3.1 PRELIMINARIES

Sharankumar Limbale’s autobiography *Akkarmashi* translated as *The Outcaste* published in 2005 by Santosh Bhoomkar. It exposed the bizarre face of Hindu culture where man has become subject of suffering and woman a prey of exploitation. Indian subaltern autobiographies have raised such a world that was created by Manu which made life a hell for the rejected. These down-trodden people have fought amongst their own people who have called them untouchables. Like Sharankumar, many authors have brought their humiliation and exploitation before the readers of the whole world. This genre contains angst, pain, pathos, grief, rebel, revolt, rejection and dissonant voices raised against inhuman suffering imposed upon them. Ambedkarism is the backbone of this protest movement. It emerged due to the longstanding efforts of Gautam Buddha, Saint Kabir, Mahatma Phule, Rajarshi Shahu, Lahuji Ustad Salve and Mukta Salve. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is the pionner of Dalit movement and literature. The Ambedkarite Autobiographies known as Dalit *Atmakathne* in Indian context and Subaltern Autobiographies in postcolonial literature have proved a weapon in the hands of social reformers. The downtrodden, who were blind and mute, raised their voice, their pen and portrayed their pain. It is their effort to break the bondages of caste and deliver their sufferings.

3.2 LANGSTON HUGHES AND LIMBALE: VICTIMS OF OUTCASTE

Sharankumar Limbale’s *Akkarmashi* published on 10th July 1984. It faced challenges of finding place among the existing Dalit autobiographies and later proved a contemporary classic. In his article ‘Chronicles of a Fatherless Being’ published in ‘Asmitadarsha’ he wrote -

*I have sown the events, incidents and experience of my life of twenty seven years... This is the story of my life, an expression of my mother’s agony and an autobiography of a community. Being fatherless is as much my fate as it is to be in general word of suffering. [Limbale, 1986.152]*

The Black Literature revolted against The Whites in Western World and Dalit voice raised against social slavery in India. Langston Hughes in his ‘Cross’, volume of poetry writes-
My old man’s white old man
And my old mother’s black
...
My old man died in a fine big house
My ma died in a shack
I wonder where I am gonna die
Being neither white nor black?
[www.poem hunter.com/poem/cross/6]

Langston Hughes raised his sorrow and helplessness of not having typical identity without which his social, cultural and religious existence is questioned. Being trapped in two, he has to bear broken identity. In the same manner, Sharankumar Limbale has to suffer. His father being Lingayat Patil and mother, being Mahar, he faces many difficulties. He has no social acceptance of purity. Calling him impure, he is humiliated, which caused lifelong wound and a stigma on his forehead. Feeling of inferiority has tortured him and he has risen with revolt. He raises hundreds of questions regarding caste, religion, ethics, purity, chastity, charity and humanity. He is not responsible for the humiliation in his life. He raised question of social relationship based upon caste system. His autobiography throws light on the conflict between purity and impurity, touchable and untouchable, scientific temperament and superstition, literate and illiterate, awakened and un awakened, high-caste and low-caste, urban and rural, liberation and slavery, exploration and exploitation.

He is torn between the two edges of civility. His is a different grief that is imposed upon him for which he is not responsible and bears unbearable humiliation. The Outcaste is an attempt to raise words as weapon against his fractured identity and social slavery, poverty, religion and caste system in Indian society. In the second part of his autobiography Punha Akkarmashi Sharankumar writes-

With my birth mansion of all Patil’s
Landlords would have become unrest
With my first breathe
Morality of the world would have been frightened
My crying would have awakened
Milk in the breasts of all KUNTIES
Why mother would have become ready for RAPE?
Why she would have preserved immoral
Intercourse for nine days and nine months?
For what would have developed this bitter fetus?
How many lusty sights would have penetrated her?
Of which race am I?
Who am I?  
Am I touchable? Then my mother... untouchable  
Am I untouchable? Then my father... touchable  
With whom my umbilical cords?  
Who am I? [2003.13]

Sharankumar Limbale’s autobiographies *The Outcaste* and *Punha Akkarmashi* raise questions of social identity. The author is maddened with the unremitting questions of his self-respect, existence and identity. His angst and dissonance leads him to revolt against the existing social system based upon the caste-based hierarchy. His granny, mother, aunt, sisters and almost his community suffer for the crime they haven’t committed. It is imposed upon them. This autobiography exposed the double standard nature of ‘a selected few’ that dominate the society. It is an attack on the roots of caste-poisoned construction of Hinduism in Indian context. It is dissonant voice raised against inhuman exploitation running major masses of this nation. It runs through hunger, poverty, humiliation, sexual exploitation, untouchability, pain, pathos, awareness, rebel, revolt, rejection, protest for self-respect and self-identity. These dimensions expose the author and the society for which he doesn’t fear. His sincerity to raise the rags of bitter truth on the threshold of the nation intends his intention to dig out the disgust for the making of a new life.

### 3.3 POVERTY, HUNGER AND HUMILIATION

#### 3.3.1 Limbale’s Philosophy of Bhakri (Hunger)

According to G. N. Devy, “Dalit autobiography speaks of poverty as a social issue, a result of caste exclusion and in need of major social reform.” [Limbale, 2005. xxi] He continues his argument and says, “It brought a large canvas of depiction of the social, cultural and political process of marginalization.” [xxiii] *Akkarmashi* narrates utter dark world of hunger of the poor for bread and hunger of the upper for lust. Poverty leads life towards dirty deeds. Limbale’s story of life is based on this poverty and hunger that brought him humiliation. Limbale writes-

*Bhakri is as large as man. It is as vast as the sky and bright like the sun. Hunger is bigger than man. Hunger is vaster than the seven circles of hell. Man is only as big as bhakri and only as big as hunger. Hunger is more powerful than man. A single stomach is like the whole earth. Hunger seems, no bigger than your open palm. However, it can swallow the whole world and let out a belch. The world would have been no wars if there were no*
hunger. What about stealing and frightening? If there were no hunger, what would have happened to sin and virtue, heaven and hell, this creation of God. If there was no hunger, how could a country, its borders, citizens, parliament, constitution come into being? The world is born from stomach so also the links between mother and father, sister and brother. [xxv]

3.3.2 The Picnic Experience – Leftovers to Mahar Students

*The Outcast* opens with the picnic experience of the school. Sharankumar is learning in this primary school. His humiliation regarding hunger, poverty and untouchability is reflected effectively here. The upper-caste boys, girls and teachers sit together and take the lunch. The upper-caste students had well prepared, delicious, tasty food and the poor untouchables had *chutni-bhakri* to eat. How did they feel of their poverty and inequality is expressed thus-

**Boys and girls from the high-castes like Wani, Brahmin, Marwari, Muslim, Maratha, Teli, Fishermen, Goldsmith and all the teachers about hundred or so sat in a circle under a banyan tree. We, the Mahar boys and girls, were asked to sit under another tree. [2]**

Their food, way of eating, prayers, etc. create a kind of valley of separation. They had variety of fried food where as the Mahar students had dry *bhakri-chutney*, *bombil* fish etc. They were offering food to each other. The author thinks of offering his food and gets these questions in his mind -

**Dare I offer my chutney-bhakri to my teacher? Would he eat it?**

*Bhakries* of high-caste were of course of better quality. Their mothers had given them fried food where as we had just pieces of dry *bhakries* which were hardly enough to satisfy the cave of hunger. [2]

The teachers ask the upper-caste students to collect the leftovers and give it to the Mahar students. This is the bitter truth in rural area and even in city slums where hunger for food is the burning issue. Masamai, the mother of Sharankumar, used to shout angrily at him calling his stomach as ‘Akkalkot’. He always remained half fed in his house because of poverty. His was the condition like the hungry vulture. The poor people are as if victims of famines. Another day, when the school started and the teacher asked students to write an essay on picnic, the whole class was writing and the author was puzzled, what to write - the hunger, poverty or the humiliation, what should he write? How could he describe the pleasant picture of picnic? Shall he write about that inequality of sitting for lunch or the leftover given to them? He
interrogates himself, “How I should start writing the essay, my teacher had asked for?” [4]

3.3.3. Marriage Experience: Snatched Away Plate of Kheer

Wedding ceremonies remain a great feast for upper-caste people. The guests eat first and then the villagers. The untouchables come at last, if called. If not, they had to watch like dogs and beg for food or leftover. The poor beggars had to suffer and accept humiliation for the cursed stomach. During a wedding feast, Sharankumar expresses his humiliation – “Outside, we swallowed our won saliva”. [7] This is piteous suffering of the burning hunger during such feasts. The author had to follow somebody like a mongrel bitch. Hiding his plate, he used to follow elder Mahar community people. Hunger humiliated him a lot. He used to take more food so that the leftover maybe brought to his sisters and mother. Once, he had taken kheer full in his plate and occured an insult in his life-

*He snatched my plate full of kheer. Threw it on the ground and slapped in the face. ‘Son of a bitch’ he shouted. If you don’t want it, why the hell did you take it? Don’t let me see you more than once at any feast after these. I returned home crying.* [9]

3.3.4 Man, a Thief and Woman, a Whore for Stomach

Sharankumar had to suffer for the ditch called stomach. With him, his community suffered. He stands for his community. The upper-caste (savarnas) humiliates the hunger of the poor and discriminates, them from others. His search for bread, respect and identity runs in his blood. To fill the stomach, remained his primary purpose. For survival, he wandered in search of food, killed animals, dug roots, cut fruits, but helpless. The autobiographer writes about me and women of lower caste. “He started selling himself for his stomach. A woman becomes a whore and man, a thief. The stomach makes you clean shit, it even makes your eat it.” [8] This is how man’s morality and woman’s chastity have been dehumanized before hunger. It makes you worst and destroys your civility. Limbale faced this evil through out his life by eating dead beef, dried roti-chutni and even abuses of the savarna society. His poverty made him to suffer. Being a member of a large family, having no male support, faced a lot of humiliation.
3.3.5. Ate Cattle Passed Undigested Jawar

The author ate the cattle shitted undigested grain of jawar in dung by washing and making bhakri of it. Many times, they used to suppress hunger and it had become the habit of the family. He remained hungry due to the utter poverty. It gave him starvation and humiliation. In all these and other aspects, Dr. Yeshwant Manohar says - “Akkarmashi reflects dreadful ugliness of society.” [1999. 270]

3.3.6. Ate Anything to Reduce the Fire of Hunger in Childhood

During the childhood days, the author used to roam with the Mahar boys in search of eatables. His search for food went thus-

We used to roam along the stream to reduce the fire of hunger in our stomach. We caught crabs, fish, eggs, smashed honey comb, caught birds cried like water fowls, tied frogs around our necks, searched lizards, shot pebbles at kits with catapults, roasted squirrels and ate them. We went to the fields and fell the leaves and fruits from trees. We broke the anthill and ate the queen ant. Umbrya, Parahya and I broke the trunks of tress, particularly the tadi palm for their pith. We did all of this to satisfy our hunger. [2005. 65]

3.4. EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN

3.4.1 Lower Caste Women Born to Suffer

No religion of the world is in favour of woman. Either by love or by law, woman is exploited. She is puppet in the hands of men. She is helpless though adored as Shakti by Hindu religion. She is always secondary. In Genisis of The Holy Bible, she is said to have been made from a super numerary born of Adam, says Milton’s Paradise Lost. In Hinduism, she is called Durga, Sharda, Lakshmi, Saraswati and the Goddess of strength, music, wealth and education respectively. In reality, she is kept powerless, poor and illiterate in all senses. She has actually, no Varna (section) in Manusmruti. In every Varna, she is supposed to be inferior. Even, the untouchables supress her. In the untouchables, what is the condition of woman? She is supposed to be ‘Dalit of the Dalits’. “The women in ‘Akkarmashi’ must be born for suffering.” [Mulate, 1999. 60] Masami, Chandamai and Santami suffer a lot due to
the inferior status in their own community. Woman in Dalit community is doubly victimized; on the pretext of her lower caste status and as a woman.

3.4.2 Deserted Women in Akkarmashi

Akkarmashi comprises of many women characters. They are widows, childless women, deserted women, marriageable girls and hence a humiliated womanhood. Regarding tragic situation of Limbale’s mother, G.N.Devy observes –

Limbale presents his own mother who has been cheated again and again, exploited most bluntly in every relationship. She strikes, burdened with a call of children and upbringing. [2005.xxv]

Sharankumar Limbale doesn’t show any dislike or dishonour to them. It shows his respect towards womanhood. Though his mother and grandmother had done adultery, he understands in which circumstances they had done and doesn’t harm or blame them with words. His tone is neither angry nor sympathetic towards them. This silence is enough strong and talkative about his patience and protest.

3.4.3 Mother Masamai: Victim of Upper-caste Male Lust

Sharankumar Limbale’s mother Masamai is the dominant character after the narrator in this autobiography. She has to pass all odds of life and accept the tragic fruits of the critical situation. She was wife of Ithal Kamble, from whom she delivered two sons Suryakant and Dharma. Due to Hanumant Patil Limbale, her married life disturbs and Ithal Kamble divorces her. Out of her poverty and frustration, Hanumant Limbale, a Lingayat community upper-caste Patil, lured her. From him, she bore Sharankumar as an unwanted child. Once again, Hanumant Patil deserts her and then Yeshwantrao Sidramappa Lingayat Patil of Hanoor from Akkalkot Tehsil kept her. She gave birth to ‘Nirgi, Nirmi, Vani, Suni, Parmi, Shrkant, Indriya and Sidram, eight children from him. In all, she bore eleven children from three men. All of them sexually exploited and deserted her. With poverty and humiliation, she brought up her children. Masamai became the victim of upper-caste male dominated lusty society. Because of this, Masamai received disgraceful title of the whore of Patils. The author notes -

People who enjoy high-caste privileges, authority sanctioned by religion and inherit property, have exploited the Dalits of this land.
The Patils in every village have made whores to the wives of Dalit farm labours. A poor Dalit girl on attaining puberty has invariably been a victim of their lust. There is a whole breed born to adulterous Patils. There are Dalit families that survive by pleasing the Patils’ sexuality. [38]

3.4.4 Granny Santamai: Humiliated Widow

Santamai is another humiliated and illfated woman. She is mother of Masami. Though widow, she loves Mohammad Dastagir Jamadar. He has illicit relationship with her. He works as a porter at bus-stand. Santamai is Mahar and he is Muslim. Hunger in the stomach keeps them together through out the life. It becomes difficult for Sharankumar to explain their relationship to his relatives after marriage and friends during college days. He reflects his dilemma – “Half of me belongs to the village were as the half is excommunicated. Who am I?” [39]

3.4.5 Dalit Women Sexually Harassed by Landlords

Yeshwantrao Sidramappa Patil had his wife from his own caste named ‘Kashibai’, living in mansion. He had two keeps, ‘Jani’, a Gondhari community woman and ‘Masamai’, a Mahar woman. These three women suffer mutually under the male dominated sexual cruelty of Yeshwantrao Patil. Dalit women had to work in farms and mansions of the upper-caste people. There, they were sexually harassed. In the farm, the hungry and lusty landlords degraded them. Out of poverty and need of bread, they used to keep themselves dumb and deaf. They were insulted due to untouchability. The farmers didn’t allow their cattle to be grazed. They used to abuse them in rubbish language. Limbale writes, “Dalit women were badly insulted. They were beaten as if they were slaves. Some farmers even harassed them sexually, pulled them into crop and raped them.” [79]

On the contrary, Limbale’s ancestors worked as the security guards of Patils mansions. They not only protected their mansion but wives and daughters too. “The ancestors sacrificed their daughters, wives, sisters and daughters-in-law to dark nights in the Patils mansions.” [79] They used to be happy and proud of their masters for their leftover. The leftover snatched away the honour of the Dalit community and brought degradation and humiliation. Hunger and poverty brought this curse to the women of Dalit community.
3.4.6 Even Harya Cheated Maratha Girl

Harya, the friend of Limbale cheated a Maratha girl at Bombay and married her. When she realized his caste, she ran away. It saddened Harya. On the other hand as a woman, may be Maratha, Harya’s wife had to suffer. It seems as if women have become sex instruments to be used by any male irrespective of any caste or religion.

3.4.7 Sister Nagi: Sexually Exploited by Senior Patil’s Son

Nagi, the sister of Limbale loved and married Nandu, the son of a senior Patil. Actually, she was sexually assulted as her husband had remarried another Patil girl. This brought tragedy in the life of Nagi. Regarding Nagi, Santamai gives information to Sharankumar, “Nagi has gone astray; she is going around with Nandu, the son of Senior Patil these days.” [85] This is how the lesson of suffering is endlessly passing from generation to generation in Maharwada. Mahar women have become sex toys to be played by Patils for the leftovers. They have no social status, no consciousness and it resulted in their suffering. A girl attaining puberty was the subject of attraction for the upper-caste people. ‘How cheap was the life of women in lower-caste’ is effectively reflected in Akkarmashi. By reflecting this, Limbale has exposed lusty brutal nature of the upper-caste men. He has exposed the sexual exploitation of Dalit women made by upper-caste Patils.

3.4.8 Devki Burried Her Illegitimate New Born Baby

Sharankumar Limbale not simply exposes the bitter tragedy of lower-caste women, but portrays the mute voices suppressed under the mansions in rural area. It’s actually the story of Devki, narrated by Masamai to show how man, may be father, exploits even his daughter. Out of frustration, Sharankumar used to ask his mother Masamai, why she had not killed or operated him before his birth by herbals. Devki, a spinster was a poor unmarried girl. She used to perform abortions of women of unwanted pregnancy. Author comments, “after all one’s prestige is more precious than life.” [67] Devki used to give herbs to women and used to relieve them. However, one day, Devki found herself pregnant and couldn’t operate herself. She
gave birth to a baby and buried it under the garbage. The author comments - “I could see the resemblance between a sow eating her own piglet and Devki.” [67]

This value system tied the legs of women and freed the men. Of whose lust Devki had fallen prey? Who exposed her sexually? It is inequality and injustice against women. Why are they humiliated? Is man not responsible for a woman’s suffering? However, the Hindu religion doesn’t pay attention towards him and goes on humiliating women. Even Mahabharata didn’t leave Kunti, who drowned her son Karana, who was born before her marriage as an illegitimate in the river.

3.4.9 Dhanavva: A Widow Daughter Exploited by Father

The sexual exploitation of daughter by father would be of the worst kind of exploitation in Hindu society where father-daughter relation is given scared status. Dhanavva, a woman was Shankar’s young and beautiful daughter. Her husband had died due to lightening and she was living with her father. He proved a rascal. She was his eldest daughter and it was difficult to remarry her. The religion doesn’t allow her to remarry. Dhanavva begged Devki to abort her. Dhanavva had kept her pregnancy secret for a long period. Devki couldn’t help her. Dhanavva used to cry and sense of guilt couldn’t allow her to live happy life. Her rascal father used to say, “I have sown the seed from which she has grown as a plant. Now, why shouldn’t I eat the fruits of this plant?” [67]

Shankar, the father of Dhanavva doesn’t seem moral. He has broken the future and prestige of his own daughter. It shows how women are not secure even at the house of their parents. Where would they go for safety and purity, which the religion and caste demands? Women have become easy and cheap means to satisfy the male lust. The author furnished the ugly face of the society and its members who cover the garb of morality. This is his strong voice against exploitation, may it be lower or upper-caste. No matter which caste, women have become the subject of exploitation. The condition of the poor and lower-caste women is the worst as their affairs do not remain hidden and the upper-caste women’s matters remain buried behind the curtains of mansions. The mansions are the helpless witness to the sexual crisis of upper-caste men over their own wives, daughters and even the helpless women of the poor.
3.5 CASTE CONFLICT AND UNTOUCHABILITY:

3.5.1 Akkarmashi (The Outcaste): The Apt Title

Caste is the stigma on the name of humanity. Manu, the maker of Manu Smriti made four Varnas and divided society into castes. Every Varna contained castes and sub-castes that caused sense of superiority and inferiority. Right from ancient days, Hindu religion has divided society on the name of caste. G. N. Devy interrogates-

Can one change one’s caste? Is the caste hierarchy defined in any absolute terms? And does a given caste originate in given social function? [xiv]

3.5.2 River Divided on the Name of Caste

Akkarmashi - the title itself is apt. It means ‘neither here nor there, neither belongs to this caste nor to that caste’. It becomes a hybrid caste, new variety. It is supposed lower, shameful and stigmatized. The author lives with it. His broken, fractured identity is the rage that made him express violently in this text. Akkarmashi has caste-conflict between upper-caste and lower-caste specially, Lingayat Patil and Mahar. It also has the conflict between Mahar and Musalman, Savarna and Dalit and even pure caste and impure (half-caste or outcaste). The river water is divided for the separate communities as wells in the rural area. Sharankumar Limbale observes-

The high-caste villagers filled their water pots and their women washed their clothes upstream. Down-stream, the Kumbies and Shepherds collected water in their vessels and carried them off. They also washed their clothes and bathed there. Those who looked after the grazing cattle washed their buffaloes and bathed themselves. The water at the lowest end was meant for us. [7]

This is inhumanity towards the lower-castes who were treated the worst compared to the animals. They had to collect impure dirty water, which caused diseases and death.

3.5.3 Fear of Entering the Temple in Childhood

In the month of Shravan that falls in the month of July-August according to Hindu Almance. There used to take place reading of Holy books of religion. Parshya and Sharankumar once went in the temple unnoticed by people. But Parshya’s father, being victim of casteism scolded them -
I want to live in the village. Why do you boys behave like this? The village will humiliate me some day because of your behaviour. No one has ever and slandered me for anything I’ll break your leg if you behave like this again. He was really angry because entering a temple is a crime. We were supposed to say our prayers from the steps outside. Our entering a temple will make God impure. We were expected to behave responsibly. The untouchables must not enter a temple. [62]

This is the mental slavery imposed by religion and caste upon the mind of Parshya’s father and the upper-caste people. This system has been humiliating and discriminating man from man. Upper castes are supposed to be the higher and the down trodden as the lower. Sharankumar asks the question -

What kind of God is this that makes human beings hate each other? We are all supposed to be the children of God, then, why are we considered untouchable? Why are we ostracized? Why are we kept away from other human beings? Why are we kept out of our own selves? Why is this discrimination between one human being and another? After all, isn’t everybody’s blood red? [62]

These questions try to uproot the superstitious significance given to untouchability. It has become leprosy, a social stigma, which humiliates to the bearer.

3.5.4 Shobi: Maintaining Manusmruti Rules

Shobi, the upper-caste girl was going to carry water. Parshya and the author were plucking the fruits of a toddy palm. It was a narrow path. Therefore, Shobi asked them to stay away and let her pass. She got angry when Parshya started arguing. She said, “Mahars have become bold these days. They now dare to walk straight up to you. Can’t you see I am carrying drinking water? Your touch will make it impure.” [70] They thought it insulting. Who made Shobi Speak this? Indirectly, she is applying the laws of Manusmruti. This is the symbol of ignorance. Actually, they had become hot with anger but the social insecurity caused their mouth shut. Out of rage, they were going to rape her but their senses awakened them.

3.5.5 Well: No Permission to Mang and Mahar to Fetch Water

Sharankumar Limbale gives another example of untouchability and caste-conflict of a well dug by Mahar and Mang, but the owner threatened them for making the water impure. He says, “Even the water there was under the control of the high-
caste. As I touched the water, gathering it in any cupped palms, ripples, formed on the surface… what is so peculiar about our touch that it pollutes water, food, houses, clothes, graveyards, tea shops, God, religion and even man?” [81] It was highly impossible even to think of taking revenge upon upper-case people for their crimes. This deep-rooted untouchability has been ruling the rural area even today too.

3.5.6 Dalit Women Raped by Upper-caste Men

Once, Dalit boys dared to look lasciviously at a high-caste woman. It was supposed to be a serve crime. The village went against the young Dalit boys and sent them to imprisonment. When they returned finishing imprisonment, “Every man’s wife had had a boy. The Dalit women had been raped when their husbands were in prison. A village always acts atrociously like this against the Dalits.” [71] Superiority dominates and exploits Dalits in this way.

3.5.7 Voice against Separate Cup-Saucer, Tumbler at Shriram’s Tea Stall: A New Awakening

During the days of higher education, the author and his friend acquired self-respect. They used to walk with pride and honour. However, high-caste didn’t like their confidence. The boys realized the ugliness of untouchability. They rebelled against the rural humiliation in tea shop. “The cup and the saucer outside Shriram’s tea-shop were an insult to our entire community. There was also an aluminum tumbler kept separately for us to drink water from.” [76] The awakened writer disliked it and conflict takes place. His dissonant voice raises – “How can we go against the village customs? How many times are we going against our entire wish?” [76] The author and his friend lodged a complaint against the owner for which they had to suffer.

3.5.8 Suffering at Ahmedpur for Room

In Ahmedpur, the author had to hide his caste to get a room on rent and live in upper-caste house. He had to hide and control all the caste based activates. Even, he was not able to treat Santamai and Dada’s arrival with non-vegetarian food. He had
to live there as a Lingayat. He writes about his pathetic condition – “I felt like an outsider. I was worried that my caste would be revealed.” [104] Who buried this fear in his mind? Awakened youth like him had to hide his caste. Why? Had he forgotten his movement? Why was he not getting room? Why had he hidden his identity of caste? The answers are deep rooted into the negativity of upper-caste people towards lower-caste instilled in them by Hindu religion.

3.5.9 Even at Latur Refused Rooms Due to Caste

In Latur also, he met with the same experience. He was asked his caste and was refused rooms. Finally, he had to go to Bhim Nagar to live. Though, he wore clean clothes, bathed everyday with soap, brushed his teeth every morning, he couldn’t escape from his low caste status. He wrote – “My caste followed me like my enemy.” [103] This awareness directs finger towards Manusmruti which bitterly humiliated the author.

3.5.10 To Throw Away Caste, Throw Away Religion

The caste and humiliation of untouchability couldn’t leave the author. Against it, he shouted and raised his voice. He couldn’t hide his frustration. For a while, he even felt, as he had become Dalit Brahmin. Caste couldn’t leave him. The Outcaste is to expose the effects of this casteism upon the lower-caste and revolt against untouchability. In relation to caste conflict, Dr. Mulate states…

Every individual, in this caste based society has to live with either this or that caste. It never leaves him. In the strong walls of it, his sorrows and pleasures dwell. His whole life remains imprisoned in it. Naturally, to throw away inequality, he has to throw away religion. This feeling reflects through Akkarmashi. [1999.186]

3.6 SUPERSTITIONS

3.6.1 Superstitions as a Means to Strengthen Religious Culture

Superstitions are religion-maintaining mechanism. They are fed upon religious background. Every religion and caste has various superstitions exploiting the lower caste society. Superstitions are byproducts of a religion. Customs and traditions kept alive superstitions. The Outcaste contains such many superstitions exploiting Dalit
society on the name of religion for instance Vaghya – Murli, Potraj, sacrificing buffalo etc.

3.6.2 Names: Vehicles of Superstitions


Even, the Mahar men are named after Gods and Mahar women are named after Goddesses. In this way, the religion maintains its rigid rule. The author raises question against this system to keep names on the names of Goddesses and Gods. He raises his angst and dissonance – “Why are such customs laid down for Mahars only?” [2005.93] By keeping away his system, Limbale named his daughter ‘Asmita’ and his son ‘Anarya’ that shows his vision and also protest against the system. It shows his marching towards casteless and dignified society.

3.6.3 Gods and Goddesses Possess Men or Women: Unreal

The tradition of ‘Potraj’, ‘Laxmi’and ‘Ambabai’ is due to superstitions. If a woman is made devotee of Ambabai, how can she die. Limbale asks, “How can a person dedicated to God die?” [93] He condemns killing of male buffalo, making unmarried boys as ‘Potraj’ for Laxmi and girls as ‘Murali’for Khandoba. Murali is supposed to be a wife of God. She had to serve the God Khandoba. In reality, she had to pass her life in the service of God. During the fairs of deities, the Gods possess the women and they dance in frenzy. While dancing, their folds of sari would loosen. The author exposes this possession of God or Goddess in the body of women, thus -

Sometimes while dancing, the folds of her sari would loosen. Her bodyguards tried to rearrange the folds and tuck them back in. While doing this, their hands would reach her secret parts. The woman realized the trick and abused them while continuing to dance in frenzy. [95]

If God had possessed her, how could she realize the malice intentions of the bodyguards?
3.6.4 Lower Caste People: Victims of Superstitions

These superstitions create blindness and nonscientific attitude in the society. Temples, their deities and followers are all the followers of Hindu system. The blind followers remain maintaining superstitions remain away from the development. The Brahmins designed this system and made the arrangements of their bread and butter. The poor, lower-caste people fell prey to their tricks and worked in favour of them. Sharankumar exposes these superstitions and makes the red alert from the danger of exploitation to the subalterns.

3.7. PROTEST IN THE FORM OF POETRY

3.7.1 Protest against Teacher

The seeds of the protest in Sharankumar’s nature can be stressed in his childhood days. During his schooldays, when the teacher used to take him to school, he disliked it. He used to hide or run away to the friends. The author, Parshya and Umbrya were the truant boys from Maharwada. They used to tease their teacher whenever they saw him. They used to shout loudly-

Master, master tu kewada?
Pora palali dha lauda. [6]
(Teacher, teacher how big you are?
The boys have run away, so hold your cock.)

However, childish, it shows the protesting nature of Limbale in childhood.

3.7.2 Protest against Bus Driver

The other incident is connected with the bus driver. Limbale’s grandfather used to do menial work at bus-stand as a porter. Naturally, he used to meet the conductors and drivers. So, whenever the bus arrived, he used to salute the driver. If the driver responded, he felt very happy. If they didn’t respond, he felt hurt. This hurt resulted in protest poetically. His angst relieved in such a rhythmic way -

Motarila killi nay
Drivarla bully nay. [41]
(The bus has no key, and the driver has no penis)
It shows Limbale’s rebellious nature. It also reflects his dissonant voice poetically reflected here in his childhood. Abuse is supposed the misuse of language. It signifies if it is used for good purposes. Many times abuse proves poetic if used for constructive purposes. The abuses used in this autobiography serve the anger of the characters against the system teasing them. Most of the times, abuses relieve the tension of the speaker and get purgatorial value.

3.7.3 Dada’s Poetic Protest

Once, Dada was humiliated in a village programme. In that programme, the upper-caste Limbale Patil was frustrated due to the death of Sheshu while lighting the gas lamp. He was in a terrible mood and had drunk. The people would beat him. In such state of mind, he threw away the coins and abused Girmallya who was elected Sarpanch of the village. The small children of the village mocked at Dada and teased him. Dada abused in rhyme with his strong feeling and spontaneous overflow of his rage-

Jummako, chodu teri Amma ko. [32]
(Fuck your mother on Friday).
It is a terrible protest against adverse condition in the life of Dada.

3.8 CRISIS OF SOCIAL IDENTITY AND SELF-RESPECT

3.8.1 Self Identity: A Million Dollar Question

It has always remained an inner urge to know one’s own self. Recognizing worth of self has remained a million dollar question. Shakespeare says ‘know thy self’ is not superfluous. One must know one’s own self then one may search one’s torture. The directions for the future are deep-rooted in the past. So, Sharankumar Limbale, in the second part of his autobiography, Punha Aakarmshi sates-

This is digging of a life, thousands of years’ sorrow remained buried outskirt. This huge heap taken out is of injustice, poverty, insult and dreadful experiences of untouchability. Had I not dug out this heap, an ancient truth would have remained hidden. This ancient truth is epitome of my self-respect incurred in Ambedkarite alphabets. [2003. Five.]
It indicates search for self-respect and the struggle for identity. A popular poet Langston Hughes has expressed his deep sorrow in his poem and Sharankumar Limbale has expressed his deep sorrow in his autobiography. Their poetic and the autobiographical expression of sorrow and suffering do not differ from each other. Langston Hughes says regarding his search for identity in his poem as -

I am a Negrow  
Back as the night is back  
...  
I’ve been a slave. [Bajaj, 1990.113]

His existence was questioned and his identity was fractured. His anxiety, frustration and known reality bitterly tortured him. Finally, he reconciled himself with his identity as Negro, black and slave. This is penetrating feeling with which the poet had to live. Sharankumar Limbale and Langston Hughes’ sorrow have the same background. Sharankumar, in the introduction of his autobiography The Outcaste writes-

My mother is an untouchable, while my father is a high-caste from one of the privileged classes of India. Mother lives in a hut, father in a mansion. Father is landlord, mother landless. I am an Akkarmashi (half-caste) I am condemned branded illegitimate. [2005. ix]

This twist of identity has remained an unresolved question before Limbale throughout the life. It humiliated him from childhood until today. The caste based Hindu religion never allowed him to enjoy his earned status before his status by birth. In India, status of an individual is decided upon the caste in which one is born. This ugly setup caused crisis in his life and he suffered of untouchability, inferiority and impurity. His existence remained a stain on the name of purity. The so-called caste based status crushed his earned status out of hard efforts. His anxiety couldn’t remain hidden. His rage of taking revenge against this evil society made him to march ahead with courage and confidence. He further explores-

I regard the immorality of my father and mother as a metaphor for rape. My father had privileges by virtue of his birth granted to him by caste system. His relationship with my mother was respected by society, where as my mother is untouchable and poor. Had she born in the high-caste or were she rich would have submitted to his appropriation of her? It is through the Dalit Movement and Dalit Literature that I understood that my mother was not an adulteress but victim of social system. I grow restless
whenever I read about a rape in the newspaper, a violation anywhere in the country. I feel it is violation of my mother. [ix]

The crimes of such type have nothing to do with caste, colour or religion. It is that lust, blasting the life of Shudras in India and as Langston suggests Negroes in the Western World. The children born without wedlock suffer with fractured identity, humiliation and untouchability. All these problems chase the author and tire him. He has perpetual suffering that breaks the hearts of the sensitive, innocent readers.

3.8.2 Unmasking of Social Reality

The Outcaste is an autobiography which reflects social history of Indian society during the author’s lifetime. It criticizes objectively the naked reality hidden behind the so-called ideal curtains of Indian society. It exposes the evils of untouchability, inequality and casteism. It exposes the mask of so-called morals and ethics of Hindu religion. Instead of remaining dumb and deaf, he has rebelled and revolted single handedly against the crimes of upper caste society. He has shown a great courage for which he wins thunders of applause. He makes us to think by raising such questions of which we had never thought of. He writes not for our sympathy or applause but for the inner burning soul that doesn’t allow him to relax.

3.8.3 Deconstruction for Reconstruction

Limbale breaks the existing social system to remake it. This destruction of social system is to reform it. Here, Limbale supports Derida’s Deconstruction theory, practically. His voice shrills and shouts out of disgusting in Hinduism, casteism, inequality badly hurt in his life. Namdev Dhasal, a celebrated Dalit poet, imprints his unmistakable stamp of anger and rebel. In his celebrated volume of poetry Gulpitha, he writes -

I curse you, curse your book
Curse your going to say this
But now my hands have risen up [2007. 11]

This direction takes Dalit writers towards the humanistic path to rebuild the scientific religion for them, which may bring honour, self-respect and existence and it came in the form of Buddhism.

75
3.8.4 Voice to Break Chains of Slavery

The Dalit Movement of literature has not simply raised hands but voices to burst out and break the chains of slavery of the outcaste. Arjun Dangle, the eminent scholar critic of Dalit literature says, “Dalit literature is not the literature of those who advocate revenge. It is also not literature, which spreads hatred. Dalit literature first and foremost advocates the significance of humanity and liberation and it is a historical necessity too.” [1994. 312] *The Outcaste* is a step towards this direction.

3.8.5 A Series of Questions for Identity

*The Outcaste* being Dalit autobiography neither spreads hatred nor advocates revenge but advocates the significance of humanity and liberation. Limbale’s out cry is against the inhuman bondages imposed upon him which suppressed him and kept him away from liberty, fraternity and equality. He suffered due to his fractured identity. *The Outcaste* contains series of questions. Masamai, the mother of Sharankumar Limbale was wife of Ithal Kamble by caste Mahar. Hanumant Limbale Patil (Lingayat) sexually exploited her. Because of which, Ithal Kamble divorced Masamai. Hanumant Limbale kept Masamai from whom Sharankumar was born. When Sharankumar was born, Hanumant Patil broke his relationship with Masamai and left her to starve and suffer. Her poverty and helplessness later on took her into the arms of Patil of Hanoor. Her journey of suffering continued. From Patil of Hanoor she delivered eight children. Masami bore children from Ithal Kamble, Hanumant Patil and Patil of Hanoor. Though the children had same mother, they had different fathers. It is the fractured frame of Masamai’s family. She was the only support to her children. By doing hard physical labour, she brought up her children. She even sold liquor for hunger, accepted lusty handling of drunkard and protected her children. However, the society always asked questions and harmed, badly hurt her innocent children. Out of such suffering, Sharankumar outbursts in his autobiography. He feels that his mother is helpless like Kunti and doesn’t allow him calm and his angst, his dissonance bursts out-

*Why did my mother say yes to the rape which brought me into the world? Why did she put up with the fruit of this illegitimate intercourse for nine months and nine days and allow me to grow in the fetus? Why did she allow this bitter embryo to grow? How many eyes must have humiliated her because they considered her a*
were? Did any one distribute sweets to celebrate my birth? Did any one admire me affectionately? Did any one celebrate my naming ceremony? Which family would claim me as its decedent? Whose son am I really? [2005.37]

Is he an untouchable as his mother is Mahar untouchable and father is Lingayat Patil? His father objects to use his name in the school register. His father rejects and hence the upper-caste rejects him. This rejection humiliates him and he has to undergo penetrating odds of life. Being Akkarmashi he has to accept all the curse of untouchability.

3.8.6 Lower Caste Beautiful Women: Prey of Upper-caste Lust

Masamai was a beautiful lady. Untouchable’s beautiful women, daughters, daughters-in-law suffered of the lust of the wicked men of the upper-castes. Masamai is that humble creature sexually exploited by Patils, out of her beauty and later on her hunger. So, Sharankumar writes, “To be born beautiful among Dalits is a curse. There is a famous saying that the neighbor’s wife is always more beautiful than one’s own. Everyone in the village chases a beautiful woman. Masamai was beautiful and suffered of it.” [38] In relation to the identification of such children born out of illicit relationship of upper-caste men, the children had to suffer. He says that his father was Lingayat, mother was Mahar and was brought up by Muslim to whom he calls Dada. So, he says – “I am like Jarasandh. Half of me belongs to the village where as the other half is excommunicated. Who am I? To whom is my umbilical cord connected?” [39] Sharankumar has reflected his boldness with maturity. It makes his autobiography – interrogative. Now and then, the questions of identity have penetrated the author. It made him to think a lot. Dr. Mulate the eminent critic rightly points out-

Limbale’s deep meditative thinking reflects his meditative nature on the thinking of life, religion, caste, human race, purity, man-woman sexual relationship, etc. He further states that the autobiography has remained extremely objective. He has torn out himself without any curtain of hindrance. This boldness is rarely seen in earlier autobiographies. [1999. 190]
3.8.7 Humiliation for Father’s Name and a Bold Protest

Limbale writes regarding his humiliation or half-caste identity. He interrogates - “Can my body guarantee that he is the offspring of the father whose name is added to his name? Has anyone seen who sowed his seed? Has anyone seen the intercourse of his parents that resulted in his birth?” [2005.59] During the admission at school, he was asked about his father’s name and he couldn’t tell it. Even in the bank, when he had to open the account, he had to face humiliation. As his father rejected him, out of the fear of caste, Limbale had to go through the odds of life during the school days. His school-teacher Bhosle tried to place the name of his father before Limbale’s name as Hanumant Limbale, which was real. At least, Limbale could know it and because of Bhosle Sir’s active help he could get it. Out of reverence to Bhosle Sir, for his identity he writes, “I owe my fathers’ name to Bhosle, the headmaster.” [45] Sharankumar Limbale got humiliation out of his half-caste identity. The society in which he lived, wanted to know his family background. Here, the question is not simply of having a father or not. It is the question of existence. So, the theorist and thinker of Dalit literature, Dr. Gangadhar Pantawane says, “It is question of the social acceptance given to cruel decorum of society. So, he is being frustrated object to the purity of birth.” [1996. 120]

3.8.8 Why Is this Mansion Dumb? : Unresting Question

Once, Kaka’s (step-father of Sharankumar who was Patil of Honour) father was sick. Kaka being upper caste used to live in the village. Masamai decided to see Kaka’s father. She went with Nagi and Sharankumar who had not seen Kaka’s mansion earlier. Kaka’s wife Kashibai stared at them. The feeling of lower-caste, broken identity made Limbale thought this-

*Are we ever going to be the lucky enough to wear good clothes and have nice food to eat? What immoral link did we have with this mansion? In what way we are connected to the heritage of this mansion? Where do we stand on the line of Patil caste? We were born to a Patil and yet we couldn’t claim to belong to this mansion. Why doesn’t this mansion accept us? Why is this mansion dumb? Why are its jaws locked? Why is its tongue-tied?* [2005. 55]

These questions based on the basis of caste generated crisis. Women, especially, lower caste always suffered form the sexual exploitation by upper-caste people. The upper-caste opportunist lusty men refused their claims and suffering
remained the fate of their children abusively called ‘Bastards’. Such socially humiliated backward life is lived by Limbale.

3.8.9 Humiliation from Outsiders and Insiders

Not only upper-caste people but also the people of lower-caste (Mahar) humiliated Limbale. The caste system has this cruel power. Shrimantanna always spoke harshly to Limbale. Once, when Limbale refused to fetch bidi, he became very angry and holding him tightly by his neck called him ‘son of a bitch’ and drove him out of the community hall and shouted-

This is not your father’s community hall, if you come back here, I will break your neck. Your father lives in Basalegaon. So, you have nothing to do with this village. [62]

In Maharwada, he felt humiliated and thought to go Basalgaon. These questions made him restless, “Suppose I go to Basalgaon, would my father allow me into his house? Would the mother there give me food? My father lives in mansion, my mother in a hut and I on the street. Where will I die? Where are my roots exactly?” [62] These are the questions which make the house of insecurity in the mind of author. He is in search of his roots that refuse him. He is a refused one by his father’s community and even by his mother’s community. He has become half-caste, which is supposed to be a stigma, and a moral crime of parents for which the children had to suffer.

3.8.10 Resemblance to the Tale of Sparrow

Being such a pathetic unwanted child, he remembers the tale of sparrow. He says-

I felt like the sparrow who suffers because its nest is destroyed. Who should I go to? Who would claim me when both my mother and father rejected me? Why didn’t my mother abort me when I was a fetus? Why did she not strangle me as soon as I was born? We may be children born out of caste but does that mean, we must be humiliated? What exactly is our fault? Why should a child suffer for the sin of its parents? [64]

It is Hindu religion where children have to suffer for parents’ and ancestors’ sin and receive parents’ honours. The social system is such, which never allows
status by the intellect but by the birth based on caste. As Limbale was born to Mahar mother and by Lingayat father and brought up by Muslim grandfather, he had to face humiliation.

3.8.11 Even Mahar Caste Refused for Marriage

During the marriage proposals also, Mahar caste people, claiming him a bastard, not belonging to their community, refused Limbale. He loved Shevanta but because of his bastard social status, he had no claim on her. He sacrificed his first innocent love in life and sympathized himself by saying like a philosopher - “Your life has meaning only when you live for someone” [54]

i] Janabai, sweeper by Mahar caste, refused her niece’s hand for Sharankumar by shouting at him-
We haven’t yet lost our self-respect. Our family is of pure blood.
So also expect the same of a bridegroom. [88]

ii] Mallya, his classmate and from the same Mahar caste had a sister. Mallya’s parents also rejected Sharankumar and he said, I was not of a pure blood.” [92]

iii] Masamai had a Mang caste friend. She also rejected Sharankumar. The author states –
“Masamai had a friend, a Mang caste. She had a daughter born of her liaison with a Patil. The girl went around a singer with a drummer. And some how, the proposal couldn’t succeed.” [98]

Mahar and Mang people also rejected Sharankumar for his being bastard which remained a great torture for him throughout the life. Gautam Ambhore the scholar critic of Dalit literature states – “The protagonist in ‘Akkarmashi’ has very severe stamps on his self identity.” [2006. 35] When got refused by the community, Limbale could not control his grief. This frustration, angst, dissonant voice and feeling of revenge is reflected in his poem-

My semen acid acid
Wishes to fuck here’s every female
Who refused me, calling SHUDRA? [Upat.1982]

3.8.12 Representative of Myth Men: Amrutnak, Ekvya and Shambuk

Sharankumar lived humiliated life of a refused one by upper-caste people as well as lower caste people. Everybody rejected and objected his Akkarmashi status
and kept him away from pleasures and rights of human life. Therefore, naturally, Limbale’s autobiography revolts against caste system that made people so. For him, all those oppressed like him are the heroes and his close relatives. He says in his book ‘Punha Akkarmashi’-

_Amrutank_ my myth man
‘Eklyva’ my myth man
‘Shambuk’ my myth man
_I am Penis, Thumb and Head lost._
_Aye History!_
_Give Amratnak, his penis_
_Give Eklyya, his thumb_
_Give Shambuka, his head. [2003.65-66]_

He links himself in this history which ill treated Amrutnak, Eklyya and Shambuka.

### 3.8.13 The Root Questions of Identity

G. N. Devy, the scholar critic of Dalit literature quotes “Limbale’s autobiography is an intense narrative pointing to the futility of those questions and the agony and frustration in searching for their answers.” [2005. xxiv] Why am I so? Who made me so? Why am I neglected? Am I responsible for this status? Why am I called _Akkarmashi_? Why am I refused? All these questions make him unrest to write this autobiography. While searching himself, he has dug out the caste and religion responsible for his humiliation. He has done postmortem of caste system ruling Hindu society in a very cruel way. Out of frustration, he raises basic questions that shake the roots of morality and Hindu religion. What is moral and immoral remains a question before him. He wishes to operate the system in search of dignified life. The interrogations have raised this autobiography to search for identity, self-respect, honour and purity. The text ends to open reader’s eyes and motivates to think and uproot Manu’s decorum of caste-system. He objects value system of Hindu society that caused frustration and fractured his identity. He violates against superstitious code of conduct that made him outcaste. His revolt is against ages old ethics and moralities that denied the rights of human being. His fighting is for self-respect, against monopoly of caste, rigid system that suppressed him under the heels of Hinduism.
3.9 RISING REVOLT AGAINST CASTE SYSTEM

3.9.1 Beginning of Self-respect Journey in School at Chapalgaon

During the school days at Chapalgaon, Limbale found thirty rupees and while picking up, his friend Pirjade saw it. He suggested to share it and to go for movie or should give at least ten rupees to him. However, Limbale gave the amount to his headmaster and told the fact. For this, the headmaster congratulated his sincerity and honesty on the loudspeaker during the prayer. When he entered his class, his teacher Hiremath stopped teaching for a while and said. “This year, we have lost in sports, but it hardly matters. The honesty that this boy, Limbale, has shown is our real victory.” [75-76]

The joy of honesty was more precious than those thirty rupees to him. This is how, the journey of self-respect and identification started. A poor boy coming from poverty showing this intelligence is the impact of education, which Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar said is the milk of tigress. This milk made Limbale roar against those humiliations of half-caste, bear and go ahead.

3.9.2 Disgust of Caste Based Culture

Disgust of caste based culture and quest for identity made Limbale to walk on the path of revolt and respect. During college days, he came in contact with Mahar community boys as he had lived in the hostel. They educated him and made him aware of the reality. He started reading Ambedkariete literature and realized that it was not he or his mother responsible for his humiliation, but the system that governs the society. Naturally, caste and its criteria made him to think and act. Actually, the seeds of Buddhism had already sown in his mind at Chapalgaon. The impact of education and presence of Dalit boys started shaping the mind of Sharankumar. He confesses - “Buddhism began to caste its spell on me.” [74] Here lies the beginning of social awakening in the life of Limbale.

3.9.3 Chungi to Chapalgaon: Journey from Darkness to Light

Chungi to Chapalgaon is the travel of Sharankumar for education. It is journey from darkness to light, humiliation to respect and ignorance to knowledge. In
Chungi, Dada’s namaz, Santamai’s Ambabai rapiers, Kaka’s mantras of scriptures were there. This could shift him towards Buddhism at Chapalgaon. His English could also get improved at Chapalgaon, which later on resulted in gaining international fame to Sharankumar Limbale in subaltern studies of the Post-colonial branch of literature.

3.9.4 Protest against Untouchability

The incidence of ‘Shivram’s tea-stall’ shows awareness and rebel of the author and Parshya. They protested against the ‘Cup and Saucer’ and ‘Tumbler’ kept separately for the lower-caste people. The people like ‘Rambap’ and other didn’t mind it. But, being educated, Limbale realized the humiliation regarding the ill treatment given to lower caste people. They went to police station and even threatened to the policeman who scolded them and rejected to lodge their complaint. They raged, “We are going to write to the Prime Minister.” [77] It startled and alarmed the constable. It was a fight against cruelty of untouchability. It made them to realize the unusual strength of self-respect.

3.9.5 Rage against Money Lender

The money lending in rural area is the worst kind of exploitation. The money lender exploits the poor people by lending money on high rate of interest. For higher education, Limbale was in need of money and Santamai took him to moneylender. Her blouse was torn and was exposing her breast. The lender was drunk and kept staring at the peeping breast. He refused to lend money. The writer lodges his anger thus –

He look spread like poison in my heart, I wished that the blouse of this moneylender’s mother or sister was torn so that I could stare at their breasts. I burned within. Our poverty was detestable. I wanted to rebel against such humiliation. [82]

Here lies the rippened seed of rebel in the mind of Limbale. The poverty, lack of prestige and self-respect made him to rebel and revolt against the existing social setup.
3.9.6 Logically Awakened at Dayanand College, Solapur

At Solapur, learning in Dayanand College, he felt free in the new environment. Here, he realized the hypocrisy of Lord Brahma and the scriptures related to him. He realized the falseness and came to know reality. Education enlightened him. He raises question with logic “If one had enough, why would one steal? Why would one suffer at the hands of police? While studying in college, I was mentally aflame.” [83]

As he had seen generations of utter poverty, he realized that the roots of his humiliation are in his poverty, castes and fractured identity imposed upon him by Hindu society favouring the upper caste only.

3.10. MARCH TOWARDS PANTHER FOR REVOLT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

3.10.1 Namaskar Replaced by Jai Bhim

The atmosphere at Dyanand College Solapur was conducive to socio-political awareness and as result of it, Limbale’s social awareness was awakened. He stopped saying ‘Namaskar’ and started saying ‘Jai Bhim’. He states his experience in these words – “I substituted Babasaheb for Ambedkar since it sounded less formal and most respectful. My youth has assumed a new meaning and significance.” [87]

His awakened mind started rejecting traditionally imposed code of conduct upon him by Hindu religion. He stared eradicating superstitions. His thinking made him to realize reality. He interrogated against blind faith of Hindu system thus – “Can we know the fate that ‘Satwai’ (the designer of fate) is supposed to write on our foreheads on the fifth day of our lives? Suppose, we remove the skin and muscle from our foreheads, can we find it written there? Or is it all a myth?” [87] This questioning suspicion about the myths and legends show Limbale’s scientific temperament. Reasoning power raised his curiosity towards myths and their meaning. He started decoding the language of customs and traditions in Hindu society.
3.10.2 Reservation: The Father of the Dalits

In relation to reservation facilities, his views are basic. When he heard that this facility was going to be cancelled, it scared him. His voice raised and demanded-

If these facilities are cancelled, give us our ‘Dalitistan’. We are educated only because of these facilities exist; they were father to us. If there were no facilities, we would have had no such education, would have been at home grazing cattle and helping our parents. Instead, we were living in cities away from home, in order to get an education. Our parents were toiling to death there. [89]

On the name of cancellation of reservation, Limbale outbursts his anger as it’s the only support to the oppressed and caste humiliated people to rise from the hell of exploitation and attain self-respect.

3.10.3 Voice for Re-naming of Marathwada University

‘Re-naming of the Marathwada University, on the name of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was the demand of Dalit Panther. They had taken march to the Legislative Assembly. They had become aware of a great struggle ahead to meet needs for an organization to fight against the challenge. Limbale took active participation in this event. His involvement in ‘Dalit Panther’ awakened him the need to organize and agitate for which education was the primary motive.

3.10.4 Rejection for Hindu Tradition of Marriage

Being awakened, he married Kusum in a Buddhist way, though he was married earlier in a traditional Hindu way. Lord Buddha, Phule and Ambedkar were his ideals. So, he expressed his feelings to people, during his marriage -

My wedding has not yet taken place. I don’t accept what has happened just now because I don’t believe in Hindu rituals. We are going to be wedded according to Buddhist rituals. So, those who have concern for us need not go away. [99]

This is revolt and rejection to the exploiting Hindu system.
3.10.5 Fight against Casteism at Ahmadpur and Latur

Receiving job as a telephone operator at Ahmadpur, he saw fires and arrests as the agitation in Marathwada for renaming the Marathwada University. Intense hatred between Dalits and high castes was ensued-

Dalits were getting an education and becoming aware of their rights was the cause. Being awakened, Dalits refused to do the lowly jobs and converted to Buddhism. [103]

In Latur, when he was transferred, he couldn’t get rooms on rant due to untouchability. His anxiety and dissonant voice rose – “Should I put this town to the torch?” [106] The caste conscious people humiliated him and he remarked. “This casteism has dehumanized everyone.” [106] He had to hide his caste and live, which was disgusting and humiliating experience to him at Ahmadpur. He frankly admits his guilt, which shows his courage.

3.10.6 Names of Children: A Cultural Protest

He named his daughter “Asmita” [107] and his son ‘Anarya’. In this relation he says, “I had already thought of a name for him, it was ‘Anarya’.” [112] It clearly indicates his revolt against naming the children after the names of Gods and Goddesses as rejection to Hindu exploitation. It is a strong cultural protest running against the culture that looted and exploited him and the lower caste communities.

In relation to rebel and crisis for identity, of Limbale, Dr. Gangadhar Pantawane states-

Generally, Dalit autobiography pen-pictures the sorrow of the earlier generation. But, Akkarmashi is pathetic tragedy of Sharankumar, raising his dissonant voices in search of identity and exposing such people’s social and cultural sorrow. [1996.119]

Dr. Anil Surya, critic of Dalit literature decodes the ‘Akkarmashi’ and says “Akkarmashi is protest against sociality established abuse ‘Akkarmashi’. It is protest against ‘Akkarmashi’ tradition. It is anger against the tradition that gave him birth.” [1996.197] Tromila Wheat in her review of The Outcaste regarding Limbale’s marching towards Buddhism states - “In the end, he found his salvation in Buddhism.” [www.hindunet.com] Sharankumar Limbale deliberately used his ‘Akkarmashi’ as a weapon against social evil established in Hindu society. His
awakened mind is a means of social change, that he has been shaping *Towards an Aesthetics of Dalit Literature* [2004] which would show direction to the Dalit authors.

### 3.11 CONCLUSION

To conclude the chapter, it may be stated as-

1. Sharankumar Limbale faced problem of identity as his father was a Lingayat, upper caste and his mother was Mahar, lower caste. His fractured identity humiliated him a lot. He witnessed inhuman suffering in his life and strongly rejected the Hindu caste system. He raised questions of his self-respect and honour. Even though educated, his fractured identity couldn’t leave him. His rage against the Manu made set up exposes the bitter reality hidden behind the suffering of the poor and lower caste people.

2. *The Outcaste* raises voice against poverty, hunger and humiliation of the poor people separated from the main stream of Hindu religion in the name of Shudras.

3. It reflects the bitter reality that the poor women are used as the sex satisfying objects by the upper caste men.

4. It raises issues of untouchability and caste conflicts.

5. It heightens Limbale’s image as a strong, courageous, rebellious and revolting protagonist, who very sincerely has noted his tragic life story.

6. The crisis of half-caste identity is the major underlying force of this narrative


8. As the Hindu social setup is designed in favour of the upper castes, it dishonors the lower castes. Limbale rejects the religion and follows the foot prints of Dr.B.R. Ambedkar. He embraced Buddhism and relieved himself from the disgusting life in Hinduism.

9. Limbale stands for self-respect, dignity and pride for those who suffered and have been suffering like him.

10. *The Outcaste* is a mile stone in Marathi literature and has gained honorable place in the Postcolonial sphere after its translation in English