Chapter IV
Dalit Literature

The Dalit movement in Andhra was an autonomous struggle against the hegemonic ideology of the upper caste rulers, accompanied by an enormous forceful literature. As an organic collective articulation, Dalit literature has fresh expressive comprehension and distinct intellectual vigour. Its distinctness “lies in its authentic unity of language and content. In it the disillusionment and disgust of young Dalits, often accompanied by a desire for revenge, come alive. It revives the memory of the pain and suffering of the past generations.” Further, “it confronts centuries of hypocrisy, deceit and violence sustained in the name of tradition”. The hegemonic caste ideology which debarred the Dalits not only from all material possessions, but systematically stunted their mental development. They were alienated and disapproved by the social laws. Their historical socio-cultural position was dissimulated and disfigured by caste as a task master.

Dalit literature carries this burden of suffering, agony and humiliation. In addition it is encompassed by the profound objective of emancipation of all oppressed masses. It is resolutely determined to uncover the concealed contradictions of the hegemonic upper caste ideology and make concerted efforts to create an alternative socio-cultural identity.

---

Dalit literature has been subjected to an extensive debate and discussion as a stream of Telugu literature. The purpose of this chapter is not to join that debate. Rather, it is to analyse Dalit literature as "the counter hegemonic ideology". The aim is to study the literature from the sociological point of view and its social origin. The chapter is divided into three sections. These deal, respectively, with the brief historical antecedents of Dalit literature, the non-Dalit writers’ contribution to Dalit consciousness in the mainstream Telugu literary trends and with a random analysis of Dalit literature in Telugu produced by Dalit organic intellectuals.

Historical Background

Dalit literature in Telugu has long historical antecedents on the lines of the Dalit movement. The numerous Buddhist inscriptions reveal that the historical legacy of Dalit literature in Telugu may be traced to the well-established Buddhist culture in Andhradesa. The Buddhist anti-caste ideology, humanist principles of liberty, equality and brotherhood were propagated through Pali literature which was against the hegemonic Sanskrit language. The Sufi poets who gave a call for the abolition of all discrimination and inequalities from contemporary society gathered all "men belonging to different castes and creeds

---


speaking different languages, assembled in the Khangahs. It was but natural that a common language was evolved as a means of communication. That language was Urdu. Urdu, thus, became the language of communication for the Sufi saints, against the hegemonic Sanskrit and Persian literature which got royal patronage, to propagate humanism and brotherhood, during the Muslim rule in the Deccan.

In the thirteenth century, Palkusiki Somanatha, under the influence of Basava's Veerasaivism, denounced caste divisions and explained in his poetical works, with scholarly disquisition, how Brahminism and Brahmin priests extracted the wealth of the lower castes in the name of sacrifices. The Sudra poetess named Molla, daughter of a potter, wrote Molla Ramayanam in simple Telugu to make it accessible to the common people. Tallapaka Annamayya, a Brahmin, disapproved of the caste system in his kirtans or songs of devotion. He sang that “the high level land of the Brahmin and the low flat level of the Chandala are the same”; “there is no high and low, Srihari is the soul of all.”

The most powerful literary voice in modern Andhradesa against upper caste hegemony was that of Vemana, a Sudra poet. Vemana chose the literary path to fight social evils. He posed his insightful questions in the form of literary stanzas (padyam) to counter the caste doctrine spread by Sanskrit slokas. Vemana asked the upper castes: “Why do

---


6 Padma Rao, p. 111.
you again and again abuse a pariah? Are not his blood and flesh and thine one? Of what caste is He who is immingled with him? He exhorted the upper castes:

\[ \text{Urivurikella nokka kanchamubetti, poththugudipi,} \\
\text{kulamu paaliyajes, talamu cheyyibetti taganammina} \\
\text{jepparaa} \]

(Let everyone eat from the same plate, place their hands on their heads and become friends.)

Vemana's stanzas were apparently a spontaneous reflection on the social reality disparaging the upper caste rulers and becoming passionately cherished aphorisms for the lower castes. Vemana is said to have uttered hundreds of stanzas. One hundred stanzas among these have been published in an anthology entitled *Vemana Satakam* (100 Verses of Vemana). The work is considered to be the first Telugu text.

Veerabrahma's teachings also became the historical inspiration for the present Dalit organic intellectuals. The Christian Literature Society in Andhra published considerable literature in both English and Telugu for the benefit of the newly converted lower castes. Among the books were: *Enlightened Teachings from the Book of Truth* (1747), *Way to Heaven* (1746); *100 Wisdom Principles* (1747); *Book of the Law* (1818). These and many other collections of hymns, pamphlets and

---

7 Satyanarayana, p. 402.
8 Padma Rao, p. 112. For a critical evaluation of Vemana, see idem. *Sanghikala Tiphave Rachavitala: Dalita Sahitya Vimartho, Lokyota Publishers, Ponnur 1995 (Telugu).*
9 Satyanarayana, op. cit.
brochures were widely circulated, which directly or indirectly helped the emergence of Dalit literature and consciousness.\textsuperscript{10}

The present Dalit literature also claims inspiration from Mahatma Jyotiba Phule's Satya Shodak Samaj movement. Phule's numerous works on education, culture, history and literature became the fountainhead of thought for Dalit organic intellectuals. Phule's scholarly cardinal works, \textit{Gulamgiri} (1873) and \textit{Sarvajanik Satya Dharma Pustak} (1891) have been recognized as sources of the early organic sociological power of knowledge.\textsuperscript{11} The most influential Dalit organic thinker, Ambedkar, has been the moving force for the Dalit literary movement in Andhra. The elaborate body of his socio-economic and politico-cultural ideas have been the guiding force and catalyzing every Dalit. Ambedkarism has been regarded as an \textit{avant grade} Dalit political and literary movement in Andhra Pradesh. Ambedkar's works such as: \textit{The Untouchables}, \textit{Who Were the Sudras}, \textit{The Buddha and His Dharma}, \textit{What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables?}, \textit{Castes in India}, \textit{Annihilation of Caste} have become the basic frame of reference for the present Dalit organic intellectuals.

The pioneers of early Dalit movement in Andhra also started propaganda-cum-literary magazines to disseminate their ideas. Among these were: \textit{Bhagyanagar}, \textit{Kusuma Dharma}, \textit{Jaya Bheri} (all started by Bhagya Reddy Verma), \textit{Navajeevan}, \textit{Vemula Kurmaiah}, \textit{Vyavasaya Kooli} (all started by B.S. Murthi), \textit{Jyothi} (Bojja Appala Swamy), \textit{Republican Jyothi} (B.V. Ramanaiah), \textit{Bhagyanagar} (Govada

\textsuperscript{10} See, B. Vijaya Bharati, \textit{Nalupu}. 1-30 April 1990.

Nirekrishna Rao). Their speeches, essays and poems became part of an alternative ideological struggle against the hegemonic ideologies of both colonialism and Hinduism.\(^{12}\)

The Dalit Sahitya Movement in Maharashtra produced an enormous amount of revolutionary Dalit literature. The first Dalit literary conference was held in 1958, which passed a resolution defining the term ‘Dalit literature’. In 1967 the Milind Sahitya Parishad was established at Nagsenvana, Aurangabad. Under its auspices a quarterly known as *Asmita* (later it became *Asmithadarsha*) was published.\(^{13}\) These writers started a movement giving expression to their own independent identity. They declared war on the omnipresent and gigantic enemy of caste through the medium of literature.\(^{14}\) Thus the present Dalit literature in Telugu took much of its inspiration from different sources.

**Telugu Literary Trends and Dalit Problem**

Telugu is the most Sanskritized language among the southern languages. Though it does not belong to the Devanagari family of northern languages it heavily borrows usage from Sanskrit texts. Starting from Nannaya (twelfth century) to the present generation, the traditional intellectuals have not created any original text in Telugu.\(^{15}\) All available major texts in Telugu were either translated from Sanskrit

---


\(^{13}\) K. Gangawane, ibid., p. 17.

\(^{14}\) For the full history of Dalit literature see Daya Pawar’s article in ibid., pp. 7-10.

\(^{15}\) See Kalekari Prasad, *Dalita Sahityam* (Vijayavada, Dalita Women Sahitya Parishad) Telugu.
or were analogous creations directly from Sanskrit texts. All these early literary constructions and expressions were mostly the handiwork of the upper castes. The social problem of caste oppression, social alienation of Dalits and untouchability were not reflected in them; in fact they helped to perpetuate caste dominance. That explains why the nineteenth-century social reformers directed their anger against Sanskritized Telugu in addition to devoting attention to socio-cultural reforms. It was Vemana who carefully studied social oppression and first raised his voice against the caste system.

The socio-cultural problems of Andhra society were reflected in some of the reformist literature in Telugu. The pioneers of social reform movement in Andhra, Kandukur Veereshalingam (1848-1919), Gurajada Appa Rao, Laxminarasimham (1848-1945) and Gidugu Ramamurthy worked for the reformation of orthodox social practices. They advocated women’s education and widow remarriage. They also expressed sympathy for the untouchables. Veereshalingam started schools for the Dalits and other working classes. Gurujada Appa Rao criticized the segregation of the Dalits on the basis of their menial occupations. He said: “Filthy occupations have been assigned to some people, looking down upon them and not even treating them as human beings.”

In 1911 Appa Rao wrote a song on Malas entitled ‘Malalu’ in which he lamented

---

Judging people with an unclean body as Malas, and rewarding unethical people as upper caste is not at all fair. The law called caste is an unjustified imposition.

And further

Human beings have two castes, good and bad. If good is Mala, I would be Mala. 17

However these reformers’ main objective was to reform certain evils of the Hindu social system and “they failed to grapple with the ideological and institutional framework of brahminical Hinduism. Their reading of classical texts and scriptures was only aimed at reforming some aspects of Hindu society, but not to question and negate the Varna system itself. ... Neither 'Kanyasulkam' (bride-price) nor 'Raja Sekhara Charitram' written by Appa Rao and Veereshaligam respectively, addressed the basic fundamental problems of caste oppression and alienation of Dalit masses from the mainstream society.” 18

During the anti-colonial struggle many non-Dalit intellectuals made remarkable efforts to absorb all those masses who were socially and politically alienated, into the broad terrain of the anti-colonial struggle. Most of them were immensely influenced by the growing nationalist aspirations and the Gandhian ‘Harijan uplift programme’. They projected the Dalit problem in their literary creations from different angles. Basavaraju Appa Rao wrote songs on the atrocities


148
inflicted on Dalits. Among the others who dealt with the Dalit problem were Mutmuri Krishna Rao, Kamaraju Hanumantha Rao, Tapi Dharma Rao, Vemuri Ramji Rao, Adipudi Somanatha Rao and Bandaru Achchanamba.

Tallapragada Suryanarayana Rao’s Helavati was the first Telugu Dalit novel written by a non-Dalit in 1913. Helavati, the protagonist of the novel, was the daughter of Verabaludu, an untouchable. As a socially alienated family they lived in penury and collected grains from the porridge given to cattle. Helavati blames the caste-ridden society for their miserable plight. She refuses to marry an untouchable on the ground that she does not want to continue as an untouchable by marrying an untouchable. Once when Emperor Humayun was in trouble, Verabaludu renders him help. The emperor rewards him with costly gifts and money, thus enriching Verabaludu’s family. But Helavati is still unmarried. At last she marries the son of a minister of the emperor. Verabaludu changes his religion and becomes Chan Mohammad. The social message of this novel was that if Hindus did not change their attitude towards the Dalits the latter would not continue as Hindus any more.¹⁹ Venkata Parawatisha Kavulu’s novel Matru Mandiram (1919) also had some critique on the caste system.

Unnava Laxminarayana’s Mala Palli (Mala Hamlet, 1922) was extensively debated and discussed. The author was considerably influenced by the Gandhian reform movement and championed the rights of the working class. In this novel he depicted “the Dalits’ realization of their socio-economic problems in the wake of broader

¹⁹ Kalckuri Prasad. op. cit.
national struggle under the leadership of Gandhi.\textsuperscript{20} Although some of his ideas differed fundamentally from the Dalit point of view—notably those of pacifism, religiosity, passiveness—his critique of the structured social relations and collectivism elicited wide acclaim. Summarizing the implications of the novel Haragopal says that “The main reason presented for the absence of class consciousness is the hegemony of the Hindu world-view conditioning the consciousness of the Harijans. This prevents them from revolting. … This indicates not only the structural constraints in which the poor Harijans were looked upon but the cobwebs of consciousness which permitted them little concerted and organized action.”\textsuperscript{21}

N.G. Ranga’s \textit{Harijan Nayakudu} (Harijan Leader, 1933) projected the Dalit problem from the point of view of the peasantry and agricultural labour. The hero was a Dalit who “agitates on various issues, opposing the violence against and abuse of Dalits, organizing inter-caste marriages, establishing schools, fighting for entry into the temples and use of public wells.”\textsuperscript{22} Adavi Bapirju’s \textit{Narudu} (1946) depicted the problem of caste prejudice, oppression and Dalit protest at all levels. The hero of \textit{Narudu}, a young Dalit born amidst abject poverty and social neglect, overcomes his disabilities, goes abroad for higher studies and marries an Anglo-Indian girl. Another novel of note is \textit{Adarsham} (1946) by Anantati Narasimham.

\textsuperscript{20} Omvedt, p. 116.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 117.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
Mangipudi Venkata Sharma’s *Nirudda Bharatam* (1915) was the first anthology of poems on Dalits by non-Dalits. The first part of the anthology was devoted to the socio-economic conditions of the Dalits and appealed to the upper castes to treat the Dalits as human beings. The second part appealed to the Panchamas to realize their sufferings which were brought about by the caste system rather than by mysterious fate.

Cherukuvada Damogipurapu Janta Kavulu’s song to the effect that “overlooking the Dalits is not justifiable”, was published in 1921. Nelluri Venkata Ramanaidu’s song ‘*Harijanulu*’ with a similar theme was published in 1928. Kondapalli Jagannatha Rao, Tirunagari Venkatasuri, Kambhampati Laximinarasinha Somayajulu, Basavaraju Appa Rao, Puripanda Appala Swami, Karuna Sri also deplored the problems of the Dalits in their writings.

One play that effectively contrasted the hegemonic upper caste ideology with the Dalit bahujan point of view was Tripuraneni Ramaswamy Chowdary’s ‘*Shambuka Vadha*’ (1922). Chowdary (1887-1943) was a father figure of the non-Brahmin movement and a literary doyen from the Sudra community. Gudapalli Rama Brahma’s film *Mala Pillala* (*Mala Girl*) also depicted the Dalit problems. A.V. Neelakanta Sastri’s play *Harijanudu* (1935) was another non-Dalit contribution to Dalit consciousness.

The main criticism about non-Dalit writings on the Dalits’ plight has been that “the aspirations and emotional feelings of the Dalit masses were not adequately taken cognizance of by the middle class intellectuals, who were predominantly drawn from the upper castes.”

---

23 Vijaya Bharati, op. cit.
24 Satyanarayana, p. 107.
25 Satyanarayana, op. cit.

Kalipatnam Rama Rao’s Yagnam (1964), revolving around a dispute over a loan taken by a Mala family of Appalaramudu from a petty money lender of the village, “was the best critique of the Nehruvian phase from the point of view of the agrarian poor. Driven to destitution, within the agrarian system and without alternative employment in industry, they accumulated in members, without becoming partners in development, and became the marginalized resultants, in spite of their efforts and will.”

---

26 Compiled from S.V. Satyanarayana, “Telugulo Dalita Sahityam” in Adunika Sahityam: Dalita Spruha (Yuva Bharati, Hyderabad); Kalkkuri Prasad op. cit. and Vijaya Bharati, op. cit.

Mainstream Telugu literature witnessed another literary trend during the forties called *Abyudaya Sahityam* or progressive literature, in protest against the prevalent romanticism, idealism and traditional individualism. The writings of this school also reflected on the global problems of the economic depression of the thirties and the fascist aggression in Europe. They idealized communism and propagated the communist utopia of world revolution. The writers of this school formed an organization called Abyudaya Rachayitala Sangham or Progressive Writers Association (PWA). The pioneer of this movement was Srirangam Srinivasa Rao (popularly known as Sri Sri), whose eloquent poems influenced the youth to a remarkable degree and do so even today. Sri Sri’s *Maha Prasthanam* (Great Presentation, 1950), was an anthology of poems which basically centered around class struggle.\(^{28}\)

An offshoot of the progressive writers school was ‘*Dehangara Kavitwam*’ or nude poetry, which sneered at established literary traditions and advocated writing of a crude form. They resorted to unconventional practices such as having their anthologies of poems released by a rickshaw puller or a prostitute at midnight in Hyderabad. Charabanda Raju, Nagnamuni and Nikhileswar belonged to this stream. One anthology of poems from this school was dedicated to Kanchikacherla Koteshu, a Dalit boy who was burnt alive by the upper castes in Krishna district in 1968.

The outbreak of Naxalbari and Srikakulam movements witnessed the emergence of the most powerful revolutionary literary movement in

Telugu called ‘Viplava Sahityam’ or revolutionary poetry. This movement was known by its organization called Viplava Rachayitala Sangham or Revolutionary Writers Association (RWA). Many highly talented revolutionary writers formed its core, producing a wide range of Marxist literature, which, however, is beyond the scope of the present study. The basic criticism about these writers made by Dalit organic intellectuals was that they did not take note of caste and its impact on the self-respect of Dalits. Their focus on the socio-economic problems of the working class did not direct them to create an alternative hegemonic caste ideology and they were not able to answer Dalit and feminist issues. Other cultural-cum-literary organizations like Jana Natya Mandali (JNM), Arunodaya, Navodaya and Janasahiti, and journals like Aruna Tara, Ahyudaya and Srujana all played an important role in propagating pro-Dalit literature.

**Dalit Literature**

Dalit literature basically is a ‘counter hegemonic ideology’ created by ‘Dalit organic intellectuals’. The ideas which they have developed reflects their own social consciousness determined by their structured social existence which has hitherto remained neglected. Dalit organic intellectuals thus come from a most exploited class and caste origin. They necessarily share a common critical attitude towards the hegemonic upper caste ideology. In search of their new socio-cultural identity and distinctness they developed their own communication

---

29 Ibid.
system with their own historical symbols and literary concepts, which created an advanced necessary self-awareness and consciousness for an intended action. Dalit literature as a "counter-hegemonic ideology" is ultimately related to action and is capable of organizing Dalits as agents of new democratic revolution. It is able to translate itself into a specific orientation of Dalit revolutionary practice. Dalit literature has been considered here in the Gramscian view of a positive "organic ideology, which has a psychological validity and which organizes human masses and created the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc."\textsuperscript{31}

Dalit organic intellectuals in Andhra Pradesh have evolved broadly in three stages.

- In the \textit{first stage}, Ambedkar's anti-caste thought/ideology was not fully developed in Andhra. Dalit organic intellectuals were then in a stage of making appeals, but they differed from non-Dalit writers who advocated integration. They had developed a critical view about Hindu social hierarchy.

- In the \textit{second stage}, Ambedkarism was fully received into their literature. Their argument centred around uncritical acceptance of Ambedkar's philosophy as the base for the counter-hegemonic ideology.


• In the third and present stage, Dalit intellectuals have emerged with a Marxist perspective, analysing Hindu/Indian society on the basis of historical materialism along with Ambedkar's caste annihilation theory. This new synthesis of Marxism-Ambedkarism was aimed at the successful accomplishment of a new democratic revolution in India.

In all the three stages, however, Dalit organic intellectuals have been collectively committed to reconstructing counter-hegemonic ideology through their literary and artistic creations consisting of poems, songs, essays, speeches, novels, short stories, plays, autobiographical notes and literary criticism.

An attempt has been made here to analyse available literature of the organic intellectuals. The definition of organic intellectuals is not confined to Dalits alone but has been extended to the minority and OBC intellectuals also, because much of the Dalit literature was created in combination with them.

Early Dalit intellectuals' creative expressions were mainly centred around the themes of equal treatment, self-respect, dignified living. While exposing caste exploitation and discrimination they asserted their identity as 'Panchamas' and 'Adi-Hindus'. Their consciousness was reflected in pleading for recognition of the nature of their existence. Mahakavi Gurram Jashuva (1895-1971) was the first compelling organic Dalit voice in Telugu literature, who exposed the hypocrisy of caste ideology. Jashuva was a great creative poet, but his creative genius and literary talent was not fully recognized. He was humiliated, subjected to an intense mental agony and treated as a literary
outcaste by the scholarly world that was dominated by the upper castes. Reacting to his humiliations he commented:

All those crack-brained crows, their prejudice, slander, can't take away my well-endowed faculty. I will bang the bells of verse, I will shower the pellets. I will chasten the crackles of Andhra voice.

He declared in addition:

I intend to pierce through caste distinction, poverty and prove that I am a human being. I wield a sword. My sword is my poetry.

Jashuva's literary output was prolific, including poetry, short stories and plays in more than thirty works reflecting on different issues of history, society, economy and political upheavals of his time. Basically a humanist, Jashuva was against all inequalities. Whoever fought inhuman traditions, inequalities and social evils, were seen by Jashuva as liberators, irrespective of caste, class, colour and ideology. His works are marked by this impartiality and rationality. Jashuva wrote poems praising Gandhi for his campaign for the untouchables' temple entry and uplift programmes. He also celebrated Subhas Chandra Bose's heroic role in the national struggle. Jashuva also recognized the autonomous struggle waged by Ambedkar for the emancipation of

---

62 Satyanarayana, op. cit.
64 Satyanarayana, op. cit.
Dalits. He asked his messenger, the Bat, whether he had got Ambedkar’s blessings:

Ambedkar my brother is there, who suffered, was victimized immensely for my community, but secured the highest position, as great as the Viceroy. Does he welcome you with a bouquet? His blessings are a must for your victory.\(^\text{35}\)

*Gabhilan* (The Bat), Jashuva’s magnum opus, rocked the whole Telugu literary world when it was published in 1941. Telugu litterateurs were until then engrossed in romanticism, without any serious social concern. *Gabhilan*, an anthology of poems, dealt with almost all socio-economic and political issues of Dalits. Each poem reflected their agony, their despair and their anger. Each poem realistically presented the bitter daily experiences of the Dalit masses, their disgust and misery. As Tarakam summarizes, “The entire theme is the remorseful life as an untouchable. The language, the expression, the idiom and the style are very powerful and near to life. The depiction was very piercing.”\(^\text{36}\) The opening poem says:

Pleased with miles of penance inconsiderates
All penury just with little of morsel Unconnected to four divisions (varnas)
Fifth born son of Mother Bharat.\(^\text{37}\)


\(^{36}\) Tarakam, op. cit.

\(^{37}\) Jashuva, *Gabhilan*, p. 9. (Translated by the researcher)
Reflecting on the economic exploitation of Dalits and how they had been mercilessly alienated from their own production by the upper caste rulers, he lamented:

When his (Dalit’s) hands do not work. The green fields hesitate to yield crops. He swears, provides food for the world. But he himself has no food.\(^{38}\)

Jashuva expressed his disillusionment with Hindu social life and questioned its wisdom which treated Dalits as less than human beings. He mercilessly exposed the hegemonic caste ideology and its hypocrisy. He wrote:

\[
\text{Tied my mouth with Karma doctrine} \\
\text{Means follows are making merry at the cost of my life,} \\
\text{Ask Eswar (God): reveal the truth about} \\
\text{What is meant by Karma and why it has a rudge against me.}^{39}
\]

Further he explained how Hinduism was responsible for the perpetuation of caste oppression. Alienating Dalits from the mainstream society, squeezing them from all sides the upper castes regarded the Dalit’s shadow itself as an offence. Jashuva asked the Dalits to be cautious about the four-hooded Hindu cobra that might attack them at any moment. He wrote:

\[
\text{By swallowing the blood of the wretched (Dalit)}
\]

\(^{38}\) Taken from Satyanarayana, op. cit.

Lives the iron anklesed Mother

Upon smelling the air hisses with vengeance

The four- hooded Hindu cobra. 40

**Naakathu** (1966), Jashuva's autobiography, revealed the Dalit poet whose integrity and honesty brought him hardship. It expressively reflected the real Dalit's inner experiences of pain and anguish and illustrated the oppressive caste social order to which Dalits were subjected.

Jashuva's contemporaries, Jala Ranga Swamy, Kusuma Dharmanra, Nakka China Vankaiah, Nutakka, Abraham were some other organic intellectuals who exposed caste discrimination and its dominance. Jala Ranga Swamy wrote the first Dalit novel *Rytu Pilla* (Farmer's Daughter, 1938) 41 The heroine Seeta, daughter of Ventanna an upper caste farmer, is progressive in her understanding of social relations, revolts against traditions and boldly comes forward to marry Sri Ramudu, an untouchable farm servant at her father's house. In his long poem 'Who Are the Untouchables' (1930), Rangaswamy questioned the upper caste hegemony:

Some occupations were created and assigned to us

We were named as serfs

Caste discrimination was introduced,

We were oppressed

---

40 Taken from Satyanarayana, op. cit.
We were troubled with slavery/trodden

Occupational difference were imposed. We were

alienated.\(^\text{42}\)

In *Melukolupu* (Awaken, 1930) and *Mala Sudhi* (Cleaning Malas, 1930) Jala Ranga Swamy criticized all hypocritical, pseud-Gandhian upper caste activists who worked for the uplift of untouchables.\(^\text{43}\) In his writings Dalit identity was symbolized as the Panchamas. He projected the Dalit historical figures of Arundhati, Matangis, Sabri as Dalit women against the Aryans.\(^\text{44}\)

Kusuma Dharmanna, while organizing Dalits for the national movement also asked the Dalits to prepare for their own liberation struggle from the native hegemonic upper caste rulers. He started a propaganda-cum-literary magazine called *Jaya Bari*. He was said to be “a powerful speaker, writer and organizer”.\(^\text{45}\) Dharmanna was known for his spontaneous satires on upper caste rulers in which the Dalits’ identity was asserted. He noted that the Dalits’ participation in the freedom struggle was marginalized due to their immediate socio-economic constraints. The upper caste leadership also failed to evolve a systematic programme to ensure their socio-economic emancipation and “the aspirations and emotional feelings of the Dalit masses did not

\(^{42}\) Sayanarayana, op. cit.

\(^{43}\) Ibid.

\(^{44}\) Ibid.

\(^{45}\) K. Ilaiyah, *Caste or class or caste-class: A study in Dalit Bahujan consciousness and struggle in Andhra Pradesh in the 1980s* (Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, 1995).
become an integral part of the nationalist ideology and programme”. Thus, the Dalits’ twofold struggle, against the imperial British and the hegemonic upper caste native ruler, was reflected in their ideological expression. Dharmanna wrote a controversial song ‘Maakoddee Nalla Doratanam’ (We do not want this black landlordship) as a counter to the song by Garimella Satyanarayana, an upper caste nationalist leader, entitled ‘Maakoddee Tella Doratanam’ (We do not want this white rule). Portraying the pathetic living conditions of Dalit masses in this song Dharmanna wrote:

(We have) only small huts outside the village

We do not have big houses

Air, light do not trifle

(We have) no delicious food curry

To wear (we have) no saree, loincloth

(We have) no tail ornaments

(We have) no land to plough, eat food

(You have) no sympathy on our poverty. Despite twelve months of bonded labour

We live with hunger wife has to labour,

Son has to graze the animals

Despite all our drudgery, we are deficient of food and clothes

Debts are undone, God, they starved us mercilessly

---

46. Satyanarayana, op. cit.
47. Ibid.
We do not want this black lordship
Sir! God! We do not want this black lordship
God, we have no equal treatment in this society
We do not want this black lordship\(^48\)

Nakka Chinna Venkaia, in his *Harijana Kirtanalu* (Harijan Hymans, 1935), pleaded with the upper castes to forgo caste distinctions:

Why they not forgo untouchability
Why they have dispute on it
Why they not forgo untouchability.\(^49\)

He asked the upper castes to treat the Dalits as fellow human beings and cease their persecution. This tone of plea also marked the writings of Nutakki Abraham, Premaiah, Gnanandakavi, Chodagiri Chandra Vajrapu, Samba Murthy and Athota Ratna Kavi.\(^50\)

Boyee Bheemanna (b. 1911) reached the highest pinnacle of Telugu literature. He wrote nearly sixty plays, stories, novels and essays which reflected on the socio-economic, historical and cultural aspects of the Dalits. Two of Bheemanna’s plays, *Coolie Raja* (Labourer King, 1942) and *Paleru* (Farm Servant, 1946) mirrored the problems closely affecting the Dalits. *Coolie Raja* was about the struggle of Dalits for economic justice. The play was performed in every village of coastal

\(^{48}\) Vijaya Bharati, op. cit (Translated by the researcher).

\(^{49}\) Satyanarayana, *Telugulo Dalita Sahityam*.

\(^{50}\) Tarakam, op. cit.
Andhra, sometimes more than a dozen times. The hero Nishkalaveer of the play says that every labourer's heart is flaring up, it would burn up any time. The play, written on the lines of caste-class struggle created tremendous consciousness among Dalits and other working classes. Because of its revolting content, inflammatory language against the upper castes and the British government the play was banned by the British government.

*Paleru* projected the problem of Dalit bonded labour. The hero Venkanna is a victim of the system of hereditary bonded labour. Different from all previous farm servants, Venkanna wants to put an end to bonded labour as such. His solution is to educate himself and change his occupation. With the help of a school teacher and an upper caste girl, he escapes from bonded labour and joins the Brahmo Samaj, where he is given the opportunity to study. Venkanna secures B.A. degree and becomes deputy collector. The play "is an urge for social equality and the acquisition of knowledge and education by Dalit masses for a decent living as well as for a respectable place in society. In it there is a suggestion that through education and inter-caste marriage social mobility is possible. The author opined that the problems of Dalits is not only that of class. ... Hence Dalits should be educated first and obtain good official positions."

Rauvri Ekambaram is another poet and organizer who moved long with Ambedkar in Andhra and together with him addressed many

---

51 Ibid.
52 Tarakam's article in Ganumala Gnameswar (ed.), *Rojee Bheemanna Sahitee Shastipurthi Sanchika*.
53 Satyanarayana, op.cit.
public meetings. Ekampram has written many poems and songs on Dalits depicting their hatred, agony and future hope. His anthology of poems on Ambedkar, *Ambedkar Samara Simha* (Ambedkar the warrior lion) created tremendous consciousness in Andhra about Ambedkar’s personality and his revolutionary ideas. His *Ambedkar Ramayanamu, Ambedkar Bharatam* and anthology of poems are still the most popular songs on Ambedkar.54

Endluri Chinnaiya’s *Ambedkar’s Life History* has been the most forceful and highly influential political propaganda document on Ambedkar in Telugu. Vizaya Bharati, daughter of Boy Bheemanna and wife of Bojja Taraka, the first Dalit woman to get a doctorate in Andhra Pradesh, translated many of Ambedkar’s works into Telugu. Her translations into Telugu of *Ambedkar: Life and Mission* and Mahatma Phule’s life history, both by Dananjaj Kheer, have inculcated a dynamic political consciousness and heightened the Dalits’ perception of Ambedkar in Telugu country. These books have been widely read and have been responsible for the widely promoted Ambedkar cultural and youth organizations in Andhra Pradesh. Modukuri Jhondon’s play *Nichehana Metlu* (Laughter) also played a significant role in building an alternative hegemonic ideology.55

The counter-hegemonic ideology was also propagated through many media of expression by Dalit organic intellectuals. Saik Nazir (1920-97), an OBC Muslim, adopted and enriched a folk form of storytelling called *Burrakatha* for his mass communication. *Burrakatha* is

---

54 Interview with Ganeswar, 21 January 1997.
55 Vijaya Bharathi, op. cit.
simple and colloquial, and totally different both in form and content from the highly Sanskritized Harikatha, which is mainly used by the upper castes. Suddaiah Hanumanthu was another singer and lyricist whose poems on vetti exploitation and the heroic role of the Communists during the Telengana movement have become the main source of cultural movement.\textsuperscript{56} Both Nazer and Hanumanthu played a significant role during the Telengana struggle.

Unlike Marathi Dalit literature, Andhra Dalit organic intellectuals were profoundly influenced by the Ambedkarite movement, Marxist-Leninist movement, Naxalbari and Srikakulam and the Dalit Panthers Movement in Maharashtra. This remarkable change may be noticed in the Dalit literature from the seventies onwards. K.G. Satyamurty, who is popularly known by his pen name ‘Shiva Sagar’ is a rebel, and a leader of peasants and proletariat. Some of his poems, ‘Gong Bells’ (1969), ‘Narudo! Bhaskaruda!’ (1970), ‘Udyamam Nelabalu’ (1971), ‘Sister Chandramma’ (1971) have been classics of Naxalbari movement. In ‘Udyamam Nelabalu’ (1971) he labelled himself thus:

\begin{quote}
I am Naxalbari!
I am Mushahari!
I am Srikakulam!
Renegade! I am Revolution
I am the man who sprouted from the blood flood of those martyrs!\textsuperscript{57}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{56} Ilaiab, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{57} Shiva Sagar, \textit{Udyamam Nelabalu} (an anthology of poems). (Srjana Pracharanalu, Hanumakonda. 1983), p. 49 (Translated by the researcher).
‘Shiva Sagar’ has been the bridge between the Progressive writers of the forties and the Revolutionary writers of the seventies, continuing the ongoing Dalit democratic revolution. As a revolutionary he sounded his revolutionary ‘Gong bells’ as early as the seventies, to unite all working classes. This poem reveals:

Workers, Farmers,

Weavers, Labourers

Hamali, Kalasi,

Kammari, Kummari,

Oppressed, Suppressed

March on! March on!

Bang the Gong bells

trot out! trot!!

Move on! Move on!\textsuperscript{58}

‘Shiva Sagar’s’ ‘Chelli! Chandramma’ poem became the symbolic representation of thousands of Dalit women who have silently borne the suppression by the hegemonic caste oppressors. It was a glowing tribute to all those Dalit women who were harassed and tormented by the landlords. His other poems, ‘Narudo! Bhaskaruda!’ and ‘O! Vilukada!’ (O! Bowman!, 1973) both have documented the

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., p. 8 (translated by the researcher).
course of revolutionary struggle. Despite State repression, the movement survived and continues, he says. The bullet hit only the thigh, which crippled movement, but not the chest, which would have killed the movement.

C. Varahala Rao, or ‘CV’ as he is known in the literary world, became the starting point for the present generation of Dalit poetry. His poems ‘Satyakama Jabhali’, ‘Narahalli’ (Human Sacrifice), ‘Samskritika Punarujjevanam’ (Cultural renaissance) and ‘Varnavyavastha’ (Caste System) have been masterpieces of Dalit poetry. They have played a significant role in the production of a counter-hegemonic ideology. In addition they reflect the sorrow and anguish of the Dalits. In his ‘Paris Commune’ poem CV suggested an Indianized Marxism with class/caste debate. His poems have given the earliest direction for the synthesis of Marxism and Ambedkar. 59

Present-day Dalit literature is an inevitable spontaneous upsurge of the suppressed voice of the Dalit masses. Their literary expressions are a compulsive outburst of stored anger, untold misery, resentment, poverty, injustice, disillusionment, mental and physical persecutions. They give voice to the Dalits’ torments and distressful social position in the oppressive caste system. Bojja Tarakam in his poem ‘I am an Untouchable’ (1976) laments:

I am an untouchable
My carcass smells dirt

59 Taken from the introductory poem on CV by Shambhuka, Poyideemihenollam (an anthology of poems). (Dalitia Vimochana Samithi, Mangalagiri. 1992). p. 10. (Telugu)
My life is full of bonded cry
My eyes filled with radiance
Of sunned in Sun, of rained in rain,
My head like
tighten banyan suckers

I was told to carry the dead cows
I was told to make shoes out of it
I was told not to wear them, never
I was told to live like that

But he repudiates this endless prostrating life and asserts confidently:

I am coming ... 
by mutilating thy
despotic darkness
I am erupting ... 
by cracking thy
barriers and trammels
...
I am whirlwind, Gust
Mud, Pyramid
Thunder, Flash
Chasm, Ocean
Current, Deluge
Magnanimous, Inferno

Alpha, Omega
I am coming

Dalit identity metamorphosed from Panchanga untouchable, Harijan to Dalit. Each stage has its own historical significance. in Andhra, the Dalit further metamorphosed into a Naxalite. Satiandra in his historic poem 'Dalit Manifesto' (1981) disputes and challenges all that past paradoxical record of the hegemonic caste system:

Mine
You asked me not to enter into the temple
Well, anyhow
I am happy being an atheist
Mine
Proscribes not to study
It I study ordered to show the tongue
Well, anyhow

I comprehend how gullible you are
how prodigious you are
...

One uttered me
As an ‘untouchable’
Another affirmed
As ‘Harijan’
Some rogue judged me

---

61 Ibid. p.88 (Translated by the researcher).
as a 'Wretched'
What is it for me?

Whosoever, whatever manner calls
When I myself am a 'Naxalite'
Having on their values
becoming a blubbery burp
or a camel's eye
conjuring up his principles
in my trauma

Yes
What is it for me?
Whosoever calls, whatsoever manner

In the same tone Gaddar says that the Dalits, even if they change
religion, even if they change their caste, would not be able to change
their identity. The only way for them is to take up arms, to capture State
power:

Slave Slave
they serf O lord saying so
he like how long—O Malanna
Why don't you revolt—O Madiganna

...
In Madras State
Madigas Malas
unbearable of landlords' oppression
Then embraced Islam

Shankacharigadu
Skew whiffed
Hindu Society became
topsy-turvy
...

Even if you change religion
Your life won’t be changing
Even if you change caste
you won’t be getting food

You without ruling the State
Your fate does not change
For the State power Malanna
Take the rifle Madiganna⁶³

G. Anjaiah questions the dominance of the feudal landlordism and asserts that without the labour and sweat of the Dalits there would be no such thing as village or town. Every village is sustained by their hard work, ploughing, guarding, grazing, washing. Every task has to be done by them only. Without their contribution every socially productive instrument designed and owned by the landlords would be of no use:

Village is ours! This street is ours!
Hamlet is ours! We are for every work!
Hammer is ours! Knife is ours!
Crowbar is ours! Spade is ours!
Cart is ours! Bullock is ours!
Why is lord and lordship

‘Shambuka’ (pen name) in his poem ‘Poyedecmi Lenollam’ (We have nothing to lose) exposes the real picture of caste hypocrisy and how it has contaminated even the powerful Naxalite movement. He wonders how hellish is caste hypocrisy:

If Madiga wear Khadi
He is a hopeless fool
If Kamma wears it
He is simple ideal Satyagrahi
Ah! Caste!
How cruel you are

If Brahmin says there is no caste
He is a great reformer
If Mala propagates the same
He is a dangerous casteist
Oh! caste!
How brutal your are

64 Jana Natya, Mundalit Patalu Kranti Prachuranalu, p. 23 (Translated by the researcher).
If Nagi Reddy, Pulla Reddy
You don’t find caste
But in Satya Murthy, Padma Rao
Caste smell is gushing out
Ah! Caste!
How funny your are.65

The present generation Dalit literature is not a stream of pleasure, it is not a regurgitation of freakish romantic memories, not even short-lived emotions. It is, rather, a philosophical dialogue, a socio-cultural and politico-cultural assertion. It represents the struggle among the social forces rather than individual forces.66 The common contexts of the present Dalit literature are: alienation, oppression, brutal force, agony, perpetual atrocities, anger, pain, privations, and sorrows. At the same time it aims at caste-class Dalit struggle, for the creation of revolutionary consciousness, self-respect, emancipation, attacking on all social evils. It aspires for state power. It opposes the concepts of pessimism, cynicism, stoicism, fatalism, superstition and romanticism. It is the real experiences of organic life. It is for new hope, humanism, equality, brotherhood, it endeavours a new socio-cultural identity.

After Karamchedu, Dalit literature was thoroughly radicalized. Many Dalit intellectuals emerged from the Karmchedu movement. Katti Padma Rao, the leader of this movement has written many poems on Dalits. His ‘Jalu Gantalu’ (1988), ‘Jana Geetam’, ‘Desam Diary’

(1989), ‘Telugu vari Hochiman Shiv Sagar’, ‘Red Star’, ‘On Sankarcharia’ have created tremendous Dalit consciousness. His ‘Desam Diary’ has been the most pertinent critique of Telugu Desam government:

Padirikuppam, Karamchedu
Tadiparthi, Kottakota,
Neerukona, Dontali
Shiraluru, Bandlapalli
Countrywide bloodshed
by the oppressed Dalits
for their emancipatory struggles
Welcome! Welcome!\(^{67}\)

Gorate Venkanna also asks the Dalits to revolt against the atrocities inflicted on them by upper castes:

How many times these macabre
How many shall we perish
(Dalitanna) get organized or we can’t stand
(Dalitanna) raise the rifle, or we can’t live.\(^{68}\)

Vanga Poudu Prasad depicts the deplorable plight of Dalits in their poverty-stricken, dirty, thatched colony:

There is Malapeta
at the end of the village

---

\(^{67}\) Satyanrayana, *Telugulo Dalita Sahityam*.
\(^{68}\) Tirumala Rao and Kunnum Ashok, p. 109.
of being oppressed

at the end of the village. 69

Masterji, singer, lyricist, dramatist, is among the leading Dalit organic intellectuals who is propagating Ambedkarism along with Marxism. Masterji’s song on Ambedkar, ‘Take Salutes Baba Ambedkar’ became the chorus for the present Dalit movement. His song ‘Deena Bandavulu’ (Saviours of the Helpless) became the Dalit national anthem.

Great many born great
But all are not saviours of helpless
Few only could liquidate our problems
Who really gave up their lives
Among them were Phule
Ambedkar and Periyar70

Masterji propounds and propagates his own theory called ‘Moolavasi Siddantam’ or the theory of aboriginism. According to this theory, Mala, Madiga and other bahujans are the real natives of this land, but in the historical process they have been suppressed and made slaves by the Aryans who were barbarians:

Adi Hindus—Nations Nudes
Real Indians are—Adi Indians
Aryans invaded—fought

Weaponless—Dravidians were defeated and—made slaves
Today they—are the Dalits. 71

His poem ‘Neel-Lal’ (Blue and Red) seeks a synthesis of Ambedkarism and Marxism:

Under Blue Red flag “O Sister”
You and me as equals “O Sister”
Be ready for the Struggle “O sister”
then only
Oppressed would get emancipation “O sister”
To dismantle the oppressor’s rule “O sister”
To accomplish the Dalit rule “O sister”72

Gaddar and Masterji are two powerful agents of the new democratic Dalit cultural revolution. Gaddar represents the Marxist-Leninist party and he leads its cultural organization Jananatyamandali (JNM). Masterji represents the Dalit bahujan organization and in 1978 started the Dalita Kala Mandali, an independent Dalit cultural organization. Gaddar’s songs are dynamic, a torrent, and a powerful weapon for revolutionary movement. But his conclusions are class struggle, armed struggle and Marxism and revolution. Masterji’s songs are having a moving force, they represent the real organs of Dalit history and culture. His songs are mostly centered around Ambedkarism.

71 Ibid., pp. 7-8.
72 Ibid., p. 49.
U. Sambashiva Rao, Krantikiran, Satish Chaday, G. Shankar, Endheri Sudhakar, Johnoor, Sahu, G. Anjaiah, Rama Rao, Kalekuri Prasad (Yuru) and many other poets and lyricists have also come up. Satish Chandar’s *Panchama Vedam*, an anthology of poems, created considerable heat in Telugu literature. U. Sambashra Rao’s song on ‘Dalit Muslim bhai bhai’ seeks to unite the Dalit struggle.

The Dalit story and novel also occupied a distinct place in Telugu literature. The themes of these stories reveal the reality and typical depiction of the Dalits’ life, centered around their daily struggle against the caste-ridden society. Similarly, they reflected the denial of public places, traditional impositions, poverty, pain, humiliations. Kolukaaluri Enayak’s ‘Urabavi’ (1969) is a short story about the denial of access to the public well in a small village. In order to protest the upper caste dominance Dalits unitedly dumped the carcass of an animal in the public well, which led to retaliation by the upper castes.73

Boya Jangaiah’s ‘Bancha Rai’ (1984) is a short story about the grabbing of Dalit land by the upper caste landlords in the name of a temple or sacred place. B.S. Ramulu’s *Bratukupuru* (Struggle for Existence, 1982), is a novel about the wretched beedi (cigar) workers’ life in Telengana, written in language typical of Telengana. B.S. Ramulu has also written *Contradictions* (1990) and *Bandhi* (1995). His works are widely read in Andhra. P. Nasaraiah’s *Eporatam Agadu* (1992) is a collection of short stories about the Dalits’ life in coastal Andhra. There are nine stories, dealing with bonded labour, land alienation, temple

---

entry, education, etc. Allam Rajaiah's *Bhoomi* (1982) and *Agnikanam* (1983), which are collections of stories, have become the primary weapons for introducing revolutionary ideas among the tribals and other Dalits in Telengana. Sahu and Dadattyat have also written stories depicting Dalit problems.

After Karamchedu, the first All India Dalit Writers Conference was held in 1987 at Hyderabad. Nearly 528 delegates from all over India attended. The conference was a unique effort of Bojju Tarakam. The conference unanimously took an oath saying that Dalit writers would hold the torch of liberation and participate in people's movements. The aims of the conference was to promote a casteless and classless society based on human values, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. It was also emphasized at the conference that Dalit literature should not only act as a source of inspiration for oppressed people but also become an instrument to ignite consciousness and courage.  

The establishment of the Ambedkar Memorial Trust in 1986 also helped to create a counter-ideology to caste dominance. The objectives of the trust were to propagate the ideals of Ambedkar for establishing a casteless and classless society; to publish books, journals and periodicals, pamphlets and conduct seminars mainly impressing the necessity to abolish the caste system and eradicate untouchability; to encourage writers, artists and dramatists who worked for the propagation of removal of untouchability and the caste system. In keeping with its mandate, the trust has played a significant role in

---

74 See B. Tarakam (ed.), *The First All India Dalit Writers Conference.*
conducting seminars and memorial lectures regularly. The emergence of organic Dalit cultural and literacy organizations like Dalit Kala Mandali, the Dalit Writers, Artists and Intellectuals United Forum (DWAIUF) in the post-Chundur (1991) period have brought about a perceptible change in the socio-cultural milieu. "These organizations have been an instrumental in spreading the anti-caste message of Ambedkar through song, story and speech". Further the DWAIUF has regularly conducted workshops for Dalit young men and women to identity their inclination and talents and to train them to realize their potential. The starting of their own publications like Lokayata, Natupu, Eduveetam have also played a vital role in spreading the counter-hegemonic ideology.

Dalit literary criticism of Katti Padma Rao's Social Revolutionary Writers: A Dalitist Literary Critique (1995) has been the best literary critique. It forms part of the syllabus for postgraduate students of Telugu. His essay on reservations, entitled "Reservation and Hindu Mathonmadam" (1991) and his book Caste and Alternative Culture (1995) have been trenchant critiques of the hegemonic upper caste culture and ideology. Kancha Ilaiyah's essays on reservations, particularly 'Paranna Bukkulu Praibha Gurinch Mathadutunna' (Parasites are talking about the merit), which were regularly published in Natupu, his highly Dalit organic intellectual mature work, Why I am not a Hindu, A Sudra Critique of Hinduva Philosophy, Culture and Political Economy (1996) have become critical texts of the present

---

75 Interview with Gnaneswar. 21 January 1997


77 Ibid.

After Chundur many anthologies of poems have been published by Dalit intellectuals. Some of them was, Rakta Khsetram (Blood-soaked Field, 1991), a long heart-rending poem by Padma Rao about the Chundur massacre. Chikkanaouthunna Pata (Song of Solidarity, 1995), is an anthology of poems written by Dalits, OBCs and minorities. These illuminating, rebellious poems were a spontaneous outpouring in reaction to Karamchedu, Chundur and Ayodhya events where the upper castes had instigated a carnage against the Dalits. These poems are testimony to the inflating, sharpening Dalit literary tone in Andhra Pradesh.

Sunkara Ramesh’s Tallikodi Hechcharika (The caution of mother hen, 1995), is a long poem. In it the mother hen cautions her Dalit brood about the conspiracies of the upper castes to swallow them. M. Nagesh Babu’s Velinade (1991) is an anthology of poems on sundry issues. Exposing the evil practices of caste system and atrocities committed by the upper castes on Dalits and minorities, he asks the Dalit mothers to conceive swords in order to bring about Dalit revolution:
Tell our
expectant mothers
to beget razor-sharp swords
tell our fellows
Not to make shoes with own skin
And ask them to use their landlord’s skin. 78

_Nishani_ (1995) is an anthology of protest poems written by
Khaza, Nagesh Babu and Theresh Babual Veeraiah. These poems brim
with anger against the upper caste pseudo writers on Dalit themes. They
attack those writers who intend to write on Dalits only to earn a name
and fame without losing their upper caste identity. The _Dalit Manifesto_
(1995) is another anthology of poems written by Dalit activists,
intellectuals and young Dalit scholars. Shiva Sagar’s famous poem
‘Marching History’ appears in it. This poem has been regarded as the
“poem of the present generation”. Summarizing the present Dalit
movement Shiva Sagar notes:

Shambuka Sneeringly
Slaying Rama
Ekalavya’s hatchet hewing
the thumbs of Drona
Bali’s tiny foot trampling
Vamana underneath
Manu of being pinned eyes
of snapping off tongue

78 M. Nagesh Babu, _Velivada. An Anthology of Poems Narasa Rao Poet_ (Srija
of pouring lead in ears
rolling in the graveyard

Positioned on the butchered
cutter of the epoch
the roaring chandala
sibilating four hunter hounds
on Shankara

Well done ...!
The present marching history
in the history of real Chandala! 79

Summing up

The emergence of the Dalit movement was associated with the
outpouring of prodigious and powerful literature bearing on the theme
of Dalit emancipation. Dalit literature had transformed from passive
supplication and pleading of an earlier generation to the higher level of
revolutionary consciousness while posing a challenge to the established
order. There has been a vast gulf between Dalit organic intellectuals and
non-Dalit writers, in their expression and content. Though non-Dalit
writers have dealt with the caste and untouchability problem in their
writings, their literary expressions were not able to touch the inner
psychological world of Dalit agony. At best, they remained sympathetic
but did not pose any systematic attack on the real oppressive institutions.

79 Dalit Manifesto: An Anthology of Poems by Vispotana (Central University,
Dalit literature has created a vast space for the emergence of new organic Dalit intellectuals. They were the real actors in the new democratic revolutionary movement. They were also actively involved in the construction of new ideas, and were producers of new knowledge which was based on their real social experience. The secular form of Dalit literature could be noticed with the emergence of the new Dalit bahujan literature encompassing the minorities, women and other bahujan oppressed classes. Its secular content is not just the expression of their reflective mode of thinking but it fundamentally aimed at the intended new democratic revolution which would alter the present position of Dalits and other oppressed masses. Thus Dalit literature is evolving with a tremendous potential of emancipatory zeal and with humanizing content along with the Dalit movement.