



## Untouchable in Dalit Memoirs

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We are well acknowledged that the Chaturvarna system was deeply rooted in Indian society since Vedic era. It has been given more importance in the Hindu religion and scriptures. The division of the people such as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudra on the basis of caste system was systematically advocated by the Brahmin. The religious scriptures of the Hindus helped in making the caste rules fixed and permanent. The rules subjected the untouchables to untold miseries and disgraceful life. Manu made the rule, "The dwelling of chandals (shudras and untouchable) and their wealth shall be dog and donkeys. Their dress shall be the garment of the dead. Their food shall be in the broken dishes, and their ornaments shall be of black iron." (Dr. Khabade: 85) The Untouchability is also exploited in Indian communities since long ago. According to Hindu scripture, Untouchables are recognized as one of the lower classes of the society. The Higher class people always condemned untouchables as a lower class of the society. The Hindu people assumed an opinion to come into contact with the untouchable's means to pollute them. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar believed that the Indian society is based on castes and Verna system. According to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, "Hindu society is a house of caste. Hindus are not a people. They are aggregates of groups of people framed into caste." (Dr. Anil Surya: 82) The castes and the Verna systems were rigid in Indian society. Dr. Ambedkar discussed the problems like religious, social, cultural, economic and political which are raised due to the Indian caste system. The Untouchability and casteism are equally supported by the Hindu scriptures and norms. The Hindu religion did not assume that the Untouchability is an inhuman and unlawful activity. In the contrast they seemed Untouchability is a practice to obey the Hindu religion.

Mahatma Phule and Dr. Ambedkar raised the problem of untouchability and castes system in the modern India throughout their writings and speeches. Dr. Ambedkar declared untouchability is indirectly a part of slavery. He observed the untouchability and the slavery comparatively and concluded: "untouchability is not



only worse than slavery but is positively equal as compared to slavery.”(Dr. Anil Surya: 82) The Untouchables were deprived from their fundamental human rights. Dr. Ambedkar struggled for the rights of untouchables throughout his life. The Untouchables were oppressed and suppressed from hundreds of year in our county in the name of caste and creed by the privileged higher community so called Hindus.

The writings of Dr. Ambedkar revolutionized the minds of exploited and neglected group of people. In the course of time the suppressed class started to learn. The learned people belongs to these deprived class fired their voice by the inspiration of Dr. Ambedkar. The problems of castiesm and untouchability have observed gradually in the writings of the exploited group. The Dalit memoirs are the outcome of an inspiration of Dr. Ambedkars writings and depict the vivid account of untouchability and castiesm. If we study the memoirs of Dalit writer sociological point of view, we come across the miserable and the pathetic condition of the untouchables in the background of Hindu culture and scripture. In this regard Arjun Dangle asks, “Dalit Literature must be assessed in the sociological frame work.” (Dangle: 237)The Dalit memoirs narrated the life of subjugated and marginalized group who faced the problems of untouchability and castiesm. Due to untouchability and castiesm, all the oppressed classes have gone through the painful and bitter experiences of life. The Dalit Memoirs like *Taral Antaral*, *Balut*, *Athwaniche Pakshi*, *Upaara*, *Uchalya*, *Katha Mazya Janmachi*, *Akkarmashi*, *Mazya Janmachi Chitthararak Katha*, *Amcha Bap Ani Ahmi*, *Kolhatyach pore* are the milestone to underline the caste system and untouchability in Dalit literature.

*Uchalya (The Branded)* is another important Dalit memoir written by Laxman Gaikwad, a dedicated social worker and writer. The writer belongs to Uchalya or Pathrut community has to bear injustice and dishonour under the caste ridden hierarchy. The British Government also branded the ‘*Uchalya*’ community as born criminals. The writer narrated the humiliation and exploitation of his own community through the memoir *Uchalya*. The higher caste Hindus have fully exploited the *Uchalya* community and made them miserable, helpless for their own selfish purpose. The child born in ‘*Uchalya*’ community is branded as an inherent criminal by birth.

The writer has portrayed the poverty and the miserable condition of the community since his childhood. *Uchalya (The branded)* is the work towards liberation



of the deprived community. The memoir '*Uchalya*' also presented untouchability and casteism which is worse on the part of the humanity. The Uchalya community is received cruel treatment by the established class.

Laxman Gaikwad felt very lonely life even among the number of students in school. The writer has not received equal status among the upper caste students. Even '*Jatpanchayat*' of the Uchalya community rejected him to take education. Writer's father used to tell story of awareness that the people of the village did not allow us to fetch water from public place. They pour water with distance to Uchalya community. Even they are not allowed to enter in the temple. There was an incident where the writer was in search of a room. But everybody was asking his own castes. Many times the writer without mentioning his own castes could get the room. The writer tries to hide his own castes every time. But sometime housekeeper understands the castes of the writer. In the result he has to leave the room because of his lower castes. Only due to his lower castes, the writer has to leave his room for nineteen times in Lature.

Untouchability and casteism always followed the writer in his every path of life. The Writer and his communities are given ill-treatment due to their lower caste only. This dishonor made the writer uneasy in his life. In the result he struggled for whole life to abolish entire caste system. The writer observed that his whole community is exploited throughout Maharashtra and struggled for their betterment. There was an example of Hanmant Wadar who is killed by the Maratha people. The reason was that the fellow took the water from the public place. There are several example of untouchability in this memoir where the practice of untouchability is observed. There was an attack of Sarpanch and Police on Pardhi community at Moha in Kalamba Taluka. The attack was not for the protection of the community. But it was an attack to support the casteism. There were number of Pardhi people killed at Dhoki. The people of Dhoki and the upper class people belongs to near villages cut seven Pardhi. These all were the victims of untouchability and casteism. The writer regrets to say that the entire real criminal in the above murder case released safe. There are number of laws against untouchability and casteism to abolish them in our constitution. But the followers of casteism and untouchability are safe. The practice of untouchability and casteism is frequently observed in the memoir *Uchalya (The branded)*.



*Kolhatyachepor (Against All odds)* is another Dalit Autobiography written by Kishor Shantabai Kale created a storm in Marathi Dalit literature. It is a moving portrayal of Kolhati community and a story of anguish and struggle of the young boy attempting to break free from the customs and lifestyle of his community. It is the story of an illegitimate child of a tamasha dancer from Kolhati community. The protagonist is the writer Kishor Kale set against the harsh and apparently hopeless life of its women. The memoir reveals the plight of the tamasha dancers of the Kolhati community in Maharashtra. The writer brought to light a lifestyle and the world which was unknown to us. *The Kolahatyache Pore (Against All odds)* is a memoir comes with the all man-made barriers such as untouchability, dishonour, inhumanity, castesism and disgrace.

Kishor Kale reacts against the social system, his parents and relatives. His journey of life is begun with ill-treatment and dishonor which was imposed by the dominant class. The writer Kale has tried to hide his own caste while completing education. Due to his lower caste he couldn't get place to leave. The realistic account he puts that the experience at Ambajogai where he is asked his caste. The writer replied the owner that I belong to Maratha instead of his real own castes. The established social system did not allow the right of equality to the downtrodden. That's why the writer never tried to unfold his lower castes. The writer frequently changed his room due to of his lower castes. The migration of the writer from place to place was due to his only castes. Kishor Kale is exploited a lot by the caste system. He condemned the rigid and unlawful tradition of the established society. The writer has been given very inhuman treatment. The reason was only to have birth in Kolhathi community.

Kishor Kale is given strange treatment by his friend when they came to know the lower caste of the writer. Such experience of the writer with his friend made him to ask his friend a question if you want to know my cast, you would ask it before making friendship with me. Wherever the writer went the castes became an obstacle in his life. He has to face many problems in the way of his life due to his castes only. An Immorality and cruelty of castes system is firmly observed in this memoir. The writer expresses his anger due to his bitter experiences of castiesm and untouchabilty. The writer becomes thoughtful after observing painful life of the Kolhati community and



react against the cruel social system. The writer becomes uneasy while observing disinterest of the government in abolishing untouchability, castesism and exploitation. The Materialistic people fulfill their sexual urge from the women of Kolhati community and dare to call them prostitute. This was dishonor and disgrace for the women of Kolhati women. Actually the women of Kolhati community are tried to survive the art.

The mentioned memoirs are the representative subaltern narratives. They are the portrayal of the deprived community. The memoir depicted the miserable and pitiable condition of the oppressed class mentioned above. The community experienced the practice of castesism and untouchablity in their every path of life. The presented memoirs are the landmark in Dalit literature which gives a vivid account of the writers struggle in life within the frame work of Hindu society's rigid stratification. Thus the memoirs surface the problem of poverty, starvation, ignorance, insult, injustice, atrocities, untouchability and castiesm.

### Primary Resources:

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### Secondary Resourcess :

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