Abstract

It is almost universally acknowledged that the history of mankind is the history of exploitation and domination. The present study is an attempt to account for Dalit Literature which always insists on democratic values such as liberty, equality, fraternity and justice. Literature is the process of humanization of the world. Such a humanistic approach is manifested in Dalit Literature. The oppressed and marginal world is for the first time reflected in Dalit writings challenges all the dominant and exploitative forces. The millions of downtrodden people could not fulfill their fundamental needs after Independence of India. They were deprived of all the benefits of democratic India. Dalit literature raised the problem of the marginal world. The social transformation, self-dignity and equal justice are the basic principles of Dalit literature.

There are various forms of Dalit literature such as Poem, Short Story, Drama and Autobiography. The present study has to analyze the selected Dalit memoirs of Laxman Gaikwad’s *The Branded*, Laxman Mane’s *An Outsider* and Kishor Shantabai Kale’s *Against All Odds*. The memoirs have raised a number of issues confronting the oppressed classes such as Uchalya, Kaikadi and Kolhati community. The oppressive social system necessitates hunger, poverty, humiliation, superstition, jatpanchayat, practice of untouchability and casteism among these oppressed and miserable communities. Subjugation of women is also a major theme of discussion in these memoirs. These suppressed communities are victimized socially, economically, culturally and physically in the name of religion, caste and gender.

The narrators form the collective voice of their own community. They try to escape from the man-made barriers that made their life excruciating. They want to liberate themselves and their community from the age old habits and customs. They come to know that their destiny cannot be changed without education. So
they struggle for education throughout their life. The narrators are inspired and enlightened by the thoughts of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. They have revolutionized their mind and manifested their agonies and pains to realize the world of their own community and hence they want to live a dignified life. These narratives are the manifestation of social consciousness and social reality. These memoirs are the authentic records of social reality, social movement and social struggle.

The study has dealt with caste-consciousness, self-assertion and social transformation. There is an attempt to bring to common notice that a handful of people enjoy greater degree of freedom, social status and security while a larger section of the downtrodden classes is deprived of the basic needs of life. The selected discourses motivate the educated people to probe into the sufferings of a marginal world and go for help. The typical and vigorous Marathi dialect is one of the major features of these memoirs to understand the authentic world of these underprivileged communities. There is an endeavour of the narrator to lead their community for liberation by breaking every obstacle.

Dalit narratives contributed not only to Indian literature but also to the world literature. The narratives require a connoisseur’s point of view to enrich Dalit literature. Dalit narratives bring in a new society, a new paradigm and a new set of life. The narratives are deeply rooted in the culture of their community and want to use them for Dalit unity and self-identity. Therefore, Dalit narratives are read as an ethnographic account of a community rather than a narrative account of a personalized self. It is for this reason Dalit Autobiographies are different from other autobiographies.

The chapter one deals with the background of Dalit literature. The status of Dalit communities was not better than the beast before and after independence of India. They were brutally treated in the name of religion, caste and gender etc. The situation of marginalized community was not equally improved during and after
the regime of British Government. In the course of time the social engineers such as Mahatma Phule and Dr B. R. Ambedkar enlightened the marginalized communities making them aware of their slavery. The self-asserted people of these deprived community raised their voice against their oppression and humiliation. They realized their lower status in the mainstream society and tried to express their own agonies and pain. The chapter I also discusses the word ‘Dalit’, Dalit literature, the development of Dalit narratives. It also covers the objectives, significance, the scope of the study and methodology to assess the selected Dalit memoir.

The chapter two is a study of *The Branded* by Laxman Gaikwad, a translation of *Uchalya*, a Marathi Autobiography. There are the records of exploitation, humiliation and deprivation of *Uchalya* community. The problems of poverty, superstition, jatpanchayat in *Uchalya* community are depicted through the present memoir. The people of *Uchalya* community are branded as thieves and lodged false charges against by the dominant Hindu people. The struggle for education is one of the major aspects narrated by the writer. Casteism and untouchability form one more dominating factor making the life of *Uchalya* people inhuman and brutal.

The chapter three is a study of *An Outsider* by Laxman Mane, a translation of *Upara* a Marathi Autobiography. It is a milestone of Dalit narratives depicting struggle of Mane and his community entitled the Kaikadi in the established Hindu culture. Mane narrates exploitation and subjugation of *Kaikadi* community. These people are humiliated in the name of religion, caste and gender. The women of *Kaikadi* community are dominated not only by their own males but also by the dominant village people. The women are brutally treated and humiliated. The problem of Hunger, poverty, blind faith, Jatpanchayat are the common features in *Kaikadi* community narrated in the present memoir.
Chapter four is a study of *Against All Odds* by Kishor Kale, a translation of *Kolhatyach Por*, a Marathi Autobiography. The memoir focuses on a struggle of a Tamasha Dancer and an illegitimate child from the Kolhati community. The sisters and daughters of Kolhati community are treated as a commodity. They are brutally exploited by the male of their community and dominant Hindu People. The parents of the community forced their daughters and sisters to dance in Tamasha Party to earn money. The parents of the Kolhati community are dependent on the earnings of their daughters and sisters which is disgraceful. Such kind of treatment to the daughters and sisters is hardly found in any other communities in India. The parents never bother about the settlement and security of their sisters and daughters in Kolhati community. Kishor Kale is an illegitimate child of Tamasha Dancer named Shanta. He has suffered a lot in the family and out of his family. The struggles of Kishor for education are noted this memoir. He is deprived of love and affection of mother and father.

Chapter five is a comparative study of the selected Dalit memoirs. There is an attempt to discuss similarities and uncommon aspects of these narratives. The communities mentioned in these memoirs come from the same background of lower class. The communities such as Uchalya, Kaikadi and Kolhati are ill-treated by the dominant Hindu people. The women of these communities are doubly slaved by the patriarchy and upper class. These subjugated people are frequently gone through tortures and sufferings. They face the problem of casteism and untouchability. The narrators are motivated by the thoughts of Dr Ambedkar. So they try to express their agonies and pains of their community. They also wanted to liberate their communities from the age-old habits and customs. The domination of Jatpanchayat is equally observed in these memoirs. The narrator maintains the rural and urban accounts of these communities as well. The common problems such as poverty, hunger, humiliation, superstition and Jatpanchayat are part and parcel of these communities. The narrators are the collective voice of
their marginalized community each such as *Uchalya, Kaikadi* and *Kolhati*. These people are depicted unsettled and insecure throughout their life. At last, the causes and consequences of deprivation of these communities are discussed in the concluding chapter.