Chapter I: Preamble
1.1. Introduction:

On vast landscape of India, there lived the people of various castes, communities and religions. Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Islam and Christian had seen dominant sects made their essence clear with the religion. Among them most of communities were tried their best to bring the social change in the society, but they become failure. Due to this, various ways of thinking took place on Indian canvas. One group demanded to have changes in religion and still remained firm to keep the religion as it is. Other group demanded to have changes in the way of life. It gave importance to cultural change in Nineteenth and
Twentieth century. As a result of this, society makes two groups such as the exploiter and exploited. Sociologically, the neglected class doesn’t belong to any caste or community those who are ignored, they are Dalit.

The literary phenomenon to which we now call Dalit literature in India emerged in the 1960s. The primary motive of Dalit literature is the liberation of Dalits in India. The aim of Dalit literature is protest against the established system which is based on injustice and exposes the evil and hypocrisy of the upper caste. Dalit literature is based on annubhava (experience) rather than anumana (speculation). Therefore, the authenticity and liveliness is the essential feature of Dalit literature.

Autobiography, as a genre of literature, is a metaphor of self and journeys of authors own life and achievement. It is a very influential genre through which Dalit writers have portrayed a realistic picture of the Dalit world. It is the recent development emerged after post-independence in India, which is the most important tool of Dalit literature. It is not just a remembering of past, but a shaping and structuring of them in such a way as to help understand one’s life. Thus, Dalit Writing is essentially expression of the reality of human life and a great piece of literature depicts that reality with communicable lucid language facilitating narrative with reader’s aesthetic and literary sense.

1.2. Survey of Research:

The title of present research is A Cultural Study of Dalit Autobiographies in India with special reference to Sharankumar Limbale’s’ The Outcaste, Laxman Mane’s An Outsider, Siddalingaiah’s Ooru Keri and Omprakash Valmiki’s Joothan. It is true that this branch of literature has studied by mostly but in regional languages. Therefore, present research has concentrate on national language which makes awareness among Indian Dalit. It is a amalgamation of three states and their culture. Hence, it enriches the way of living of Indian Dalit.
The research on Dalit Autobiography in India is not enough in compares to the awareness of Indian Dalit. The researchers have focus on new concepts like subjugation, Dissonant Voices, Feminist approach but no one could handle the issue of Dalit culture.

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Milind Pandit has also awarded Ph. D. degree form same university under the title of Influence of Dalit autobiography on post miodern writing.

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Hence, the present research is different from other perspectives. It is simply a cultural study of Dalit autobiographies in India.

1.3. Significance of Research:

Dalit literature is an emerging branch of literature. It has found its own voice in post-independence in India. However, in 1960s a group of Dalit writes can makes their identity as politician, literary canon, and economist but still they could not change the face of Dalit society. Thus, the significance of this research is to focus on Dalit lives and their trouble.

1.4. Scope and Limitations of Research:

The present research has a cosmic scope. The present research entitled A Cultural Study of Dalit Autobiographies in India analyses the portrayal of Dalit culture through the
autobiographies of Sharankumar Limbale, Laxman Mane, Siddalingaiah, and Omprakash Valmiki. It is a simply cultural study of Dalit autobiography as a Dalit text.

1.5. Hypothesis:

The hypothesis of the present research is to find out the following points.

- To study the notion Dalit literature and Dalit Autobiography.
- To focus on a cultural study of Dalit autobiography as text.
- The life experiences of pain as a means of cultural assertion.
- To study the Self-identity and roots of Dalit’s humiliation and injustice.
- Can these autobiographies be studied as rejection to traditional Hindu culture and acceptance to Buddhist culture?

1.6. Research Methodology:

There is no typical method in present research entitled A Cultural Study of Dalit Autobiographies in India. Therefore, above methods used for the present research:

1. Descriptive Method
2. Referential Method

1.7. Research Structure:

Before beginning the research, it needs to have the research structure. It is an important to include the above point: purpose of research, area of research, time and data collection for research. It needs to have the knowledge of difficulties in problems arising in future. These points are the structure of research takes place.

1.8. Purpose of Research:

The purpose of the present research is to dig out a cultural study of Dalit society in India. It was the central agenda of the research. The indispensable word Dalit and Dalit culture
was concentrated for research with the help of Dalit autobiographies in India. As Dalit in India is known to be discarded and kept away from the society since thousand years ago. The central aim of this research is to find out the term Dalit or untouchability or the suppression or subjugation of people under the name of caste, religion, creed etc. It has concerned Dalit author how they have attempted to bring them into mainstream.

1.9. Findings and Conclusions:

Dalit autobiographies are the store house of pain and pathos. The select Dalit authors penned their soul-numbing survival stories equivalent to American slave narratives. They documented sufferings as it is- the reality. Dalits, the caste victims, emerge out of social and legal exploitations, yet they are still undervalued and denied of socializations. The devastated selves consider their autobiographies as agents to bring out positive transition beyond borders in the contemporary Indian Dalits lives. Thus, the select Dalit autobiographies in India are considered as milestone towards the progressive change in society. The conclusion of this research is to rejection of Hindu culture and to accept Buddhist culture which is based on classless society and equality. Dalit autobiographies, in India and abroad, focus on the pathetic and challenging past and their community, which is struggling for present and hopeful future.

1.10. Statement:

A CULTURAL STUDY OF DALIT AUTOBIOGRAPHIES IN INDIA

Sharankumar Limbale’s The Outcaste, Laxman Mane’s An Outsider, Siddalingaiah’s Ooru Keri and Omprakash Valmiki’s Joothan

1.11. Culture:

By etymologically, the term culture has a classical origin. It was first used by the Roman orator, Cicero in his book Tusclan Disputations. The word culture derives from Latin word cultura, which means cultivation. Culture is one of the most invigorating and
inspiring subjects, which studied anthropology, literary studies and social sciences. It is a way of life, a set of values, beliefs and behaviour. The meaning of culture in literature is broad, enough to include all human behavior and social makeup, which are learnt and not inherent. In general non-inherent behaviours are unspoken to be different in various societies and the variations contribute to the creation of multiple cultures. The term culture has a multifaceted, diverse history and assorted range of meaning in contemporary society. There are number of anthropologists use it differently. E. B. Tylor was the anthropologist, 19th century, who defined the term culture as follows:

**Culture is that complicated totality in which are included Knowledge, confidence, Art, Moralities, laws, customs and all the other efficiencies which a man is forever striving to achieve as number of community.**


This definition emphasizes that culture is a social legacy and the gift of society to mankind.

In the nineteenth century, it came to refer first to the betterment or refinement of the individual, especially through education and then to the fulfillment of national aspirations or ideals. In the mid-nineteenth century, some scientists used the term culture to refer to a universal human capacity. In twentieth century, culture emerged as a concept central to anthropology around all human phenomena that are not purely results of human genetics but the way of life. It is expressed our living and thinking styles, our day to day affairs, art, literature, religion and other raiment. Culture is, in fact, a collective word used to signify all those standards of life which are acquired and transformed by a social medium. Curtely, it is an object which have made for society that is culture, which is the large-scale context of a society.
1.11.1. Indian Culture / Eastern Culture:

India is an ancient civilization of the world. It has varied cultures with many languages and traditions. It often labeled as a mixture of sub-cultures, spans across the Indian sub-continent and includes traditions that are several millennia old. The culture of India refers to the beliefs, customs, traditions, languages, ceremonies, arts, values and the way of life. When a person speaks sweetly, behaves politely and expresses a generous feeling of charitableness, one feels that the person is cultured or civilized. When we speak of a person as cultured, there is a charitable expression on the part of that person in regard to others in feeling, in words and in outward conduct. It shows the culture of his society or nation. In India there is incredible cultural diversity throughout the country.

The South, North, and North-east have their own distinct cultures and almost every state has carved out its own cultural position. India is a vast country having variety of geographical features and climatic conditions. It may be an Indian or a person from any other country, attracted from the exuberant Indian Culture and traditions. Indian culture is a composite mixture of varying styles and influences. In current usage, the Indian culture has crossed the geographic boundaries and has extended globally. Thus, India is homeland of the most ancient civilizations including four major world religions includes Hindu, Boudh, Sikh and Jain. These religions and their cultures can be given as follows:

1.11.1.1. Muslim Culture in India:

Muslim (Islam) is India’s second largest religion today. Islam is partially based upon the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad Paigambar. The Quran, sacred book, is to be the source of of Islamic culture. There are five pillars of Muslim life recommend by prophet Paigambar. They are: Faith, Prayer, Zakat, Fast (Roza) and Makah (Hajj).

i. Faith is the first pillars of Muslim culture, which is believe on Allah (God).
ii. Prayer (Namaj) is the second pillar of Muslim. Mosque is a place where Muslim people gathered daily in five times for Prayer (Namaj). It works as a center for information, education, and dispute settlement.

iii. Zakat is the third pillars of Muslim that they are required to give approximately one-fortieth of their wealth to charity as Zakat. Muslim charity is considered as donations in Islam, as providing charity during Ramajan is regarded in Islam as especially honorable. Islam’s holiest month is the Ramjan, in which month every Muslims must fast as a tradition of Muslim.

iv. The Fast is the fourth pillars of Muslim. During the month of Ramjan not only abstain from food, drink, and sexual intercourse from dawn to sunset, but also from immoral behaviour.

v. Hajj is the fifth pillars of Muslim. It is to be performed at least once in a lifetime, by those who are physically and financially able to do so. Thus, it will form the culture of Muslim. The Muslim culture is completely based on these five pillars and philosophy.

These five pillars contributed mostly to the Islamic culture.

Marriage and Burkha in Islam were considered to be the identity and culture of Muslim. Marriage is nothing but the contract made by Kazi. Burkha is another tradition which means, ‘an enveloping outer garment worn by women in some Islamic traditions to cover their bodies when in public.’ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burqa] Islam culture believes that music is haram, but many Muslims are familiar to listening music. Sufi is one gretest example of Muslim music, which played an important role to spread the Islam. Art is an important part of Muslim culture. The abstract, decorative and floral designs are unique to Islamic art and architecture. Muslim art is always devoid of depictions of the animate, especially human beings according to the dictates of Islam or Muslim religion. Islamic art focuses on the omnipresence of Allah, the one who can not be represented by imagery. Islamic architecture in India can be divided into two parts:
religious and secular. Mosques and Tombs represent the religious architecture, while palaces and forts are examples of secular Islamic architecture. The mosque or *Masjid* is a representation of Muslim art in its simplest form. Thus, this kind of Muslim culture attracted human being towards the Muslim.

### 1.11.1.2. Christian Culture in India:

Christian is India’s third-largest religion spread all over the world. Christianity is partially based upon the teachings of the Jesus Christ. Christian may mean a benevolent and peace-making society. Indian Christians are believers in the divinity of Jesus Christ. Church is the home of Jesus Christ where Christians came for prayer every Sunday. One of the most common symbols to be found in Indian Christianity is the cross. This is the ultimate symbol of God’s love. What used to be a gloomy form of death and torture in barbaric times was transformed into a symbol of ultimate sacrifice, selflessness, salvation and redemption. The cross represents a lot of things associated with Christianity.

Easter is by far the most important celebration for the Christians even Christmas comes second. Christmas is the most important festival of Indian Christians. As a part of their celebration they give Christmas gifts to their family members and token of money to poor people as charity. Hence, the festival of Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ and conveys his message of love, tolerance and brotherhood. It’s a celebration of humanity and mankind. Good Friday, anniversary of Jesus death on the cross, is another festival celebrated in India. Therefore, there are a number of places in India, where Christian festivals are celebrated on a grand manner. Marriage is another big celebration for Christians in India. Baptismal day is one of the most important days in the life of a Christian Orthodox. It usually takes place the first year after the baby is born. Until the baby is baptized it is often called baby and doesn’t have a name. Carnival has also same importance on Christianity.
Thus, Christians do not share one common culture; their cultures for the most part tend to be a blend of Indian and European cultures. It differs from one region to another depending on several factors such as the prevailing rite and tradition and the extent of time for which Christianity has existed in those regions. Christians are found all across India and in all walks of life.

1.11.1.3. Buddha or Buddhist Culture in India:

The Buddhist is the India’s furth-largest religion spread all over the world. The philosophy of Buddhism is based on the teachings of Lord Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama (563 and 483 BC), a royal prince of Kapilvastu, India. The aim of the Buddhist is Nibbana which means emancipation from suffering. Buddhist teaching is a revelation of true and absolute values. Its truth can be tested and tried in one’s own experience. Buddhism teaches clear thinking, self-control and mental culture as means to these ends. Buddhist emphasizes the principles of harmlessness and restraint. Buddhism never believed on God and supernatural power. Regarding to this, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had given three objectives:

1. His first object was to lead man to the path of rationalism.
2. His second object was to free man to go in search of truth.
3. His third object was to remove the most potent source of superstition, the result of which is to kill the spirit of inquiry.

[Bglave: 2007: 98 ]

Buddhism rejected ritualism, sacrifices and dominance of priestly class. Buddhism appealed to the masses on account of its simplicity, use of vernacular language in its scriptures and teachings and monastic order. Buddhism left deep impact on the society. It gave serious impetus to democratic spirit and social equality. It opened its doors to women and Shudras- untouchables. Buddhism encouraged abolition of distinctions in society and strengthened the principle of social equality. This is a philosophy which may be called Buddhist culture that accepted by all over the world today.
1.11.1.4. Jain Culture in India:

Jain is India’s fourth-largest religion and spread worldwide today. Its philosophy is mainly based on self-endeavor in the soul on the spiritual hierarchy to divine consciousness. The word *Jain* means a follower of *Jinas*, which means conquerors. *Jinas* are spiritually advanced human beings who rediscover the *dharma*, become fully *liberated* and teach the spiritual path to benefit all living beings. Jainism encourages *spiritual* development through reliance on and cultivation of one’s own personal wisdom and *self-control*. The goal of Jainism is to realize the soul’s true nature.

Every community has its own customs, beliefs and traditions, Jain religion or community is not an exception for this view. Because of that treating saint with all devotion is tradition of Indian culture. This tradition followed by Jains today. It is believed that if saints are fed at home, that home will be peaceful and gets prosperity. With all sincerity and eagernessness Jain householders (*Shravaks*) wait for the arrival of *Muni*: saint of highest cadre, make arrangements to feed him. It is a matter of pride and satisfaction. Jains have another religious custom. That is - taking food before Sunset. This is for the reason that more micro-organisms are generated at night. With a view to minimize their victimization, preparation and consuming food at night is prohibited in Jainism for ages. This tradition is followed by all Jains irrespective of their economic status, living place etc. *Swadhyaya* or studying the philosophical books is another rule which every Jain (whether householder or saint) has to follow. So, there is a custom in majority of Jaina householders that, anyone in the house reads out a religious book every day to all in the house. Respecting and serving the *monks* is another custom followed by Jains. Jains believe that only things earned by rightful conduct stay in life. They wish only the energy and intellect bestowed by god, character and behavior prescribed by saints, to stay firmly in their mind. The stress on behavioral pattern and character here is nothing but *self-control* which is one of the six rules mandatorily to be followed by a Jaina householder.
Thus, Jains are known for their tolerant cultured behaviour. Theirs is not an attacking nature, but adjustable one. Their principles of non-violence, no-enmity with anybody, possessing only essential things etc have made them more polite and socialized. But at the same time they have also done heroic deeds and ruled over different provinces. This quality of leadership is still persisting in Jains. By their culture, they are commanding the respect from people.

1.11.1.5. Sikh Culture in India:

The Sikh is the fifth-largest organized religion in India. The Sikhs have developed unique expressions of art and culture which are influenced by their faith and synthesize traditions from many other cultures. Sikhism is Punjab’s only indigenous religion with all other religions coming from outside Punjab. All the Sikh gurus, saints and majority of the martyrs in Sikh history were from Punjab and from the Punjabi people. Sikh culture and Sikhism are considered inseparably intertwined. Sikh art and culture is synonymous with that of the Punjab region. The Punjab itself has been called India’s melting pot, due to the confluence of invading cultures, such as Greek, Mughal and Persian that mirrors the confluence of rivers from which the region gets its name. Thus, Sikh culture is to a large extent informed by this synthesis.

Punjabi wedding traditions and ceremonies are traditionally conducted in Punjabi and are a strong reflection of Punjabi culture. The Punjabi wedding has many rituals and ceremonies that have evolved since traditional times. Punjabi cuisine has an immense range of dishes and has become world-leader in the field; so much so that many entrepreneurs that have invested in the sector have built large personal fortunes due to popularity of Punjabi Cuisine throughout the world. Sarso ka saag and Maki ki roti are examples of well known dishes. Bhangra is one of the many Punjabi musical art forms
that is increasingly being listened to in the west and is becoming a mainstream favourite. Punjabi music is being used by western musicians, in many ways, such as mixing it with other compositions to produce award-winning music. In addition, Punjabi Classical music is increasingly becoming popular in the west Owing to the long history of the Punjabi culture and of the Punjabi people there are a large number of dances, normally performed at times of celebration, including harvests, festivals, and weddings. The Punjabi language has different dialects, spoken in the different sub-regions of greater Punjab. Thus, Sikh culture represents their identity and culture worldwide.

1.11.1.6. Hindu Culture in India:

India is a country with rich and varied cultural heritage, where Hindu Dharma (religion) is given pride of place. It has complicated culture like Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and Isai or Christian. These are the pillars of this country. As M. S. Rajpankhe discussed in his research paper,

Hindu is a typical religion based upon Varna system. It has gradation of four Varnas such as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. For every grade, Manu- the maker of this system- maintains different rule and regulations of the ways of life. [Rajpankhe: 2007: 132]

The centralization of Hindu culture is countless customs, traditions and beliefs differ from region to region and climate conditions. Hindu is believes on the only cycle of birth and rebirth and a collection of different canon and traditions mainly based on Vedas. It has modified from time to time by great saints without changing the basic teachings of the religion and the main aim of life i.e. salvation: liberation from cycle of birth and rebirth.

The Vedas and the Manuscript (Manusmriti) tell us about the (mythic) origin of the caste system and the duties of the various castes. In Hindu Vedic scriptures, one of the earliest religious literary forms was caste system or Verna system. Verna is generally translated
as colour and meant to refer to the skin colour and figuratively to the moral status of the different castes descending from the light skinned Aryans and the darker Dravidians. The origin of the caste system is an intensely debated topic, and likewise the meaning of Verna. The word caste is not mentioned in any ancient Sanskrit scriptures. But it brought in use by Portuguese upon their arrival to India in 16th century.

The word caste derived from the Latin ward castus, meaning pure. The Vedas are generally thought to have been composed around 1500 – 1000 B.C. The earliest section of the Vedic corpus, the Rig Veda, contains the Hindu creation story. Purusha is described as a primeval giant sacrificed by the gods and from his body the world and the Varnas were built.

The first group was made of Brahmins (priests). They came from Purusha’s mouth, and were to provide for the intellectual and spiritual needs of the community. The second group was called the Kshatriyas (warriors and rulers). They were created from the arms, and were to rule and to protect the others. Vaishyas (landowners and merchants) sprang from Purusha’s thighs. This group was in charge of trade and cared for agriculture. Shudras (artisans and servants) came from the feet. They had to do all the manual work. [Mugdum: 2009: 7-8]

Thus, in the Rig Veda society is described as an organic whole sustained by various groups with differing roles and occupations all amalgamated into a stable structure. In the Vernic ordering of society notions of purity and pollution are central and activities are worked out in this context. However, this class sequence is the backbone of Hindu culture. These four classes and their culture can be studied in details.

1.11.6.1. Brahmin:

The Brahmin is the first born and highest of the four Varnas or Class, as prescribed in the Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda, which constitutes society into four Varnas or
Chaturvarna. He is styled the lord of universe, even equal to the God himself. He is to be worshipped, served and respected by all. Oxford dictionary defines Brahman as, ‘a socially or culturally superior person.’ [http://oxforddictionaries.com/] Thus, the Brahmins are priests, the Kshetriyas are warriors, the Vaishyas are traders and the Shudras are labourers engaged in manual work. Each Varna was abided by its stipulated vocation. Brahmins are said to occupy the highest position among the four Varnas of Hinduism. Brahmin refers to the or to the creative aspect of the universal consciousness. Brahmins were engaged in attaining the highest spiritual knowledge and adhered to different branches (shakhas) of Vedas. This culture has applied by Brahmin to the other class in India.

1.11.1.6.2. Kshetriya:

The Kshetriyas are the second-highest of the four Varnas or categories into which Hindu society is traditionally divided. Oxford Dictionary defines the term Kshetriya as,

...a member of the second of the four great Hindu castes, the military caste. The traditional function of the Kshatriyas is to protect society by fighting in wartime and governing in peacetime. [http://oxforddictionaries.com/]

The Kshetriyas have a rich tradition of cultural values dating back to several centuries. The Kshetriyas form a culturally advanced and forward-looking community. They have been following the time-tested customs and traditions of their ancestors with a modern touch.

The traditional values and heritage of Kshetriyas embody the cultural ethos of the country in general and the community in particular. Their rituals and festivals have played a vital role in the evolution of Indian culture. The fairs and festivals of Kshetriyas are very unique in nature and content. Their marriage ceremonies, rituals and practices are quite different from that of others. They continue to practice them without detracting
from the guidelines handed down by their go trams from time immemorial. Many of the cultural activities of *Kshetriyas* are religion-oriented. They are basically *Vaishnavites*, although they perform *Shaivite* rituals too. They pay much attention towards the celebration of all Hindu religious festivals. They have contributed much too Indian literature in general and to the *Bhakti* genre in particular. Thus, the *Kshetriya* men are basically sons of warriors. Their inborn warrior-like qualities and attributes enabled them to boldly stand up against *adharma* and oppression during alien rule in India at different stages in its history and culture.

1.11.1.6.3. **Vaisya:**

The *Vaishyas* are the third-highest of the four *Varnas* in Hindu religion. The word originated from Sanskrit literally means settler or settlement. Collins Dictionary defines *Vaishya* as, ‘the third of the four main Hindu castes, the traders.’ [http://www.collinsdictionary.com/](http://www.collinsdictionary.com/) Lord Sri Krishna, Bhagwat Gita, said:

‘*Chatur Varna Maya Sristim Guna Karma Vibhag Shah.*’


He means to say that on the inquiry of self-realization, people undergo different step by step stages of awareness, and with it comes purity in their character. There are four divisions of *Varna in Hindu society*. *Vaishya* are those whose mind is engaged by the vishaya which means subject or specialization or professional knowledge. It is considered that the *Vaishyas* arose from the belly of *Brahma*. Traditionally, they are the merchant class, like *halwai*, oil depot, pot-makers, grocers, shoe makers, meat shops. There are also clerks, helpers in various shops. Apart from the trading profession, *Vaishyas* have played a great role in Indian culture.

1.11.1.6.4. **Shudra:**
Shudra is the fourth class of Hindu Society. Traditionally, Shudras were the labourers, farmers, craftsmen, servants, cobblers, blacksmiths, cooks etc. They were considered inferior to the other three castes and were constrained to perform only untrained jobs, which had low status. In the book *Who Were Shudras*, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar interpreted the term Shudra as follows:

The Shudras were one of the Aryan communities of the solar race; there was a time when the Aryan society recognized only three Varnas, namely Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya. The Shudras did not form a separate Varna. They ranked as a part of the Kshatriya Varna in the Indo-Aryan society. There was a continuous feud between the Shudra kings and the Brahmins in which the Brahmins were subjected to many tyrannies and indignities. As a result of the hatred towards the Shudras generated by their tyrannies and oppressions, the Brahmins refused to perform the upanayan of the Shudras and owing to the denial of upanayana, the Shudras, who were actually Kshetriyas, became social degraded and fell below the rank of the Vaishyas and thus came to turn the fourth Varna-class. [Ambedkar: 1990: 11-12]

The religious texts endorsed that the caste system was God made; and therefore, was not to be interfered by humans. Both religion and the state confined the Shudras to mental, cultural and social slavery and segregated them as untouchables. Shudras must live outside of the village. They may possess only broken mud-pots. Their wealth shall be dogs and donkeys. Their dress shall be garments of the dead; they shall eat their food from broken dishes; black iron shall be their ornaments, and they must wander from place to place. They must never reside within the village, but outsider labour at cremation grounds, on mountains or in groves. They are to wear only the shrouds of dead people and eat with broken utensils. They may only enter the villages and cities with the king’s permission for work purposes, wearing special symbols to enable identification. Having been made to live on the outskirts of the village, the Shudras were assigned various tasks
like scavenging, carrying away of carcasses and acting as hangmen etc. which were their inescapable duties.

Thus, their physical contact or even their shadow would pollute the upper class society. *Shudras* are the people who were never allowed to have equal social status. They were never treated as a human being. Service to society and that too was for only upper *Varnas* was their task. Their humiliated life remained pathetic. This lower class in Hindu society was always suppressed and depressed. However, above task and behaviour make *Dalit* culture in India, which has a sub-caste known as *Ati-shudra*.

1.11.1.6.4.1. *Ati-shudra*:

The sub-caste of *Shudras* is known as *Ati-shudra*. According to the division of labourers which the *Varna* system brings about, Ambedkar said that the caste system in India brought about not just a division of labour, *‘those to whom it falls to perform the lowest and filthiest tasks came to be known as *Ati-shudra.*’* [Ibid: 14] This fifth class was forced to live at a distance from the upper classes. It includes *Mang, Mahar, Chambhar, Dhor, Kaikadi, Wadar, Bhangi* and so on. They all are lives outside the village. They have their own identity and culture. After the 1960 they got social, cultural and political sense and therefore they were revolt against patriarchal society in the form of *Dalit* movement and have been written about their lives. This writing is nothing but considered as *Dalit* literature in India.

1.11.1.7. *Dalit* Culture in India:

There are number of cultures found in India, among them only Christian and Buddhist culture have caring untouchables or *Dalits*. Hindu culture is completely opposite to it, while concentrate on God, temple, religious texts and *rushimunies*. There is no value of *Dalits* in Hindu religion, though they are a part of its religion. Therefore, *Dalit* writers
have using different kind of language than that of the language used in earlier times in literature. They use the language which is known to them and considered rustic by the previous writers. Dalit writers are interested to portray their peoples past. So they follow the language of their own people and their dialect, without refining it. Dalit feelings come from Dalit language only. No other language could express it exactly. So, Dalit feelings and Dalit language is known as Dalit culture. Dalit language contains harshness, unusual diction; it is similar to the life condition of the Dalits in the society. Thus, Dalit Culture has seen today a casteless culture. Being inspired by Buddhist culture, Black cultutre, Mahatma Phule and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Dalit Culture established a novel society based on the idea of Equality, Liberty and Fraternity.

1.12. The History of Dalit Movement in India:

*Dalit* movement is often misunderstood as a movement against the non-*Dalits* in general and Brahmins in particular. It is not against any caste or community but against the untouchability in every caste and community in India. The essence of *Dalit* movement is indeed rooted in the ideals: liberty, equality and fraternity. The central purpose of the *Dalit* Movement is to establish a society based on social equality. The *Dalit* movement rejects the sub-human status imposed on *Dalit* by the Hindu social order. *Dalit* movement essentially aims at securing these inseparable ideals to every individual- including *Dalits*. *Dalit* movement, therefore, has a larger vision of infusing a sense of oneness or we feeling in short, fraternity, in everyone’s mind.

The History of *Dalit* Movement goes back to the 11th century. The first *Dalit* writer was Madara Chennaiah, eleventh century cobbler-saint, who lived in the reign of Western Chalukyas. He was regarded as the father of Vachana poetry, who spread equality and fraternity through his poetry. *Dalit* saint Kalavve, in 12th century, challenged the higher castes system and given the new theory and philosophy of equality for society. He said:

*Those who eat goats, foul and tiny fish:*
Such, they call caste people.

Those who eat Sacred Cow

That showers frothing milk for Shiva:

Such, they call out-castes. [Qtd. by Abedi: 2010: 1]

He means to say that those who are eat goats and flesh; they have considered Dalit. But what about the people, those who have eat milks like God Shiva, in the form of Abhishek, they called out castes.

1.12.1. Contribution of Bhakti movement to Dalit Movement:

Twelfth century was most important in the history of Indian culture and caste ridden society. It was the time of reformation, everywhere Brahmins seeds the crop of God and Goddess. However, in Punjab Gurunanak, Kabir in north India, Changdev Raval in Gujarat, Chakrdrhar Swami in Maharashtra and Basveshwar in Karnataka were struggling against caste ridden society and endeavored to eradicate the caste differences and gender discrimination. They were fought for equality and revolts against the practice of untouchability.

Before twentieth century, Muslim regiment was conquering on India via Khaibar khind. Finally, Muslim empire ruled over the north India but they failed to rule on Maharashtra and Karnataka, due to reformers like Basveshwar and Chakrdrhar Swami as well as orthodox Hindu Brahmin and their religion. On the other hand, Buddhist and Jains were also tried to conquer on Maharashtra and Karnataka but they were also failed. Because of these both of religions were non-va\-\-di\-c religion. So, they don’t agree the system of Varna in Hindu society. At that time everyone becomes great doesn’t on his quality but on his birth. Though, it was spread the philosophy of orthodox culture but the society was based on system of Varna.
There was a variety of cults, in an ancient time, emerged with their own ideology in order to bring about reformation in Hindu Society. The saint like figures Basweshar, Chakradhar Swami, Kabir, Dnayneshwar, and Tukaram were fought for egalitarianism in society. The tradition of equality and fraternity was a seeds of Dalit consciousness which was found in the writings of Saints (Poets) like Namdev, Eknath and Chokha Mela in the middle age.

In Karnataka, Basveshwar established new religion named Virshaiv Lingayat and was tried to make to liberalize and equality in society. Contemporary, Chakrdhar Swami founded Mahanubhava Sampradaya. These both cults were intended at liberalizing Hinduism from its rigidity. Other great saints like Gurunanak, Kabir and Bassava other parts of India detested the practice of untouchability. In Panjab, Gurunanak was the founder of Shikh religion and who revolted against system of Varna and established new religion which gives the importance of work. He said:

I am not Hindu, I am not a Muslim, I am a Shikh, a new religion which full of virtues and qualities derived from Hindu and Muslim religion.

[Mense: 2009: 9]

Like other saints he has taught importance of work. In the part of north India, contemporary Saint Kabir has done the same work. He was the first person in India to convince the Islamic culture and the traditions of Hindu society, as well as reveals the bad deeds of both religions simultaneously. Sanit Namdav from Maharashatra goes to Panjab for scattering equality and liberty via Gujarat and Rajasthan, was lived there near about twenty years. During the span of spreading Varkari cult in Panjab, he was come in contact with saint Gurunanak and saint Kabir. Finally, they had given a new religion of humanity to the nation. There were many saints can be found in the middle ages who taught the equality, love and Bhakti.

Saint Dnayneshwar, who was excommunicated into Dalit status in 13\textsuperscript{th} century, who wrote an annotation titled as Dnuaneshwari in 1290. He established the Varkari
Sampradaya- religious order of regular pilgrimage, in Maharashtra and provided this tradition with firm and strong spiritual philosophy of humanity among the ordinary people and the untouchables. He has spread his Varkari Sampradaya and equality among the society. He, therefore, said: ‘This universe is my home.’ [Kulkarni: 1992: 29] Such humanitarian philosophy spread all over India by Dyaneswar. Saint Eknath, another excommunicated Brahmin, who fought for the rights of the untouchables and ordinary people during Bhakti period. Bharud (a folk song) invented by Eknath during Bhakti period for the purpose of social reformation and for the entertainment. Allegorically, it attacks on the instances of traditional professions such as barber, beggars, fortune tellers, farmers, bhagats, cobblers etc. The Bharud, Which Saint Eknath had composed to express his firm belief and social outlook of strong opposition for castism and communalism are really thought provoking.

According to the Brahmanical hierarchy, ‘…all non-Brahmans were called Shudras. [Tukaram: 1990: 65] Saint Tukaram calls himself,

*Shudra Kunbi* (agriculturist) a *Shudra* poet, an outcaste, who continued to speak about the evils of the caste system and against its rigidity in the name God’s most pious follower still, infuriated his enemies as patriarchal society and orthodox society. [Ibid]

Saint Tukaram has clearly clarified the attributes and characteristics of true and Dalit saints in following Abhanga (A hymn, lyrical poem):

*Je ka ranjale ganjale! Tyasi mhane jo apule!!
Tochi sadhu olakhava! Dev tethechi janava!! [Ibid: 66]*

He had sought this divine state about the worldly matters. Therefore, he has earned the highest esteem, adoration and devotion in the hearts of common people in the whole Maharashtra. He strongly opposed all kinds of social injustice and discrimination. He rejected Castism and Class discrimination between Dalit (Untouchables) and Upper Class Society. However, Bhakti cult of Varkari Samaj was people oriented. A contemporary Saint Janabai (Woman Slave) and Saint Kanhopatra (*The Prostitute*) were fought for the
rights of untouchables during the middle age. Saint Dnayneshwar had laid the firm foundation of Bhagavat Dharma and Saint Tukaram becomes the dazzling apex of it.

Saint Chokha Mela, being as a Dalit poet, gave the first expression to his conscious feelings in his Abhangas (Songs in devotion to God). He, therefore, deserves to be called the precursor of Dalit poetry. In his famous Abhanga, he asks appropriately why the people get lured by the outward appearance of man:

Hard is sugarcane,
But that its juice better doesn’t make
Why you are lured away by appearance fake? [Kadam: 1969:25]

Most of these saints subscribed to the Bhakti movements in Hinduism during the medieval period that rejected castism. However, it is wrong to view the Varkari movement as a religious movement only, because the major concerns of its leaders were to uproot the spreading social evils. However, post- failure of Bhakti movement in India, social reformers were emerged and tried to work for Dalit and untouchability in India.

1.12.2. Contribution of Social Reformers to Dalit Movement:

India has a rich history of thinkers and social reformers who have helped to set up the foundations of modern India. Social reformers were doesn’t the part of Dalit movement but has been done the same as Dalit movement required in society. Therefore, it is an essential to touch the social reformers when Dalit movement in India is studied or remembered. Mahatma Jyotirao Phule occupies a unique position among the social reformers of Maharashtra in the Nineteenth century. He was a social reformer who took initials to introduce education to women and downtrodden people in India. He revolted against the unjust caste system under which million of people had suffered for centuries. In particular, he courageously upheld the cause of the untouchables and took up the cudgels for the poorer peasants. However, he has pays attention on Indian Shetji and Bhatji. On one hand, he was fighting with the upper caste people and on the other hand
he was sensitizing untouchables by his teaching and speeches against slavery and on their great history of being the rulers of this land. As a result, untouchables realized of their metal slavery got organized to fight against the slavery and stood with Mahatma Phule for constructing an equal society where no human being will suffer the pain of inequality and injustice.

1.12.3. Contribution of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to Dalit Movement:

Babasaheb Ambedkar is remembered for his revolutionary contributions to the mission of eradication of caste in India. Throughout his life, he battled social discrimination while upholding the rights of the Dalits and other socially backward classes. He was not only a great national leader but also a distinguished scholar of international repute. He not only led various social movements for the upliftment of the depressed sections of society but also contributed to the understanding of the socio-economic and political problems of India through his scholarly works on caste, religion, culture, constitutional law and economic development. He played a seminal role in the framing of the Indian Constitution. He, thus, was a fierce advocate of emancipation of Dalit in India.

When Babasaheb Ambedkar was learning at Satara School, he decided to offer Sanskrit as one of his school subjects. But the teacher of Sanskrit insulted and humiliated by saying: ‘I’ll not teach of Sanskrit to the pupil belonging to Mahar caste.’ [Opp. Cite, Kulkarni: 305] Today, we can imagine what extreme agonies have experienced by Babasaheb’s sensitive mind at the childhood. From this incident, he thought of tackling the problem himself and began his fight against untouchability. There were several ways by which he was trying to do this. He spent his whole life fighting against social discrimination, the system of Chaturvarna (the categorization of Hindu society into four Varna’s) and the Hindu caste system. Untouchability and caste system were the two social evils that had haunted by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar since his childhood days.
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar started publishing a weekly journal called *Mooknayak*, where he criticized the orthodox system that prevailed in the society. He spoke openly about the discriminations that were made to the lower castes in the society and the humiliations that they had to undergo and endure. He had also voted for creating separate electorates for the backward classes in society. Reservations for *Dalits* and other religious communities were also demanded by Babasaheb Ambedkar. He also formed the *Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha* so that the deprived and backward classes could get some opportunities to upgrade themselves. He arranged for spreading education to these classes and tried to improve their socio-economic conditions.

First anti-touchability movement was launched by Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar in the 1920s in Maharashtra. He saw the opportunity and possibility of advancement for the untouchables through the use of political means to achieve social and economic equality with the highest classes in modern society. Assertion for *Dalit* identity has become a central issue of *Dalit* movement. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar started his epic movement for the social, economic and cultural freedom of the *Dalits* in India. He courageously deterred Gandhi’s Freedom movement by drawing himself into a conflict with Gandhi on the critical issue of the *Dalit* location within the Hindu social milieu. Apprehensive of immutability in the abject and lowly condition of the *Dalits* even after India gets freedom. He resolutely gave a call for the social and Cultural Revolution.

Mahatma Gandhi had also deep concern with social justice to the *Dalits*, but his approach was different in relation to Babasaheb Ambedkar. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wanted to subvert the caste-system to reach the goal and Mahatma Gandhi wanted to achieve the goal without damaging the existing social structure. At this moment, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s call:

*Educate, Organize and Agitate, inspired the *Dalits* and they lent him unremitting support. The most vital part was that Dr. Ambedkar*
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engendered among the *Dalits* a sense of self-respect and self-confidence. [Ambedkar: 1945: 54]

The condition of untouchables was awful and pathetic before independence. They were not allowed to draw water the lake or well which was exclusively meant for the upper castes. Therefore, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar started the *Satyagrah* for drawing water from Chavdar Lake at Mahad, a tahsil place of Raigad District in Maharashtra, which was hitherto reserved only for the upper class. There he along with his thousands of followers performed action of the Bonefire of *Manusmriti* in December 25, 1927. Since the untouchables were not allowed to enter the Hindu tempels, Ambedkar, as a protest to this, started the act of entering the Kalaram Mandir at Nasik. These entire actions become the landmarks in the history of the *Dalit* movement in India.

1.13. *Dalit* Movements and Organizations in India:

The problem of untouchability and exploitation of *Dalits* in social, economic and political areas has been a stark reality of Indian society. Various efforts have been made so far by visionaries in this direction by launching movements and forming organizations to highlight and find solution of the problems of the *Dalits* in India. As a result the awareness among the *Dalits* who have started asserting their identity and demanding their due share in power. If we look at the history of *Dalit* movements organized in different parts of the country, it becomes clear that a number of socio-political organizations, struggles and various types of activities of the *Dalits* had emerged out of different socio-economic and political conditions in the past to ameliorate their wretched condition. A number of leaders raised their voice against the exploitation of *Dalits* and organized various Organizations in India. Such organizations and movements are as follows.

1.13.1. *Dalit* Movement in Maharashtra:
Dalit movement is not a literal movement but is the logo of change and revolution. Its primary aim was the liberation of Dalits. It can found its roots in Maharashtra in the form of Dalit Panther, which was social organization founded by Namdev Dhasal in April 1972 at Mumbai. The most essential factor responsible for the rise of Dalit Panther Movement was the repression and terror under which the oppressed Dalits continued to live in the rural area. It had borrowed its moral support from the writings of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

Namdev Dhasal, Raja Rao and Arun Kamble were the original leaders of Dalit Panther, which was inspired through Black Panther Party, a revolutionary movement with African-American in the United States. Dalit Panther started as a movement of fundamental assertion for the claim of equality against the upper caste. The nature of this movement was where Dalit assert their protest against the age old exploitation and domination of upper caste. The movement was caged towards changing of the overall structure of the society and hence it was radical transformation movement and not the reformatory activity. The movement was change oriented and the target was of a structural change.

The ideology of Dalit Panther Movement was immediately against the established Hindu Caste system and its hierarchy due to the growing numbers of evil atrocities on Dalits. The movement also targeted Congress party and Mahama Gandhi. All panther leaders, in spite of their ideological differences had one thing in common. They all had burning hatred against oppressive conditions of Dalits especially in rural areas. Some of them, like Dhasal also believe that Indian constitution has its own limitations and the movement cannot be run within the democratic sphere. And hence in the beginning the movement has the militant stand. The March and demonstrations against atrocities was the regular part of the programme of Dalit Panther movement.
The programmes were arranged mainly to target Hindu religion, Hindu Gods and goddesses, religious heads, government authorities, hierarchical system, police, feudal landlords, capitalists, Shiv Sena and also Republican Party of India, contemporary Dalit movement in Maharashtra, leaders who were called as white collared Brahmins. However, the huge support of Dalits behind Dalit Panther made them powerful which couldn’t be ignored and taken for granted by other political parties. This movement witnessed finest Dalit literature of its time.

In this way, Dalit Panther movement created counter culture and separate identity of Dalits. The category Dalit was accepted on national as well as international level because of the movement. Dalit Panther is Social Organization and Dalit Movement which was created many mass Dalit Leaders. During the short span of time, Dalit Panther left impact not only in Maharashtra but all over India. Today, number of Dalit organizations emerged in Maharashtra to set up the social system of Maharashtra but they have to failure.

1.13.2. Dalit Movement in Uttar Pradesh:

There are few reasons behind to arouse Dalit movement in pre-independence in Uttar Pradesh. Among them, the failure of the land reforms in bringing equality among the Dalits in Uttar Pradesh was enough to encourage launching the Dalit Movement. Sudha Pai has divided the history of the post-independence Dalit Movement in Uttar Pradesh into three phases. These three phases are:

*The first phase is from 1956-1969, when Dalits decided to form their own party under the leadership of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar with the Republican Party of India (RPI). The second phase is about the failure of Dalit political parties that enabled the Congress to secure Dalit support under the leadership of Ms. Indira Gandhi by the sharing in the consensus on Garibi Hatao. The third phase starts from the early*
1980s when the Dalit Movement entered into competitive democratic politics with the emergence of the BSP with the criticism that the Dalit Movement had distanced itself from the initiatives for social transformation and focused only on political motives and goals. [Pai: 2001: 26]

During early twentieth Century, concern to Dalit’s interests was raised at different forums at the national level in public and private under the leadership of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. When he was influential in national politics no second one leader emerged in Uttar Pradesh to carry on the legacy of the Dalit Movement established by him. Due to failure of Republican Party of India as a Dalit political party, the 1970s and 1980s were crucial for the Dalit Movement in Uttar Pradesh.

Kanshi Ram was first Dalit leader, who had a broader view than any other Dalit leader in the past of a movement that could unite all the social sections affected by the discriminatory social arrangement of Hindu society. He argued that:

…only fifteen percent the upper castes was ruling over the eighty five percent backward and lower castes along with religious minorities. Therefore, the fraction of eighty five per cent should come together and take the advantage of democratic politics- being the majority they could rule over the country forever. [Ibid: 6]

This strategy is reflected very clearly in the slogan: ‘jiski jitni sankhya bhari, uski utni bhagidari.’ [Ibid: 2] In his theory, he is more realistic than the earlier propagators of the Dalit Movement.

Keeping this view in his mind, Kanshi Ram established a non-political organization called the ‘All India Backward and Minority Castes Employees Federation: BAMCEF’, on December 6, 1973. His other organizations were Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti, popularly known as DS-4, which was a political organization. In this way, in 1984, he turned the DS-4 into a full-fledged political party, the Bahujan Samaj Party,
launched on Ambedkar’s birthday with the slogan: ‘vote hamara, raj tumhara; nahi chalega, nahi chalega…’ [Teltumbde: 2006: 31] The goal of this party was based on an axiom of Ambedkar that political power was the key to all problems. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, Bahujan Samaj Party focused on social engineering to bring Brahmins and other upper castes together through the policy of Sarvajan. Its real effort started from 1995 to onwards. Thus, it is not only a political party but also perform as a role of Dalit movement in Uttar Pradesh.

1.13.3. Dalit Movement in Karnataka:

The term Dalit movement is used in Kannada literature in seventies; it generally refers to the movement of the 1970s and after 70s of the twentieth century. But it is not in the first time that such movement has taken place. There are many such movements in the records of Karnataka history. It was in the first time, in twelfth century, Basavappa raised his voice against caste discrimination in the northern part of Karnataka state. This social reform movement led by Basavappa, it gave rise to a new kind of writing in Kannada literature. It is named as Vachana Sahitya. Its purpose was to uplift the Socio-economical status of non-Brahmin castes. Influenced by Vachana Sahitya, a non- Brahmin movement took place in the old Mysore state in 1917. It was led by Vokkaligas and Lingayats of the then Mysore state. Its aim was to uplift the Socio-economical status of non Brahmin castes. This movement was supported by some organizations. They are Vokkaliga Sangha (1906) and Central Muslim Association (1909). It was a time of development of these movements among the non-Brahminical castes. Therefore, Dalit Movement which emerged in 1970s aimed to bring social change.

One of the main reasons for emergence of Dalit movement in Karnataka was the speech of Basavalingappa. He was invited to a function in Mysore on 15th November, 1973. In his speech on Tradition, social structure and New Views, he said Kannada Literature is Boosa literature. The intension behind calling Kannada literature as Boosa (fodder) was
mis-interpreted in media. He was made to resignation for his ministerial berth. This incident made the Dalits to get join together to light the lamp of enlightenment. The second incident happened in Kolar on October 23rd 1971. The Potter Sheshagiriyappa was killed by upper castes in a land dispute. The third factor was the problems of factory workers in Badravathi, Shimoga District. These three incidents gave rise to the establishment of Dalita Sangarsha Smithi in Badravathi. Inspite of all these stray incidents, the main guiding principle was Ambedkar and his writings. All these factors become important reasons for the emergence of Dalit movement in Karnataka. Therefore, Dalit Movement gave rise to the birth of many writers and journalists.

In the speech, Importance of the Dalit movement, Prof. D. Javaregowda, ex-vice Chancellor of Mysore University, has said the decline of this country means the decline of Shudra and Ati-shudra of this land. It was the first post-independence people began to think against wrong conventions, they made number of protest all over the state irrespective of castes. This movement helped many tiny minorities to unite among themselves under one organization. This period is considered as questioning period, about the inhuman behaviour of conventionalists. And it affects every field in the state of Karnataka. It is known that the pioneers of many movements were the commoners. They only have the capacity to bring in change in the existing order.

1.14. Inspiration behind Dalit Literature:

There are many reformative references and Dr. Ambedkar’s thought is behind of Dalit literature in India. Influenced by these references, Dalit literature is fed on these thoughts. Dalit literature enjoys not only the heritage of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, but also the heritage of Lord Budha, Karl Marx and Black Literature.

1.14.1. Lord Gautam Buddha:
It was Gautam Buddha who first revolted against Hindu Varna system, after Charvak, who spread his philosophy among *Dalits* and untouchables. Due to this, the dominance of caste, Varna, and spiritual concepts were reduced. Human life was full of misery. Birth, old days, diseases, death, frustrations, pain and desire- disappointments were makes life miserable. However, Lord Buddha tried to find out the causes and remedies of these miseries. To relieves from miseries, Buddha suggests eights ways salvation.

Lord Buddha was not a philosopher but he is a social reformer who works for untouchability and to cultivated moral values in the society. Regarding to the humanity, Lord Buddha doesn’t live any place or God in materialistic philosophy. Thus, he believes that the human beings were treated worse than animal were reminded of their humanness. Lord Buddha advocates pure humanitarian scientific approach and equality in his philosophy. He firms that accept thing only if it appears rational and discard of otherwise. This broad thought philosophy was given by Lord Buddha to the world wide. Thus, this thought provoking philosophy is behind to the emerging of *Dalit* literature and inspiring source of it.

### 1.14.2. Karl Marx:

Karl Marx was a great nineteenth century thinker, who opposed the capitalist system. His philosophy is based on the class conflict, which is known as Marxism. Marxist theory of Dialectical Materialism is influenced by Hegel. Marx appealed Hegelian thought to materialism and tried to interpret history from material point of view. Being social change, he wished to produce new society based on the equality. There is no place for God and religion in his philosophy. According to Marx, dualism of thought and counter thought is a soul of material life. Human history is the products of material causes. Therefore, this thought- provoking philosophy is behind to the emerging of *Dalit* literature and inspiring source of it.
1.14.3. Black Literature:

The African Americans, today called as Black Literature, survived from the evil practice of slavery, and brought out their sufferings in the form of speech and writings for mass emancipation. There were very significant impacts on Dalit Literature by African American Literature, and Dalit writers found a parallel phenomenon in their movements. It could also be noticed that African American literature stands as support and proof as Dalit literature. These oppressed people’s writings are creative to elevate themselves from the orthodox and conservative societies. Like African American slave narratives, Dalit narratives are the stories of Dalit victims who endured similar exploitation in their own soil. However, Dalit autobiographies authentically portray various forms of social and legal injustices.

1.15. The History of Dalit Literature in India:

By naturally, there are two classes in the society from ancient time. They are: the oppressors and oppressed, the ruler and the ruled, exploiter and exploited. The class of exploiter is always powerful and influential. On the other hand, the class of exploited is meager, helpless, and ignored by the human rights. Sociologically, the neglected class doesn’t belong to any caste or community those who are ignored, they are Dalit.

1.15.1. Concept of Dalit:

The term Dalit is derived from the Sanskrit root word dal which means held under check, suppressed, crushed, broken and downtrodden. The word Dalit is similar to the Marathi word dalan i.e. crushed. As Lai A.C. said in his opening address at the Dalit Solidarity Conference, Nagpur: The word Dalit is a beautiful word, because it embraces the sufferings, frustrations, expectations, and groaning of the entire cosmos. [Lai: 1995:
Therefore, the term *Dalit* can be discussed and defined by scholars as follows.

Yeshwant Manohar said that:

*Exploitation is the caste of Dalit. Dalit means those who are affected through social, economic and cultural darkness of exploitation.*

[Manohar: 1978: 3]

It means the exploitation is the base of Dalits in India. W. N Wankhede, in *Dalit Sahitya Sammelan* held at Nagpur in 1976, defines Dalit and admits:

*The word Dalit does not refer only to Buddhists and Backward class people, but also to all those who are toil and are exploited and oppressed.* [Wankhede: 1976: 5]

The man who is exploited economically, socially and mentally, he is *Dalit*. He does not believe in God, religion, rebirth, Holy books, Heaven, Hell of this land, since all these things have made Him a slave, he believes in Humanism, *Dalit* is as a state of the revelation of the anguish of exploitation and humiliation. The Manifesto of Dalit Panthers was:

*Who are Dalits? All Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, neo Buddhists, labourers, landless and destitute peasants, women and all those who have been exploited politically and economically and in the name of religion are Dalits.* [Murugkar: 1990: 4]

In 1970s, Dalit Panthers (A leading association in Maharashtra) revived the term and expanded its reference to include scheduled tribes, poor peasants, women and all those who were being exploited politically, economically and in the name of caste and religion.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, *The Untouchable: Who Were They And Why They Became Untouchables*, explains Dalit in details as follows:

*Dalit is one who denied the supremacy or Brahmins and did not receive the mantra () from Brahmins or other recognized Hindu gurus. He has denied the authority or Vedas and did not worship the Hindu God and*
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Goddess. He was not served to good Brahmins as family priests and had no Brahmin priests at all. He was denied the access to the interior of or the Hindu temples. [Ambedkar: 1948: 22]

Dalits are a mixed population of numerous caste groups all over India. There are many different names proposed for defining this group of people like Chandala, Panchamas, Sudra, Ati-sudra, and Ashprush and Harijan. Thus, Dalit is a self designation for a group of people traditionally regarded as untouchables.

1.15.2. Dalit Consciousness:

The idea of Dalit Consciousness is basically an issue that is related with the realization of human sensibility. Dalit Consciousness is a reformatory thought of Dalits life. It includes optimistic point of view, sorrow and pain, and social relationship with society. Being Dalit and Dalit Consciousness are two different parts. Dalit literature is a writing of Dalits life which is written in the form of Consciousness. Dalit Consciousness is essentially against exploitation. It has also enmity against the discrimination and pains.

Sharadchandra Muktibodh in his Essay entitled, What is Dalit Literature laid emphasis on the fact that the state of being Dalit is a state of revelation of the anguish of exploitation and humiliation. It is not a literature of caste but of a Consciousness. He, therefore, elaborates his views on Dalit Consciousness and states:

The nature of Dalit Consciousness is obviously not subjective. It is true that pains and pleasures are lived and experienced by individuals alone but the sufferings of Dalits are common reasons. Hence, there content is essentially social. [Muktibodh: 1994: 267]

It is true that Dalit Consciousness is a kind of power of oppressed and exploited people in India, which is given to them a freedom of speaking, writing and living. Concerning to Dalit Consciousness Daya Pawar said:
Dalit Consciousness is a revolutionary feeling which goes against middle class society. It is a system which makes sympathy about downtrodden people. [Ibid: 29]

Dalit Consciousness is not an attitude but feelings of Dalits in India. This is the motto of Dalit Consciousness. This is its cherished goal. The characteristics of Dalit Consciousness are as follows:

i. Dalit Consciousness is protectively optimistic and, automotive independent and new and the conflict is its soul.

ii. Spirit of revolt, man-centered, non-spirituality, atheism, mobility and loyalty to knowledge and science give it the semblance of thirdly.

iii. Individual prestige and fear-free security.

iv. Human centeredness, loyalty to this world (material world) and revolt against all the institutions which oppress man.

Thus, Dalit consciousness is a state of mind, which aroused due to awareness Dalit movement.

1.15.3. Concept of Dalit literature:

What is Dalit literature? Is it a literature written by Dalits on their own lives or it includes the literature written by non Dalits on Dalits? The questions lead to a very comprehensive discussion. But it is very difficult to draw a boundary line in between these two types. But generally speaking: Dalit literature refers to the writings of Dalits on Dalit life. Dalit Literature is the writing which is written about Dalits life. It was produced by Dalit consciousness. Human freedom is the inspiration behind it.

1.15.3.1. Dalit View and Dalit Point:

Dalit Literature must be written from the Dalit point of view and with a Dalit vision. Dalit point of view is an interpretation of the sorrow and sufferings of Dalits. Any writer with some Dalit sensibility may have Dalit point of view but not necessarily Dalit vision.
The difference between *Dalit* point of view and *Dalit* vision can be found in the desired objective. A person with the *Dalit* point of view aims for a limited transformation whereas a person with the *Dalit* vision demands a total revolution of transformation. Regarding to this, Prof. S. Z. H. Abedi said in his keynote address at the National Conference on *Dalit* Literature highlighted on *Dalit* and non-*Dalits*. His argument is:

*Dalit* Literature written by both *Dalit* and non-*Dalits* is based on the poetics of anger and suffering and aesthetics of protest. Since it is based on the doctrines of Art for life sake, it is oriented more towards theme than art or technique like feminist literature. The lack of art and artifice in *Dalit* literature is compensated for by the lived reality and candid expression directed at the polite conscience of high society, high literature and high theory. [Opp. Cite, Abedi: 14]

However, *Dalit* Literature aims at the articulation of human sensibility and therefore *Dalit* oriented literary texts are the tools for the reconstruction of the aesthetics of human grandeur against the aesthetics of artistic canons.

1.15.3.2. *Dalit* Aesthetics:

*Dalit* writers escape the worlds of romantic fantasy to expose the areas of darkness that consistently echo anguish along with the craving for freedom, equality, justice and human compassion. They are in search of a new aesthetics that can be acknowledged as the breath of real human suffering beyond the dynamics of religion, myths, ethical commitments and artistic canons. Sanjay Kumar remarks:

Aesthetics in *Dalit* literature may be perceived as an individual phenomenon which may not ensure universal pleasure because the one who identifies himself with *Dalit* experience will obviously rejoice it more than the others. Besides, it certainly pleases the readers who have a sound sense of history and sensitivity towards society. The one who has lived *Dalit* experiences can think of no other meaning of
aestheticism than the one portrayed through Dalit autobiographies marked with counter Dalit aesthetics and an undertone of resistance, assertion and protest.’ [http://www.ijells.com/]

Thus, Dalit Eestheticism is state of mind like Dalit consciousness.

1.15.3.3. Dalit and Non-Dalit Writing:

There is much difference in between the Non Dalit writers and Dalit writers in giving experience power. The Non-Dalit writers have written in the form of conceptual experience, where as Dalit writers have been wrote sensitive experience. There is also a difference between play reading and play seeing on the stage. Dalit writing gives special reference to the expression of experience. Non-Dalit writing is not real, but an imaginary work. There is not a spontaneous feeling. That is why authenticity of Dalit life can be seen in Dalit writing. The writings of non-Dalits on Dalits and Dalits on themselves are differentiated by Narendra Jadhav as follows, ‘The difference is that between the love of a mother and love of a nurse’. [Jadhav: 2003: IV] The Dalit writers argued that the experiences and the humiliation undergone by Dalits cannot be imagined or explained by non-Dalit writers. Thus, one may find slight difference in the writings of non-Dalits on Dalits. In this discussion many writers from both Dalit and non-Dalit communities were participated. Non-Dalits who wrote about Dalit life were identified as only protest writers. Because they were not sufferers of untouchability. Though, they expressed their anger against the injustice of the society. Their ideas were more concerned with economic inequality. But the prime concern of Dalit writers was social injustice. So these Dalit writers considered their own writings as Dalit literature.

1.15.3.4. Nature of Scope Dalit Literature:

Dalit literature is a product of specific social, cultural, religious, economic situations in India. The term Dalit Literature came into use in 1958, when the first Dalit Sahitya
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Sammelan was held at Mumbai on 8th March, 1958. In relation to this, Adv. Eknath Awad said, Jeevnath Ghetlela Parivartnach Varsa..., at the inaugural function of this Sahitya Sammelan, Sahityaratna Annabhau Sathe said:

Dalit literature is a struggle of new life. It is a soul of humanity. It is a life story which faced the states of death. Therefore, Annabhau Sathesays, ‘this universe is not stand on the head of cobra, but it is depending on the hands of Dalit, farmers and oppressed people.’ [Awad: 2013: 4]

Dalit literature is a medium of self-expression, self-existence or self-identity. It is the forum and the medium of expression of the experiences of the communities that have been excommunicated, marginalized, exploited and humiliated for ages in the Indian caste-ridden Hindu society. It reflects Dalit experience and sensibility, attempting to define and assert Dalit identity from a primarily Dalit point of view. In many ways, it is a protest literature which faithfully mirrors the stark realities of the Dalit situation and becomes an important weapon to strengthen the Dalit (political) movement. Dalit author Sharankumar Limbale calls it: ‘the burning cry of untouchables against the injustices of thousands of years.’ [Limbale: 2003: IV] Thus, Dalit literature has its roots in the lives of the people who are suppressed, crushed, downtrodden or broken to pieces.

Dalit literature is now an established genre in literature. The primary motive of Dalit literature is the liberation of Dalits in India. Regarding to the aim of Dalit literature, Dr. C. B. Bharti said: ‘the aim of Dali literature is protest against the established system which is based on injustice and exposes the evil and hypocrisy of the upper caste.’ [Bharti: 1999: 34] In other words, Surekha Dangwal said: ‘Dalit literature is based on annubhava- experience- rather than anumana- speculatation.’ [Arora: 2010: 155]

Therefore, the authenticity and liveliness is the essential feature of Dalit literature. Thus, Dalit literature can be defined as a literary movement which aims at highlighting the insecurities, injustice, exploitation and worst atrocities against the marginalized section of Indian society. It expresses the dilemma, plays, predicament and injustice meted out to
Dalits. It portrays the life and struggles of low castes for the dignity, justice and equality. It is a literature of community or group. Therefore, Dalit writing is not takes of an individual’s suffering but of group or community. In this regard Dalit literature is differing from mainstream writing.

1.15.3.5. The Purpose of Dalit Literature:

The prime intention of Dalit literature is to give a voice to the oppressed section of India. It is the charter of liberty and justice of the Dalit universe and the world of exploited. It is the manifesto of burning of atheism, the rule of karma, templism, and all other value systems to incumbent class which begets and nourishes Dalitness at all levels like economic, social, cultural etc. The writing or life sketches through which this consciousness peeps out may be called Dalit Literature. The literature which expresses the absolute reformation and is ready to face the revolution is called Dalit Literature. The problem of Dalits means the problems of human liberty. We can’t understand the concept of human liberty unless and until we understand the problems of Dalit. This broad outlook lying at the root of literature, not only make that literature, the literature of Dalit but also the literature of man.

1.15.3.6. Development of Dalit Literature:

Dalit writings got momentum in Maharashtra due to the bequest of Mahatma Phule and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. With the beginning of reformers like Mahatma Phule and Babasaheb Ambedkar in Maharashtra, they brought forth the issues of Dalits through their works and writings. Dalit authors presently are able to show not only the hostile circumstances in which Dalits live, but also their struggle for emancipation from caste. Dalit literature is a literary expression of this helplessness. Though its use was sporadic during that time, the word Dalit gained currency in the early 1970s, with the rise of Dalit Panther, a leading Association in Maharashtra. Dalit Panther revived the term and
expanded its reference to include Scheduled Tribes, Poor Peasants, Women, and all those being exploited politically, economically, and the name of caste, religion or culture. Therefore, below forms can be developed Dalit Literature in India. They are as followes:

1.15.3.6.1. Dalit Poetry:

There is a plenty of Dalit poetry expressing the violent lashing experiences of poet’s life effectively. Narayan survey was one of the prominent poets in the early Dalit literature. The other poets like keshavMeshram’s Utkhanan (Excavation), Daya pawar’s Kondwada (suffocating Enclosure), Namedeo Dhasal’s Golphita (The Red Light zone), Triyambaksapkal’s Surung (dynamite) and so on. Unlike Dalit poetry, folk poetry too practiced for propagandng Dalit sensibility. Vamandada kardak, Bhimrao kardak, Vitthal Umap and so on are the prominent Dalit folk poets. The folk poetry includes Ballads which enthralled the common people of Dalit community. It too creates awareness about Dalit reform movements.

1.15.3.6.2. Dalit Short Stories:

Short stories and novels are important genre of literature that exploited by Dalit writers for expressing Dalit sensibility aptly. The short stories like Fakira by Annabhau Sathe, Davandi by Shankarrao kharat, JevahMi Jaat Chorli Hoti (When I robbed a caste - 1963), MaranSwast Hot Aahe (Death is becoming cheap-1969) by BaburaoBagul, Red stone by N. G. Shende are the best examples of Dalit short stories by Dalit writers.

1.15.3.6.3. Dalit plays:

Drama is too a best source of Dalit sensibility expressions. The Dalit plays are equally popular. They are M. V. Chitnis’s Yugyatra, Gangadhar Pantawane’s Mritushala and
Mask, Datta Bhagat’s Wata Palwata, B.C. Shinde’s Udvast (Destroyed), Ramnath Chavan’s Bamanwada (Brahmin lane).

1.15.3.6.4. *Dalit* Autobiography:

*Dalit* writers mostly interpreted their own experiences regarding social injustice in their own autobiographies. It is called *Dalit* Autobiography. This form of literature is best suited to *Dalit* writer. There are many *Dalit* Autobiography produced in post-independence such as –Daya Pawar’s Baluta, P. V. Sonkamble’s Athvaniche Pakshi, Laxman Mane’s Upara and so on. Evan *Dalit* women presented their experiences rather more finely than *Dalit* men writers. They are: Shantabai Kamble’s Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha, Urmila Pawar’s Aaydan, Baby Kamble’s Jina Amucha and etc. Thus, *Dalit* literature is produced on large scale after the *Dalit* reform movement created awareness in them and it mostly comes out in post-Independence period. Therefore, *Dalit* writers have their literary foundation with ideology and publish numerous journals. They also have a number of political organizations supporting them.

1.15.3.7. Features of *Dalit* Literature:

The first essential feature of *Dalit* literature is that it is not originally and essentially a literary exercise. The practice of writing does not aim at achieving an aesthetic performance in literature as an art. It serves purposes of social intervention and accordingly carries strong militant connotations. This holds well in Maharashtra as in other areas of India. It deals with the figures of self-assertion and protest, and the ways of a quest and construction of an identity of one’s own, on the part of those who have been denied a full human dignity, and whose consciousness was made to forcibly internalize patterns of cultural depreciation and social subalternity. One of the Chief features of *Dalit* literature is protest and rejection of Brahmanism but not the Brahmins.
1.15.4. *Dalit* Literature in Maharashtra:

*Dalit* Literature is mainly the result of *Dalit* movement, which emerged in 1960s. Regarding to this, Gail Omvedt, in her article *Dalit literature in Maharashtra: Literature of Social and Protest and Revolt in Western India*, claimed that:

...though *Dalit* literature as movement began only in the late 1960s and early 1970s, one of the most important *Dalit* writers and a major forerunner of the movement was Anna Bhau Sathe. [Omvedt: 1992: 78]

Annabhau Sathe (1920-1969) depicted realistic image of Indian *Dalit*. He wrote directly from his experiences in life, and his novels celebrate the fighting spirit in their characters who work against all odds in life. Silenced for centuries by caste prejudice and social oppression, the *Dalits* of Maharashtra registered their protest in the form of short stories, poetry, novels and autobiographies. He, further, illustrate:

He was a writer of diverse forms. His novels and short stories remain avidly read even today, and in fact up to the present no equivalent *Dalit* novelist has emerged. The sorties tell simple heroic or tragic tales of village. [Ibid]

However, *Dalit* literature emerged into prominence and as a collective voice after 1960 a fresh crop new writers like Baburao Bagul, Bandhu Madhav and Shankarrao Kharat, came into being with the Little Magazine Movement. They represent a new, direct, angry, accusatory, and analytic voice in the literature.

The origins of *Dalit* literature in the contemporary usage of the term, which is largely written and published in regional Indian languages, are in the late nineteenth century. G. N. Devy discussed *Dalit* Literature in Maharashtra in the Introduction of *The Outcaste: Akkarmashi*:
When Dalit literature started emerging in 1960s Marathi literary taste was dominated by narcissistic tendency that for grounded merely formalistic, non-confrontationist, and titillating works. One of the central debates in that era was focused on arts for art’s sake ad arts for life’s sake kind of issue. It was in the 1960s that little magazines started challenging the urban-biased and excessively individualistic mainstream writing. The earliest writings by Dalit writers were published first in these little magazines. Some of these had grown up in the poor quarters of Bombay, others had moved from their rural locations to the fast growing metropolis. And most were attracted to trade unions or left parties. Annabhau Sathe, Baburao Bagul, Yeshwant Manohar, Namdeo Dhasal, and Narayan Surve are the more significant among them…the launching of a militant Dalit Panhers Movement in 1972 brought the Dalit literary movement to the notice of the Marathi literary circles. [Devy: 2005: XX]

Narayan Surve, a trade unionist, wrote moving poems about the young workers involved in movements, and sex- worker mothers anxious about their children’s education. The language of these poem has used spoken by men and women leading a life of misery in Bombay. On the other hand, other poets wrote poetry loser to the modernist sensibility but with an unmistakable stamp of the anger of a rebel. Therefore, it is said that a fusion of suffering and complaint has by now become the defining feature of Dalit literature. However, Narayan Surve, Namdeo Dhasal, and Daya Pawar had given Marathi poetry a new tone and power; and their acceptance by the little Magazine movement had made an assured space for Dalit expression in Marathi literature.

The evolution from the poetry of the 1960s to the autobiography of the 1980s marked a major change in the self-assessment of the Dalit writers. Though poetry expressed in full measure the Dalit anxiety to be counted as humans, it had to depend on the forms and conventions of poetry available in the Marathi tradition as well as the modern poetry
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written under the influence of Western Modernist literature. Tracing the development of the Dalit Literature, Eleanor Zelliot, in her essay *Dalit: New Cultural Context for an old Marathi Word*, states:

While *Dalit* Literature as a school, a self-conscious movement, is a product of the 1960s. An individual writer from among the Untouchables appear in the fourteenth century and again in the Mahar Movement, which began in the late nineteenth century...The *Bhakti* movement, begun traditionally by Dyaneshwar in the thirteenth century, was joined by saint-poets from almost all Marathi-speaking castes, including the Mahar poet-Chokhamela. [Zelliot: 1992: 37]

Thus, *Dalit* literature echoes the agony of the experiences of untouchables. It portrays the caste humiliation, injustice, atrocities, and discriminations perpetrated by the upper caste people. It expresses the political consciousness that focused on the struggle for self-respect and dignity for the community.

1.15.5. *Dalit* Literature in Uttar Pradesh:

The rise of Hindi *Dalit* literature can be traced only as far back as the early 1980s, making its literary history much shorter than its Marathi and Kannada counterparts. The links between contemporary literature and North Indian *bhakti* poetry by Ravidas and Kabir as well as the mass of publication of political pamphlets that began with Swami Achutanand’s early-20th century North Indian *Adi-Hindu* movement. However, the origins of *Dalit* literature as a self-conscious creation of a new literary genre, dominated by the themes of exploitation and political awakening as well as a realist aesthetic peculiar to a modern *Dalit* perspective, are only about two decades old. The idea of a *Dalit chetna: Dalit* consciousness is a central concept in both the creation and evaluation of Hindi *Dalit* literature.
At the centre of the Dalit evaluation of their own literary production is the critical lens of Dalit chetna, as defined earlier, through which Dalit prose and poetry is measured. Many define this Dalit chetna as the revolutionary mentality awakened and inspired by B R Ambedkar. Others make it clear that Dalit chetna is something only a Dalit can possess, grounded as it is in the notion of pure experience i.e. that only living life as a Dalit can give rise to Dalit consciousness. Dalit chetna is elemental in opposing the cultural inheritance of the upper castes, the notion that culture is a hereditary right for them and one that is denied to Dalits.

*Dalit chetna: Dalit consciousness* is deeply concerned with the question: Who am I? What is my identity?’ The strength of character of Dalit authors comes from these questions. While Dalit poetry tends to invoke symbolic figures such as Shambuk, Eklavya, Buddha and of course Ambedkar and to address broad themes of socio-political freedom, appealing to the revolutionary spirit of the reader (or hearer) to rise, Dalit short fiction reflects the reality of Dalit life in caste society. The scale of its subjects is less grand, often focusing on the struggles of the Dalit everyman, fighting for survival and respect in a casteist society, rural and urban. The bulk of Hindi Dalit prose narratives exhibit a dominant style of melodramatic realism, often using a sort of exposé storytelling style that at once reveals the insidious exploitation of Dalits while speaking in a highly emotional register.

A rising chorus of Dalit women writers have further complicated the notion of Dalit consciousness as a rhetorical construction of collective identity formation. Dalit women have frequently found themselves at the mercy of discursive constructions of social resistance that attempt to assimilate their identities. Dalit women are claimed by both Dalit and feminist movements across India, each often demanding a de-emphasis on one aspect of their identity, gender or caste. On the one hand, the arbiters of the Dalit public sphere often decry Dalit women’s critiques of patriarchy for causing division within the greater movement for Dalit equality. On the other, Dalit women complain about the
erasure of their caste difference by mainstream women’s movements in a bid to emphasise a gendered notion of sisterhood above all else. Debates about the peculiar location of Dalit women in both the anti-caste and women’s movements in India have been at the fore of activist and scholarly discussions since the formation of the National Federation of Dalit Women in 1995. The participation of representatives of several Dalit groups, including the National Federation of Dalit Women, at the United Nations World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa, in 2001 further drew international attention to the need to situate caste within overlapping frameworks of race, class and gender.

Finally, it is important to stress that Hindi Dalit literature is not simply a body of disparate texts that address similar themes of marginality and resistance. Rather, it is a living, breathing literary movement that is intent on establishing itself as an integral part of the field of Indian literature. The fundamental goal of Hindi Dalit writers in establishing and carefully guarding the boundaries of their own emerging literary genre is to exercise control over their own representation.

1.1.5.6. Dalit Literature in Karnataka:

The source of Dalit writers in Karnataka was undoubtedly the literature produced by Babasaheb Ambedkar. The Kannada Dalit literature emerged in a different stage due to the dissimilarity of Kannada Sahitya Parishath: The State association for Kannada literature. In 1979, in the annual programmed of Association, it led to the separate forum in literature called Dalit literature. After having different literary forum it began to include the women writings, and writings of minorities (Muslims). Shudra writers also contributed for the growth of Kannada Dalit literature. Therefore, it was Dalit movement and literature which made everyone in the society to look towards the last man of the social hierarchy of the caste system.
One of the Chief features of Dalit literature in Kannada is protest and rejection of Brahmanism but not the Brahmins. The Brahmanism is a mental state which accepts superiority over another man. It attaches inferiority to the fellow in the hierarchy of caste system. It gives more respect and more profit for the caste which is up in the ladder of caste system, and as it goes down the ladder profit and respect also decreases. Its contribution for the Dalit caste which is lowest of all the castes is nothing but exploitation, jeering, mockery, and slavery. This mental state of Brahmanism not only exists in Brahmins but also be in Shudras, who simply mimic the ideas of Brhaminical practices without testing them with scientific temperament. Siddalingaiah, Professor of Kannada in Bangalore University, Karnataka, was a major figure to contribute Kannada Dalit literature. He was a poet in Kannada literature,

…who pioneered the Dalith voice in 1975? Dalith is a cultural term denoting the oppressed class which was treated as untouchable by the so called upper castes in India.

[http://bavivekrai.wordpress.com/]

Thus, the influence of the poems of Siddalingaiah paved the main path for Dalith movement and literaure in Karnataka and also revolutionary organizations to consolidate.

1.16. Dalit Autobiography: Nature and Scope:

Autobiography is a very influential genre through which Dalit writers have portrayed a realistic picture of the Dalit world. The Dalit autobiographies were first written in the 1930s. Regarding to the origin of the Dalit autobiography, Ravikumar, in the Introduction of Dalit Autobiography The Scar, remarks:

At the national level, Ambedkar and Rettaimalai Srinivasanare are the precursors of the Dalit autobiographical form as per research indicators at present. [Ravikumar: 2009: X]
In the 1970s other Marathi Dalit writers began to write their autobiographies. Since then, Dalit autobiographies are being written by the Dalits throughout the country.

1.16.1. Purpose of the Dalit autobiography:

Dalit autobiography is the recent development emerged in post-independence in India, which is the most important tool of Dalit literature. Dalit writers describe Dalit autobiographies as narratives of pain. It is pain which strings one narrative event to the next, and it is pain that binds individual Dalits together into an imagined community of fellow sufferers. It transforms an experience of pain into a narrative of resistance. It is a kind of subjective narration by a Dalit writer in which more importance is given to the social life than the writer himself, but common social life is analyzed through the writer. It provides as a weapon for creating a social change and awareness in an unequal society. Regarding to the purpose of Dalit autobiography, Arvind Malagatti said:

The main purpose of the Dalit autobiographies is the emancipation of the oppressed and exploited people, as Dalit literature is one of the integral parts of the Dalit movement. Dalit literature is not a recent one but it has been there for centuries. Since the Dalits were not recognized, their writings were relegated to the background. [http://dalitindia.in/2chaper1.]

Gradually, in the twentieth century it came into public arena, and in the post independent India it gained great momentum. At present, it is one of the most discussed subjects at national and international level.

1.16.2. Development of Dalit Autobiography:

The first Dalit autobiography in Marathi Literature was Things I Never Imagined published by Balasaheb Suryawanshi in1975, which represents not only Mahar
community but also nomadic, tribal and criminal communities. He was a Christian Dalit, who brought out the problems of Christian Dalits. It deals with heart rending poverty, inequality and suppression. Such background was the roots cause of Dalit autobiography in India. Contemporary, such issues have been raised by P.E. Sonkable in his articles and published in the magazine of Milind College, Auragabad. Later on, these articles have made book entitled as Aathwaninche Pakshi in 1969. It deals with the miseries and sorrows of his whole life and his unpredictable struggle to seek education. It goes every layer of society and creating awareness among Dalits.

Before him, Daya Pawar published his autobiography Balute in 1978. Daya Pawar depicted the story of a low caste child who through hard work obtained education and became a successful person. Daya Pawar received Ford Foundation Scholarship, for Balute and NFDC produced a film Atyachar on Balute. Balute is published in Hindi, Marathi, Gujrati, and Kannad and in foreign languages such as Japanese, German. Along with the Mahar community, the Tribal and the Nomadic communities also published autobiographies. In December 1980, Laxman Mane came with Upara- An Outsider, who depicted the life style, customs and traditions of the Kaikadi community. It is very difficult to say whether Mane’s goal has been achieved or not but it is important that this autobiography has succeeded in underscoring the problems of Kaikadi community. It received the Shaitya Academy Award and published this autobiography in English.

Uttam Tupe through his autobiography Katyaverchi Pote displayed the sorrows and sufferings of Matang community that earns their livelihood by skinning dead animals and begging in villages. In the same year, Shankarrao Kharat published Taral Antaral. Shankararo Kharat described the customs and traditions of Yeskar community– Mahar subcaste. He described his struggle for education. He graduated in law and became the Vice-Chancellor of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad. Nansaheb Jhodge, published his autobiography in 1982 entitled Phanjar - Pricking Thorn. In 1983 Dadasaheb More published Gabal. Through this autobiography, More has
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depicted the problems of a nomadic tribe – Pingla Joshi who earn their livelihood wandering from village to village.

Women writers also came forward with their life stories. They published autobiographies describing their sorrows and sufferings. Very low treatment was given to the women in Mahar and Nomadic Communities. In 1983, Mukta Sarvagond through her autobiography Mittlelei Kavade - Closed Doors disclosed the plight of the Dalit women to the world. Sarvagond raised voice against the people of her own community and also of those who are availing the facilities of being Dalit for filling their houses and she attacked the pretence of Dalit leaders. She also pictured the exploitation of common Dalits at the hands of their own community members. In 1981, Kumud Pawade published her autobiography entitled Antasphot. Shantabai Kamble and Baby Kamble came with their autobiographies in 1986.

In 1987, Laxman Gaikwad published Uchalya - The Branded. Laxman Gaikwad brought out problems of the nomadic Community -Uchalya who are branded as thieves from their birth. Because of this prejudice they were not able to earn anything and they turned towards thieving. Laxman Gaikwad has given a heartrending description of their poverty, hunger and struggle for education. Laxman received Sahitya Academy Award for his autobiography. This autobiography was published in English. Inspired by Laxman Gaikwad, Atmaram Rathod published Tanda- an autobiography of a person who is born in Banjara family and lives out of the town in separate colonies. People from these communities lived together, out of the society and earned livelihood by cattle tending, selling milk and farming.

In 1994, Kishore Kale published Kolhatyche Por - Against All Odds. Kolhati is a tribal community. Women from these communities earn their livelihood by dancing in the stage shows and men enjoy their earnings lavishly. Kishore’s Mother was a Tamasha dancer. Kishore was an illegitimate child of a Tamasha dancer and had to go through severe
problems at various levels. Through his autobiography, Kishore has drawn the picture of
the Kolhati community, the sufferings of women in the hands of their fathers and brothers
and society as well. Through their writing, Dalits are demanding for liberty, honor,
security and freedom which are the right of every human being. Recently, Adv. Eknath
Awad has published his autobiography etitled as Jag Badal Ghalun Gav in 2010, which
deals with the life-long experiences of narrator.

1.16.3. Features of Dalit Autobiography:

The essential feature of the Dalit autobiographical narratives is that they do not isolate
the individual from his whole historical environment, family, community and society at
large. Another essential feature of the Dalit autobiographical narratives is the oppression,
struggles, assertion and quest of identity of the individual who is the subject- matter of
the narrative seem never dissociated from the shape that the system of social relation. It is
concerned to the pathetic condition of the Dalits. The sufferings and humiliations are an
integral part of the Dalit Autobiography. Dalit Autobiography helps the Dalits to become
aware and struggle for their human rights, which are denied to them by the so-called
upper castes. The methods of depiction, sequences of content, and text organization are
analyzed to reinforce the Dalit authors' exploration of society. Dalits autobiography
considered as a weapon to leverage transformation in the social and political institutions
of India. Thus, Dalit Writing is essentially expression of the reality of human life and a
great piece of literature depicts that reality with communicable lucid language facilitating
narrative with readers' aesthetic and literary sense. Thus, Dalit autobiographies
authentically portray various forms of social and legal injustices.

1.17. Dalit Autobiographers and their life:

The life sketch of above Dalit authors can be given as follows for further understanding:
1.17.1. Sharankumar Limbale:

Sharankumar Limbale, a well-known Dalit activist, writer, editor, critic, is one among the most renowned Dalit writers in India. He is born on 01st June 1956. He has completed M. A. (Marathi) in 1990 and Ph. D. in Marathi in 1996 from Shivaji University, Kolhapur. He is a good academician as well as a writer and he occupied so many positions till today. He is an illustrious writer and his writings mostly rest on Dalit struggle and identity. He is known for his poetry, short stories and particularly for his master-piece, autobiography Akkarmashi, which is first written in Marathi and translated into Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, Punjabi, Malayalam languages. It is first Dalit autobiography which is translated into English by Santhosh Bhoomkar.

Sharankumar Limbale got many awards and won the wider acclaim from the public for his literary talents. He is also known for the critical work Towards an Aesthetics of Dalit Studies (2004), which is the most resource book on Dalit criticism after Arjun Dangle’s Poisoned Bread and Kancha Ilaiah’s Why I am Not A Hindu. He is a member of many academic and cultural organizations and many scholars did and engaged in active research on his writings. Currently, he is working as a Professor, Regional Director (Pune Division) of the Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Nashik.

1.17.2. Laxman Bapu Mane:

Laxman Bapu Mane is born on 1st June, 1949 at Somanthali district of Maharashtra, India. He is a Marathi Dalit writer and social activist in maharahtra. He wrote Upara: An Outsider (1980), a Marathi version which is translated into English by A. K. Kumar in 1997, as well as in various languages like Hindi, Gujrati, Tamil, Malayalam and foreign languages like English and French. It is concidered as a milestone Marathi Dalit literature and recived Sahitya Akadami Award in 1981. His second book is Band Darwaja: Closed door (1984) and others are Palavarch Jag (1988), Vimuktayan (1997), Udhavast (2003), Bhatkyanch Bharud (2003), Kay Karayach Shikun (2003), Khel Sadeteentakyanch
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(2005), and one poetry collection *Krantipeeth* (2007). Laxman Mane has received a Homi Bhabha fellowship during 1986-88 for his continued social work. Therefore, he served for some time in the following capacities:

i. Acting president of the Indian Institute for research in the developmental problems of nomadic and denotified communities, Satara

ii. Secretary of *Bhartiya batke vimukt vikas va sanshodhan santha*

iii. General secretary of *Mahatma Jyotirao Phyle Samata Prathistan*

iv. A senator of Shivaji University’s administratation.

He has also given number of awards from Maharashtra like Bando Gopala Mukadam Puraskar (1982), N. C. Kelkar award (1982), Bharti Vidyapeeth Award (1982), Y. B. Chavan Prastisthan grant for research studies (1988), Maharashtra Gaurav Purskar (1990), Maharashtra Foundation Purskar (1998), Bhimratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Savotkrusth wyakhata (2005) and Padmshree Awarded by President of India in 2009.

By suffered due to depressed socio-economic status of his community, Laxman Mane has taken foot-step of converting himself to Boudhism by inspiration of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on 2nd Day of October 2007. He led the rare massive conversion movement nearly about seven lacks people from forty-two different Nomadic and De-notified tribes had embraced under his leadership on 27th May, 2007. This was important achievement, which has enlightened the lives of these depressed masses. He was the president of the *Bhatkya Ani Vimukth Jamati Sanghatana*, Maharashtra and a founder member of the *Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishtan*. Currently, Laxman Mane is in jail due to the case of raped but the democracy has still alive therefore the judgement of court will give the justice to him.

1.17.3. Siddalingaiah:

Siddalingaiah, a major Kannada poet and activist, was born in Magadi in southern part of Karnataka, India. He was a founder of the Dalit Sangharsh Samiti, which launched a
powerful Dalit movement in Karnataka in the mid-1970s. He obtained a doctoral degree from Bangalore University for his research on village deities. His publications include *Gramadevathegalu*, a study of village deities in Karnataka, *Ooru-Keri*, an influential autobiography, and collections of poetry, essays and speeches. Twice member of the Karnataka Legislative Council, he is presently Professor at the Centre for Kannada Studies, Bangalore University and Chairperson, Kannada Book Authority.

1.17.4. Omprakash Valmiki:

Omprakash Valmiki is born in 30th June, 1950 at Barla District Mujaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh. He has completed M. A. in Hindi literature. He is a leading Hindi *Dalit* writer and author of the celebrated autobiography *Joothan* (1997), first published in Hindi in 1997 and translated into English by Arun Prabha Mukherjee in 2003. His other three collection of poetry are *Sadiyon Ka Santaap* (1989) *Bas! Bahut Ho Chuka* (1997) and *Ab Aur Nahin* (2009), and two collections of short stories are *Salaam* (2000), and *Ghuspethiye* (2004). He has also written *Dalit Sahiya Ka Saundryashastra* (2001) and a history of Valmiki community, *Safai Devata* (2009). One Hindi translation is on his credit which is Kancha Ellaya’s *Why I am not Hindu*?

In concerned to Drama, he is actor, director. Nearby in sixteen plays he has performed as an actor. His short story, poems and autobiography are prescribed for studied at primary level and university level. He was the president of first *Dalit Lekhak Sahitya Sammelan*, Nagpur held at 1993. Secondly, he was the president 28th Asmita Darsh Sahitya Sammelan, Chandrapur held at 2008 in Maharashtra. He has also given number of awards from India and abroad like Dr. Ambedkar National Award (1993), Parivesh Samman (1995), Kathakram Samman (2001), New India Book Award (2004), 8th World Hindi Sammelan (2007) and Newyork, Amerika Samman, Sahitya Bhushan Samman (2008). Currently, he is living leading *Dalit* Hindi writer at dehradun, Uttar Pradesh.
1.18. Summing Up:

Culture is one of the most invigorating and inspiring subjects, which studied anthropology, literary studies and social sciences. The meaning of culture in literature is broad, enough to include all human behavior and social makeup, which are learnt and not inherent. It is a way of life, a set of values, beliefs and behaviour.

There are many cultures found in India, among them only Christian and Buddhist culture have caring untouchables or Dalits. Hindu culture is completely opposite to it, while concentrate on God, temple, religious texts and rushimunies. There is no value of Dalits in Hindu religion, though they are a part of its religion. Therefore, Dalit writers have using different kind of language than that of the language used in earlier times in literature. They use the language which is known to them and considered rustic by the previous writers. So, they follow the language of their own people and their dialect, without refining it. Dalit feelings come from Dalit language only. No other language could express it exactly. So, Dalit feelings and Dalit language is known as Dalit culture.

The History of Dalit Movement goes back to the 11th century; the first Dalit writer was Madara Chennaiah, eleventh century cobbler-saint, who lived in the reign of Western Chalukyas and who is also regarded as the father of Vachana poetry. The main issues around which most of the Dalit movements have been centered in the colonial and post colonial periods are confined to the problem of untouchability. Post- failure of Bhakti movement in India, social reformers were emerged and tried to work for Dalit and untouchability in India. Various efforts have been made so far by visionaries in this direction by launching movements and forming organizations to highlight and find solution of the problems of the Dalits in India.
Dalit movement is not a literal movement but is the logo of change and revolution. Its primary aim was the liberation of Dalits. It can found its roots in Maharashtra in the form of Dalit Panther, which was social organization founded by Namdev Dhasal in April 1972 at Mumbai. However, Dalit literature is product of Dalit movement, which emerged in post-independence in India. The word Dalit is similar to the Marathi word dalan i.e. crushed. Dalit literature is now an established genre in literature. The primary motive of Dalit literature is the liberation of Dalits in India. Dalit literature refers to the writings of Dalits on Dalit life. Dalit Literature is the writing which is written about Dalits life. It was produced by Dalit consciousness. Human freedom is the inspiration behind it.

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