

Contribution of Indian Dalit Women in Literature

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ABSTRACT

The role of women in literature crosses many broad spectrums in works of the past. Women are often portrayed as weak and feeble individuals that submit to the situations around them but in many cases women are shown to be strong, independent individuals.

The Indian women writers are mainly talk about the male ego and female desire for freedom, They write about the male dominance over them.

As the role of Dalit women in literature evolves, so does their views on the work force environment and their own independence.

Women across the world and especially in rural India have met immense challenges to get themselves educated and for Dalit women, it's been doubly hard. However, from the pioneering Dalit women of the early 20th century who got themselves educated to young women writing today as intersectional feminists, Dalit women writers have made immense contributions to Indian literature as well as the cause of Dalit rights.

Keywords:- Dalit, Dominance, Independence, Environment, Feminist.

I. INTRODUCTION

People belonging to literature have always been an important part of the society and Indian women are not an exception. The women in Dalit society have made notable contribution to literature and their contribution is well appreciated in all literary circles. In the writing of Dalit women in the 20th century has been considered a powerful medium of modernism and feminist statements.

14 Dalit women writers tell it as it is, the struggle as a woman from the margins of society. Through fiction and non-fiction.

Women across the world and especially in rural India have met immense challenges to get themselves educated and for Dalit women, it's been doubly hard. However, from the pioneering Dalit women of the early 20th century who got themselves educated to young women writing today as intersectional feminists, Dalit women writers have made immense contributions to Indian literature as well as the cause of Dalit rights. Their writing gives an in-depth view of their struggle, besides having produced many literary gems.

Here are some of the must-read Dalit women writers writing across Indian languages and English. Though before you go on to this list, I'd like to mention Savitribai Phule, without whom no Indian woman could have learnt to read or write, and could be called the foremother of all Dalit women writers.

Shantabai Kamble

Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha her first novel can be considered the first novel written by a Dalit woman – a pioneer for Dalit women writers, at that time. She is the protagonist and this could be looked upon as an autobiography showing through her eyes the brunt born by Dalits of class, caste and oppression. It chronicles life of Naja through childhood, marriage, hunger and labour. This book was later shown as a serial in 1986 by the name of 'Najuka' which is how it's known of now. The book is now included in the University of Mumbai syllabus too.

Bama Faustina Susairaj

'Karukku'(1992), the most famous book written in Tamil is an autobiographical account of her childhood experiences of being a dalit. In her book she tries to bring about an awakening in dalit women to empower them with education through her experiences. This book led to her being ostracized from her village as it critiques the social order but however gained critical acclaim.

Her style of writing was noticed as being unique and one other unique feature being she does not once name the protagonist.

Yashica Dutt

An Indian journalist and writer, Yashica Dutt belongs to a Dalit family from Ajmer. An alumni of St. Stephens college, New Delhi and Columbia university, USA she has written frequently about the issues faced by Dalits. She has freelanced for numerous well-known newspapers and magazines in India.

Urmila Pawar

Urmila Pawar was born into the Hindu Mahar family in Maharashtra. She has an MA in Marathi Literature and retired from PWD department of the state of Maharashtra. She converted into Buddhism when she was 12 at behest of Babasaheb Ambedkar's country wide call for renouncing in 1956. Her moving to Mumbai in 1976 marked her discovery of feminism. These two important events shaped her life and writing.

Aaidan (1988) – also available as an English translation titled *The Weave Of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoir* – her autobiography written in Marathi details the life of her family members and also gives insight into everyday life of Dalits. Aaidan means bamboo and anything made of bamboo and her family traditionally were bamboo basket weavers.

Vijila Chirappad

Adukala Illathaa Veedu (*A Home without a Kitchen*, 2006), Amma Oru Kalpanika Kavitha Alla (*Mother is not a Poetic Figment of our Imagination*, 2009), and Pakarathi Ezhuthu are her collection of poems which portray the hardships and anguish of dalit life. Her usage of poetry instead of prose is a unique feature as poetry considered to be more romanticized in nature. Her works talk about gender and caste issues.

Babytai Kamble

Her book *Jina Amacha/The Prisons We Broke* is the depiction of Dalit women of Mahar community and their tribulations.

Kalyani Thakur Charal

Kalyani Thakur Charal not only writes herself, but has also provided a platform for other Dalit women writers, as the editor of the Dalit women's magazine, Neer. She is part of the editorial board of Chaturtha Duniya, a publishing house focussed solely on the works of Dalit writers. She is also a board member of the recently formed Dalit Sahitya Akademi. And, of course, she is an activist who has lent her voice to a wide range of issues including the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

She has recently edited and written in Stree-Samya publication's offering Dalit Lekhika – Women's Writings from Bengal, along with Sayantan Dasgupta, that removes any misconceptions we may have that caste brutalit...

Baby Halder

Born in 1973, Baby Halder is an Indian author. One of her critically acclaimed works is her autobiography Aalo Andhari (A Life Less Ordinary). Baby Halder started her writing journey when she was on a trip to South India- within a month of the trip, Halder had written about 100 pages in her native language Bengali. Her autobiography talks about poverty, hardship, violence, and her struggle to make a name for herself as a writer. The book touches on topics of her difficult life after her mother left her and how she was married off to a man 14 years older than her. Her book was translated into Hindi (2002), Malayalam (2005), English (2006), and eventually into 21 languages and 13 foreign languages, including German, French, Korean and Japanese.

Maroona Murmu

Maroona Murmu is an associate professor in the Department of History at Jadavpur University, Kolkata. Her book Words of Her Own: Women Authors in Nineteenth-Century Bengal explores the idea and articulation of emerging women writers in nineteenth-century Bengal.

Lily Haldar

Lily Halder's Bhanga Berar Panchali (The Litany of a Broken Fence) is another addition to Bangla (Bengali) autobiographies. Lily Halder is an established Dalit writer based in Kolkata, West Bengal.

In her book, Lily Halder doesn't generalise the concept- and speaks of a marginalised life. Instead, she talks about a life that paves the way out of the margins to the mainstream. The book further talks about how going mainstream proves to be evidence of success- albeit partial- in the struggle against caste discrimination.

Sukirtharini

Sukirtharini is a feminist poet, and she is widely acclaimed for her contribution to Dalit and Tamil literature. Sukirtharini is a Tamil teacher at the Governments Girls High School in Vellore, Tamil Nadu.

Sukirtharini has a master's degree in economics and Tamil literature. Her works have revolved around the idea of the female body as the chastisement of the oppressive caste system. This idea comes from a deep perspective about being born both a female and a Dalit.

II. CONCLUSION

This paper gave a view of how Dalit Women writers bring out the oppression and suppression of the women in this patriarchal society . each works is an open window to the feminine world to reconstruct the world of suppressed emotions of women. From this it is evident that women began to utilize the power of pen.

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