

## Identity Crisis Of Dalits In Major Indian Writer's Texts.

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### **Abstract**

*India has one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, but its caste system is famous.*

*This study examines the historical oppression, the suffering of the oppressed, and the origin of Dalit writings. This article highlights topics such as movement and the depth of Dalit literature. It is commonly considered that the beginnings of all Dalit literary works may be traced back to the ideology of Ambedkarism. The article also explores the challenging conditions faced by Dalit individuals and their outstanding attempts to enhance their societal position. This work provides a comprehensive portrayal of the social and political connections of the Dalit group within the context of India's caste-based system. This study investigates the societal circumstances surrounding Dalits in India and their interactions with minority groups and non-Dalits. It examines the struggles of the minority group for equal rights and liberty. Today's Dalit population has a positive attitude towards equality because of strong Dalit movements, writers, and philosophers challenging upper-caste culture through Dalit literature, government benefit package implementation, and more. It is against the law to discriminate on the basis of gender or caste. This is a literary account of oppressed people's struggle toward social equality and identity exploration.*

**Key Word:** Dalit, caste, oppressed, Marginalisation

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### **I. Introduction**

Poor people and those from lower castes are often left out of society and the economy in India. It's not just Hindu culture that is different from other societies in South Asia because of caste. Some parts of caste identity are still alive and well in Pakistan and Bangladesh, even though most of the people there are Muslims. For example, social exclusion based on caste and the tradition of being untouchable are still around. Many nations in the Southern region have prohibited untouchability in their constitutions, although it is still completely enforced.

Most of what is known about early Indian history comes from Aryan or Hindu literature. The first Indian culture was based on Varnashrama Dharma, a caste system based on work that finally led to discrimination based on race. The Shudras were meant to work for the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas, while the Brahmins were at the highest level of the social class system. They continue to be society's "untouchables." In the constitution of India, these people are referred to as Scheduled Castes. Their social standing increased as a result of the work done by Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. They also encouraged the education of Dalits, which led to the development of a novel method of writing. These people are commonly referred to as Dalits. Within the context of Indian culture, such people are referred to as minority groups, as they have a long record of being controlled by the higher castes. As a direct consequence of this, they have, for a very long time, been considered a subaltern, marginalized, and oppressed community.

In India, especially in the Marathi language, a new literary trend called Dalit literature took off in the 1950s and 1960s. A group on the outside called the Dalit Panthers went with it. This idea spread widely to every corner of India. The authors and poets of the group came up with the word "Dalit" to replace the words "Untouchable" and "Harijan." People from the Untouchables, founded by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (1891–1956), started writing in the early 1960s as part of a movement. In the 1970s, English-speaking people felt like they had never seen or heard of Dalit writing before. Dr. Ambedkar's magazines Janata, Prabuddha Bharat, and Muknayak all had novels and songs about underprivileged people in the 1940s and 1950s. One such work was a brief narrative by Marathi author Bandhu Madhav that highlighted the real experiences of those who were subjugated. Then this theme came along, and then others.

In many types of writing, Dalit literature is an intellectual and artistic form of writing that changes the way people live. In India, it was a type of writing that started a new literary trend. It is mostly about how people have been both financially and politically exploited in India for centuries, and Dalit writing is about that. However, this proves that India is slowly moving towards greater socioeconomic equality. All leaders and thinkers who write about Dalits should be praised.

In the eighteenth century, the Hindu reform founded by Ram Mohun Roy (1772-1833) brought up fresh issues regarding the social framework of Hinduism. It was a voice for gender equality, ending caste prejudice, and allowing widows to remarry. On the other side, it was more challenging to fight against untouchable practices and social marginalization.

## **II. Literature review**

1) K. Kavitha, a scholar explains Indian Dalit literature, which began in Maharashtra in the 1960s, is literature of the oppressed, usually connected with a broad group of individuals historically regarded as the lowest in Indian society and known as "untouchables." Dalit literature evolved in response to Indian social and cultural history. Literary representations of oppressed communities have gained significance in a time of critical focus on human rights issues. Dalit writing has grown in India to highlight Dalit oppression, brutality, and poverty. These experiences have been repressed, frequently with religious and social sanction, and relegated to non-literary.

2) Soumya Nair Anoop Kumar, examines the impact of Indian Dalit literature on identity and equality, discussing subjugation, untouchability, caste segregation, oppression, and women's suppression. The writings of the oppressed, including poems, short stories, novels, essays, and biographical narratives, often express their deep-seated rage.

3) Anju Bala, a scholar explains that in every civilized community, some inequalities cause social prejudice. India calls it 'Casteism'. Tribal, Dalit, and other minority literary voices were excluded from gentry discourses. Dalits lack education, assets, and equality. Dalit literature speaks for all the oppressed, exploited, and marginalized communities who experienced social inequity and exploitation for so long. Dalit literature seeks to free Dalits from servitude. Dalits write to express their indignation at the social hierarchy that degraded them. This Dalit consciousness and self-realization about their identity have been important to dynamic diverse creative writing. The study reveals how Dalit writers bring attention to the exploitation of Dalits in our society through their writings. It explores the Dalit experience from passive historical objects to self-aware individuals. The paper will examine the development of Dalit literature, its impact on society, the social conditions of Dalits in India, and their approach to writing their own history.

## **III. Dalit**

The word Dalit is derived from the Sanskrit language and, etymologically, it means "ground", "suppressed", "crushed" or "broken to pieces". In Indian culture, they were untouchables among the Brahmin, Kshatriya, and Vaishya castes. In the past, people who were not allowed to be touched were called "Chandala" or "Avarna." Between the years of 1900 and 1930, Narasimha Mehta and Mahatma Gandhi used the words "Untouchable" and "Harijan." The term "Harijan" is derived from Sanskrit which means "people of God." This category of people are called Scheduled Caste. For many years, the term "Dalit" has been often used to refer to Shudras. The word "Dalit" means "ground," and it refers to a lot of different groups that are on the outside. People use it to show that untouchability is not caused by waste but by other people.

## **IV. From social discrimination to self-identification, The Journey of Dalit Writers in India**

Dalit literature highlights the stories of those who are caste-bound in India. In Indian society, Dalits have long been subjected to oppression by the upper classes. They have thus always been a subordinate, downtrodden, and disadvantaged group. However, this society is growing and developing daily because of the work of numerous social activists like Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar, and Jyotiba Phule. Nonetheless, there are a lot of problems with their continued survival in the current circumstances.

Munshi Premchand, Amrita Nagar, Mannu Bhandari, Mulk Raj Anand, Arundhati Roy, Salman Rushdie, Malkhan Singh, Jai Prakash Kardam, Suraj Pal Chauhan, Omprakash Valmiki, Vasant Moon, and many more artists wrote not just for fun but also to make a point about society. The people who came after them were Bama, Sivakami, Poomani, Marku, Paul Chirakkarode, and Arundhati Roy. It's important to understand the circumstances of the time because it's not "enjoyment" or "relaxation" reading as it is the struggle for the justice of marginalized groups and brings the individuals to stand up against inequality.

Joothan: An Untouchable's Life, Omprakash Valmiki's autobiography, is widely read. It was first written as a piece called "Ek Dalit ki Atmakatha" and came out in the book Harijan se Dalit in 1993. Before becoming a professor of English at York University in Toronto in 2003, Mukherjee translated Joothan into English. He did this from 1997 to 2002. The word "jootha" comes from animals and means "polluted" food. It shows the fight

between the Chuhra (Dalits) and the Tagas, who are from Barla's top caste. The poem spoke to Mukherjee about his home country of India in a way that no other work had before. It did so in his first language, Hindi. Joothan shows how painful it is to be poor, beg, and be abused as a Dalit.

Premchand (1880-1936), the most well-known contemporary Hindi writer of all time, frequently highlighted the plight of the poor in his novels and short stories. He slowly replaced the nationalist optimism that came from the non-cooperation movement at the beginning of the 1920s with community distrust in his writings. His best and most popular book "Godan," which came out in 1936, has been read in many different ways. One common view is that it is a harsh criticism of how the poor are routinely taken advantage of within the framework of caste. The story is about what happens to a small-scale farmer from a low-income family in an agricultural society that is becoming more modern. The caste positions of the primary protagonists Hori and Dhaniya, are not revealed in the novel.

There is a similar view on social change in Indian writing written in many languages, including English. Many people think that Mulk Raj Anand's 1935 book *The Untouchable* was the first Indian story written in English. The main figure is Bakha, who cleans the latrines. They hate their job, but they can't figure out how to get out of their situation. He can't understand what kind of discrimination he is facing or what the anti-colonialist fight means to people like him. Bakha remains far away from being socially aware in any way. He only has one hope: the water closet, a new invention he's heard of, which might let him quit his job.

Most writers, academics, critics, and reviews say that Dalit works are examples of how caste has been used and abused in recent years. These stories, which come from a number of different sources, are seen as a tale of the Dalits' troubles. All of the writers wrote about how hard life was for them in Indian society, where they didn't have enough food, shelter, places to live or culture.

## **V. Search for Identity**

Poetry and prose by Dalit people have been written in large amounts. It was no longer possible for Dalit women to suffer in peace. Now, speaking out against discrimination is a real issue. They cannot tolerate all the injustices going on around them right now, but they are protesting strongly. Indian society has looked down on Dalits for hundreds of years, but that view is slowly dying out. People from the Dalit community have spoken out against inequality and tried to convince people from the top castes that if we want to stay together.

In India, people of different languages, cultures, and religions have always lived together. In the past, learning from teachers from higher castes and Dalit castes was an important aspect of getting through any problem. Because of the hard and brutal discrimination of castes in Hinduism, many Dalit people have become Christians or Buddhists. People who switched belief systems may also face racism in their newly adopted beliefs. Even though they are in a bad situation, many people who are marginalized have been given chances to get a good education and work. A number of Dalit women worked in hospitals run by Christian missionaries.

Dalits have been the subject of a lot of political research as they fight against all kinds of oppression based on caste. In the last few decades, Dalit movements have slowly become involved in and part of the political system. They have started parties, run for office, and held officials responsible. There are more and more Dalit groups in Indian politics, but the fight for Dalits is much bigger than the government's policy resolution methods.

Apart from institutions, Dalit groups have come together to both physically and culturally fight against caste's everyday rules and customs. Additionally, minority groups have to find a fresh and complex method to question the system of society. Two major examples are the construction of Ambedkar monuments and huge buildings that have a "Dalit architectural style" to them. Along with these direct problems, there are campaigns that focus on and bring attention to cultural issues. The number of works written by Dalits is increasing immediately and the copies of the local works are helping to spread them. All of these programs helped to change India's perspective on social equality for the better.

## **VI. Results**

To sum up, marginalization is a complicated issue that concerns people everywhere and is a major cause for concern in both national and global communities. It's very common because of a lot of different factors that work together in socioeconomic growth and are becoming more and more important as the world becomes more linked. Classism is a thing that happens all over the world. Some things about African-American writing are like things in Indian Dalit literature. A long-suppressed class fight began because of the drive of well-known Dalit leaders. It brought new life to Dalit writing. In Dalit writing, rejection and fight have been born from the pain of Dalit people. The story is about people who are harmed by the caste structure. It is a major and important part of Indian writing.

In Dalit fiction, the most important thing is that the experience is true, not that the writing is beautiful. The most important thing about Dalit writing is that it shows how aware Dalits are. It is a belief that goes against the rank system and puts the person first. This way of thought comes from the ideas of Ambedkar. People have sometimes said that Dalit writing is propaganda. People say that this writing lacks imagination. Some people have

also said that their work shows the passion of a cause and isn't neutral or objective. Nowadays the writings of Dalit authors involve works not only about the individuals who are mistreated in their homeland as well as about people from different communities across the globe who are driven to the edges by the wealthy.

Dalit women are more feminist than any other community. As Dalit women and as women, they are both victims. She has times when she feels sad and lost, but she also has times when she is strong and brave. Dalit women have no choice but to strongly protest against this dual injustice and break the hurdles that keep them from running away, whether it's through writing or organizing campaigns in the streets.

In the twenty-first century, Dalit culture is marked by schooling that gives people power, followed by a fight for individuality and equality. Culture is something that people do and it changes over time. Dalits used to be the silent victims. After going to school and getting settled in their lives, they speak out against unfairness to find one's identity. Their struggle doesn't seem like starting fights or chaos; it's about being seen as normal people with rights in a democratic India. The role of the Dalit community was at the center of Dalit writing, especially diaries and self-stories. In India, the rules have changed because of strong Dalit literature and organizations. Because of strong Dalit writings and actions, the Indian constitution was changed to protect this minority group and make sure they had equal rights in society.

## VII. Conclusion

As a whole, Dalit writing sends a message of society over individuals, rebellion over passivity, and progress over regression. The abused, the helpless, the grieving, the repressed, the enslaved, and those who belong to the lower state convey a signal to everyone about their place in the community. When it comes to being cut up, Dalits in India is a lot like African Americans. The writers all share a political view that is in opposition to the dominance of upper as well as middle-class Hindu ideas and for individual liberty over strict societal norms. In all of their writing, Dalit writers asked questions about faith and who they were. It could be said that Dalit writing got a solid base in the middle of the 20th century, and its structure was set up at the beginning of the 19th century. Writers from the Dalit community currently have an ideological literary foundation and publish numerous papers.

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