experience helped her to see women as persons, as human beings. AIDAN (Weave)-her autobiography translated into English by Maya Pandit as The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoir. Urmila Pawar'sAmhihiItihasGhadawala. Urmila Pawar's short autobiographical narrative named AmhihiItihasGhadawala or Urmila Pawar and the Making of History. It is an outcome of dialogues between the author and a group of students, teachers and activists at an oral history workshop. The themes of the narrative are Urmila's childhood and growing up stages as adult, her married life, her occupation as a writer, discriminations in various phases of her life, etc.

Bama FaustinaSoosairaj (Bama)

Tamil Dalit Feminist, Karukku-her autobiographical novel, depicts joys and sorrows experienced by Dalit Christian women in Tamil Nadu. Translated into English by Lakshmi Holmstrom. Other novels-Sangati, Vanmam. Short story collections-Kusumbukkaran,

Kandattam etc. She wrote an essay on being a single professional Dalit woman in *Single By Choice: happily unmarried women!*- a collection of 13 essays by unmarried women in India talking about their singlehood.

MeenaKandasamy

Indian poet, fiction writer and translator and activist from Chennai, Tamilnadu. She edited *The Dalit*, a bi-monthly alternative English magazine of the Dalit Media Network from 2001-2002. Her works were focused mainly on caste annihilation, feminism and linguistic identity. Her famous works include *Touch*, *Mrs. Militancy*, *The Gypsy Goddess* etc. Most famous for *A Portrait of a Writer as a Young Wife* or *When I Hit You*. She poignantly records the miseries, humiliation, and brutalities experienced by the oppressed in *Touch*. Her poetry is an onslaught on the social evils prevailing in our society such as caste system, untouchability, oppression on women, and cultural hegemony.

ShantabaiKamble

First Dalit woman to become a teacher. Marathi writer and Dalit activist. Her autobiographical narrative raises the issue of two-fold marginalisation and oppression one, faced by the Dalit group at the hands of 'Upper caste' and secondly gendered discrimination towards women through their male patriarchal peers. Wrote her own autobiography *MazhyaJalmachiChittarkatha* (*The Kaleidoscopic Story of My Life*)

Women of the Dalit community endure the burden of multiple oppressions of caste, class, and gender. However, caste remains the main root of their sufferings. The caste system is an evil practice, and it is prohibited by the constitution of India yet persists in Indian society because it is so deeply ingrained in the minds of the people and thrives on social norms and ideologies. The Indian caste system is a social hierarchy, a closed society, in which the position and status of the individual in the society is decided by birth.

Omprakash Valmiki says in *Joothan: An Untouchable's Life*:

"Caste is a very important element of Indian society. As soon as a person is born, caste determines his or her destiny. Being born is not in the control of a person. If it were in one's control, then why would I have been born in a Bhangi household? Those who call themselves the standard-bearers of this country's great cultural heritage, did they decide which homes they would be born into? Of course, they turn to scriptures to justify their position, the scriptures that establish feudal values instead of promoting equality and freedom."

Some great people said about notions Dalit Literature, they depict their point of view and opinion, it is help to us for understand this kind of Literature, let's see..

DrSharankumarLimbale defines Dalit Literature:

"Dalit Literature is Form of agitation. It Centres the Common Man who has been oppressed for thousands of the years. The Hindu caste System has divided Indian Society into castes. There are not only divisions of caste but also the watertight compartments of Indian people and Culture. One who take birth in one's caste should Live in one's caste, Drink and eat in one's Caste marry within his caste and die within his caste. This is a caste of Tyranny. Dalit Literature wants to destroy this inhuman caste system which enslaved not only Dalits but also our democratic country. Our nation is politically free but socially it is still in slavery. Dalit Literature is the struggle for total revolution and it is the declaration of Human rights". **M.N Wankhede** describes Dalit Literature:

Dalit Literature considers man as its nucleus. It becomes one with the Joys and the sorrows of Human Life and takes it forward to "Samyak" total Revolution. It preaches a Group of Human Beings that forms society, equality. It considers man Noble. Dalit Literature has spread Love and Enmity among Human beings.

BaburaoBagul

"Dalit Literature is inimical to untouchability, Slavery, inequality and pain. As long as there is Untouchability and slavery in this country, Dalit Literature will definitely exist. Dalit Literature is that Literature which advocates Human Liberation, Glorifies man, and oppresses Staunchly the supremacy of Lineage, race and caste.

NarharKurundkar

A Tendency is being expressed in Literature that everyman should get Freedom, respect and Fearless protection.

According to Yashwant Manohar Dalit Literature is the Expression of the Neglected hearts and brains whose stomachs and Minds have kept hungry by Culture. In the womb of this Literature an Embryo of Human centred Civilised age is growing with Stormy determination. Thus it is the Literature of Victims of class and varna system. Dalit Literature is not the literature written only by the Dalits. Being a Dalit and possessing dalit Consciousness are two different things. The literature created by means of this consciousness about dalit and their life is dalit Literature.

► Dalit Literature have been divided into 5 Genres

1. Prose

2. Poetry

3. Short Story

4. Drama

5. Autobiography

► Through these Genres Dalit Literature takes its shape as a part of Dalit Movement aiming at its avowed object of social reconstruction based on new man, new Values and new Culture.

★ Conclusion:

This paper present a point view of indian women through indian female writers. No one can understand problems of women better than those who came out from that area or zone. Each and every word of their work has its own story, the way they suffered and faced all the situation was same like walking on the road of pieces of broken glass without protection and support. Presents a male-dominated world where women have limited opportunities and their lives depend entirely on the men they marry. Portray small groups of people in a limited environment. Gender discrimination and class Conciousness. Highlight social hypocrisy through irony, Employ domestic realism, Characters are middle-class and provincial. Heroines undergo a process of education and self-realization. Delicate economy, subtle irony, underlying moral commentary. Focus is on the heroine's struggles for For self-mastery, To meet the society's demands yet maintain independence, Against abuse and oppression, Against class pressures, being caught between the poor, hardworking lower class and the immoral, idle upper class. These writers shown variety and phase of indianfaminism, Their contribution have left an incredible mark in the history of indian literature and also played an important role in presenting the gender issues prevailing in the society.

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- Kamla Das and her works
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- Bharati Mukherjee's works
- NayantharaSeghal's works
- Dalit Literature and their writer's works

