

An Undeniable Era And Approaches Towards Subaltern Studies

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the humiliation, discrimination, and exploitation faced by the Dalit people as subalterns in India which is based on caste, religion, gender, and the vulnerable situation of the Dalit community. From the analysis, many used the power of writing to beat the shackles of untouchability and Dalit oppression. Also, a number of Dalit writers also emerged claiming the equality they should be provided. A silent and safe protest could be made by the process of writing. Nobody was banned from writing and as long as they could write they continued to unravel the cruel deeds of the upper class. Nobody but the women writers could talk of the difficulties they had to face in such a caste and religion-based society. In the daylight, all the upper caste people seem to have a feeling of untouchability towards the lower castes, but in their darkness, they saw the lower caste women as an object for sex. Now, they don't seem to have a problem with the untouchability. All these issues are brought to people's attention by the magic of writing through the writers.

Keywords: - Indian Literature, Subaltern Study, Identity Crisis, Male Domination, Dalit Literature.

Introduction

Many Indian writers have written about the subaltern problems that existed and continue to exist in Indian society. Literature became a revolutionary tool to solve the problems of the subalterns and was the only way Indian writers could proclaim the atrocities that the subalterns were forced to go through. Numerous novels and non-fiction books were produced by various writers. Many Dalit writers have emerged with autobiographical and semiautobiographical novels in which the subalterns were treated with no respect at all and were merely considered as living beings by the high castes. Among them also the women were the ones who had to face the most act of brutality. Dalit men had to go through only the oppression by the elite classes, whereas the Dalit women had to face both Dalit oppression and male dominance within their group over them. Thus, literature stands as the Carrefour of all the misfortunes confronted by the subalterns of Indian society. The enduring significance of Premchand writing lies not just in the fact that they reflected the harsh social reality and mirrored the contemporary critique of semi-feudal India. It is the revolutionary writing which Premchand's novels acquire in the colonial Indian society by imparting a critical–realist edge to literary representation that gives him the badge of the most pioneer of a fiction writer who narrated in the form of social critique and protest of India. It is Premchand critique of the colonial and feudal system through extensive writings which makes him the prominent voice of Subalterns in Indian literature and as well as in cultural history. In the earlier writing of Premchand, he comes through the patriotism and anti-colonial struggle of masses but the major shift in his writing captured the Marxist ideology of class struggle and *Godaan* is the best example of this kind of writing. Mulk Raj Anand should be considered the first to have voiced his opinion about the marginalized sector through literature. His *Untouchable* and *Coolie* were the bare representation of the atrocities faced by the marginalized. Even Bama in her autobiographical novel *Karukku* confirms that

she chose to write novels as a protest against the cruelties and the inequalities she and the people of her community had to face.

In subaltern literary discourse, Dalit literature stands for the writings on Dalits by Dalit experience; Dalit literature voices the concerns of various Subaltern castes and marginalized communities in India. Subaltern studies took the question of caste seriously and caste narratives became the major part and even in literature caste issues especially Dalit issues become the most assertive in contemporary times. Dalit literature created her own space and as Omprakash Valmiki writes, 'Dalit Chetna obtains its primary energy from Ambedkar's life and vision, and all Dalit writers are united with respect to this truth.' In the discourse of Subaltern, recognition becomes important for marginalized sections as Dalits, whose silenced voices have brought in the centre stage of literary narratives. In an elitist literary discourse in post-independent India narrated the history of mainstream classes like landlords, petty bourgeoisies and dominant classes. In contemporary Indian literature, Dalit writing encompasses through many prominent Dalit writers like Namdeo Dhasal, Omprakash Valmiki, Tulsi Ram and others. Dalit literature has certainly reframed the narratives of slums, ghettos and untouchable spaces. Namdeo Dhasal, founder leader of the Dalit Panthers movement, favors protest in poetry choosing the language of subalterns as like, red light area. Dhasal himself belongs from the Dalit Community and his literature speaks on behalf of subalterns. The Dalit literature which deals with the lives of subaltern depicts a tradition which is old, though the term "Dalit literature" was introduced only in 1958. Mainly through subaltern studies writers employ a photographic realism to draw attention to the circumstances which those deprived of their rights from birth have to endure. For instance, Dhasal's poems broke away from stylistic conventions. He included in his poetry many words and expressions which only the Dalits normally used. Thus, in "Golpitha", he has adapted his epigrammatic style of language to that of the red-light milieu, which shocks middle class readers.

The tribal literature also presents an authentic documentation to be the best medium for protest against injustice and exploitation. Here, writers repeatedly assert in their writings, for example Mahasweta Devi researches her subject thoroughly before she represents any historical event in the form of fiction yet she also has a reverence for materials collected from folklore, for they reveal how the common people have looked at experience in the past and how they look at it now drawing on history, folktale and legend. Through the narration of an individual's and community's sufferings, many tribal writings hold a mirror up to injustice and exploitation. In the history of the rise of national resistance to colonialism and imperialism, there are some works which seem to have been written in a minor key. Most of these relate to the role of the indigenous subaltern who continually challenged the consolidation of territorial imperialism at the grassroots level and organized frequent protests against the growing exploitation of tribals, peasants and villagers. Another form is Dalit literature where Dalit people, from the ancient time itself, were considered unworthy and outcasts. The color of the skin played a major part along with religion and caste. It is ironic that even now, even after all these novels and writing which are as strong as swords, untouchability is still prevailing in India. But much of the misconceptions of the people about untouchability were eradicated by the power of literature. Thus, literature became a Carrefour of such social issues.

NEED FOR THE EMERGENCE OF TRENDS IN "SUBALTERN" - The tribals are the exponents of 'natural' effects rather than the man made artificial innovations. In other sense, it is primitivists' view of what exists prior to man's independent reasoning and contrivance. It is just because of the fact that

they are isolated from civilization. In ethics a primitives lauds the 'natural' or innate instincts and passions over the dictates of reason and prudential forethought. They love life of freedom, innocence and simplicity. Their languages are to be developed with episodes of globalization and research programs should be evolved in order to enrich their languages giving written forms to them so as to reach them for changes in their primitive culture through subaltern literature. The writers should be in a position to feel the pulse of the tribal people by interacting with them in their own language. For the elite who produce literature, this side of tribal life and ethics should be revealed so as to encourage them to contribute to 'subaltern' literature.

In the words of G.N. Devy, "History is made from the villages and taluka blocks and district divisions by small communities; by people whose names are never recorded in history. History is continuously borne by such people that the basic and central tenet of the subaltern studies may find exercises in all the volumes" (19).

HUMANITARIAN OUTLOOK AND SUBALTERN STUDIES- As stated earlier in the paper, 80 languages are unexplored in a country like India with 10,000 population each. We are running the risk of a sheer neglect of our fellow beings. On the other hand we are not going to enlist co-operation from the tribes for making good their lives by tapping the resources that lie beneath the hills and forests for the economic development of the country. An effort should be continued to efface the term "marginalized" by our mixing with the tribes for convincing attitude to be promoted among them from the side of the 'artificial' sphere of economic progress of which the citizens are known for. The journalists should bring to light the life styles of the tribals and record the voices of the people for the linguists to study them for enlarging them into languages proper to be listed under the recognized languages. The research and development projects should cater to the needs of the ungripped or unwritten languages of the tribals. The international phonetic script can be used for the systematic study of the languages. Tourism development should aim at their direct contact with the people of different areas under the blanket of thick forests wherein the tribes dwell.

THE THREE TRIBAL MANIFESTATIONS OF 'SUBALTERN'- Telangana is replete with tribals like Koya, Gondu and other aboriginal sects originated from forest areas. The history of these tribes does not come into focus. Journalists and writers are expected to explore the dark corners. Subaltern Studies is an area which needs enormous expansion. The cause of Jhats is highlighted recently. But it was after a united struggle. Still the backward tribes never understand the ways to conduct a campaign as an eye-opener to the political authorities. But their very existence as tribes might have seen historical tragedies which went into the abyss of the past .No recorded history is possible. The administrative wings visit these remote areas only in search of natural wealth of resources to cater to the needs of scientific age .But these tribes have built up their own systems of knowledge and withstood the political upheavals as well as natural calamities reaped on them from time to time.

CONCLUSION - Subaltern Studies have historical background. Folklore study will add to the pages of historical facts. The amelioration of tribal life- style aims at humanitarian outlook. Liberty equality and fraternity should be shared with these unrecognized tribes, in order to attain the values enshrined in the constitution of India. The Government should take the literary study as a project. Tribal languages should be enlisted as the recognized ones with the linguistic projects to be launched. There is an enormous scope for research and development of Subaltern Studies.

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