



Voices of Pathos and Protest from Dalit Women in Contemporary Indian Society

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Abstract— Majority of the news that are reported on the violation of human rights in contemporary Indian media points towards the insolent and dissolute mind-set of a group of people conquered by caste hierarchy. The victims of this degenerated mentality happen to be the marginalised and oppressed masses in society who have been silent sufferers for centuries. In such a struggle, Dalit women cannot refrain themselves from the revolutionary struggles to attain equality and freedom. Being a social activist, I put forward my thesis in my attempt to join hands with Dalit women in India, who are victims of oppression from within and outside their community. They are prone to physical assaults, verbal assaults, sexual harassment and exploitation, rape, forced prostitution and domestic violence in addition to poverty and hunger. With fiery determination, Dalit women have been fighting with their pen, expressing their brutal experiences and their stiff resistance against the obnoxious caste hierarchy. Poetry being the most striking form of expression brings forth their utmost discontent with the caste system and proclaims their vehement dissent. This thesis is an attempt to analyse the poetry of Dalit women and the propositions of the dialectics of pathos and protest. The study also problematizes Dalit women's poetry, which as a form of activism and resistance can in fact, bring a change in the lives of the ordinary Dalit women in India.



Keywords— Dalit Women, Indian Society, Pathos and Protest

I. INTRODUCTION

Dalit women in India face systemic and structural discrimination since they are Dalits, women, and members of the underprivileged community. These people have frequently experienced physical abuse and violence within the household, which has left them vulnerable to emotions of exploitation, alienation, and loneliness. The goal of the Ambedkar movement, which was led by social reformers like Phule, Ambedkar, and Periyar, was to provide Dalit women with access to education and to challenge the social norms of the day. However, most of these movements were limited to certain regions and did not classify issues based on gender, caste, or class. The inability of the economy to provide work possibilities and the absence of equality were both factors that contributed significantly to the situation of Dalit women after the country gained its independence. To

discern the state of being for Dalit women through the use of Dalit female language, Dalit feminist theory had to be established. Ahmad (2020) The aim of this study is achieved by an examination of the several facets of Dalit assertion in literary works, historical documents, and cultural contexts. In her insightful analysis of women's contributions to the Chalo Udupi development, Ananya (2016) highlights the importance of women pioneers and their capacity to inspire more women to join the dissent for the development of Chalo Udupi. The work of Bama, "Sangati Events" (2005), This work, which was analysed by Holmstrom, provides one of the strongest arguments for the difficulties that Dalits face in contemporary society. Furthermore, this book delves into the intricate relationships that Indian culture has between socioeconomic class, position, and orientation.

Chakravarti, 2003 The author of this work dissects the point of confluence between rank and orientation as a women's activist. The link between gender and caste is the author's specific area of expertise. The results of this research offer valuable insights into the ways in which caste hierarchies and gender oppression interact, with a particular emphasis on activist discourse. This action is meant to emphasise the significance of the prior subject. Mangubhai, Lee, and Irudayam (2014) Given the various forms of persecution that are marked by brutality based on station, class, and orientation, it is crucial to present a convincing image of Dalit women's experiences within the Indian context. This is an attempt to combat the misuse that these three components convey. Karmakar's (2022) This article's goal is to investigate the connections between multidimensional Ness and women's rights, drawing on the viewpoints of Jennifer C. Nash and the research completed on Dark women's activist analyses.

II. DALIT WOMEN'S VOICES OF PATHOS AND PROTEST

There is a saying that goes, "Voice is the right and the ability to make oneself heard and to have one's experiences and perspectives available to others; to participate in the construction of the self and to decide how to represent that self to others." This is Ashby. Because Dalit women have been historically marginalized in society, Dalit literature believes that it is imperative to bring to light the issues and viewpoints of Dalit women that have been buried and unrepresented. This organization is dedicated to this important cause and provides its members with a unique sensibility that allows them to communicate their lives and experiences. In her article titled "Can the Subaltern Speak," Gayatri Spivak discussed the presuppositions that are associated with subaltern studies and brought attention to two challenge areas. She suggested that the subaltern is unable to communicate verbally due to the fact that they do not possess a site of enunciation that allows them to do so. Furthermore, she maintained that the women occupied that radical space due to the fact that they were both women and subjects of colonial rule at the same time. She makes the following statement: "The ideological construction of gender maintains the male dominant position as both the object of colonialist historiography and the subject of insurgency." If, within the framework of colonial production, the subaltern is unable to speak and there is no history associated with them, then the subaltern as a woman is even more thoroughly buried in the shadows". She became embroiled in controversy as a result of the incorrect interpretation of this theory. Spivak's idea of subalternity, on the other hand, does not imply that the subaltern is incapable of communicating. The word "speak" has been

given a particular value by her in the essay that she has written. By "speaking," Spivak meant the interaction that takes place between the speaker and the receiver. The message that the subalterns are attempting to convey goes through a complete and utter transformation whenever they attempt to talk. Due to the fact that other people are not yet prepared to listen to them, it is an ongoing process. Despite the fact that people are turning a deaf ear to the pleadings of the subalterns, the communication system fails, and there is no transaction that takes place. In addition, because of the disparity that exists in the society, the subalterns are unable to engage in commerce with other people. Due to the fact that only the colonizer had the ability to talk, the subalterns who were subservient to the control of the colonizer were unable to speak. It is the "subject" that is responsible for determining the entirety of the concept of "voice," and the category of "other" does not have a voice of their own. The subalterns were once again subjected to subjection by the upper class elites not long after the institution of the colonial authority. It is particularly prevalent in India that women continue to be subordinated. When this occurs, the subaltern is portrayed as a figure of radical difference, the "Other," who is unable to communicate. This is not because they are physically incapable of speaking; rather, they are not a part of the discourse. Dalit women, on the other hand, identify poetry as their agency, which allows them to represent themselves and become active participants in their discourse. Therefore, their poetry are not merely representations but also acts in addition to that.



Fig. 1: Dalit Women

By recovering their fundamental rights and visibility in public areas that have been denied to them, poetry written by Dalit women serves as a conduit for reinforcing their voices, which have been lost during the process of reclaiming their voices. As part of this creative endeavor, these poets speak the truth to those in command. They are demonstrating their resistance through the usage of these poems, which are centered on the impudent unfairness that exists in society. The poetry written by Dalit women are reflections of their rage and agitation at the ways in which they are compelled, trapped, and coerced to comply with the moral and ethical precepts that are mandated by caste hierarchy and patriarchal norms. A protest against the

myriad of crimes and injustices that have been inflicted upon them as a result of the dualism of caste and gender, the voice of Dalit women is therefore their resistance. Poetry is a sort of literary activism that permits the voiceless soul to speak to the structures of power, even if they are not heard. This voicing via poetry is an inevitable form of literary activism. The poet, on the other hand, acquires the ability to speak out loud, and poetry becomes a sort of empowerment, an endeavor to make the voices of Dalit women heard. Within this framework, the purpose of this chapter is to conduct an in-depth analysis of whether or not the act of writing through the medium of Dalit poetry by women has been able to bring about a change in the socio-economic position of Dalit women. Women of the Dalit caste, who are twice alienated due to the shifting of caste and gender, find that Dalit feminism provides them with a means of expressing their voice. To differentiate itself from mainstream Indian feminism, which has been criticized for marginalizing Dalit women, Dalit feminism has been referred to as a "discourse of discontent" and "a politics of difference". "Dalit feminists work at the grassroots level and are aware of the fissures of identity, class, and caste," says Rajani Tilak, a social activist and writer who is of Dalit descent. Feminism within feminism" is how she describes the concept of Dalit feminism. As was said earlier, the ideology of Dalit feminism evolved in order to theorize its own position in respect to mainstream feminism, which it believed had overlooked the presence of Dalit women. On the other hand, they were unable to fully accept "the Dalit male aesthetics and politics," which placed an emphasis on the caste angle to the exclusion of issues pertaining to gender. Similar instances of racial discrimination and marginalization in the lives of Black women in the United States of America led to the establishment of the Black Feminist movement in the 1970s. Both of them are unable to renounce their color or caste, despite the fact that caste is a product of human ingenuity and race is, to a certain part, defined by biology or pre-ordained. The concepts of blackness and caste are at the core of their identity. The white male masters exploited the black women as their sexual savages and breeders so that they could take advantage of them. The black women were slaves who were denied all of the rights that humans had. African-American men and women rejoiced in their liberation after the abolition of slavery. In spite of this, Sarojini Sudha argues in her thesis titled "From Oppression to Optimism through Self-Spun Philosophy" that "during the Black Liberation Movement of the 1960s, black men over-emphasized white male sexual exploitation of black womanhood as a way to explain their disapproval of interracial relationships" (114). This is in reference to the fact that black men have a strong desire to exert control over the sexuality of black women.

The concept of Dalit feminist aesthetics is founded on the necessity of comprehending the myriad of complexities and layers that comprise the lives of Dalit women, as well as applying this perspective to the evaluation of literary works. Self-reflection and self-interrogation are both components of this critical analysis. The organization works toward altering people's consciousness and offering them opportunity to think and behave in a different manner. What distinguishes Dalit feminism from other forms of feminism is the audacity and courage that Dalit women have shown in order to advocate for themselves. As in the poem "Another Mother Mine" by Shiva Ingole, when Dalit males speak for their women, they are saying the following:

I am the only one who has tattooed songs of freedom on the bare torsos of women in this place, and I have also set drums of defiance on the lips of women.

When one listens to the male authoritarian voice, they would have the impression that the independence of women is only superficial. In addition, the male equivalents have a tendency to assume control of the female voice and use it for their own purposes. In a same vein, the representation of the pains and sorrow of Dalit women by uppercaste women cannot be compared with the voices of Dalit women. One example is the poem "Tirugane" written by the Kannada poetess Hema Pattanashetty, which includes the following:

It is the tale of my companions. Having conversations with those around me, rather than just telling stories. However, are the tender agonies of feelings that are delicate?

In light of the context, it is appropriate to talk about the resistance of Dalit women against the historical duality of patriarchal and gender oppression, the possibility of otherness, sexuality, and other forms of social injustice, as expressed in their poems. In ancient Indian culture, it is possible to observe the subjugation of women, which was a mode of operation in which they were viewed as objects to be protected. The fact that women are not granted the right to education, independence, or riches is made abundantly clear by the Manusmriti, which is the Hindu scripture that is considered to be the source of law. In addition to putting women in a position of subordination, this thesis also places them in a position of disadvantage. It is declared by Manu:

In the Manusmriti, chapter V, verse 147, it is said that "nothing must be done independently, even in her own house." This applies to girls, young women, and even elderly women. The protection that she receives from her father during her childhood, her husband during her youth, and her sons during her old age is indicative of the fact that

a woman is never capable of achieving independence, as stated in Manusmriti IX.3.

It is therefore quite curving that Manusmriti conspires against women in society, so preventing her from exercising her independence and uniqueness within the confines of the home. When a woman is a mother, her husband, and her son, they become sentinels of her mind, body, and soul. In this context, Manu is not alluding to the punishment that will be handed out to those men who do not follow his laws. For women, these rules are absurd since they prevent them from exercising their freedom and holding decision-making power even when they are in their latter years. This law-giving book not only restricts the freedom of expression and existence of women, but it also denies them the right to receive information, as demonstrated in the stanza that follows:

There is no valid reason for women to study the Vedas. Sanskaras are performed by them without the use of Veda Mantras because of this reason. Due to the fact that they are not permitted to read the Vedas, women are not aware of any religious doctrines. The elimination of sin can be accomplished by the recitation of Vedic mantras. According to Manusmriti IX. 18, women are considered to be as impure as the falsehood since they are unable to say the Veda Mantras. This is cited in Agarwal.

When the Manusmriti describes women as dirty and untruthful, it makes a reference to men as being truthful and trustworthy. In this situation, it is unfair that males are permitted to know the Vedas and mantras, which are meant to cleanse them of their sins through rituals, while women are compelled to practise these practices. Women are relegated to the role of helpless slaves under the rule of men, and they are denied access to the power of knowledge, which has the ability to dispel darkness and bestow all the advantages of purity and autonomy. Manusmriti goes on to justify the exploitation of DaUt women as sex objects and promotes child marriage. It also suggests that child marriage should be encouraged.

A man who is thirty years old will marry a young woman who is twelve years old and who satisfies him. Or a young lady of eight years old and a young man of twenty-four years old. According to Manusmriti IX.94, if the performance of his obligations will be hindered in any other way, he is required to become married sooner.

The act of sexually exploiting a shudra woman is permissible for any Brahman, Kshatriya, or Vaishya man, as stated in Manusmriti IX.25 (quoted in Agarwal 20-21).

It is necessary to challenge this injustice that is being committed against women in general and Dalit women in particular. According to the Brahmins, even the murder of a Dalit lady is considered to be a minor offense, and it is seen to be on par with the murder of an animal. As a result, Dalit women are the most susceptible victims of the laws that are imposed by the Hindu faith. The speech of Dalit women who are voicing their disapproval of the Chaturvama system of caste hierarchy in the ongoing struggle to dismantle the inequitable society is a clear indication of the protest that is being directed against Manusmriti. One example is the poetry "A Song" written by Smritikana Howalder, who is of Bengali descent. In this poem, she criticizes Manu, the law-giver, for dividing the community into different castes. In her argument, she contends that God did not create castes, and that it was Manu who was responsible for bringing the catastrophic night into the lives of women. Manu was the one who divided the human race and referred to women as "Sudrani," which was a derogatory term. It is brought to her attention that everyone mindlessly and unquestioningly adheres to Manu's laws, which are the means by which man is expelled by man. As the poet puts it, she is expressing her disapproval of the unequal society.

It is said that Sudra does not deserve equality. When it comes to our society, Brahmins are at the pinnacle, while Sudras are at the bottom. The nation is in pain and is bleeding. When it comes to blood, there is no distinction between a Brahmin and a Sudra. Every single test will turn out to be incorrect.

It is Howalder's hope that individuals will break down this caste division and light the lamp of knowledge in order to illuminate society. It is the goal of Dalit women to shatter the closed hierarchy that exists within society and to demand that they be granted equal position in society.

The works of Dalit feminists are an expression of the voices of Dalit women, which serve to place their presence in society and demonstrate their resistance to the unjust caste system and gender oppression. As a means of speaking out against the injustice that they are subjected to, the pathos that Dalit women experience is sometimes expressed via the poems that they write. There are times when people have the impression that poets are in a subservient place in society and that they are lamenting about their lives. On the other hand, they discover a solution that allows them to break free from the cycle of enslavement, achieve a position of power, and express their disapproval of society. Thus, their voices convey both the grief and the protest that they feel. It is possible to interpret the passionate verses as sources of validation for their feminist thoughts, which

delve deeply into the duality that is associated with the myths of gender and caste fairness.

Jyoti Lanjewar, a poet who writes in Marathi, explores the unequal gradation of suffering that the supreme Almighty inflicts upon the poet through the poem "Firewood." As a result, the poet becomes the voice of every single woman in the entire planet. In the beginning of the poem, the poet makes a declaration that the hands of the creator ought to have trembled before giving birth to the shattered remnants of a woman's life that is pointless. Before he made the decision to tie up its continuously twisted bundle of nightly farewells, he ought to have given it some more thought. A question is posed by the poet:

With millions of bodies at His disposal Why to me
all the pain, the conflagration?

An explanation is required by the poet for "this tangle of pain" that is extending out from birth to birth, as well as for her dreams that were forgotten, buried, and offered as sacrifices to gods that are unknown to her. Through the use of an interrogative sentence, she expresses her anguish and protest: "Was I the only Firewood?" Twenty. She likens herself to a bundle of firewood in her comparison. Symbolically, firewood represents a life that is pointless and is just designed to be consumed by fire in the face of insult and discard.

In another poem titled "sting," Jyoti Lanjewar, who writes in Marathi, expresses her disapproval of the way women are treated unfairly. It is unclear to her how much longer she will have to suffer through the deadly sting. Within the context of women's liberties, the poet investigates a number of pertinent themes. In the words that follow, she makes an attempt to locate herself among the annals of history. She sometimes sees herself in the indigenous culture of the land as the Great Goddess Durga, other times as Yashodhara, the wife of Siddhartha, and other times as Draupadi. According to her, women continue to endure the brunt of pain throughout the years, albeit under different names. In this section, she continues her questions:

What is a woman supposed to be after all?
Originator of sin ? Graveyard of insults? Or Then
the embracing motherhood: On whom nature
gazes - The daily devouring flesh?

It is necessary to provide answers to all of the concerns that the poet has raised, as she concludes the poem by declaring that those individuals who have been robbed and smashed "broke the umbilical cord/ only to become a man in the end."/

The poem "Gleaning" by Jupaka Subhadra illustrates the anguish that a Dalit lady experiences as a result of her constant labor as a slave. The poet embodies the typical dalit

woman who faces challenges in her life from the wee hours of the morning until the late hours of the night. The speaker of the poem is a woman who, in the midst of the scorching heat, ventures out to get drinkable water. Despite the fact that the soles of her feet are burned, she pauses for a moment to express her feelings of melancholy. She has a strong attachment to the work that is done in the household of her landlord, but she is unable to find the time to work on her own house:

I had to get up early and go to the landlord's house
to sweep their yards and smear dung-water; I have
to do this immediately. Place water in the water
troves so that their animals can drink it; I need to
remove the feces and the odor from their cattle
sheds, and I need to carry piles of debris that are
making my scalp more rigid. There is no time for
me to work at my own residence.

Their enslavement includes the conditions of poverty and famine. According to the speaker, she is given stale food as a form of alms for the laborious and boring work that she performs on a daily basis. Illustrations of lives that are prone to poverty include the winnowing tray, the blunted broom, and the thatched home. She is required to do a great deal of effort and must remember to keep herself secure, even from the pursuit of the landlord:

when I went for gleaning the left-over, I stumbled
on a ridge being chased by the Patel With bated
breath I swept the grains That fell in the dust and
in the cracks of stones While threshing, loading
and carting. But I couldn't shove even a fistful of
grains Even as I sieved a heap of soil and
winnowed the dust separating the gravel. I
couldn't get a measure of grains

The tone of her voice is one of desperation as she says, "When is this bonded life going to end?" The "strategic essentialism" argument that Spivak presents is worthy of being mentioned in this particular setting. It is imperative that feminists bring attention to the phenomenon known as "the feminization of poverty." This refers to the manner in which job practices and pay, divorce law and settlements, and certain laws contribute to the fact that in many nations, women constitute the majority of adults who are living in poverty. Although it is true that many women do not live in poverty and that there are other factors that contribute to poverty outside an individual's gender, in order to effectively combat the poverty that some women experience, it is necessary to employ the strategic essentialism of bringing attention to the gendered aspect of economic inequality. In this context, discrimination on the basis of caste is fundamentally one of the primary causes for the socioeconomic status of Dalit women.

In one of the poems written by Sukirtharani in Tamil. During the process of translating her, she articulates the voice of a Dalit lady who makes her living by beating the drum. The beginning of the poem starts with a description of the bedroom, which is described as "scattered with sunlight like crumpled balls of paper, they stir." This description suggests the deteriorated state of the lady's room as well as her body. The central theme of the poem is her attempt to make sense of existence. The fact that her "shrunken buttocks" sway whenever she goes by is a clear sign of her financial situation. The poet paints a picture of the existence and living conditions of the unfortunate lady who wakes up to the sound of a song that has no melody. People are looking at her with curious eyes and asking her about the lyrics of her songs. Those who are unable to grasp the meaning of the lady's song are provided with the following translation by the poet:

I translate her poverty the hunger she eats, the hunger she expels, her dwelling place whose air is sprinkled with untouchability her oppressed community. I speak the words, becoming her

A poem is written by the poet, which is a translation of the lady's life. The poem combines the feelings of the oppressed people with the tragedy of the Dalit woman who is struggling to fill her stomach, the atmosphere of untouchability that surrounds her, and the woman herself.

The poem "O Woman in the Dark" written by Kalyani Thakur in Bengali is a heartfelt tribute to the "wonderful" beauty of the woman who has the courage to speak up and break the quiet. It provides a clear explanation of some of the aspects of a Dalit woman's life that usually go unspoken. Having absorbed sufficient strength, the lady is now able to fight back against the world in order to ensure her own survival. "... poisoning the ancient yoke" is something that she has successfully accomplished over the course of her life. She is someone who has learned to swim against the flow. Due to the fact that she is "strong and hard," the autumnal gale is unable to cause damage to her sails. The 'endless dark' is where she spends her entire working day. To the woman who is a Dalit:

Mortar and pestle are her mates - The woman's, who grinds spices: Her idiom they know.

The language and rhythm of the toiling woman is familiar to the non-living things in nature for they always converse and act to her pace. They know the wetness of her sweat. This kind of an attachment or experience is inaccessible to the upper caste women who confine themselves to the domestic space.

The poem "Debt" written by Sukirtharani in Tamil is a very unsettling piece of writing that makes reference to the laborious work that Dalit women do. In addition to being a source of portrayal of the suffering, this poem is also a source of protest against the immoral culture that made members of lower castes feel inferior. A portrait of a Dalit woman getting ready to go to work is presented at the beginning of the poem on the page. Her working equipment consist of a piece of hide that has been sewed into the base of the basket and a scrap-iron sheet with a blunt edge that has been heaped with ashes that have been gathered. She comes to a stop behind a house, when she notices a square iron sheet from a nail hanging from the ceiling. It is raised by the lady with one hand, and she then places a handful of ashes inside of it. She uses her forearm to scrape the jagged edges of the hole, and then she sweeps and scoops the object from left to right, gradually tilting it into the basket:

And when it is full, and heavy on her head with the back of her hand she wipes away yellow water streaming down her brow

In Hira Bansode's (Marathi) poem "Look Mother", another facet of a mother- daughter relationship is seen. The daughter consoles her mother who is a widow and urges her to be strong enough to face the hard situations in life. Dalit women show more boldness in character because they are the ones who earn for running the family. They believe in living by the sweat of one's own brow. She says:

Mother, we are people from the backwoods, it is an old habit with us to stitch together our sorrows and joys with thorns

The girl, who is far away from her mother doing household chores for a living, feels secure at the very thought of her mother. Like a bird, she feels warmth under the wings of her mother:

We live so far apart, but it is as though your wings were always spread over me. You watch over me and my burden of tiredness, of pointless work, grows a little lighter

The poem conveys the warmth that comes from a deep attachment between a mother and her daughter. After her father has passed away, the young woman in the poem is doing her best to muster the bravery to bear the weight of her family on her shoulders. In addition to her own obligations, she is concerned about the feelings that her mother is experiencing. Within the context of a traditional Indian family, the male is the one who assumes the role of being responsible for the children and families. The majority of women who do not have a son will find solace in the home of her brother during this difficult time. According to the patriarchal society, women are expected to remain within the confines of the home. However, in the

case of the Dalits, women are expected to shoulder the same tasks as men. They are more powerful and their own autonomous. They confront the challenges and circumstances they are facing and hold out hope for a more favorable future. The reassuring words that the daughter spoke to her mother are evidence of this:

Don't you think we now need to bear these wounds
without wincing? Let go of the pain a little, see
how everything will become light

The mother figure is shown in the social condition in Jyoti Lanjewar's poem "I Never Saw You," which is written in Marathi. The poem is written from a newly awakened consciousness. When it comes to experience, sensibility, and expression, it is at the forefront of breaking new territory. The poem is a strong depiction of the life of a Dalit lady who works hard and is a mother who struggles to bring up her children despite the many challenges that she faces. In the sweltering heat, the mother is shown hauling vats of tar, fixing roads, helping to construct a dam on the lake, harvesting cotton, pruning the unyielding land, carrying cement on her head through the scaffolding of big constructions, and performing a variety of other difficult jobs. Her soles are seen burning. "Here, the poet shows the unfortunate state of an oppressed lady, who struggles with her surroundings in order to bring up a new revolutionary generation that is capable of altering their "names" (92). The mother in the poem is so powerful that she encourages her children to pursue an education and "relieve me of the loaded baskets of labor" (69), even when she is in the midst of challenging circumstances in her life. As a result of witnessing her mother in such depressing conditions, the poet is able to fully realize her sadness. With a necklace of golden beads at her throat, bangles and bracelets on her arms, and rubber chappals on her feet, she claims that she has never seen her mother wearing a brand new silk sari that is bordered with gold. She also claims that she has never seen her mother wearing these things. As an alternative, she has witnessed her working barefoot in the roadways that are on fire. It is a daily gamble that her mother works with a hungry stomach in order to provide for her children. Her mother is a hard-working laborer who performs a variety of laborious tasks for the benefit of her family. The woman who is being discussed here is not the kind of person who could sit quietly and pray with beads; rather, she is the kind of person who, even in the midst of her own death, struggles and wishes for a life of happiness for her children and grandchildren.

Poets who are members of the Dalit community take a profound look at the women who have gladly given up their lives for the sake of society. The poem "Yashodhara" written by Hira Bansode in Marathi is a reflection of the

hardships endured by Yashodhara, the wife of Gautama Buddha. Yashodhara was abandoned by her husband when he decided to pursue spirituality in order to fulfill the requirements of his soul. Yashodhara is the first person to be addressed in the poem.

O Yashodhara! You are like a dream of sharp pain,
life-long sorrow. I don't have the audacity to look
at you. we were brightened by Buddha's light, but
you absorbed the dark until your life was mottled
blue and dark, a fragmented life, burned out, O
Yashodhara!

Eleanor Zelliot speaks about Hira Bansode's Yashodhara as a poem which opens up new vistas:

both in the field of creative ideas of the Buddhist
women of Maharashtra and in the field of what
women bring to Buddhism. The humanness of the
Buddha, as opposed to the divine status of Hindu
gods or leave the world austerity of Hindu saints,
is one message of the poem. But there is another
message, which is more unusual. Hira, herself a
married woman, looks at Yashodhara, the Buddha's
wife, as a tragic figure, an abandoned woman, and
yet a woman who somehow is a part of the
Buddha's final accomplishment

The poet not only conveys her sorrow at the loss of her beloved, but she also expresses her sorrow over the fact that they had goals for finding an identity that they were unable to achieve. She displays a combination of personal impulses and social concerns, which is something that can only be seen in women who have experienced political awakening. It takes a lot of courage for her to acknowledge that her husband is a source of motivation for millions of people who are actively fighting for freedom because of his actions. She takes great pride in comparing her companion to the sun, which was responsible for stirring up a religiously oppressed people and fighting for its liberation regardless of nationality or religion. It is the poet who embodies the spirit of those Dalit women who have the courage to sacrifice their entire life for the sake of freedom and dignity.

This poem is the poet's way of expressing her disapproval of the Brahminical system, which was responsible for her excommunication from the town, her labeling as an untouchable, and her complete destruction. Within the context of the poem, the term "me" does not refer to a single individual but rather to the entire community of Dalits that she represents as a single entity. In his response, Jajula Gowri takes issue with the division of labor that serves as the foundation for the caste system. In point of fact, caste is not only a division of labor but also a division of persons who perform labor. In his opinion, Ambedkar states that "it is a hierarchy in which the division of laborers are graded

one above the other" (Rodrigues 263). As a voice of the Dalit feminist movement, Gowri expresses her opposition to this gradation in the following manner:

The political diplomacy of the rich dragged me into the streets Enfacng occupation on me They weighed my labour in an unjust balance They made me the needle of the balance and pierced mine own eyes with the same.

Here, the poet expresses his feelings over the injustice that occurs when one is denied the freedom to choose one's occupation. Gowri makes a compelling case for the fact that those who are marginalized do not have the right to make their own decisions. When it comes to the fifth vama, the poem expresses its disagreement with the practice of relegating the Dalits to the status of "Untouchables" or "panchamas."

Even among the Sudras, excommunication is permitted. There was a fifth 'Vama' that they smeared over me. -!In the pretext of forced labor, they drained every last drop of blood from my body. Bones are all that are left, and my own buddy is currently pursuing them while grinding them into flour and singing the mantra of harmonious coexistence.

Jajula Gowri reacts against the injustice and ill-treatment the Dalits had to endure in life. She detests being a slave in life and determines to assert her identity as a human being;

I can bear it no longer It's time I thought of my own place Co-existing with people inhuman I'm deceived time and again Crushed among yesterday- today and tomorrow I'll keep myself as myself

Slave, a thought-provoking poem by Hira Bansode (Marathi) critiques the repercussions of male-dominance specifically in the Indian cultural context. She highlights the ill-fated lives of the most popular and respected Indian mythological heroines, Sita, Ahalya and Draupadi. Despite being three of the "panchkanyas" hailed by the Hindu orthodox tradition they had to undergo severe trials and tribulations as seen in the following verses:

Where Sita entered the fire to prove her fidelity
Where Ahalya was turned to stone because of
Indra's lust Where Draupadi was fractured to serve
five husbands In that country a woman is still a
slave

Through the use of the most honest lyrical verses, the poem exposes hypocrisy and the acceptance of double standards. There is a large amount of imagery that is used to show Draupadi, who is typically seen as the most highly empowered lady out of the three, but whose fate was

unfortunately "fractured to serve." In the final sentence, "to be bom a woman is unjust," the famous dictum of Simone de Beauvoir, which states that "one is not bom, but rather becomes a woman," is echoed and repeated. This is found in *The Second Sex*, page 267,000. In order to stress the fact that it conveys a strong satire against the patriarchal culture, the statement is repeated multiple times.

It is only possible for the heartfelt companion to traverse the physical portico of caste proportions. Despite the fact that she goes to the home of her friend who belongs to a lower caste, she is hesitant to let go of the psychological and emotional attachment that she has with caste sentiments. The poem concludes with a series of rhetorical queries, such as "Are you going to tell me what mistakes I made? Are you going to tell me my mistakes?" (38–40)" In an ironic turn of events, the poet inquires of her friend whether she has ever gone to her home in order to discover her shortcomings and instruct her on how to live, rather than focusing on the friendship that exists between them. At this point, the friend's sense of superiority is called into doubt. It is no longer possible for the poet to allow himself to be humiliated in the name of caste and untouchability. They do not want to have somebody in charge of their lives deciding what is right and wrong, as well as what is good and bad. One of the things that is being addressed here is the tendency of individuals from higher castes to think of Dalits as being uncivilized or messy. When it comes to society, the Dalits are revered and have their own distinct identity. For the sake of hierarchy, there is no need for anyone to question them. Like the poet notes, the legacy of untouchability is deeply ingrained in people. This is a fact that cannot be denied. For the sake of the betterment of society, it truly needs to be altered.

III. CONCLUSION

With regards to fighting the covering severe frameworks that Dalit women are exposed to based on rank, orientation, and financial position, the strengthening of Dalit women by means of account obstruction is an undertaking that is complex and essentially significant. Dalit women are recuperating their organization, testing predominant accounts, and intensifying their voices by means of different sorts of activism, including yet not restricted to writing, oral narrating, web stages, and various kinds of activism. To lay out their characters, request equity, and sort out for change, Dalit women might involve story opposition as a solid instrument. This is accomplished by highlighting the interconnectedness of oppressions, discrediting dominant narratives, and exposing and criticizing caste and patriarchal institutions. Initiatives to empower Dalit women must continue to emphasize their voices, experiences, and

agency while also encouraging solidarity and collective action to overthrow oppressive structures and build more inclusive and equitable communities.

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