Chapter-IV

4.0 Evaluation of the condition of Dalits

In the context of traditional Hindu society Dalit condition has often been historically associated with occupations regarded as ritually impure such as any involving leatherwork butchering or removal of rubbish animal body and waste. Dalits worked as blue-collar employee cleaning streets, latrines and sewers engaging in these activities were considered to be polluting to the individual. As a result Dalits were usually kept apart and excluded from complete participation in Hindu social life. For example they could not enter a temple or a school and required to stay outside the village. Complicated defense were sometimes observed to avoid incidental contact between Dalits and other castes. Prejudices against Dalits still exist in rural areas in the everyday matters such as access to eating places, schools, temples and water sources. It has mostly vanished in urban areas and in the public area. Some Dalits have successfully integrated into urban Indian society where caste origins are less important in public life. In rural India caste origins are more willingly clear and Dalits often disqualified from local religious life though some qualitative facts suggests that its brutality is withdrawing.

The caste system has produced numerous rules about Untouchability that run day to day connections among social groups in the Indian society. When Dalits attempt to resist the unjust rules imposed upon them revenge by upper castes is rapid and aggressive. Dalits who try to declare their rights face the risk of collective and economic boycott and even physical pressure. A shortcoming of the country's approach towards the welfare of Dalits is that actions on atrocities are mostly seen as a law and order issue divorcing them from the larger policy for social justice. Atrocities do signify a major barrier to socio-economic mobility of the community. Policy maker should take into account that ending violence. Dalits is a basic obligation for success of redistributive policies rather than assuming that these policies by themselves would result in an end to violence and discrimination.
Since centuries Dalits have been the most deprived and discriminated as part of the typically caste divided Indian society. They have been suffering by humiliation, less respect, dignity and civilization. The last three thousand years of human history terrible disgust of the caste system in society. The global communities take for granted responsibility in bringing justice to the Dalits who have been systematically depressed their value, dignity, culture and rights by the upper caste people. What is miraculous that even after 65 years independence and as India is participant to many international agreements as Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Though in 1950 Untouchability was abolished by Indian constitution there is no difference in the life of Dalits and their essential human rights are dishonored on a daily basis. India is the world’s largest democratic country. It is simply a democracy of the few, for the few and by the few and is probably the largest violators of human right acts. What is inferior to notice that untouchables cannot get a bucket of water from the village well or mingle in village tea stalls or cafes as their contact would pollutes all. In fact Dalits have been considered the most degraded, downtrodden exploited and the least educated in Indian society. They are considered untouchables because their touch is considered polluted. The caste hierarchy has put these people at the lowest ebb so they are outcaste. For decades they are banned from sharing water, food and shelter and forced to live in ghettos and hence they are referred as segregated. The dirty water of entire village flows their houses are segregated from the other part of the village. This area is known as Maharwada. This is the recognition mark which is still attached to this community. They have been socially, culturally and politically subjugated and marginalized.

Thus dalit women seem to be simple addition in the literary movement. Both typical feminists and dalit men can be blamed for the crime of divorcing dalit women. How dalit women have been silenced by ordinary feminism? Under such weak conditions who are the partners of dalit women? Mainstream and feminist movements in particular seem to be misguided in their understanding of dalit women. Many dalit and non dalit scholars share an idea that dalit
women are free than high caste women. Examine the specialty of
dalit women’s experience with patriarchy and oppressed sexuality.

They are of the opinion that lower caste women are not private like upper
caste because their men depend on them for survival. Joshi and Liddle also
write about the non sexual and the sexual divisions of labor. They suggest that
lower castes women are forced to start work for earnings. While addressing
the matter of sexuality they state Lower caste women are less controls over
their physical freedom. The financial benefits and the social restriction of
privacy are unknown to them. Sati was never demanded of them. In many
lower caste communities separation was accepted and widows and divorced
people could remarry without shame. This analysis of Liddle and Joshi
suggests that dalit women though economically poor but go ahead sexually
open minded life than upper caste women. That was 1986 and this is 2014
where it ties in with the common dialect by upper and middleclass women
who suggest that dalit women are better because they can drink, smoke and
abuse or hit back their husbands. The romanticizing of dalit women’s life is
also a characteristic. Dalit patriarchy is more self ruled than Hindu arguing
that certain customs like paadapuja are not set up between the dalits. They
also note the frequency of beating wife in dalit families and that the beaten
wife has the right to attack public by shouting and abusing the husband.
Though by understanding the original reason of criticizing brahmanical
patriarchy and its strict system it is hard to read as democratic patriarchy. For
that matter how can any patriarchy be autonomous in nature? Some dalit
feminists like Urmila Pawar have analyzed the differences between Brahman
and dalit women. Pawar explode some myths regarding the gender question in
relation to the dalit movement. There was a broad gap between dalit and
Brahman women on financial, communal and educational levels. Along with
caste based atrocities she was constantly under the risk of rape in the family
she had to bear the physical violence. Thus there is a constant movement
between an understanding of the liberation that dalit women’s economic
independence provides women and the oppressive economic deprivation of the
community. Pawar continues women in India identify with their caste over and
above their gender. The progressive feminist Uma Chakravarti writes as,
“Upper caste men and women have both defended patriarchal institutions strongly as they see them as a barricade of their higher position in society. She states patriarchy was and is a necessary aspect of class order and social stability women then would and did resist its reformulation.”

Women tied to the family circle continue to attach the beliefs and practices of some dalits. This is particularly true who are looking for rising mobility. Dalit women have been constantly working outside in the fields. The new fact of middle classes called for domesticating dalit women. These dalit men reproduced their domination by upper castes through a constant permission and request of force to dalit women. Patriarchal norms would not permit the family unit to survive on a woman’s income. In general this attitude is changing. When families realized that their financial load would less if both worked. They allowed women to work in public.

The villages have a vertical unity provided by many castes and horizontal unity provided by caste agreement with further villages. Villages are usually divided into communities of the same castes with the main castes living in the heart of the villages and the lower castes and Untouchables on the border. Towns and cities are often divided into neighborhoods of the same castes with the dominant castes living in nice neighborhoods and the lower castes and Untouchables in the slums. Other terms used to describe them include Depressed Classes Avarna (outside the Varna system) Antyaja (last-borne), Outcastes (inaccurate since they are in caste system), Adi-Dravida (meaning original Dravidians) external caste backwards castes Panchama (meaning fifth Varna a term developed to accommodate inter caste offspring into the caste system) and Pariah (a term used by the British based on the name of the major Untouchable group of Tamil Nadu). Their low rank is based in on the general belief often associated with Hinduism that traditional occupations dealing with death excrement blood such as butchers, leather workers, scavengers’ latrine cleaners and street cleaners are polluting to other castes and touching them
ought to be avoided. Unspoken in this construct is the belief that Untouchables deserve lot in life. Because of karma and as a punishment for sins they are in the position dedicated in earlier lives. Untouchability is not unique to South Asia. In some places Untouchables are not allowed to use the cups or utensils used by others castes members at restaurants and stalls. Sometimes they are served from coconut shells or rather than in cup water poured into their hands. In some cases higher castes will not even agree to the lower castes shadows go down on them and Untouchables were obligatory to wear bells to alert upper class Hindus that they were coming. If a member of a high caste touches an Untouchable they are supposed to take bath and perform a ceremony to recover purity. Untouchables in the countryside have traditionally lived in separated city or segregated neighborhoods. In the cities they frequently lived in separate slums. In many cases they regularly used their own well, roads, footpaths and bridges. In some places Untouchables live in rural community downwind from villages with non Untouchables residents so their wind doesn't pollute the higher caste people in the villages. Such separation is regarded as essential actions to protect others from polluting company.

In some places Dalits are prevented from reading or studying Hindu scriptures. Those that did were sometimes severely beaten as a punishment. Untouchable children are often prohibited from attending classes with children from higher castes. Even educated Untouchables with high level government jobs are forced at sit at the feet of Brahmins when they return to their villages. It has been said that some Untouchables are consequently polluting a corpse which itself is regarded as polluting.

In some places Dalits are banned from understanding or studying Hindu scriptures. Those that did were sometimes harshly beaten as a punishment. Untouchable children are also banned from attending classes with children from higher castes. Yet educated Untouchables with high post government jobs are made compulsory to sit at the feet of Brahmins when they return to villages. It has been said that some Untouchables are consequently polluting a body which itself regarded as polluting.
Dr. Sharankumar Limbale’s *Akkarmashi* published in 1984 is an acknowledged masterpiece. An emotional violent autobiography is of a half caste growing up in the *Mahar* community and the torture of not belonging to it. Written in the dialect of Mahar community of Maharashtra it gives numbing account of the embarrassment of the community at the hands of an unthinking advantaged class. Sharan is disturbed by the question of his cracked identity and asks himself,

“Am I an upper caste or an untouchable?”

The work is a harsh analysis of the lack of sympathy that the lower castes have tolerate for centuries. Limbale tells heart rending methods of struggle for hunger. The dominating theme of the book is the dalit’s continuous battle with hunger.

“Eating baked bread that smells of dung or stealing grain left with corpses at the crematorium seems routine to him Maharwada village enclave of the untouchable Maher’s meant a heap of *jowar* gathered at the resting place of a corpse. Each person was like again. Why don’t they eat the jowar connected with the rites of the dead? It too was food. Why should such jowar not be touched?”

Although Limbale is allowed the privilege of going to school he had to watch the higher caste children eat lavish meals and could only hope that they would be open-minded with their leftovers. When he eats greedily morsels his mother would shout at him when he got home so selfish and not saving any for her or his sisters. His grandmother would eat *bhakari* made from the corn she had dug out of the load of dung so that her grandchildren would eat good flour they had. She made unbelievable surrender still her house went hungry until they were able to beg on a market day or until a good friend received the agreement to remove a dead animal. Limbale firmly believed that hunger can be controlled by men and if no hunger no fighting and no conflict. Limbale tells us everything about his life including the clothes he will wear the person
he will marry and the food he will eat. Limbale describes the life of a man who suffered not only caste system but also the pain of not even allowed into the caste system. His complete life he lived under the curse impure blood because his mother had out of wedlock with the chief of the village. His entire life he had watched people and families separately and he wanted no part of it.

The present study makes an attempt to examine the duplicity of the ancient caste system and how its selfish followers commit crimes for their material comforts and luxuries. It further discusses how the sufferer and protagonist Limbale challenge the system itself and its long beliefs which are somewhat not the same and prejudiced against the downtrodden as portrayed in The Outcaste. The original Marathi version of Akkarmashi is written in 1984. Later it was translated into English in 2003. Limbale became renowned and popular after his autobiography was published. The Outcaste has portrayed the condition of enslaved, exploited and harassed life of a Dalit woman and her children who are born from different Hindu men through his autobiography. Dr. Sharankumar Limbale is the son born to a Dalit woman from a Hindu man. According to the social system he is an illegal child. He does not belong to any of the castes religions. He is fatherless though he has a father and has no identity. Limbale’s mother belongs to the Mahar caste and his father is from the Lingayat caste. In fact his parents are not married.

Limbale has pointed out in his autobiography that Indian society is Hindu society in particular has been extremely old fashioned, traditional, superstitious, unscientific and hypocritical. The Outcaste reveals that since the social order in Hinduism is hierarchical the members of it at the lowest ring are bound to suffer and get victimized in a variety of ways by those at the higher ranges of society. Dalits are forced to live life of obedient and submissive slaves who are never supposed to disobey their oppressors. According to the caste system they cannot fulfill their basic needs if it is against the system.

The Outcaste shows that Dalits have been poverty stricken people. The system of their society has indeed imposed poverty on them. They have been
thrown away to periphery which has almost been completely neglected. Moreover it discloses that poverty makes the poor to steal. It makes them beggar. At the same time it makes them to tell falsehood. Limbale writes that he himself had to steal food to fill his stomach. He had to beg whenever necessary and his grandmother had to tell lies. The Outcaste points out that poverty makes them to eat what animals eat when there is no way to have food. For instance Limbale’s sister had to eat banana peels to satisfy her hunger. As a result one can state that Dalits in India often have to eat used food. They have to wear used clothes and footwear. At times they have to starve. The Dalits in Limbale’s locality have habitually eat discarded and stale food. Sometimes they eat what is not safe to eat for human beings. Most of them are equal to beggars. Limbale reports how his sister and he had to eat useless peels of bananas. By evening when the market dispersed. Vani had collected banana skins which people had thrown after eating. She sat by the street and ate the skins.

“I hit Vani. I snatched the skins and threw them away to stop her from eating them. Suddenly I changed my mind. I collected the banana skins and wiped them with my shirt as they were soiled. Then I went to the river sat in a corner and started eating them. When I saw our teacher approaching I threw away the skins. It was as if I was throwing away my stomach with hunger in it.”

He writes that sometimes they have to tell lies and some other times they have to steal eatables. Limbale does not mind stealing eatables when it becomes a need.

Since they do not have a regular means of income they have to depend on their oppressors. They are always paid less than what they deserve to get for their work. The same point is narrated by Bama in her book Karukku. She writes,

“Our hard work was exploited half the time by our Naicker employers. The rest of the time we were
swindled by these tradesmen. So how was it possible for us to make any progress?" \(^5\)

**The Outcaste** describes that everything regarding the life of the Dalits is determined and controlled by the caste Hindus. That is why one can remark that Dalits are treated as bonded laborers because the social system in Hinduism, **The Outcaste** reveals completely unequal and unfair. Limbale the Outcaste presents dark aspects of the Indian society especially of the cattiest Hindu one. In such a society in which Dalits and non-Dalits live practice of untouchability is necessarily observed by the cattiest Hindus. As a result the powerless and ignorant Dalits are subjected to maltreatment and excruciatingly humiliation. But **The Outcaste** exposes that no one finds any logical behavior in it because the supporters of untouchability do not strictly follow Limbale records,

> “This is Narayan Patil’s well. Last year the Mahar dig and built it. The spades and shovels of Maher’s were used to dig the well. The Mahar gave their sweat for it. They also used explosives. They the Mahars are the reason why there is water in the well. But now the same Mahars are not allowed to draw water from it not even drinking water.” \(^6\)

Limbale describes that Hindus in the system wholeheartedly love and sympathize with animals but they are not seen to have sympathy with the Dalits when they indeed it. That is the Dalits are observed as lower to animals. Limbale documents Hindus see the cow as their mother. A human mother is cremated but when a cow dies they need a Mahar to dispose of it. The owner weeps when one of her animals dies. The cow pain looks sad. **The Outcaste** points out that the Dalits are given inhuman treatment by Hindus. Moreover if any Dalit lady is good looking and happens to be ignorant and powerless she is bound to get sexually harassed and maltreated by them. As a result she is hated and discriminated against not only by the Hindus but by the untouchables also. Masamai is one such victim who has to suffer at each and every step in her life because she has been made to lead a kind of life which is
completely against her wish. The Outcaste further portrays how the behavior of Hindus is rational and hypocritical. On the one hand Hindus follow untouchability and unabashedly categorize against the Dalits on the basis of the caste system. They look down upon them because they have power. Alternatively they do not follow the carry out of untouchability as it should be followed. The autobiography points out that since the caste system in which Dalits live is unequal discriminatory undemocratic and indifferent to the Dalits they cannot get justice though they try best to get it. Taking into consideration class and role of the caste system the non Dalits especially Hindu men hardly hesitate to harass exploit and victimize the Dalits. A number of Hindu men often try to have illegal sexual relationship with Dalit women. Dalit women were badly insulted. They were beaten like slaves. Some farmers even harassed them sexually pulled them into the crop and raped them. Similar episode is narrated by Kishor Shantabai Kale in his autobiography Against All Odds in which a Hindu politician buys a young Dalit girl to quaint his lust for some days. Jagtap was a politician and Kondiba (father of the sexual victim) could see his pockets overflowing. In Shanta’s life as per Kolhati tradition Jagtap took the place of a husband although she was an reluctant bride. On condition that she would not have sex with any other man he maintained her and her family. He was her Kaja or Yejma Limbale asserts that Dalits are branded as inferior human beings in the names of god’s goddess’s religious scriptures and such metaphysical phenomena. As a consequence they have been considered to be untouchable. By the way he interprets the illogical code of behavior followed by the members of the caste system. He used clean clothes bathed every day and washed himself with soap and brushed teeth with toothpaste. There was nothing unclean. Then in what sense was he untouchable?” A high caste that is unclean was still considered touchable! According to him they (Dalits) have been forced to live outside the boundaries of the localities of Hindus. But when Hindu men want to have sex with the Dalit ladies they openly disobey the social norms only if they need such ladies for relieve and enjoyment. In the same manner, Limbale’s caste Hindu father disobeyed the practice of untouchability to have illegal sexual relationship with his Dalit mother. However he could not go against the caste system and did not look after her and his own son Limbale himself as a responsible
husband and father. **The Outcaste** reveals that in fact it has been a part of Hindu men’s lives to use the communal influence and force Dalit women to fall a prey to their sexual lust. Limbale narrates that Masamai was well settled in her married life with her husband. She was a beautiful woman. Her husband Ithal Kamble was a servant on the farm of Hanamanta.

Limbale a Hindu married landlord Kamble’s life was weak in almost every sense because Dalits have been supposed to do only slavish and menial works according to the system. That is why Kamble was poor to live a human life. He was following the system in a passive manner. He was an ignorant poor and powerless man. He was working like a slave for Limbale’s family. Limbale writes,

“He was one of the beasts that toiled on the farm. The animals in the shed he looked after were no different from this bonded laborer.”

Here one can state that the entrenched caste system has determined and maintained the nature and function of the life of the downtrodden. It has made their lives completely dependent on Hindus. As a result this particular hope of the Dalits on the oppressors has crippled them forever. It can be said that the root cause of the pathetic condition of the Dalits lies in the unfair structure and nature of the caste system.

Subhash Chandra, a researcher remarks in relation to the dependence of Dalits that,

“The Dalit class is completely dependent on the non-Dalits to fill their stomachs. They are helpless to eat the discarded food of the non-Dalits to satiate the hunger of the stomach.”

Limbale points out that everything is set for both the downtrodden as well as for their counterparts by the caste system. However being a Hindu Hanamanta
Limbale transgresses the code of conduct set by the caste system. He establishes an illegal sexual relationship with Kamble’s wife Masamai who easily falls a prey to his cunning policy. As a result the caste panchayat forces Kamble and Masamai to get a divorce. Now Masamai is alone and free. Being the situation Hanamanta Limbale lures her and keeps her as his concubine. In this way he keeps her for his sexual lust for a few months. For his sexual need Hanamanta Limbale does not follow untouchability with Masamai. But when a son is born to them he instantly and deliberately reject his son Sharankumar. Here one can remark that although Hanamanta Limbale is not an obedient and true follower of the system he pretends to follow it. Since he cannot go against the system he directly refuses to accept his son from a Dalit woman. That is he rejects to take responsibility to bring up his son. He is portrayed as a hypocrite. He is not a true lover of Masamai. But he pretends to be and utilizes her. He is never afraid about the weak condition and poverty of Masamai. Masamai and her all children have to suffer from malnutrition. Even though he is a landlord he never cares for Sharankumar Limbale. His activities show that he is a cunning and bad man. But Limbale writes that the system has identified him as someone better to the Dalits who are almost completely helpless and innocent. Another Hindu married landlord called Yeshwantrao Patil who is the father of eight children with Masamai unlawfully does not take the responsibility of bringing up the children. All the children go hungry all the time although Patil is not worried about them. Through his activities are seen that he is careless, selfish and cunning person. But just because he is born in a Hindu family he is considered to be superior to the Dalits. One can say that though Hanamanta Limbale and Patil are adulterers and criminals they are not seen punished because the system is in their support. Not only Hanamanta Limbale and Patil are hypocrites but the system itself functions as a hypocrite. Here it can be stated that the view of the well-established system are not just enough to follow to lead a human live especially for Dalits. That is why many of the members of it directly or indirectly fail to obey it. Due to this hypocrisy nature of the Hindu followers of the system the Dalits begin to doubt the sincerity of the caste system itself.
Limbale points out that most of the literate people in India are branded as educated. However highly and well educated one Hindu is they are not able to detach themselves from the influence of the upbringing of the caste system. Generally injustice maltreatment and atrocities are carrying out against the untouchables in the rural areas. However even metropolitan cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai are no exception. Whenever a Dalit come to a city for a room on rent he is asked his caste by the non-Dalit house owners. If he tells his caste untouchable he will not given a room. In such situation the Dalit has to walk here and there in search of a rented room. If he does not get it he has to go to the Dalits locality in the city for a room. Or he has to live in an unclean locality. At times they have to tell lies and hide their castes. This frustrating story of a Dalit is narrated in The Outcaste.

“However I went to Latur. I faced the problem of finding a house in a new town and my caste followed me like an enemy. Latur was such a big place with huge buildings, houses and bungalows but I was turned away wherever I went. They said frankly ‘we don’t want to rent out our house to Muslims and Mahars.’ Should I put this town to the torch? Such a big town—but I could not get a single room.”

Every town and person was conscious about the caste. Limbale focuses on the point that since Dalits are ignorant powerless and unaware of the truth they are most of the time exploited and subjected to suffering humiliation abuses. There is no fellow feeling between them. The non Dalits always hate Dalits. Therefore the downtrodden are concentrated to more or less by them. In a critical situation there is only one thought before them. That is to fill their stomachs because they are struggling for their whole life to earn their bread and butter. The dominating theme throughout the book is the Dalit’s regular conflict with hunger. Although Limbale is allowed going to school he had to observe the higher caste children eat lavish meals and could only hope that they would be liberal with their leftovers. When he ate greedily those morsels his mother yells at him when he got home and not saving any for her or his
sisters. His grandmother would eat *bhakari* made from the corn she had dug out a pile of manure so that her grandchildren would have what little good flour she had left. She made incredible sacrifices but her house still went hungry until they were able to beg on a market day or until a good friend received the deal to remove a dead animal. As a child Limbale firmly believed that hunger controlled men and if there had been no hunger there would have been no strife and no war.

So they have no time to think of other good or bad right or wrong phenomenon in the life. **The Outcaste** portrays that Limbale is one of the greatest victims of the caste system which is based on the concept of god yet he is not completely a staunch atheist. He says that he does not agree of this religion of this country and this god. But throughout the autobiography one can find that hardly any character in it is an atheist.

Limbale describes that like other Dalits students at school he was victimized by his non Dalit especially by Hindu teachers and harassed by his schoolmates. When taken into consideration all the autobiographies by Dalit authors it can be said that in fact, in Indian schools it has been a tradition for non Dalit teachers and students to harass and insult the Dalit students. In other words the Dalit students are made to work all the while rather than to make them learn how to study. It can be stated that they are deliberately misguided and their attention is diverted from their studies. More importantly it is extremely important to bring about a revolution among non Dalit teachers so that they would stop becoming discriminatory and would stop subjecting Dalit students to dire atrocities and injustices.

In addition to this **The Outcaste** displays that Dalits are treated very badly and subjected to humiliation if ever they make attempts to reject humiliation and maltreatment inflicted upon them. They are most of the time addressed in an arrogant and bad mannered. They are made to adopt discouraging names. One can find inauspicious names for Dalits in each and every Dalit autobiography. **In The Outcaste** it such names of Dalits like *Kacharuajja* which means dust grandfather. Limbale has reveals that Dalits are helpless and powerless. Hence they have to do certain things in secret. People in the world eat non-vegetarian
food. But when Dalits eat it they have it very secretly because the Hindus consider it wrong though they themselves eat it silently. It could be commented on that non Dalits are hypocrite.

At the same time they are unable to tolerate what downtrodden do. Besides The Outcaste exposes that because of the inferiority complex in relation to Dalits and superiority complex regarding them non Dalits cannot tolerate the well being and upliftment of Dalits. As Dalits get comforts they start suffering. In this connection Limbale documents the Hindu community was hurt because with the facilities given to them Dalits were getting an education and becoming aware of their rights. A generation of militant youths generated by the movement also threatened the Hindus and the thought of untouchables being satisfied lives with jobs made available to them forced. Dalits refused to do the ordinary jobs that they once did for Hindus. Such changes in the Dalit community occurred with their conversion to Buddhism. The thought that the community which had lived the life of cats and dogs for thousands of years was now behaving as equals was unacceptable by the high caste. Dalits have to hide their caste identity in order to escape from the calamity brought about by the caste conscious society because they are helpless. That is why they are unable to confront the discriminatory forces in the society. While talking about the rejection of the Hindus to the reservation policy he clearly says that they cannot understand the suffering of the Dalits.

One can see that Limbale’s life story is quite different from those by other Dalit writers. The Outcaste describes that he had to suffer not only at the hands of Hindus but at of the Dalits because he was born to an untouchable mother and a touchable father. Here he is the greatest victims in the cattiest society. Dalits and non Dalits have equally subjected him to extreme humiliation and suffering. Limbale narrates one such story in which his in-laws insult him.

“That evening my father-in-law came home drunk and picked a quarrel with me. My mother-in law was already annoyed with me. Whenever I quarreled with
my in-laws Kusum my wife became tense. The problem of pure and impure blood meant nothing to her.” 10

Maryappa Kamble said,

“My son is the president of the Dalit Panthers. He is highly respected by his followers. You say that you are a relative of that Muslim. You are the cause of humiliation for us among our own caste. We have told everyone that you are of pure blood. You must have some self-respect otherwise don’t enter our house I felt insulted.” 11

Though Dalits are the worst sufferers of the caste system they are unable to discontinue following it. Here Limbale’s wife comes under the class of exemption who accepts him as her husband because for her it does not matter if her husband belongs to another caste. It means she refuses the extremely powerful system.

Therefore The Outcaste represents when Dalits have got educated in the twentieth century they sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly have tried to disobey the system. Limbale points out in his autobiography that as he got mature he began to go against the social norms and practices which were totally illogical and anti human. Although the Dalits are not allowed to enter temples his friend and he entered the temple in his village when they were young boys. When they were served tea in separate cups meant for Dalits at a village hotel they complained against the hotel owner to the police. The Dalits have not been considered to be addressed with respect according to the system. But Limbale began to respect those Dalits who were really respected. He remembers he stopped saying namaskar and started saying Jai-Bhim. He became critical of the system and convention. He disowned his father’s caste and wanted to get married according to the Buddhist rituals. In addition to these anti system deeds of him there are other innovative and radical acts such as inter caste marriages.
The journey from Daya Pawar's *Baluta* to Limbale’s *The Outcaste* is the story of social history. In these autobiographies connecting different periods and put in dissimilar levels of society domestic and personal space is regularly propelled into a whirlpool of confused conflict with caste politics and power. The writer gives details of a story of social truth that its own historical reality. They function at individual, social and cultural level bringing the past and the present. Dagdu Maruti Pawar dealt with the atrocities experienced by the dalits or untouchables under the caste system in different forms of literary genre. His autobiography *Baluta* recounts the incident of an untouchable struggling for a peaceful existence emotionally under attacked but unable of revenge in action. The autobiography is written as a story by Dagdu Pawar being told to the more literate Daya Pawar. The book received significant anti dalit blowback for frank exposition.

The book exposes not only harsh insult and shameful behavior of unfair upper caste persons making hell of dalit lives but the question of hunger and survival as well dominates. *Baluta* as it was named in *Marathi* represents the ideal symbol of the dalit’s embarrassment for leftover food as *Baluta* or his fixed village share as fee for performing stigmatized labor. 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 the self of which he writes in his autobiography. Pawar plays on the relationship between secrecy and revelation instead of celebrating the autobiographical as an authentic act of self representation. Indeed Dagdu Maruti Pawar is both a character plus a concept he is the secret sharer of Indian society whose shocking experiences cannot be related without reject the deal of Hindu ambiguity. The narrative progresses throwing light on different chapters of life including way of life, practices, education, profitable realities and gender bias. The diversity of plot concerns is combined by the writer's constant analysis. It is a first person narration of the minority consciousness and their struggle is a matter of inspiration for him and for others giving an account of discrimination and deprivation as a stage of recognition and assertion living on the limits of the marginalized unessential human exposed to the harsh realities of life.
Prof. Jasbir Jain in her work *Contesting Post Colonialism* has talked about,

“Such memory narrative and the homogeneity which is there but has raised a very important question that how does one define outer reality? Is it defined and shaped only by the cultural other or does reality also manifest itself in the act of living. The self in dalit writings is constantly in the process of being formed it is the environment and the external control forces which loom large. Experiencing the pathos and pain which the memory of the actual happenings brings to the writer the reader feels the shock and a sense of loss at the unaccountable misery borne by some even in the so called progressive time.”

12

Dalit narratives are not only self portraits but also a social explanation and memorial which lies bare pain. Constructed as the performance of shocking experiences suffered by the protagonists, opening in the vulnerable years of childhood they show the load of individual on the border treated as outcastes and looked with doubt. The tedious encounter with injustice burns carefully into the memory of the protagonist marking their development during life carrying mark of negative response and domination.

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 ends meet, 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.
But this trajectory is not the essential narrative line in a book whose title is a better metaphor for the writing technique that Urmila Pawar adopts. The lives of different members of her family her husband’s family her neighbors and classmates are woven together in a narrative that gradually reveals condition and different aspects of the everyday life of Dalits 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 blankly 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.

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 these Dalit women their own lives harsh and full of toil have with this landscape The first chapter begins with the village Dalit women’s journey to sell their wares rice bags firewood grass in the town market 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. Anecdotes like these in Urmila Pawar’s memoir can 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 dry asides of self deprecation. At school Dalit children are saddled with bothersome tasks on 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 strikes up a friendship and wants 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 her 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 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 normal 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 Mahars. This is another role thrust on the untouchables that of carriers of misfortune as well as pollution protectors and sanitizers of the village who are reviled rather than revered. The disobedient Mahar boys are soundly kicked and beaten for their misbehavior. The narrative here frighteningly 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 dispute 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 petromax lamps and the strong Holi fire.
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 Mahars 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 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 occasions in their live.”

Afterward Pawar gives 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 Bhikiakka are more victims of dire poverty than patriarchy and 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 also 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 is 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. In general Dalit widows were not treated with the same degree
of exclusion as in the Brahmin community. Although Pawar touch on the issue of widow remarriage she gives us a small linguistic essay on the interesting term *randki sooj* 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 *randki sooj*. She asks her elder sister about it and gets the following reply,

“You know for some women when their husbands die it is a release from oppression. Then they look a little better fresh so people say they have got the randki sooj. Then she grew 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 devotes an entire chapter the third to a description of food it’s 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 whiles 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.

As she writes

“The upper caste girls always used words like Ladu, Modak, karanjya, Puranpolya. They brought such novel items in their tiffin boxes as well as at times we went on excursions. However I never asked myself the stupid question why we do not prepare such dishes at home?
We were aware without anybody telling us that we were born in a particular caste and in poverty and that we had to live accordingly.”  

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 look after 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 small it may be. Women are the cultural carriers of caste and it is through the patriarchal control of women that caste divisions are maintained.

The other important reference about the community and exploitation of the women is seen in their food preparations at residence. It is very clear from the memoir that separate food planning was done for men and women and mainly the daughter-in-law is oppressed maximum level. Pawar as a feminist and dalit woman has highlighted an issue as she writes,

“When the men folk went out and women and girls remained at home they dined at kata. A small quantity poured in water and cooked as a soup with chili powder salt and a piece of mango or maul. This was called sagar. Women ate their rice with the watery dish. The song we used to sing. Hey what is that funny’ dug noise what is the foul smell spreading all over?

Well what they cooked was fish water!
Someone has had a bellyful and how!
She wears a short sarees, down to the feet now
To hide what trickling down from her butt.”

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 everywhere presence of caste cannot be entirely forgotten even here there are daily and occasionally bigger jolt 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 too 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 aggravation 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 book exposes not only severe insult and contemptible behavior of oppressive upper caste persons making hell of dalit lives but the question of hunger and survival.

Dr. Narendra Jadhav’s Untouchables’: My Family’s Triumphant Journey Out of the Caste System in Modern India brings out this impact in many different ways. From most important expressions for opening wells and temples long closed to Dalits reviving the practice of Buddhism leading the drafting of the Constitution and setting a personal example of academic achievement. Ambedkar is everywhere in Dr. Jadhav’s life. Untouchables: My Family’s Triumphant Journey out of the Caste System in Modern India is written in mainly exciting way. It is not an autobiography of the talented Dr. Jadhav who has a Ph.D from the US and is a member of the Planning Commission of India. Actually it is the story of his father and mother. Each chapter exchange between his father’s viewpoint (Damu) and mother (Sonu) but keeps moving forward in time. Only at the end does Jadhav (Chotu) himself come in. The story of Damu and Sonu is interesting enough to read just because of whom they were and the times they lived in. At one level it is a tribute from a son to his father while on the other hand it is the story of the Dalits through three generations. The story begins in 1930s when Damu
the protagonist of the story is continuously addressed as Mahar in his ancestral village in Western Maharashtra where caste firms one’s destiny. Influenced by Dr. Ambedkar’s teachings Damu stands against the Police and the caste system. However a few things stood out. One of these was the strong religiosity of Sonu Jadhav. She came across as an extremely religious. Indeed the chapter where Damu proposes that the family convert to Buddhism is quite exciting with Damu’s political interpretation of religious belief coming into conflict with Sonu’s more personal and spiritual understanding. The book traces the unexpected journey of Damu from a small village at Ozar in Maharashtra to the city of Mumbai to run away from discrimination. It was a voyage that brought back his self-respect and touchability. In the city he earns respect in different jobs in spite of being a low caste and an uneducated. His inflexible spirit encouraged his wife who realized that their freedom could be possible only through the search of educational excellence. At another level it gives an intelligent appraisal of the caste system in India and traces the story of the awakening of Dalits traversing three generations. At another level it is a reflective of the aspirations of millions of Dalits in India. Untouchables ’: My Family’s Triumphant Journey out of the Caste System in Modern India, is also the story of Sonabai the mother of author. Her virtue as a pre-pubescent bride and shocked lack of enthusiasm to give up her old and trusted gods for the unknown Buddha are case of an ordinary Dalit woman’s experiences. In the book Sonu’s story alternates with that of Damu’s. This is more than a mere personal account of the caste divide in India. It examines the Dalit beginning organization by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar the Independence movement the Civil Disobedience Movement Gandhiji’s relation with Ambedkar the throng conversion of Dalits to Buddhism in 1956 and caste in its current reality. One can find Ambedkar’s call for the Dalits to “Educate, Unite and Agitate” as a frequent idea in the book. Untouchables ’: My Family’s Triumphant Journey out of the Caste System in Modern India, is the first book to portray Ambedkar as a character in the story. There is also a long note at the end of the caste structure and Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. Jadhav has sensibly retained many Marathi words in the text thus retaining the spirit of the story. Personal story keep the book lively and easily readable. The book ends with a note of self recognition that in modern India self-respect rests in the minds and
hearts of people and those old prejudices do not really matter. *Untouchables’* gives an interpretation of caste which is surprisingly different and helpful.

Dr. Jadhav’s description of his conquest of the Vithoba temple was another best moment. Denied entry for centuries by the Hindu priestly order the Dalit was greeted by the chairman of the temple trust and the head priest when he arrived for *puja*. This stone was the boundary beyond which the untouchables were not allowed to step. The touchable had the temple. The untouchables had only the stone. Their boulder stood strong and alone a few feet outside the temple. The boulder became their temporary Vithoba crude beat by the elements quite unlike the richly dressed decorated idol of the god within. In the struggle against caste discrimination illiteracy and poverty their weapons are education, empowerment and democracy. This is a story of such family. The book is a multi layered narration of the under privileged who suffered at the hands of the privileged for centuries. His autobiography is wonderful narrative which describes how his illiterate parents raised their six children to become successful human beings.

Dr. Narendra Jadhav’s parents never went to school. But they knew the importance of education. They send their children to Chhabildas Boy’s high school. The medium of instruction was Marathi.

> “I used to sit in a corner like a scared rat. I studied Sanskrit because this was denied to all my forefathers.” 17

Dr. Narendra Jadhav expresses his personal agony through these words. His tone may seem to be loud but his protest is true. He believes that Dalit literature is a literature of genuine objection. His mode of thinking is different from other Dalit writers. Some criticizes Dalit literature as immature. Dr. Narendra Jadhav’s book has positive contents and poetic quality. He scored 93% marks in Sanskrit but missed the Jagananath Shankershet scholarship by two marks. Everyone was surprised when they saw his score in Sanskrit. His Sanskrit teacher thought that the scores name might be Bhave? Bapat? Phadke or Gokhale? Dr. Narendra Jadhav was hard worker. He had a self confidence.
His Sanskrit teacher sent a word for him but he didn’t go to meet the teacher. He wanted to avoid the conflict.

“T.S. Eliot has said that “The passions of a poem are somehow related to the passions of the society that produce it.”” 18

Dr. Jadhav believes in the maxims. Do not wait to strike until the iron is hot but make it hot by striking. It’s the courage of Narendra Jadhav that counted as he fully knew that,

“Success is never final and failure never fatal.” 19

Damodar Runjaji Jadhav and his wife Sonu are the main characters of the autobiography. Damu is the protagonist of the story whose protest against the injustice is a unique one. His father was against the word Harijan.

“If Harjans are the people of God who are the other people? The devils?” 20

He used to ask one cannot be genuinely human unless one has become the bearer of a culture and education in its widest sense must produce a determinate citizen type. His father attended a meeting addressed by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar which moved him so much that he decided to spread the message of Dr. Ambedkar. ‘Educate, Unite and Agitate’. His Father and Mother were converted to Buddhism in 1956 when Dr. Ambedkar gave a call to join Buddhism. Damu the protagonist has a bitter experience while bringing of the children. He controls himself while narrating these experiences. One villager calls Narendra Damu mahar’s son while others used a dignified language.

His autobiography is a story of positive search for excellence of a person who spent his childhood in the slums of Mumbai. Narendra Jadhav remembers the early days. Survival of the fittest was the rule in the slums where he grew up. He was a pretty good fighter so he wanted to be a dada a gangster. He is excellent in his studies and soon outshines leaving everyone spell bound. There is no sigh of deep resentment and use of words depicting hatred for the society. The attitude of Damu is sober though he thinks that. Whatever heights
a man might scale his caste is never caste off. It remains an inseparable part of his identity.

**Untouchables: My Family’s Triumphant Journey out of the Caste System in Modern India** is a dramatic piece of writing that forces us to acknowledge the inhumanity and injustice of social order that treats humans worse than animals. He knows the word of Dr. Ambedkar’s Lost rights are regained by begging but relentless struggle and Goats are used for sacrificial offerings and not lions. Throughout the narrative runs the slogan coined by Dr. Ambedkar “Educate, Unite and Agitate.” He taught his children. Do anything but do best merit in that field. The ends with the realization that further change is required. The whole has to stop treating Dalits as different.

Jadhav’s autobiography presents Damu’s self reflexive systematic viewpoint at the setting of strong exploitation. It offers the growth of three generations of the protagonist’s family. His successful transcendence of national boundaries to become the universal citizen is framed in an inspiring way. Thanks to his grit hard work and courage his children and grandchildren fulfill his ambition prepared with little education and purpose. It’s a story about dreams coming true that all over the world find appealing.

An autobiography is a remarkable piece of writing that forces us to accept the atrocity and bias of a social order that treats humans worse than animals. It is prolonged description of Narendra Jadhav’s Marathi autobiography **Amcha Baap Aan Amhi** meaning ‘Our Father and Us’ written in 1993. Damu was not a leader nor did he turn into. But he had one exception to fight against the existing caste system and generate his fate. An intelligent man with no proper education worked hard to live with dignity. In his Author’s message Jadhav explains Damu as he was not a leader but he refused to label himself by conditions and expected to shape his own future or Damu had no prescribed education. Still he guided his children to educational height and inculcated them the spirit of excellence or Damu was not a guru but he taught his children to believe in themselves and hold human self esteem or Damu was
often humbled. Damu was an ordinary man. But he did an extraordinary thing he stood up against the tyranny of the caste system.

Damu is one of the few self-confident independent Dalit characters in Indian writing in English. In the opening pages of autobiography Damu was doing his yeskar duties (village duties to Mahars) in his native village Ozar. Damu was running in front of the Mamledar senior income official announcing his coming. Afterward Damu was asked to look at the dead body of a woman found floating in the well. He was not allowed to go home to inform his family and about food. He was ill-treated and made obligatory to stay near the well the entire night. The next morning Fauzdar arrived and asked Damu to search out the dead body into the well. Damu refused to do so under the excuse that he was not supposed to handle the dead body of an upper caste woman. The author declares the caste system is so deeply fixed that change can at most excellent like ornamental. The caste system was liable by God and not by human. It has such a powerful permit behind it that no laws no development and no revolutions will ever change it completely. Damu was beaten up by the Fauzdar for refusing to follow his orders. He was stubborn and strong-minded. He speaks out. Inspire of these cruel traditions he was not going to stand for by such traditions.

However Change take places little though it may seem. He decides to leave his village that night. He runs away with his wife Sonu to Mumbai. Together they started walking towards freedom. In Mumbai Damu struggled hard. Jadhav narrates to survive during the great sadness in the 1930s. He worked in the Railways the Port Trust and some fabric mills to earn for living in Mumbai. Motivated by Ambedkar’s call for Dalit emancipation he participated in Dalit movement. He had actively involved in the Nasik Temple Entry Movement in 1930, Mahad Satyagraha in 1927, Buddhist conversion movement in 1956 Ambedkar’s funeral procession and other activities of the Dalits. He inculcated in his children an ambition to succeed in life through education and hard work. Damu refused to frighten by all the odds in his life. He had forever confirmed himself master of his willpower. He is presented as a self made man
in many ways. Jadhav’s character is of self-confident, self made Dalit. He inherited the attitude of his father that a human being is a master of his will. He asserts,

“If other look down on me in their belief that my caste is low. It is their problem not mine. I certainly don’t need to torment myself over it. I pity them for they are the victims of their own obsolete prejudices.”

Dalit identity gave Damu’s family confidence and pride to refuse their credited class as low caste Mahars. The making of modern identity as Dalits is possible because of two past processes. One is his journey from village to the town Mumbai and the other is Dalit movement lead by Ambedkar. Damu’s granddaughter feels that,

“Now I think I know who I am. I am Apoorva not tied down by race, religion or caste.”

Throughout the narration run the clarion created by Dr Ambedkar which unites all Dalits, “Educate, Unite and Agitate.” Damu perceived slogan as his personal operation and though ignorant himself and educates his children to the best of his abilities. He even tries to educate his wife Sonu remarkable that was unheard of in that period. Luckily the all children completed his hope and raise to high positions in their chosen careers a great achievement for a man who has dedicated his life to bettering their prospects.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s teachings have a deep effect on Damu and Sonu and they understand that they are beginning to build up a sense of self. The simplicity of the narrative brings out the tragedy in the story. Damu is shown in this novel as a man of strong character with advance looking approach and progressive visions. He instills a superior level of self confidence in his wife. He wins his wife on his side when he explains the principle of living and importance of life. He makes a scholar out of his life. At last his wife Sonu appreciate him and unite him in every step of upheaval and conflict. In spite of romantic relation the martial life has been relation based on mutual trust love and sacrifice between them. Damu treats his wife with kindness is
extraordinary for the times and really emotive. Asked about the qualities she liked most in her husband. Sonu makes a statement on the poor expectations of women in her generation.

“He never drank never abused me. Best of all he never raised his hand to me.”

The book ends with the realization that supplementary change is essential. The world has to end treating Dalits as different. It is up to the present generation to carry the set on fire the tears and blood of their ancestors. In this Memoir the author examines the issues which are so deep and sharp in a manner which is touching. From one point of view it is an attack on the social structure of Hindu society. If this autobiography is studied in a different angle it is a call to the oppressed and humiliated people to empower themselves by devoting themselves to learning and at last to stand as a brotherhood to fight against cruelty, subjugation, slavery, domination and those who complete and support the idea of superiority which is not only foolish and unreasonable but silly.

Well known economist Stanley Fischer has noted,

“The book eloquently tells the story of a Dalit (Untouchable) family’s journey from an Indian village to the Indian and international middle class. It is the story of the genius and determination of the (author’s) illiterate father and his stalwart mother and their remarkable children. It is also a story about modern India and its potential. Even more it is a moving story about humankind in all its complexity.”

Narendra Jadhav in his autobiography Untouchables: a memoir brings to the fore what is the place of a Dalit in the eyes of policemen and upper caste people. He writes walking slowly and was looking forward to some that tea and bhakris, 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 worried and Damu sensed that a little very bad had happened. He told Damu that by the Mangroves a dead body had found floating in the broken well. This plainly indicates that dalit’s duty was to carry the dead body and listened the orders of police. The policeman did not care whether Damu was hungry or not. When Damu told the policeman that he had not eaten since morning he lifted his rod as if to beat him.

“Do you see my baton? he asked brandishing it I stick it up your ass and you will see it come out of your throat. I beat you up so badly that you’ll forget the name of your father.” 26

This clearly shows a picture of mistreatment, fear, terror, oppression and domination of a Dalit by a policeman. Library Journal remarks on the autobiography is as…

“This moving story of perseverance from a sector of India rarely represented to American readers will be a standard text on Indian and Dalit themes for years to come.” 27

Thus it is noticed that Untouchables: My Family’s Triumphant Journey out of the Caste System in Modern India is a Story of Change, Courage and Progress of hope.”

Baluta as it was named in Marathi draws upon the typical symbol of the dalit’s humiliation for leftover food as Baluta or his fixed village share as remuneration for performing stigmatized labor. Pawar has characterized his story as a top secret that must not be exposed because of the shame and the pain. Pawar plays the relationship between confidentiality and shock instead of celebrating the autobiographical as a genuine act of self representation. The narrative progresses throwing light on different phases of life including customs, practices, education, economic realities and gender discrimination.
The book created a new field in Marathi literature and the use of language is also not just of revolt but of a extremely introspecting analytical logic. Pawar’s autobiography reproduces his active participation in the social, cultural and literary movement on the nationwide. Baluta is an expression of his contemplative thinking solid attitude, deep understanding and sympathy towards social happenings and issues. Because of the harsh conditions he suffers mentally and physically in his personal life instance of which find in his writings. The work portrays the infirmity inside the society permeated with caste and class difference and the reader is filled with sensitivity to the situation and condition of the protagonist thus creating a new affinity amongst all.

Dagdu Maruti Pawar has dealt with the atrocities experienced by the dalits or untouchables under the Indian caste system in various forms of literary genres. His autobiography Baluta recounts the experience of an untouchable struggling for a peaceful existence mentally tormented but unable of revenge in action. The autobiography is written as a story by Dagdu Pawar told to the more cultured Daya Pawar with both being personas of the author. The book exposes severe insult and shameful behavior of humid upper caste persons making hell of dalit lives but the question of hunger and survival also dominate. Baluta as it was named in Marathi draws upon the typical symbol of the dalit's dishonor for leftover food as Baluta or his traditional village share as reward. Pawar has characterized his story as an undisclosed that must not be exposed because of the shame and the pain that attaches to confronting the self. It is a first person narration of the minority consciousness and their struggle is a matter of inspiration for him plus for others giving an account of discrimination and deprivation as a stage of recognition and assertion living on the margins of the marginalized as young expendable human material exposed to the harsh realities of life. Pawar’s autobiography reflects his active participation in the social cultural and literary movement. Baluta is an expression of his reflective thinking solid stance deep understanding and sympathy towards social happenings and issues. Due to the oppressive conditions he suffers psychologically and physically in his personal life. The work portrays the illness within the civil society fill with caste and class
division. He odds created by extreme poverty and the harshness of the oppressive caste system. After associating with the Maharashstra Buddha Sahitya Sabha and the Pragat Sahitya Sabha since 1968 he became an active member of the Dalit association in literature. He concluded his education at the same time of working as a laboratory assistant in a veterinary college in Parel Mumbai. He started his literary career through contributing articles to the periodical Asmitadarsha. He earned fame through his autobiography Baluta with the intention to talks about the harsh realities of the caste system in India. Baluta is a story by Dagdu Pawar as narrated to the more literate Daya Pawar both of who are personas of the author. The autobiography communicates the experiences of an untouchable struggling for a nonviolent survival. The powers of the book are the simple clear cut and to the representation and a visible practical picture of the culture around him. The book motivated Marathi society and was a critical success in both Marathi and in Hindi translation but received significant anti Dalit blowback for its frank exhibition. This book created a new type in Marathi literature. Many autobiographical books talking about harsh experiences hard realities were written after Baluta. What is unique about Daya Pawar is his use of language which is not just rebellion but an extremely introspecting logical thinking. Baluta draws upon the model symbol of Dalit as humiliation having to beg for leftover food as Baluta or his traditional village. Understood more broadly as the Dalit Âs share or lot in life Baluta historicizes the figure of the stigmatized Dalit by establishing him surrounded by financial suffering. The narrator of Baluta undercuts the reputed reality of the autobiographical from the set apart his story as a secret that must not be exposed because of the shame and the pain that connect to tackle the self.

It was never easy to tell personal stories of humiliation and oppression. 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.” 28
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 private pain with the reflection that telling stories is politically important. Some Dalits think such stories are like digging up compost. But if a man does not acquainted with his history he will not know which track he must take in the future.

Dalit narratives are not only self portraits but also a social commentary and memorial which exposed their distress. Constructed as the production of shocking experiences suffered by the protagonists beginning in the helpless years of childhood they show the burden of being outcastes and looked at with doubt. The repetitive encounter with injustice burns sparingly into the memory of the narrator-protagonist marking their progress through life carrying mark of rejection.

Shantabai Kamble faces similar problems in upholding her individual identity. Kamble and Pawar each expatiates how not only her identity as a woman but also her use of language and the very food she eats are integrally related to her Dalit identity. Both these texts provide elaborate descriptions of recipes and cooking processes revealing culinary art as a caste sensitive factor. Hunger becomes a recurrent motif in both these texts especially in the narration of the childhood days. Kamble tells us about how the Dalits are forced to survive on dead animals and leftovers of the upper caste when she discovered a number of new food items brought by the upper caste girls in school. She also explains how these made her even more aware of her caste and poverty. Dalits were denied the right to education they were forced to live outside the villages and the public places and temples were closed for them. The huge separation was
powerful among the people on the basis of their castes. The lower class Shudra consists and treated as if it did not belong to the human race. The evil tradition of untouchability was practiced and it was believed that the simple touch or even the shadow of a Shudra spoils the purity of Savarna. Though the practice of untouchability is legal crime in independent India it is found to be practiced in some parts of the country in one way or the other. All these horrors naturally have crept in Dalit autobiographies and made the outside world aware of the terrible conditions of Dalits. For instance Shantabai Kamble draws a picture of the practice of untouchability in the sacred temple of education where Dalit children were forced to sit outside the class room and the teacher strictly keeping himself away from their touch. She writes,

“Patil Master was the teacher of Standard III. He forced us to sit outside the classroom. He did not let us touch either to him or the other upper-caste students. He used to punish us from a safe distance with a cane. While checking our homework he used to make us put our slates on the floor and after checking he put them down. Only then we were allowed to take them back. He did not like to be touched by us.”

Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha in which the narrators write about the conflict between Dalits and Savarnas. The lower castes were treated very roughly. The evil custom of untouchability was believed that the gloom of a Shudra spoils Savarna. Dr. B R Ambedkar with his slogan ‘Educate, Agitate and Organize’ has been a great influence in Dalit freedom. Shantabai’s evidence is a glaring record of that blend of chance and purpose which often determines the course of life of marginalized human beings particularly women. Her contact to schooling is socially symbolic in this respect. It is due to a mixture of normal temperament, motivations and objectives and the informal availability of friendly conditions.
The life of Shantabai Krishnaji Kamble reveals the firmness of a Dalit to acquire social mobility. The autobiography is dedicated to her father and mother who were laborer. She dedicates her autobiography to them as gratitude for giving her education. Her autobiography talks about her mother who believed that education will bring changes in the shameful lives of the dalits. She also narrates the harmony that existed in the community in the center of poor quality. She remembers that girls did not have the option to select their life partners. Every decisions related to the marriage of the girl was taken by the elder males in the family. The credit of the lack of voice in the dalit patriarchal family provides feminist sympathetic of the dalit families. She explains about a dalit woman who had pre-marital relations with her husband. She also narrates the way the dalit males tortured dalit woman. The discrimination of dalit students made her to think about caste and education. Her parents were supportive for her education. Her autobiography emphasized the role of education for the sustainable development of her community. Her autobiography can see as a micro history of Mahar society. She recreated her memories as way to project her humiliation of her group of people. She evaluates the existing changes with that of the past to read the impact of the activist of Ambedkar. She describes before the Ambedkarite era the superstitions and rituals were the part of Dalits life. She interprets the lack of health supporting systems for Dalits with the culture of false beliefs. Her mother could not declare her rights because of patriarchy that exist at home. But she talks about her father who supported the Dalit laborers. The partition of labor within the Dalit homes was gender. The common conditions of Dalits are positive relations with the village. Dalits have to be obedient before their lords. The body languages of the dalits were decided by the lords of the village. For instance the Dalit women were forced to bow their heads down in front of the feudal lords. Shantabai also recounts how being Mahar she and her community people were discriminated against by the upper castes. She gives one example of how she was ill-treated by the mother of her classmate Shaku, a Brahmin girl. One day Shaku did not come to school. The headmaster sent Shantabai to her house to bring her. When Shantabai reached their house she saw there were rangolis outside the door. Seeing Shantabai at the door Shaku's Aai shouted,
"You daughter of a Mahar stay there. You will trample the rangolis." 31

This was a caste insult which was not only targeted against an individual but the entire Mahar community. Such was the humiliation she got from Shaku's mother that throughout her life Shantabai was frightened of visiting any upper caste house.

4.1 Summing Up:

To sum up, in the fourth chapter researcher has illustrated that as far as the concrete life of the Hindus was concerned on the term dharma which was interpreted to mainly Jati-dharma i.e. the social duties the religious obligations and the legitimate occupations for the subjection of each individual caste. The Dalits were told that their duty and way of life with a view to obtaining a higher level of existence and finally Mokasha i.e., salvation from history lay in the faithful performance of the duties of their Jati which were considered polluting and so they were segregated and treated as untouchables in the Hindu society. The purity of a person was inversely proportional to his involvement with matter. Those actions which involved contact with blood or decaying matter were considered impure. Thus those who carried out works like scavenging tanning of leather etc. were considered polluted beings and declared untouchables. On the other hand the Hindu society did not accept the Dalits as Hindus. The temples were closed to them they had no role whatever in the religious sphere. The vast wealth of the temples had gone to the caste Hindus even Dalit shrines were taken up by the high castes. Economic and social dependency forces the Dalits to continue to play the servile roles assigned to them in village festivals and other rites. The autobiographies of these writers clearly show how they are completely controlled by the society around them but there is an absence of self pity and basically it is subjective experience. It is the economic struggle the act of physical survival the day to day measurement. Dalit writers engaged with caste as a subjective category of how they lived and experienced. The study also focused on how the Dalit autobiographies record the unnoticed pains of the Dalits experience of discrimination.
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