Chapter Two

Political Consciousness, Literary Expression and Search for Theory

- Meaning and Nature of Political Consciousness
- What is Literary Expression?
- Interaction between Creative Literature and Politics: Ideological Debates
  - Idealism (Plato, Kant, Benedetto Croce)
  - Positivism (Hippolyte Adolph Taine)
  - Formalism (Victor Shklovski)
  - Structuralism (Lucien Goldmann)
  - Sociological Literary Criticism (Leo Lowenthal)
  - Marxist School (Georg Lukacs, Raymond Williams)

- Placing Hindi Dalit Literature
  - Ambedkarite Influence
  - Contemporary Dalit Discourse
Meaning and Nature of the term Political Consciousness

Definition of a notion, term or idea itself is a very complex process. The term ‘definition’ means describing exactly characteristics, nature, scope, dynamics and limitations with most possible clarity and precision about a particular phenomenon. In this way, research definition should be a systematic investigation into and study of materials and sources in order to establish facts to reach new and valid conclusion. The process of obtaining a research definition involves careful, systematic, patient study and investigation establishing reliable and valid knowledge about the social world around us.

The definition of a concept as complex as political consciousness would necessarily incorporates examination of socio-eco-political and cultural processes being operated in the society and as this study is guided by the Ecological Model, it would also examine political consciousness spread over different level: individual, family, community and state as dispersed in several functional domains of social and political interaction.

Political consciousness constitutes knowledge about political institutions, its dynamics and processes and is a key concept for understanding the political system. It has strong correlation with participatory orientation and political efficiency of the people. The level of political consciousness has far-reaching consequences for successful functioning of democracy because if people are well informed about political issues, they will participate more meaningfully in political processes and take enlightened decisions. In fact, possession of minimum level of political consciousness leads to certain degree of involved political participation. Political consciousness is constitutive and relational in its nature and content where the constitutive elements represent political comprehension of feelings, thoughts, beliefs, idea, experiences, awareness and cognitions (both subjective
and objective) and the relational element establish connections between individual’s understanding of the self (that subsequently becomes the political self) and its relation with external world.

This makes the concept of political consciousness complex one to define and its analysis involves processes of its formation, articulation, expression and manifestations both at the subjective and objective levels. The concept is not monolithic and homogenous but incorporates several tiers particularly in a heterogeneous and multi-cultural society like India. Indian society is comprised of numerous castes and sub-castes numbering around roughly over four thousand besides the sizeable number of tribes and other religious communities. Other than the castes, Indian society is characterised with colonial legacy, developing political institutions that are not very established one and fragile political culture. To understand political consciousness in this kind of socio-political set up becomes quite complex and intricate which requires critical examination of all issues around this concept.

Political consciousness implies one’s self-image vis-à-vis other individual and social communities, their relationship with socio-political locations and their linkages/connectivity with socio-eco-political and cultural structures of society. Political consciousness characterises a community’s cognitive comprehensibility of its objective conditions as well as its subjective awareness that, in turn, is formed through social experiences, political struggles and cultural traits.

Political consciousness is not a homogeneous category in nature and function but has various levels of latent and manifest expression operating within it, which are
influenced by the complexities of social structures. In fact, the dialectical relationship between immediate achievements and long-term impact on the whole society can be located in various levels of political consciousness thus making it a "functional feature of human existence" possessing not only self-awareness but even more a remarkable capacity to understand what is happening how, when and where.

In this way, political consciousness signifies a continuous process that, possibly, begins from cradle and continues till grave. In its wider connotation, it includes processes like political socialisation, political modernisation, political culture and political development. In fact, political consciousness is an understanding of the entire socio-political system that affects the development and progress of one's life at every level: individual, familial, communitarian, state and socio-cultural.

Before exploring a working definition for political consciousness, it is important to understand certain concepts and terms like political and politics, processes like political socialisation, political culture, political modernisation, political development and political system and their meaning, nature and scope as clarity of these concepts and processes would provide insights and impetus to find out a comprehensive working definition for political consciousness.

The term 'politics' is derived from the Greek words *polis* and *politeia* that embraces everything which touches life of an individual and state. Greeks were having an organic view of politics that became a trilogy for them incorporating theory of the State, theory of the Moral and theory of Law. Politics was understood as "the distilled wisdom of the age" and a political man possessed insatiable curiosity to know the unknown fact; a
scientific attitude and instinct for criticism wielded by Reason, debated the concept of Idea and Form and had a very dynamic Theory of Justice.

Subsequent philosophers and writers contributed to the development of the term and broadly distinguished between theoretical politics and applied politics where theoretical politics included:

1. Theory of the State;
2. Theory of the Government;
3. Theory of Legislation; and
4. Theory of the State as an artificial person

While the applied or practical politics included:

1. The State (actual forms of government);
2. The Government (working of government, administration and other);
3. Laws and Legislation (courts, procedures etc.); and
4. State personified (diplomacy, peace, war and international relations)

This understanding of the terms politics and political expanded the horizon and encompasses virtually every sphere of human activity and life within its orbit. The dynamics of the term politics has three connotations:

1. Politics as a political activity;
2. Politics as a political process; and
3. Politics as political power
Oakeshott defines political activity as “an activity in which human beings related to one other as members of a civil association, think and speak about the arrangements and the conditions of their association from the point of view of their desirability, make proposals about changes in these arrangements and condition, try to persuade others of the desirability of the proposed changes and act in such a manner as to promote the changes”\(^4\). He further elaborates “in political activity, then, men sail a boundless and bottomless sea; there is neither harbour for shelter nor floor for anchorage; neither starting place nor appointed destination. The enterprise is to keep afloat on an even keel, the sea is both friend and enemy”\(^5\)

Political process is an extension of the sense of political activity that includes study of the dynamics of political and civil association, socio-psychological analysis of actors who are operationalising their ideas affecting the very nature of political activity. It is a continuous process and is shaped by several factors.

Political power is “the capacity of an individual, or a group of individuals, to modify the conduct of other individuals or groups in the manner which he desires”\(^6\). Robert Dahl explains power in a very succinct way that “A has power over B to the extent he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do”\(^7\). The concept of political power embraces the entire gambit of political system and political power when exercised with legitimacy becomes constitutional responsibility while without legitimacy and constitutional propriety, it remains as manifestation of brute force. A critical investigation of politics examines description and analysis of the ways power is obtained, exercised and controlled, the purpose for which it is used, the dynamics of decision-making and the factors and contexts in which those decisions are made and executed.
Thus examined, the concept of politics has comprehensive meaning and possesses complex nature with wide scope. It includes, on the one hand, the study of its theoretical formulations and narratives whereas on the other, it critically scrutinises the applied and empirical factors affecting the very nature of body politic. It takes into account all spheres of political activity, political process and political power. It is one of the most dynamic and ever-evolving concepts of human activities and the very meaning, nature and scope of the term—politics, determine different tiers of political consciousness. A politically conscious person, however fluid in character, would possess a sense of political activity, political process and political power. We would examine, in subsequent chapters, how this understanding of political consciousness is pertinent and important for the analysis of the *Dalit* consciousness and movement.

Another process deeply associated with political consciousness is that of political socialisation. Political socialisation "is the process by which political cultures are maintained and changed. Through the performance of this function, individuals are inducted into the political culture and their orientations towards political objects are formed". It is a learning process where gradual learning occurs for the norms, attitudes and behaviours acceptable to the contemporary political system. Applied in narrow sense, this concept may appear conservative and status-quoist but if it is adoptable with an understanding for the study of change, it may provide substantial empirical data, particularly for analysis as it would include different stages of political socialisation, i.e., childhood, adolescence, youth, adulthood and old age, and also, several agents of political socialisation like family, peers, friends, institutions, political parties and associations and state.
The quality of this concept lies in the fact that it is a process that makes detailed analytical instrument for the study of any social phenomena. The analysis of processes of political socialisation becomes unavoidable for a critical study of political consciousness among Dalits because it would address the multiple processes leading towards the formation of political consciousness of an individual and community. It would examine politics of protest, its feasibility and viability, its limitations and experiences of success and failures. Investigation would, further, incorporate the transmission of political knowledge from one generation to another and its operationalisation with several variants. Hence, political consciousness is also analysed with socialisation processes and its limitations.

Thus, a comprehensive understanding of political consciousness would include the study of politics, processes of political socialisation and political culture, its impact on the construction of political consciousness among the Dalits and its different ways of expression in the Hindi Dalit Literature.

Analysed in this way, the most powerful component of political consciousness becomes political participation and expression. Political participation is not confined to a relatively limited sets of acts such as voting, campaigning or participation through a very formal institutionalised behaviour but refers to “any voluntary action, successful or unsuccessful, organised or unorganised, episodic or continuous, employing legitimate or illegitimate methods, intended in influencing the choice of public affairs and politics, the administration of public works or the choice of political leaders”\(^9\). Political participation is not just an arbitrary choice but is performed with certain degree of political consciousness and possesses objectives, ideology, programmes, leadership and organisation as important
cardinal factors which are interdependent and inter-influential. Political participation of a community is guided by objectives, ideology, programmes, leadership and organisation and incorporates both institutionalised and non-institutionalised individual and collective actions initiated and adopted by a community to achieve desired goals.

Political participation is informed through multiple factors: level of political education, articulated political opinion, amount and quantum of suppression, marginalisation of a particular community, urge for radical changes and many more. It is to be noted that the greater amount of political consciousness would increase and enlarge level of political participation. It would be observed, in the course of this study, that greater amount of articulated political consciousness among the Dalit community has increased and broadened level and scope of political participation, particularly since Dr. Ambedkar throughout the country. In fact, there exists a proliferation of consciousness that is felt and expressed politically among the Dalit community.

Clubbed with political socialisation, political culture and political participation, political consciousness, thus, becomes ‘a functional catalyst’ providing general participation orientations, community mobilisation and identity building processes. As ‘a functional catalyst’, political consciousness performs tasks of

1. Subjective understanding of the self;
2. Transmission of knowledge from one generation to another;
3. Objective cognition of socio-eco-politico-cultural conditions;
4. Critical relationship with other communities and structures of powers and economic controls; and
5. Transforming society consciously with a visionary movement.
Accordingly, political consciousness among the Dalit community has shaped a new self-image among them that resolves "will to act against exploitation, rise from oppression, from death to life, from darkness to light"\textsuperscript{10} and a tireless zeal to continue their movement for social change and for the establishment of an egalitarian society. The prominent personalities of this movement like Jotiba Phule, Babasaheb Ambedkar and E.V. Ramasami 'Periyar' and others (Narayanaswami Guru in Kerala, Acchutanand in Uttar Pradesh, Mangoo Ram in Punjab) attacked the exploitative system at all and every level: culturally, economically and politically.

There has been an upsurge of the Dalits all over India roughly from the Bhakti movement (12\textsuperscript{th} to 18\textsuperscript{th} Centuries), which attempted to purify Hinduism of its evils and fought against the tyranny of the caste system. It produced great saints like Chokhamela, Eknath, Pandita Ramabai, Kabir, Ravidas and many more who left an immense appeal, either through their works, preaching or teachings. Later on, Mahatama Jotiba Phule emphasised on educational, social and political development of the community that was, subsequently, articulated by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who "played three roles: that of a caste leader, that of an untouchable spokesman and that of a national statesman"\textsuperscript{11}. He formed three political parties (Independent Labour Party, Scheduled Castes Federation and Republican Party of India) preparing the ground for the Dalit Panthers and other formations of the community, which are performing task of proliferation of the political consciousness at various levels from understanding of the self to the transformation of society with a visionary movement.

Thus, political consciousness among the Dalits incorporates political socialisation, culture and participation in its horizon and possesses value of 'a
functional catalyst.' In fact, exploring the nature of political consciousness among the *Dalits*, one finds that it has a performatory nature that becomes manifested in the above listed tasks of political consciousness.

**What is Literary Expression?**

The second definitional perspective includes definition of literature, literary expression and relationship between political consciousness and literary expression.

Literature is not a static collection of written expression authored by a writer nor is documentation. Rather it is always evolving and developing keeping tune with the changing times. Literature and its concepts are deeply associated with the development and progress of the society. It is basically the development of the heart of the people and a cherished asset and accumulation of the knowledge of a particular time period reflecting society in a miroristic way. Literature becomes a christened reflection of the feelings of the masses along with social relation combining it with the literary imagination of a writer\(^\text{12}\). Literature is essentially expression of the reality of human life and great pieces of literature depicts that reality with communicable and lucid language facilitating narrative with readers' aesthetic and literary sense having long lasting influence on the heart and mind of the readers. Premchand defines literature as "the critique of life"\(^\text{13}\) having spirit of independence, essence of aesthetics, creative soul leading towards the enlightenment of life whether expressed in essay, stories, poetry, novels and autobiographical forms. Literature explores, analyses, understands, investigates and examines several issues of our life and provides its critique.
Literature is the reflection of a particular time narrating feelings and ideas that are thriving in the heart of the people. It is not just any expression but generates aesthetic sense, movements and strength; provides mental and spiritual solace; strengthens our determination to overcome difficulties; associates us with the larger social communities and motivates for cherished principles of liberty, equality and solidarity. In this way, literature is not any writing or all the books but as Raymond Williams writes that “Literature is a difficult word, in part because its conventional contemporary meaning appears, at first sight, so simple. There is no apparent difficulty in phrases like English Literature or Contemporary Literature, until we find occasion to ask whether all books and writing are literature (and if they are not, which kinds are excluded and by what criteria) or until we make a precise and acceptable distinction between various forms of writings and even oral tradition that is descended through ages”.

Literature always explores for harmony between Nature and humankind that produces aesthetics, convergence of feelings (between man to man and between authors and readers) and reaffirms mutual love, affection, and ideas of humanity. Literature is not understood as a form of art expressed in a very sophisticated language. Language is just a means to achieve some purpose and it should be easy, communicable and lucid. In fact, great works of literature are those that were written in the language which people speak.

Literature is the imaginative and creative expression of those experiences and events, which are witnessed by the people including the author. The inspiration behind every kind of literature consists of experiences, feelings, thoughts and ideas drawn from the real life and when blended with creative skills of the authors take shape of a masterpiece. Any piece of written expression does not become a part of literature unless it
generates interest in the socio-politico-cultural milieu, satiate us psychologically and spiritually, make us realise about the real life aesthetic sense, motivates us to overcome, through struggles and movements, our difficulties of life and determines us to consistently make efforts for an egalitarian society for the betterment of humankind and its quality of life ensuring dignity, equality, liberty and solidarity for all.

Literature makes search for harmony and compatibility (between Nature and human being, man to man) its major objectives where love, compassion, mutual self-respect, motion, development, synthesis and fusion of ideas and movements become its cardinal variants for a powerful sense of aesthetics. In fact, literature makes our life more natural and independent that shapes a noble human being.¹⁶

Like any other branch of human enquiry and intelligence (e.g. social sciences and humanities) literature also explores to understand human nature and its numerous manifestations. Here comes a deep relationship between literature and society where any work of literature cannot be devoid or ignorant of the contemporary social reality, of course, it might transcend and represent an idealist view of the social reality that may not, apparently be in consonance with the contemporary social sphere. This relationship is motional and ever evolving. Going deeper in this relationship would prove that literature is a developmental expression in creative forms that makes us awakening, conscious and determined to aspire and achieve our shared vision for a democratic society.

This brings to our notice that the Hindi Dalit Literature is representing real picture of the community, its trauma and its struggle for social change. This also recognises the fact that literary aesthetics have been transcended from a sophisticated perspective to a
realistic aesthetic sense that attempts to demolish the supremacy of structured forms of literary aesthetics. We would explore and analyse this characteristic in subsequent chapters of this study in relation to the Hindi Dalit Literature. We would also observe that Hindi Dalit Literature is cultivating its own literary space with a very high level of thinking that possesses sense of freedom, essence of realistic aesthetics highlighting ground realities of the Dalit community.

In this process, the task, of course, is not to restrict individual creativity but to enhance the greatest possible opportunities of untrammelled development for the individual's creativity blended with the shared common vision of literature. "What can then be seen as happening, in each transition," writes Raymond Williams in Marxism and Literature, "is a historical development of social language itself: finding new means, new forms and then new definition of a changing practical consciousness. Many of the active values of 'literature' have then to be seen, not as tied to the concept, which came to limit as well as to summarize them, but as elements of a continuing and changing practice which already substantially, and now at the level of theoretical re-definition, is moving beyond its old forms." 17

Thus, literature is often considered as mirror, in which society may see its own reflection and it, of course, transcends contemporaneity but many a times represents its own age. It is a record of the torments, hopes and yearnings of a particular age. It gives expression to the aspirations, dreams and vision of the people. When it goes deeper and deeper, it expresses something in the human heart that responds to tears and sorrows more spontaneously than merely to joy and laughter. As a matter of fact, literature aims at true and real depiction of the society where society, in the words of Caudwell, "is like an oyster
and literature is its pearl within it". Society is the soil from which the flower of literature springs and makes/ motivates this world to be more beautiful and qualitative.

Here it is pertinent to discuss the issue of sociology of literature where there are various schools, for instance, Idealist, Positivist, Formalist and Structuralist. Each school of thought has a particular opinion about literature and its relationship with society. We would now elaborate on some of the schools that advocate the sociology of literature and its close interrelation with society and argue vociferously that literature cannot be devoid of its social context, realities and its several connotations.

Interaction between Creative Literature and Politics: Ideological Debates

Idealism:

Idealists consider that literature possesses an autonomous sphere and has no or little relation with society. That literature pursues its own aims and attempts to achieve those roles through individual creativity and aesthetic sense. Major proponents of this school are Plato, Aristotle, Hegel and Benedetto Croce.

Plato (427-348 BC) considered that Meta Narrative Consciousness (Idea) is the essence of the universe and external reality is reflection (Form) of that consciousness. His Theory of Idea was philosophically speculated on the premise that this world is in the state of constant flux, in a perpetual flow of ever-changing appearances. He sought to find the permanent in ever changing and called it Idea. “An Idea is not part of the world of time and space. It is eternal; it is the final and independent reality. Idea is an end as well as a source. The world of Ideas is the real world and the familiar world is a world of shadows.” All artists and litterateurs attempt to achieve the Idea of Beauty that is
independent, immanent and eternal. Idea of Beauty is the source of all creativity and is the
Prototype of all Archetypes that thrives to accomplish final Idea of Good, which, in turn, is
source of all Knowledge and Existence. Philosophising the Idea of Good, Plato suggested
“both a scientific method of studying complex and involved phenomena and a doctrine
involving assertion about degrees of reality. In the former sense, the theory resembles the
ideal typology of such modern social scientist as Max Weber, who seek to enlarge our
understanding of historical and political reality by imagining institutions and situations
relieved of their actual mixture with opposing or contrary tendencies. As a doctrine of
reality, the Theory of Idea has both metaphysical and ethical implication. It maintains that
the Idea is permanent, objective facts and not merely convenient human construct. In
ethical terms, the Idea are the implicit goals of their imperfect historical representations
and therefore establish a standard by which to judge the world of flux.”

Accordingly, literature aims at achieving the Idea of Good and always seeks
Prototype of all Archetypes. It is independent and eternal, but Plato qualified this theory
when he was constructing his Ideal State that is organic in nature and connects each and
every aspect of human activity with each other and represents a fine synthesis of creative
artistry and philosophical speculations. In fact, Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), who was not an
idealist like Plato but a teleologist, refined this theory and introduced several
modifications. He considered that Matter is the Potentiality and Form is the Actuality and
needs an Efficient Cause to become the Final Cause. Aristotle regarded that man becomes
‘the efficient cause’ imitating nature through art and can discern many alternative potential
forms in matter, depending upon the end for which the artistic production is to be used. But
even in that the ‘final cause’ would occur in consonance with the inherent qualities present
in matter. Thus, artist has a very crucial role and in a way becomes ‘catalyst’ to produce
the real nature of any phenomena. As Sibley observed that “all this implies that to understand a thing in the ethical, social, and political domain means to know it not merely in its origins and in its history, not only in its parts, as it were, but to know it also in its implicit purpose and its goal...knowledge, therefore, implies an understanding of how every object of knowledge relates to the ordering of the whole; for its function connects its own activities with the purpose or telos of the whole”\textsuperscript{21}

Expanding the Theory of Knowledge (and Aesthetics), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who introduced a new trend which begun with the Rationalism (stressing Reason) of Rene Descartes and the Empiricism (stressing Experience) of Francis Bacon in the philosophical knowledge. Knowledge is an association of ideas or psychological expediency. Philosophy of knowledge consists of two components, viz., rational and sense perception. Knowledge is limited to phenomenon; it cannot know reality as it is. There is difference between things as they appear and as they are in reality. Appearance is different from reality because in viewing thing, the human mind imposes some qualities on these things, which they do not really possess. But man has pure practical reason that enables him to discover things that are universally valid and binding on him. This discovery enables man to realise that he ought to do certain things. It is this faculty, which takes man beyond the world of phenomenon and leads him to the realisation of the world of reality. Thus, a human being has two aspects of his nature. There is his empirical self, centred on sensual experiences, his desire and impulses. There is also his transcendental self, which is his rational self and which makes him to do what he ought to do. His empirical self, based on desires and impulses, makes him subject to things extraneous to his true self i.e., heteronomous. It is his transcendental self which renders him subject to his true self i.e., autonomous and makes him part of the noumenal, i.e., real world. The final realization of
self comes when an individual finds social character of his self, though through transcendental reason and volunteer for the social good. An artist, in fact, depicts any phenomenon with his sensual perception and attempts to transcend it to achieve the noumenal world or the world of reality. Of course, literature, in this way, has linkages with the social phenomena but the realisation of self comes through the ‘inward turn’ and through the transcendental self of the artist.

GWF Hegel (1770-1831) proclaimed, “reason is the sovereign of the world,” truth is the whole, which is merely the essential nature reaching its completeness through the process of its own development of the Absolute. His theory is based on three postulates that reality is an organic process; all organic processes are dialectical and reality lies in the Ideal and it may be achieved through the realization of Geist or Spirit. This Spirit may be called Idea or Reason. It is its nature to realise itself and to reach perfection and history of the world is an attempt on the part of the Spirit or Reason to realise itself though experimentation. The Spirit evolves to higher and higher stages of evolution and self-realisation thought a dialectic process. Thus, the artistic creativity may be achieved through experimentations that undergo a dialectic process to explore the higher and higher stages of self-realisation. Here also, we find that artist is not devoid of the social phenomena but his self-realisation is through a dialect process with a purpose to achieve the stage of Geist.

Italian aesthetician Benedetto Croce²³ (1886-1952) attempted to make all forms of art completely autonomous and considered those forms of art, which are associated with politics as quasi-art. In fact, he was first an aesthetcian and then a philosopher and tried to prove that art possesses an autonomous existence. He also contested the viewpoint that
advocates philosophising art and aesthetics where, he emphasised that philosophy is based on analytical critique and reason whereas art demands none of these. Art is a very simple, lucid and natural expression that possesses autonomous domain even to the external world. He considers Spirit as Truth that consists of four fundamental processes where two are theoretical, other two are behavioural, and these processes make all forms of art autonomous, authentic and eternal.

\[
\text{Spirit (Consciousness)}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Theoretical} & \text{Behavioural} \\
\text{Intuition-expression} & \text{Conceptualisation} & \text{Utilitarian activities} & \text{Ethical activities}
\end{array}
\]

The first of the theoretical processes is intuition-expression where Truth can be experienced through intuitive process. In fact, all kinds of experiences are the instances of consciousness and every human being possesses these instances and a minimal degree of consciousness but there may be differences in terms of degree. Second is the conceptualisation, which is more analytical, rational, and scientific that provides objectivity to comprehend and understand any phenomenon. The practical perspective includes the utilitarian and ethical processes.

All the four processes are different and independent in their nature and scope. Intuition-expression is associated with aesthetics; conceptualisation with logic; utilitarian with economics and ethical is associated with moral. Croce considered the first process (intuition-expression) as the most important, which is also a determined factor for art, literature and aesthetics. It incorporates sensitivity blended with imagination and
metaphors that led to the activation of the intuitive-expression producing art, literature and aesthetics. In this way, literature and art are independent of any social factor and has its autonomous domain of operation. But this perspective has its limitation and does not address some of the pertinent issues, in particular that any artist is, after all, located in a socio-cultural milieu and gets affected by its traits. His universe of creation and activities influences his cognition and intuitive-expression.

**Positivism:**

Positivists consider literature as a collective expression of society and attempt to understand it with the cause and effect relationship. Though, it is largely based on the empiricist understanding but it also tries to incorporate various other important components that are important to understand the sociology of literature. As Raymond Williams pointed out that “it is now virtually impossible to disentangle a popular sense of positivist from general arguments about Empiricism and scientific method, though the actual history of the word should make us wary of some of its vaguer uses. The word was effectively introduced into French by Comte from 1830 and was often used in English. Its root was positive in one of its developing sense, denoting real or actual existence (a shift from the earliest use to denote ‘formally laid down’... the sense of ‘definite’ or ‘certain’, in this formal context, obviously contributed to the sense of ‘real’). Comte argued that the human mind passed from a primary stage of theological interpretation through a stage of metaphysical and abstract interpretation to a mature stage of positive or scientific understanding, based only on observable facts and the relations between them and the laws discoverable from observing them, all other kinds of inquiry into origin, cause or purpose being pre-scientific. In this sense, positivist was widely adopted and was often interchangeable with scientific... indeed, because it was so concerned with understanding
and changing society, it was met by the charge that it was not scientific enough, or not objective enough."

In literature also, it was used as interchangeable with empiricism and as an important instrument to understand society and its reflection in the works of literature. Major proponent of this school was Hippolyte Adolph Taine who, sometimes, is referred as the founder of the discourse that is known as the sociology of literature.

Taine (1828-93), a philosopher, historian and critic of literature and society, made an effort to understand and analyse society and literature and their interrelations. Taine was writing during the period where Europe was undergoing tremendous social and cultural changes along with Industrial and Scientific revolutions. There was a theoretical change undergoing in the field of social sciences with the beginning of interdisciplinary discourse influenced by natural sciences and its methods. This was an age where historicity, objectivity and scientificity were being explored to have some convergence.

Elaborating about his literary perspective, Taine regarded that it attempts to be comprehensive and analytical where all aspects of human creativity are facts and events with no value judgements. Scientific analysis means neither appreciating nor condemning any particular thing but analysing it in its totality. Therefore, Taine has a very comprehensive perspective on the works of literature that analyses social facts and events, their processes of production, exploring cause and effect and making it objective. He considered that the purpose of art, literature, science, culture and society is to enrich the repository of knowledge of humankind and the task before a social and cultural scientist is to analyse these facts in a very critical and comprehensive ways so as to represent the true
nature of these facts that are affecting the very development of humankind. There are four major aspects of Taine's sociology of literature, viz.,

1. To explore social and material basis of literature;
2. To analyse importance of the author;
3. To interpret reflection of society in the works of literature; and
4. To understand author-reader relation.

In this way, Taine considered literature as the collective expression of society and sociology of literature was established as a discourse that explore, analyse, interpret and understand interrelation between society and literature.

In addition to the four major aspects of literature there are three important concepts in Taine's perspective on literature and society:

a. Race as an innate and involving hereditary characteristic;
b. Movement as the epoch, the spirit of the time and as a literary tradition;
c. Milieu as the environment, emphasising on climate and geography.

These are interconnected concepts and cause the development of literature. Critics of literature have to take into account both the four aspects and three concepts into their consideration so as to achieve a complete and total understanding of any work of literature that is basically derived from the social facts and events thus, in turn, analysing the society at large.
**Formalism:**

In traditional philosophical and aesthetic discourse, form denotes the relationship between different elements within a specific system. The term Formalism covers a number of schools in the first half of the twentieth century whose main goal lies in the explanation of the formal and structural patterns of literary texts. This emphasis distinguished itself from older traditions, particularly biographical literary criticism of the nineteenth century, which was primarily concerned with extrinsic or extra-textual features in their analysis of literature. The successive branches of Formalism, the Prague School of Structuralism, New Criticism and Post-structuralism have a common denominator in their general attempts to explain levels of content in relation to formal and structural dimension of texts.

Aristotle introduced the basic philosophical principle, which distinguishes between a level of structure and a level of content into literary criticism, for example, in his Poetics (4th century BC) he used the notion of determining function of form over matter of literary phenomena by adopting formal patterns to interpret generic features of drama. This laid down the foundation for subsequent formalist analysis where an attempt was made to know 'how' of the text rather than 'what' of the text.

Russian Formalism started an objective discourse of literary criticism through structural analysis as Roman Jacobson put it "the subject of literary scholarship is not literature in its totality, but literariness, i.e., that which makes of a given work a work of literature." Russian Formalism negates arguments based on spirit, intuition, imagination or genius of author and neglects historical, sociological, biographical or psychological dimensions of literary discourse. It considered literary work an independent entity and
made phonetic structures, rhythm, rhyme, meter and sound as independent meaningful
elements of literary discourse.

According to Victor Shklovski (1893-1984), structural elements in a literary text
cause the effect called defamiliarization (stylistic device used to make the reader aware of
literary conventions). This tendency, inherent in literary language, counteracts reader’s
familiarity with everyday language and consequently offers a tool to distinguish between
literary and non-literary discourse. He measured novels and poetry from the same
yardstick, strongly advocated that literary discourse has nothing to do with social changes,
and has an independent existence.

Formalism also tries to analyse, structurally, elements of a text, such as characters
in a plot, which earlier schools considered on a thematic level. Vladimir Propp’s (1896-
1970) character typology, which reduces the indefinite number of characters in literary
texts to a limited list of recurrent types, became one of the most important discourses of the
Russian Formalism that sustained to the general structural theories of the twentieth
century. This kind of analysis and procedure, known as Myth Criticism, narrowed down
the infinite number of possible literary character to a finite number of basic structural
agents. Myth Criticism attempts to exposes patterns of myth and the most notable work in
this field is that of J. G. Frazer (1854-1941) in the famous work Golden Bough where an
effort has been made to unravel the common structures of myth in different historical
periods and geographical area. Northrop Frye (1912-91) offered another important
approach that placed structure of myth at the heart of what he considered the main literary
genres. He resembled patterns of the seasons with that of the literary texts.
Formalist school considers that literature is the product of its own independent existence and has no resemblance with the socio-political discourse. Formalists are of the opinion that literary changes take place due to the 'oldness' in the form of the texts and replace it with another 'new' forms. This change is more geographic than socio-political. This school limits vision of the literature and its scope and restricts work to the form of the texts only. This is a very limited way of understanding literature and its relationship with society because it cannot be denied that whatever may be the form, the very content of the literary work cannot be devoid of its social contexts.

**Structuralism:**

A very significant presence was made felt by Structuralism in the field of sociology of literature during the mid twentieth century and its major protagonist was Lucien Goldmann (1913-71). He was writing at a time when several streams of literature, philosophy, politics and aesthetics markedly addressed debates on interplay between literature and society. His major contributions include Hidden God (1956), Towards a Sociology of the Novel (1964), Cultural Creation in Modern Society (1976) and Methods in the Sociology of Literature (1980) along with various essays and interviews. He attempted to explore literature with a historical, social and aesthetics perspective making it an analytical instrument for the study of society.

Goldmann considers that literary works are not, in the first place, to be seen as the creation of individuals, but of what he terms, "the Trans individual mental structures" of a social group which are structure of ideas, values, aspiration, thought process and vision. To have a deeper understanding of the literary texts, one should examine structure of thought or 'world vision' of the social class or group to which the writer belongs. "Great
writers are those exceptional individuals who manage to transpose into the world vision of the class or group to which they belong, and to do this in a peculiarly unified and translucent way. Goldmann is interested in the contents of a particular world vision than the structure of categories it displays. Two apparently quite different writers may thus be shown to belong to the same collective mental structure. Genetic, because Goldmann is concerned with how such mental structures are historically produced- concerned, that is to say, with the relations between a world vision and the historical conditions which give rise to it. Goldmann is seeking, then, is a set of structural relations between literary text, world vision and history itself. He wants to show how the historical situation of a social groups or class is transposed, by the mediation of its world vision into the structure of a literary work. To do this it is not enough to begin with the text and work outwards to history or vice versa; what is required is a dialectical method of criticism which moves constantly between text, world vision and history, adjusting each to the others.

Introducing Method in the Sociology of Literature, William Q Boelhower writes that “in order to conceptualise the levels of the cultural creation of society, the sine qua non of a valid sociological aesthetics, Goldmann collected certain macro-analytical categories (totality, world view, form, the transinidividual subject and possible consciousness-objective possibility) from Lukacs and grounded them in a series of positive
and anthropological categories taken from Piaget (significant structure, function, the structuration-destructuration process, the epistemological circle of the subject and object, equilibrium). His intention was to convert the categories the Lukacs used in a philosophical and merely descriptive way into methodological prototypes that would prove to be highly functional, rather that ideological instruments. Thus literary works, for Goldmann should be seen as structure and not devoid of its context (socio-politico-historical). If a text is not analysed with this perspective then the very ‘sociality’ of the text and its communicability could not be captured that may lead to flawed understanding of the contexts of its generation. Hence, socio-aesthetic unity of the text is very crucial to understand and analyse the society. It is of utmost importance because the very generation of literary works can never be devoid of its context and any writer can never be so autonomous and independent of his/her milieu.

The method developed by Goldmann (genetic structuralism) considers literary works a constitutive element of social consciousness that shape the very structure of any text. He provided six analytical tools that make his method a comprehensive one and include Significant Structure, Tran individual Subject, Totality, World View, Possible Consciousness-objective possibility and Homology, thus making the field of sociology of literature a challenging one that not only analyse a particular text but the overall contexts, its several connotations and its processes that led to the creation of a text. This again reaffirms the fact that there exists a very intrinsic interrelation between politics and literature.

44
Sociological Literary Criticism:

Sociological literary criticism also considers a close interrelation between creative literature and politics and emphasises on the contexts of the text. Before discussing major protagonist of this school, it is important to understand the meaning of the term criticism and literary criticism. "Criticism has become a very difficult word", writes Raymond Williams "because although its predominant general sense is of fault-finding, it has an underlying sense of judgement and a very confusing specialised sense, in relation to art and literature." History of the term ‘criticism’ has travelled a long journey from ‘negative judgement’ to ‘the distinction of appreciation’ and now takes into account various concepts such as judgement, discrimination, sensibility, disinterested, qualified, rigorous and so on in its orbit expanding its horizon. Literary criticism can refer to systematic and scholarly interpretation of texts as well as their evaluation.

Sociological Literary Criticism makes an attempt to interpret literary texts on the basis of their contexts, connotations, interpretation and evaluation. It starts with the assumption that any creative work cannot be produced in a vacuum and has deep connection with the socio-political context. Leo Lowenthal has made remarkable contribution in this field though Adorno and Marcuse have also attempted to develop sociology of aesthetics and literature. All of them were writing during the interwar period under the aegis of the Frankfurt School that explored Critical Theory. There are three important contributory works by Leo Lowenthal viz., Literature and the Image of Man, Literature, Popular Culture and Society and The Art of the Narrative and Society. Considering himself as ‘literary scientist’, Lowenthal regarded that the aim of literature lies in the analysis of its sociality. He started with an understanding that literature has the power to tap aesthetic sensibilities of the society and its time. Literature is the expression
of socio-politico-historical experiences and provides insights about the contemporary human life. Social reality can be reflected in literature only when the author is conscious of his/her social aesthetic sensibilities, hence, it is important to understand the author’s perspective to analyse creative works. This characteristic makes author and ‘ideologue’ of his time and according to Lowenthal, author cannot remain ‘just neutral’ to the contemporary social reality.

According to Lowenthal, there are two kinds of consciousness in the expression of literature i.e., singular consciousness and plural consciousness where the former is expressed throughout a particular text and makes itself ‘ideological’ while the latter is expressed through a dialectical process of consciousness and makes it more complex but realistic as the social reality itself is a complex process to understand and analyse. He utilised dialectical materialism as an important instrument for sociological literary criticism. For him, both form and content are important constituents of creative literature where content can be analysed with the sociological methods (for Lowenthal, it was dialectical materialism) and form may be analysed with the aesthetic method (here he tries to combine Adorno and Marcuse). A fine blending of form and content reflecting the social reality would have an impact on the reader that would also provide him/her insights to comprehend, understand and analyse the contemporary social reality and his/her connectivity with the structures of society. In this way, Lowenthal made important contribution in the field of sociology of literature making it a scientific analytical tool for the interpretation of social reality, capturing nuances of the complexities of social structures and levels of consciousness. His works established the fact that literature and socio-political context cannot be isolated.
Marxist School:

For the study of the literary expression of political consciousness, Marxism is the most notable school that attempts to deliver both a ‘Theory’ and ‘Method’ for literary criticism. Though there are difficulties in arriving at a monolithic Marxist literary theory, as Terry Eagleton puts it that “Marx and Engels had rather more important tasks on their hands than the formulation of a complete aesthetic theory. Their comments on art and literature are scattered and fragmentary, glancing allusions rather than developed positions. This is one reason why Marxist criticism involves more than merely re-stating cases set out by the founders of Marxism. It also involves more than what has become known in the West as the ‘sociology of literature’. The sociology of literature concerns itself chiefly with what might be called the means of literary production, distribution and exchange in a particular society- how books are published, the social composition of their authors and audiences, levels of literacy, the social determinants of ‘taste’. It also examines literary texts for their ‘sociological relevance, raiding literary works to abstract from them themes of interest to the social historian.”

He further elaborates, “Marxist criticism is not merely a sociology of literature, concerned with how novels get published and whether they mention the working class. Its aim is to explain the literary work more fully; and this means a sensitive attention to its forms, styles and meanings. But it also means grasping those forms, styles and meanings as the products of a particular history... The originality of Marxist criticism, then, lies not in its historical approach to literature but in its revolutionary understanding of history itself.”

Marxist criticism is based on the assumption that literature is the product of its historical context and cannot be isolated from its contemporary context. As Marx and
Engels wrote in The German Ideology that “the production of ideas, concepts and consciousness is first of all directly interwoven with the material intercourse of man, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the spiritual intercourse of men, appear here as the direct efflux of men’s material behaviour…we do not proceed from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as described, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at corporeal man; rather we proceed from the really active man…consciousness does not determine life: life determines consciousness.” They further wrote in the Preface of A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy “the mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.” Thus art and artistic creation become constituent of the ‘superstructure’ and its ‘base’ is provided by the economic mode of production but Marxist criticism is very cautious about the mechanical and one-to-one correspondence between base and superstructure.

Literature, for this school, is, of course, a part of the superstructure but it is not just the passive reflection of the economic base though it considers that art cannot change the course of history but it can be an active element in such changes. Marx clearly pointed out that there exists ‘the unequal relationship of the development of material production…to the artistic production’ as he says that “in the case of the arts, it is well know that certain periods of their flowering are out of all proportion to the general development of society, hence also to the material foundation, the skeletal structure, as it were, of its organisation…it is even recognised that certain forms of art, e.g. the epic, can no longer be produced in their world epoch-making, classical stature as soon as the production of art, as such begins; that is, that certain significant forms
within the realm of the arts are possible only at an undeveloped stage of artistic development. If this is the case with the relation between different kinds of art within the realm of art, it is already less puzzling that it is the case in the relation of the entire realm to the general development of society. The difficulty consists only in the general formulation of these contradictions. As soon as they have been specified, they are already clarified."42 This kind of difficulty leads us to examine works of literature from a very comprehensive perspective so as to arrive at a meaningful understanding of the contemporary social reality and its expression in the creative literature.

It also associates works of literature that represents certain ideological viewpoints signifying the ways men live out their roles in class society, the values, ideas and images which tie them to their social functions. At the same time literature challenges the ideological viewpoints also as Ernst Fischer advocates that "authentic art always transcends the ideological limits of its time, yielding us insight into the realities which ideology hides from the view."43 French Marxist theorist Louis Althusser also regards that literature remains unrestricted by ideology but it has a very 'particular relationship with it'.44

Another important component of Marxist literary criticism is that of form and content though many critics have discussed it in a limited ways. In fact, form has been considered 'stylistic exercise' and it has to represent content of the social reality. Marx himself regarded that "mere stylistic exercise led to 'perverted content', which in turn impresses the stamp of 'vulgarity' on literary form. He shows a dialectical grasp of the relations in question: form is the product of content, but reacts back upon it in a double-edged relationship. Marx's early comment about oppressively formalistic law in the
Rheinische Zeitung – ‘form is of now value unless it is the form of its content’ – could equally be applied to his aesthetic views.⁴⁵ Therefore, form and content are dialectically related and “form is produced by content, is identical and one with it, and, though the primacy is on the side of content, form reacts on contents and never remains passive”.⁴⁶ Christopher Caudwell also reaffirms that content determines the expression of form and it is only content that brings change in the form and its various mode of expression. According the Terry Eagleton “form is always a complex unity of at least three elements: it is partly shaped by a ‘relatively autonomous’ literary history of forms; it crystallizes out of certain dominant ideological structures and it embodies a specific set of relations between author and audience. It is the dialectical unity between these elements that Marxist criticism is concerned to analyse.”⁴⁷

Thus Marxist literary criticism is based on the theory of ‘base’ and ‘superstructure’ analysing literature with the method of dialectical materialism representing the ideological viewpoints of the author and his times and attempts a unity between form and content. We would discuss two major protagonists of this school, Georg Lukacs and Raymond Williams.

Georg Lukacs (1885-1971) represented a period of intellectual critique and political turmoil. He was writing at a time when most of the European intellectual discourse was passing through a process of reconstruction. He was a philosopher, aesthetician and political activist and to understand his contribution one has to go deeper in the times of his writings. He regarded that literature should be representative of its times and greatest writers are those who can capture and recreate a harmonious totality of human life. His major works include Studies in The Historical Novel (1962),
The Meaning of Contemporary Realism (1969), European Realism (1972), Aesthetics (1962) and History and Class Consciousness (1923).

Lukacs' understanding of society and literature is guided by an attempt to capture many-sided image of human wholeness. Terry Eagleton describes that Lukacs has a very clear understanding of society and writer "where the general and the particular, the conceptual and the sensuous, the social and the individual are increasingly torn apart by the 'alienation' of capitalism, the great writer draws these dialectically together into a complex totality" representing Lukacs' "fiction in a microcosmic form, the complex totality of society itself." He called such an endeavour 'Realism' and considered ancient Greece, the Renaissance and France in the early nineteenth century as the three great periods of historical realism. "A realist work is rich in a complex, comprehensive set of relations between man, nature and history."49

Totality, typicality, reflection and world historical are the major critical concepts in the works of Lukacs and they possess an interrelated existence to express the true nature of social reality. "A typical or representative character incarnates historical forces without thereby ceasing to be richly individualised; and for a writer to dramatize those historical forces he must, for Lukacs, be progressive in his art". Reflection means objectivity of art and artist, which is not mechanical, passive and photographic. Only objective comprehension of the historical forces is able to express complex level of consciousness and it is a challenging task before the artist to express these forces with objective form. Internal dynamics of these critical concepts make any particular work of literature transcendental and provide insights to understand the contemporary historical process. For Lukacs, great artist are those who create great piece of works, not
due to their personal stylistic skills but due to their objective comprehension of the historical forces and locates his/her position within history. It is important to recall that this kind of understanding leads us to reiterate that there exists a very intrinsic relationship between creative literature and politics and it is more important in the context of Hindi Dalit Literature as it is the product of such historical forces which are shaping future of Dalit community and movement in contemporary Indian society.

Another important contribution in the Marxist literary criticism has been made by Raymond Williams (1921-88) who was a man of varieties. His writings include Culture and Society (1958), The Long Revolution (1961), Modern Tragedy (1966), Orwell (1971), The Country and the City (1973), Keywords (1976) and Marxism and Literature (1977). Some critics regard that there are three stages in the development of thought of Raymond Williams; the first stage starts with his works like Reading and Criticism (1950) and Drama: From Ibsen to Eliot (1952) with gradually moving towards Marxism; the second stage is represented in the works like Culture and Society and The Long Revolution and the third one is expressed in the works like The Country and the City and Marxism and Literature. During all these stages he was attempting to explore a theory of culture, literature and society continuing his debates with three major discourses, viz., Romanticism, Rational Criticism and Marxism and analysing Wordsworth, Arnold, Eliot, Lewis, Marx, Engels, Caudwell, Goldmann and Lukacs. This sort of analyses makes him a quintessential philosopher, theoretician, sociologist, political thinker, and a sensitive litterateur.

Investigating critically the origin of the term literature and its different usages, Raymond Williams produced a remarkable work ‘Marxism and Literature’ where he
dealt with the subject extensively. He starts with the origin itself and writes "in its modern form the concept of ‘literature’ did not emerge earlier than the eighteenth century and was not fully developed until the nineteenth century. Yet the conditions for its emergence had been developing since the Renaissance. The word itself came into English use in the fourteenth century following French and Latin precedents: its root was Latin littera, a letter of the alphabet. Literature in the common early spelling was then in effect a condition of reading: of being able to read and of having read."

According to his theorisation, literature was not, initially, a work of imagination, reflection of society in its true nature or of production and included philosophy, history and essays and as well as poems. With the advent of print (and print capitalism) literature transformed its nature and scope leading towards ‘an objective category’ that constitute taste or sensibility as a criterion defining literary quality; an increasing specialization of literature to creative or imaginative works and a development of the concept of tradition within national terms, resulting in the more effective definition of a national literature. Raymond Williams identified the development of literature and its shift from mere reading to expression of contemporary times from the Renaissance to the Marxism. He clearly established the fact that journey of literature has complex nature and it is important to understand the very nature of its journey to comprehend properly the scope of literature. This view is in resonance with the journey of Hindi Dalit Literature which itself has travelled a long way, of course, with the Dalit movement and transforming its nature from the ‘reformative’ and ‘moralistic’ to ‘political’ that attempts to reflect the objective cognition of contemporary social structures.
Emphasising the importance of Marxist tradition, Raymond Williams writes that it has “attempted assimilation of ‘literature’ to ‘ideology’... an effective and important inclusion of ‘popular literature’- the ‘literature of the people’- as a necessary part of the literary tradition, and a sustained but uneven attempt to relate ‘literature’ to the social and economic history within which ‘it’ had been produced. Each of these last two attempts has been significant. In the former a ‘tradition’ has been genuinely extended. In the latter there has been an effective reconstitution, over wide areas, of historical social practice, which makes the abstraction of ‘literary values’ much more problematical...”

He also identified ‘significant tendencies’ of Marxist literary criticism where Lukacs contributed a profound revaluation of ‘the aesthetic’; the Frankfurt School, with its special emphasis on art, undertook a sustained re-examination of ‘artistic production’, centred on the concept of ‘mediation’ and Goldmann undertook a radical revaluation of the ‘creative subject’. Making literature a tool to understand social transition, Raymond William pointed out explicitly that “what can then be seen as happening, in each transition, is a historical development of social language itself; finding new means, new forms and then new definitions of a changing practical consciousness. Many of the active values of literature have then to be seen, not as tied to the concept, which came to limit as well as to summarize them, but as elements of a continuing and changing practice which already substantially, and now at the level of theoretical redefinition, is moving beyond its old forms”. Literary theory is defined by its capacity to capture these transitions along with the perception of beauty, ‘contemplation of an object and perception and contemplation of the ‘making’ of an object’, its language, its skill of construction and its aesthetic properties. In this way,
Raymond Williams provided a comprehensive literary theory that included various 'schools' but has distinction of its own emphasising on 'structure of sensibility' that has to take into its consideration the very processes of artistic creation and its production. Of course, there might be different views on his theorisation but one thing can be said that he attempted to integrate contemporary debates on art and literature with society utilising the instrument of dialectical materialism. In fact, the apparent changes in his positions also represent dilemma of his times and he endeavoured to reflect these dilemmas in a very cohesive manner producing systematic and exhaustive theory of literary criticism.

Thus seen, every school of the sociology of literature (except Idealist) considers that there exists a very close interplay between society, politics and literature. Each school has its positives and negatives but none of these schools are mutually contradictory and excel the understanding of each other where Positivists highlight the importance of social fact to be expressed in the literary text; Formalists emphasise on form but not devoid of content; Structuralists pointed out the role of structures in the creation of literary texts; Literary Criticism provides an insights into the sociality of literary text and Marxists advocate that literature cannot be isolated from its socio-historical contexts. Keeping in mind the close relationship between creative expression and political consciousness, it is pertinent to study grassroots level political movements so as to acquire a comprehensive view of the movements. This is more important for the study of the Dalit movement in Hindi belt as this movement is articulating itself in making its political identity and expressing it with all cultural and literary mediums. Then it is very much relevant for the understanding of the contemporary political movement to study it through the literary expressions.
Analysis of these ideological debates provide comprehensive theoretical framework for this study as the central theme revolves around political consciousness among Dalits as expressed in Hindi Dalit Literature, which, by its very nature, is a 'protest literature' that has its roots in the contemporary Dalit Movement. We find direct bearings of the socio-political contexts in the expression of Hindi Dalit Literature, for instance, when Premchand was writing Godan, he was locating it within the contemporary socio-political contexts where there was a National Liberation Movement, struggle against imperialism and colonialism and most notable was the Gandhian outlook that considered problems of the Dalit community in the Indian society as moralistic. While the recent writings in the Hindi Dalit Literature represent a political outlook and indicates on the transition that took place through Dalit movement in the contemporary Indian society.

Different schools on sociology of literature also provide an opportunity to make an effort towards the construction of the theory of Dalit aesthetics. Dalit aesthetics is not mere a concern of literature discussing forms, style and language used for the expression of political consciousness among Dalit but needs a thorough understanding of the Indian social structure and locating Hindi Dalit Literature in that perspective. Given the context of the Dalit community, it is of utmost importance that an attempt should be made to establish a sociological aesthetics of Dalit Literature rather than just a literary aesthetics of the literature. Following section would investigate how Hindi Dalit Literature is deeply placed in its socio-politico-historical contexts and how political consciousness that is expressed through literature depicts the true nature of the Dalit community in the contemporary social structure.
Placing Hindi Dalit Literature

The focus of the present study is to explore nature and scope of literary expression of political consciousness among Dalits with an objective to investigate the larger relationship between creative literature and politics. Some of the works of Hindi Literature have been selected to explore this relationship. We have already discussed different schools of thought in the preceding section and now we would discuss how the context of the Dalit community and their movements have affected/influenced the very course of literary expression of political consciousness in Hindi Literature. Though history of Dalit movement would be discussed in the next chapter, this section is devoted to understand the influence of political trends on the expression of literary works and how this study is placed in its socio-political contexts with their several connotations.

First of all, it is important to notice that Hindi Dalit Literature, by its very nature is a protest literature as it protests very vociferously multiple levels oppression perpetrated on this section of Indian society through the perpetuation of the Indian Caste System and its inherent oppressive nature. The Dalit Literature is an integral part of the Dalit Movement as it utilizes different forms, styles and content that is inherently political for its expression. It cannot be studied isolating from its contemporary context, as it is not a 'recreational' or 'leisure' literature because it advocates rights of the Dalit community and inspire people to rise against oppression.

Though Dalit literature in Marathi is well-established stream, the Hindi Dalit Literature is a product of recent socio-political development at the grassroots levels. Tracing the roots of the Dalit literature Eleanor Zelliot writes, “While Dalit literature as
a school, a self-conscious movement, is a product of the 1960s. Individual writers from among the Untouchables appear in the fourteenth century and again in the Mahar movement, which began in the late nineteenth century. In the long history of Marathi literature before the 1960s, only one school of acknowledged writers included members of the lower castes— that of Bhakti saint-poets. Popular entertainment—lawani (Ballads), pawads (Panegyric poetry) and folk-dramas called tamasha, undoubtedly were produced by low castes, but were anonymous and never considered respectable literature. The Bhakti movement, begun traditionally by Dnyaneshwar in the thirteenth century, was joined by saint-poets from almost all Marathi-speaking castes, including the Mahar poet—Chokhamela. Two of the most popular Bhakti saints are the Shimpi (tailor) Namdeo, a contemporary of Chokhamela in the fourteenth century, and the last and greatest of the saints-poets, the Maratha- Kunbi Tukaram in the seventeenth century. Dnyaneshwar himself was an outcaste Brahman and another major figure in the Bhakti pantheon, the saint, Eknath of the sixteenth century, kept his Brahmanical standing only virtue of miracles performed with the help of Vithoba, the God of the Bhakti movement.”

Zelliot has further traced the very course of the development of Marathi Dalit Literature which has a corresponding parallels to the political changes faced by the Marathi society and the Dalit community. In this regard Zelliot quotes Vasudha Mane’s piece on ‘Recent Marathi Writing’ that highlighted the context of the Dalit Literature “in a society which is still caste-ridden, the new crop of writers belonging to castes and classes which were traditionally outside the pale of literature so far has attracted attention during the past few years in Marathi literature. They come from backward rural areas, from slums in industrial towns and many of them hail from families of
labourers and menials. They come with experiences hitherto unknown and unimagined by the most sympathetic and observant of writers in the traditionally literate classes. They come with a language and expression which has trampled all conventions.\textsuperscript{56}

Further, Zelliot found that “there is, of course, a focus on the life of the lowly in \textit{Dalit} literature” with variations in “the style and content” and “suffering tinged with hope”.\textsuperscript{57}

There was also a very significant impact of Black American Literature on the \textit{Dalit} Literature and writers found a ‘parallel phenomenon’ in their movements. “Janardan Waghmare has written extensively of the possible comparison between Black and \textit{Dalit}, pointing out that although the Black was brought to America from Africa, the \textit{Dalit} was born in his own country, He may have been an heir of this country but he could not claim his heritage… so Ambedkar said, “Gandhiji, I have no homeland…”\textsuperscript{58}

Zelliot further noted that “there is an occasional reference to the Black world in \textit{Dalit} literature, such as in Daya Pawar’s poem entitled “Harlem,” which is a love poem to his wife with full realization of the life-destroying world around them. There seems, however, to be no imitation of Black literature and its two strongest fields, autobiography and dramas, are not yet developed in \textit{Dalit} literature.”\textsuperscript{59} But we would notice, in the fourth chapter, that Hindi \textit{Dalit} Literature has initiated process with these two fields also by Mohan Dass Naimishray’s ‘Apne Apne Pinjare’ and Om Prakash Balmiki’s ‘Joothan’ expressing their biographical account. But the major contribution of this comparison remains important and found American Black Literature “as support, as proof that a group similar to the \textit{Dalit} can become militant, can become creative, and can progress in a hostile society”.\textsuperscript{60}
Highlighting the role of cultural movement in the politics of Maharashtra, Gopal Guru in his book *Dalit Cultural Movement and Dialectical of Dalit Politics* in Maharashtra writes that *Dalit* cultural movement has performed two historical tasks: one, it has generated different forms of literature of its own community (like poetry, drama, autobiography etc.) paving the way for the realization of the cultural and literary aspirations and two, it has prepared a radical context for the politics and political movements initiated by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Thus, the *Dalit* literature has a revolutionary vision for social change establishing an egalitarian society and travels its journey with the *Dalit* movement in Indian society. The very agenda of the *Dalit* literature was political and aspires for structural changes in the society in all fields: social, political, cultural and economic. We find a direct influence of political movement on the *Dalit* literature, for example, Maharashtra experienced Ambedkar influence in the first half the last century itself who made *Dalit* issue a 'political' rather than the 'moral' one as against Gandhi for whom *Dalit* issue was a 'moral' issue. In the same way, Marathi *Dalit* Literature was also expressing these trends in hundreds of works having a convergence with the Ambedkarite movement.

In contrast to the society in Maharashtra, North Indian society experienced a different kind of response to the *Dalit* issue, and the very tone of the social texture was 'reformative'. In Uttar Pradesh, Swami Acchutananda (1879-1933) launched *'Adi Hindu Movement'* during nineteenth century and anti-caste literature was written that focused on highlighting the multiple oppressions faced by the *Dalit* community. In fact, the roots of *Adi Hinduism* can be traced in the *Bhakti* movement itself that advocated equality but *Adi Hindu Ideology* constructed a theory of the ancient racial origin of 'untouchables' and claimed original inhabitancy. Shankarnand also wrote, attacking the
caste system, very powerful poetry that became popular in the oral tradition during the nineteenth century and influenced the community sensitising them for 'a changed thinking'.

Dayananda Saraswati also made an attempt to reform the caste system and Arya Samaj "promised to facilitate the social uplift of lower castes, set up schools for them, and presented the hope of surmounting caste division by allowing untouchables to enter the Hindu caste hierarchy through 'purification' or shuddhi... but the symbols that the Samaj usually upheld was the Vedas, which were projected as the ultimate container of religious truths. The growing emphasis on the Vedas by the Arya Samaj, however, implied the fortification of caste distinctions on which the Vedas were based. This gradually disillusioned the untouchable who had joined it, especially because the Samaj did not accord them equality of status, even though it admitted lower caste to the Hindu hierarch through shuddhi. The distinction between high-cast Hindus and the 'purified' low castes had remained."\textsuperscript{62} We find that there was a very vocal Adi Hindu Movement in the Hindi belt during the first half of the last century led by Swami Acchutananda and Baba Ram Charan, its major protagonists, that had a significant impact on course of Dalit politics and also its expression in literature.

There was an inspiration from the Bhakti movement but its focus was not reformatory rather it introduced introspective dimension of Bhakti and gave it a new social significance. "Spiritual introspection (atma-amubhav) was accorded supreme importance as the only way to arrive at true knowledge or sadgyan and to evolve one's won world view"\textsuperscript{63} as Acchutanand said, "Real knowledge is the knowledge gained through introspection and which you have understood and realized on your own. For
this reason, you will have to discern between good and evil, virtue and vice, auspicious and inauspicious, through your own introspection. This [introspection] is the path of self-realization of the sants [saints and preachers]. Self-realization is the only touchstone against which you can test truth and falsity, high and low."\(^{64}\) This movement had an impact on the course of the Dalit movement in Hindi belt but it got fully articulated with the advent of Ambedkar on contemporary socio-political scene. Though his presence was belated as expressed by Mohan Dass Naimishray who writes, "There were Kabir, Nanak and Raidas in the north but not Jotiba Phule and Ambedkar and this is a matter of regret for this belt because they advocated revolutionary changes in the very structure of this caste-ridden society."\(^{65}\)

Mohan Dass Naimishray further traced the prevalent Hindi Dalit Literature that was, in his opinion, "remained ignored or unrecognised by the elite or upper-castes."\(^{66}\) He writes that Ramchand Banodha from Allahabad wrote a biography much before Dhananjay Keer and there were several authors inspired by Dr. Ambedkar and wrote very powerful Dalit literature, for instance, Bhagwandas Yadvendu (Acchut ka Beta), Dr. Khemchand Bohre, Babu Karan Singh Kain, Gopi Chand Pippal and Chatrapati Ambesh. Since there was not a strong Dalit movement in this belt, these writings remained either ignored or unrecognised. Here we notice that how politics affects the very course of literature in society that whereas Maharashtrian society was able to enrich itself with the cultural movement along with the political movement but Hindi society experienced a different kind of literature because there were no visible available references to it.
The decade of 1980s was a watershed mark in the history of the *Dalit* movement in Hindi belt. The contemporary socio-political structures were having new interfaces with the changing patterns of the society and new social forces were unleashing themselves making their claim on the political system. *Dalit* politics shaped its identity by this time and there were various organizations articulating *Dalit* voice. We would examine these trends and patterns in the next chapter but it is to be noted that *Dalit* politics during this decade attempted to incorporate each and every expression of the *Dalit* voice including literature making it a larger and comprehensive movement for social change visualizing equality, liberty and justice in an egalitarian social structure. We would also discuss different views about *Dalit* aesthetics and form and style of the Hindi *Dalit* Literature, which has a very close relation with the form, and style of the *Dalit* politics in the Hindi belt.

Highlighting close relation between political movement and *Dalit* Literature, Dr. Sharan Kumar Limbale pointed out that there were hopes and aspiration at the time of Independence that trauma and pain of the *Dalit* community would come to end but this oppression continued along with many other problems like unemployment, poverty, caste conflicts, casteisation of politics that compounded the miseries of human life and made it complicated. But with the proliferation of democratic values to the depth of Indian social set-up clubbed with the expansion of education started the process of agitation and protest against the oppression and reaffirm the principles of equality, independence, justice and solidarity that led to the revolutionary changes in the vision of the political movement and literary expression reflected these changes in the vision to represent the social reality of the contemporary time. Contemporary Hindi *Dalit* Literature is the result of the impact of Ambedkarite vision for revolutionary change.
and aesthetics of this literature makes democracy, egalitarian social vision and humane values its essence. The very inspiration behind Hindi Dalit Literature is political that gets influenced by the Ambedkar movement, consolidation of democracy in India, proliferation of science and technology, political articulation by the new social forces and universalization of education making it a comprehensive domain for analysis that is representative of the contemporary Indian social and political reality.

Dalit Literature expresses the political consciousness that focused on the struggle for self-respect and dignity and carves a ‘new self-image’ for the community and it is also self-critical and introspective in its nature and scope, which sometimes play a role of guiding force to the political movement. It also visualizes the trends in the political movements, as would be seen during the course of this study, providing an opportunity for adopting the right course of action during the Dalit movement. Hindi Dalit Literature represents the Dalit voice and community’s “movement against socio-economic exploitation and numerous types of atrocities committed on the Dalits; movements for better access to the opportunities and for realization of goals of equality, liberty, fraternity and justice; and finally movements for gaining self-respect and dignified social identity.”

It also represents struggle against oppression and sets a positive agenda before itself exploring Independence and Democracy and making each and every person equal having equal rights, liberty and freedom. Representation of political discourse makes Hindi Dalit Literature political literature and its expression of political consciousness becomes literary enriching it and enthusing confidence within the community that sustains their movement.

64
The Hindi Dalit Literature is representing real picture of the Dalit community, its trauma and its struggle for social change. This also recognises the fact that literary aesthetics have been transcended from a 'sophisticated' perspective to a realistic aesthetic sense that attempts to demolish the 'supremacy of structured forms' (of the upper castes writers) of literary aesthetics. We would explore and analyse this characteristic in subsequent chapters of this study in relation to the Hindi Dalit Literature. We would discuss, in the next chapter, what are the markers of Dalit aesthetics and how those markers are political in their nature. Also a brief history of Dalit movement would be narrated in next chapter with an attempt to trace different literary trends in the expression of Dalits' political consciousness.
Notes


3. Johari, J. C. Comparative Politics (Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1979) p. 4


5. Ibid.


9. Weiner, Myron. Ibid., p. 164

10. Omvedt, Gail. Ibid., p. 11

11. Zelliot, Eleanor. Ibid., p.53


13. Premchand, Sahitya Ka Uddeshya in People’s Art in the Twentieth Century: Theory & Practice (Delhi: Jana Natya Manch, July 99- September 2000) p. 75

14. Williams, Raymond. Ibid., p. 183

15. Premchand. Ibid., p. 74

16. Ibid., p. 77


19. Wayper, C.L. Ibid., p.18-20

66


42. *Ibid.* p. 10


49. *Ibid.*, p. 28


