

## DALIT LITERATURE AND MARXISM – A STUDY

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I'm the sea, I soar, I surge

I move out to build your Tomb's

The wind, storms, sky, earth

Now all are mine

In every inch of the rising struggle

I stand erect.

(Prasad & Gajjan, I have Become the Tide, 76)

### Abstract

*It is universally acknowledged that literature is the mirror of society which keeps on reflecting the mistakes through its own imaginative poetic power since ages. But it had been technically ignored and forcefully suppressed. Now it has broken the old stereotypical framework. It has also broken the long silence of commoners who possess the sea, storms, wind, sky and earth and everything and moves out to build a new palace where we all king on the creator's creation. It further raises question against the traditional method of portraying elite class's notion and ideology and interprets and analyses the identical problem of Dalits, their alienation and marginalization and Marxist class consciousness. This present paper looks at select samples from the two movements mentioned above and represents the technical ignorance of marginalized section and how they have been dehumanized and deprived.*

**Keywords:** Acknowledge Stereotypical, Alienation, Marginalization, Dehumanized

In the history of human upliftment, there are two movements which have shaken the human consciousness. One is Dalit and other is Marxism. The former is based on the ideologies and principles of Babasaheb Ambedkar who wanted to polish the society by dismantling the caste system which is the root for the suffering and alienation of the marginalized exploited lower class people. The latter is based on the principles and ideologies of Karl Marx and Hegel who wanted to systematize the social structure by

deconstructing stereotypical the economical system of society. According to them no one territory will progress until its old structure is annihilated which is the core of 'historical materialism' in which everything such as religion, literature, ethic, art, culture and so on are inspired by the power of economic. In this context let us discuss how these two movement attempt to highlight the ideologies and methodologies used by the upper class to dominant the marginalized alienated lower class section.

One of the most discernible features of India is its caste ridden society. Dalits are known as Shudras and they have been designated as untouchables for ages. This marginalized alienated backward subaltern community has long been distinguishing from the main stream of human society. They have been alienating from identity crisis. They have been searching their identity with the periods of time either by embracing other faiths or by revolting against the Varna strata that exists in Hindu religion. Some renowned social reformers like Jyotiba Phule, Sabitribai Phule, Ambedkar and so on fight for the equal rights and identity for the Dalits. Being a dalit, Ambedkar educates himself and becomes the former of Indian constitution. Dalit people have their own voice for claiming their identity through their own literature which ascertains that subaltern can also speak.

The main ideologies and principles of Marxism are based on the Hegel's principle of "dialectical progress." It was later expanded by Karl Marx. In their book *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848, they delineate the communist society. In this book they try to emphasize that the exploited lower class section must unite to dismantle the capitalist social system by revolting. Both of them have dreamt of classless society in which there will be no private property and no dictatorship. These are the fundamental roots of exploitation. In this context they wish to build a utopian society which will totally be classless and exploitation free.

Ambedkar dedicated his entire life for the betterment of Dalits who have been alienated from the rest of the society. He measured everything such as law, religion, literature, economy, politic, and so on for the basis of the betterment of untouchables. By the influence and inspiration of his, the Dalit writers burst out into crying to see the wretchedness and shocking status of untouchable human beings in the Indian society. In this context, they can be likened to the Black writers who always want to write about the world they experienced. C. D. Narasimhaiah in his "India and the literature of common wealth" utters:

Not long ago there were Negro women who were ashamed to say their race created it. They didn't care for Negro paintings because they were too Negro? I want to be a poet, not a Negro poet was what one heard. And today they have gone so far in asserting their identity that without it they have nothing to stand up to the white man. And some of their rebels rightly assert that Negro children are born into a white world and if they are to survive in it they need to achieve blackness. The black writer shouts 'The Statue of Liberty must go', the bitch must vacate our minds". He says, "it is more important to know how to cry, sob, laugh, stare and startle than to learn how to smile, grimace archly and wink'. The writers want to define the world in their own terms. (Narasimhaiah 33)

According to Marxist ideology, society is divided mainly into two classes. One is the owner or the capitalist class which Marx and Engels called bourgeoisie. It owns the mean of production. Another is the labor class. They own nothing only their labor. Therefore the former is dominated and latter is dominant. Though they have shown the exploitation but they never reject the aesthetic beauty and the value of art. Engels in as letter to Minna Kautsky on 26 November 1885 written:

I am not at all an opponent of tendentious poetry as such...But I think that the bias should flow by itself from the situation and action, without particular indications, and t writer is not obliged to obtrude on the reader the future historical solutions of the social conflicts pictured ... AL socialist-biased novel fully achieves its purpose, in my view, if by conscientiously describing the real mutual relations, breaking down conventional illusions about them, it shatters the optimism of the bourgeois world, instills doubt as to the eternal character of the existing order, although the author does not offer any

definite solution or does not even line up openly on any particular side. (Marx and Engels 1947, 45)

Both the Marxist literature and the Dalit literature deal with the greatness of the common human beings. They both have their own certain principles and ideologies. They both have considered that common man is the centre of art and life. In this context Marxist thinker Maxim Gorky points out:

We must realize that it is the masses' labour that is the chief organizer of culture and the creator of all ideas, those that have for ages detracted from the decisive significance of labour—that source of all our knowledge, as well as the ideas of Marx, Lenin and Stalin, which are instilling a revolutionary consciousness of their rights in proletarians of all lands, and in our country are elevating labour to a force that is the basis of creativeness in science and art. (Gorky 1982, 332) 2

Alike Marxist, literature Dalit literature also emphasizes the enigma of class consciousness. So the Dalit writers embrace humanism and reject aestheticism. They through their arts express their bitter experiences regarding casteism faced by the marginalized section in Indian society and at the same time wish to obliterate the long silence of Dalits. Most of them have written in the form of autobiography and have shown the real life experiences faced by them. They also glimpse how Dalits have been deprived and dehumanized and discriminated from the rest of the section in terms of education, works and opportunities. In this context E. M. Forster in the preface of Mulk Raj Anand's novel *Untouchable* utters:

The sweepers is worse off than a slave, for the slave may change his master and his duties and may even become free, but the sweeper is bound for ever, born into a state from which he can't escape and where he is excluded from social intercourse and the consolation of his religion. Unclean himself he pollutes other when he touches them. They have to purify themselves, and to rearrange their plans for the day. This he is disgusting as well as disquieting object to the

orthodox as she walks along the public roads, and it is his duty to call out and warn them that he is coming... (*Untouchable* Preface 8)

Hegemony is the centre of Marxist structural based society. It emphasizes on art, beauty, culture, movie and literature and marginalizes the real meaning which is called ideology in Marxist language. It is invisible and makes us realize the commoners that the mean of production is right. Marxist literature helps us to pay attention how capitalist section through the helps of ideology have dominated and exploited the worker class section and how social energy is circulated. It is shown by Stephen Greenblatte in his essay 'The Circulation of Social Energy.' He disseminates: 'this institutional improvisation frames the local improvisation of individual playwrights' (2003; 506)

Both Dalit and Marxism have believed that literature is the reflection of society. Therefore, they both have considered common man as the protagonist of their arts. They think artist is a man speaking to ordinary men because they have no identity and their voices have unheard. In this Baburao Gaekwad says: *People of every caste and religion were involved in the fight for the country, but the untouchable person being of inferior status never became a hero. Therefore Dalits were not portrayed in modern Marathi literature' (Gaekwad 1986, 38).*

After the above discussion it is quite clear to us that though the Dalit and Marxist literature both deal with the commoners as the centre of their discussion, they both have their own different ideology and path. The former looks at the matter on the basis of caste whereas the latter looks at the matter on the basis of class. Therefore the Marxists refuses Dalits' notion to call only Shudras are Dalits. To them Dalits are all the sections who are marginalized, exploited, dehumanized, and alienated from the main stream of human society. At the end we can conclude that the dream they have shown become a utopian reverie because still today the plight of the marginalized exploited section is far fletching from the up to mark.

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