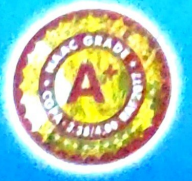
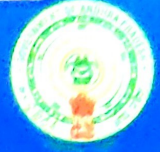




Govt. College Autonomous, Rajahmundry
ప్రభుత్వ కళాశాల స్వయం ప్రతిపత్తి



రాజమహేంద్రవరం, తూర్పు గోదావరి జిల్లా, ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్.



భాషావిజ్ఞ ప్రత్యేక సంచిక

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దళిత సాహిత్యం - తాత్విక దృక్పథం

Dalit Literature - Philosophical Perspective



నిర్వహణ:

తెలుగు మరియు తత్వశాస్త్ర శాఖల సంయుక్త ఆధ్వర్యంలో

ప్రభుత్వ కళాశాల స్వయం ప్రతిపత్తి
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Dalit Movement : A Social Change

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Abstract :

Dalit movement is an organized collective action of groups or lowers caste people against the upper-class people and their thought process on Brahminical thoughts to maintain an aura of empowerment and equality in the Indian society. Dalit Movement has no doubt brought a major social change in the traditional hierarchy of Indian society. It has encouraged the democratic ideals of liberty, equality and social justice among the different castes and classes of people. The Dalit movements raised the issues related to identity and reservations of government jobs and political positions. There was a strong opposition to the practice of untouchability and discrimination. The movements have brought the dalits to the mainstream politics and allowed them to hold important and administrative posts in different parts of the country. The dalit literature mobilized the dalit intellectuals to assert their rights and maintain their dignity in the hierarchical society. The Dalit movement was a direct challenge to the upper caste and class and they have been acting as a strong pressure group to the government in the mainstream politics. Thus the dalit movement has become a powerful social movement to bring a major socio-economic and political transformation in the conditions of dalits.

Keywords : empowerment, identity, hierarchy, transformation, intellectuals

Introduction :

An ideal society should be mobile, should be full of channels for conveying a change tak-

ing place in one part to other parts. In an ideal society there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared. There should be varied and free points of contact with other modes of association. In other words there should be social endosmosis. This is fraternity, which is only another name for democracy. Democracy is not merely a form of Government. It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen.....

- Dr. B.R.AMBEDKAR

The Dalit movement began as a protest movement to bring socio-political transformation in the status of dalits in India. Dalits have been ruthlessly exploited and inhumanly subjugated by the upper castes for centuries. They have been isolated, fragmented and oppressed by the hegemony of Brahmin culture. The new polity, the postmodern administrative framework, the rational judicial system, the current forms of land tenure and taxation, the new patterns of trade, the liberal education system, and the network of communications emphasized the spirit of liberty, equality and social justice for Dalits.

The Dalit movement asserts rights and privileges to the Dalits. Ruman Sutradhar (2014) writes that the Dalit Movement is a social revolution aimed for social change, replacing the age old Dalit Movements in India hierarchical Indian society, and is based on the democratic ideals of liberty, equality and social justice. He

also explains that the socio-cultural exclusion, economic deprivation and political exploitation of centuries made the Dalits break out of such kinds of age-old prejudices. Hence, they began to protest with the help of literature, or forming organizations like the Dalit Panthers, and this protest movement came to be recognized as the Dalit Movement.

The postmodern researchers, social scientists and academia have developed their interest to study the Dalit movement as it is one of the important social movements in India. Different Dalit leaders through their organization and political parties have mobilized and motivated the Dalit mass to achieve the overall objectives of creating an inclusive society. Due to stronger mobilization by the Bahujan Samaj Party, the dalits could participate in the democratic electoral process in the country and create a separate identity for themselves. The dalit leaders unleashed the movement for maintaining or increasing reservations in political offices, government jobs and welfare programmes. It is called the new political movements of dalits. Dalit movement brought a transformation in the caste structure of Indian society and emphasized the fight for self-dignity. The present reservation system is the outcome of dalit movement.

Who is a Dalit?

Dalits have different names in different parts of our country. They are called Holaya, Panchama, Chandala, Samagara, Chammar, Adikamataka, and Adidravida etc. The word Dalit is derived from the Sanskrit word Dal, means ground, suppressed, crushed, or broken to pieces. It was first used

by Jyotiba Phule, the founder of the Satya Shodak Samaj, a non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra. He used the term to refer to the outcastes and untouchables as the victims of the caste-based social division of the Indian society in the nineteenth century. Victor Premasagar writes that the term expresses the weakness, poverty and humiliation at the hands of the upper castes in the Indian society.

The term Dalit has become a political identity, similar to the way African Americans in the United States moved away from the use of the term Negro to the use of Black or African-American. Dalits today use the term Dalit as they believe the term is more than being broken and is in fact an identity born of struggle and assertion. The word dalit is a degraded term which was replaced by the British rulers who named it as depressed class in 1919. Gandhi lovingly called them Harijan. The British administration defined them as Scheduled castes in 1935. Again the term Dalit was popularized by the Dalit Panther Movement of Maharashtra in 1970.

In Varna Vyavastha, untouchables are placed as Panchama Varna. They occupy the lowest position in Indian society. They are the members of the menial caste and they are considered as impure and polluted and they have been regularly facing discrimination and violence which prevents them from enjoying the basic human rights and dignity promised to all citizens of India. They were denied access to roads, temples, schools, etc. to avoid pollution of other castes. They are forced to accept polluting occupations like dis-

posing dead bodies, working with leather, cleaning toilets and sewage, etc.

The total percentage of Dalits is 16.6 per cent in India. They are highly concentrated in states like Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa and Maharastra. Dalits are mainly poor peasants, share-croppers and agricultural labourers in the rural economy. In the urban economy they basically form the bulk of the labouring population. Sutrdhar (2014) writes that Dalits began their movement against the exploitation by Brahmans, and that they have not succeeded even now. There are varied reasons why the movement could not be successful and one of the most important is that Brahmanism is deep rooted in the social structure of India.

The Arya-Brahmins, the originators of the Vedas have actually institutionalized discrimination through the institution of caste. The majority are accepting caste system because the dominant ideology is inflicted in the people's minds by the process of hegemony. Brahmanism, in order to continue discrimination has made use of Gramscian hegemony through social institutions like schools, and temples, to maintain their hegemonic status. The Brahmins have very systematically deprived the Dalits of their own land and resources. The dominant Brahmanical ideology of caste is being resisted by a small group that took the shape of the Dalit Movement. A few educated Dalits organized the majority to begin the movement.

Dalit Movement in Pre-Independence India :

Bhakti Movement: This movement in 15th

century was a popular movement which treated all sections of society equally and it developed two traditions of Saguna and Nirguna. The first one believed in the form of God Vishnu or Shiv relating to the Vaishnavite or Shaivaite traditions. It advocated equality among all the castes though it subscribed to the Varnashram dharma and the caste social order. The followers of Nirguna believed in formless universal God. Ravidas and Kabir were the major figures of this tradition. It became more popular among the dalits in urban areas in the early 20th century as it provided the possibility of salvation for all. It promised social equality. Through these movements Fuller argues devotionalist ethic came to be widely reinterpreted as a charter of egalitarianism. No doubt the teachings of Bhakti movement inspired and motivated scheduled castes for the beginning of dalit movement. These provided the means to protest against orthodox Hinduism for future generations of Dalits.

Neo-Vedantik Movements: These movements were initiated by Hindu religious and social reformers. These movements attempted to remove untouchability by taking the dalits into the fold of the caste system. According to the pioneers of these movements, untouchability was not an essential part of Hinduism and, for that matter, of the caste system. Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj, believed that the caste system was a political institution created by the rulers for the common good of society, and not a natural or religious distinction. He said, in fact, any Brahman, who is disqualified for his work, becomes at once a Sudra de jure, and a Sudra, who qualifies for it, becomes at once a

Brahmana de jure; though neither can become so de facto also either by his own will or the will of others, as long as the state does not make him so^o (Jordens 1978: 62).

The neo-Vedantic movements and non-Brahmin movements played an important catalytic role in developing anti-caste or anti Hinduism dalit movements in some parts of the country. The Satyashodhak Samaj and the self-respect movements in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, the Adhi Dharma and Adi Andhra movement in Bengal and Adi-Hindu movement in Uttar Pradesh are important antiuntouchability movements which were launched in the last quarter of the 19th and the early part of 20th century. Nandini Gooptu (1993) in her study in Uttar Pradesh in the early twentieth century briefly analyses the emergence of the Adi-Hindu Movement in the urban areas of the region (2001). Like Adi-Dharma, the leaders of the Adi-Hindu movement believed that the present form of Hinduism was imposed on them by the Aryan invaders. The movement did not pose a direct threat to the caste system. It was in essence, conceived as and remained a protest against the attribution of low roles and functions to the untouchables by means of a claim not to be Aryan Hindus; it was not developed into a full-blown, direct attack on the caste system (Gooptu 1993: 298). The Dalits began to call themselves Adi-Andhras in Andhra, Adi- Karnatakas in Karnataka, Adi-Dravidas in Tamil Nadu, Adi-Hindus in Uttar Pradesh and Adi-Dharmis in Punjab. Dalits also followed the route of conversion with a purpose of getting rid of untouchability and to develop their social and financial conditions.

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule formed the Sayta Shodak Mandal in 1873 with the aim of liberating non-Brahmins from the clutches of Brahminism. Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur started Satya Shodak Mandal in 1912 and carried forward the movement started by Phule. In the pre-independence period, the Dalit movements comprised of a strong non-Brahman movement against Brahmanism in Maharashtra, Adi Dravidas movement in Tamil Nadu, Shri Narayan Dharma Paripalan movement in Kerala, Adi Andhras movement in Coastal Andhra and the like. Phule tried to formulate a new theistic religion.

Ambedkar's Contribution to Dalit Movement :

Ambedkar started a Marathi fortnightly, the Bahiskrit Bharat, in April 1927 and a weekly, the Janta in November 1930. In September 1927 he started the Samaj Samta Sang for advocating social equality among the untouchables and the caste Hindus. He supported inter-caste dinner and inter-caste marriage. He also published another paper, the Samata in March 1929. In December 1927 he led a Satyagrah to establish the civic rights of the untouchables to draw water from a public tank, Chavadar Talen, at Mahad district Kolaba. Hindus claimed the tank as a private property and a prolonged litigation followed. Ambedkar won the case in the Bombay High Court in March 1937.

Ambedkar conducted another Satyagrah in March 1930 to establish the rights of the untouchables to enter the famous temple of Kalaram at Nasik. The Satyagrah was with-

drawn in 1934. From April 1942 to 1946, he spread his activities and formed the Scheduled Castes Federation^o as an all India political party. From 1942 to 1946 he was a member of the Governor General^o Executive Council and took advantage of this opportunity to promote the interest of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. He secured funds from the central Government for their education and reservation in posts in the central and provincial services for them.

Conclusion :

Untouchability has been outlawed, but unfair practices have not. Today, wearing nice clothing is not banned, but getting a decent job is. Today, socially and politically based structures of the society, in the view of reform and social betterment, set up one group against the other, creating hostility and maintaining the sense of disapproval from the past. Education is the only way to overcome such prejudice. Thus, the social reform movement will only succeed if all the Dalits unite and fight for equal rights.

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However, they must realise that the caste, that is, mostly popped up in people^o minds, can never be eliminated. Therefore, here, the social transformation would tell us that the abolition of discrimination based practices and the attainment of rights are both required for the uprisal of society^o majorly disadvantaged group, the Dalits. Dr. Ambedkar^o writings are as relevant today as were at the time when these were penned. He firmly believed that our political democracy must stand on the base of social democracy which means a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life. He emphasized on measuring the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved. According to him if we want to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also in fact, we must hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives. He advocated that in our political, social and economic life, we must have the principle of one man, one vote and one value.

అక్టోబర్ 2022

రెండు రోజుల జాతీయ సదస్సు
21-22 అక్టోబర్ 2022

బావేపేట ప్రొఫెసర్స్ కాలేజ్

దళిత సాహిత్యం - తాత్విక దృక్పథం

Dalit Literature - Philosophical Perspective



ప్రభుత్వ కళాశాల స్వయం ప్రతిపత్తి

రాజమహేంద్రవరం, తూర్పు గోదావరి జిల్లా, ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్.