Conclusion

Dalit autobiographies are strong means to fight against the social inequalities and injustice. Dalit autobiographies written by various Dalit writers broke the traditional upper caste autobiographical writing which depicts the romanticized version of life. When the mainstream autobiography ignored Dalit lives, the Dalits autobiography paved the way for the Dalits to talk about their pain, suffering and their day to day life experiences in their autobiographies. The fact is that lack of education made the Dalits inefficient to fight against oppression because education transforms the character and personality of a person and enlightens a person to understand the problems better. An educated person uses the advantage of his knowledge, skills and values accumulated through education for better reasons than one.

The movement to spread the importance of education for Dalits was practically started by Ambedkar. He educated them morally first and emphasized the idea of academic education. For Dalits, to get educated is a herculean task. They have to face a lot of humiliation and discrimination. Such a hostile atmosphere in schools has always discouraged Dalits to step into, what is supposedly called, “the temple of learning”. Dalits wrote autobiographies to break away from the traditional upper caste autobiographical writing as they talked about their pain, suffering and their day-to-day life experiences in their autobiographies. However, the Dalit male writers have depicted the Dalit women in quite a negative light in their writings as submissive, meek, immoral, sexual
objects, etc. Thus, the Dalit women writers wrote their autobiographies in a more assertive and rebellious when compared to Dalit male autobiographies. My research area includes the autobiographies of both male and female Dalits writers. I have included the opinions of those writers who speak through their stories while examining the status of the cross-section of the Dalits in our society.

Chapter I forms the introduction of my thesis which mainly discusses the backdrop of the social changes among the Dalits. It briefly discusses what an autobiography is and how it is an assessment of social tyranny. It also gives an account of how Dalit autobiography is a medium for the Dalits’ revolution. It also throws light on the fact that Dalit literature is one of its most significant recent trends and a matter of literary debates wherein the Dalit autobiographies are contextualized within certain larger socio-historical process.

Chapter II focuses on the socio-economic conditions of the Dalits. It examines how the Dalits get economic independence socially and culturally. Initially, the Dalits had no land and no education. They suffered from poverty, illiteracy and slavery for ages and were exploited. The Dalits were inspired by the revolutionary Dr. B. R. Ambedkar’s thoughts. They became educated and got financial independence and left their traditional professions, and moved from one profession to another.

Chapter III examines how the Dalits have become conscious of their oppression, and caste discrimination, injustice, atrocities, etc. Ambedkar social reform movements carried a significant place for the Dalit community in general.
With educational avenues created by the architect of the Indian constitution, the Dalits have become socially conscious about the circumstances and social problems of untouchability and caste discriminations. The period from 1920 to 1956 was influenced by the writings and political activities of Ambedkar, who argued the case of untouchables from the boundaries of the villages to the round table conferences, and fought for equal rights for the entire Dalit society.

Chapter IV examines how the Dalits have changed their caste structure with the help of education. The Dalits wanted to change the oppressed with their writings and producing dramas and opening schools. The Dalits participated in cultural and literary activities, and established many organizations such as the independent labour party and communist party. These organizations struggled against all the caste system and reformed their life style.

Chapter V throws light on Dalit empowerment. The major places in Dalit autobiographies are political agenda and political developments. The Dalits fight against caste discrimination, untouchability, poverty, slavery and injustice. Dalits have been encouraged by Ambedkar’s slogan “Educate, Organize, and Agitate” which has reached most of the Dalit youth. So they take up education and politics seriously. Educated Dalits write their oppression anguish and protest through the writings of Dalit autobiographies.

The conclusion focuses on the summarized view of all the chapters of my thesis. It also includes the analysis of my research and my suggestions for further research as well as the limitations which are beyond my approach. The ability of
the marginal group to write literature comes under immediate contestation, and Dalit writers have been forced to fight for the right to speak as well as to redefing the boundaries of what can be said. Dalit writers have attempted to negotiate this challenge of securing narrative authority by emphasizing the ‘experience of discrimination’ and ‘Dalit identity’ as two necessary criteria for both writing and critiquing Dalit autobiography.

In my opinion, the Dalit autobiographies should not be simply the narration of a Dalit’s life-story. They should also be used by Dalit writers as a means of political assertion. The Dalit autobiographies serve as a dissident space within the literary public in which the Dalit writer can speak out against untouchability and contest the institutional narrative that caste no longer functions as a social force in modern India. They also serve as means for Dalit writers to reclaim narrative authority over the construction of the ‘Dalit self’. I must say that the Dalit society is not inferior as it is claimed by the upper castes, but is different or oppressed or inventive in the face of extreme exploitation. Dalit writers have been inspired to write because of the popularization of education, the spread of democracy, science and law, as well as the organizing and the struggles of Dalit youth. All these things became possible due to Babasaheb Ambedkar who emphasized that education would help the Dalit overcome the dependency on the caste Hindus. I also find it to be true that education can transform the mind of the people and make them aware of their rights in order to live a normal life in the society I also suggest that the people of the Dalit community must be educated and this can help them. To cross the barrier and achieve which has never been
achievable. During my research, I have tried to find out the possibilities where autobiographies provide a space for Dalit writers to regain control over the constitution and meaning of Dalit selfhood and join in a show of strength with the larger ‘Dalit community’.

Research in a given area has always been a challenging task and no matter how thoroughly we examine things, we find that there are still areas which have remained untouched. Though I have included the works of a number of Dalit writers and the source materials for examining closely the views of the writers, due to the restriction of time limit, I could not complete all of them. I hope that my research will lead to further exploration of the complex issues outlined in this thesis.