



Dalit Literature In Maharashtra: Scope For The Research

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Abstract:

Maharashtra has a considerably long tradition in literature. Three Marathi writers namely V.S.Khandekar, V.V.Shirwadkar, V.D.Karandikar have been honored with 'Dnyapeeth' award. In spite of the various national and state level recognitions, Marathi literature was unfortunately restricted to urban middle class milieu. So called problems of this class were voiced through the writings of these writers. Some of it catered the needs of neo literates in decades immediately following independence. Sometimes romantic love stories of the middle class boys and girls occupied the poems of the times, lyrical ballads and sonnets were written to take the readers to the world of make believe. Dalit, peasants and illiterate women didn't have much place in this literature.

Kea words: Culture, tradition, movement, rebel etc.

Introduction:

Indian society has been a multilingual society for centuries today. Literature produced in one language has always been translated into other Indian languages. It helped people from one language to get in touch with the literature in other languages. The globalization has brought the world together. People from India have been learning various European languages for various academic and commercial reasons. Dalit writers in Maharashtra wrote their life in Marathi. Dalit literature in Maharashtra came forward as a force to reckon with. Daya Pawar's *Baluta* (1978) translated as *Baluta* (2015), Laxman Mane's *Upra* (1980) translated as *Upra (An Outsider)* (2003), Sharankumar Limbale's *Akkarmashi* (1984) translated as *The Outcaste* (2003), Laxman Gaikwad's 'Uchalya' (1987) translated as *The Branded* (1998), and Urmila Pawar's *Aaydan* (2003) translated as *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs* (2008) etc. are published gradually. These are some of the remarkable autobiographies which are translated into English. The shackles of tradition were removed with the publication of these Dalit autobiographies. These books awakened the people of Maharashtra to a different kind of literature in Marathi. Small trickle soon became a movement called Dalit Literature. These autobiographies can be studied differently in different manner and style.

The intention of this article is not to critically analyze and evaluate Dalit Literature. I would like to write on the probable research areas in this literature. First of all let it be clear that these writers were not either established writers or professionals related to publishing industry. Naturally their language was not literary in the traditional sense of the world. This is where research in linguistic variations comes in. The writers before the advent of Dalit Literature used so called standard Marathi. They did not include the language of the backward classes, village folk and illiterate people in cities. But it had a time of artificiality and interpolation. It never seems to be an integrated part of the linguistic structure of the work.



It is the Dalit writers who changed the language of Marathi literature in the seventies of the twentieth century. The caste, region, gender specific expressions are found in abundance in this literature, various idioms and proverbs, figures of speech that those persons had been using in limited circles suddenly adorned the paper of Marathi writing. Research scholars who are interested in the study of literature from linguistic point of view may certainly think of Dalit literature seriously.

Term culture includes language and dialect, religion, technology, cuisine, aesthetic, art, music, fashion, architecture, values, ideology, socio norms, taboos, etiquettes, gender roles, festivals, commercial practices, social structure etc. Literature combines language and culture. These two phenomena are interdependent.

People all over the world have been discussing rewriting of history. Revisiting Marathi literature will be enriching experience and academic journey. Dalit Literature has changed the definition of fair and filthy in literature. It has created its own aesthetics which requires the new eyesight and fresh viewpoint. We have references to their personal, social, and national lives in all these works. Careful study of the details compels us to understand the meaning of political and social Independence that the land has attained in 1947. A careful researcher can go deep into the conceptual and actual reality regarding Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

Dalits have been the integral part of India's social and economic life. They ran around from the village to another village when a baby was born in the family, whenever there was a sudden in the family. They were the ones to accompany bride and bridegroom to the family deities' funeral rites could not be completed without their active participation. This shows the different roles that these Dalit classes played in India's life.

Sapir told that,

“Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society.” (Page, 77)

Though Dalits were prevented from property, fraternity could never be completed without their help. They were tough enough to protect the crop from wild animals and road robbers. They were the ones who ran small scale businesses like tannery, cobblers. Dalits excelled in arts like dance and music while they carried out their roles as entertainers into the set up of the society. If one reads Dalit literature between and beyond the lines one can come across such references.

Laxman Gaikwad's *The Branded* is the autobiography of a person belonging to *Uchalya* or 'Pathrut' community. Laxman Gaikwad is a wonderful organizer. *Uchalya* was known as a criminal tribe in Maharashtra. *Uchalya* has received several awards including Sahitya Akademy award in 1988. The Marathi word 'Uchalya' literally and figuratively means a thief or a pilferer. It is the name of one of the communities notified as criminal tribes in the All India Criminal Tribes Act. Thus it is a socially and legally branded community.



Sharankumar Limbale has written *Akkarmashi* in Marathi. He is an excellent student and rebellion. It is translated as *The Outcaste* into English. This is Sahitya Akademy Award winning novel. This is a story of a Dalit youth who has a mother but not the legitimate father. He is Dalit from his mother's side and an upper caste from father's side. He has bitter experience in his life that he has depicted in this autobiographical novel. He has given detailed description of his family and its struggle to live life. He wanted to take revenge upon the system. They work as laborers in their lives.

Aayadan is originally written in Marathi by Urmila Pawar. *Aayadan* is translated as *The Weave of My Life – A Dalit Woman's Memoir* into English. Urmila Pawar is a major Dalit woman writer born in the same community. She is an activist and feminist struggle in Maharashtra. Laxman Mane's *Upra (An Outsider)* is an autobiography of a person belonging to the Kaikady tribe – a nomadic tribe in Maharashtra. Laxman Mane is a humanitarian soul. Mr. Mane knew well that the writing of this autobiography was a crime for Kaikady Jatpanchayat and he would be punished for it. Yet he dared to write his experiences in life. Also this is a Sahitya Akademy Award winning autobiography.

Baluta is the first Dalit autobiography written in Marathi. Also it is translated as *Baluta*. As a document of the long silenced and long denied sufferings of the Dalits, *Baluta* is not only a contribution to the archives of Dalit history, but a manifesto for the revolutionary transformation of society and human consciousness. Except all these there are more writings in Marathi and translated into English. Some of them are Narendra Jadhav's *Amcha Baap Ani Amhi*, Kishore Kale's *Kolhatyacha Por*, Bebi Kamble's *Amucha Jina* etc

A researcher taking up study in multicultural aspects of Dalit literature can find a variety of new topics. When people discuss multiculturalism, they generally talk about Indian culture vis a vis European or American culture. It is the time to focus our attention on the Dalit culture in comparison with so called upper caste literature in India.

Barring a few exceptions like MulkRaj Anand's *Bakha* in 'Untouchable' and *Velutha* in 'The God of Small Things', none of the Indo Anglican novel has placed Dalit character at the center. Even in a novel like 'Kanthapura' *Murthy* the little Mahatma shudders while entering an untouchable's hut. Dalit literature evolves around the interaction between Dalit and non-Dalits differences the two kind of literature is envision. Non-dalit literature of the past included Dalit character as fillers. They did not have separate identity as such. Dalit writings incorporate non-dalit sensibility as character. Researcher in this area will certainly bring forward the peculiar features of this literature.

Next area of research that such literature, can offer is in the field of translation and sense translation. International scholars, like Eugene Nida and R.S.Jamesford have written about linguistic translation and sense translation. A reputed critic Sujeeet Mukharji maintained that translation was a process of rediscovering the text and the translator. Dilip Chitre translated Tukaram's abhang and has put forward a theory which says that translation in a way was recreating the text.



Sujit Mukarjee rightly points out,

“Fifty years of new nationhood have produced many problems for India and also many solution, inherited from many centuries that preceded the twentieth has been that we have always translated. Language is one of our greatest wealth and translation enables us to continue to speak or write or read to each other. As has been said in many other contexts, in such diversity is our security, durability and unity.” (Page, 52)

Dalit literature in Marathi is translated in a number of Indian and foreign languages. Most of it is available in English translations. Dalit literature has its own form, narrative technique and language. It will be exceptionally rich experience to study the translation process and the final outcome in detail.

Conclusion:

I would like to conclude that Dalit literature is full of possibilities in research in languages as well as literature. Its language is different. Its art of characterization provides new experience. Its plot structure paves the way for new narrative techniques. I therefore believe that it should be taken up for research with vigor and commitment.

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