Chapter VI

Conclusion

The present study has attempted to comparatively explore the bottom of the caste system in India and the apartheid system in South Africa in the fictional writings of Bama and Miriam Tlali. It argues that the works of these two writers constitute literary resistance not only to the caste system and the apartheid system, but also to patriarchies. The social institutions of religion, law, politics, art, and literature glorify the dominant ideology of the Caste Hindus and Race Whites. But, after centuries of suppression, Dalits and Blacks are now finding their voice in literature through political activism. In many ways, an arm of downtrodden politics, literatures has become an effective tool in expressing the protest of these communities against the domination of Caste-Hindus and Racist-Whites. The protagonists of these fictions take the radical step of rejecting and identifying themselves primarily as Dalits and Blacks. It has also explored larger ambiguities in the construction of an identity of Indian Dalits and South African Blacks.

The process of liberation of both the groups began with the struggle over the nature of reality. It involved the questioning of reality imposed on them and then redefining it themselves so that they could shift from the terrain fixed to them and acquire new frames of reference. The nightmarish experiences of casteism and racism had awakened Bama and Tlali to delve into the past history and culture and forced them to rewrite, reproduce, and celebrate its value. Instead of becoming sadomasochistic, the dalit and blacks are slowly occupying the lacuna with their assertion and identity. A supportive, cohesive community and familial bonding alone might reduce the damage done to the oppressed people. The lives of these two novelists have proved how the fortifying support of the family and community enable
them to overcome their vulnerability and create an independent mind which would help in
the formation of concrete self-image. They refuse to be stereotyped but instead with
their self-confidence and resistance almost terrorize their opponents.

The Dalit and Black writings are to awake the mass towards progress. The aim
of marginalized literature is to expose their cruel experiences and also the world
people who are in search of integrity and identity. Their writings demand civil and
human rights, destruction of hegemony and the active reconstruction of interrupted
and interpreted histories. The racism and castism as experienced by Bama and Tlali
had awakened them to delve into the past history and culture and forced them to
rewrite, reproduce and celebrate its value. Instead of becoming sadomasochistic, the
blacks and the dalits are gradually attaining their assertion and identity. A supportive,
cohesive community and familial bonding alone might reduce the damage done to the
oppressed people.

The introductory section throws light on some of the definitions and
interpretations of the word “marginalized” to demonstrate how these writers have
portrayed the marginalized in the background of casteist, racist, sexist, and classist
culture in their fictions. It sketches the objectives of the study and its significance.
Both the writers are introduced with their major publications, their achievements,
and their literary status with relation to their contemporaries in fiction. It also focuses on
certain preliminary information on Indian Dalit and South African black Literature.
The chapter traces the social phenomenon of marginality of Dalits and Blacks. An
attempt has also been made to show how the dalit women and black women are
captured in the web of geometric oppression of caste, race, gender, and class and
remains the slave of the slave or the other of the other. The palloocratic groups have
subordinated the woman as a subhuman being. The thesis also brings out the parallels
in these two literatures to demonstrate how the portrayal of the oppressed is the connecting thread.

Both Dalit and Black literatures had, hitherto, been sidelined in the mainstream Indian literature and South African literature respectively. After the emergence of Ambedkarite Movement in India and the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa had awakened the dalit and black writers to mirror the lives of the dalits and blacks, these literatures have made solid inroads into the mainstream literature as Dalit Literature and Black South African Literature. Therefore, the contextualization of both Bama in Indian literature and Tlali in South African literature shows how they have emerged as powerful voices and secured a prime place in the respective literatures. And after having underscored their social and moral visions, the ways in which these two writers have proceeded in their writings to liberate dalits and blacks from the shackles of slavery have been dealt with.

The second chapter explores a fractured society that is still divided into marginal groups after centuries of domination of the upper castes over the dalits and the whites over the blacks. The seed of marginality in India and South Africa lies embedded in years of resistance of dalits to upper castes and blacks to the white’s domination. The dominant castes in India and the white minority in South Africa control the political and economic structure whereas the dalits and black majorities provide cheap labour. In the works of Bama and Miriam Tlali, this dichotomy has been deliberately created and maintained by the “Hinduthuva’s Varna” and the government’s implementation of “Apartheid.” The portrayals of these marginalized groups are constantly in conflict with the upper castes and whites because they have divergent views about politics and lead a different way of life filled with poverty and difficult standards of living. It is the moral responsibility of writers, artists, teachers,
and leaders to create awareness in readers about the cruelty and injustices of racial and caste discrimination practiced against their own fellow beings.

The third chapter describes how dalits and blacks are thrown into the bottom of the mainstream society and how they suffer from economic depravity. Bama and Tlali firmly believe that by means their writings, political transformation of democracy can be recovered and the people can attain empowerment. It is also reveals the decentralization of Indian Dalits and the South African Blacks and also discusses the social, political, and economic challenges that they face in their day today existence. It also reviews the economic, cultural, and political rights, in general and how they are applicable to dalits and blacks. An obvious documentation of marginalized in the writings of Bama and Tlali about the socio-economic status of dalits and blacks brings out the enigma of depravity and exploitation in terms of shelter, religion, land ownership, education, and employment. Though they are aborigines, they still lack the basic necessities such as food and shelter.

This chapter also explores how the caste domination and racial oppression lead to the economic oppression of the deprived classes. The fruits of the black labour are enjoyed by the whites and exploited blacks live as the poorest of the poor. In India the superior “Varna” forces the Shudras to real lot their position to the fifth class in hierarchy and to do all sorts of low and dirty jobs to the higher caste people and leaves them in chronic wretchedness. The black feminists present how the poor black women are forced to take up jobs in whites’ houses and also go for shop keeping their younger ones underfoot with cheap salary. The other poor blacks denied of good jobs and are suffering from poverty and chronic illness. They also undergo untold miseries under the pernicious sharecropping systems. The dalit women fictions too realistically
present the plight of the farmers who work for the higher caste landowners as eternal bonded labourers and live with gruel as staple diet.

So, the aim of the writing of political transformation and empowerment determines the causal relation between oppressive socio-political conditions and the rebellious art and writing. It creates socially conscious authors who write with a view to include and pursue the political consciousness of their reader and positively effecting their analyses of the contradictions inherent in their political distributions within a system that propagates hostile social forms to them. Being fiction writers, both writers respond to egalitarianism and are guided by Socialist principles. Bama and Tlali take part in a process of revolutionary creative writings that aim at eradicating the currently depressive and tyrannical political system of “Varna” and “Apartheid,” and replacing it with an alternative legitimate socialist system that will be democratically implemented.

The fourth chapter explores how the patriarchal society exploited women’s political empowerment and the realization of the empowering nature of economic self-reliance and sexual oppression in the form of cultural practice. The universality of women’s experience of sexual violence has always provided an immediate entry point for feminist intervention. The analysis of patriarchy and its relationship to class, caste, community or race notwithstanding, feminist politics of all hues is able to relate directly to sexual violence – experienced in different ways and to differing degrees – and forms an intrinsic part of women’s lives. In turn, the writings of both have taken the powerful mechanisms of political activism through its women-centred creative writing which exposes their multiple oppressive experiences, not only to fight against their political and sexual oppression, but also to define themselves and their existence, as opposed to being defined, and to maintain their self-defined rights, identities, and independence. It also presents the portrayal of the oppressed women and the men
oppressor. The women presented in the novels face a double-jeopardy, the dalit women of overt casti test divide and dalit male patriarchy and the black women of blatant white racism and black male sexism. The oppression of women widows and unmarried women are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment. Many of them go for cheap labour but are still not freed from economic dependency.

Most Indian urban women have experienced sexual harassment and molestation. Many of these rape cases go unnoticed as the victims do not dare to face humiliation and public shame. Rape is also used to reiterate the female subservience and to establish male power and generally they serve as a threat to dalit women who try to raise their voice against these atrocities. In villages, it is a tool in the hands of the landlords to keep their agricultural labourers under control. The level to which women are oppressed in the Indian social context can be seen in “Manusmriti.” Manu gives women a status almost that of slave and they occupy the inferior place in the ladder of social status. They are considered physically and intellectually inferior to males, weak, sentimental, and dependent. They are made to obey the males as the slaves to obey their masters. On the whole, they are reduced to mere commodities or objects. The oppressive patriarchy gives further validation to the slavery of women by defining women as the “other.” Manu code clearly states: “A women should never be independent. Her father was authority over in childhood, her husband in youth and her son in old age” (qtd in Massey, Indigenous people 174). In fact, black women are slave’s slave. The black man has never given the legitimate role to his womenfolk. He has never made any attempt to introspect why he is treating her like a mule. In short, a kind of a love-hate relationship exists between the black man and black women as he prefers white woman to black woman. Hence, the subaltern women are completely treated as a “beast of burden” and “hapless victims.”
The fifth chapter reveals that the writers are categorized as literary resistances and their works are analyzed using the “Theory of Resistance.” It discusses the theoretical framework into the works of Bama and Tlali constitute literary resistance not only to the caste system and to the apartheid system but also to patriarchies. Through an analysis of all the works of these two authors, it is presumed that caste and race hierarchy are still prevalent in the world. It also explores larger ambiguities in the construction of an identity of the Indian Dalits and South African Blacks. It also emphasizes that central to their vocation is the intention of bringing justice by the transformation of the subaltern people’s status of marginality to that of centrality by empowerment.

Bama and Tlali, though from two geographical extremities, exhibit a similar approach to exploring and expressing issues that concern themselves and the group they represent. They began their literary career with the wring of their life stories and then they moved on to narrating the lives of women of their respective communities. They revealed the truth that casteism and racism are dehumanizing in their effects. Racism may be considered to be the offspring of colonialism but casteism owes its genesis to the ancient caste system invented by man. Both foreground the presence of the grandmothers who are the repositories of the histories of their communities. They play an active role in the narrative to describe the life in their communities. There is a gynic a positive vision of how they could become empowered. The undertone of optimism attempts to transform them beyond the state of despair. Both the writers contest the neo-colonial structures, counter hegemonic narratives of liberation, and carnivalize and transform the fictions into a potential instrument for the regeneration of positive social values. The literary output of both novelists can be brought under the theory of resistance. The post-colonial critic Spivak’s controversial query ‘Can the
Subaltern Speak?’ has been countered by Parry, the Black critic, who argues that Spivak deliberately does not give speaking part to the colonized. Parry cites Fanon states that the colonized are constructed according to the Ideology of the colonialist (Parry 27). When the colonized denies the right to subjectivity, internalizing and refracting the images of the colonizer, the colonized is condemned to exist in an inauthentic condition.

Bama and Tlali articulate the discrimination and exploitation leveled against their communities and against themselves as individuals. It helped them creative a philosophy wherein the possibility of out of oppression to optimism is explored. They use the philosophy of optimism as a shield to edge forward, resisting whatever is detrimental to the gynic quest of self identity, self assertion, and self worth. This act of autogenesis, the process of coming into being from silence into sound, is a slow process from marginalized invisibility into central vision. To recuperate the past is to recall that all colonialism were about the conquest of space, and about the exploitation of people and discrimination; and what colonial people resisted was the violent appropriation of their homes, assaults on their persons as well as the subordination of their cultures and the denial of their right to self determination. The black and the dalit writings emerge from their history and it is not only the importance of historical facts or artifacts or artifacts but also the historical meanings of two things – a sense of truth and a sense of community between the writer and the reader. The act of going back is only to march forward, returning, reclaiming, and repossessing what is lost. The writings of Bama and Tlali reveal oppression and register their protest and resistance but simultaneously affirm their own humanity and dignity which has been denied historically.
The present research has attempted to delineate and bring out the untold sufferings of dalits in India and blacks in South Africa general in the name marginalization and untouchability. The research is also concentrated on the unseepable pains of dalits in India in the name of even ‘unseeability,’ which does not prevail in the life of Blacks in the context of Eurocentricism. Undoubtedly Bama and Tlali have made a niche in the annals of ‘Resistance literature’ by setting journey for their characters in particular and for their decentralized communities in general towards centralization and retribution of their lost identity.