ABSTRACT

The research is particularly descriptive and theoretical which includes diverse arguments under one umbrella discourse of what Dalit exclusion means in the context of Indian education with special emphasis on Andhra Pradesh. First and foremost it offers an analysis of the overall situation of Dalits in their educational areas, and how they are being excluded on grounds of caste, gender, socio-economic status, and also culturally and politically as individuals. In general the research brings out the argument that caste based discrimination is intertwined with the backwardness of Dalits in education. The research work is dealing with how the Dalit students in the educational field are affected in their educational attainment and enrollment because of their caste status. Dalit groups in India are being discriminated on the ground of their caste status and occupation.

The research discusses Dalit poetry or prose writing as a genre, examines how "Dalit is represented in the writing, written by Dalit writers and discusses the salient features of Dalit poetry and prose writings. It also examines how and why Dalit poetry or prose writing is different from the mainstream (upper caste) writings. The research traces the evolution of writings in the west as an independent genre.

The dissertation tries to focus on people who are historically and socially exploited and underprivileged. Poetry or prose writing as a distinct literary genre is understood as the writing of the "self". It is retrospective writing, where the primary focus of the author is upon his/her own life as an individual. Generally poetry or prose writings become a medium for poets and authors to express their self to depict their lives. However, in Dalit writings the individual "I" gets transformed into the entire community. In the mainstream writings or literature it may vary from person to person, whereas in
Dalit literature it will be the same experience. The person may be different but the personality in relation to the experience is the same.

Dalit literature concerns Dalit understanding of their social world and their place (educational, cultural and politico-economic) in it, as reflected in what Dalits say (views and perspectives through the literature) what they do (as their elders, intellectuals and visionary proclaimed about political power) as they live their lives, interacting with the others and especially with the non-Dalit communities. Dalit literature deals with Dalit identity (which was not taken seriously owing to propaganda that was created earlier when literature was in the clutches of the upper castes) which is a part of the discourse of globalization. Dalit literature gives emancipation within and inculcates an interest among their own communities. It reminds one of the literary creativity among Dalits and makes them fight for their rights. Among other things, the study observes the nature of writing prose or poetry among the Dalits and their perspectives and perceptions. No research work has been undertaken so far in this area of study.

The research investigates the literary creative abilities among the Dalits irrespective of the age group. The problems that hindered them not to take part in writing poetry or prose or short stories are dealt with. The research has also observed that the syllabus or curricula or so called text work written about the cultures, customs and creeds, which are irrelevant to the Dalit day to day lives.

Broadly this thesis makes the argument that not only are the Dalits ignored in mainstream English education which is predominantly in the hands of the upper castes, but also the fact that in some way or the other the "untouchable text" is being written and rewritten in multiple forms owing to the institutionalized discrimination. This thesis
touches on the history of caste system, a review of English education, what it means in the Indian context and how these broad national trends related to discrimination can be seen in Andhra Pradesh.

In the first chapter first and foremost I offered an analysis of the overall situation of dalit children educational areas, and how they are being excluded on the grounds of caste, gender, socio-economic status and also culturally and politically as individuals. In general the research conclusion brings out the argument that caste based discrimination is interrelated with backwardness of Dalits in education.

Chapter one titled "Introduction: Research Questions and Theoretical Background" discusses some of the theoretical tools employed in this thesis. This part of the thesis not only gives the aim of the study as well as the background but also substantiates some of the main issues directly relevant to the thesis and that throw light on what Dalit exclusion is all about.

Chapter Two "Caste and its Origins" creates a background for the thesis questions stated in Chapter one by giving a framework to caste system in India. The framework throws light on not only the question of caste origins but on the historical oppression of the "untouchable" communities who were outside the purview of caste system. I wish to show that the exclusion of Dalits is not a new phenomenon but has its origins in caste system.

Chapter Three "The term "Dalit" and its Origins" discusses the origin of the term "Dalit" in order to give a historical basis to the resistance from the hitherto "untouchable" communities. Through this discussion I intend to create a platform to show how Dalit
exclusion has been practiced in English Language Education in India with specific reference to Andhra Pradesh.

Chapter Four "English Language Education and Dalits" deals with the attitudes that Dalits have towards English language in the present arena and how these attitudes are related to and affected by social, economic and cultural background and the influence of the mother tongue. I have dealt with the attitudes of Dalits from the perspectives of identity, social and economic context. The final aim of this study is to create a kind of motivation for Dalits to look upon English and English education as an alternative to the hierarchical model of education that is enshrined through caste system.

Chapter Five "Contextualizing Dalit Life and Education in Andhra Pradesh" is the argument that goes back to examine the ideological platform that forms the social history of both the oppression of Dalits and how English Language Education has played a role in liberating them.

Chapter Six "Caste, Language and Dalits: A Critical View" shows how the politics of oppression and exclusion can be seen in the use of local languages and how the same is reproduced in the English language exclusion of Dalits.

In Chapter Seven "Conclusion: Prospects for further Analysis of the Research Question" I discuss the further possibilities of looking at the research question posed in the Introduction.

The essence of the thesis revolves around two main aspects: one is that Dalit exclusion is not a new phenomenon but is rooted in caste system. Another is that English Language Education in India which has hitherto been in the hands of the upper castes is gradually moving into the lives of Dalits as a way to resist caste system.