Translation is a challenging task that intends to carry meanings across a language. But, when it comes to translation of a literary text it also gives additional responsibility of carrying the meanings with its context and intensity and the cultural values. Translation of a literary text is not supposed to be a carrier of meaning only but a bridge that connects two completely apart cultures and that is where lies the test of a translator. When it comes to a dalit literary text, it has its own an additional set of challenges. Dalit literature is mostly written in the regional languages and further more in the dialects with a baggage of idioms, proverbs, phrases and sayings primarily to present the dalit life more authenticity. It, being the voice of the lowest strata of the society, uses the language which is capable enough to carry their sufferings, anger and helplessness. Therefore, the language used by the dalit writers is at times invective and expletive. Sharankumar Limbale believes that dalit literature needs to have its own dictionary to read and enjoy the dalit literary works. Such attempt has been done by Dalpat Chauhan in Gujarati validate the point.
Dalit literature has different objectives than that of the mainstream literature. It is primarily written to express their anguish, pain and suffering. It is intended to bring forth their caste based oppression, discrimination and marginalization. Dalit literature is also intended to construct their identity hence the literature that is produced is deeply rooted in their cultures and ethnography.

As an important dalit literary text *Vyathana Vitak* reflects all these qualities. The text is a landmark in Gujarati literature as well as Gujarati dalit literature. The text came out in 1985 after the anti-reservation agitation of Gujarat. Explaining the importance and relevance of the text, Prakash Shah, an eminent Gujarati writer and journalist, says, ‘When Joseph Macwan came up with *Vyathana Vitak* before three decades, we were introduced to an unknown Gujarati world then and created a humanitarian atmosphere. Had the text come little earlier, we could have moderated the anti-reservation agitation.’ The text has its equal literary, social, cultural and historical importance.

Regarding the selection of the text for translation and study, it has already been said earlier that translation is very necessary to serve the basic purpose of dalit literature. The text has been chosen out of the researcher’s interest and reading of dalit literature or Gujarati dalit literature. Moreover, the text is the first acclaimed Gujarati dalit text by the pioneer of Gujarati dalit writer Joseph Macwan. It is the text which gave Macwan recognition as a writer. It also marked the beginning of the prose phase of Gujarati dalit literature and became the first dalit text to win Gujarati Sahitya Akadami Award. This text has also been translated into many other Indian regional languages by the National Book Trust (NBT). Other genres in Gujarati such as short story, novel, drama, and poetry have been studied and translated but the genre of the text ‘character sketch’ has been neither studied in Gujarati nor translated.
from Gujarati up till now. Above all, it is an authentic documentation of the dalit culture and ethnography. Hence, translating and studying the text will be an important contribution to literature or dalit literature.

Coming to the translation of the text, the challenges started with the title itself. The title Vyathana Vitak appropriately communicates the pain, suffering and oppressed condition of dalits. Vyatha is agony or pain while Vitak has multiple meaning such as a tale and a sufferer. An eminent Gujarati scholar Achyut Yagnik translates the title as Tales of Agony. The Wikipedia page on Macwan translates the title as Agony of Suffering. Some other researchers translate the title as Agonies of Grief. The title of Frantz Fanon’s book The Wretched of the Earth also captured an attention for long. But, it was felt that even if these titles were carrying the meaning rightly, they were not inclusive of the genre of the text. The text is a collection of character sketches hence such a title should be preferred which is faithful to both the gist and the genre of the text. Therefore, from some other choices, The Afflicted is thought to be more suitable. It communicates the suffering with an emphasis on people or characters.

Another challenge was the Charotari dialect of the text. The dialect gives an authenticity to the text but the same factor adds to the challenge. While translating the text, many times two-layer translation approach intralingual and interlingual had to be applied. First the sentences or passages were translated into standard Gujarati from Charotari and then into English in order to reach the sense. However, utmost care has been taken to retain the atmosphere of the text which is expressed through the dialect.
While translating the character sketches, it has been another mountainous work to translate the specific usages, phrases, proverbs and idioms. Usages such as ‘Poonjo phati padyo’ (Poonjo died), ‘kholiye khenchyo a hancho’ (This dharma is for this life), ‘Thase teva devase’ (We will cross the bridge when we will come to it), ‘kaki khuno palata’ (Kaki was bemoaning), ‘kholo nakhavo’ (to beseech) demanded considerable amount of efforts and time to translate. Sometimes the equivalences could be found but most of the time it has been difficult to carry the meaning with the atmosphere of the text in which the idioms, usages or proverbs have been used.

Translating culture specific words is always an act of loss. There are many such words for which equivalences could not be found. Hence, while translating the text, the culture specific words for example ‘fukanu davakhanu’, ‘akhapatar ganatu khetar’, ‘khuno palavo’, ‘rog-nivarak’, ‘dharan bandhavi’, ‘ovarana’, ‘zena’ ‘vedhala’ ‘pind’ ‘naradam’ ‘mantrelu’ ‘charitar’, ‘boriyu’ have been retained from the source language and, as a better solution, a glossary has been provided to keep the text rooted in its context. At times, the writer has created or invented his own words such as rog-nivarak for the better illustration of his ideas. In such cases too, the source language words have been retained and explained in the glossary.

Creative writers take linguistic liberty for the construction of sentences. Hence, we find sentences in fragments or clubbed. Many times, the sentences are grammatically incomplete like missing subject as in the sentence “tyare a notu samjatu aje samjay chhe”. The translation of such structures with the lucidity and oral flavor was a challenge. In such cases, best efforts have been made to retain the structures as they are but, at times, liberty has been
taken to satisfy the need of the target language by reframing the sentences without disturbing the lucidity and orality of the text.

The most challenging task was to translate the poems, songs, hymns and dirges. In the Charotar region, the dalit community has songs for every occasion or event of life. Hence, Macwan too has incorporated these songs in the text. But, as it is true with any poem, they posed particular problems keeping with the tight structure of verse. The hymns are used to express one’s spiritual engrossment hence it mostly comes with deep references and distinct symbols. It was necessary to translate the songs in such a way that the English readers who may not be familiar with the references and symbols can also read and comprehend it. In such cases, it was felt necessary to take liberty with the forms and poetic parameters.

One of the features of the text is the use of a rustic and rude language to express the anger and helplessness of the people. The most important requirement to translate a dalit text well is to carry this anger, helplessness and rebellious spirit across. But at times, it has been very difficult to communicate it without getting it diluted. Many times it has happened that the words of source language have been used with vernacular/dialectical utterance. Like the word ક્ષય (xay) is pronounced in one way in standard Gujarati but pronounced as ખય (khay) in the dialect. While translating such words into the target language, though equivalences are available in target language, the tone and rural/dialectical pronunciation or the rusticity was very difficult to communicate. In such situations, efforts have been made to retain the rural touch of the source language and therefore more informal or dialectical target language is preferred in translation.
It has also been difficult to encompass the totality of human life by recording those moments of happiness which do form an inextricable part of dalit life through jokes and repartees as well as the oral flavor of the text i.e. linguistic peculiarities and the various linguistic registers. There are stories, riddles and jokes shared on the occasions of Magan’s marriage, befooling Turis, making fun of Pakak kaka, teasing Nayno Bajiyo and night visits of Bhavan Bhagat’s farm which color a happy shade in the gloomy lives of the characters. When the writer’s friend Magan goes with procession to marry Lakshmi who is elder than him, Lakshmi’s friends make fun of Magan and Joseph by singing songs called fatanu:

Youn is the bridegroom and old is the bride,

How can such a match be allowed . . . dear sister! (Macwan 24)

On her first meeting with Magan, Lakshmi expresses her love in these words:

And in response to it, she dragged Magan close and hugged him. Pointing to her heart, she said: “You reside here since I saw you first in our marriage ritual. I have been worshiping a pair of vessels¹ since I matured. When the Valamgor used to praise your gentle body, I used to be overjoyed. I used to inquire of you to whosoever came from this region. You are my husband. I like you more than Sona liked Halaman, Hothal liked Hodho and Utara liked Abhimanyu. Apart from you all others are my brothers and father!” (Macwan 29)

The text is constructed in the form of story within story. Community achieve Bhavan Bhagat and Jethakaka play the role of teacher for the children by narrating stories of Sinhasan Batrisi, Soodaboteri, Barasa-kasturi, Vikram and Vital, Savaringa and many more. These

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¹ Worshiping vessels is traditional practice performed by a spinster to get good husband.
stories, jokes with linguistic peculiarities and the various linguistic registers give an oral flavor to the text which is much difficult to convey in a language of another culture.

At some places, it was easy to translate some of the passages or incidents at linguistic level. But the events, socio-cultural practices or customs are so rooted in the source text culture that translation would certainly fail to carry the illustrative world behind it. In such cases like the marriage ceremonies, custom of *annu*, practice of untouchability, the role of *panch*, caste based discrimination, the social decorum for the women or specifically for the daughters-in-law and socially specified roles of some of the castes like Bhavaiya, Turi, Mal, Dhayajo, *Chamar* foot notes have been provided explaining the cultural social significance and its ceremonial procedure.

Another difficulty is with the names of the characters. In Gujarati, the names of the characters are changed/modified as per the context. The names are modified, specifically suffix, based on who is addressing whom as in the fifth character sketch, the protagonist *Satish* becomes *Satiya, Satiyo* and *Chandu* becomes *Chandiyo* and *Chandudiyo*. These changes themselves communicate particular context and meaning. Hence, to communicate these peculiarities, the pattern has been followed in the target language also.

Macwan has made the text a collage of languages. The characters from different castes within the dalit fold come with their own shades of language. The people from lower castes like Vanakar, Chamar, Bhangi, Turi, Taragara and the people from higher castes as well as the educated dalits and the Christian dalits all come with their own different jargons and register. As the difference of the language of the higher caste doctor and other lower caste characters in ‘A Time When I Had Three Mothers!’ is clearly visible in these examples.
Convincing Joseph, Ladubhabhi says, “Hendo mara baap! Tame Janamjala thaine avatarya chho, hendo!” (Come dear son, you are born as unfortunate! Come!) (Macwan 11)

While the doctor uses the standard Gujarati language, “Jao, Aena Bapune bolavi lavo” (Go and inform his father.) or “Tu bhagyashali te bachi gayo. Be dahada modo padyo hot to Hadaka sudhi pahochelo gha gregarine kari det!” (You are fortunate that you were saved. Had you delayed for a day or two, the bone deep wound would have been gangrenous!) (Macwan 13)

Such a variety of the language makes the characters alive. Though, it was challenging, efforts have been made to carry the distinct variety in the target language. Macwan has also used a variety of languages like Hindi or English as per the demand of the characters. Such phrases and sentences have been translated into English but with the loss of linguistic variety of the source text. In translation, efforts have been made to communicate the use of other languages by mentioning it in the reporting verbs.

Unlike English, the characters are not addressed by their names but by their relations to the narrator as the name of Joseph’s uncle is Jethakaka but everywhere he is addressed as ‘Kaka’ (Uncle) only. Similarly many other characters like ‘Kaka’, ‘Kaki,’ ‘Maa’, ‘Foi’ have been referred to not by their proper names but by the common noun that represent their relation to the narrator. Such style of narration has worked well to create an emotional connection with the characters but if these words or names describing relations are translated in literal way then they may remain just uncles and aunts and may not sound like characters. Hence, the names as used in the source text have been retained as per the need of the context.
One of the important features of Dalit literature is that it is mostly written in the form of personal narratives and autobiographical tone wherein the writer revisits his own life from childhood onwards. In this journey a considerable difference come in the use of language from child to an adult and grown up man. But, it becomes difficult to translate or to communicate the change of language or the stages of language in the target language. In Vyathana Vitak too Macwan revisits his life and narrates the events chronologically to begin with his childhood onwards. The stages of his life have been reflected by the language as below.

Asking to his step mother, Joseph as a child uses Chrotari, “Kem ali ma, mari haru rotalo nathi rakhyo?” (Oh mother! Why didn’t you keep even food for me?). (Macwan 8)

While talking to Ruthbhabhi Joseph a grown up and educated man uses standard Gujarati, “Amne paraya na samjso, Bhabhi! Snehano tantano tamane ahin khenchi lavyo chhe. Amane tamaraj chhokara samajo ane have pachhi ahij chhelo padav mani lyo . . .” (“Bhabhi, consider us your relatives. The thread of affection has drawn you here. Accept us as your children and settle down here for the last stage of your life. . .”) (Macwan 119)

There is remarkable difference in the language of the writer as different stages of his life. It was the most difficult challenge to show the difference of language from stage to stage and considerable amount of efforts have been made to incorporate the linearity in the translation.

Dalit literature is self affirmative and directed more inward. Each event in the external world leaves a deep humiliating scar within. Now, while translating a dalit text, it becomes important not to miss this internal turmoil along with the external events. It is very crucial to depict the psychological conditions of the characters. There was the same responsibility as
well as challenge while translating this text too and best efforts have been made to present the inner pangs of the characters well captured by the ST.

Dalit writers also experiment with the forms. They have developed their own forms of personal narratives and it has its great significance in the development of dalit literature. While translating a dalit text, it almost becomes mandatory to reflect these experiments or liberties with a form in the target language. Macwan has explored and experimented with the genre of character sketch in *Vyathana Vitak*. Almost all of his sketches are autobiographical and developed in the form of a well structured short story. While translating the text, it was necessary to bring along these experiments of the writer and, at large extent, the sketches have been translated with its distinct features of the form.

One of the important characteristics of a dalit literary text is its interrogative nature. And while translating a dalit text, it becomes a translators’ fundamental responsibility to carry the interrogative tone of the text. Here to Macwan question the social system, caste hierarchy, the patriarchy, downtrodden condition of dalits and women, the religions, the economic system, conversion of dalits to Christianity. These questions have also been brought in the translation of the text.

Dalit literature is primarily written to communicate its anguish and decry with its intensity. Mostly in translating a dalit literary text in foreign language, the intensity is lost which turns out to be a great loss to the text as the sole purpose of dalit literature is to be audible enough to communicate their wretched condition. Many times it so happens that a text is aligned with the target culture or reader which turns out to be a serious loss for a dalit text in translation. Here, efforts have been made to retain the intensity of the text.
At many challenging junctures a range of dictionaries like Gujarati to English, Gujarati to Hindi, Hindi to English and English to English, thesaurus as well as, importantly, online Gujarati Lexicon dictionary and *Bhagavadomandal* were used to translate more faithfully. Reading of the source text several times and discussing the text and the translation with translators, experts and friends too have been very helpful in rendering the text well. Reading and revising has proved to be a very fruitful exercise for the translation.

It is felt that the foremost need to translate a dalit text is to have sympathy and compassion for the dalits. Unless a translator has *parkaya pravesh*, a dalit literary text is not possible to translate well.

While practically translating a dalit text, it is felt that it would be very meaningful contribution if a specific dictionary is prepared for Joseph Macwan (like Shakespearean Dictionary). The dictionary can explain the dialectical or colloquial words used by Macwan across his range of works. The dictionary can be in the style of Gujarati to Gujarati as well as Gujarati to English. Further, several crucial articles by eminent critics along with Macwan’s notes on several editions of the text have been included in the text which haven’t been translated for now. But, keeping in view the importance of these articles and notes for the dalit literature in general, they can be translated in future to add to the critical corpus on dalit literature.

Dalit literature is not written only for dalits but for the society as a whole. Hence, dalit literature helps the non dalits to deconstruct their traditional notions about caste and society and make them think of a new society with dignified human living. Hopefully the translation will echo clearly the voice of the writer and the characters of the text to address the world.