2.0 Struggle of Dalit women

The rise of Dalit autobiographies as a source of Dalit cultural identity becomes important in India as untouchables. However Dalit autobiographies maintain certain ambivalences as the authors and many women struggle to settle their low caste identity with their current urban middle class status and their claims to represent all members of the Dalit community. According to the Hindu caste hierarchy there were four castes namely the Brahmans (priestly caste), the Kshatriya (warriors), the Vaishyas (traders) and the Shudras (menial task workers). Below this four caste steps there was another rung of peoples who were called the untouchables (Panchamas). Among the untouchables the status of women was further eroded and closely linked to the concept of purity. This was what the rigid, fundamentalist Hindu promotes through continuation of caste system commanding the Brahminical values to maintain the caste system. In a male dominated society, Dalit women suffered unimaginable oppression not only through caste but gender too from which there was no escape. Women often referred to as thrice Dalit as they suffer from the triple oppressions of poverty being female and being female Dalits. Many Dalit women were denied access to education to meaningful employment health provision and were the first to suffer the negative thinking. Access to upper caste wells was forbidden. Worst of all Dalit women were exposed to many forms of violence and were frequently raped as a way to humiliate Dalit men.

The autobiographies begin by briefly exactness the relationship between caste labor and sexuality drawing particularly on Dalit feminist reflections of a live experience of caste. It highlights the dialogues between many women concerned in different forms of sexual labor. This attempt was still ongoing and therefore a development. The discrimination that Dalit women were subjected to was similar to racial discrimination where the former was discriminated and treated as untouchable due to descent for being born into a particular community. The caste system declares Dalit women as impure and
therefore untouchable and socially excluded. This was a complete negation and violation of women’s human rights. Dalit women were thrice discriminated treated as untouchables and as outcastes due to their caste face gender discrimination being women and finally economic impoverishment due to unequal wages disparity with low or underpaid labor. Even today in modern times we see the severe oppression and exploitation of Dalit women. The Laws of the Manusmriti have an overpowering effect on the level of education reached by Dalit women. The caste discrimination inherited by birth leaves Dalit women facing multiple oppressions that violate their economic political social and cultural rights. The most deprived section of the society comprises of Dalit women who were the poorest illiterate and easy targets for harassment. The women face not just caste violence inflicted on them by the dominant castes but status violence also. Culture was dynamic changes never static with identities and shared experiences. Family religion and education system used to be the main elements of culture. Culture was influenced by medium. Rituals were always carried out by people who were reinforcing the meanings of life. The Hinduism History which has degrading Dalit women through dogma and concept of purity then affects culture which can work as a channel for progress of Dalit women’s living environment. Dalits to adopt a life style with untouchability practices. Sanskritization was an alien faith to Dalits the spirituality of Dalits was replaced by Sanskrit spirituality. The Dalit life in continuation that is of dead and living was the integral spirituality of Dalit culture. Upper caste culture endangers Dalits uniqueness and reliability. It increases and wipe out Dalit culture instead of enriching the culture. The culture was reflection of resistance from the past to the present and moves to shape a blueprint for the future life which becomes a flowing stream. There was continuity of collective life in Dalit culture. Traditional culture was a way of living. Meanwhile what would be the question of duties of a wife? Who was the head of the family? Wives were devoted to their husbands and afraid of even mentioning the name of their husband. Barren woman considered to be amangalam and bad omen in the society. Puberty was viewed as flowering stage in a girl’s life as pleasurable. Fertility women were referred to mud waiting to receive seed. Woman in marriage were framed to be obedient and submissive wives. Motherhood was expected to be nurturing fearful good
wives and bearers of worthy sons. Society allows multiple forms of sexual behavior to co-exist practically but not socially. Particularly lower caste laboring women who were Dalit women treated as the sexual property of the men of the all caste. The other caste women were treated as good and lower caste Dalit women as bad women because of Dalit women social status was low subordinated that was why they were made to be sexually available to other caste. Dalit women were marked as natural and fit victims of violation contrast to upper caste women who were considered to be pure and custodian of chastity. Chastity of upper caste women could be taken up as big issue in their culture because of being submissive wives who was called pativratas. The lower caste women were considered not to be chaste. Sexual purity was anticipated caste purity which was honored by the society. Dalit women follow the Rituals more than the Dalit men. Dalit women associate with earth. Cultural programme of festivals was only moment for the Dalit women who get into trance. It was the only time they express their inner feelings and speak against other caste men husbands and demanding the local alcohol chicken good food and behave like goddess. To show the closeness with the nature they sing songs about their forefathers mothers the children and they abuse the landlords through their songs. After the hard work in the day during the night they sit together and chat with each other. They use lot of proverbs for talking and fighting. They tease each other and their kin who were about to be married with them. They relate with each other and while calling the person they will not use the name but the relationship. They sing when a baby was born when a girl attains puberty. These practices we never find with women of other caste. Dalit women were very strong and they give birth to more children. They work equally with the man that’s why they oppose male dominance. They prove that they were stronger than the men. Dalit women work hard to survive. They were very open minded, innocent and were not exploit others but exploited by others. They have good characters. Dalit women everyday relates themselves with people in four ways.

- With their family members, children and husband.
- With the traders who buy their goods.
- The other caste landlords who give them work.
Now beyond this the new attempt was that Dalit women attended several programs like conferences meetings, workshops and training programs which allowed them to meet with many Dalit women. Dalit women were illiterates. They knew only work related to land. They have not achieved even as one present politically. They remain only voters. They had no chance of learning about the country the other ethnic groups and languages. Not all the Dalit women were member of the movement as well as in the political party. They were not involved in village politics. Dalit women leadership was also controlled by the men. Dalit women had their own language. They preserved their language of their land. They had their own justice that is why they do not have permanent enemies amongst themselves. For many years they followed the Rituals of the land. They were different from other castes women because they do not depended on their men like others. They worked equally with men. When the men were taking the spade, Dalit women were ready with their basket to take mud. Every work was both Dalit men and women work equally. Dalit women were workers and they were not slaves to their husbands. They had very strong resistance power which has to be constant.

After the invasion of Aryans Dalit culture was destroyed. Dalits lived under the dominant Brahminical culture. Dalit culture based on pure and impure concept as Sanskritization was thrust on the oppressed, downtrodden communities especially on Dalit women. Dalit culture was silenced. Dalits through the struggle gave life to the culture that faced the death by the main culture. Dalit culture is freedom, unity, equality, a culture of battle towards freedom. Dalit culture is sealed through various forms of theatre which is revolutionary disturb and leads to action which is political action.

The dominant brahminical culture from which the Devadasi system is extended to Dalit community is prevailing Dalit women. The people around so called civil society therefore do not share the problem with Dalit women. All the writers insist on their courageous efforts to avail of the facilities of education and be able to cope up with the modern world. Shantabai Kamble the first untouchable woman to be appointed as a teacher in the district of
Sholapur in 1942 is the most articulate in this regard in *The Story of my Life* (1986). When she reaches the end of her self-narrative and casts a distant glance on the memories laid down before her eyes she firmly attests that since the beginning and all along her life schooling alone saved her from hardship.

Bhimrao Gasti in *Berad* (1987) and *The Cry* (1993) is the most effective example of a capability to get rid of the suffering of the past, take stock of the collective history of the community and one’s personal experience and find in it inspiration for further struggles. *Berad* is the name of the caste of the author a caste administratively classified since the British as a criminal case. The author is Ph. D. in chemistry. He was working in a laboratory in Hyderabad till he resigned in 1975 this was the time of Emergency to work for the upliftmen of his community and dedicate himself to social action.

Ramchandra Taware is an artisan, of the service caste of potters *Kumbhar*. Against the services that they offer to the families of the village which the narrative tells us they were recognized the customary right to receive remuneration in kind at the time of harvest festivals or domestic ceremonies. This counter gift is called balute hence the name of Balutedar given to the artisan castes which enjoy this right. R. Taware's autobiography *The Potter's Tool* (1983) raises two critical questions first how this practice is actually performed and second, how it is perceived by the artisans themselves. The writer bluntly tells us that this practice actually is a form of social relation to be identified as bonded labor. In the village the *Balutedar* is a bonded labour. The story of his family is a representative one. All *Balutedar* families were under the rule of the Patil. *Balutedar* have to bear atrocities. They were exploited by the established class. The *Balutedar* has no alternative but to mutely bear the injustice of the village rule. He accordingly shows how the practice of *Balute* is exploitation in disguise and projects the potter condition as a figure of the boycott of artisan castes by the village. When there used to be marriage in the village *Maharin, Partin, Kumbharin, Malin* used to get a sari. The sari used to be of a very inferior quality. If some of them were complaining about the quality the answer used to be if you want to take this you take it otherwise we have nothing else to give you. Or someone would say
that from tomorrow we will not allow you to take clay. Sometimes his mother had to come back without getting a sari. For the sake of the Gavgada, the village rule and order we had to bear it. Everybody was not like that. Some people used to give some food and clothes on the occasion of marriage. But everything depended on their whims. Social identity and status were a matter of legitimately belonging to a recognized lineage that is a legitimate descent this legitimacy being defined by the rules of endogamy and exogamy of the prevailing kinship system. The sexual exploitation of lower caste women by higher caste landlord gave birth to children who were considered as belonging nowhere and to nobody except their mother. But the latter is herself as a result stigmatized as a whore who has polluted the purity of the descents. Mother and children remain as a result socially ostracized.

2.1 The Outcaste: Dr. Sharankumar Limbale

Dr. Sharankumar Limbale, author of The Outcaste (2003) first served as a teacher and then later on, took a job in Post Office as telephone operator. He introduces himself as a worker of the Dalit Panther and a bastard Akkarmashi. The Marathi word refers to the child born from extra marital relations and is used only as an abuse. As a child the author used to stay in the Maharwada. There people used to tease him by using this derogatory word which he deliberately chose as a title for his book. He was born out of the sexual exploitation of dalit women by caste Hindus. His mother was a Mahar a landless woman agricultural laborer and his father a landlord and village ruler Patil. That is not a life of Limbale’s only but the slavery is forced on him. An attitude of blunt confrontation of the overall inhuman social order is maintained throughout the book. Masamai, Limbale's mother was married to Vithal Kamble. Kamble was working as a bonded labor on yearly agreement (salgadi) in the fields of Hanumanta Limbale the Patil of the village of Basalgaon. Hanumanta Limbale managed to break the marriage of Masamai and Vithal Kamble to take Masamai as a keep. The caste Panchayat drove out Masamai from Kamble's house. She was not even allowed to take her children with her. Vithal Kamble married again. The author was born from the relation of both of them. After some years Hanumanta started quarrelling with
Masamai and threw her out. Eventually Masamai left Basalgao and came to Hannur to stay with her mother Santamai.

In the *dalit* communities for a woman to be a beautiful and attractive is a curse. Generally those who have got superiority by *Varna* and who have inherited wealth used to rape *dalit* women. Sharankumar’s mother had given birth to twelve children from three men. His father was Lingayat his ancestors were Lingayat that is why he is a Lingayat. His mother is *Mahar* her ancestors were Mahar that is why he is a Mahar. But the Muslim Mahammud Dastagir Jamadar alias Dada became his guardian. Then was he not a Muslim? Had his love no right on him? His coordinately cord is joined to whom? Dada had a first Muslim wife but they had no issue. She went away. Dada spent all his life with Santamai his maternal grandmother. He looked after him like his grandson. His caste or religion never became an obstacle.

One Mahar Machindra Anna told him,

“This public square of the Mahartakya does not belong to your father. Your father is in Basalegaon. Why were you staying in Hannur?”

For many days he did not go to the Mahar public square. He thought if he goes there they will beat him they will abuse him. He had no right either like sparrows. If he start and go to Basalgao, they will beat him. He returned back. When he was back, Kaka Dada, Masamai, everybody used to look at him as a stranger. Kaka asked Dada,

“Why do you keep Sharan? Whose is he? Drive him out of the house. Dada used to say I have to keep him because of Santamai.”

Sharankumar used to feel. In whose embrace should he go? Who will tell him you were mine? Mother rejects father rejects.

Sharankumar Limbale was born of an encounter between his mother a woman of the Mahar caste and a high caste man who forced himself upon her. Limbale describes in a very frank language his childhood where he and his
fellow Mahars were confronted with grinding poverty and hunger as well as rank discrimination by high caste Indians. He describes discriminatory incidents in his public school. In school he and other Mahar children were expected to accept leftover food from the higher caste children. They were not allowed to draw water from public wells in case they pollute the well but instead had to wait for higher-caste children or teachers to draw the water for them and pour it into their hands or cups. Limbale had another mark of oppression that of having been born with no father. Basically he was a product of a rape but was considered a bastard because his high caste father did not recognize him. So in many ways he was outcaste within a community of outcastes. Limbale exposes about how Mahar and other Dalit women have been forced into sexual encounters with higher caste men. Limbale was able to escape from his poverty and oppression and become a professor of economics, writing and publishing many books. However in this book he lays out in stark language how he grew up and what he faced.

Tromila Wheat reviewed that

“What is it like to grow up as an impoverished outcaste in modern India? Perhaps the best way to find out is through the words and emotions of those who have lived through the experience and who have the education and talent to write so expressively about it. One obvious source is Sharankumar Limbale’s recent autobiography, The Outcaste Akkarmashi.”

The pain in above lines is of women which is the greatest blot on humanity in the world even though it is an endowment by god. Deprived of every comfort right and entity she is reduced to mere mute being. From the time immemorial she has been passive, subjugated, slaved and bothered. She is periphery margin object and other while male is the centre, mainstream, subject and self respectively. She is the easy prey of atrocities and burden of the household and societal values left with the subhuman status. Resulting in nineteenth century for equal status the demand was heard with social, cultural and political movement in North America. Mary Wollstonecraft launched a powerful attack on second class status of women with the feminist writing followed by John
Stuart Mill Margaret Fuller. While in twentieth century Virgina Woolf, Simon De Beauvoir, Mary Ellman, Barbara Johnson, Rita Felski, Toril Moi launched their attacks on patriarchal ideology concept of gender and marginalized roles allotted to women in and ocentric world.

Sharankumar Limbale considers Dalit have been deprived of power property and position. It was propounded that god created this hierarchy so that Dalits may not rebel against this social order. Thousands of generations of Dalit have continued to endure this injustice. Thus god resides in the holy and religious text written by human being for what Dalit women were suffering to a greatest degree from centuries. That had been earlier supported as the root cause of suffering for women in India are those so called Hindu religious books says Ambedkar in his essay *Rise and Fall of Hindu Women*. *Manusmritii*, Vedas that were the governing agent of Indian society allots the role to the wife to be *pativarta* that dictates her slave like restricts ones chastity and labor women as a sex object and promotes child marriage but also justifies a number of violent atrocities on women.

*Dalit* women’s condition is worst as they suffer distinctly. *Dalit* women face triple burden of caste, class and gender in which she sums up the plight of *Dalit* women highlighting the fact that they were a distinct social group and cannot be masked under the general categories of Women or Dalits. Besides the active movements and agitation against male dominated society feminine sensibility has been the concern of the writers who created a body of feminist literature in the last two decades of the last century raising diverse issues that woman have to confront in and out of home startlingly excluding of the Dalit women who were in more inhumane conditions than the women in general. Their socio-economic status is contrastingly different from the women in general. Ruth Pawar Jubavala, Nargis Dalal, Anita Desai, Attia Hussain, Shakuntla Rama Rao, Nayan Tara Sehgal, Vimla Raina Kamla Markandey, Kamla Das and others have not provided space for Dalit women. Hopeless of justice and true representation as legacy of Mahatama Phule and Babasaheb Ambedkar, Dalit they came to promote writing in regional languages in different genres poetry, stories and autobiographies with great authenticity.
For autobiographies was experienced-base rather than the imagination or speculation.

Limbale’s autobiography is an objective work that shows little bitterness or remorse. The author includes an excellent introduction that introduces the caste system to the Western reader. The humiliation of the Dalit community at the hands of an unthinking privileged class and the hopelessness of the situation of women born in lower castes. Urmila Pawar in *The Weave of my Life* the sufferance of the Mahar community’s survival is as complicated as the weaving of Ayadan made by Urmila’s mother and Baby Kamble in *The Prison We Broke* the unlivable conditions Mahar Community’s ignorance lack of education and their unimaginable conditions that they had gone through. All these Dalit autobiographies create testimonies of caste based oppression, anti caste struggles and resistance but Limbale brought forth the heart rendering savagery of Patilki against the Dalits especially women. Berreman argues

“The human meaning of caste for those who live it is power and vulnerability, privilege and oppression, honor and degradation, plenty and want reward and deprivation security and anxiety that is ridiculous with reference to.”

Dalit as they have power, privilege honor abundance and reward of being offered leftover and dead animals humiliation beaten murdered and raped and turned whore of the high caste. Limbale highlights that women not only have to perform the menial jobs reserved for low castes paid for only the leftover of the Patil families family appointed in service of village council while rest of the people had to serve the Hindu families individually as Santamai.

“Swept the streets in the village and lit the bonfire that lit the villagers warm during winter. She had to collect the leaves for the madder plant that they smoked in their pipes. She had to smear with the dung the platform of the village square where the villagers gathered for meetings and functions. Sometimes she was asked to take files to the town office which was ten
miles away. Dada was then working as the village night watchman."  

Since Dalit had no occupation except to serve high caste people they were in liquor business brew or adulterating that they serve caste Hindus. There were seven-eight family members in business engaging whole family including women and children who prepared it and sold it engaged all the family members as Limbale describes,

“Kamalakka (neighbor) and Nirmi (sister of Limbale) went to Chungi to get the stuff. Kamalakka was a robust woman who had been deserted by her husband. Nirmi was about ten years old. The two of them left very early that morning. They had to walk six miles to and fro.....they were drunk and lying by the roadside when we found them. Kamalakka’s sari was all disheveled. Nirmi’s eyes were so heavy.”

The family in business liquor had accustomed to the liquor irrespective of sex and age i.e. male, female, old and young. One had to taste the stuff to brew liquor as Nirmi, Kamalakka or Limbale himself had done. This evil to say epidemic had shuffled almost every resulting in quarrels and fights as sometimes. Santamai too got drunk and if on that day Dada (grandfather of Limbale) was drunk there would be a fierce quarrel between them. Santamai sometimes beat Dada. Sharankumar Limbale uncovers the lust of the Patils while serving the liquor to the Patil’s many times Limbale saw them holding his mother’s hand while she severed those drinks. But one should not mistaken that untouchability was non-existent rather it was more authoritative that unmasks the Hindu society of their hypocrisy and lustrous nature for the untouchable women. Untouchable becomes more touchable lustrously and more untouchable practically drunkards accepted liquor from the house of Mahar but not water. They had affair with the Mahar women but wouldn’t accept the food they cooked.

Dalit Women’s position was worse than the slaves for slave may change his position in capitalistic world but not a woman. They were exploited by one
then by another. Treated unequally in patriarchal system they were deserted by
their husbands victims of domestic violence and ill-treatment particularly
lower caste laboring women, who were treated as the sexual property of the
men of the all caste. The other caste women were treated as good and lower
caste Dalit women as bad women because of Dalit women social status was
low subordinated that is why they were made to be sexually available to other
 caste. Evil eyeing and treating them as whore or concubine high caste has
made numerous happy families split as Jagannath Patil’s son lured Harya’s
wife away. The news spread all over the village as well as the Maharwada.
Harya caught his wife red handed with Bhimanna. Dalit women were easy
prey of their lust they were separated from their husbands and kept as keep the
same was true in the case of Masamai mother of Limbale,

“Ithal Kamble (the husband of Masamai, Limbale’s mother)
toiled on the farm owned by Hanmanta Kamble a Patil. Who
helped him during hard times? But while helping Ithal Kamble
the Patil’s intention was quite different. This rich man was out
to ruin a poor man’s family the relation between husband and
wife came to an end. Hanmanta Limbale lured Masamai. She
was given a rented house at Akkalkot which she accepted. It
was a kind of revenge to live openly with the same man who
had uprooted her from her family. Hanmanta Limbale now
possessed her like a pet dove. They lived happily. Masamai
became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Who’s the father of
this boy? Hanmanta didn’t want any of this to happen but who
disown a child?” 7

But the main cause is the beauty of Dalit women though the concept of
aesthetics and beauty is a boon everyone wishes to live but it proves to be a
curse for Dalit women. Concept of cleanliness and beauty in Dalit is not
tolerated by those who had imposed the duty of menial jobs that pinches as a
peck in eyes thus ravish it away from Dalit no matter what mean they by
scripture politics and practice or by force. Caste Hindu tendency to possess the
every resource that pleases them is testimony and richness and resourcefulness
is misfortune for Dalits. Masamai was beautiful lady so she suffered for that. She was deserted by her husband after him Hanmanta enjoyed her and then leaved her. Dr. Limbale never received wholehearted love by his mother. People who authorized by religion in high caste, and inherit property have exploited the Dalits. The Patils in every village have made whores of wives of Dalit farm laborers. A poor Dalit girl has invariably been victim of their lust. There is a whole breed born to adulterous Patils. There were Dalit families that survive by pleasing the Patils sexually. The whole village considers such house as house of the Patil’s whore. Even the children born to her from her husband were considered the children of a Patil. Besides survival on the charity of a Patil what can such household expect? So it is not only single case but customs and traditions of Patils as a Patil always a big landowner has a Dalit Woman as his whore that causes exploitation of Dalit women and reduces to nothingness. As such Masamai was the whore of Hanmanta Limbale who kept her till she pleased without problem but intercourse creates i.e. reproduction not acceptable to the Patils then left her with their own blood to be called bastard. A keep is only kept never married as Masamai again was a kept by the Yeshwantrao Sidramappa Patil head of village of Hanoor the keeper of Janu a Gondhali women along with Masamai and bore eight children. Undoubtedly a keep remains always a keep no matter how many children he made her bear to. Unmistakably a keep is not to found but fondle. Moreover shamelessness of high caste transcends all limits as even after causing her bear eight children one wishes to share the keep as kaka was persuading his mother to sleep with Hanmanta who was on visit to Hanoor reveals Limbale. Limbale unveils candidly that his mother committed not adultery for lust but for bread as they (Masamai and Santamai) hadn’t sold their bodies to appease their lust. His villagers have provided them with bread so they repay much to them. They provided bread but in exchange to satisfy their lust with women.

As Sharmila Rege discusses that

“Strict controls were imposed on the high caste Hindu wives that controlled their labor and chastity sanctified by religious scripture. Thus the controlled behavior and body of high caste
women attributed to legislation while the social and sexual labor of the lower caste women was made available to the land economy. Social behavior and labor of poor women lets open access to the women of Dalits that causes sufferance and agony. The world full of wolves and vultures for the Dalit dove is inescapable.”

If one escapes one way she gets entangled other way. No matter one accepts it freely or forcibly. Rangoo Damunna’s sister in law chose to be prostitute for bread and Masamai had been too had Kamalakka not persuaded. Others were repeatedly raped for working in their farms as Devki a spinster worker in Girmallya’s farm was pregnant is indubitably by the farm owner. Nothing matters one is a laborer in farms or near the boundary of their farms thrash and rape was a common practice while the Dalit men had protected their mansions and farms but never saw beautiful face of wives of Patil but they had forced Dalit to be raped.

Dalit women were badly insulted and beaten as if they were slaves. Some of farmers even harassed them sexually pulled them into the crop and raped them. Dalits sacrificed their daughters, wives, sisters and daughter-in-laws to dark nights in Patils mansion. Distinctly high caste people perpetrated more atrocities on Dalits mainly victimized women. The high caste people can rape keep and molest Dalit women but daring to look lasciviously on high caste women by Dalits commits crime against which they attack murder set fire their houses register criminal cases against the victims of their atrocities and more they rape their women as Limbale writes about occurrence of such incident,

“Whole village went to court against Dalit men who were sentenced to prison for a year. When they returned after serving their term, every man’s wife had had a baby. The Dalit women had been raped when their husbands were in prison. A village always acts atrociously like this against dalits.”
Supplementary Dalit women spoilt junior had the same blood to practice. The elder used to go to the mothers and youngsters to daughters. Falsely pretending to marry enjoyed the body of Dalit girls and later deserted thus violating the marriage sanctity that Nandu (son of senior Patil) marries Nagi (sister of Limbale). As such marriages were usually not acceptable in society of high caste they just dispose of the marriages after sometime as though already married to Nagi. Nandu had married some other girl.

Moreover Dalit women had also affairs as Santamai had been seen chatting to Imam. Suman (declared sister of Limbale) had eloped with various lovers many times Nagi with Nandu, Kondamai go with Manakunna and later Damunna though she was married to Kherubaap, Ambumai with Kcharuajja but affair with Mahar was not allowed in society. The terror of Mahar community was so intense that Masamai requested,

“They will force us to sleep with them. You’d better stop your affair with Shewanta.”

Helpless Mahar could not resist against the illegitimate relation of Patils with their women. Hunger and vulnerability forced Dalit women to be pregnant and mothers of children of high caste men. Somehow if they bring illegitimate up they push them to identity crisis. Father does not acknowledge such children. Ultimately what caste they belong to as they were born of different caste parents? Who will marry illegitimates born of high caste father and low caste mothers? What religion they belong to if they born of different religion? These were the slaps on the faces of such children as Limbale feels himself. Concerns of Limbale seem justified as such children were not taken as pure in Mahar. No one get ready to marry their children. Limbale siblings suffer this humiliation. The girls has been married off at early age with the older people married-many times may be because of high caste people to save them from Hindus as Nagi was married to Kumar a deserted already by two wives. Pami and Indira’s marriages were fixed at age of seven and eight-nine and Vanis married to Jumma son of Rangoo prostitute. Pami and Indira returned home never to go back to their husband because by them the in-laws had come to
know that Masamai was a Mahar as father-in-law and kaka (father of Limbale’s sisters) were lingayat while mother-in-law is Mahar.

Dalit women were quarry not only of caste exploitation but of patriarchy too in their own community. Patriarchy plays a very vital role in treatment to women. In male dominated society Dalit women suffer unimaginable oppression not only through caste but gender too from which there was no escape. Indifferently they were treated brutally in male dominated society women stands no more than the clothes that can be retained and changed at anytime and age. Hindu religious scripture has significantly affected society irrespective of caste.

Arjun Dangle on Dalit Literature explained,

“Limbale draws attention to the fact he is the ‘illegitimate’
Progeny of the liaison between an upper caste and landlord and a dalit woman.”

Kacharuajja married once again with a wife to be his daughter Kumar too old with kids for Nagi third wife Jangam for Vani too old. More women were deserted with reason beaten and battered by their husbands as Chandamai and Santamai were deserted for unable to bear. Nagi, Vani Pami and Indira for the reason they were helpless. Kondamai was ill treated in the night. Further for the slightest reason as not being amendable to the household was tortured as Harya was ready with a knife to cut his wife’s nose and breasts on being found in bed of another man. Limbale was advised to not treat her like a wife. Let her rot for the reason that parents of Kusum Sharan’s wife were not letting him live with Kusum on account of unemployment. Thus child marriage, early motherhood, desertion of women, cruelty and marriage of old people again and again is signal of status of women in patriarchal system. Thus the hardships of Dalit women were not simply due to their poverty economical status or lack of education but were direct result of the severe exploitation and suppression by upper classes.

To conclude Sharankumar Limbale has offered the situation and trauma in life of Dalit women how they suffer at every step of their daily routine in caste.
hierarchy not only economically socially and physically but sexually too like a
doll and commodity to use and throw. For this sexual exploitation the children
born to as such suffer in life at every step in and out of their own community
too at the prospect of marriage and other social roles. The repeated
exploitation in male dominated society they were battered deserted and
physically tortured. Further they were the sufferer of patriarchy that gets
sanction from the religious scripture across the world. Consequently it is
predominantly the religious scripture that is the root cause of all above
illiteracy, unemployment, resource less caste system and patriarchy that has
reduced Dalit women to level of commodity. Sharankumar Limbale leaves the
questions of this section to the society explicit and implicit to be answered.

2.2 The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman’s Memoirs: Urmila Pawar

The original title of Urmila Pawar’s memoir is Aaydan a word from the local
dialect spoken in the villages that form the background of her life. Aaydan is
the name for the cane baskets that her mother wove to sell for additional
income for the family. Translated into English as The Weave of My Life: A
Dalit Woman’s Memoirs it takes us from her childhood memories of life in
the village and her mother’s constant struggle to make it, through her school
and college days in the town of Ratnagiri to her life after her marriage in
Mumbai where she encounters a feminist group and later becomes a writer and
organizer of Dalit women. The time span it covers is from just after India’s
independence in 1947 to the end of the century. The lives of different
members of her family her husband’s family her neighbors and classmates
were woven together in a narrative that gradually reveals different aspects of
the everyday life of Dalits and their constant struggle for survive the manifold
ways in which caste asserts itself and grinds them down. The author’s point of
view is also woven from two strands that of the young girl uncompromisingly
witnessing instances of caste injustice patriarchal domination and the daily
compulsions of poverty and of the mature woman looking back on these with
the insights she has gained later on in her life. And yet the narrator’s position
is neither central nor distanced it is constantly engaged.
M. S. S. Pandian says about two recent Dalit autobiographical texts *Karukku* and *Vadu* originally written in Tamil.

“The everyday the ordinary a temporality that is not teleological and a language of affect and in comprehension invest caste with certain presentences and immediacy and opens up a space for moral and political appeal to the upper castes. The burden of caste is returned to the upper caste.” 12

In Urmila Pawar’s writing there is plenty of the ordinary and every day and a temporality that goes back and forth from her own childhood to episodes in the life of her mother and her elder brothers and sisters and back. Much has been written. The sufferings of the Dalit were like those of the black slave in America the sufferings of community. Not only this because the path to emancipation is also a social project rather than an individual one the Dalit autobiography combines witnessing and experiencing in an act of sharing that gives it a political there is a sheer drop down to the sea.

**The Weave of My Life** begins with a detailed description of the harsh landscape of the *Konkan* region on the west coast of India and the relation. Dalit women their own lives harsh and full of toil have with this landscape. The range of the *Sahyadris* runs along the coastline and there is a sheer drop down to the sea. It begins with the village Dalit women’s journey to sell their wares rice bags firewood grass in the town market. The women walk in a group accompanied by their children for how can they leave them behind and who will look after them back in the village? They talk curse and gossip among themselves as they climb the hills along thorny paths buffeted by strong winds. Their rambling progress as they trace their zigzag route is echoed in their talk and sets the tone for Urmila Pawar’s writing in this memoir of a Dalit woman’s life.

In the words of Sonali Rode,

“Urmila Pawar's *Aaydan* describes her long journey from Kokan to Mumbai bringing the struggle of three generations for
a Dalit modernity about which readers have hitherto heard so little.”

Urmila Pawar is now a well known writer in Marathi her work consists mainly of short stories and a history of the role of women in the movement for the emancipation of the Dalits or untouchables led by Bhimrao Ramji (affectionately and respectfully known as Babasaheb) Ambedkar in the early twentieth century which she wrote in collaboration with Meenakshi Moon published in 1989. In chapter 8 of her autobiography Pawar tells us about starting out as a writer. Earlier she had been an enthusiastic participant in school and village plays this gave her confidence to speak on the stage and while she was working in Mumbai she came in contact with organizers and political activists among different groups of Dalits. She is struck by situations involving caste and gender prejudice and begins to put down her thoughts in the form of short stories. After some of these are published she meets other writers and becomes aware of matters of style and structure. Toward the end of the book she takes up her project of recording the histories of older Dalit women who took part in the Ambedkar movement. The transition from an oral to a written form of self-expression in Urmila Pawar’s own life echoes the story of emancipation of the Dalits. It is interesting that Pawar’s first attempt to form an organization of Dalit women is by starting a literary group called Sauvadini a coined name that adds a feminine ending to the word for conversation or dialogue.

In Pawar and Moon’s account of an earlier era of the struggle for Dalit liberation find repeated accounts of Dalit women in the 1930s and forties going up onstage in a public meeting where even to read an announcement or to propose or second a motion is an extraordinary act of self-emancipation. This is because untouchability the most extreme manifestation of caste in Indian society functions through a prohibition not only of touch and of certain occupations but also of the public use of speech. it is only the Brahmins who can enunciate sacred texts but the untouchables are even further silenced by the authority of caste. So for these Dalit women, who were also silenced by the authority of patriarchy to make a public use of speech was at the time truly
revolutionary. The political scientist Gopal Guru has underlined how Dalit women preserved the emancipator character of the public use of language in the post independence period when according to him. Dalit cultural politics was beginning to lose its edge. During Ambedkar’s lifetime and also after his death in 1956 the tradition of Ambedkari jalsas did much to mobilize and politically awaken Dalits across Maharashtra. These troupes drew upon the musical traditions of the Mahar the largest Dalit caste in Maharashtra and also on different forms of religious and folk singing imbuing them with a message of Dalit liberation.

Dalit women were invisible in the cultural landscape that was completely dominated by Dalit males. Further traditionally Dalit women had performed in the erotic song and dance form of the tamashas patronized by upper caste men. Ambedkar urged Dalits to give up those occupations and traditions that were demeaning and humiliating or in the women’s case sexually exploitative. And so according to Guru the moral code imposed by Dalit patriarchy forced women into private spheres and denied them free visibility. However he adds that in the post Ambedkar era women also developed their own cultural forms of protest. Urmila Pawar writes about how after they became Buddhist the women of her village at first found it hard that they could no longer sing the old religious songs but later on the weave their own words into the old tunes talking of their beloved leader affectionately as Baba or Bhim of his first wife Ramabai and of his social message. After Ambedkar’s conversion in 1956 shortly before his death Dalits all over the state followed him in giving up the worship of Hindu gods and goddesses and embraced the Buddhist faith. Urmila Pawar was a young schoolgirl at the time. While thousands of Dalits became Buddhist on the occasion of Ambedkar’s own conversion in Nagpur in eastern Maharashtra in October 1956 this wave of conversion reached her village in the Konkan only after Ambedkar’s death on December 6. Pawar describes the grief expressed by all around her on that day young and old women and men weeping uncontrollably while she (Urmila Pawar) was only just beginning to understand what had happened. And she tells us then the conversion happened quite suddenly Crowds of people from the surrounding villages marched to the grounds of Gogate College in Ratnagiri until it
resembled a sea of humanity. We went there too along with Govindada and the other villagers. Several instructions were being issued from the loudspeakers hanging overhead. Then came the reverberating sound of *Buddham Saranam Gachchami*, and we too joined the chanting of the crowd. After the ceremony we went home. Govindada and the villagers collected the idols and various pictures of the gods and goddesses adorning our walls which *Aaye* used to worship every day and threw them into a basket. This was a historic moment in the lives of Dalits in Maharashtra. Throwing away the pictures and idols of Hindu gods and goddesses was significant in two major senses it meant renouncing the lowly place that was accorded to Dalits in the Hindu caste hierarchy and it also entailed giving up superstition and ritual in favor of a more enlightened view of the world. Buddhism gave the Dalits a new vision of life the possibility of living in a totally new way free of bondage and subjugation. Toward the end of *The Weave of My Life*, Urmila Pawar returns to her village after living in Mumbai for many years. She sees tarred roads in place of the stony, thorny pathways she used to walk to school on and tiled houses in place of huts. But when she looks into the interior she is disturbed to find that the old gods and goddesses and rustic talismans to ward off evil spirits have returned to the homes of the neo-Buddhist villagers. The Konkan region with its rocky paths its precipitous slopes and the nearness of the sea the always palpable presence of a wild and unruly nature has traditionally been a breeding ground for all kinds of superstitions and belief in ghosts and the occult doings of neighbors. This is an integral part of the culture of the Konkan and with the Dalits there is added the constant struggle for survival in conditions of unremitting labor and extreme poverty. This region was also one of the areas that many of Ambedkar’s followers originated from. Urmila Pawar tells us about the villagers fight to emerge from these conditions to a better life through the eyes of the rebellious child that she then was who sees her father merely as a hard and even cruel man. He is willing to thrash his children and his nephews and nieces to put them through school. Yet the narrator also makes us see that his harshness is necessary for the Dalit child’s road to education is full of obstacles. The children are made to sit apart they are singled out to perform duties like sweeping the school they are beaten without reason and for the Brahmin teacher still feels that untouchables have
no right to an education. Pawar’s father set up house in Ratnagiri so that his children and his nephews and nieces would have access to better schools. When Urmila’s sister takes up a job and is about to give it up because of the hardships it entails her father helps out. That’s when Baba decided to stay with her. He brought his luggage to her tiny room and helped her hold on to the job. Pawar’s father also serves as a village priest he has inherited this mantle from an ancestor who directly challenged the authority of the Brahmin. For a Dalit to take on the duties of a village priest for his community was itself part of a tradition of resistance.

The Brahmin who usually had a monopoly on the priesthood exacted tribute and profit from every occasion in the villagers lives from birth marriage and death to illness, infertility or madness. The Dalit priest on the other hand is partly healer partly teacher and counselor. His approach to religion is pragmatic certain rites have to be carried out as a matter of custom. He is not above using meaningless mantras to lend dignity to his ministrations as long as this serves to comfort the supplicant who comes to him. The religious practice of the Dalits is thus shorn of the mystification that surrounds the figure of the Brahmin priest his monopoly over the interpretation of the sacred law thinly disguising his economic greed. The Dalit priest’s role is to dispense human wisdom in the context of the everyday. After their father’s death Urmila’s brother Shahu inherited the priesthood though he was only twelve years old. People made concessions for the small priest and gave him only jobs he could handle. Anecdotes like these in Urmila Pawar’s memoir can be read for their deep insights into caste as it is lived by the Dalits with its small cultures of resistance that help to make the ever present pain of untouchability more bearable. Her own experiences of caste discrimination are narrated with an interweaving of humor or with wry asides of self deprecation. At school the Dalit children are saddled with bothersome task son one occasion the master hits Urmila with the unjustified accusation that their family cow has made a mess in the verandah. She runs home crying and is cheered to find that her mother is willing to confront the teacher and demand justice. After her marriage Pawar is subjected to discrimination when she and her husband look for rented accommodations in the town of Ratnagiri they have to vacate two
rooms after the landlady discovers their caste. In one place her landlady’s daughter’s strike up a friendship and want to borrow a sari.

Urmila generously shows her all her wedding saris but when the girl discovers Urmila’s caste she suddenly lost her voice. Picking up my brocade sari she walked off. Here is the paradox of untouchability that it is fine to borrow a Dalit girl’s sari but not to have social intercourse with her or drink tea in her house. But Urmila Pawar’s tone in telling us this story is not the incomprehension of the suffering subject of the worst kinds of Dalit oppression and violence rather it is ironic. After all landladies in small towns are notorious for their caste sensitivities and it would not be only Dalits who are likely to undergo this kind of discrimination. One of the most moving anecdotes recounted in this memoir is of the village celebrations of the spring festival of Holi. Mahar youths are made to do the hard work of cutting down branches and trunks of trees and carrying them to the field where a fire will be lighted at dusk. But they are not allowed a place in the celebrations it is the upper caste men who carry the palanquin of the goddess and the Mahars are forbidden to touch it. But the Mahar boys who by this time have poured lots of drink down their throats jump up and try to touch the palanquin. They have been affected by the mood of defiance that is peculiar to the Holi festival when it is acceptable for men and women to howl and curse in public. These are age old traditions that have been followed by all castes for centuries. On the day after the full moon people throw dust and cow dung at each other these days it is customary to spray one another with colored water. While praying for prosperity and the diversion of calamities from the village the upper castes also ask that the calamities be visited on the Mahar. This is another role thrust on the untouchables that carrier’s misfortune as well as pollution, protectors and sanitizers of the village who are reviled rather than revered. The defiant Mahar boys are soundly kicked and beaten for their transgression. The narrative here chillingly adopts the technique of the ordinary the youths return to their families receive some comfort from their mothers and sisters and run back into the fray only to get beaten up again. Then the festival moves on to the next stage and everyone enjoys the dramatic performances staged in the light of the full moon petro-max lamps and the raging Holi fire.

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One of the special features of Urmila Pawar’s memoirs is her account of patriarchy among the Dalits. It begins in the second chapter with the description of the marriage ceremony of her eldest brother. This marriage took place before the Mahar converted to Buddhism but Urmila Pawar’s family had already cut down on the number of rites to be performed. She gives details of the rituals of a Mahar wedding which the reader of the Marathi original will easily recognize as being different from those of a traditional Hindu wedding. The all important saptapadi or seven circling of the sacred fire by the bride and groom for instance is replaced by arranging seven piles of rice on a wooden plank for the bride to step on. When the rituals are over the traditional games begin. After her account of several games, Pawar remarks:

“All these games were basically intended to control the bride and keep her in check. But when they were being played everybody laughed and had a good time. These were happy occasion in their lives.”

Women from her village traveled to the marketplace at Ratnagiri to sell various equipments. They trudged the distance with huge heavy bundles with firewood or grass rice or semolina long pieces of bamboo baskets of ripe or raw mangoes on their heads. Their loads would be heavy to break their necks. Early in the morning they start their journey to Ratnagiri. Phansawale and Ratnagiri the road was difficult as it wound up and down the hills. When they came to the first hill the angry women would curse the moolpurush of our family who had heard them would have died again. The reason for the abuse was quite simple because it was he who had chosen this particular village Phansavale for this people to settle. It was an extremely difficult and inconvenient landscape as it lay in a difficult to understand channel in a far off corner of the hills. Two high hills were between the village and the outside world. The sharp climb with their narrow winding paths full of jutting pointed stones and pebbles were extremely slippery. One wrong step will roll down to one's death somewhere in the bottom of the deep valleys. Then there were two big rivers to cross. After crossing the hills and the river son a long dusty and
dirty path till they reached the city. Every time a toe crushed against a overhang stone a curse rang out probably making the poor ancestor turn in his grave.

Occasionally the women heard the terrifying roars of a tiger even in large daylight and certainly incidents of tigers attacking people on their way were not rare. Danger lurked everywhere. It crawled across one's path in the form of poisonous snakes such as *ghonus* and *phurse* who looked as if they wanted to inquire casually after the travelers. The barren open spaces were covered with bushes as sharp as the teeth of those creatures and resembled some ancient body armor. The howling wind blew continuously. Then there was a huge deep well on the way without any protective walls around shrouded in the mist of chilling stories of evil spirits lurking there. And as if all this were not enough there would be freaks and perverts hiding in shrubs and trees who occasionally assaulted the helpless women. Later on in the book Pawar gives us more serious examples of patriarchal oppression of women both within the Dalit community and along the lines of caste hierarchy with upper-caste men enjoying a license to exploit Dalit women sexually. The temple priest sexually abuses a young girl from the nomadic Komati community the young Urmila sees her coming out of the inner sanctum in tears and does not understand. Her mother and her elder sister Bhikakka are more victims of dire poverty than patriarchy but a detailed account of the ill-treatment of another sister Manjula at the hands of her in-laws followed by several cases of similar treatment of daughters-in-law. On the other hand Urmila Pawar tells us of her own experience of affection and friendship from members of her husband’s family. There is a terrible story of a widow who becomes pregnant and kicked in the stomach by women of the village till she aborts the fetus and later dies. Noting the self righteousness of the village women who feel that they are upholding the honor of their community is the only comment Pawar offers us with regard to this incident. She does not mention whether the woman in question was a *Dalit* though that seems unlikely. However the Dalit women of the village certainly participated in the spirit if not the act of punitive violence.

On the whole however Dalit widows were not treated with the same degree of exclusion as in the Brahmin community. Although Pawar does not touch on
the issue of widow remarriage she gives us a small linguistic essay on the term *randkisooj* which translates as widow’s swelling or widow swelling. Urmila has heard the phrase from her mother who claims that although she is a widow she does not have the *randkisooj*. She asks her elder sister about it and gets the following reply:

“You know for some women when their husbands die it are a release from oppression. Then they look a little better fresh so people say they have got the *randkisooj*. Then she grew grave and said but let me tell you I have always been like this somewhat plump even before my husband died.”

This explanation is perhaps an adequate comment on the nature of dalit patriarchy. The earthy phrase more so because the word *raand* means both a widow and a prostitute in Marathi tells us that many a woman is so badly treated by her husband that she blossoms out a little after his death. And yet the freedom to joke about it the common use of such a phrase also signifies that widows are not completely suppressed.

Urmila Pawar’s use of earthy language is no longer a new stylistic device. Dalit autobiographers have used the vocabulary of the *Mahars* and the *Mangs* to define a world foreign to the experience of most of literature. Pawar is aware that there is not much shock value left in the use of this vocabulary. But she gives us an experience of the women’s cursing the words they use in quarrels the open discussion of bodily functions and of the polluting work that the untouchables are forced to do. The crude language the openness is also an integral part of Dalit culture. The women’s songs especially those composed after the conversion to Buddhism carry the touch of the soil the strength of bodies accustomed to hard labor. Her account of her romance with Harishchandra the man she eventually marries also does not shy away from discussing the physical aspects of their relationship.

Maya Pandit’s translation succeeds to a great extent in conveying the flavor of this speech and the down to earth. She retains the use of Marathi kinship terms that are so much a part of family relationships and gives us a glossary to their
meaning. It is always challenging to translate a linguistically diverse text from one language to another and here it has been done with considerable accuracy and ease.

Urmila Pawar devotes to a description of food and eating habits in her family and community. This helps her to accomplish a number of distinct objectives. First the experience of extreme poverty of living with a persistent lack of adequate nourishment is most effectively conveyed through the child’s viewpoint. The mother is described as stingy fending off her children’s demands while we also see her efforts to make ends meet and to give them what taste and variety she can. Then there is the contrast with the food habits of young Urmila’s upper caste schoolmates. The children’s negotiations with each other and the pain the girl feels tell us a great deal about one of the central aspects of caste hierarchy. And finally throughout the hierarchy it is the women who care for the culture of their caste and there is an enjoyment and a pride in talking about the food characteristic to one’s caste and the food prepared at festivals however meager it may be. Women are the cultural carriers of caste and it is through the patriarchal control of women that caste divisions are maintained.

In the later chapters of **The Weave of My Life** Urmila Pawar moves with her husband to Mumbai and works at a job in a government office. Here the narrative picks up speed as she adjusts to life in a metropolitan city. The ubiquitous presence of caste cannot be entirely forgotten even there. There are daily pinpricks and occasionally bigger jolts of caste discrimination. But Pawar makes good use of the newfound freedom and attends meetings meets women’s groups and most important begins to write. Here her weaving technique is at play as she intersperses the narrative of her own achievements with her observations about the society around her. Her feminism becomes more pronounced. Her increasing activity and fame as a writer makes her husband uncomfortable. There is tragedy she loses a college going son and problems to be resolved. She stands by both her daughters when they go against their father’s wishes marrying men of their choice. Pawar’s autobiography has been much acclaimed in Marathi literary circles. It has won
prizes and is currently in its third edition. But she says that the book has also received its share of flak especially in the Dalit community. She has been criticized for her association with upper caste women’s groups and her open exposition of Dalit patriarchy has not been welcomed. The movement for the emancipation of the untouchables carried on for some time after Ambedkar’s death but the co-operation of many of its leaders by the ruling Congress Party eventually blunted its revolutionary edge. Ambedkar for his part like the nineteenth century social reformer Jyotiba Phule before him was always very clear that a fight for the emancipation of Dalits would have to take up the cause of gender equality. Even today cultural and political movement leaders organizing against caste invoke the names of Ambedkar and Phule. Urmila Pawar talks about this several times in the later chapters of her book today’s Dalit leaders are not very open to women raising issues of gender. Some might say that patriarchal attitudes have hardened since the 1990s when fundamentalist religious organizations began to dig in their heels on the Indian political scene. In fact the radical face of the Dalit movement began eroding even earlier with the rise of the ShivSena in Mumbai a party that mobilized disaffected non Brahmin youth of the city using a fascist rhetoric directed first against southerners in Mumbai and later against Muslims. Similarly though some dialogue between Dalit women’s organizations and the mainstream women’s movement it a problematic term today have been initiated there is still distrust and suspicion. The issues raised on each side do not translate well into the rhetoric of the other. There has not been enough genuine dialogue or attempts to forge a common program.

In any case Urmila Pawar is today quite deeply involved in a political attempt by Dalit women’s organizations to bring together the movements against gender and caste inequality. Recently she was one of the organizers of protests in Mumbai on the brutal murder of a Dalit woman and her daughter in a village named Khairlanji in the Bhandara district at the eastern end of Maharashtra state. The story is depressingly familiar. An upwardly mobile Dalit family attracted the anger of the village upper castes as they owned a bit of land a daughter was studying in college and her mother bought her a bicycle. Attempts to harass them by trying to encroach into their land were
resisted. The retaliation of the upper castes was visited upon the two women Surekha and Priyanka Bhotmange. Their bodies stripped naked were found dumped in a river. A recent court verdict has acquitted three of the accused and pronounced a death sentence on five others for murder. However the judgment denies any caste motivation for the crime and also refuses to take cognizance of the accusation of gang rape since evidence of the latter has been systematically destroyed. Dalit women’s organizations in demanding justice for the victims of this crime seek to underline how violence especially sexual violence is perpetrated on Dalit women whenever it is felt that the caste order has been transgressed. The involvement of the state and the media in suppressing these implications of the Khairlanji violence has however not been taken up either by Dalit political organizations or women’s organizations as a major issue though some protests have been organized by women organizations at the local and national levels. If one wishes to understand the complex interweaving of caste and patriarchy and how it affects the lives not only of Dalit women but of men and women of all castes living in contemporary India, Urmila Pawar’s book has much to offer. This is about how the politics of culture is played out in the lives of ordinary women and men in a situational context vastly different from her own. She may also understand something of the role that Dalit women can play in shaping the politics of the future.

This book is a meaningful narrative of the social transformation of Dalits in India. At one level it is loving tribute from a daughter at another it gives an intellectual review of the caste system in India. This is the story of the awakening of Dalits traversing three generation at yet another level it is reflective of the aspirations of millions of Dalits in India.

In the concluding paragraphs of her Memoir Urmila Pawar writes,

“Life has taught me many things showed me so such. It has also lashed it me till I bled I don’t know how much longer I am going to live nor do I know in what form life is going to confront me let it came in any form; I am ready to face it
stoically. This is what my life has taught me. This is my life and that is me.”

Urmila Pawar reflects that it is a radical rational humanistic category developed in the rebellion of those oppressed and humiliated by the social system. She sees her realization of becoming a modern human being emerging from the Phule Ambedkarite movement and granting individuality to both men and women from the women’s movement in Maharashtra. Sharmila Rege in her afterword writes,

“Memoirs of humiliation and resistance delineate the reproduction of caste as a form of modern inequality both in the village and the city. People would first purify the Aaydan the basket woven by dalits by sprinkling water on it. At school teachers would pick on dalit girls to clean the dung on the school verandah when it was the turn of their class to undertake the cleaning.”

2.3 Untouchables’ My Family’s Triumphant Journey out of the Caste System in Modern India: Dr. Narendra Jadhav

‘Untouchables’ My Family’s Triumphant Journey out of the Caste System in Modern India is a story of awakening of Dalits. It is a story of one Dalit family’s struggle motivated by Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar who touched the lives of millions of Dalits. Damodar Runjaji Jadhav was just one of them. The author’s father Damu was an ordinary man who did extraordinary things in his life. He stood up against the oppression of the caste system by teaching his children to believe in themselves and reclaim their human dignity. Damu’s guts and sinews are too strong his response to Ambedkar’s call to Dalits to “Educate, Unite and Agitate.”

Damu comes to Mumbai to escape from the domination of the upper castes in his native village Ozar in Nasik District of Maharashtra. His struggle for survival and his conversion under the guidance of Dr. Ambedkar from servility to awakened self-consciousness is the main theme of this book. Damu was not a leader nor did he ever become one. But he had an exception to rebel
against the existing caste system to create his own destiny. An intelligent man with no education he worked hard to live with dignity. Damu is abused and severely beaten up for refusing to take out a rotten body from a well. His forefathers had worn clay pots around their necks to keep their spit from polluting the ground and brooms tied to their rumps to demolish their footprints as they walked. Damu’s story is different from those Indian Dalit autobiographies which repeat and lighten the horrors of untouchability. The simplicity of narrative brings out the depression in the story and conquest of the Damu’s family describing various landmarks like a drastic transformation under the influence of Dr. Ambedkar in realization of their self esteem and finally their empowerment through education. Untouchables’ My Family’s Triumphant Journey Out of the Caste System in Modern India., brings to the fore what is the place of a Dalit in the eyes of policemen and upper caste people. He writes Walking home slowly he was looking forward to some that tea and bhakri is homemade millet bread when a policeman came looking for him:

“Eh Damu Mahar I have been looking all around for you. Where have you been wandering around, you son of bitch?”

The constable seemed flustered and Damu sensed that something terrible had happened. He told Damu that a dead body had been found floating in the broken well by the Mangroves.

“You will sit guarding the body till the Fauzdar and the police party comes to inspect the scene and write a report the constable ordered. Nobody should be allowed near the well. Remember if anything happens to the corpse your body too will end up in the well.”

This clearly indicates that Dalit’s duty was to carry the corpse and listened to the orders of policemen. The policeman did not care in the least whether Damu was hungry or not. When Damu told the policeman that he hadn’t eaten since morning he lifted his pointer as if to hit him.
"Do you see my baton? He asked brandishing it I’ll stick it up your ass and you will see it come out of your throat. I’ll beat you up so badly that you will forget the name of your father."  

This clearly shows a picture of exploitation, fear, terror, repression and oppression of a Dalit by a policeman. Dalit writers like Om Prakash Valmiki and Sharankumar Limbale and others who have attempted to negotiate the challenge of securing narrative authority by emphasizing the experience of discrimination and Dalit identity as two necessary criteria for writing. Dalit autobiographers also negotiate the issue of authority to represent the Dalit community by presenting their autobiography not as a result of this desire for personal recognition but as a response to the requests from the Dalit community for representation.

Dalit autobiographies are not simply the narration of life stories. They are also used by Dalit writers as a means of political assertion. For example Dr. Narendra Jadhav in his autobiography Untouchables': My Family’s Triumphant Journey Out of the Caste System in Modern India, speaks about Dr. Bhimrao (Babasaheb) Ambedkar leading thousands of Dalits to the Chavdar Pond in Mahad in a peaceful agitation for water rights and soon he will launch a satyagrah demanding entry into the Kala Ram Temple for Dalits. There is an incident described in the text where Damu the chief protagonist of the story is seen as rebelling against the whole traditional society when the fauzdar turns his foul tongue on Babasaheb Ambedkar. For Damu Babasaheb is god. Damu decides he has had enough. He will throw away the depressed crutches of village duties that have been load with him and he return to Mumbai. The harsh opposition of Ambedkarites to Mahatma Gandhi’s description of untouchables as Dalits finds no place in Damu’s story. Where as in Moon’s even the anti Gandhi expression during his visit to Nagpur forcing him to turn back is debated and described. In comparison Vasant Moon’s growing up Untouchable in India is more political. Damu works for the Dalit cause from time to time in the early years and more constantly later. He does not discuss issues of political dispute as Moon does. Damu’s guts and sinews are too strong to Ambedkar’s call to Dalits to “Educate, Unite, Agitate”
too complete. His story lives in the present the recent spurt in Dalit literature in India is an attempt to bring to the forefront the experiences of discrimination violence and poverty of the Dalit. These experiences have for long been silenced and marginalized as unliterary with religious and social sanction.

Alok Mukherjee a literary theorist and a human rights activist rightly sums up the significance of Dalit writing,

“Indian literary history and theory as well as the teaching of Indian literatures are spectacularly silent about Dalit literature. Yet dalit cultural and critical productions make a significant critical intervention in the thinking and writing about Indian society, history, culture and literature. He identifies two of the important functions of Dalit writing. Firstly Dalit writing attempts to deconstruct the dominant castiest constructions of India identity and secondly it constructs a distinct Dalit identity. Dalit writing presents a dalit centric view of life and constructs Dalit identity in relation to Colonial identity and Indian identity.”

More recent is the trend to deny their existence altogether. The growing quantity of Dalit texts, poems, novels and autobiographies however seeks to approve this while describing the nuances of Dalit cultures. Dalit literature comes in all genres the autobiographies are the most popular. This extraordinary growth in Dalit writing is part of growing need of the dalits themselves to coherent their experiences. These texts which have for centuries been refer to the margins offer a challenge to literary aesthetics which with its caste and gender bias have for long been concealed descriptions of the distress of being an untouchable and the target of upper caste ideology and machinations these voices question the institutions and ideologies that have placed them at the margins. Even more distressing are the stories of Dalit women it bad and worse. This autobiography has definitely used as political assertion. This is not limited to a small area but links the individual to his entire caste community as a way of gaining power and support in a group
struggle against oppression. India’s Ex-Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Sigh’s observation of the autobiography substantiates the following view,

“Like life of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar or indeed the life of our beloved former President the late Dr. K. R. Narayanan the life story of Dr. Jadhav is also a story of change, great courage, progress and hope . . . Narendra’s autobiography must shape our social and political vision. It must shape our educational policy.”22 (Dr. Manmohan Sing, November 16, 2005. Address)

This strong positive message is engraved in the minds of the reader. Dr. Narendra Jadhav’s autobiography ‘Untouchables: My Family’s Triumphant Journey Out of the Caste System in Modern India’ is a story of the impact of teaching his children a sense of self respect dignity identity and awareness of human rights. He leaves his native village Ozar in Nasik and comes to Mumbai. Once again we find that villages are the den of caste consciousness in India. A Dalit finds it very difficult to succeed in a village. Especially big cities give opportunities to Dalits. This conversion of the family from an exploited to a self awakened human entity is the central part of this autobiography. The author’s father fights the hierarchy of caste and created his own destiny. The autobiography describes how the father was mercilessly beaten and insulted in the village. But in different Dalit tales his story does not at exploitation but it goes beyond. It brings family’s success of the struggle. It’s a positive story and ends in achievement. It underlines the importance education. A poor family conquers middle class status because of father, strength of the mother and hard work of the children. India is plentiful with such raw potentials. Shonali Muthalaly explains in her review on “My Review of Narendra Jadhav’s autobiography” that,

“This amazing and intense story will make you laugh a little cry a lot and assess your life in great detail. A heart wrenching account told from Narendra’s parents Damu and Sonu’s point of view each chapter ending with one’s narrative and picking up with the other’s on the same event and continuing forward.”23
The Dalit autobiographies reflect a flaming desire for freedom from the command of caste. Dalits experience is a sense of disgust from upper castes. The chance of birth stigmatizes them forever. Even small children know how they are inferior from the bigger people. Now the vast majority of India is not to feel marginalized anymore. They enjoy what the constitution has granted them what Nature has given them. Time to ask or beg has gone. Time to feel dignified has come.

2.4 Baluta: Daya Pawar

Baluta title is generalizing the status of rural untouchables. It records the struggle of a writer for peace with no chance of revenge in word. These are investigative reflections on the autobiographical narratives written in prose by dalit authors in their mother tongue Marathi. The most genuine autobiographical masterpiece of N.S. Suryavanshi, Things I Never Imagined (1975) and the sensation caused in the literary circles of Maharashtra by Daya Pawar's Baluta(1978) may be considered as marking the rising of the dalit autobiography at the horizon of the Marathi literary establishment. They show variety in respect of length mode of production degree of elaboration quality of editing, printing publication and publicity.

The autobiography recounts the experiences of an untouchable women struggling for a peaceful existence. He earned fame through his autobiographical prose work Baluta those talks about the harsh realities of the caste system and the painful life of dalit women in India. He gave expression to the oppression of the Dalits through his verse. With effective verses like his first collections of poems Kondvada he voiced the atrocities and oppression faced by generations of the Dalit. Baluta is a story by Dagdu Pawar as narrated to the more literate Daya Pawar. The strengths of the autobiography are the simple straightforward and to the point portrayal and a transparent realistic illustration of the ethos around him. The book stirred Marathi society and was a critical success in both Marathi and its Hindi translation. This autobiography created a new genre in Marathi literature. Many autobiographical books are talking about harsh experiences and hard realities after Baluta. Use of language is special about Daya Pawar which is not merely
of revolt but of a deeply introspecting analytical intellectual. Pawar’s writing’s reflects his active participation in the social, cultural and literary movements on the national level. His work was greatly effective. He received recognition by way of awards. He suffered mentally and physically due to unfair situation in his personal life. It is permanent suffering that comes through sharply in his writings. **Baluta** resemble the legendary bird phoenix which kills itself on a funeral pyre but is reborn from the ashes.

Anupama Rao considers that

> “Baluta as a representative of Dalit literature wasn't just a more faithful narration of the Dalit experience but that it presented an ethical challenge to the caste Hindu whom it implicated.”

Dalit literature too is born from the ashes of the anguish anger of the unjust social system based on caste and class inequities and is an expression of the agony suffered by these deprived groups for ages. It is the main an attempt to establish an independent identity for him. It engages the theme of protest directed against the existing intellectual and social system. It also opens several debates on the issues of caste and identity politics. It has become an expression of community rather than the individuals by challenging traditional literary aesthetics traditional slogans ideologies and idioms of existing.

**Baluta** by Daya Pawar depicts crude realities of the caste system in India. Daya has a staunch intellectual vein. He is well versed in world literature. All his life he was involved in various social movements of Dalit uplifting. The book depicts a Dalit’s struggle for a peaceful existence. Daya suffers by physically and mentally. The autobiography shows deep compassion towards his people and his constant spirit. The book portrays the exposure of Dalits. The autobiography also received anti Dalit backlash. But Daya Pawar succeeded in bringing to notice the dilemma of the masses of Dalits. **Baluta** his traditional village shares as remuneration for performing stigmatized labour. Pawar has characterized his story as a secret that must not be revealed perhaps because of the shame as well as the pain that attaches to confronting himself. Pawar plays the relationship between secrecy and shock instead of
celebrating the autobiographical as an authentic act of self representation. Definitely Dagdu Maruti Pawar is both a character and a concept. He is the secret sharer of Indian society whose shameful experiences cannot be related without rejecting the agreement of Hindu privacy. The narrative progresses throw light on different phases of life like customs practices, education, financial realities and gender bias. The diversity of narrative concerns is united by the writer's continuous analysis. It is a first person narration of the marginal consciousness struggle is a matter of inspiration for him and others giving an account of discrimination and deprivation. The harsh reality of life is recognition and assertion living on the boundaries of the marginalized as young expendable human material exposed. Pawar’s struggle reflects his active participation in the social cultural and literary movement on the national level. *Baluta* is an expression of his introspective thinking solid position deep understanding and understanding towards social activities and issues. Due to the oppressive circumstances he suffers mentally and physically in his personal life. The work portrays the infirmities within the civil society permeated with caste and class distinctions and the reader is filled with sensitivity to the situation and condition of the protagonist his autobiography is strongly emotional testimonies about the suffering of past life as pains of death. They want to confirm about them and plan them as historical evidence in front of against humanity. The wish to forget a former condition of domination and its semantics make them angry one ought not to be ashamed of a past which was not fault but society's crime. To put the past on record is a duty of justice to the ancestors whose humanity was crushed but could not be altogether eliminated by the Hindu *Dharma*. Keeping record of their agonies and efforts to survive is to redeem them hand and remind the new generations who tend to return into the folds of a racially repressive society of the one who has shown humanity the way of justice and love Ambedkar a god. This is the actual story of his life. But it is also a story of The Untouchable. In his life social and political worker, labored with great dedication and faithfulness for *dalit* and nomadic people the slum dweller those living on pavements the prostitutes of *Kamathiwada* etc. They were firstly a mockery Dagadu altered in Dyam or D. M. As a consequence the doubt about the capacity of the image or the name to reveal a real identity is a denunciation of the social identity
obtained at birth. In other terms society denied a human identity and on the other hand gave a social identity that makes one shivering a dreaded identity. The boy received a mineral name and he survived but recognized as a stone. He was later known as Dayaa name which carries a call for people's pity that pity that the sight of the potraj inspires to the on lookers and passersby on the street and that the narration of his life will similarly elicit from the readers. At that time untouchability was observed in the most abominable manner. But he used to eat the meat of dead animals because that was the only way to live. Those who had reduced human beings to such a state ought to be ashamed. When the village ostracized the Mahar he starved and his mother too. If the animals of the village fell victim to an epidemic ostracisation was inevitable. A bitter gourd used to be tied near the village boundary to announce that the Mahars were ostracized. Mahars were then forbidden to set their foot in the village. Nobody was allowed to give them work. They could not even buy salt and chilies in the village. Nobody would give them food or water. During such an ostracisation the Marathas would pull the corpse of the animal which dies in the epidemic out in the field. Seeing their food eaten by the vultures was a painful sight for the Mahars. The Mahars used to pray God Rokdoba to have mercy on their children. But Rokdoba was the god of the Marathas. How could he has pity on them? The starved Mahars would go at night to fetch that rotten meat which gave out a foul smell. Even the inflorescence of a cactus that caused itching was eaten. Marathas were still scared to cause enmity with the Mahars. A Mahar may suffer beatings docilely beg bear with insults during daytime, at night he becomes a tiger. Then the Maratha who has hurt him is taught a lesson. The Mahar may steal his animal set fire to the feed up root his crop and stuff the well with it. The next day the same Mahar would go and sympathies with the Maratha along with the village.

Pawar’s graphic description of life in the Mahardwada a place outside villages reserved for Dalits shocked and still does. Baluta is a term for the structure of village duties that Dalits had share in the village produce. Which was not followed by short story collections of comparable power Baluta inaugurated a stream of explosive autobiographical narratives. It was not easy to tell these
personal stories of disgrace and domination. At one point in Baluta Pawar writes,

“What I had seen of the life of Mahars in my childhood has cut a permanent gash in my heart. The past will never be erased. It will go only when I go. The layers of abjectness that you see on my face even today have their source in those times. Hard as you might scrub them all you will do is draw blood. They will not come off. However Pawar balances his personal pain with the thought that telling these stories is politically important. Some Dalits feel such stories are like digging up a garbage dump. But if a man does not know his past he will not know which direction he must take in the future.”

2.5 Majya Jalmachi Chitarkatha: Shantabai Kambale

The autobiography Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha by Dalit woman writer Shantabai Kambale the protagonist of the story Naja bears the brunt of class caste and gender. Naja is from the Mahar caste one of the biggest Dalit communities in Maharashtra. Najabai Sakharam Babar (renamed Shantabai Krishnaji Kamble after her marriage) was the first dalit woman teacher in Sholapur district. She began teaching at the Sholapur District Board School in 1942. She completed two years of teacher training and served as an education extension officer in the Jat taluka of Sangli district in 1952. She wrote Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha (The Kaleidoscopic Story of My Life) after her retirement from teaching in 1981. The autobiography was first serialized in Purva magazine in 1983 and was teleserialised as Najuka on Mumbai Doordarshan in 1990. It has also translated into French. The word Chittarkatha means a picture story indicates a sense of pieces of pictures being put together like a jigsaw puzzle.

She explained,

“My parents have given me education. My husband was a school master. We have therefore given education to our
children. Friends of my age who continue to stay in the village say to me you are educated. Your children also are educated. Now you are well off. Otherwise see what we are. We go as daily wage earner. Hired one day jobless the next. This is how we live starving. Had we studied we would have lived well like you. To think of it, it is true do I tell myself. My children have studied and succeeded. None of my brothers went to school. They learnt to be masons. One does not always find work in this line. One never eats one's fill. One feels cramps pain in the stomach as soon as the rainy season starts. I remember my mother telling us. There is nothing to eat today. Children go and sleep on an empty stomach. I could not find sleep as my stomach was empty. I said to my mother Mummy give me anything to eat. Naja there is nothing in the house. What to give? She used to reply wiping her eyes. We all used to have a troubled sleep. The memory of those days gives me stomach aches.”

In fact the direct and sober narration of events which marked the initial seven years of her schooling give a relevant account of two opposite dynamics. On the one hand traditional constraints regulate everyday life and make school appear as a burden unnecessarily breaking a precarious set of strategies of immediate survival. On the other hand an untouchable school master personally committed to the cause of educational uplift of untouchable castes makes a point to open a separate class in the untouchable hamlet itself and forcefully intervenes to enroll girls too. The author's testimony is a glaring record of that blend of chance and purpose which often determines the course of life of marginalized human beings particularly of women. The latter's lot actually looks like a hazard. Shantabai's access to schooling is socially symbolic in this respect. It is due to a mixture of natural dispositions a will more or less aware of its motivations and objectives and the casual availability of friendly circumstances. Shantabai's promotion appears a matter of complete luck as everything apparently starts with a trick of a committed school master keen to enroll the girl despite the objection of his father. Seen from within her
schooling experience shows the way personal resources turn through constraints inhibitions and handicaps of any sort. Now in her sixties Baby Kamble looks forward but with painful feelings as she observes that the learned generation of today has totally driven Babasaheb out of its life.

Najabai Sakharam Babar (renamed Shantabai Krishnaji Kamble after marriage) was the first dalit woman teacher in Sholapur district. She began her teaching career in Solapur District Board School in 1942 and completed two years teachers training in 1952 to become the education officer of Karad taluka in Sangli District. Shantabai retired in 1981 and wrote her autobiography Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha (The Kaleidoscopic Story of My Life) in which she related her experience as a dalit woman who had managed to break both caste and social barriers.

Shantabai was born in Mahud Budruk to parents who were agricultural laborers and bull tenders for middle caste peasants. But their economic deprivation did not make them stop dreaming about their daughter’s education. As Shantabai recalls whenever her mother related stories of hardship she would finish the story by telling her that it was important to study for better life. Thus Shantabai was educated in her local school till class seven and thereafter the community leaders put pressure on her father to marry her off. The search began for a school master who would marry her and this led her family to start negotiations with her prospective husband Kamble Master.

Shantabai explains the circumstances of her marital family which also depended on the collection of coal and soon moved to Kargani where she and Kamble Master lived. At this time she got pregnant and when she was five months pregnant she discovered that Kamble Master had got a second wife by marrying his own cousin. In disgust Shantabai forced Kamble Master to break their marriage in front of the community elders and went back to her father’s house in Mahud.

After she came home she received a call for an interview as a school teacher in Akluj. She was then offered a place as a reliever in place of a teacher who was on medical leave. Shantabai recalls that there was no bus to Akluj so she
would travel half the way on horseback and the rest of the way on foot every day. The work was tough and she would often suffer from fever. In any case she was seven months pregnant and forced to apply for maternity leave. In the process she miss carried her child and lost her infant. She petitioned the Sholapur School Board whose chairman was involved with Ambedkar movement for a permanent job. On the eighth day she received an appointment as a school teacher in Kurduwadi School where she was paid a substantial sum of Rs 15 per month. She recalls that from her first salary she brought two sarees for seven rupees and twelve kilos of jowar and nine kilos of wheat for one rupee each.

At this time Kamble Master used to visit her regularly and he started spreading the message that he was coming to Kurduwadi to check on his wife so that she would not marry a second time. He finally managed to pressurize Shantabai to take long leave and shift back with him. However Shantabai’s marital problems did not end there and the second wife came back. After a series of quarrels and clash Shantabai once again returned to her father’s home with a second child and was posted to Kaldas in 1949. She faced many personal problems during her duties and posting.

When she got to her new workplace she was advised to return as she was told that two previous teachers had left because they were beaten up and sent back in shame. In return she told the villagers that they should judge her by her work and took up her duties at the school which was in the middle of a Brahmin habitation. Shantabai recalls how people of the lower castes were happy and would declare that our teacher has come. They began to send their sons and daughters to school and gradually the people of Kaldas got convinced that the teacher was good for them. At the same time she also had to face discrimination from the upper castes who would not allow her to fill water from the village well. She recalls that the flow meant for the untouchables always had stagnant water.

In Kaldas Kamble Master visited her regularly and even borrowed money from her to build a house in Kargani where he was working at that time. At the end of one year in this school Shantabai hoped to return to a stable life in
Kargani as her husband’s second wife was dead by then. But as she puts it she
did not live too long in the new house because she got admission to a two year
teacher training course at the Women’s College in Pune. Here Shantabai has
an interesting tale to narrate. She says that though the college did not practice
untouchability a Brahmin girl from Pandharpur refused food every time she
was served by a dalit. So all the lower caste girls complained and the
superintendent threatened the girl with expulsion if she refused to eat food.
The next time she was forced to eat the chapattis Shantabai served her.

In 1953 a year after Shantabai finished her training she and Kamble Master
were appointed to Dighinchi where both of them started adult literacy classes
in the dalit colony of Baudhdhwada. She enrolled forty women in her class
while her husband started educating dalit men. The education officer of the
area was very impressed with this work and the chairman of the Zilla Parishad
also recommended a reward. But upper caste Brahmin leaders refused to give
them the award of Gramgaurav. However by this time the fame of the
Kambale had spread wide and the education officer of Karangi (the place
where they had a house) got them transferred back as he wanted the schools in
his area to be improved. She recalled that they started a campaign for the
enrolment of dalit girls in school. By the time of her retirement she and her
husband had together reformed the school and improved its reputation. She
was appointed as an education extension officer five and a half months before
her retirement. The discriminatory mindset of the people did not change even
after her achievements. At the farewell function on her retirement she was
asked to sit on the podium but the presiding officer forgot to mention about
her promotion She wonders,

“This dalit headmistress from this village has become
Education Extension Officer. She has been promoted. It would
have been better if he had mentioned this but perhaps he forgot
to do so…”

Perhaps both patriarchy and caste were at play here and Shantabai had defied
both. She too concludes her autobiography on a note of personal
dissatisfaction and uncertainty for future. Although her beliefs tell that it is
possible to lead a meaningful life yet it has not been possible for her to do so far. Her support is the knowledge.

Shantabai Kamble is an activist of Ambedkar Movement. She is aware of the oppressions under which the Dalit community people have to suffer. She is proud of to be a Mahar community woman. She asserts herself as a real citizen of the land which is named after their caste i.e. land for Mahar is Maharashtra. But as true activist she is upset by the social condition of her community people she wants to orient them she wants to introduce the new generation with the life of Dalit during the last fifty years. This is her intension behind the autobiography so it is the history of her community people rather than the routine description of the author’s family matters. She had lived in the same social structure of Hindu society in which woman is considered as assistant of husband. She was subjected for her husband’s doubts. But her autobiography deals with grandparents’ parents and her community people. The tone of the autobiography is egalitarian and it is not influenced by masculinity. The adversity is an equal challenge for wife and husband. Her autobiography deals with these two contradictory approaches for two religions in which the logical rationality self awareness and struggle for emancipation are important aspects. In short we can say that the basic difference between these two autobiographies is that the former finds romance and trill in the conversion whereas the later deals with the utter need of conversion as means of emancipation for each and every type of adversity in the life of downtrodden.

2.6 Summing Up:

To sum up, in the second chapter researcher has described the pain and the discrimination of Dalit women. They were subjected which was racial discrimination where the earlier was discriminated and treated as untouchable due to born into a particular community. Dalit Women’s position was worse than the slaves. They were exploited by one by another. They were thrice discriminated, treated as untouchables and as outcastes, due to their caste, face gender discrimination being women and finally economic impoverishment due to unequal wage disparity Treated unequally in patriarchal system they were deserted by their husbands’ victims of domestic violence and ill-treatment
particularly lower caste laboring women. Dr. Sharankumar Limbale’s autobiography among all other autobiographies is most sensitive and aware of the problems facing women as a gender inequality. It is however a burden of hatred and contempt since centuries and sometimes abuses and spits out back on lower castes the toxin that they had consumes for ages. But that negativity is actually a form of bold and positive assert. Because self-conscious and ruined human beings break that position and condensed by a shout which was the signals of a human being. These autobiographies hold certain ambivalences, as the authors and many women struggle to reconcile their low caste identity with their current middle class status.
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