

**A CULTURAL STUDY OF *DALIT* AUTOBIOGRAPHERS IN INDIA**  
with special reference to Sharankumar Limbale's *The Outcaste*, Laxman Mane's *The Outsider*, Siddlingaiah's *Ooru Keri* and Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan*

A Thesis submitted to  
**TILAK MAHARSHTRA VIDYAPEETH, PUNE**  
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.) in English

**Under the faculty of:** Arts and fine arts

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**October- 2013**

# CERTIFICATE

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I hereby declare that the thesis entitled *A Cultural Study of Dalit Autobiographies in India* with special reference to Sharankumar Limbale's *The Outcaste*, Laxman Mane's *The Outsider*, Siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri* and Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan* completed and written by me has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree or other similar title upon me of this or any other Vidyapeeth or examining body.

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**Place:**

**Date:**

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# CERTIFICATE

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled *A Cultural Study of Dalit Autobiographies in India* with special reference to Sharankumar Limbale's *The Outcaste*, Laxman Mane's *The Outsider*, Siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri* and Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan* which is being submitted herewith for the award of the Degree of Vidyavachaspati (Ph. D.) in English of Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune is the result of original research work completed by Ramesh Achyutrao Landage under my supervision and guidance. To the best of my knowledge and belief the work incorporated in this thesis has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree or similar title of this or any other University or examining body upon him/her.

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**Chapter I: Preamble**

### **1.1. Introduction:**

On vast landscape of India, there lived the people of various castes, communities and religions. Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Islam and Christian had seen dominant sects made their essence clear with the religion. Among them most of communities were tried their best to bring the social change in the society, but they become failure. Due to this, various ways of thinking took place on Indian canvas. One group demanded to have changes in religion and still remained firm to keep the religion as it is. Other group demanded to have changes in the way of life. It gave importance to cultural change in Nineteenth and

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Twentieth century. As a result of this, society makes two groups such as the exploiter and exploited. Sociologically, the neglected class doesn't belong to any caste or community those who are ignored, they are *Dalit*.

The literary phenomenon to which we now call *Dalit* literature in India emerged in the 1960s. The primary motive of *Dalit* literature is the liberation of *Dalits* in India. The aim of *Dalit* literature is protest against the established system which is based on injustice and exposes the evil and hypocrisy of the upper caste. *Dalit* literature is based on *annubhava* (experience) rather than *anumana* (speculation). Therefore, the authenticity and liveliness is the essential feature of *Dalit* literature.

Autobiography, as a genre of literature, is a metaphor of self and journeys of authors own life and achievement. It is a very influential genre through which *Dalit* writers have portrayed a realistic picture of the *Dalit* world. It is the recent development emerged after post-independence in India, which is the most important tool of *Dalit* literature. It is not just a remembering of past, but a shaping and structuring of them in such a way as to help understand one's life. Thus, *Dalit* Writing is essentially expression of the reality of human life and a great piece of literature depicts that reality with communicable lucid language facilitating narrative with reader's aesthetic and literary sense.

### **1.2. Survey of Research:**

The title of present research is *A Cultural Study of Dalit Autobiographies in India* with special reference to Sharankumar Limbale's *The Outcaste*, Laxman Mane's *An Outsider*, Siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri* and Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan*. It is true that this branch of literature has studied by mostly but in regional languages. Therefore, present research has concentrate on national language which makes awareness among Indian *Dalit*. It is a amalgamation of three states and their culture. Hence, it enriches the way of living of Indian *Dalit*.

## A CULTURAL STUDY OF DALIT AUTOBIOGRAPHIES IN INDIA

The research on *Dalit* Autobiography in India is not enough in compares to the awareness of Indian *Dalit*. The researchers have focus on new concepts like subjugation, Dissonant Voices, Feminist approach but no one could handle the issue of *Dalit* culture.

Rajpankhe M. S. has awarded M. Phil by Y. C. Open University, Nasik and Ph. D degree by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad, under the title of *Dissonant Voices in Subaltern Autobiographies: Post-colonial Study*.

Milind Pandit has also awarded Ph. D. degree form same university under the title of *Influence of Dalit autobiography on post miodern writing*.

Ashwin S. Meshram is one who has awarded Ph. D degree from Nagpur University, Nagpur under the title of *Revolt Motif in African American and Dali Literature with Special Reference to Native Son, Invisible Man, Upara and Athavaninche Pakshi*.

S. Bharathiraja is one who has awarded Ph. D. degree from Annamalai University, Takilnadu under the title of *A Study of Social Realism in the Select Indian Dalit Autobiographie*.

Hence, the presdent research is different from other perspectives. It is simply a cultural study of *Dalit* autobiographies in India.

### **1.3. Significance of Research:**

*Dalit* literature is an emerging branch of literature. It has found its own voice in post-independence in India. However, in 1960s a group of *Dalit* writes can makes their identity as politician, literary canon, and economist but still they could not change the face of *Dalit* society. Thus, the significance of this research is to focus on *Dalit* lives and their trouble.

### **1.4. Scope and Limitations of Research:**

The present research has a cosmic scope. The present research entitled *A Cultural Study of Dalit Autobiographies in India* analyses the portrayal of *Dalit* culture through the

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autobiographies of Sharankumar Limbale, Laxman Mane, Siddalingaiah, and Omprakash Valmiki. It is a simply cultural study of *Dalit* autobiography as a *Dalit* text.

### **1.5. Hypothesis:**

The hypothesis of the present research is to find out the following points.

- To study the notion *Dalit* literature and *Dalit* Autobiography.
- To focus on a cultural study of *Dalit* autobiography as text.
- The life experiences of pain as a means of cultural assertion.
- To study the Self-identity and roots of *Dalit*'s humiliation and injustice.
- Can these autobiographies be studied as rejection to traditional Hindu culture and acceptance to Buddhist culture?

### **1.6. Research Methodology:**

There is no typical method in present research entitled *A Cultural Study of Dalit Autobiographies in India*. Therefore, above methods used for the present research:

1. Descriptive Method
2. Referential Method

### **1.7. Research Structure:**

Before beginning the research, it needs to have the research structure. It is an important to include the above point: purpose of research, area of research, time and data collection for research. It needs to have the knowledge of difficulties in problems arising in future. These points are the structure of research takes place.

### **1.8. Purpose of Research:**

The purpose of the present research is to dig out a cultural study of *Dalit* society in India. It was the central agenda of the research. The indispensable word *Dalit* and *Dalit* culture

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was concentrated for research with the help of *Dalit* autobiographies in India. As *Dalit* in India is known to be discarded and kept away from the society since thousand years ago. The central aim of this research is to find out the term *Dalit* or untouchability or the suppression or subjugation of people under the name of caste, religion, creed etc. It has concerned *Dalit* author how they have attempted to bring them into mainstream.

### **1.9. Findings and Conclusions:**

*Dalit* autobiographies are the store house of pain and pathos. The select *Dalit* authors penned their soul-numbing survival stories equivalent to American slave narratives. They documented sufferings as it is- the reality. *Dalits*, the caste victims, emerge out of social and legal exploitations, yet they are still undervalued and denied of socializations. The devastated selves consider their autobiographies as agents to bring out positive transition beyond borders in the contemporary Indian *Dalits* lives. Thus, the select *Dalit* autobiographies in India are considered as milestone towards the progressive change in society. The conclusion of this research is to rejection of Hindu culture and to accept Buddhist culture which is based on classless society and equality. *Dalit* autobiographies, in India and abroad, focus on the pathetic and challenging past and their community, which is struggling for present and hopeful future.

### **1.10. Statement:**

#### *A CULTURAL STUDY OF DALIT AUTOBIOGROPHIES IN INDIA*

Sharankumar Limbale's' *The Outcaste*, Laxman Mane's *An Outsider*, Siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri* and Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan*

### **1.11. Culture:**

By etymologically, the term culture has a classical origin. It was first used by the Roman orator, Cicero in his book *Tusclan Disputations*. The word culture derives from Latin word *cultura*, which means cultivation. Culture is one of the most invigorating and

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inspiring subjects, which studied anthropology, literary studies and social sciences. It is a way of life, a set of values, beliefs and behaviour. The meaning of culture in literature is broad, enough to include all human behavior and social makeup, which are learnt and not inherent. In general non- inherent behaviours are unspoken to be different in various societies and the variations contribute to the creation of multiple cultures. The term culture has a multifaceted, diverse history and assorted range of meaning in contemporary society. There are number of anthropologists use it differently. E. B. Tylor was the anthropologist, 19<sup>th</sup> century, who defined the term culture as follows:

**Culture is that complicated totality in which are included Knowledge, confidence, Art, Moralities, laws, customs and all the other efficiencies which a man is forever striving to achieve as number of community.**

**[Quot. By Ravat: 2006: 94]**

This definition emphasizes that culture is a social legacy and the gift of society to mankind.

In the nineteenth century, it came to refer first to the betterment or refinement of the individual, especially through education and then to the fulfillment of national aspirations or ideals. In the mid- nineteenth century, some scientists used the term culture to refer to a universal human capacity. In twentieth century, culture emerged as a concept central to anthropology around all human phenomena that are not purely results of human genetics but the way of life. It is expressed our living and thinking styles, our day to day affairs, art, literature, religion and other raiment. Culture is, in fact, a collective word used to signify all those standards of life which are acquired and transformed by a social medium. Curtely, it is an object which have made for society that is culture, which is the large-scale context of a society.

### **1.11.1. Indian Culture / Eastern Culture:**

India is an ancient civilization of the world. It has varied cultures with many languages and traditions. It is often labeled as a mixture of sub-cultures, spans across the [Indian sub-continent](#) and includes traditions that are several millennia old. The culture of India refers to the beliefs, customs, traditions, languages, ceremonies, arts, values and the way of life. When a person speaks sweetly, behaves politely and expresses a generous feeling of charitableness, one feels that the person is cultured or civilized. When we speak of a person as cultured, there is a charitable expression on the part of that person in regard to others in feeling, in words and in outward conduct. It shows the culture of his society or nation. In India there is incredible cultural diversity throughout the country.

The South, North, and North-east have their own distinct cultures and almost every state has carved out its own cultural position. India is a vast country having variety of geographical features and climatic conditions. It may be an Indian or a person from any other country, attracted from the exuberant Indian Culture and traditions. Indian culture is a composite mixture of varying styles and influences. In current usage, the Indian culture has crossed the geographic boundaries and has extended globally. Thus, India is homeland of the most ancient civilizations including four major world religions includes Hindu, Boudh, Sikh and Jain. These religions and their cultures can be given as follows:

#### **1.11.1.1. Muslim Culture in India:**

Muslim (Islam) is India's second largest religion today. Islam is partially based upon the teachings of the [Prophet Muhammad](#) Paigambar. The *Quran*, sacred book, is to be the source of Islamic culture. There are five pillars of Muslim life recommend by prophet Paigambar. They are: Faith, Prayer, *Zakat*, Fast (Roza) and *Makah (Hajj)*.

- i.* Faith is the first pillars of Muslim culture, which is believe on *Allah (God)*.



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- ii. Prayer (*Namaj*) is the second pillar of Muslim. *Mosque* is a place where Muslim people gathered daily in five times for Prayer (*Namaj*). It works as a center for information, education, and dispute settlement.
- iii. *Zakat* is the third pillars of Muslim that they are required to give approximately one-fortieth of their wealth to charity as [Zakat](#). Muslim charity is considered as donations in Islam, as providing [charity](#) during *Ramajan* is regarded in Islam as especially honorable. Islam's holiest month is the *Ramjan*, in which month every Muslims must [fast](#) as a tradition of Muslim.
- iv. The Fast is the fourth pillars of Muslim. During the month of *Ramjan* not only abstain from food, drink, and sexual intercourse from dawn to sunset, but also from immoral behaviour.
- v. *Hajj* is the fifth pillars of Muslim. It is to be performed at least once in a lifetime, by those who are physically and financially able to do so. Thus, it will form the culture of Muslim. The Muslim culture is completely based on these five pillars and philosophy.

These five pillars contributed mostly to the Islamic culture.

Marriage and *Burkha* in Islam were considered to be the identity and culture of Muslim. Marriage is nothing but the contract made by *Kazi*. *Burkha* is another tradition which means, 'an enveloping outer [garment](#) worn by women in some [Islamic](#) traditions to cover their bodies when in public.' [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burqa>] Islam culture believes that music is [haram](#), but many Muslims are familiar to listening music. Sufi is one gretest example of Muslim music, which played an important role to spread the Islam. Art is an important part of Muslim culture. The abstract, decorative and floral designs are unique to Islamic art and architecture. Muslim art is always devoid of depictions of the animate, especially human beings according to the dictates of Islam or Muslim religion. Islamic art focuses on the omnipresence of *Allah*, the one who can not be represented by imagery. [Islamic architecture](#) in India can be divided into two parts:

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religious and secular. Mosques and Tombs represent the religious architecture, while palaces and forts are examples of secular Islamic architecture. The mosque or *Masjid* is a representation of Muslim art in its simplest form. Thus, this kind of Muslim culture attracted human being towards the Muslim.

### **1.11.1.2. Christian Culture in India:**

Christian is India's third-largest religion spread all over the world. Christianity is partially based upon the teachings of the Jesus Christ. Christian may mean a benevolent and peace-making society. Indian Christians are believers in the divinity of Jesus Christ. Church is the home of Jesus Christ where Christians came for prayer every Sunday. One of the most common symbols to be found in Indian Christianity is the cross. This is the ultimate symbol of God's love. What used to be a gloomy form of death and torture in barbaric times was transformed into a symbol of ultimate sacrifice, selflessness, salvation and redemption. The cross represents a lot of things associated with Christianity.

Easter is by far the most important celebration for the Christians even Christmas comes second. Christmas is the most important festival of Indian Christians. As a part of their celebration they give [Christmas gifts](#) to their family members and token of money to poor people as charity. Hence, the festival of Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ and conveys his message of love, tolerance and brotherhood. It's a celebration of humanity and mankind. Good Friday, anniversary of Jesus death on the cross, is another festival celebrated in India. Therefore, there are a number of places in India, where Christian festivals are celebrated on a grand manner. Marriage is another big celebration for Christians in India. Baptismal day is one of the most important days in the life of a Christian Orthodox. It usually takes place the first year after the baby is born. Until the baby is baptized it is often called baby and doesn't have a name. Carnival has also same importance on Christianity.

Thus, Christians do not share one common culture; their cultures for the most part tend to be a blend of [Indian](#) and European cultures. It differs from one region to another depending on several factors such as the prevailing rite and tradition and the extent of time for which Christianity has existed in those regions. Christians are found all across India and in all walks of life.

### **1.11.1.3. Buddha or Buddhist Culture in India:**

The Buddhist is the India's fourth-largest religion spread all over the world. The philosophy of Buddhist is based on the teachings of Lord Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama (563 and 483 BC), a royal prince of Kapilvastu, India. The aim of the Buddhist is *Nibbana* which means emancipation from suffering. Buddhist teaching is a revelation of true and absolute values. Its truth can be tested and tried in one's own experience. Buddhism teaches clear thinking, self-control and mental culture as means to these ends. Buddhist emphasizes the principles of harmlessness and restraint. Buddhism never believed on God and supernatural power. Regarding to this, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had given three objectives:

- 1. His first object was to lead man to the path of rationalism.**
- 2. His second object was to free man to go in search of truth.**
- 3. His third object was to remove the most potent source of superstition, the result of which is to kill the spirit of inquiry.**

**[Aglave: 2007: 98 ]**

Buddhism rejected ritualism, sacrifices and dominance of priestly class. Buddhism appealed to the masses on account of its simplicity, use of vernacular language in its scriptures and teachings and monastic order. Buddhism left deep impact on the society. It gave serious impetus to democratic spirit and social equality. It opened its doors to women and *Shudras*- untouchables. Buddhism encouraged abolition of distinctions in society and strengthened the principle of social equality. This is a philosophy which may be called Buddhist culture that accepted by all over the world today.

### 1.11.1.4. Jain Culture in India:

Jain is India's fourth-largest religion and spread worldwide today. Its philosophy is mainly based on self-endeavor in the soul on the spiritual hierarchy to divine consciousness. The word *Jain* means a follower of *Jinas*, which means conquerors. *Jinas* are spiritually advanced human beings who rediscover the [dharma](#), become fully [liberated](#) and teach the spiritual path to benefit all living beings. Jainism encourages [spiritual](#) development through reliance on and cultivation of one's own personal wisdom and [self-control](#). The goal of Jainism is to realize the soul's true nature.

Every community has its own customs, beliefs and traditions, Jain religion or community is not an exception for this view. Because of that treating saint with all devotion is tradition of Indian culture. This tradition followed by Jains today. It is believed that if saints are fed at home, that home will be peaceful and gets prosperity. With all sincerity and eagerness Jain householders (*Shravaks*) wait for the arrival of *Muni*: saint of highest cadre, make arrangements to feed him. It is a matter of pride and satisfaction. Jains have another religious custom. That is - taking food before Sunset. This is for the reason that more micro-organisms are generated at night. With a view to minimize their victimization, preparation and consuming food at night is prohibited in Jainism for ages. This tradition is followed by all Jains irrespective of their economic status, living place etc. *Swadhyaya* or studying the philosophical books is another rule which every Jain (whether householder or saint) has to follow. So, there is a custom in majority of Jaina householders that, anyone in the house reads out a religious book every day to all in the house. Respecting and serving the *monks* is another custom followed by Jains. Jains believe that only things earned by rightful conduct stay in life. They wish only the energy and intellect bestowed by god, character and behavior prescribed by saints, to stay firmly in their mind. The stress on behavioral pattern and character here is nothing but self-control which is one of the six rules mandatorily to be followed by a Jaina householder.

Thus, Jains are known for their tolerant cultured behaviour. Theirs is not an attacking nature, but adjustable one. Their principles of non - violence, no - enmity with anybody, possessing only essential things etc have made them more polite and socialized. But at the same time they have also done heroic deeds and ruled over different provinces. This quality of leadership is still persisting in Jains. By their culture, they are commanding the respect from people.

### **1.11.1.5. Sikh Culture in India:**

The Sikh is the fifth-largest organized religion in India. The Sikhs have developed unique expressions of art and culture which are influenced by their faith and synthesize traditions from many other cultures. Sikhism is Punjab's only indigenous religion with all other religions coming from outside Punjab. All the Sikh gurus, saints and majority of the martyrs in Sikh history were from Punjab and from the [Punjabi people](#). [Punjabi culture](#) and Sikhism are considered inseparably intertwined. Sikh art and culture is synonymous with that of the [Punjab region](#). The Punjab itself has been called India's melting pot, due to the confluence of invading cultures, such as [Greek](#), [Mughal](#) and [Persian](#) that mirrors the confluence of rivers from which the region gets its name. Thus, Sikh culture is to a large extent informed by this synthesis.

Punjabi wedding traditions and ceremonies are traditionally conducted in Punjabi and are a strong reflection of Punjabi culture. The Punjabi wedding has many rituals and ceremonies that have evolved since traditional times. Punjabi cuisine has an immense range of dishes and has become world-leader in the field; so much so that many entrepreneurs that have invested in the sector have built large personal fortunes due to popularity of Punjabi Cuisine throughout the world. *Sarso ka saag* and *Maki ki roti* are examples of well known dishes. [Bhangra](#) is one of the many Punjabi musical art forms

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that is increasingly being listened to in the west and is becoming a mainstream favourite. Punjabi music is being used by western musicians, in many ways, such as mixing it with other compositions to produce award-winning music. In addition, Punjabi Classical music is increasingly becoming popular in the west Owing to the long history of the Punjabi culture and of the [Punjabi people](#) there are a large number of dances, normally performed at times of celebration, including harvests, festivals, and weddings. The Punjabi language has different dialects, spoken in the different sub-regions of [greater Punjab](#). Thus, Sikh culture represents their identity and culture worldwide.

### **1.11.1.6. Hindu Culture in India:**

India is a country with rich and varied cultural heritage, where Hindu *Dharma* (religion) is given pride of place. It has complicated culture like Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and Isai or Christian. These are the pillars of this country. As M. S. Rajpankhe discussed in his research paper,

**Hindu is a typical religion based upon *Varna system*. It has gradation of four *Varnas* such as *Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya* and *Shudra*. For every grade, *Manu*- the maker of this system- maintains different rule and regulations of the ways of life. [Rajpankhe: 2007: 132]**

The centralization of Hindu culture is countless customs, traditions and beliefs differ from region to region and climate conditions. Hindu is believes on the only cycle of birth and rebirth and a collection of different canon and traditions mainly based on *Vedas*. It has modified from time to time by great saints without changing the basic teachings of the religion and the main aim of life i.e. salvation: liberation from cycle of birth and rebirth.

The *Vedas* and the Manuscript (*Manusmriti*) tell us about the (mythic) origin of the caste system and the duties of the various castes. In Hindu *Vedic* scriptures, one of the earliest religious literary forms was caste system or *Verna* system. *Verna* is generally translated

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as colour and meant to refer to the skin colour and figuratively to the moral status of the different castes descending from the light skinned Aryans and the darker Dravidians. The origin of the caste system is an intensely debated topic, and likewise the meaning of *Varna*. The word caste is not mentioned in any ancient Sanskrit scriptures. But it brought in use by Portuguese upon their arrival to India in 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The word caste derived from the Latin word *castus*, meaning pure. The *Vedas* are generally thought to have been composed around 1500 – 1000 B.C. The earliest section of the *Vedic* corpus, the *Rig Veda*, contains the Hindu creation story. *Purusha* is described as a primeval giant sacrificed by the gods and from his body the world and the *Varnas* were built.

**The first group was made of *Brahmins* (priests). They came from Purusha's mouth, and were to provide for the intellectual and spiritual needs of the community. The second group was called the *Kshatriyas* (warriors and rulers). They were created from the arms, and were to rule and to protect the others. *Vaishyas* (landowners and merchants) sprang from Purusha's thighs. This group was in charge of trade and cared for agriculture. *Shudras* (artisans and servants) came from the feet. They had to do all the manual work. [Mugdum: 2009: 7-8]**

Thus, in the *Rig Veda* society is described as an organic whole sustained by various groups with differing roles and occupations all amalgamated into a stable structure. In the Vedic ordering of society notions of purity and pollution are central and activities are worked out in this context. However, this class sequence is the backbone of Hindu culture. These four classes and their culture can be studied in details.

### **1.11.1.6.1. *Brahmin*:**

The *Brahmin* is the first born and highest of the four *Varnas* or Class, as prescribed in the [Purusha Sukta](#) of the [Rig Veda](#), which constitutes society into four *Varnas* or

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*Chaturvarna*. He is styled the lord of universe, even equal to the God himself. He is to be worshipped, served and respected by all. Oxford dictionary defines *Brahman* as, ‘**a socially or culturally superior person.**’ [<http://oxforddictionaries.com/>] Thus, the *Brahmins* are priests, the *Kshetriyas* are warriors, the *Vaishayas* are traders and the *Shudras* are labourers engaged in manual work. Each Varna was abided by its stipulated vocation. Brahmins are said to occupy the highest position among the four *Varnas* of Hinduism. *Brahmin* refers to the or to the creative aspect of the universal consciousness. *Brahmins* were engaged in attaining the highest spiritual knowledge and adhered to different branches (*shakhas*) of *Vedas*. This culture has applied by *Brahmin* to the other class in India.

### **1.11.1.6.2. *Kshetriya*:**

The *Kshetriyas* are the second-highest of the four *Varnas* or categories into which Hindu society is traditionally divided. Oxford Dictionary defines the term *Kshetriya* as,

**...a member of the second of the four great Hindu castes, the military caste. The traditional function of the *Kshatriyas* is to protect society by fighting in wartime and governing in peacetime.**

[<http://oxforddictionaries.com/> ]

The *Kshetriyas* have a rich tradition of cultural values dating back to several centuries. The *Kshetriyas* form a culturally advanced and forward-looking community. They have been following the time-tested customs and traditions of their ancestors with a modern touch.

The traditional values and heritage of *Kshetriyas* embody the cultural ethos of the country in general and the community in particular. Their rituals and festivals have played a vital role in the evolution of Indian culture. The fairs and festivals of *Kshetriyas* are very unique in nature and content. Their marriage ceremonies, rituals and practices are quite different from that of others. They continue to practice them without detracting



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from the guidelines handed down by their go trams from time immemorial. Many of the cultural activities of *Kshetriyas* are religion-oriented. They are basically *Vaishnavites*, although they perform *Shaivite* rituals too. They pay much attention towards the celebration of all Hindu religious festivals. They have contributed much too Indian literature in general and to the *Bhakti* genre in particular. Thus, the *Kshetriya* men are basically sons of warriors. Their inborn warrior-like qualities and attributes enabled them to boldly stand up against *adharma* and oppression during alien rule in India at different stages in its history and culture.

### **1.11.1.6.3. *Vaisya*:**

The *Vaishyas* are the third-highest of the four *Varnas* in Hindu religion. The word originated from Sanskrit literally means settler or settlement. Collins Dictionary defines *Vaishya* as, ‘the third of the four main Hindu castes, the traders.’ [<http://www.collinsdictionary.com/>] Lord Sri Krishna, Bhagwat Gita, said:

**‘*Chatur Varna Maya Sristim Guna Karma Vibhag Shah.*’**

[<http://vaisya.askdefine.com/>]

He means to say that on the inquiry of self-realization, people undergo different step by step stages of awareness, and with it comes purity in their character. There are four divisions of *Varna in Hindu society*. *Vaishya* are those whose mind is engaged by the *vishaya* which means subject or specialization or professional knowledge. It is considered that the *Vaishyas* arose from the belly of [\*Brahma\*](#). Traditionally, they are the merchant class, like-*halwai*, oil depot, pot-makers, grocers, shoe makers, meat shops. There are also clerks, helpers in various shops. Apart from the trading profession, *Vaishyas* have played a great role in Indian culture.

### **1.11.1.6.4. *Shudra*:**

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*Shudra* is the fourth class of Hindu Society. Traditionally, *Shudras* were the labourers, farmers, craftsmen, servants, cobblers, blacksmiths, cooks etc. They were considered inferior to the other three castes and were constrained to perform only untrained jobs, which had low status. In the book *Who Were Shudras*, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar interpreted the term *Shudra* as follows:

**The *Shudras* were one of the Aryan communities of the solar race; there was a time when the Aryan society recognized only three *Varnas*, namely *Brahmin*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya*. The *Shudras* did not form a separate Varna. They ranked as a part of the *Kshatriya Varna* in the Indo-Aryan society. There was a continuous feud between the *Shudra* kings and the *Brahmins* in which the *Brahmins* were subjected to many tyrannies and indignities. As a result of the hatred towards the *Shudras* generated by their tyrannies and oppressions, the *Brahmins* refused to perform the *upanayan* of the *Shudras* and owing to the denial of *upanayana*, the *Shudras*, who were actually *Kshetriyas*, became social degraded and fell below the rank of the *Vaishyas* and thus came to turn the fourth Varna- class. [Ambedkar: 1990: 11-12]**

The religious texts endorsed that the caste system was God made; and therefore, was not to be interfered by humans. Both religion and the state confined the *Shudras* to mental, cultural and social slavery and segregated them as untouchables. *Shudras* must live outside of the village. They may possess only broken mud-pots. Their wealth shall be dogs and donkeys. Their dress shall be garments of the dead; they shall eat their food from broken dishes; black iron shall be their ornaments, and they must wander from place to place. They must never reside within the village, but outsider labour at cremation grounds, on mountains or in groves. They are to wear only the shrouds of dead people and eat with broken utensils. They may only enter the villages and cities with the king's permission for work purposes, wearing special symbols to enable identification. Having been made to live on the outskirts of the village, the *Shudras* were assigned various tasks

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like scavenging, carrying away of carcasses and acting as hangmen etc. which were their inescapable duties.

Thus, their physical contact or even their shadow would pollute the upper class society. *Shudras* are the people who were never allowed to have equal social status. They were never treated as a human being. Service to society and that too was for only upper *Varnas* was their task. Their humiliated life remained pathetic. This lower class in Hindu society was always suppressed and depressed. However, above task and behaviour make *Dalit* culture in India, which has a sub-caste known as *Ati-shudra*.

### **1.11.1.6.4.1. *Ati-shudra*:**

The sub-caste of *Shudras* is known as *Ati-shudra*. According to the division of labourers which the *Varna* system brings about, Ambedkar said that the caste system in India brought about not just a division of labour, **‘those to whom it falls to perform the lowest and filthiest tasks came to be known as *Ati-shudra*.’** [Ibid: 14] This fifth class was forced to live at a distance from the upper classes. It includes *Mang, Mahar, Chambhar, Dhor, Kaikadi, Wadar, Bhangi* and so on. They all are lives outside the village. They have their own identity and culture. After the 1960 they got social, cultural and political sense and therefore they were revolt against patriarchal society in the form of *Dalit* movement and have been written about their lives. This writing is nothing but considered as *Dalit* literature in India.

### **1.11.1.7. *Dalit* Culture in India:**

There are number of cultures found in India, among them only Christian and Buddhist culture have caring untouchables or *Dalits*. Hindu culture is completely opposite to it, while concentrate on God, temple, religious texts and *rushimunies*. There is no value of *Dalits* in Hindu religion, though they are a part of its religion. Therefore, *Dalit* writers

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have using different kind of language than that of the language used in earlier times in literature. They use the language which is known to them and considered rustic by the previous writers. *Dalit* writers are interested to portray their peoples past. So they follow the language of their own people and their dialect, without refining it. *Dalit* feelings come from *Dalit* language only. No other language could express it exactly. So, *Dalit* feelings and *Dalit* language is known as *Dalit* culture. *Dalit* language contains harshness, unusual diction; it is similar to the life condition of the *Dalits* in the society. Thus, *Dalit* Culture has seen today a casteless culture. Being inspired by Buddhist culture, Black culture, Mahatma Phule and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, *Dalit* Culture established a novel society based on the idea of Equality, Liberty and Fraternity.

### **1.12. The History of *Dalit* Movement in India:**

*Dalit* movement is often misunderstood as a movement against the non-*Dalits* in general and Brahmins in particular. It is not against any caste or community but against the untouchability in every caste and community in India. The essence of *Dalit* movement is indeed rooted in the ideals: liberty, equality and fraternity. The central purpose of the *Dalit* Movement is to establish a society based on social equality. The *Dalit* movement rejects the sub-human status imposed on *Dalit* by the Hindu social order. *Dalit* movement essentially aims at securing these inseparable ideals to every individual- including *Dalits*. *Dalit* movement, therefore, has a larger vision of infusing a sense of oneness or we feeling in short, fraternity, in everyone's mind.

The History of *Dalit* Movement goes back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The first *Dalit* writer was Madara Chennaiah, eleventh century cobbler-saint, who lived in the reign of Western *Chalukyas*. He was regarded as the father of Vachana poetry, who spread equality and fraternity through his poetry. *Dalit* saint Kalavve, in 12<sup>th</sup> century, challenged the higher castes system and given the new theory and philosophy of equality for society. He said:

**Those who eat goats, foul and tiny fish:**

**Such, they call caste people.**

**Those who eat Sacred Cow**

**That showers frothing milk for Shiva:**

**Such, they call out-castes. [Qtd. by Abedi: 2010: 1]**

He means to say that those who are eat goats and flesh; they have considered *Dalit*. But what about the people, those who have eat milks like God Shiva, in the form of *Abhishek*, they called out castes.

### **1.12.1. Contribution of *Bhakti* movement to *Dalit* Movement:**

Twelfth century was most important in the history of Indian culture and caste ridden society. It was the time of reformation, everywhere *Brahmins* seeds the crop of God and Goddess. However, in Punjab Gurunanak, Kabir in north India, Changdev Raval in Gujarat, Chakrdhar Swami in Maharashtra and Basveshwar in Karnataka were struggling against caste ridden society and endeavored to eradicate the caste differences and gender discrimination. They were fought for equality and revolts against the practice of untouchability.

Before twentieth century, Muslim regiment was conquering on India via *Khaibar khind*. Finally, Muslim empire ruled over the north India but they failed to rule on Maharashtra and Karnataka, due to reformers like Basveshwar and Chakrdhar Swami as well as orthodox Hindu *Brahmin* and their religion. On the other hand, Buddhist and Jains were also tried to conquer on Maharashtra and Karnataka but they were also failed. Because of these both of religions were non-vaedic religion. So, they don't agree the system of *Varna* in Hindu society. At that time everyone becomes great doesn't on his quality but on his birth. Though, it was spread the philosophy of orthodox culture but the society was based on system of *Varna*.

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There was a variety of cults, in an ancient time, emerged with their own ideology in order to bring about reformation in Hindu Society. The saint like figures Basweshar, Chakradhar *Swami*, Kabir, Dnayneshwar, and Tukaram were fought for egalitarianism in society. The tradition of equality and fraternity was a seeds of *Dalit* consciousness which was found in the writings of Saints (Poets) like Namdev, Eknath and Chokha Mela in the middle age.

In Karnataka, Basveshwar established new religion named *Virshaiv Lingayat* and was tried to make to liberalize and equality in society. Contemporary, Chakrdhar Swami founded *Mahanubhava Sampradaya*. These both cults were intended at liberalizing Hinduism from its rigidity. Other great saints like Gurunanak, Kabir and Bassava other parts of India detested the practice of untouchability. In Panjab, Gurunanak was the founder of Shikh religion and who revolted against system of *Varna* and established new religion which gives the importance of work. He said:

**I am not Hindu, I am not a Muslim, I am a Shikh, a new religion which full of virtues and qualities derived from Hindu and Muslim religion.**

[Mense: 2009: 9]

Like other saints he has taught importance of work. In the part of north India, contemporary Saint Kabir has done the same work. He was the first person in India to convince the Islamic culture and the traditions of Hindu society, as well as reveals the bad deeds of both religions simultaneously. Sanit Namdav from Maharashtra goes to Panjab for scattering equality and liberty via Gujarat and Rajasthan, was lived there near about twenty years. During the span of spreading Varkari cult in Panjab, he was come in contact with saint Gurunanak and saint Kabir. Finally, they had given a new religion of humanity to the nation. There were many saints can be found in the middle ages who taught the equality, love and *Bhakti*.

Saint Dnayneshwar, who was excommunicated into *Dalit* status in 13<sup>th</sup> century, who wrote an annotation titled as *Dnuaneshwari* in 1290. He established the *Varkari*

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*Sampradaya*- religious order of regular pilgrimage, in Maharashtra and provided this tradition with firm and strong spiritual philosophy of humanity among the ordinary people and the untouchables. He has spread his *Varkari Sampradaya* and equality among the society. He, therefore, said: ‘**This universe is my home.**’ [Kulkarni: 1992: 29] Such humanitarian philosophy spread all over India by Dyaneswar. Saint Eknath, another excommunicated Brahmin, who fought for the rights of the untouchables and ordinary people during *Bhakti* period. *Bharud* (a folk song) invented by Eknath during *Bhakti* period for the purpose of social reformation and for the entertainment. Allegorically, it attacks on the instances of traditional professions such as barber, beggars, fortune tellers, farmers, bhagats, cobblers etc. The *Bharud*, Which Saint Eknath had composed to express his firm belief and social outlook of strong opposition for castism and communalism are really thought provoking.

According to the *Brahmanical* hierarchy, ‘...all non-Brahmans were called *Shudras*. [Tukaram: 1990: 65] Saint Tukaram calls himself,

***Shudra Kunbi* (agriculturist) a *Shudra* poet, an outcaste, who continued to speak about the evils of the caste system and against its rigidity in the name God’s most pious follower still, infuriated his enemies as patriarchal society and orthodox society. [Ibid]**

Saint Tukaram has clearly clarified the attributes and characteristics of true and *Dalit* saints in following *Abhanga* (A hymn, lyrical poem):

***Je ka ranjale ganjale! Tyasi mhane jo apule!!***

***Tochi sadhu olakhava! Dev tethechi janava!!* [Ibid: 66]**

He had sought this divine state about the worldly matters. Therefore, he has earned the highest esteem, adoration and devotion in the hearts of common people in the whole Maharashtra. He strongly opposed all kinds of social injustice and discrimination. He rejected Castism and Class discrimination between *Dalit* (Untouchables) and Upper Class Society. However, *Bhakti* cult of *Varkari Samaj* was people oriented. A contemporary Saint Janabai (Woman Slave) and Saint Kanhopatra (*The Prostitute*) were fought for the

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rights of untouchables during the middle age. Saint Dnyaneshwar had laid the firm foundation of *Bhagavat Dharma* and Saint Tukaram becomes the dazzling apex of it.

Saint *Chokha Mela*, being as a *Dalit* poet, gave the first expression to his conscious feelings in his *Abhangas* (Songs in devotion to God). He, therefore, deserves to be called the precursor of *Dalit* poetry. In his famous *Abhanga*, he asks appropriately why the people get lured by the outward appearance of man:

**Hard is sugarcane,**

**But that its juice better doesn't make**

**Why you are lured away by appearance fake? [Kadam: 1969:25]**

Most of these saints subscribed to the *Bhakti* movements in Hinduism during the medieval period that rejected castism. However, it is wrong to view the *Varkari* movement as a religious movement only, because the major concerns of its leaders were to uproot the spreading social evils. However, post- failure of *Bhakti* movement in India, social reformers were emerged and tried to work for *Dalit* and untouchability in India.

### **1.12.2. Contribution of Social Reformers to *Dalit* Movement:**

India has a rich history of thinkers and social reformers who have helped to set up the foundations of modern India. Social reformers were doesn't the part of *Dalit* movement but has been done the same as *Dalit* movement required in society. Therefore, it is an essential to touch the social reformers when *Dalit* movement in India is studied or remembered. Mahatma Jyotirao Phule occupies a unique position among the social reformers of Maharashtra in the Nineteenth century. He was a social reformer who took initials to introduce education to women and downtrodden people in India. He revolted against the unjust caste system under which million of people had suffered for centuries. In particular, he courageously upheld the cause of the untouchables and took up the cudgels for the poorer peasants. However, he has pays attention on Indian *Shetji* and *Bhatji*. On one hand, he was fighting with the upper caste people and on the other hand



he was sensitizing untouchables by his teaching and speeches against slavery and on their great history of being the rulers of this land. As a result, untouchables realized of their metal slavery got organized to fight against the slavery and stood with Mahatma Phule for constructing an equal society where no human being will suffer the pain of inequality and injustice.

### **1.12.3. Contribution of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to *Dalit* Movement:**

Babasaheb Ambedkar is remembered for his revolutionary contributions to the mission of eradication of caste in India. Throughout his life, he battled social discrimination while upholding the rights of the *Dalits* and other socially backward classes. He was not only a great national leader but also a distinguished scholar of international repute. He not only led various social movements for the upliftment of the depressed sections of society but also contributed to the understanding of the socio-economic and political problems of India through his scholarly works on caste, religion, culture, constitutional law and economic development. He played a seminal role in the framing of the Indian Constitution. He, thus, was a fierce advocate of emancipation of *Dalit* in India.

When Babasaheb Ambedkar was learning at Satara School, he decided to offer Sanskrit as one of his school subjects. But the teacher of Sanskrit insulted and humiliated by saying: **‘I’ll not teach of Sanskrit to the pupil belonging to *Mahar* caste.’** [Opp. Cite, **Kulkarni: 305**] Today, we can imagine what extreme agonies have experienced by Babasaheb’s sensitive mind at the childhood. From this incident, he thought of tackling the problem himself and began his fight against untouchability. There were several ways by which he was trying to do this. He spent his whole life fighting against social discrimination, the system of *Chaturvarna* (the categorization of Hindu society into four *Varna*’s) and the Hindu caste system. Untouchability and caste system were the two social evils that had haunted by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar since his childhood days.

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Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar started publishing a weekly journal called *Mooknayak*, where he criticized the orthodox system that prevailed in the society. He spoke openly about the discriminations that were made to the lower castes in the society and the humiliations that they had to undergo and endure. He had also voted for creating separate electorates for the backward classes in society. Reservations for *Dalits* and other religious communities were also demanded by Babasaheb Ambedkar. He also formed the *Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha* so that the deprived and backward classes could get some opportunities to upgrade themselves. He arranged for spreading education to these classes and tried to improve their socio-economic conditions.

First anti-touchability movement was launched by Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar in the 1920s in Maharashtra. He saw the opportunity and possibility of advancement for the untouchables through the use of political means to achieve social and economic equality with the highest classes in modern society. Assertion for *Dalit* identity has become a central issue of *Dalit* movement. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar started his epic movement for the social, economic and cultural freedom of the *Dalits* in India. He courageously deterred Gandhi's Freedom movement by drawing himself into a conflict with Gandhi on the critical issue of the *Dalit* location within the Hindu social milieu. Apprehensive of immutability in the abject and lowly condition of the *Dalits* even after India gets freedom. He resolutely gave a call for the social and Cultural Revolution.

Mahatma Gandhi had also deep concern with social justice to the *Dalits*, but his approach was different in relation to Babasaheb Ambedkar. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wanted to subvert the caste-system to reach the goal and Mahatma Gandhi wanted to achieve the goal without damaging the existing social structure. At this moment, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's call:

**Educate, Organize and Agitate, inspired the *Dalits* and they lent him unremitting support. The most vital part was that Dr. Ambedkar**

**engendered among the *Dalits* a sense of self- respect and self-confidence. [Amebedkar: 1945: 54]**

The condition of untouchables was awful and pathetic before independence. They were not allowed to draw water the lake or well which was exclusively meant for the upper castes. Therefore, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar started the *Satyagrah* for drawing water from Chavdar Lake at Mahad, a tahsil place of Raigad District in Maharashtra, which was hitherto reserved only for the upper class. There he along with his thousands of followers performed action of the Bonfire of *Manusmriti* in December 25, 1927. Since the untouchables were not allowed to enter the Hindu tempels, Ambedkar, as a protest to this, started the act of entering the Kalaram Mandir at Nasik. These entire actions become the landmarks in the history of the *Dalit* movement in India.

### **1.13. *Dalit* Movements and Organizations in India:**

The problem of untouchability and exploitation of *Dalits* in social, economic and political areas has been a stark reality of Indian society. Various efforts have been made so far by visionaries in this direction by launching movements and forming organizations to highlight and find solution of the problems of the *Dalits* in India. As a result the awareness among the *Dalits* who have started asserting their identity and demanding their due share in power. If we look at the history of *Dalit* movements organized in different parts of the country, it becomes clear that a number of socio-political organizations, struggles and various types of activities of the *Dalits* had emerged out of different socio-economic and political conditions in the past to ameliorate their wretched condition. A number of leaders raised their voice against the exploitation of *Dalits* and organized various Organizations in India. Such organizations and movements are as follows.

#### **1.13.1. *Dalit* Movement in Maharashtra:**

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*Dalit* movement is not a literal movement but is the logo of change and revolution. Its primary aim was the liberation of *Dalits*. It can found its roots in Maharashtra in the form of *Dalit Panther*, which was social organization founded by Namdev Dhasal in April 1972 at Mumbai. The most essential factor responsible for the rise of *Dalit Panther* Movement was the repression and terror under which the oppressed *Dalits* continued to live in the rural area. It had borrowed its moral support from the writings of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

Namdev Dhasal, Raja Rao and Arun Kamble were the original leaders of *Dalit Panther*, which was inspired through Black Panther Party, a revolutionary movement with African-American in the United States. *Dalit Panther* started as a movement of fundamental assertion for the claim of equality against the upper caste. The nature of this movement was where *Dalit* assert their protest against the age old exploitation and domination of upper caste. The movement was caged towards changing of the overall structure of the society and hence it was radical transformation movement and not the reformatory activity. The movement was change oriented and the target was of a structural change.

The ideology of *Dalit Panther* Movement was immediately against the established Hindu Caste system and its hierarchy due to the growing numbers of evil atrocities on *Dalits*. The movement also targeted Congress party and Mahama Gandhi. All panther leaders, in spite of their ideological differences had one thing in common. They all had burning hatred against oppressive conditions of *Dalits* especially in rural areas. Some of them, like Dhasal also believe that Indian constitution has its own limitations and the movement cannot be run within the democratic sphere. And hence in the beginning the movement has the militant stand. The March and demonstrations against atrocities was the regular part of the programme of *Dalit Panther* movement.

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The programmes were arranged mainly to target Hindu religion, Hindu Gods and goddesses, religious heads, government authorities, hierarchical system, police, feudal landlords, capitalists, Shiv Sena and also Republican Party of India, contemporary *Dalit* movement in Maharashtra, leaders who were called as white collared Brahmins. However, the huge support of *Dalits* behind *Dalit* Panther made them powerful which couldn't be ignored and taken for granted by other political parties. This movement witnessed finest *Dalit* literature of its time.

In this way, *Dalit* Panther movement created counter culture and separate identity of *Dalits*. The category *Dalit* was accepted on national as well as international level because of the movement. *Dalit* Panther is Social Organization and *Dalit* Movement which was created many mass *Dalit* Leaders. During the short span of time, *Dalit* Panther left impact not only in Maharashtra but all over India. Today, number of *Dalit* organizations emerged in Maharashtra to set up the social system of Maharashtra but they have to failure.

### **1.13.2. *Dalit* Movement in Uttar Pradesh:**

There are few reasons behind to arouse *Dalit* movement in pre-independence in Uttar Pradesh. Among them, the failure of the land reforms in bringing equality among the *Dalits* in Uttar Pradesh was enough to encourage launching the *Dalit* Movement. Sudha Pai has divided the history of the post -independence *Dalit* Movement in Uttar Pradesh into three phases. These three phases are:

**The first phase is from 1956-1969, when *Dalits* decided to form their own party under the leadership of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar with the Republican Party of India (RPI). The second phase is about the failure of *Dalit* political parties that enabled the Congress to secure *Dalit* support under the leadership of Ms. Indira Gandhi by the sharing in the consensus on Garibi Hatao. The third phase starts from the early**

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**1980s when the *Dalit* Movement entered into competitive democratic politics with the emergence of the BSP with the criticism that the *Dalit* Movement had distanced itself from the initiatives for social transformation and focused only on political motives and goals. [Pai: 2001: 26]**

During early twentieth Century, concern to *Dalit*'s interests was raised at different forums at the national level in public and private under the leadership of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. When he was influential in national politics no second one leader emerged in Uttar Pradesh to carry on the legacy of the *Dalit* Movement established by him. Due to failure of Republican Party of India as a *Dalit* political party, the 1970<sup>s</sup> and 1980<sup>s</sup> were crucial for the *Dalit* Movement in Uttar Pradesh.

Kanshi Ram was first *Dalit* leader, who had a broader view than any other *Dalit* leader in the past of a movement that could unite all the social sections affected by the discriminatory social arrangement of Hindu society. He argued that:

**...only fifteen percent the upper castes was ruling over the eighty five percent backward and lower castes along with religious minorities. Therefore, the fraction of eighty five per cent should come together and take the advantage of democratic politics- being the majority they could rule over the country forever. [Ibid: 6]**

This strategy is reflected very clearly in the slogan: '*jiski jitni sankhya bhari, uski utni bhagidari.*' [Ibid: 2] In his theory, he is more realistic than the earlier propagators of the *Dalit* Movement.

Keeping this view in his mind, Kanshi Ram established a non-political organization called the 'All India Backward and Minority Castes Employees Federation: BAMCEF', on December 6, 1973. His other organizations were *Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti*, popularly known as DS-4, which was a political organization. In this way, in 1984, he turned the DS-4 into a full-fledged political party, the *Bahujan Samaj Party*,

launched on Ambedkar's birthday with the slogan: '*vote hamara, raj tumhara; nahi chalega, nahi chalega...*' [Teltumbde: 2006: 31] The goal of this party was based on an axiom of Ambedkar that political power was the key to all problems. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, *Bahujan Samaj Party* focused on social engineering to bring Brahmins and other upper castes together through the policy of *Sarvajan*. Its real effort started from 1995 to onwards. Thus, it is not only a political party but also perform as a role of *Dalit* movement in Uttar Pradesh.

### **1.13.3. *Dalit* Movement in Karnataka:**

The term *Dalit* movement is used in Kannada literature in seventies; it generally refers to the movement of the 1970<sup>s</sup> and after 70<sup>s</sup> of the twentieth century. But it is not in the first time that such movement has taken place. There are many such movements in the records of Karnataka history. It was in the first time, in twelfth century, Basavappa raised his voice against caste discrimination in the northern part of Karnataka state. This social reform movement led by Basavappa, it gave rise to a new kind of writing in Kannada literature. It is named as *Vachana Sahitya*. Its purpose was to uplift the Socio-economical status of non-Brahmin castes. Influenced by *Vachana Sahitya*, a non- Brahmin movement took place in the old Mysore state in 1917. It was led by *Vokkaligas* and *Lingayats* of the then Mysore state. Its aim was to uplift the Socio-economical status of non Brahmin castes. This movement was supported by some organizations. They are *Vokkaliga Sangha* (1906) and Central Muslim Association (1909). It was a time of development of these movements among the non-Brahminical castes. Therefore, *Dalit* Movement which emerged in 1970<sup>s</sup> aimed to bring social change.

One of the main reasons for emergence of *Dalit* movement in Karnataka was the speech of Basavalingappa. He was invited to a function in Mysore on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 1973. In his speech on *Tradition, social structure and New Views*, he said Kannada Literature is *Boosa* literature. The intension behind calling Kannada literature as *Boosa* (fodder) was

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mis-interpreted in media. He was made to resignation for his ministerial berth. This incident made the *Dalits* to get join together to light the lamp of enlightenment. The second incident happened in Kolar on October 23<sup>rd</sup>1971. The Potter Sheshagiriappa was killed by upper castes in a land dispute. The third factor was the problems of factory workers in Badravathi, Shimoga District. These three incidents gave rise to the establishment of *Dalita Sangarsha Smithi* in Badravathi. In spite of all these stray incidents, the main guiding principle was Ambedkar and his writings. All these factors become important reasons for the emergence of *Dalit* movement in Karnataka. Therefore, *Dalit* Movement gave rise to the birth of many writers and journalists.

In the speech, *Importance of the Dalit movement*, Prof. D. Javaregowda, ex-vice Chancellor of Mysore University, has said the decline of this country means the decline of *Shudra* and *Ati-shudra* of this land. It was the first post- independence people began to think against wrong conventions, they made number of protest all over the state irrespective of castes. This movement helped many tiny minorities to unite among themselves under one organization. This period is considered as questioning period, about the inhuman behaviour of conventionalists. And it affects every field in the state of Karnataka. It is known that the pioneers of many movements were the commoners. They only have the capacity to bring in change in the existing order.

### **1.14. Inspiration behind *Dalit* Literature:**

There are many reformative references and Dr. Ambedkar's thought is behind of *Dalit* literature in India. Influenced by these references, *Dalit* literature is fed on these thoughts. *Dalit* literature enjoys not only the heritage of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, but also the heritage of Lord Budha, Karl Marx and Black Literature.

#### **1.14.1. Lord Gautam Buddha:**



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It was Gautam Buddha who first revolted against Hindu Varna system, after Charvak, who spread his philosophy among *Dalits* and untouchables. Due to this, the dominance of caste, Varna, and spiritual concepts were reduced. Human life was full of misery. Birth, old days, diseases, death, frustrations, pain and desire- disappointments were makes life miserable. However, Lord Buddha tried to find out the causes and remedies of these miseries. To relieves from miseries, Buddha suggests eights ways salvation.

Lord Buddha was not a philosopher but he is a social reformer who works for untouchability and to cultivated moral values in the society. Regarding to the humanity, Lord Buddha doesn't live any place or God in materialistic philosophy. Thus, he believes that the human beings were treated worse than animal were reminded of their humanness. Lord Buddha advocates pure humanitarian scientific approach and equality in his philosophy. He firms that accept thing only if it appears rational and discard of otherwise. This broad thought philosophy was given by Lord Buddha to the world wide. Thus, this thought provoking philosophy is behind to the emerging of *Dalit* literature and inspiring source of it.

### **1.14.2. Karl Marx:**

Karl Marx was a great nineteenth century thinker, who opposed the capitalist system. His philosophy is based on the class conflict, which is known as Marxism. Marxist theory of Dialectical Materialism is influenced by Hegel. Marx appealed Hegelian thought to materialism and tried to interpret history from material point of view. Being social change, he wished to produce new society based on the equality. There is no place for God and religion in his philosophy. According to Marx, dualism of thought and counter thought is a soul of material life. Human history is the products of material causes. Therefore, this thought- provoking philosophy is behind to the emerging of *Dalit* literature and inspiring source of it.

### 1.14.3. Black Literature:

The African Americans, today called as Black Literature, survived from the evil practice of slavery, and brought out their sufferings in the form of speech and writings for mass emancipation. There were very significant impacts on *Dalit* Literature by African American Literature, and *Dalit* writers found a parallel phenomenon in their movements. It could also be noticed that African American literature stands as support and proof as *Dalit* literature. These oppressed people's writings are creative to elevate themselves from the orthodox and conservative societies. Like African American slave narratives, *Dalit* narratives are the stories of *Dalit* victims who endured similar exploitation in their own soil. However, *Dalit* autobiographies authentically portray various forms of social and legal injustices.

### 1.15. The History of *Dalit* Literature in India:

By naturally, there are two classes in the society from ancient time. They are: the oppressors and oppressed, the ruler and the ruled, exploiter and exploited. The class of exploiter is always powerful and influential. On the other hand, the class of exploited is meager, helpless, and ignored by the human rights. Sociologically, the neglected class doesn't belong to any caste or community those who are ignored, they are *Dalit*.

#### 1.15.1. Concept of *Dalit*:

The term *Dalit* is derived from the *Sanskrit* root word *dal* which means held under check, suppressed, crushed, broken and downtrodden. The word *Dalit* is similar to the Marathi word *dalan* i.e. crushed. As Lai A.C. said in his opening address at the *Dalit Solidarity Conference*, Nagpur: **The word *Dalit* is a beautiful word, because it embraces the sufferings, frustrations, expectations, and groaning of the entire cosmos. [Lai: 1995:**

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xiii] Therefore, the term *Dalit* can be discussed and defined by scholars as follows, Yeshwant Manohar said that:

**Exploitation is the caste of *Dalit*. *Dalit* means those who are affected through social, economic and cultural darkness of exploitation.'**

**[Manohar: 1978: 3]**

It means the exploitation is the base of *Dalits* in India. W. N Wankhede, in *Dalit Sahitya Sammelan* held at Nagpur in 1976, defines *Dalit* and admits:

**The word *Dalit* does not refer only to Buddhists and Backward class people, but also to all those who are toil and are exploited and oppressed.'** [Wankhede: 1976: 5]

The man who is exploited economically, socially and mentally, he is *Dalit*. He does not believe in God, religion, rebirth, Holy books, Heaven, Hell of this land, since all these things have made Him a slave, he believes in Humanism, *Dalit* is as a state of the revelation of the anguish of exploitation and humiliation. The

Manifesto of *Dalit* Panthers was:

**Who are *Dalits*? All Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, neo Buddhists, labourers, landless and destitute peasants, women and all those who have been exploited politically and economically and in the name of religion are *Dalits*. [Murugkar: 1990: 4]**

In 1970s, *Dalit* Panthers (A leading association in Maharashtra) revived the term and expanded its reference to include scheduled tribes, poor peasants, women and all those who were being exploited politically, economically and in the name of caste and religion.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, *The Untouchable: Who Were They And Why They Became Untouchables*, explains *Dalit* in details as follows:

***Dalit* is one who denied the supremacy or *Brahmins* and did not receive the *mantra* () from *Brahmins* or other recognized Hindu *gurus*. He has denied the authority or *Vedas* and did not worship the Hindu God and**

**Goddess. He was not served to good Brahmins as family priests and had no Brahmin priests at all. He was denied the access to the interior of or the Hindu temples. [Ambedkar: 1948: 22]**

*Dalits* are a mixed population of numerous caste groups all over India. There are many different names proposed for defining this group of people like *Chandala*, *Panchamas*, *Sudra*, *Ati-sudra*, and *Ashprush* and *Harijan*. Thus, *Dalit* is a self designation for a group of people traditionally regarded as untouchables.

### **1.15.2. *Dalit* Consciousness:**

The idea of *Dalit* Consciousness is basically an issue that is related with the realization of human sensibility. *Dalit* Consciousness is a reformative thought of *Dalits* life. It includes optimistic point of view, sorrow and pain, and social relationship with society. Being *Dalit* and *Dalit* Consciousness are two different parts. *Dalit* literature is a writing of *Dalits* life which is written in the form of Consciousness. *Dalit* Consciousness is essentially against exploitation. It has also enmity against the discrimination and pains.

Sharadchandra Muktibodh in his Essay entitled, *What is Dalit Literature* laid emphasis on the fact that the state of being *Dalit* is a state of revelation of the anguish of exploitation and humiliation. It is not a literature of caste but of a Consciousness. He, therefore, elaborates his views on *Dalit* Consciousness and states:

**The nature of *Dalit* Consciousness is obviously not subjective. It is true that pains and pleasures are lived and experienced by individuals alone but the sufferings of *Dalits* are common reasons. Hence, there content is essentially social. [Muktibodh: 1994: 267]**

It is true that *Dalit* Consciousness is a kind of power of oppressed and exploited people in India, which is given to them a freedom of speaking, writing and living. Concerning to *Dalit* Consciousness Daya Pawar said:

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***Dalit* Consciousness is a revolutionary feeling which goes against middle class society. It is a system which makes sympathy about downtrodden people. [Ibid: 29]**

*Dalit* Consciousness is not an attitude but feelings of *Dalits* in India. This is the motto of *Dalit* Consciousness. This is its cherished goal. The characteristics of *Dalit* Consciousness are as follows:

- i. *Dalit* Consciousness is protectively optimistic and, automotive independent and new and the conflict is its soul.
- ii. Spirit of revolt, man-centered, non-spirituality, atheism, mobility and loyalty to knowledge and science give it the semblance of thirdly.
- iii. Individual prestige and fear-free security.
- iv. Human centeredness, loyalty to this world (material world) and revolt against all the institutions which oppress man.

Thus, *Dalit* consciousness is a state of mind, which aroused due to awareness *Dalit* movement.

### **1.15.3. Concept of *Dalit* literature:**

What is *Dalit* literature? Is it a literature written by *Dalits* on their own lives or it includes the literature written by non *Dalits* on *Dalits*? The questions lead to a very comprehensive discussion. But it is very difficult to draw a boundary line in between these two types. But generally speaking: *Dalit* literature refers to the writings of *Dalits* on *Dalit* life. *Dalit* Literature is the writing which is written about *Dalits* life. It was produced by *Dalit* consciousness. Human freedom is the inspiration behind it.

#### **1.15.3.1. *Dalit* View and *Dalit* Point:**

*Dalit* Literature must be written from the *Dalit* point of view and with a *Dalit* vision. *Dalit* point of view is an interpretation of the sorrow and sufferings of *Dalits*. Any writer with some *Dalit* sensibility may have *Dalit* point of view but not necessarily *Dalit* vision.

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The difference between *Dalit* point of view and *Dalit* vision can be found in the desired objective. A person with the *Dalit* point of view aims for a limited transformation whereas a person with the *Dalit* vision demands a total revolution of transformation. Regarding to this, Prof. S. Z. H. Abedi said in his keynote address at the National Conference on *Dalit* Literature highlighted on *Dalit* and non-*Dalits*. His argument is:

***Dalit* Literature written by both *Dalit* and non-*Dalits* is based on the poetics of anger and suffering and aesthetics of protest. Since it is based on the doctrines of Art for life sake, it is oriented more towards theme than art or technique like feminist literature. The lack of art and artifice in *Dalit* literature is compensated for by the lived reality and candid expression directed at the polite conscience of high society, high literature and high theory. [Opp. Cite, Abedi: 14]**

However, *Dalit* Literature aims at the articulation of human sensibility and therefore *Dalit* oriented literary texts are the tools for the reconstruction of the aesthetics of human grandeur against the aesthetics of artistic canons.

### **1.15.3.2. *Dalit* Aestheticism:**

*Dalit* writers escape the worlds of romantic fantasy to expose the areas of darkness that consistently echo anguish along with the craving for freedom, equality, justice and human compassion. They are in search of a new aesthetics that can be acknowledged as the breath of real human suffering beyond the dynamics of religion, myths, ethical commitments and artistic canons. Sanjay Kumar remarks:

**Aestheticism in *Dalit* literature may be perceived as an individual phenomenon which may not ensure universal pleasure because the one who identifies himself with *Dalit* experience will obviously rejoice it more than the others. Besides, it certainly pleases the readers who have a sound sense of history and sensitivity towards society. The one who has lived *Dalit* experiences can think of no other meaning of**

aestheticism than the one portrayed through Dalit autobiographies marked with counter Dalit aesthetics and an undertone of resistance, assertion and protest.’ [<http://www.ijells.com/>]

Thus, *Dalit* Eestheticism is state of mind like *Dalit* consciousness.

#### **1.15.3.3. *Dalit* and Non-*Dalit* Writing:**

There is much difference in between the Non *Dalit* writers and *Dalit* writers in giving experience power. The Non-*Dalit* writers have written in the form of conceptual experience, where as *Dalit* writers have been wrote sensitive experience. There is also a difference between play reading and play seeing on the stage. *Dalit* writing gives special reference to the expression of experience. Non-*Dalit* writing is not real, but an imaginary work. There is not a spontaneous feeling. That is why authenticity of *Dalit* life can be seen in *Dalit* writing. The writings of non-*Dalits* on *Dalits* and *Dalits* on themselves are differentiated by Narendra Jadhav as follows, ‘**The difference is that between the love of a mother and love of a nurse**’. [Jadhav: 2003: IV] The *Dalit* writers argued that the experiences and the humiliation undergone by *Dalits* cannot be imagined or explained by non-*Dalit* writers. Thus, one may find slight difference in the writings of non-*Dalits* on *Dalits*. In this discussion many writers from both *Dalit* and non-*Dalit* communities were participated. Non-*Dalits* who wrote about *Dalit* life were identified as only protest writers. Because they were not suffers of untouchability. Though, they expressed their anger against the injustice of the society. Their ideas were more concerned with economic inequality. But the prime concern of *Dalit* writers was social injustice. So these *Dalit* writers considered their own writings as *Dalit* literature.

#### **1.15.3.4. Nature of Scope *Dalit* Literature:**

*Dalit* literature is a product of specific social, cultural, religious, economic situations in India. The term *Dalit* Literature came into use in 1958, when the first *Dalit Sahitya*

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*Sammelan* was held at Mumbai on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 1958. In relation to this, Adv. Eknath Awad said, *Jeevnath Ghetlela Parivartnach Varsa...*, at the inaugural function of this *Sahitya Sammelan*, *Sahityaratna* Annabhau Sathe said:

***Dalit* literature is a struggle of new life. It is a soul of humanity. It is a life story which faced the states of death. Therefore, Annabhau Sathe says, ‘this universe is not stand on the head of cobra, but it is depending on the hands of *Dalit*, farmers and oppressed people.’**

[Awad: 2013: 4]

*Dalit* literature is a medium of self-expression, self-existence or self-identity. It is the forum and the medium of expression of the experiences of the communities that have been excommunicated, marginalized, exploited and humiliated for ages in the Indian caste-ridden Hindu society. It reflects *Dalit* experience and sensibility, attempting to define and assert *Dalit* identity from a primarily *Dalit* point of view. In many ways, it is a protest literature which faithfully mirrors the stark realities of the *Dalit* situation and becomes an important weapon to strengthen the *Dalit* (political) movement. *Dalit* author Sharankumar Limbale calls it: **‘the burning cry of untouchables against the injustices of thousands of years.’** [Limbale: 2003: IV] Thus, *Dalit* literature has its roots in the lives of the people who are suppressed, crushed, downtrodden or broken to pieces.

*Dalit* literature is now an established genre in literature. The primary motive of *Dalit* literature is the liberation of *Dalits* in India. Regarding to the aim of *Dalit* literature, Dr. C. B. Bharti said: **‘the aim of Dali literature is protest against the established system which is based on injustice and exposes the evil and hypocrisy of the upper caste.’** [Bharti: 1999: 34] In other words, Surekha Dangwal said: **‘*Dalit* literature is based on *annubhava*- experience- rather than *anumana*- speculation.’** [Arora: 2010: 155] Therefore, the authenticity and liveliness is the essential feature of *Dalit* literature. Thus, *Dalit* literature can be defined as a literary movement which aims at highlighting the insecurities, injustice, exploitation and worst atrocities against the marginalized section of Indian society. It expresses the dilemma, plays, predicament and injustice meted out to



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*Dalits*. It portrays the life and struggles of low castes for the dignity, justice and equality. It is a literature of community or group. Therefore, *Dalit* writing is not takes of an individual's suffering but of group or community. In this regard *Dalit* literature is differing from mainstream writing.

### **1.15.3.5. The Purpose of *Dalit* Literature:**

The prime intention of *Dalit* literature is to give a voice to the oppressed section of India. It is the charter of liberty and justice of the *Dalit* universe and the world of exploited. It is the manifesto of burning of atheism, the rule of *karma*, templism, and all other value systems to incumbent class which begets and nourishes *Dalitness* at all levels like economic, social, cultural etc. The writing or life sketches through which this consciousness peeps out may be called *Dalit* Literature. The literature which expresses the absolute reformation and is ready to face the revolution is called *Dalit* Literature. The problem of *Dalits* means the problems of human liberty. We can't understand the concept of human liberty unless and until we understand the problems of *Dalit*. This broad outlook lying at the root of literature, not only make that literature, the literature of *Dalit* but also the literature of man.

### **1.15.3.6. Development of *Dalit* Literature:**

*Dalit* writings got momentum in Maharashtra due to the bequest of Mahatma Phule and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. With the beginning of reformers like Mahatma Phule and Babasaheb Ambedkar in Maharashtra, they brought forth the issues of *Dalits* through their works and writings. *Dalit* authors presently are able to show not only the hostile circumstances in which *Dalits* live, but also their struggle for emancipation from caste. *Dalit* literature is a literary expression of this helplessness. Though its use was sporadic during that time, the word *Dalit* gained currency in the early 1970<sup>s</sup>, with the rise of *Dalit* Panther, a leading Association in Maharashtra. *Dalit* Panther revived the term and

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expanded its reference to include Scheduled Tribes, Poor Peasants, Women, and all those being exploited politically, economically, and the name of caste, religion or culture. Therefore, below forms can be developed *Dalit* Literature in India. They are as follows:

### **1.15.3.6.1. *Dalit* Poetry:**

There is a plenty of *Dalit* poetry expressing the violent lashing experiences of poet's life effectively. Narayan survey was one of the prominent poets in the early *Dalit* literature. The other poets like Keshav Meshram's *Utkhanan* (Excavation), Daya Pawar's *Kondwada* (suffocating Enclosure), Nandedo Dhasal's *Golpitha* (The Red Light zone), Triyambaksapkal's *Surung* (dynamite) and so on. Unlike *Dalit* poetry, folk poetry too practiced for propogating *Dalit* sensibility. Vamandada Kardak, Bhimrao Kardak, Vitthal Umap and so on are the prominent *Dalit* folk poets. The folk poetry includes Ballads which enthralled the common people of *Dalit* community. It too creates awareness about *Dalit* reform movements.

### **1.15.3.6.2. *Dalit* Short Stories:**

Short stories and novels are important genre of literature that exploited by *Dalit* writers for expressing *Dalit* sensibility aptly. The short stories like *Fakira* by Annabhau Sathe, *Davandi* by Shankarrao Kharat, *JevahMi Jaat Chorli Hoti* (When I robbed a caste - 1963), *MaranSwast Hot Aahe* (Death is becoming cheap-1969) by Baburao Bagul, *Red stone* by N. G. Shende are the best examples of *Dalit* short stories by *Dalit* writers.

### **1.15.3.6.3. *Dalit* plays:**

Drama is too a best source of *Dalit* sensibility expressions. The *Dalit* plays are equally popular. They are M. V. Chitnis's *Yugyatra*, Gangadhar Pantawane's *Mritushala* and

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*Mask*, Datta Bhagat's *Wata Palwata*, B.C. Shinde's *Udvast* (Destroyed), Ramnath Chavan's *Bamanwada* (Brahmin lane).

### **1.15.3.6.4. Dalit Autobiography:**

*Dalit* writers mostly interpreted their own experiences regarding social injustice in their own autobiographies. It is called *Dalit* Autobiography. This form of literature is best suited to *Dalit* writer. There are many *Dalit* Autobiography produced in post-independence such as –Daya Pawar's *Baluta*, P. V. Sonkamble's *Athvaniche Pakshi*, Laxman Mane's *Upara* and so on. Even *Dalit* women presented their experiences rather more finely than *Dalit* men writers. They are: Shantabai Kamble's *Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha*, Urmila Pawar's *Aaydan*, Baby Kamble's *Jina Amucha* and etc. Thus, *Dalit* literature is produced on large scale after the *Dalit* reform movement created awareness in them and it mostly comes out in post-Independence period. Therefore, *Dalit* writers have their literary foundation with ideology and publish numerous journals. They also have a number of political organizations supporting them.

### **1.15.3.7. Features of Dalit Literature:**

The first essential feature of *Dalit* literature is that it is not originally and essentially a literary exercise. The practice of writing does not aim at achieving an aesthetic performance in literature as an art. It serves purposes of social intervention and accordingly carries strong militant connotations. This holds well in Maharashtra as in other areas of India. It deals with the figures of self-assertion and protest, and the ways of a quest and construction of an identity of one's own, on the part of those who have been denied a full human dignity, and whose consciousness was made to forcibly internalize patterns of cultural depreciation and social subalternity. One of the Chief features of *Dalit* literature is protest and rejection of Brahmanism but not the Brahmins.

#### **1.15.4. *Dalit* Literature in Maharashtra:**

*Dalit* Literature is mainly the result of *Dalit* movement, which emerged in 1960s. Regarding to this, Gail Omvedt, in her article *Dalit literature in Maharashtra: Literature of Social and Protest and Revolt in Western India*, claimed that:

**...though *Dalit* literature as movement began only in the late 1960s and early 1970s, one of the most important *Dalit* writers and a major forerunner of the movement was Anna Bhau Sathe. [Omvedt: 1992: 78]**

Annabhau Sathe (1920-1969) depicted realistic image of Indian *Dalit*. He wrote directly from his experiences in life, and his novels celebrate the fighting spirit in their characters who work against all odds in life. Silenced for centuries by caste prejudice and social oppression, the *Dalits* of Maharashtra registered their protest in the form of short stories, poetry, novels and autobiographies. He, further, illustrate:

**He was a writer of diverse forms. His novels and short stories remain avidly read even today, and in fact up to the present no equivalent *Dalit* novelist has emerged. The sorties tell simple heroic or tragic tales of village. [Ibid]**

However, *Dalit* literature emerged into prominence and as a collective voice after 1960 a fresh crop new writers like Baburao Bagul, Bandhu Madhav and Shankarrao Kharat, came into being with the Little Magazine Movement. They represent a new, direct, angry, accusatory, and analytic voice in the literature.

The origins of *Dalit* literature in the contemporary usage of the term, which is largely written and published in regional Indian languages, are in the late nineteenth century. G. N. Devy discussed *Dalit* Literature in Maharashtra in the Introduction of *The Outcaste: Akkarmashi*:

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When *Dalit* literature started emerging in 1960s Marathi literary taste was dominated by narcissistic tendency that for grounded merely formalistic, non-confrontationist, and titillating works. One of the central debates in that era was focused on arts for art's sake ad arts for life's sake kind of issue. It was in the 1960s that little magazines started challenging the urban-biased and excessively individualistic mainstream writing. The earliest writings by *Dalit* writers were published first in these little magazines. Some of these had grown up in the poor quarters of Bombay, others had moved from their rural locations to the fast growing metropolis. And most were attracted to trade unions or left parties. Annabhau Sathe, Baburao Bagul, Yeshwant Manohar, Nmdo Dhasal, and Narayan Surve are the more significant among them...the launching of a militant *Dalit* Panthers Movement in 1972 brought the *Dalit* literary movement to the notice of the Marathi literary circles. [Devy: 2005: XX]

Narayan Surve, a trade unionist, wrote moving poems about the young workers involved in movements, and sex- worker mothers anxious about their children's education. The language of these poem has used spoken by men and women leading a life of misery in Bombay. On the other hand, other poets wrote poetry loser to the modernist sensibility but with an unmistakable stamp of the anger of a rebel. Therefore, it is said that a fusion of suffering and complaint has by now become the defining feature of *Dalit* literature. However, Narayan Surve, Namdeo Dhasal, and Daya Pawar had given Marathi poetry a new tone and power; and their acceptance by the little Magazine movement had made an assured space for *Dalit* expression in Marathi literature.

The evolution from the poetry of the 1960s to the autobiography of the 1980s marked a major change in the self-assessment of the *Dalit* writers. Though poetry expressed in full measure the *Dalit* anxiety to be counted as humans, it had to depend on the forms and conventions of poetry available in the Marathi tradition as well as the modern poetry

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written under the influence of Western Modernist literature. Tracing the development of the *Dalit* Literature, Eleanor Zelliot, in her essay *Dalit: New Cultural Context for an old Marathi Word*, states:

**While *Dalit* Literature as a school, a self-conscious movement, is a product of the 1960s. An individual writer from among the Untouchables appear in the fourteenth century and again in the Mahar Movement, which began in the late nineteenth century...The *Bhakti* movement, begun traditionally by Dyaneshwar in the thirteenth century, was joined by saint-poets from almost all Marathi-speaking castes, including the *Mahar* poet-Chokhamela. [Zelliot: 1992: 37]**

Thus, *Dalit* literature echoes the agony of the experiences of untouchables. It portrays the caste humiliation, injustice, atrocities, and discriminations perpetrated by the upper caste people. It expresses the political consciousness that focused on the struggle for self-respect and dignity for the community.

### **1.15.5. *Dalit* Literature in Uttar Pradesh:**

The rise of Hindi *Dalit* literature can be traced only as far back as the early 1980<sup>s</sup>, making its literary history much shorter than its Marathi and Kannada counterparts. The links between contemporary literature and North Indian *bhakti* poetry by Ravidas and Kabir as well as the mass of publication of political pamphlets that began with Swami Achutanand's early-20<sup>th</sup> century North Indian *Adi-Hindu* movement. However, the origins of *Dalit* literature as a self-conscious creation of a new literary genre, dominated by the themes of exploitation and political awakening as well as a realist aesthetic peculiar to a modern *Dalit* perspective, are only about two decades old. The idea of a *Dalit chetna*: *Dalit* consciousness is a central concept in both the creation and evaluation of Hindi *Dalit* literature.

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At the centre of the *Dalit* evaluation of their own literary production is the critical lens of *Dalit chetna*, as defined earlier, through which *Dalit* prose and poetry is measured. Many define this *Dalit chetna* as the revolutionary mentality awakened and inspired by B R Ambedkar. Others make it clear that *Dalit chetna* is something only a *Dalit* can possess, grounded as it is in the notion of pure experience i.e. that only living life as a *Dalit* can give rise to *Dalit* consciousness. *Dalit chetna* is elemental in opposing the cultural inheritance of the upper castes, the notion that culture is a hereditary right for them and one that is denied to *Dalits*.

*Dalit chetna*: *Dalit* consciousness is deeply concerned with the question: Who am I? What is my identity?' The strength of character of *Dalit* authors comes from these questions. While *Dalit* poetry tends to invoke symbolic figures such as Shambuk, Eklavya, Buddha and of course Ambedkar and to address broad themes of socio-political freedom, appealing to the revolutionary spirit of the reader (or hearer) to rise, *Dalit* short fiction reflects the reality of *Dalit* life in caste society. The scale of its subjects is less grand, often focusing on the struggles of the *Dalit* everyman, fighting for survival and respect in a casteist society, rural and urban. The bulk of Hindi *Dalit* prose narratives exhibit a dominant style of melodramatic realism, often using a sort of exposé storytelling style that at once reveals the insidious exploitation of *Dalits* while speaking in a highly emotional register.

A rising chorus of *Dalit* women writers have further complicated the notion of *Dalit* consciousness as a rhetorical construction of collective identity formation. *Dalit* women have frequently found themselves at the mercy of discursive constructions of social resistance that attempt to assimilate their identities. *Dalit* women are claimed by both *Dalit* and feminist movements across India, each often demanding a de-emphasis on one aspect of their identity, gender or caste. On the one hand, the arbiters of the *Dalit* public sphere often decry *Dalit* women's critiques of patriarchy for causing division within the greater movement for *Dalit* equality. On the other, *Dalit* women complain about the

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erasure of their caste difference by mainstream women's movements in a bid to emphasise a gendered notion of sisterhood above all else. Debates about the peculiar location of *Dalit* women in both the anti-caste and women's movements in India have been at the fore of activist and scholarly discussions since the formation of the National Federation of *Dalit* Women in 1995. The participation of representatives of several *Dalit* groups, including the National Federation of *Dalit* Women, at the United Nations World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa, in 2001 further drew international attention to the need to situate caste within overlapping frameworks of race, class and gender.

Finally, it is important to stress that Hindi *Dalit* literature is not simply a body of disparate texts that address similar themes of marginality and resistance. Rather, it is a living, breathing literary movement that is intent on establishing itself as an integral part of the field of Indian literature. The fundamental goal of Hindi *Dalit* writers in establishing and carefully guarding the boundaries of their own emerging literary genre is to exercise control over their own representation.

### **1.15.6. *Dalit* Literature in Karnataka:**

The source of *Dalit* writers in Karnataka was undoubtedly the literature produced by Babasaheb Ambedkar. The Kannada *Dalit* literature emerged in a different stage due to the dissimilarity of *Kannada Sahitya Parishath*: The State association for Kannada literature. In 1979, in the annual programmed of Association, it led to the separate forum in literature called *Dalit* literature. After having different literary forum it began to include the women writings, and writings of minorities (Muslims). *Shudra* writers also contributed for the growth of Kannada *Dalit* literature. Therefore, it was *Dalit* movement and literature which made everyone in the society to look towards the last man of the social hierarchy of the caste system.



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One of the Chief features of *Dalit* literature in Kannada is protest and rejection of Brahmanism but not the Brahmins. The Brahmanism is a mental state which accepts superiority over another man. It attaches inferiority to the fellow in the hierarchy of caste system. It gives more respect and more profit for the caste which is up in the ladder of caste system, and as it goes down the ladder profit and respect also decreases. Its contribution for the *Dalit* caste which is lowest of all the castes is nothing but exploitation, jeering, mockery, and slavery. This mental state of Brahmanism not only exists in Brahmins but also be in *Shudras*, who simply mimic the ideas of Brhaminical practices without testing them with scientific temperament. Siddalingaiah, Professor of Kannada in Bangalore University, Karnataka, was a major figure to contribute Kannada *Dalit* literature. He was a poet in Kannada literature,

**...who pioneered the *Dalith* voice in 1975? *Dalith* is a cultural term denoting the oppressed class which was treated as untouchable by the so called upper castes in India.**

[<http://bavivekrai.wordpress.com/>]

Thus, the influence of the poems of Siddalingaiah paved the main path for *Dalith* movement and literaure in Karnataka and also revolutionary organizations to consolidate.

### **1.16. *Dalit* Autobiography: Nature and Scope:**

Autobiography is a very influential genre through which *Dalit* writers have portrayed a realistic picture of the *Dalit* world. The *Dalit* autobiographies were first written in the 1930s. Regarding to the origin of the *Dalit* autobiography, Ravikumar, in the Introduction of *Dalit* Autobiography *The Scar*, remarks:

**At the national level, Ambedkar and Rettaimalai Srinivasanare are the precursors of the *Dalit* autobiographical form as per research indicators at present. [Ravikumar: 2009: X]**

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In the 1970s other Marathi *Dalit* writers began to write their autobiographies. Since then, *Dalit* autobiographies are being written by the *Dalits* throughout the country.

### **1.16.1. Purpose of the *Dalit* autobiography:**

*Dalit* autobiography is the recent development emerged in post-independence in India, which is the most important tool of *Dalit* literature. *Dalit* writers describe *Dalit* autobiographies as narratives of pain. It is pain which strings one narrative event to the next, and it is pain that binds individual *Dalits* together into an imagined community of fellow sufferers. It transforms an experience of pain into a narrative of resistance. It is a kind of subjective narration by a *Dalit* writer in which more importance is given to the social life than the writer himself, but common social life is analyzed through the writer. It provides as a weapon for creating a social change and awareness in an unequal society. Regarding to the purpose of *Dalit* autobiography, Arvind Malagatti said:

**The main purpose of the *Dalit* autobiographies is the emancipation of the oppressed and exploited people, as *Dalit* literature is one of the integral parts of the *Dalit* movement. *Dalit* literature is not a recent one but it has been there for centuries. Since the *Dalits* were not recognized, their writings were relegated to the background.**

[<http://dalitindia.in/2chaper1.>]

Gradually, in the twentieth century it came into public arena, and in the post independent India it gained great momentum. At present, it is one of the most discussed subjects at national and international level.

### **1.16.2. Development of *Dalit* Autobiography:**

The first *Dalit* autobiography in Marathi Literature was *Things I Never Imagined* published by Balasaheb Suryawanshi in 1975, which represents not only Mahar

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community but also nomadic, tribal and criminal communities. He was a Christian *Dalit*, who brought out the problems of Christian *Dalits*. It deals with heart rending poverty, inequality and suppression. Such background was the roots cause of *Dalit* autobiography in India. Contemporary, such issues have been raised by P.E. Sonkable in his articles and published in the magazine of Milind College, Auragabad. Later on, these articles have made book entitled as *Aathwaninche Pakshi* in 1969. It deals with the miseries and sorrows of his whole life and his unpredictable struggle to seek education. It goes every layer of society and creating awareness among *Dalits*.

Before him, Daya Pawar published his autobiography *Balute* in 1978. Daya Pawar depicted the story of a low caste child who through hard work obtained education and became a successful person. Daya Pawar received Ford Foundation Scholarship, for *Balute* and NFDC produced a film *Atyachar* on *Balute*. *Balute* is published in Hindi, Marathi, Gujrati, and Kannad and in foreign languages such as Japanese, German. Along with the Mahar community, the Tribal and the Nomadic communities also published autobiographies. In December 1980, Laxman Mane came with *Upara- An Outsider*, who depicted the life style, customs and traditions of the Kaikadi community. It is very difficult to say whether Mane's goal has been achieved or not but it is important that this autobiography has succeeded in underscoring the problems of Kaikadi community. It received the Shaitya Academy Award and published this autobiography in English.

Uttam Tupe through his autobiography *Katyaverchi Pote* displayed the sorrows and sufferings of Matang community that earns their livelihood by skinning dead animals and begging in villages. In the same year, Shankarrao Kharat published *Taral Antaral*. Shankararo Kharat described the customs and traditions of Yeskar community– Mahar subcaste. He described his struggle for education. He graduated in law and became the Vice-Chancellor of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad. Nansaheb Jhodge, published his autobiography in 1982 entitled *Phanjar - Pricking Thorn*. In 1983 Dadasaheb More published *Gabal*. Through this autobiography, More has

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depicted the problems of a nomadic tribe – Pingla Joshi who earn their livelihood wandering from village to village.

Women writers also came forward with their life stories. They published autobiographies describing their sorrows and sufferings. Very low treatment was given to the women in Mahar and Nomadic Communities. In 1983, Mukta Sarvagond through her autobiography *Mitlelei Kavade - Closed Doors* disclosed the plight of the *Dalit* women to the world. Sarvagond raised voice against the people of her own community and also of those who are availing the facilities of being *Dalit* for filling their houses and she attacked the pretence of *Dalit* leaders. She also pictured the exploitation of common *Dalits* at the hands of their own community members. In 1981, Kumud Pawade published her autobiography entitled *Antasphot*. Shantabai Kamble and Baby Kamble came with their autobiographies in 1986.

In 1987, Laxman Gaikwad published *Uchalya- The Branded*. Laxman Gaikwad brought out problems of the nomadic Community -*Uchalya* who are branded as thieves from their birth. Because of this prejudice they were not able to earn anything and they turned towards thieving. Laxman Gaikwad has given a heartrending description of their poverty, hunger and struggle for education. Laxman received Sahitya Academy Award for his autobiography. This autobiography was published in English. Inspired by Laxman Gaikwad, Atmaram Rathod published *Tanda*- an autobiography of a person who is born in Banjara family and lives out of the town in separate colonies. People from these communities lived together, out of the society and earned livelihood by cattle tending, selling milk and farming.

In 1994, Kishore Kale published *Kolhatyche Por - Against All Odds*. Kolhati is a tribal community. Women from these communities earn their livelihood by dancing in the stage shows and men enjoy their earnings lavishly. Kishore's Mother was a Tamasha dancer. Kishore was an illegitimate child of a Tamasha dancer and had to go through severe

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problems at various levels. Through his autobiography, Kishore has drawn the picture of the Kolhati community, the sufferings of women in the hands of their fathers and brothers and society as well. Through their writing, *Dalits* are demanding for liberty, honor, security and freedom which are the right of every human being. Recently, Adv. Eknath Awad has published his autobiography entitled as *Jag Badal Ghalun Gav* in 2010, which deals with the life-long experiences of narrator.

### **1.16.3. Features of *Dalit* Autobiography:**

The essential feature of the *Dalit* autobiographical narratives is that they do not isolate the individual from his whole historical environment, family, community and society at large. Another essential feature of the *Dalit* autobiographical narratives is the oppression, struggles, assertion and quest of identity of the individual who is the subject-matter of the narrative seem never dissociated from the shape that the system of social relation. It is concerned to the pathetic condition of the *Dalits*. The sufferings and humiliations are an integral part of the *Dalit* Autobiography. *Dalit* Autobiography helps the *Dalits* to become aware and struggle for their human rights, which are denied to them by the so-called upper castes. The methods of depiction, sequences of content, and text organization are analyzed to reinforce the *Dalit* authors' exploration of society. *Dalits* autobiography considered as a weapon to leverage transformation in the social and political institutions of India. Thus, *Dalit* Writing is essentially expression of the reality of human life and a great piece of literature depicts that reality with communicable lucid language facilitating narrative with readers' aesthetic and literary sense. Thus, *Dalit* autobiographies authentically portray various forms of social and legal injustices.

### **1.17. *Dalit* Autobiographers and their life:**

The life sketch of above *Dalit* authors can be given as follows for further understanding:

### 1.17.1. Sharankumar Limbale:

Sharankumar Limbale, a well-known *Dalit* activist, writer, editor, critic, is one among the most renowned *Dalit* writers in India. He is born on 01<sup>st</sup> June 1956. He has completed M. A. (Marathi) in 1990 and Ph. D. in Marathi in 1996 from Shivaji University, Kolhapur. He is a good academician as well as a writer and he occupied so many positions till today. He is an illustrious writer and his writings mostly rest on *Dalit* struggle and identity. He is known for his poetry, short stories and particularly for his master-piece, autobiography *Akkarmashi*, which is first written in Marathi and translated into Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, Punjabi, Malayalam languages. It is first *Dalit* autobiography which is translated into English by Santhosh Bhoomkar.

Sharankumar Limbale got many awards and won the wider acclaim from the public for his literary talents. He is also known for the critical work *Towards an Aesthetics of Dalit Studies* (2004), which is the most resource book on *Dalit* criticism after Arjun Dangle's *Poisoned Bread* and Kancha Ilaiah's *Why I am Not A Hindu*. He is a member of many academic and cultural organizations and many scholars did and engaged in active research on his writings. Currently, he is working as a Professor, Regional Director (Pune Division) of the Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Nashik.

### 1.17.2. Laxman Bapu Mane:

Laxman Bapu Mane is born on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 1949 at Somanthali district of Maharashtra, India. He is a Marathi *Dalit* writer and social activist in maharahtra. He wrote *Upara: An Outsider* (1980), a Marathi version which is translated into English by A. K. Kumar in 1997, as well as in various languages like Hindi, Gujrati, Tamil, Malayalam and foreign languages like English and French. It is considered as a milestone Marathi *Dalit* literature and received Sahitya Akadami Award in 1981. His second book is *Band Darwaja: Closed door* (1984) and others are *Palavarch Jag* (1988), *Vimuktayan* (1997), *Udhavast* (2003), *Bhatkyanch Bharud* (2003), *Kay Karayach Shikun* (2003), *Khel Sadeteentakyanch*

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(2005), and one poetry collection *Krantipeeth* (2007). Laxman Mane has received a Homi Bhabha fellowship during 1986-88 for his continued social work. Therefore, he served for some time in the following capacities:

- i. Acting president of the Indian Institute for research in the developmental problems of nomadic and denotified communities, Satara
- ii. Secretary of *Bhartiya batke vimukt vikas va sanshodhan santha*
- iii. General secretary of *Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Samata Prathistan*
- iv. A senator of Shivaji University's administration.

He has also given number of awards from Maharashtra like Bando Gopala Mukadam Puraskar (1982), N. C. Kelkar award (1982), Bharti Vidyapeeth Award (1982), Y. B. Chavan Prastisthan grant for research studies (1988), Maharashtra Gaurav Purskar (1990), Maharashtra Foundation Purskar (1998), Bhimratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Savotkrusth vyakhata (2005) and Padmshree Awarded by President of India in 2009.

By suffered due to depressed socio- economic status of his community, Laxman Mane has taken foot-step of converting himself to Boudhism by inspiration of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on 2<sup>nd</sup> Day of October 2007. He led the rare massive conversion movement nearly about seven lacks people from forty- two different Nomadic and De-notified tribes had embraced under his leadership on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2007. This was important achievement, which has enlightened the lives of these depressed masses. He was the president of the *Bhatkya Ani Vimukth Jamati Sanghatana*, Maharashtra and a founder member of the *Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishtan*. Currently, Laxman Mane is in jail due to the case of raped but the democracy has still alive therefore the judgement of court will give the justice to him.

### **1.17.3. Siddalingaiah:**

Siddalingaiah, a major Kannada poet and activist, was born in Magadi in southern part of Karnataka, India. He was a founder of the Dalit Sangharsh Samiti, which launched a

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powerful Dalit movement in Karnataka in the mid-1970s. He obtained a doctoral degree from Bangalore University for his research on village deities. His publications include *Gramadevathegalu*, a study of village deities in Karnataka, *Ooru-Keri*, an influential autobiography, and collections of poetry, essays and speeches. Twice member of the Karnataka Legislative Council, he is presently Professor at the Centre for Kannada Studies, Bangalore University and Chairperson, Kannada Book Authority.

### **1.17.4. Omprakash Valmiki:**

Omprakash Valmiki is born in 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1950 at Barla District Mujaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh. He has completed M. A. in Hindi literature. He is a leading Hindi *Dalit* writer and author of the celebrated autobiography *Joothan* (1997), first published in Hindi in 1997 and translated into English by Arun Prabha Mukherjee in 2003. His other three collection of poetry are *Sadiyon Ka Santaap* (1989) *Bas! Bahut Ho Chuka* (1997) and *Ab Aur Nahin* (2009), and two collections of short stories are *Salaam* (2000), and *Ghuspethiye* (2004). He has also written *Dalit Sahiya Ka Saundryashastra* (2001) and a history of Valmiki community, *Safai Devata* (2009). One Hindi translation is on his credit which is Kancha Ellaya's *Why I am not Hindu?*

In concerned to Drama, he is actor, director. Nearby in sixteen plays he has performed as an actor. His short story, poems and autobiography are prescribed for studied at primary level and university level. He was the president of first *Dalit Lekhak Sahitya Sammelan*, Nagpurheld at 1993. Secondly, he was the president 28<sup>th</sup> Asmita Darsh Sahitya Sammelan, Chandrapur held at 2008 in Maharashtra. He has also given number of awards from India and abroad like Dr. Ambedkar National Award (1993), Parivesh Samman (1995), Kathakram Samman (2001), New India Book Award (2004), 8<sup>th</sup> World Hindi Sammelan (2007) and Newyork, Amerika Samman , Sahitya Bhushan Samman (2008). Currently, he is living leading *Dalit* Hindi writer at dehradun, Uttar Pradesh.



### 1.18. Summing Up:

Culture is one of the most invigorating and inspiring subjects, which studied anthropology, literary studies and social sciences. The meaning of culture in literature is broad, enough to include all human behavior and social makeup, which are learnt and not inherent. It is a way of life, a set of values, beliefs and behaviour.

There are many cultures found in India, among them only Christian and Buddhist culture have caring untouchables or *Dalits*. Hindu culture is completely opposite to it, while concentrate on God, temple, religious texts and *rushimunies*. There is no value of *Dalits* in Hindu religion, though they are a part of its religion. Therefore, *Dalit* writers have using different kind of language than that of the language used in earlier times in literature. They use the language which is known to them and considered rustic by the previous writers. So, they follow the language of their own people and their dialect, without refining it. *Dalit* feelings come from *Dalit* language only. No other language could express it exactly. So, *Dalit* feelings and *Dalit* language is known as *Dalit* culture.

The History of *Dalit* Movement goes back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century; the first *Dalit* writer was Madara Chennaiah, eleventh century cobbler-saint, who lived in the reign of Western *Chalukyas* and who is also regarded as the father of Vachana poetry. The main issues around which most of the *Dalit* movements have been centered in the colonial and post colonial periods are confined to the problem of untouchability. Post- failure of Bhakti movement in India, social reformers were emerged and tried to work for *Dalit* and untouchability in India. Various efforts have been made so far by visionaries in this direction by launching movements and forming organizations to highlight and find solution of the problems of the *Dalits* in India.

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*Dalit* movement is not a literal movement but is the logo of change and revolution. Its primary aim was the liberation of *Dalits*. It can found its roots in Maharashtra in the form of *Dalit* Panther, which was social organization founded by Namdev Dhasal in April 1972 at Mumbai. However, *Dalit* literature is product of *Dalit* movement, which emerged in post-independence in India. The word *Dalit* is similar to the Marathi word *dalan* i.e. crushed. *Dalit* literature is now an established genre in literature. The primary motive of *Dalit* literature is the liberation of *Dalits* in India. *Dalit* literature refers to the writings of *Dalits* on *Dalit* life. *Dalit* Literature is the writing which is written about *Dalits* life. It was produced by *Dalit* consciousness. Human freedom is the inspiration behind it.

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**Chapter II: A Cultural Study of Sharankumar Limbale's *The Outcaste***

## **2.1. Introduction:**

*Akkarmashi*, a landmark in Marathi *Dalit* literature, is first written by Sharankumar Limbale in 1984. It is a Marathi version which is translated as *The Outcaste* in English by Santosh Bhoomkar in 2003. It is first Marathi *Dalit* autobiography, which is translated into Hindi, Kannada, Panjabi, Tamil, Malyalam, and Gujrathi. **Sharankumar Limbale's *The Outcaste* is about an untouchable family in general and community struggles in particular.** [<http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/>] However, the principle aim of this chapter is to focus on the cultural study of Sharankumar Limbale's *The Outcast* as a *Dalit* text. It can be interpreted and analyzed under the following points:

- A cultural study of *The Outcast*:
- The life experiences of pain i.e. cultural assertion:
- Self-identity and roots of *Dalit*'s humiliation and injustice:
- Rejection of traditional Hindu culture and acceptance to buddhist culture:
- Summing up:



### 2.2. Cultural Study of Sharankumar Limbale's *The Outcast*:

No one can live without a culture. Every one (every society, every group) and every sub-group has a culture of its own, similar and common in many respects with the proximate people, or the group of which they are a sub-group. That is the social-reality world over. *Dalit* and caste Hindus in this Country are two such groups living in proximate places all over the Country for nearly three millenniums, but still are different, looking diametrically in different directions in many respects, opposed, antagonistic and cannot digest or accept the presence of each other, even though social necessities make the *Dalit* not only necessary but absolutely essential for the caste Hindus survive. Therefore, the culture can be interpreted and analyzed under the following points:

#### 2.2.1. Living and Thinking:

*Dalit* literature is made by *Dalit* experiences. It has developed through the life experiences of *Dalits* in India. It narrates human expressions and *Dalit* experiences. Therefore, *Dalit* literature is a finest example to express *Dalits* life-long experiences. It throws light on *Dalit* culture with the help of own experiences. There is an important place of traditions, folklore, ethics, eticates, believes, living and thinking in *Dalit* literature. The values of the way of life, thinking and *Dalit* culture are reflected through the various organs, which are given below:

#### 2.2.2. House Structure:

*Dalits* were mostly lived in the huts and outside the Village, due to lack of concrete house. Sharankumar's family had no land or house to live like villagers. They spent most of the time inside the bus stand in Hooner. Regarding to the House, Sharankumar said: **'to us the bus stand was like home... we lay like discarded bus tickets. We had to get**

up in the normally or risk annoying the driver and conductor. Once they actually thrum or sheets and rugs out on the road? [Limbale: 2003: 42] Mostly his childhood passed on the bus stand, which considered as house. Once, his classmates force to him for going his house but he could not dare to go his house. But warmly welcome his classmates on the bus stand.

### **2.2.3. Food:**

Most of the people have two meals daily, one is at morning and second one is at evening. *Dalit* society have been exceptional to this and seen poverty stricken people as living. Due to such environment, *Dalit* collects leftover food for eaten. There is a slogan in Marathi language, regarding to the *Dalit* foods, *Magun anayach ani hatavar khayach*. It means to beg and eats on the hand. It has a tradition in *Dalit* society to beg and eat. But don't make the foods at the home. That's why; their concentration was at the leftover food.

Sharankumar remembered his school picnic, where he tried to tell about his school picnic and his mother's attitude, 'Why didn't you get at least a small portion of it for me? Leftover food is nectar.' [Ibid: 3] This attitude was not of Masamai only but entire *Dalit* society. There was a habit of *Dalits* society to make tea at the early morning. Sharankumar said, 'my granny- Chandamai who woke early morning and making black tea using jiggery.' [Ibid: 16] Sharankumar was ate *bhakari* soaked in tea at the early morning, when he returns to home during the short interval, he ate roasted dry meat. It was a favorite dish of the narrator and other *Dalits* in India. Regarding to this Sharankumar said, 'Chandamai always preserved pieces of meat which she placed on the water through on the roof to dry....It still remember that nauseating smell.' [Ibid] Being poor, *Dalit* society hasn't eaten once in day, therefore, they ate green leafs or *bhakari* which was made by grain collected from dung paste and drink water.

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*Dalits* are non-vegetarian people. Concerned to meat Sharankumar said, ‘Chandamai would select a few pieces of dry meat, cut them in to smaller pieces with sickle and roast them on a hot pan which melted the fat in the meat, causing it to sizzle. The smell of frying meat spread all over the house. Chandamai used to roast crumbs of stale *bhakri* in the same pan, with a spoon, then taking the pan off the flames add salt and chilli. She would then place the whole hot pan before me.’ [Ibid: 17] Thus, *Dalits* are totally depending on upper caste people. That’s why, they couldn’t against the villagers. They have no work rather than farm. They ate left food and wear the cloths used by upper class society.

### **2.2.4. Occupation:**

Occupation has continual physical or mental effort to overcome obstacles and achieve an objective or result. It is the labour, task, or duty that is one’s used to means of livelihood. It is a specific task, duty, function, or assignment often being a part or phase of some larger activity. In relation to *Dalit*, they have done sub-ordinate work in compares to upper caste society. Granny of the narrator Santamai swept the village street, went around begging massaged the bulging stomachs of pregnant woman and also worked as a midwife. Dada Dastgir lit the street lamps, distributed newspaper, went to school carrying tiffin for the students- a drunkard who would lie anywhere. He had drags the animal, skin them and eat their flesh. Sharankumar said, ‘Santamai worked as a midwife as well. Whenever a woman had labour pains, she was sent for. She would come even at one or two o’clock in the night to call her. She would get up ungrudgingly attend to her duty as a midwife sometimes she was busy the whole night. In the morning I felt like an orphan if she wasn’t around.’ [Ibid: 57] Thus, anything does which got two times food was the occupation of *Dalit* society in India.

### **2.2.5. Caste Council- *Jat Panchayat*:**

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The role of caste council is most important in *Dalit* society. There is difference in between Village council and caste council. Village council solved the problems of entire village where as caste council solved the problems of only caste people. It works as a similar court system. *Jat Panchayat* is a team of selected members of a caste who settles the disputes of the people in the caste. It works as people court, and to maintain law and orders into *Dalit* society.

*The Outcaste* describes about Masamai, *Dalit* woman, and her family clash. She was married to Ithal Kamble- a farm worker at Hanmanta Limbale and gave birth to two sons named Dharma and Suryakant. Though, Ithal Kamble was work hard in the field and house of landlord, he got seven or eight hundred rupees for yearly. During such atmosphere, Hanmanta Limbale (patil) helped him but while helping Ithal Kamble, the patil's intention was dire. Therefore, the quarrel of Ithal Kamle's family goes to caste council for justice. But instead of giving justice, the caste council has forced Masamai to divorce Kamlbe. Sharankumar said, 'This separated Masamai from her suckling baby and her four year old son Dharma. Masamai wept when she left her husband's house, without her two children.' [Ibid: 36] Masamai was the victim of caste council. Regarding to this, Hari Narke, in the online show on IBN Newachannel, said: '**Caste Council has become the center of exploitation.**' [Narke: IBN News Chanel: 5/7/13] This exploitation can be seen all over in India till today.

### **2.2.6. Gavki: Padewarki:**

*Gavki* is a Marathi word which means *Yeskarki*. Long stick is a symbol of *Yeskari*, which makes a sweat song. When it creates sound, it indicates *Yeakar* has comes to home for *Bhakri*. *Yeskarki* has lots of work in the village such as day and night. However, this stick is known as the stick of *Yeskari*. Regarding to this Dr Gimekar said: '**Yeskari is the home of pain of misery.**' [Gimekar: 2004: 135] Though, *Gavki* or *Yeskarki* ruined the life of *Dalits* in India, but they had feels it is an honour.

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The Outcaste described *Padewarki* as *Gavki* is an honour given by Patil to *Dalits*. It was allotted to different people on a contract basis on the occasion of *Pola*, Hindu festival. It is a Marathi word which means a contract of work and paid grains with return. Those who have accepted *Padewarki* or contract of works, they got six measures of *Jawar*, and others received four, and others might be receiving only two measures *Jawar*. Occasional tips were different matter, if there has no male in the family, the woman from such a family sub-contracted to someone else on a share basis. For a fifty percent anybody was prepared to accept the contract. *Padewarki* means a Baluta, manual work on yearly contract and get grains with returns. In addition to *Padewarki*, the contract involved smearing the community hall with dung paste from time to time and lighting the village street lamps every evening. Whenever an animal died in the village, its owner came to the *Maharwada* to ask the one under contract (*Padewarki*) to remove the carcass after which three people would accompany the one who had the contract of fetch the dead animal. Such occasion raised the question in the minds of Sharankumar. For such a work the owner of the dead animal would give eight measures of *Jawar*. Hindu believes cow as a mother, they have to make a funeral function of their cow. How this is contrast? Whenever cow is alive, they used her and after died they destroyed by the hands of *Mahar*.

In which month animals wel died more, it was enough to appease their hunger. But a month in which no animals died passed with great difficulty, like the intercalary month. At such times an animal was usually poisoned to death. Narrator was so excited whenever he found dead animal. Not only *Maharwada* but also white vultures were arrived everywhere. Sharankumar said, ‘in school we are played a game in which one of us pretended to be a dead animal and the others about ten or twelve ours played the role of white vultures.’ [Limbale: 2003: 15] Therefore, *Dalits* were conscious on *Padewarki* or dead animals.

### 2.2.7. Custom and Tradition:

Hindu custom and tradition are indispensable part of *Dalit* society. It was a tradition of Hindu people to throw a coin of rupees on the dead body. Once, therefore, the Sharankumar involved in the funeral ceremony to takes the coins of rupees. At the incident of funeral ceremony, Sharankumar was touched to dead body. This news had spread all over the village. However, his mother couldn't allow to him enter in the house because to touch the dead body is impure tradition of Hindu society which has followed by *Dalits* in India.

*The Outcaste* depicted the tradition of fast. Santamai fasted on Tuesday on the name of Goddess Ambabai and Friday on the name of Goddess Laxmi. On her fast days she ate only once a day. On the other hand, Dada bathed and visited temple of Laginshaa every Thursday because it has its own importance in Muslim religion. Santamai always had a large round *Kumkum* mark on her forehead. She wore a necklace of shells. A corner in their house was reserved for the Goddess Ambabai. Before the image of Goddess, they put a wicker-basket. Regarding to this Sharankumar said, 'On a peg in the wall in that corner there always hung a set on where Santamai burned incense. While saying her prayers Santamai prayed with her palms held together and eyes closed. She went out with her basket to collect alms from houses.' [Ibid: 51] It was a tradition to beg alms and fast on the name of Goddess in *Dalit* society.

There was a custom in *Dalit* society to offer a child to God. For child *Dalits* were made various sacred vows. If a daughter is born after offering a vow to goddess Ambabai that girl is named Ambabai, if it is son who s Ambadas. If they make their vow to goddess Laxmi and daughter is born, she is Laxmi otherwise he is Laxman. They also left their children on the name of Goddess Laxmi as *Potraj* and as a *Wagya* and *Murli* on the name of God Khandoba. For Goddess Yallma a boy is called *Jogtya* and a girl is called *Jogin*. Regarding to this Sharankumar said, 'I have never come across a *Potraj* among the

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Barmin or *Waghya* among the Lingayat, the high castes. Why are such customs laid down for Mahars only?' [Ibid] It is true that if *Dalits* are followed Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, their children become Doctor, Engineer, Professor or Magistrate. Otherwise there is no belief that they will become *Potraj, Waghya and Jogtya*. Those children left on the name of God or Goddess, they never married. Their prime duty is to serve God and temple. If a girl is dedicated to God, she never married before marriage to God. After this ceremony, she can live with somebody who can love her. Such girl is known as *Devdasi* which means servant of God. The children born to *devdasis* are considered impure and are not work in a village but lives on begging. It is another tradition makes religious exploitation of *Dalits* in India.

Santamai was worked as massage woman in her village and nearby. She massaged the stuffed stomach of pregnant woman with oil. Regarding to this, Sharankumr said: 'If the baby was not in the right position in the womb, she corrected it. She slid her hand inside, held of the baby and pulled it out. They wouldn't let me watch because I was a boy.' [Ibid: 57] Following delivery, it was Hindu custom to give some grain and a little money for bangles and blouse piece. This work is as similar to Doctor and Nurse done by Santamai.

Once, Sharankumar studying at tenth standard, he went to home town and walked with pride. There was a tradition in his village to drink a tea with separate cup for *Dalits* on Shivram's tea shop. During that time he got maturity and realized self-esteem. He thinks that Shivram's tea shop is an insult of whole Maharwada. Therefore, Sharankumar and his friend Harya decides to oppose this cruel Hindu tradition and make complains against Shivram to the police station. As a result of this, Shivrm has destroyed the cups which have used by *Dalits*.

### **2.2.8. Rituals and Festival:**

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*Dalit* society doesn't think what is good or wrong, due to lack of education. Most of *Dalits*' worship Hindu God and temples, believing on old traditions imposed on them by Hindu culture. Therefore, number of God and Goddess has been emerged in *Dalit* society. God Mahadev was greatest among Indian God. There was a festival in the month of Shravan. Number of devotional singers would gather for this festival. Nearby all villages have come to worship God Mahadev. On such occasion *Dalits* bath and took make up.

Another festival in *The Outcaste* was the festival of Vitthoba. The pilgrims were comes from different villages. There was also other Goddess such as Ambabi, Laxmi worshiped by *Dalits*. Regarding to this, Rajnish Oasho said: **'There are many criminals in India, among them Manu, designer of Manusmriti, is a greatest and become the cursed for country. He has affected millions of people in India who lives like animal.'** [Khobragade: 2004: 26] He, further, writes about the *Manusmriti* and said:

**India has cursed of *Manusmriti* and tortured to us till today. Five thousand years has gone but still Manu control to us. He has divided Hindu society into four class and fourth class edified as slave.'** [Ibid: 124]

It point outs that *Manusmriti* as a devil spread darkness in the lives of *Dalit* in India. He has made a system of God and Goddess which is known as Brahamin system, who have made the policy for *Dalits* to live under the impression of Manu. There was no equal God to *Brahmin* and *Dalit* in India.

*Dalit* has its own God and Goddess such as *Khandoba*, *Masoba*, *Laxmi* and *Mariaai*. Sharankumar said, 'Every year our village suffered from an epidemic of cholera. We called it *Mariaai's* wind, believing it to be the curse of the goddess. Stricken people died very quickly. Something had to done. A male buffalo was sacrificed to appease *Mariaai* at which time *Potraj* danced in front of the goddess. In the evening decorated palanquin was carried in the name of *Mariaai*. We performed the rituals of transferring the curse to



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the neighboring village.’ [Limbale: 2003: 46] Instead of Doctor, *Dalits* have done ritual ceremony for cholera. They believe that it is divine blessing; therefore, they have done ritual ceremony. Thus, it all happened due to lack of education.

### **2.2.9. Addiction:**

*Dalits* are not non-vegetarian but drinks liquor too. Being work hard at day- night, they have needed to use wine for ignored the body pain. Such mood addicted to use wine daily. Hooweever, *Dalits* produce liquor at home. Regarding to this, Sharankumar said, ‘four or five other families besides ours were also in the liquor business in our locality, like Damuanna, Manakunna, Kamalakka. [Ibid: 28] He further writes, ‘Our house was always crammed with customers. Sometimes they continued drinking late into the night and we went to sleep while they were still there. Sometimes there was a quarrel...They continued to sit unmoved and shameless, talking no notice of her scolding.’ [Ibid: 29] It shows that such environment has become the reason of their weakness and demolition.

### **2.2.10. Superstition:**

Superstition plays a vital role in *Dalit* society. Darkness means Superstation. It aroused from the notion of belief. But belief is born out from pure love of heart or trust. Superstition is aroused through the notion of ignorance, ingenuous, evil attitude, selfish and revenge attitude. Due to superstition, *Dalit* has destroyed his own life, and believes on God and Goddess.

Chandamai was absolutely superstitious. Once, Masamai was newborn, Chandamai said: ‘a ghost could follow our footsteps. She took many precautions because Masamai had had a child recently. The baby’s head was not yet tonsured and Satwai is considered inauspicious.’ [Ibid: 19] Without spit outside the door he could not entering the house, nor could he enter the house without washing feet and mouth. Chandamai was forced him

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to gargle with the Cow's urine and convince to him for drink urine. She said that drink Cow's urine, you will not be sick. Before going to sleep she praise to Goddess Ambabai and Laxmi. On the other hand, his grandfather Dada Dastgir praises Muslim Gods Haidri Khwala, Bandenawal, Hajimling Maullah and so on.

*Dalit* believes on black magic too. One day, someone would throw stones at the Maharwada. Santamai used to abuse them because there was believe that 'such abuse afflicts the one who performs black magic.' [Ibid: 48] But no one can found who has thrown stones on Maharwada. Regarding to the Superstition *Dalit* philosopher B. Pawar, in Daily Samrat, Newspaper, said:

**Superstitious person has to sing a hymn by believes on natural change, environment influence and natural calamity. It is a known as Superstition. [Kamble: 2005: 1]**

Thus, all these factors are responsible to make the culture of *Dalit* society.

### **2.3. The Life Experiences Of Pain i.e. Cultural Assertion:**

A life is not mine but it is a slavery imposed upon me. This negative attitude is the central idea of Sharankumar Limbale's autobiography *The Outcaste*. Regarding with the purpose of writing *The Outcaste*, in an interview with Siva Nagaiah Bolleddu, a Scholar in English at Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur; A.P., Sharankumar said:

**The span of my autobiography is my childhood, I want write about my pain and pangs. I want write about the suffering of my community. So I cannot give importance to my personal life. I am writing for social cause. My autobiography is a statement of my war against injustice. [http://www.the-criterion.com]**

The narrator's self reflects his life in particular and the life of the community in general. A *Dalit* has no personal life of his own but is dissolved in the engulfing whirlpool of his

community. However, *The Outcaste* is an account of Sharankumar Limbale life-time suffering.

### **2.3.1. *Akkarmashi*: Half-Caste:**

Sharankumar Limbale said in an *Acknowledgement* of *The Outcaste*, ‘My history is my mother’s life; at the most my grandmother’s. My ancestry doesn’t go back any further. My mother is an untouchable, while my father is a high caste from one of the privileged classes of India. Mother lives in a hut, father lives in a mansion, Father is a land lord; mother, landless. I am an *Akkarmashi* (half-caste). I am condemned, branded illegitimate.’ [Limbale: 2003: IX] As a result, Sharankumar lived as an untouchable life. Masamai was *Dalit* woman who married to Ithal Kamble (farm worker at Hanmanta Limbale) and gave birth to two sons named Dharma and Suryakant. Sharankumar narrates: ‘Ithal Kamble toiled on the farm by Hanmanta Limbale, a Patil, who helped him during hard times. But while helping Ithal Kamble, the Patil’s intention was quite different.’ [Ibid: 35] The landlord had an evil sight on Kamble’s wife and he was such a magician that he got her separated from her husband and subsequently made her his concubine. Sharankumar was a product of illegal relationship of Hanmanta and Masamai. This relation is known as an *Akkarmashi*, which means, Prof. Rajpankhe M. S., ‘**half-caste**’. [Rajpankhe: 2007: 136] it is an abuse or curse, which of being fatherless followed Sharankumar all throughout his life.

### **2.3.2. Concept of *Akkarmashi* Culture:**

*Akkarmashi* means one who is an outcaste or illegitimate and is used only as an abuse. Whenever the boy is born with the parents of different castes or religion, he is *Akkarmashi*. If a person born with different casts he is known as *Akkarmashi*. Regarding to the meaning of *Akkarmashi*, Saptarshi Mandal wrote in his research paper, *Dalit Life Narratives as Ethnographies of Justice*:

*Akkarmashi* which roughly translated means outcaste, and signifies ostracism. The word also denotes *exclusion*, for an outcaste is essentially excluded from the community and the associated resources, rights and privileges.

[<http://www.google.co.in/>]

Sharankumar was identified as illegitimate by his community, because he was born of a sexual relationship outside marriage, between an upper caste man and a *Dalit* woman. The usage of the word illegitimate is not specific to the circumstances of Sharankumar's birth alone, but also encapsulates a significant facet of the *Dalit's* situation of marginality. Therefore, the question raised such who is Sharankumar? Mahar, Lingayat or Muslim. What kind of this culture is? Is it *Akkarmashi* or *Dalit*? The answer of this question is it is not *Akkarmashi* or *Dalit*? But this is a hybrid culture.

### **2.3.3. Hunger: Basic Need:**

The undefeatable challenge faced by Sharankumar, as child, is hunger. He describes discriminatory incidents in his public school. At school days, Sharankumar and others were getting leftover food from the higher caste children. They also were not allowed to draw water from public wells lest they 'pollute' the well, but instead had to wait for higher-caste children or teachers to draw the water for them and pour it into their hands or cups, so that the higher-caste people would not have to touch and be defiled by the Mahar children. Sharankumar has dwelt on this basic need of man over and again all throughout the life, philosophizing on the evident need of food: 'He went for days without eating anything. He started selling himself for his stomach. A woman becomes a whore and a man a thief. The stomach makes you clean shit; it even makes you eat shit.' [Limbale: 2003: 8] The narrator is supplied many incidents of hunger which were projected before a class of readers who are blissfully unaware of such undercurrents.

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Sharankumar described the school picnic, where all children and the teachers were made circle under Banyan tree and enjoyed picnic party. There was a variety of fried and tasty food taken by children from high caste, whereas we had just pieces of dry *bhakris* and chutney which were hardly enough to satisfy the cave of hunger. Regarding to this he said, 'My stomach was like a way to the graveyard that continuously swallows the dead.' [Ibid: 2] He remembered his mother's speech, she, Masamai, always used to shout angrily and said, 'what is it you have a stomach or *Akkalkot*?' [Ibid: 3] Whatever was given by Sharankumar and his friend ate greedily and nothing was ever enough.

After picnic party everyone chatting with each other and Sharankumar sat like owls watching them. At last his school-mate has given the leftovers. It was also finished by *Dalit* boys. Regarding to this, a *Dalit* poem entitled *Mother, Aai* in Marathi, connects with many child raised questions with self-respect and pride amidst hunger and self-denial:

**I have seen you turning back the tide of tears trying to ignore your stomach's growl  
Suffering parched throat and lips Building a dam on a lake...**

**I have seen you sitting in front of the stove burning your very bones to make coarse bread and a little something to feed everybody, but half-feed yourself so there'd be a bit in the morning...**

**I have seen you washing clothes and cleaning pots in different households rejecting the scraps of food offered with pride...**

[<http://roundtableindia.co.in/>]

Such narratives resonate with the pain and dilemmas of many households condemned to live routinely with hunger, where parents are compelled to take children out of school into work. Even more harrowing for them is to send a child into debt bondage. Hunger in the household often makes children themselves take painfully adult decisions about their lives.

#### **2.3.4. Episode of Stomach:**

Sharankumar raised a questions regarding to the hunger of Indian *Dalits*, why has given stomachs by god to us? Because of that everyone eat and drink at such wedding ceremony in the village. Entire Maharwada was so much eating and drinks at the wedding function. He was in thinking that people were in confusion that why has given stomachs by god to us? For the answer of this question, man goes towards God and asked, ‘Oh god, why you have given one stomach? I want to eat so much so please give me blessings of two stomachs. Therefore, God said, ‘Oh man, go away, first of all you have filled the one stomach and comes to back. I will give you second stomachs.’ [Limbale: 2003: 8] Eeryone goes to fill his first stomachs, but no one can fill his stomachs. So ever, it is said that for the filling of stomachs men becomes thieves and women become whore. It all happened due to the hungry stomachs. However, Sharankumar realized that God had made a mistake to given a stomachs to *Dalits*.

#### **2.3.5. Experience of Dung Paste:**

Sharankumar describes an incident of Dung paste, which plays vital rolw in the life of Sharankumar. Once, he had gone to collect dung paste with his granny Santamai. He follows her like a police dog, and his granny walks like ghost riding, she carried a sack on her back to put the dung paste. With broken chappals, she dragged her feet as she walked. Getting lumps of dung, they were greed like eating feast. During the harvest season dung has twice used for *Dalit* society. First is to make round cakes of dung i.e. *Gavrya* and second is to getting grains from which she has make *bhakari*. Regarding to this Sharankumar said, ‘Santamai picked up such lumps of dung and on the way of home washed the dung in the river water, collecting only the clean grains. She then dried them in the sun. As they dried they shrank... [Ibid: 10] Hence, the narrator and other *Dalit* society were used to eats them and to feed to their stomachs.

### **2.3.6. Portrayal of Market-Bazar:**

Sharankumar described an incident of market day, which was a festival for *Dalit* society. On the occasion of market there was a rush of people, snacks and animals. It was daily routine of Sharankumar took ten paisa and goes to market. Once, he took ten paisa and visited market where he saw snacks in whole day but couldn't bring anything. At the end of market, he has brought a *pedha* (sweets) and ate like shabri (a character of *Ramayana*) and remaining piece of sweet has taken for his mother who has just delivered a baby. It shows the state of poverty and starvation. *Dalit* got a little to eat but most of times they have to slipped with hungry stomachs. However, Santamai went to beg and comes with dried *bhakari* taken into her pouch of sari. They were eats different pieces of *bhakari*, leftover cuury given by the villagers. Being hungry Sharankumar ate like a glutton. Therefore, we can say that leftover food has become nectar for the *Dalit* society.

Vani, Nagi, and Nirmi were used to run around everywhere in the *Bazar*. Due to hunger and starvation they went around begging and eating whatever they could get. Regarding to this Sharankumar said, 'My eldest sister Nagi was a born thief.' [Ibid: 20] At midday, a fruit seller beats Vani with shoes in the market, because she has stolen a banana. She, therefore, wriggled and cried on the street of market. Everyone enjoed but no one can save Vani from the fruit seller. It had seen by the narrator with rainy eyes like leaking roof.

At the early morning, after eating leftover food, Santamai started her job of sweeping the market ground. Sharankumar followed her carrying bags. There was no salary of village council. She, therefore, swept entire market and begs market instead of money. The fruit seller would give them onion, challis rotten bananas, vegetables, guavas and such. No one gave easily; therefore, she has gone twice at one seller. Giving full of bag Sharankumar went home emptied them and returned to *Bazar*. At the time of closing, clothe seller wants labour for carrying cloth bundle. Sharankumar wonders around the

bus stand in searching job of carrying bundles. But it was not like by Dada who annoyed to him by seen as porter.

### **2.3.7. Poverty: Social Issue:**

There are many incident of poverty which completes the autobiography *The Outcaste*. Regarding to the poverty, Sharankumar narrates that he himself had to steal food to fill his stomach. He had to beg whenever necessary, and his grandmother had to tell lies for food. The poverty even makes them to eat what animals eat when there is no way to have food. Sharnkumar's sister Vani had to eat banana peels to satisfy her hunger. Therefore, **'one can state that Dalits in India often have to eat second-hand food. They have to wear second-hand clothes and foot-wear.'** [www.the-criterion.com] Due to starvation and poverty, The *Dalits* have to often eat discarded and stale food at Market.

Sharankumar records how his sister and he had to eat discarded peels of bananas: 'By evening the market dispersed. Vani had collected banana skins which people had discarded after eating the fruit. She sat by the street and ate the skins. I hit Vani. I snatched the skins and threw them away to stop her from eating them. Suddenly, though, I changed my mind. I collected the banana skins and wiped them with my shirt as they were soiled. Then I went to the river, sat in a corner and started eating them. When I saw our teacher approaching, I threw away the skins. It was as if I was throwing away my stomach with hunger in it.' [Limbale: 2003: 22] He writes that sometimes they have to tell lies and some other times they have to steal eatables. He does not mind stealing eatables when it becomes a need. Moreover, it reveals that poverty makes the poor to steal eatables. It makes them to beg. At the same time it makes them to tell lies. Thus, *Dalits* are to be considered **'poverty-stricken people'** [www.the-criterion.com]. The system of their society has indeed imposed poverty on them. They have been thrown away to periphery which has almost been completely neglected.



### **2.3.8. Portrayal of *Khatik*- Beef Seller:**

*Dalit* waits Wednesday, market day, like festival because it brought snacks, sweets and meat. At the morning of Wednesday, Sharankumar and Santamai ate leftover foods and waiting to Beef seller who arrived at the afternoon. The entire Maharwada crowded around him. Sharankumar said, 'If the meat was fresh Santamai purchased a kilo or more, if stale, then just half a kilo.' [Limbale: 2003: 23] He gave a company to his mother for meat. Masamai was always quarreled with butcher for a nice piece of the thigh. She asks about oily pieces and snake-bone for Sharankumar. He further said that, 'Masamai walked back home, the plate of beef covered with her sari. I tiptoed a way when the butcher gave me a few pieces of discarded meat. On one such day, when a kite attacked me and scratched my hands with its talons, Masamai thumped my back and called me abuses.' [Ibid: 24] Such environment taught him a lot.

### **2.3.9. Depiction of Love:**

It was the time of youth, if pressed the chick might have yielded milk and if squeezed other chick it might have blood. But during such time narrator have some bad habits includes smoking and fascinated towards girl. It was a Maharwada of hundred and fifty-five huts. There were ten to fifteen boys and seven to eight girls were studying at one class. But Sharankumar was crazy about a girl named Shewanta. She has a brother and sisters among them Sada was always her waist. Her mother did whatever odd jobs she could find and father went out to dig. Such surroundings she grew. She never smiled wholeheartedly. She never oiled her hair but still she looks like attractive. Sharankumar narrates, 'whenever Shevanta stayed indoors for too long I would whistle, or sing. She knew the signals and would come out. She deliberately brought out some vessels, pretending to wash them.' [Ibid: 26] It means she too attracted towards Sharankumar. The language of love understood both of them and sinks in the play of love.

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Once, Sharankumar was waiting for Shevanta at the river. She has arrived but he couldn't express his feelings on her. Only silence was among them. Both of them were far away from each other and smiled to each other from a distance. Though they were far away from each other but they feel very close. During such romantic atmosphere, Sharankumar throws the water on Shevanta like hurling flowers. He had a great desire to lift her and carry her into the sunlight. He wants to play with her freely. But Shevanta was sacred, she said: 'Please, Sharan, don't splash me. If I get drenched I have no clothes to change into.' [Ibid: 27] Being heard this statement Sharankumar became emotional. As a result of this, it was spread all over the village like a patch of rash on leper's skin. But they could not get married due to his *Akkamashi* caste. Both of them were Mahar caste but Sharankumar was not Mahar or Lingayat, he was an *Akkamashi*.

### **2.3.10. Depiction of Liquor:**

To produce liquor was major occupation of Sharankumar's family. There are four to five other families in Maharwada like Damunna, Manakunna and Kamalakka who were to produce liquor and sell. Sharankumar said, 'the first round of the liquor was always the strongest.' [Ibid: 28] Due to liquor, there was filthy smell spread all around the house. He has seen the quarrel of customer as well as their horrific behaviour with Masamai. Whenever Sharankumar having his meal, customer sitting beside him. Still they have finished their food.

There was a regular fear of the police, so they buried the liquor under the rubbish in pots and vessels and kept watch as if they were protecting a harvest. They took the liquor from outside as required. It was terrific atmosphere where they sell liquor. But whenever police took raid, people ran all around in village. Due to such trouble they suffered financially but in many other ways also. Sometimes narrator has also gone to bring the stuff from Chungi. On such trip, the retailer has given him a drink as a sample. Testing the samples made him tipsy and on the way back he stumbled frequently.

Once he even fell off. It was difficult ride on cycle as he was almost drunk. However, when he returned home his mother abused him, ‘you can drink as much as you like when you come back home. If you were to die on the way.’ [Ibid: 31] The same incident happened with Nirmi, narrator’s younger sister, when she and Kamalakka went to Chungi to get the stuff. Still evening come but they were not come to home that’s why Masamai was worried about her. Finally, Sharankumar and his mother went towards them, ‘on such way they have seen both lay with the full tube of liquor under their heads. Kamaakka’s sari was all disheveled. Nirmi’s eyes were so heavy, she couldn’t even open them.’ [Ibid] When Masamai seen all this she was crying. She said sadly, ‘I should not have taken the risk of sending my child with this Kamali.’ [Ibid] Thus, it is Marathi saying that liquor means the source of quarrel. This is a life experience faced by Sharankumar during his childhood.

### **2.3.11. Portrayal of Village Politics:**

Politics is an addiction which has not left any area to affection such as rural or urban. Sharankumar’s village is not exception of this view. It was a peaceful atmosphere, when Bashakaka was *Sarpanch*- Head of village. Santamai work as a village sweeper and Dada used to light the street lamps at the evening. Due to a Muslim, Bashakaka was failure in next election and Ram has become next head of the village. Being as a *Sarpanch*, Ram has make changes in *Gram-Panchayat*. He has removed Dada from his work and appointed his own people. Instead of Santamai, Mallu’s Sona swept the street, market and her elder son Sheshu who had to light the lamps. But Sheshu could not work long due to his death. Therefore, Sona became mad. After lost village work, Dada started working as porter at the bus stand. Whenever Dada got drunk he became uncontrollable, people would beat him. Dada has threw away coins and tore up currency. He has abused Ram *Sarpanch* in rhyme, ‘*Jummako chodu teri Amma ko.*’ [Ibid: 32] It means to fuck your

mother on Friday. He hasn't quarrel with only villagers but also with Santamai. It all happened due to the politics which has ruined Ram's house as well as Santmai.

### **2.3.12. Practice of Exploitation:**

Sharankumar writes, 'To be born beautiful among *Dalits* is a curse.' [Ibid: 37] This rule was not exceptional for narrator's granny, Chandamai and his mother Masamai. Both of them were exploited by village Patil. As Masamai was beautiful, she was attracted by Hanmanth. She was made separate from her husband and suffered a lot in her post-widowed life. Though Hanmanth enjoyed the splendor of Masamai, and comes to know that she was *Dalit* he tried to avoid her. He also commented that the new born child was looked after by Bhondya, the potter. Regarding to this, it is said that, **'the upper caste men in every village had made whores of the wives of *Dalit* form labourers and Masamai was one among them.'** [<http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/>] As a result of illigal relation, Masamai gave birth few children include, Sharan Kumar, Nagi, Nirmi, Vani, Suni, Pami, Tamma, Indira and Sidramma.

However, Sharankumar narrates, 'we were all of one womb and blood. We shared a common mother but different fathers...I was born from her affair with Hanmantha Patil. Masamai had Nagubai, Nirmala, Vanmala, Sunanda, Pramila, Shrikant, Indira and Sidram from Kaka, whose name was Yeshwantrao Sidramappa Patil, the head of the village named Hanoor.' [Limbale: 2003: 38] It shows that how *Dalit* women were destroyed and the innocent *Dalit* women were exploited. Regarding to the women exploitation, G. N. Devy wrote in his *Introduction of The Outcaste*,

**Every time the dominant classes attack and exploit the weak, they violate their women. The sexual exploits of the men among the wicked exploiters draw legitimacy from their authority, wealth, society, culture and religion. What of the exploited woman in India? She has to carry the rape in her womb. That rape has to be borne, fed and reared.**

**And this rape acquires and lives a life. My autobiography holds in it the agony of such life. My experiences are my words. What will remain there if you take experience away from a life? A living corpse... [Devy: 2006: XXIX]**

This narration holds the agony of Sharankumar's life. However, his words are his experiences and these experiences can develop his autobiography.

### **2.3.13. Episode of Shobhi:**

Sharankumar portrays the incident of Untouchability. One day the narrator and his friend Parshya were busy to pluck the fruits of a toddy palm. At that time, Shobhi- an upper class girl who arrived carrying a vessel of water on her head. *Dalit* boys were ignored to her. Therefore, she becomes angry on them and said: 'Mahars was become bold these days. They how dare to walk straight up to you. Can't you see I am carrying drinking water? Your touch will make it impure.' [Limbale: 2003: 70] Due to this insult, Sharankumar remembered her humiliation treatment at school and became in angry mood he decided to take revenge of it. That afternoon, they caught to Shobhi and said: 'So you call us Mahar; don't you? Your water gets impure if we touch it, if that's so then why doesn't this river turn impure? If a human being becomes impure by our mere touch then why didn't your color change to green or yellow, as it happens when someone is sick or poisoned? Why didn't the food in your bundle rot? If you consider us Mahars then answer my questions or we want let you go.' [Ibid: 71] In this way they take their revenge and create awareness among *Dalit* society. It is the symbol of revolution and it got only because of education.

### **2.3.14. Episode of Kaka:**

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Kaka alis Yeshwant Sidram who lives at Hoonar. He was a father of Nagubai, Nirmala, Vanmala, Sunanada, Pramila, Shrikant, Indira and Sidram. Masamai always told him that Kaka has a mansion, where his wife, son and parents were lived. By heard this Sharankumar was puzzled and thought, why then did he keep visiting our house? I always thought that Kaka and my mother were husband and wife. The whole thing baffled me. Kaka always sneaked into our house. Whenever he visited us he sat with us, spoke and laughed with us. He behaved like the man of our house. To us Kaka was like a father.' [Ibid: 46]

### **2.4.15. Portrayal of Festival:**

Sharankumar recounts the festival of God Mahadeva, which was took place in the month of *Shravan*. Number of devotional singers were comes from different villages for this festival. During such festival, Sharankumar was to find out his father's face, but every time he was failure to recognized his father. Once, due to Kaka he had seen his father. Kaka was the Patil of Hanoor and Hanmanta was the Patil of Baslegaon. At such time, Kaka brought Hanmanta along to the Masamai's house. Now, she kept by kaka as whore. That's why Hanmanta don't go to her home. It was the first time to recognise his father by Sharankumar. In half sleeping he has thought that, 'I got my father. Tomorrow I will tell to my friends and teacher who is my father. ...no, one would humiliate me, now that he had come.' [Ibid: 61] Suddenly the quarrel took place between Masamai and Kaka. As a small boy Sharankumar did not understand what happened but comes to know the reason of quarrel he states, 'It took quite sometime for me to know why my mother was so angry...' [Ibid] It was unbearable for him to know the reason of quarrel.

### **2.4.16. Portrayal of Temple Of Vithoba:**

Sharankumar narrates an incident of humiliation which was took place in the temple of Vithoba, Hooner. There was believes to read a holy scriptures in the temple of Vithoba.

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Once, Sharankumar and Parshya entered the temple and prostrated directly before the God and immediately come out. It was seen by parshya's father who didn't like their rebellious behavior and beats to Parshya very badly. His father said Parshya, 'I want to live in this village. Why do you boys behave like this? The village will humiliate me some day because of your behavior. No one has ever slandered me for anything. I will break your leg if you behave like this again.' [Ibid: 62] Villagers believe that entering a temple is crime and it was done by them. It makes God impure. There is an unreadable law towards *Dalits*: 'The untouchables must not enter a temple.' [Ibid] Regarding to this, Sharankumar said: How discriminate between man and man? Who makes one rich and others poor? One is high caste and other is untouchable? What kind of God is this that makes human beings hates each other? If we are all supposed to be the children of God, then why are we considered untouchables? We don't approve of this God nor this religion or country. Hence, Sharankumar refused Hindu culture, caste and religion.

### **2.4.17. Episode of Machindranna:**

Sharankumar keeps in mind Machindranna as cruel man, who spoke severely. One day he demands to fetch the *bidi* to the narrator. He refused to fetch *bidi*, Machindranna became angry on him and said, 'you son of bitch.' [Ibid] You go to Baslegaon, there is your father. It makes awareness about the relationship of his father. Therefore, few questions rose in the minds of the narrator: If I go to Baslegaon would my father allow me into his house? Would the mother there give me food? My father lives in mansion and mother in a hut and I am on the street. Where I will die? Whenever dada, was angry on Sharankumar, he became wild and said, 'you are a Muslim. You are not my father, so don't you dare hit me.' [Ibid: 63] He abuses to Kaka and said, 'Patil you are in no way concerned with me. You can't touch me. [Ibid] On such occasions, he wants to go his father's land Baslegaon.

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Annoyedly Sharankumar thought as regards Baslegaon: What kind of people was Baslegaon? What sort of people were they? What were my brothers there live? What was my home there like? Should I go there in search of my roots? How many days would it take? Would my father recognized to me? With these questions the narrator was curious about his Father's land. Many times Sharankumar wants to go his Father's land but because of fear he comes back. He lives like Karna, in village he is *Akkarmashi* and at the home he is fatherless boy. Therefore, he looks at his mother with wild and anger. He asked his mother with annoyed, 'why didn't my mother abort mewhen I was a foetus? Why did she not strangle me as soon as I was born? We may be children born out of caste but does that mean we must be humiliated? What exactly is our fault? Why should a child suffer for the sin of its parents?' [Ibid: 64] He, further, said: 'Masamai and Santamai are not only examples. They sold themselves to be loved and cared for by someone. They hadn't sold their bodies to appease their lust. Nor we exist just for the sake of that hunger? Beyond hunger lies a vast life. There is life beyond bread. And yet I had no experience of life beyond this ghetto.' [Ibid] It shows us that they are the victims of social system.

However, it is true that villagers have provided bread to *Dalits* but in exchange of it they used to *Dalit* women. This reality couldn't denied by the history. Regarding to this Sharankumar said, 'I can't to think of Masamai and caught between bread and lust.' [Ibid: 64] Seeta, a character from Ramayana, was freed by Lord Hanumana but what about mother and my sisters? Who will free to them? It was awful situation makes the narrator to bold and mature. Thus, all these life-ling experiences made cultural assertion.

### **2.4. Self-Identity and Roots of *Dalit's* Humiliation and Injustice:**

Caste discrimination makes a complex stratification of the society. This division of society was based on the family lineage and the occupation. The highest class being the



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*Brahman* followed by warrior class called as *Ksetriya* and then came the *Vaishayas* and later was *Shudras*. The fifth which was not even considered to be added in the class system was *Dalits*, which were often referred to them was polluting to the orthodox Hindus. The cruelty reached its height when the *Dalits* were imposed with the humiliating circumstances as murder, assault, rape, and many more such allegations. Influenced by Shahu, Phule and Ambedkar, *Dalit* writers have emphasizing on their existing issues. However, autobiography has become an important genre to convey the bitter experience of *Dalits* humiliation and injustice in India. Sharankumar Limbale's autobiography *The Outcaste* portray the most humiliated events and insults Sharankumar and his family members underwent in different places like Akkalkot, Hanoor, Chungi, Chapalgaon, Sholapur, Ahmedpur, Barshi and Bhimnagar in Latur.

### **2.4.1. Question for Contemporary Culture:**

*The Outcaste* is the story of injustice and exploitation of narrator and his community. It asked the question to contemporary culture. It is the chorus as we are victims of social system. On the one hand, the narrator put finger on the rotten social system and on other he points towards the change of this system. However, a patient has tells his pain and pangs, whereas the autobiography has raised a cultural questions like patient. It exposes bitter reality and war against injustice. The intensity of narration that raises the ultimate question in social ethics, namely on what at all is morality?

The autobiography concludes with these questions: Why has this complex of moral establishment been created at all? Who created morality and immorality? Why? If my birth and life are being branded as immoral, what morality do I follow? The narrator knows that there are no answers to these questions. Therefore, autobiography *The Outcaste* is an intense narrative, pointing to the futility of these questions and the agony and frustration in searching for their answers. Who am I? The question of identification like Negro raised by narrator in the autobiography *The Outcaste*. Who is am I? Caste or

Out caste? Who am I? Through the chain of these questions this autobiography has completed.

### **2.4.2. Episode of School Picnic:**

Sharankumar remembered his school picnic; it was a harsh experience to him. Because the narrator and his *Dalit* friends were busy to play a game touch and go, whereas upper class boys were played with teacher. The *Dalit* children play and eat separately, embarrassed in front of their upper- caste classmates by their stale dry *rotis*, chutney and dried fish. They can smell the delicacies from the other group: fried *paranths*, delicious *laddoos*, fresh spiced vegetables, *gujiyas* and so much else. When they have eaten, the teacher asks the *Dalit* boys to collect the leftovers, which they attack as soon as their classmates have walked ahead. When Sharankumar returns home he is rebuked sourly by his mother for not bringing some of the leftovers for the rest of the family to taste.

### **2.4.3. Experience at Primary School:**

Next day, when the narrator goes to school the teacher has been given task to write an essay on the school picnic. Everyone was in notebook and thought about yesterday's picnic. At the same time, teacher noticed to the narrator and annoyedly shouted on him and said, 'you son of bitch, come on, start writing! You like eating an ox, don't you?' [Ibid: 4] The narrator was in confused to write an essay because he doesn't know how and what to write. Slowly, he has remembered the picnic and the hands of high caste girls and boys offering them their leftover food, the withered tree in whose shade they sat, the bundle of leftovers, the question of his mother and the question of teacher. How should he start writing the essay? It shows the teacher also gives the humiliated treatment to *Dalit* students in school. Not only teacher but also upper caste students were given humiliated treatment to *Dalit* students. Sharankumar said, 'one day, when I reached school, Ismailiya, Maulas son was teasing Umbarya calling him 'a base born'. I reached

their he said, 'here's another born who swallowed our ox.' [Ibid: 16] This incident was could not forget by the narrator for a long time. Thus, he was victimized by non-*Dalit* teachers and harassed by his schoolmates. In fact, in Indian schools it has been a tradition for non-*Dalit* teachers and students to harass and insult the *Dalit* students, and subject them to the works, which are supposed to be done by peons.

#### **2.4.4. Experience at Shivappa Teli's Mansion:**

Sharankumar gives one more incident of humiliation; it was given by Mahadya- a servant of Shivappa Teli. In the month of *Shravan* school would be moved to Shivappa Teli's mansion. Sharankumar was sitting with other boys in mansion, but when Mahadya noticed to the narrator. He running up and snatched his school bags and slapped him. It was unbearable for the narrator. He doesn't control his feelings and came out the school. He has given another incident of humiliation in the school. It was first time the narrator goes to school and sat in the school. That's why, he don't know how to gives the permission of teacher and leave the class for urine. In the confusion of that he doesn't control and doing the urine on the floor of class. Due to those classmates were makes noise in the class. Therefore, teacher drove him out of class. Once again he came out the class with shame and fear. It was daily incident to him that the boys from upper caste treated him like animal and he was he was bear the society. He said, 'During the short interval the other boys threw stones at me and teased me calling aloud 'Mahar'!' [Ibid: 6] Really it was daily routine to bear the upper caste boys and society.

#### **2.4.5. Episode of Wedding:**

Sharankumar described an incident of wedding, where he faced horrendous experience. Wedding is a festival for *Dalit* society. Because it was given five days feast for them. Especially, *Dalit* women and boys were treated inferiorly by upper caste but they felt it was an honor to eat and feast at the wedding of Patil or landlord. He narrates the

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experience of wedding ceremony at Hanoor. One day there was a wedding and only the order of his mother he goes to wedding. He describes the nature and attitude of upper caste people towards *Dalits* in wedding ceremony. He said, 'Before beginning to eat they uttered the names of Gods like Pundlik and Vithal and also the names of saints like Dyanadev and Tularam. We greedily heard the sounds of mashed food being shared. Has everyone had enough? asked some older men. Don't hesitate, eat slowly, have as much you like, they shouted. Men rushed between the raw, serving dinners who were busy eating.' [Ibid: 7] This picture has been seen by the narrator and his friends from long ago. 'There were shouts of *kheer!* and *Chapati!* *Ghee!* *Curry!*' [Ibid: 7] This sound was make greediness in the minds of narrator. Therefore, he has concentrate on wedding feast.

At the end of day, the invitation has come to Maharwada for feast. Sharankumar goes to with his granny Santamai and sister Nagi to eats. Masamai doesn't attend this kind of ceremony. It means she was alone in the house. Therefore, the narrator wants get more and more *Kheer* and *Chapati*, though his stomach was full. Giving full of *Kheer's* plate the narrator walks towards his home. It was seen by Girmallya- wedding servant. He snatched his plate of *Kheer* and throws on the ground and slapped to him. He, further, said, 'Son of bitch... If you didn't want it why the hell did you take it? Don't me see you more than once at any feast after this. The scum!' [Ibid: 9] Hence, the narrator comes to home with empty hand. In addition to this, *The Outcaste* also presents that *Dalits* are treated very badly and subjected to humiliation if ever they make attempts to reject humiliation and maltreatment inflicted upon them. They are most of the time addressed in an arrogant and disrespectful manner. They are made to adopt inauspicious names. One can find inauspicious names for *Dalits* in *The Outcaste*. In itself such names of *Dalits* are like *Kacharuajja*, which means dust grandfather, are there.

### **2.4.6. Episode of Barber:**

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Now, Sharankumar goes to school daily. There he was reads and heard the teacher. That's why he understood the importance of cleanness. He comes to school up date and fresh like upper class students. He becomes conscious about his living style in Maharwada. On day he goes to school and saw the barber at the corner of village. He attracted towards him and decides to haircut like other boys in his school. Therefore, he visits to barber. The barber first looked at him and then to his head and said, 'Don't stand here. I am not going to shave your head.' [Ibid: 22] There was another customer of different village who has given sympathy towards the narrator but barber doesn't it. Being wild, a barber said, 'He is a Mahar, let him go.' [Ibid] It shows that not only upper caste but also *Balutedar* has given injustice treatment to *Dalits* in India. A barber who is used to shave the Buffaloes but refuse to shave of human beings on the name of *Dalit* or Mahar. Who is the responsible of this treatment? Why these people are refused us? These questions are raised before little Sharankumar as well as Modern India today.

### **2.4.7. Experience at High School, Chungi:**

Sharankumar's village school was only at seventh class. After getting primary education the narrator admitted high school at neighboring village Chungi. There he wants to fill up the admission form with the signature of parents and village head (*Sarpanch*). Till today Sharankumar puts his own thumbs impression in place of parent's signature but the signature of village head was always a problem of the narrator. At the secondary school record, the narrator doesn't want to write the name- Masamai Hanmanta Limbale- as a guardian in the official record. Because Masamai had left by Hanmanta from last ten years. Now, she has kept by another Patil as a whore. He understood very well that woman is not a puppet in the hands of Patil or destiny. Regarding to this he said, 'What sort of life had she been living, mortgaging herself to one owner to another and being used as a commodity? Her lot has been nothing but the tyranny of sex.' [Ibid: 59] Therefore, the narrator doesn't want to write the name of Limbale as guardian.

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On the contrary, village chief signed everyone's form except Sharankumar. He doesn't approve the name Masamai Hanumanta Limbale. He was in confusion that who is the father of Sharankumar. Bhosle sir tried to convince to the village chief and recommended to sign on his form. Therefore, he proposed his granny's name Santamai Balshankar; once again village chief refused this name because he knows that Santamai was living with a Muslim man Muhmad. He was totally confused to approve the name of Sharankumar. He said to Bhosale sir, how to identify Sharankumar by his caste, religion or father? He has neither father's name nor any caste or religion. Finally, because of Bhosale sir (Guruji) Sharankumar got his father's name. However, village chief signed on his admission form. It was unbearable for the narrator. Being annoyed he said, 'Has anyone seen who sowed his seed? Has anyone seen the intercourse of his parents that resulted in his birth?' [Ibid: 61] At the age of ten or twelve he suffered a lot and faced the experience of humiliation.

### **2.4.8. Episode of Admission:**

Once, Sharankumar goes to submitting his application form where his class teacher asked the questions: 'Do you have no father? He replied, 'No! He is dead. Teacher asked once Do you have no mother? He replied, No! She is too dead.' [Ibid: 62] This interaction was heard by his village mates those who are know that what is truth. It was create a dead silent like the calm after a big storm. Being conscious he asked the number of question to his mother, 'Who is my father? What is his name? Where he did live? Why didn't he come to our home? What is relationship with kaka? What is a relation between you and kaka? Who is a father of Nagi and Nirmi? What is my relation with Nagi and Nirmi? And so on.' [Ibid: 63] Instead of answering me, Masamai was silent like kunti- a character from Mahabhartta and he feels himself as a Karna- a character from Mahabhartta. She says that she is a Patil's whore. At such time he was so happy because he got the answer of his question but doesn't know what the meaning of the word whore is or what the history behind whore is.

#### **2.4.9. Episode of Cobbler at Bus Stand:**

Sharankumar completed his primary education at Chungi and Chapalgaon. When he was studied at Chapalgaon, Santamai-grandmother comes to his boarding always. One day she come with a pair of old chappal-shoos, which was forgotten by someone at the temple. It was broken at the front side because of that she has gone to cobbler who was at Bus stand and repaired old Chapales. When she asked to repair this chapel, the cobbler has refused to it. Because of he recognized to Santamai as Mahar. This incident was also unbearable for the narrator but he couldn't take the action.

Chapalgaon was very close to his motherland-Hanoor. However, during the holidays, they go to their home and observed the people from upper class as well as *Dalit* society, their behaviour with each other. Being educated and consciousness they were hates to the idea of untouchability. Regarding to this Santamai said, 'Life is not the same. We suffered more injustice in our days.' [Ibid: 78] She, further, narrates: 'Whenever an animal in the village died, the villagers grew annoyed. They considered the Maharwada has responsible for it. They tied to us a pole and beat us like animal. They accused us not of having poisoned the animal. Our women and children cried and shirked. All the men in the Maharwada were very badly beaten. The village then ostracized the Maharwada for few days. We wouldn't get any work on the farms. We were denied any provision at the shops though we had money and were ready to pay. We had reached a dead end. Such humiliation was agonizing.' [Ibid] However, she tells her stories of such humiliation which was faced by them. She said the days of humiliation and injustice were gone in the past. Everything has changed today. It was the stories of injustice told by Santamai like Rashtramata Jijabai had told the stories of velour to young Shivaji. The narrator thought that her tears were like an epic and her agony contained the potential spark of a great war.

#### **2.4.10. Self Identity:**

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Sharankumar portrays the incident of humiliation and injustice. Now, he has passed Matriculation exam and got second class in the class. Therefore, he has understood everything which ever happened in his society. So ever he decides to study at the Solapur. The narrator gives the incident of Dyanand College, Solapur; at the time of admission. He said there was a clerk named Limbale who entered his name to the register as Sharankumar Hanmanta Limbale and start to enquire about his caste and religion. When the narrator said he is Hindu Mahar, the clerk said in surprisingly, ‘How is it possible? Is there Nimbale among the Mahar as well?’ [Ibid: 82] Sharankumar said yes and goes away immediately. Whenever he insulted as Hindu Mahar, the narrator thought about his caste and religion. The blood runs away in his body was not of Mahar but of Lingayat man. Due to this, he was not Hindu-Mahar, but a Lingayat. Therefore, he said this agony is not mined but also my community too.

While studying at Solapur Sharankumar became strong by mentally. There he was growing amidst a conflagration. The roots of *Dalit* movement were settling more firmly. Because of that he was understood the new meaning of Self Identity, Humiliation and Injustice. There he was awakening under a new consciousness which was becoming more pervasive day by day. During these circumstances the narrator meets his past love (Shevanta) occasionally. She gave him an inspiration to struggle against patriarchal society. In this way, the narrator grown up likes Karna and makes self identity in his mind.

### **2.4.11. Issue of Narrator’s Marriage:**

Sharankumar remembered his life at the Hostel, where he was more or less like camp. Everyone was lived at the hostel, majority they were *Dalit*. Being influenced by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, he has started to speak Jay Bhim instead of *Namaskar*. It was first revolt of the narrator to get through education. It was the time find out bridegroom for



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Nirmi, because she has now come of age to marry. On the other hand, the narrator yet not married. This biggest problem is raised before Santamai. Masamai always saw Nirmi and Vani to his customers and to request them for finding bridegrooms. Some of spoke nonsense and passed humiliating remarks as they were drunk. It was seen by the narrator himself. At such occasion, he remembered the Marryappa who said once under the influence of liquor that he will give his daughter to him. One day Marryappa Kamble comes to Solapur and demands money to the narrator. At that time he gives him hundred rupees and sends him to Barshi. Once again he visits to the hostel of Sharankumar, but the narrator avoided him because he has no money to spend on him. Third time Marryappa turned up again. This time he doesn't want money, but come with a proposal of marriage for Sharankumar. Thus, the narrator accepted his proposal and gets married with a girl named Kusum.

### **2.4.12. Treatment of Mother-in-laws:**

*The Outcaste* describes that he had to suffer not only at the hands of caste-Hindus. One can say here that he is a greater victim than the greatest victims in the casteist society. *Dalits* and non-*Dalits* have equally subjected him to extreme humiliation and suffering. Sharankumar narrates one such story in which his mother-in-laws insult him. She said to the narrator, 'There is no discipline in your house.... We want send our daughter until you are independent?' [Ibid: 100] Thus, Masamai suggest to the narrator and said, 'Don't treat her like wife. Let her rot.' [Ibid] She further suggest, 'Now that you are married, sleep with her at least once and prove that you are a man.' [Ibid] whenever, he goes to Barshi for meets to his wife, he makes quarrel with his mother-in-laws and Kusum his wife became tense. She said, 'You are rotten people. We have purified you. You were lying on the garbage. They drove me out of the house.' [Ibid] It makes anger towards his mother-in-laws. One day Maryappa Kamble said, 'My son is the president of the *Dalit* Panthers. He is highly respected by his followers. You say that you are a relative of that Muslim. You are the cause of humiliation for us among our own caste. We have told

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everyone that you are of pure blood. You must have some self-respect; otherwise don't enter our house.' I felt insulted.' [Ibid: 101] It shows that Sharankumar humiliated through relatives as well as caste Hindu society.

### **2.4.13. Experience at Ahmedpur:**

It was the time of renaming of Marathwada University Aurangabad; Sharankumar got a job as a telephone operator at Ahmedpur. Entire Marathwada region was involved in the movement of renaming of Marathwada University. '*Dalit* localities were set on fire even during daytime and there were a series of murders. They threatened to seal off the whole Marathwada region. There were long marches everywhere in the state of Maharashtra. Every day the newspapers were full of news about fires and arrests as the agitation in Marathwada spread to other parts of states.' [Ibid: 103] All round there was fear and nervousness. Due to this environment, a movement aroused in the blood of Sharankumar like a foetus.

### **2.4.14. Untouchability at Latur:**

Being educated *Dalits* highly cannot be able to detach themselves from the influence of the upbringing of the caste system. Most of the time injustice, ill-treatment and atrocities are perpetrated against the so-called untouchables in the rural areas. Even metropolitan cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, are no exception to the untouchability. Whenever a *Dalit* happens to come to such a city and has to rent a room for staying, he is asked his caste by the non-*Dalit* house owners. If he tells his caste, which is untouchable, he will not be given a room on hire. In such circumstances the *Dalit* has to wander here and there in search of a rented room. If he does not get it, he has to go to the *Dalits* locality in the city, rent a room and stay there. Or else, he has to live in an unclean locality. At times, they have to tell lies and hide their castes.

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This irritating story of a *Dalit* is narrated in *The Outcaste*, 'However, I went to Latur. I faced the problem of finding a house in a new town and my caste followed me like an enemy. Latur was such a big place with huge buildings, houses and bungalows, but I was turned away wherever I went. They said frankly, 'We don't want to rent out our house to Muslims and Mahars.' Should I put this town to the torch? Such a big town-but I could not get a single room. Every town and person was caste conscious. This castism has dehumanized everyone.' [Ibid: 106] The above quote points out that there is always an impossibility of the termination of castism and untouchability. Here, it could be remarked that caste system is such a destructive phenomenon for *Dalits* that it has enabled people of certain castes to be parasites and have privileges, and made people of other castes suffering masses and victims. Therefore, *The Outcaste* points out that since the caste system in which *Dalits* live is unequal, discriminatory, undemocratic and indifferent to the *Dalits*, they cannot get justice though they try their best to get it. Taking into consideration the nature, characteristic features and role of the caste system, the non-*Dalits*, especially caste Hindu men hardly hesitate to harass, exploit and victimize the *Dalits*. Thus, injustice and humiliation was faced by the narrator is not today's phenomenon but it has a long history. The roots of injustice and humiliation went deep in to history, for many thousands of years. Therefore, the narrator said his agony is like Lord Buddha's experience. But why doesn't aroused Lord Buddha in me?

### **2.5. Rejection to traditional Hindu culture and acceptance to Buddhist culture:**

In nineteenth century, Mahatma Phule opened the doors of education for untouchables and marginalized section of the society in India. Being influenced of Mahatma Phule, *Dalits* were reconstructing the history of *Dalit*. They have started using the long denied weapon, the Pen, to break the citadel of racing class that had misrepresented their history and culture. They have to reject the traditional Hindu religion i.e. God, Temple and accept the way of equality which was seen by the supremo of *Dalit* Dr Babasaheb

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Ambedkar in the form of Buddhism. The same view can be seen in Limbale's autobiography *The Outcaste*.

### **2.5.1. Rejection of Wedding Ceremony:**

Sharankumar describe a wedding ceremony where he suffered through humiliation. Once, giving full of *Kheer's* plate the narrator walks towards his home. It was seen by Girmallya- wedding servant. He snatched his plate of *Kheer* and throws on the ground and slapped to him. He, further, said, 'Son of bitch... If you didn't want it why the hell did you take it? Don't me see you more than once at any feast after this. The scum!' [Ibid: 9] Hence, the narrator comes to home with empty hand. Once, when Santamai and his sister returned home, he asked for *Kheer* they had sneaked. Masamai said, 'take your plate and go.' [Ibid] But he refused as he felt awkward about going to the village just to eat. He feels ashamed by seeing the classmates.

### **2.5.2. Rejection of Separate Cup of Tea:**

When Sharankumar getting primary education at Chapalgaon, it gives him pride as blessing. Sharankumar and Parshya come to home at the weekend where they have seen Untouchability. Therefore, they hate old Hindu tradition and customs like one can drink cup of tea in the hotel and others can outside the hotel. Everywhere, they were condemned as *Dalit* or Untouchables. That's why they have no affection towards their village. Getting education the narrator realized that self-esteem is an unusual strength. They were going thought that the separate cup-bashi for *Dalits* is an insult of an entire Maharwada. There was only one old man named Rambaap who drink cup of tea at Shivram's hotel. Therefore, the narrator has decide to convince him for denies this old tradition but he doesn't agree with him and said, 'We are low castes. What you have seen is a long tradition that has come down to us from our for-fathers. What can we do about

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it? How can we go against the village customs?’ [Ibid: 73] Finally, the narrator decides to reject all this. Therefore, he said ‘how long can we mutely suffer all this? How many times are we going to be born and live thus against our wish? Sometime we ought to reject all this.’ [Ibid: 74] However, they decided to make a complaint against Shivram’s hotel.

One day, Sharankumar and Parshya were going to Shivram’s hotel and take the order of cup of tea. Faimya- a servant in Shivram’s hotel- poured water for them on a height, avoiding contact to them. Parshya took the money where as Faimya provide them a cup of tea without touch. Instantly, Parshya took the cup of tea and run away from the hotel and stopped at the police station. He said, ‘May I come in sir? Sharankumar was stood behind him, trembling. The constable looked at us, amassed. Perhaps he did not understood what we had said because he shouted at us, what the hell do you want sons of bitches.’ [Ibid: 77] Both of them entered to police station and narrated what happened in the Shivram’s hotel. He doesn’t want get complaint against Shivram, but he has going to tortured us and said, ‘I will put you both in prison.’ [Ibid] So ever, they were sacred; their mouth become dry and think like that if we are feared to constable but not failure.

Therefore, the narrator said we are going to write a letter to Chief Minister and Prime Minister of India, if you are arrest to us instead of Shivram. Immediately, constable calls to Shivram. He comes with anger and started to abuses us. He said to police constable an entire Maharwada has used to drink a cup of tea at my hotel. They have no complaint. But if you feels it was an insult of your community, you comes to home I will served to you in my plate. Finally, Shivram has surrender to police and us. From this incident they are walked with pride in village. It was not digested by upper caste person who hates our behaviour and confidence However, Sharankumar points out that as he got mature, he began to go against the societal norms and practices which were totally illogical and anti-human.

### 2.5.3. Rejection of Temple:

Although the *Dalits* are not allowed to enter temples, his friend and he himself entered the temple in his village when they were young boys. The *Dalits* have not been considered to be addressed with respect, according to the system. But Sharankumar began to respect those *Dalits* who were really respected. He remembers, 'I stopped saying *namaskar* and started saying *Jai Bhim* instead. I substituted Babasaheb for Ambedkar since it sounded less formal and more respectful.' [86] He became critical of the system and convention. He disowned his father's caste and wanted to get married according to the Buddhist rituals. In addition to these anti system deeds of him, there are other innovative and radical acts such as inter-caste marriages. In his autobiography by asking a number of questions regarding irrational and inhuman beliefs and practices he has attacked the system itself and its followers.

### 2.7. Summing Up:

To sum up, *Akkarmashi: The Outcaste* described the pain and travesty of the cultural turmoil that opened up Marathi literature to *Dalit* writing. It is world-wide *Dalit* autobiography, which is written by Sharankumar Limbale. It narrates the story of a child born to *Dalit* (Mahar) mother, who was raped by the upper caste man. She had to carry her rape and deliver a baby, named as Sharankumar. As a result of this rape, Sharankumar neither belongs to Mahar community nor Marata caste, he is *Akkarmashi*. Due to his factured identity, the narrator suffered his entire life was the fact that he had no identity, no home or place of belonging. He could not get certain papers signed for school because he could not properly identify his caste by his mother or father, and they would not accept his grandmother as his guardian because she lived with a Muslim. When it came time for marriage, he could not even get married to an outcaste girl because his blood was not pure; he was not wanted anywhere. The clouds of doubt and identity hung over this poor outcaste boy his entire life. However, in several acts of

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incredible strength and bravery, he did not allow these socially constructed walls to stop him from getting an education and eventually publishing his story. He came to realize the depth of division caused by the conflict between Hindus and Muslims and chose a separate path for him in what he considered to be the warm embrace of Buddhism.

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**Chapter III: A Cultural Study of Laxman Mane's *The Outsider***

### **3.1. Introduction:**

*Upara* is a world celebrated *Dalit* autobiography written by Laxman Mane. *Upara* is a Marathi word which means, '**Outsider**'. [Lal: 2006: 4434] It was first published in Marathi language in 1980 and translated into English by A. K. Kamat entitled as, '**Upara: An Outsider**' in 1997. [Sukla: 2006: 63] Arjun Dangle sees it as a remarkable example of a '**Dalit autobiography**'. [Dangle: 1992: 255] However, *Upara* is considered an outstanding contribution to Marathi literature for its lively depiction of the life of the downtrodden and forceful style, authenticity of experience and its strong plea for social justice. It is a story of his life as a member of the Kaikadi caste. Therefore, the principle aim of this chapter is to focus on the cultural study of Laxman Mane's *The Outsider* as a *Dalit* text. It can be interpreted and analyzed under the following points:

- A cultural study of *The Outsider*:
- The life experiences of pain i.e. cultural assertion:
- Self-identity and roots of *dalit*'s humiliation and injustice:
- Rejection to traditional hindu culture and acceptance to buddhist culture:
- Summing up:

### **3.2. Cultural Study of *The Outsider*:**

*The Outsider: Upara* is an autobiographical narrative by Laxman Mane. The narrator has courageously narrated all the sorrows and sufferings of a community that was wandering in the darkness of suppression, exploitation, oppression and marginalization. All incidents from this autobiography have been making a factual picture of Kaikadi community. It has described the culture of Kaikadi community, which has their own rules and norms., Aruna Joshi said,

**‘...hailed from the Kaikadi community- an itinerant community of basket weavers. This can be said to be the first piece of conscious literature from a person of a DNT. It traces the life full of strife of the boy who is the first one ever to go to a school in his community, his maturing into a politically aware social worker and his inter-caste marriage that evokes a lot of uproar and agony for both the communities.’** [<http://www.oijrj.org/>]

#### **3.2.1. Living and Thinking:**

*Upara*, literally means An Outsider, is world wide celebrated Dalit autobiography, which exposes the culture of Kaikadi community. The question of identity, and injustice was not of Laxman Mane but community in particular. The people who are living in slums, on pavements, on the outskirts of villages and those who do not have even such places who are suffering in miserable conditions in the vales and valleys, hills and rocky planes. They have neither work, nor opportunities, neither facilities nor support, neither shelter nor protection. They do not have even two meals a day! Being educated Laxman realised the reasons of his suffering. However, he turned towards Buddhism and tried his best to light the lamp of life to his people.

### **3.2.2. House Structure:**

Being nomadic tribe, Kaikadi don't have fix income source and fix place. The basic needs like food, cloth and shelter are dreams for them even after independence. Regarding to this Girish Kausadikar, Dalit Autobiography: Narration ofg Pain, said:

**...they have to live on the mercy of landlords and religious authorities.**

**They earn only by weaving baskets brought of cane. Being unskilled and notorious image no one is interested to employ them for farming.'**

**[Kausadikar: 2013: 105]**

With a very few exceptions, Kaikadi did not cook daily. Their children brought food by begging in the villages. They have to compete with dogs and pigs to pick the food from dung hill. Kaikadis were supposed to live away from village. Their faces were considered as inauspicious. They have no house, no land, no village and no farm but **'moving from place to another place for generations, loading their hearth and home on the backs of donkeys...'** [Mane: 1997: 15] The corner of temple, village, big tree Mountain and Vallies are the place where they make their huts and lived. Laxman recalls: 'in Khopoli, our huts erected on a plain by the side of a road... Our hut was in the open. At night, a kerosene lamp without a glass cover was lit...I grew in this hut like a small plant growing on the dunghill.' [Ibid: 71-72] In such circumstances Laxman Mane have lived and grown up.

### **3.2.3. Food:**

*Upara* is the pathetic account of poverty which suffered by Laxman Mane and his community. Laxman recalls: His mother and father went in the villages for selling the baskets and other articles. Laxman and his sister starved in the hut as there was nothing to eat. His mother usually received stale food from the villagers which was their routine meal. Laxman wrote: 'Mother had brought lots of *bhakari*. Three of these were given by

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the village chief's wife. She had also given the leftovers of the night before. In addition, the women whose baskets mother had mended had given her something or the other which she had packed in the loose end of her sari. 'Mother had borrowed some buttermilk from somewhere. She had also brought some flat loaves, drum stick curry, sauce, pickle all stale and of course collected as alms. Mother would sell some baskets in the village, mend the old ones and in exchange acquire all this food. We ate all it. This was our everyday meal.' [Ibid: 3] The above passage illustrates the economic, social and cultural conditions of the Kaikadi's. They didn't have proper food, no clothes, and no houses; they often eat stale food which was given to them in exchange of cane baskets. Laxman never received good food like sweets and chapattis. He was always haunted with questions like, why he was not able to take good food like high caste people. Why he was not allowed to attend school like other children? These questions inspired him to take education and to achieve all the amenities like high class people.

### **3.2.4. Occupation:**

To make and sell baskets of cane is the prime occupation of Kaikadi community in Maharashtra. However, they have to travel one place to another in search of cane for a long time.

### **3.2.5. Caste Council- *Jat Panchayat*:**

*Jat panchayat* plays vital role in Kaikadi community in Maharashtra. There are four types of *Panchayat*: *Jamat Panchayat*, *Thal Panchayat*, *Village Panchayat*, and *Maddhi Panchayat*. *Jat panchayats* are to be solved the problem or quarrels of community people. Laxman narrates his father's decision of admitting him to school was revolutionary. It was a step towards violation of *Jat Panchayat*. However, his father successfully convenience them and promise them that education will not spoil him. Due to this, Laxman's presence in the school was matter of hatred and preposterous. Laxman

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said, 'from our Panchayat's point of view, the very writing of this book is crime and I am aware of the provision of the punishment or such wrong doing. I am prepared to face the consequences.' [Ibid: 6] If anyone disobeys the judgment of the *Panchayat* his complete family is excommunicated from the society.

**Excommunication meant that nobody would dare to touch him. They are served food and water from a distance; and nobody from the family is neither invited nor permitted to attend marriages. No marital relations would be allowed with such person.**

[<http://su.digitaluniversity.ac/>]

This is an example of social exploitation and the tragedy of Kaikadi Community that they are exploited by their own community and by the Hindu society at large.

Laxman described another incident of his maternal aunt named Paru. She was fond of cleanliness which is treated as an offense. It is assumed that people living on dirt need not to follow cleanliness. It is better not to look beautiful which may an invitation to molestation. The woman in this community is insecure. Due to this, Paru was divorced by her husband as she is found guilty of being raped by somebody. Instead of punishing the culprit, she is convicted for this humiliating act but *Jat panchayat*. Regarding to this Girish Kausadikar, in his article *Dalit Autobiography: Nrration of Pain*, wrote:

**The role of *Jat Panchayat* in most of *Dalit* narration is negative as well as destructive. Their verdicts are arbitrary and sometimes whimsical and crocked. [Opp. Cite., Kausadiar: 106]**

Shivaji Moghe, Online TV Show: 9.30 to 10.30, z 24 Newschannel, 5/7/2013, remarks that *Jat panchayat* is pure devil of inequality. [Moghe: Z 24, 5/7/2013] It is said that this is not a face of modern Maharashtra. However, a question is raised such as can we change the face of reactionary Maharashtra.

### **3.2.6. Custom and Tradition:**

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Every tribe has a distinct dialect, a distinct culture, distinct conventions and distinct traditions. The Kaikadi community has no exception for this rule. They have their own rules and norms. They have their own customs and traditions. It was tradition in Kaikadi to inform the village chief of their arrival in the town and provide all the information of their belongings. Regarding to this Laxman recalls: 'Jaisingea and Father had gone to the village to inform the village chief of our arrival. It was obligatory for the npradic tribes to inform the village chief on their arrival. Also they had to give him the details of the number of people, donkeys, fowls, dogs and so on.' [Mane: 1997: 32] Once, Laxman's family was passed the mountain and settled on plain land. There was a mound of small and big stones. His father went there and suggested to throw five stones at the heap. Being conscious Laxman asked, 'why throw stones on the heap, father?' His father laughed and said: 'Just like that. Everyone throws them and so do we!' [Ibid: 46] This activity was not imposed on them by anyone but being fear they make an image of god and worshipped as it is. They believe that Lord Khandoba has the owner of this world and for the blessing of him all activities done by them.

### **3.2.7. Festival and Rituals:**

*Upara* is the full of narration of festivals and rituals. It is an inseparable part of Kaikadi community. *Dassera*, a festival of Navratra, is one of big celebration for Kaikadi which offered them the connectivity and new vision. Concerned to this Laxman recalls: '...the gods were seated at a particular spot and worshipped. All the nine days, father invoked the gods, at night, right in front of their idols. Mother looked after the household by striving to make both ends meet, at times borrowing from others...After *Dussera*, the families would move out to earn their livelihood and to live.' [Ibid: 69] He has seen the delivery pain of his mother at *Kopoli*. He got a baby who was born near to Ocean of Mumbai however he becomes *Samindrya*. As the child born, the fifth day was to be celebrated in Kaikadi community. Regarding to this his mother said: 'The goat has a white patch on its tail. For the fifth day celebration of the childbirth, we need an absolutely black goat.' [Ibid: 74] However, the masculine person of the family went out

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of huts and killed the goat on the name of Mother Satwai and worshipped her. They believe that she cares the new child and their family from bad omen.

Kaikadi community has no special god or Goddess. They worshiped all Hindu Gods among them Lord Khandoba is big celebration for them. After Dussera, they assembled at Jejuri and make engagement of their childrens. Marraiges could get fixed and contracts made. Such time the girl's father has demands. After discussing family matters they have to offerd the vermillion and the flowers to the god and collect few for their home god. Finally, they would make feast with meat and liquor. Once, at Malwadi a Vadar killed the pig for Kaikadi community. It was a tradition to make feast after the festival and recalls past experiences. Regarding to this, Dombari said to the father: 'Bapu Shardi is died.' [Ibid: 41] such festival and ritual make their relation tied.

### **3.2.9. Superstition:**

Superstition is the bad evils which imposed on kaikadi community by Hindu culture. Dr. Sahebrab Nigal defines superstition as '**a beleves without sense and impulse.**' [Nigal: 2013: 4] Hindu culture follows the law of British company as makes divide and rule among non-Brhamin in *An Outsider*. Regarding to this Laxman's father said: 'Come, hurry! Otherwise a 'Mahar' maury cross our path.' [Mane: 1997: 27]It shows that Mahar as *Dalit* has no identity and value in Indian senerio. It is a bad omen or superstition follwes by Nomadic tribe.

Once, Kaikadi tribe was reached at Palwan where Jausingya and Laxman's father had gone to inform the village chief of their arrival. Due to long journey everyone was going to sleep. Suddenly, Sami, sister of Narrator, she began to howling therefore everyone woke up. Regarding to this, Laxman narrates: 'Sami was in the throes of a fit. Her jaws were locked. Her limbs grew stiff. Her eyes showed white and she was writhing. Her face distorted, she was wailing in pain' [Ibid: 33] Such atmosphere makes terror around the Kaiakdi's huts. Regarding the pain of Sami, Father possessed by God and began to



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uttering terrible cries: 'Leave me, leave me ... hold me...speak! Who are you? Why have you come? Are you God or ghosts? Speak! [Ibid] Jaisingya was at adjusted dhiti of father and said: 'Oh my Go! Do not torture the tree! The little girl went to bed after dinner. If she is guilty, forgive her! I beg of you. If she has done something wrong forgive her and protect the child!' [Ibid] On such conversation father, in the form of God, continued to moan and said: You there! You have shut your eyes to me. You don't see me...hum...hum...' [Ibid] However, they accept its demand and at night father paid the demand of him. As a result of this, Sami becomes well and opened the eyes. Such number of gods and devils came at *Hagandari*. Laxman was surprised how god has come to Kaikadi's hut if at village his all wish could be completed. Thus, it shows that how Kaikadi becomes superstitious. These all factors are important for making the culture of society.

### **3.3. The Life Experiences of Pain i.e. Cultural Assertion:**

Laxman Mane's *Upara: An Outsider* is a landmark in *Dalit* Literature. It gives a vivid account of the writer's struggle within the caste structure of the Hindu society. Dr. Ashwin P. Ranjanikar said in his research article entitled, Marginality and Oppression in Dalit Autobiography:

**The author had no self-importance to become a writer, nor was he engaged with any literary activity. He writes because he wants to tell the experiences of struggle, oppression, exploitation and agonies to the society. His unending struggle started from his childhood and it reached its peak after his inter-caste marriage.**

[<http://su.digitaluniversity.ac/>]

However, this autobiography revealed experiences of oppression and marginalization and also his strife for achieving liberty, dignity, pride and status of human being. These life experiences of pain are called as cultural assertion.

### **3.3.1. Episode of Snake:**

The mother was making meal on hearth, beside her Jaysingya and narrator's father were chatting on the incident of cobra. Once, he was at over the hill and searching fetch cane. There was no sound without his own shoes and the shrill of the night insects and an intermittent note ejected by a night bird. Only silence was there like a man in sunken in death. It was the time of early dawn. He was ready for cutting and hand moved fast with the scythe. Both his hands were got injured in the spiky bushes and were full of cuts. But he had to continue his task till he couldn't cut down at least a wait of five baskets. Unexpectedly, he has seen a blood on his hand and thought that he has cut down his hand therefore he stopped the cutting and looking towards carefully. It was not his hand but a cobra was cut down by him. Regarding to this narrator said: 'In an instant, he threw away the cobra's tail and looked up to see the round-headed cobra in the bushes, its hood spread, moving to and fro. Father stepped back.' [Ibid: 25] Being frightened he uttered the names of his god such as Kalubai, Yellama, Laman. Finally, he decides to kill him and made a fire and burn to the cobra. Invoking the name of Goddess Kalubai, he comes back to home.

### **3.3.2. Episode of Dombari:**

Once, narrator's father met an old man wore coat, who was singing a song. He was a Dombari, a tribe, whispering something. When he asked him, he said: 'You know, Bapu, my daughter Shardi is died!' [Ibid: 41] He couldn't say anything more and tried to cry. Further, he said that, 'Bapu my daughter was slim as a tender pod of beans. One could squeeze out milk from her lips! Did I deserve this in my old age?...Well, I would have earned a lot of money during the festival.' [Ibid] It means to say that if she was alive he will earn more money in this festival. But destiny could not go together. As the old man narrated the tragedy, narrator's father was heard to him sadly. Finally, the festival was

dispersed. Both of them decided to go towards his house and lived certain distance and then bid him good bye.

### **3.3.3. Portrayal of Rambhau:**

Once, the parents were went neighboring village to sell their baskets. Only children were at home. It was a time to bear the teasing of nature and destiny. Early morning, the parents were out of house therefore the meal or leftover was not avail in the house. Laxman was tried to keep the stale *bhakri* in tamarind water. There was nothing to eat at house. Their patience was exhausted and tried to cry. Suddenly, they heard a voice outside. Regarding to this, Laxman narrates: ‘Father was being pushed ahead by a small crowd. Mother was behind him. She had no blouse on. She was wearing father’s shirt. Her *sari* was torn. Father had only his *dhoti* on.’ [Ibid: 61] Being seen this picture, children were frightened and start to crying. The crowd goes towards village chief and entire village come together. His mother was falling at the feet of captors and begging to forgive them. But captors were not in the mood of listening, while one of them abused, ‘why the hell did you go in there? You deserves a good kick in your...’ [Ibid] The people spoke whatever came to their mind from theft to mother’s affair with so and so. The entire kaikadi community was begging for mercy but their heart wouldn’t melt. Captors would suggest to the village chief that they have canned leave single cane in the village. However, this thief’s community couldn’t be live in our village. They come at night and take away the canes even from the thorny bushes. Today we have caught this couple red-handed. The son of bitch was escaped but when he saw the sari of his whore’s has snatched away, he comes back. As result of this injustice, a young, fair man named Rambhau has interfere and talking with the side of victims. He said: ‘Anvari, you go. I have set you free. You may go home.’ [Ibid: 63] Entire village had fallen silent. Being angry the village chief told to him, ‘Rambhau, what you done? Do you understand the situation? You are interfereing with the government procedure. I will have to lodge a complaint and have you arrested.’ [Ibid] Boiling with rage, he said: In place of Ani, if

your sister was made to stand like this, how would you have taken it? You do have mother and sisters, don't you? I'll pay you for your canes. How many of them were brought from Sonvadi? [Ibid] In anger the village chief removed the shoes and threw towards him. As a result, entire Maharwada come beats whoever seen before them. Finally, narrator's parents and Rambhau were arrested and relieved after for two days.

### **3.3.4. Portrayal of Konkan:**

Konkan, west part of Maharashtra, was a prosperous region. It was not difficult to earn money for tribal family. *Dassera* was an important festival in the Konkan region, which was suitable for the harvesting of rice. Post *Dussera*, Kaikadi families left Konkan and went towards the region of Maval for begging. Among them few continues their journey via Pen, Panvel, Khaparda, Khopoli while few come down towards Mahad via Mahabaleswar. Due to the pregnancy of Narrator's mother, once, the family stays at the road of Kopoli. Everyday they shifted their residence on a dunghill, behind a temple, under a tree and searched the land where harvesting was going on. Regarding to this, narrator said: 'In the Konkan, we ate rice everyday. Salted fish and Bombay duck was easily available. But soon we were fed up with rice and fish curry.' [Ibid: 69] The Konkan was an adored place for Laxman because it gave him nearby food in comparison to his native place. During the traveling his school was moving on the donkey's back.

In the Konkan region, there were countless customers for canes, who paid money in cash. Therefore, father, doing hard work, collects the money and used it for future saving. The family of Appa and Tatyia had be an adjunct to narrator's family. They were Laxman's uncles. All the family live together with cordially. Everyone work hard, ate healthy and took be concerned of each other lovingly. No one can make a quarrel with each other. Once at night, Laxman was splitting the canes to his mother. Father was narrating the stories of ghost from the Konkan. Regarding to this Appa narrates: 'you know, Bapu? ...I

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nearly dead today.’ [Ibid: 70] Everyone from was astonished and asked, what happened? Therefore, Appa began to narrating his story.

Once, three brothers had gone to forest for cutting canes. They helped each other and lift the bundles of the canes onto their heads or shoulders. Then they began to returning speedily. Father and Tatya had gone far ahead whereas Appa remained far behind. There was never sound of any bird or traffic on the road, which appeared to be deserted. Father and Tatya were still out of sight. Surprisingly, Tatya saw a tree lying on the road, right ahead of him. Thinking that a tree might have fallen on the road, he continued to walk. Now the tree was began to approaching him. He has seen it clearly. Therefore, a thought came in to his mind: ‘The tree was far ahead. How is it walking towards me! Or, does it have something to do with ghosts? It was a belief that Konkan has most of ghosts. However, he used to utter the names of Goddess, Kalubai. At the same time, four bicycle riders were came and make noise on the road. As a result of this the python went down the edge of the road and disappeared in the wild bushes. Regarding to this the Konkani people were saying, ‘The Python would have swallowed this bearer of canes in no time. It is his good luck that we arrived here in time.’ [Ibid: 71] It was first time Tatya saw such an enormous snake in his life. He said: ‘the messenger of death arrived but the moment had not come.’ [Ibid] Others heard the entire story and thanked God to save him.

### **3.3.5. Episode of Joshi:**

The family of Laxman was busy to weaving baskets and selling them in the Konkan. Then the family turns towards Khaparda, where large number of nomads comes in Konkan to live. There was a tribal family come in Khaparda for begging, which was settled near to Laxman’s shed. It was a family of Joshi, who has two wives. The quarrel was common in his house. The husband, Joshi, has drunkard entire day and yell and shout through the night. Every night his wives took the baskets and goes to for selling their wares. Being fresh the husband went out for talking future in whole village. It was his

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occupation to say the future of villagers. At night, he could sit with narrator's father, who requests to tell him about his future. Joshi has used to laugh at him and humouredly said: 'You see dear Bapu! If I could really read the future, would I not know my bitches Pari and Saree cheat on me? Tell me! Why do you weave the baskets? To earn your livelihood, isn't it? I too have to spin the yarn to eat. The fact is that you have to be able to tell things from the face of a person. Once, you come to know that the client has been taken in; you have to confuse him thoroughly. Are you not weaving layers upon layers to complete a basket? Well! I too proceed the same way... what you have to do is this.' [Ibid: 80] It was a *Jotishi*, futurist, who does not deceive anyone but to tell society expected. It was an art to tell the truth of society. He doesn't believe on his wives, whenever they called him he would say, 'The whores are calling.' [Ibid] He was a badly smoker and drunkard.

### **3.3.6. Episode of Pari:**

Once, tribal were stay at Pen. There was a huge banyan tree by the side of road under which they were live. Other families also joined them after few days. Due to this, Laxman got many friends for playing. They were maternal relatives, which were become one family. According to his mother, one couple was an uncle and aunt which were known as *Swatu* and *Swadga* in Kaikadi language. The name of that uncle was Martimama and aunt was Pari. Pari was more attracted to him than Sami, sister of Laxman, who was so pretty, good looking and fair complexioned. She was daily bath and washes her hair while other Kaikadi woman bath once a week. Whenever she going to bath, young men wandering like insatiate. Regarding to this, being angry narrator's father said: 'Paying too little and screwing too much, No?..You fellows really want to buy?..I, too, am not free mind you! Go! Go away..! You hear? [Ibid: 81] Being seen pari's bathe and crowd of people, Martimama abuses, 'Come! Let a donkey screw your mother! Are you a Brhmin...or is your body full of shit...? Why do you have to bath every day? [Ibid]

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It shows that bath, for poor women, became painful experiences. Everyone teased and humiliated her due to the habit of bath.

Once, Pari was combing her hair, which was seen by Martimama from a distance. As he saw this picture, he jumped on her and started to beat. Snatching the mirror from her hand, Martimama began to beat her face with the mirror. As a result, Pari was crying. She was badly hurt. This kind of quarrel has become routine for others. Finally, due to the narrator's parent the quarrel was stopped and Pari became silent. Martimama was not allowed to give the permission of bath everyday or comb therefore he said: 'When we live on the dunghill, we should live like dirt. We must not imitate the people who live in bungalows. We are street dwellers. We are open to the public's gaze all the while. What if somebody casts an evil eye on you.' [Ibid: 82] This attitude is really loving and caring about his wife, but it did not mean poor women don't bath everyday or comb.

Once, Martimama and Pari were decided to return their own village. But the destiny has caught her and broken her chastity. At night, Pari was running with loudly and uproar. Entire Kaikadi tribe woke up and enquired. Pari was unable to speak anything. She had completely covered with blood therefore Kaikadi has used to guess she possessed a ghost. No one can touch her while she used to sleep alone that night. Finally, mother had enquired about what happened with her last night. After along time, Pari stopped roaring and she says, 'I was sleeping on a gunny-bag. I was fast asleep. And the Devil seized the opportunity...' and she tried to cry. She further said: 'I told them that I was having my menses but I was not spared...' [Ibid] She burst into tears once again. She has told her what happened last night. As a result, mother reported to his husband and Martimama and abused, 'the whore's arise invited all this! I knew it all along... This bitch was not going to be faithful to me.' [Ibid] Being heard the painful narration everyone neglected her even his husband too. Therefore, Martimama left Pari alone and goes far away from her. Regarding to this Laxman said, 'Parumami traveled with us from place to place for a few months. She behaved like a mad woman. She would not eat. She would break down every

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now and then and cry.’ [Ibid] After a long time, her father met at the festival of Kalubai, who said that Pari was met him, but she was mad. She suffered a lot and finally died.

### **3.3.7. Episode of Pingala:**

A man called Pingala Joshi who has living beside the temple. The temple was a small distance from Laxman’s shelter. He uttered a sound like the bird Pingala, not in day but in night. With a lamp in one hand and a small bell in other, he would set out at midnight ringing the bell. The person who first saw him he gives him money and grain. Therefore, he blesses them: ‘May you be prosperous.’ [Ibid: 85] Regarding to this narrator said: These nomads were destined to be on the move all their life. Kaikadi, at least, would spend a few days in a village. But these people were really a peculiar lot. They claimed that they belonged to Nath sect. After sunrise, they would not beg. Even if someone offered them something, they wouldn’t accept it. They never stayed for more than one night at one place.’ [Ibid] The family of Pingala Joshi was a neighborhood of narrator. The Pingala Joshi always called his wife as whore. He has four children.

Once, he has brought a bag full of food. Due to that, he has no work for this day therefore he would go to bring fish, crabs or firewood. He has spent his leisure time to smoking opium. Suddenly, he suffered through a temperature at night. His wife was afraid about it that’s why she visit Laxman’s father and received a holy ash. But it had no effect on Pingala, the temperature could not come down. Entire nomads were worried about it. His wife was brave, who goes to brought herbal plants prescribed by narrator’s father and come back at the darkness. As diesesious Pingala shouted and abuses to her: ‘Bloody whore! You, brozen bitch! I’ll get your mother screwed by a donkey. Sleeping around weren’t you?’ [Ibid: 86] Being abused her, he reject to receive the herbal medicine which was brought by her. He yelled, ‘Let me die if I must! I would rather die. The bitch has blackened my face!’ [Ibid] It was late in the evening, the quarrel took place. The crowd was worried about him. Mother asked about the quarrel, she explained that Joshi



community has a tradition to a woman must return home before sunset. Otherwise she has suspected of misconduct. Finally, she pulled the children and poured water in the hearth and walked out saying, 'His gun has enough powder to shoot. Let him have another woman. I shall look after these four children as best I can. [Ibid: 87] As a result, the Pingala began to yelling whole night. Therefore, the poor old woman and her children come back to house.

### **3.3.8. Portrayal of Wedding:**

Once, there was a wedding ceremony of Tanaji Patil. Whenever such occasion took place, his mother was work hard at such place. Laxman too help her for cleaning the ground and so on. During that time no fire would be lighted in entire Kaikadi society as to be cooked. The whole concentration was going on the wedding feast and kept an eye on them. The propaganda was spread like air that the guests were started feast. At last seen by the guest were began their feast, they ran away like dog and make line away from the pandol, by the side of dunghill. Regarding to this, Laxman narrates: 'Whenever a wedding took place in a house where we were employed by its owner, we behaved as if we were the masters of the house. Likewise, whenever the other tribal's were employed by some other owner, they too would behave similarly.' [Ibid: 94] It was make noise and sound, which result get abuses by server. Being hungry everyone demands more and more food for eating. It was not enough to them but they were concentrate on the guest get up. After finished the feast Kiakadies were collect the leftover and to give it the sun next day. It was favorite dish for tribal's children. During the wedding season, no one can cook for several days. In this manner, they were hardly aware as to when the month of Ashadh was over.

### **3.3.8. Portrayal of Band-Baja:**

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In the month of March, father has finished his harvest collection and returns towards his native land Nirgudi. Laxman's school was passed by place to place on donkey. He attended a school nearby month to half, where he has given the exam of first standard and passed. Regarding to this, his father affectionately announced: 'You hear my children? This cub of mine has passed in his school examination. Yes! Passed is the word! [Ibid: 91] It was time of summer therefore they have no work. They have made a party of Band-baja, which have used for small functions like engagement ceremony, twelfth day ceremony of a new born child, and at the function of girl matured. The party has four men Laxman, Appa, Tatyā and his father. After the month of March –April, they were rehearsing the old and new song on Band. Dattu was their leader and guided them to sing a song. During the summer days, the sun was boiling hot. Still the small Laxman and his friends were played a game of Marbles, under a tree of neem, which is known as 'surpatya'. During that time Laxman was fond of swimming. Without permission he went to swimming for only fun. Laxman was failed seventh standard but being effort he could get admission in eighth class. It was the time of summer vacation therefore he wait only the result. Due to leisure time, he reorganized the band party and sung at various functions. Laxman was to drummed, Tatyā worked as a flat drum known as *Kalat*. It was a time to sing a devotional song mostly. Once, they were sung in Sangvi at wedding ceremony. First time they were worked for long time. Therefore, Laxman become thirsty but no one can give him a glass of water. Finally, he remembers that someone fed poured the water from distance. During that time, he was touch to the water tank therefore women cursed him, 'You... there! You carrion! You have polluted...our water! What are we going to drink now... yourcorpse?' [Ibid: 112] As a result of this his father too abused him. During that time, his result of seventh class published in newspaper. He was failed henceforth the chapter of education was closed for him. He could help to his parents in canes, weaving variety of baskets and traveled from one place to other place.

### **3.3.9. Portrayal of Excommunicate:**

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Kaikadi community has their own rules, laws, customs and traditions. Their disputes are solved within the community *Panchayat*. If anyone disobeys the judgement of the *Panchayat*, the family is excommunicated from the society. This is an example of social exploitation. Regarding to this, Laxman recalls the month of Falgoon, Kaikadi community comes to Nirgudi in a couple of weeks. The cow dung houses reopened. Everyone has woven the basket and sell it to the village, which have given to him by community chief on the name of *Balut*. There was a person who makes crime become excommunicated. No one can eat with him and didn't attend his any ceremony. It was completely by caught from community by Panchayat head. Regarding to this, there was a law of Panchayat to that if a woman committed disloyalty; her entire family would be excommunicated. Therefore an excommunicated person has left their house and village too. Other law was that if the Kaikadi woman had't returns home till sunset and her husband was not ready to accept her, she went towards only her parents. Then her father placed her before Panchayat and then accepted what happened. As a result of this woman got four times married.

There was a woman named Gajra, who was excommunicated in Kaikadi community. She becomes the symbol of entertain for villagers and Kaikadi. She has used the talk ambiguously with villagers. Once, a barber named Ithu talks to her, 'Gajra! Will you make a sparsely woven basket for my rooster?' [Ibid: 101] She laughed at him and said, 'I shall certainly make one for your rooster! But first look into your pocket and see if you have money.' [Ibid] Because of without money there was no use of his rooster. Once, Laxman was thirsty and drink water from Gajra's house. It was seen by his mother and abused to him, 'Son of bitch! You drink water in this filthy house? Have you mortgaged your sense of property or what?' [Ibid] With burst of anger she gave him a slap and warned him, 'Never cross the threshold of Gajra's door! Don't ever see the face of that big whore!' [Ibid] Laxman could not understand his mother said. One night, a terrible fight was going outside the Gajra's house. Kaikadi felt that it was a quarrel of brothers, but it was different matter. Gagra had slept outside with her daughter-in-law. By saw this;

Sadya went to the bed of Gajra's daughter-in-law. Therefore, her brothers-in-law caught him and tried to beat him. After some time the crowd dispersed but other quarrel of Gajra and her sons took place again. They used to wildly abuses, 'Even our whole village is not sufficient for you! Are you mother or a butcher?' [Ibid; 103] As a result of this, Gajra's house was excommunicated by Panchayat chief.

### **3.3.10. Episode of *Ujja*:**

The Kaikadi women were went to sell their ware in market. It was a group of four or five women to sell their ware in market. Pretending to brought, they ask more question to shopkeeper. They don't obtain anything but only bargaining with him. Sometimes they began to collect certain quantity of grain, while one of them has fugitive with a bags of grain. At the same time, other women had asked the shopkeeper how many measures he had put in the bags. Finally, they don't buy anything from him and left the shopkeeper. It was not thieves, but a skill which is known as 'Do Uajj, means to make fool'. It was a skillful way of stealing. If the women were caught, they would be beaten up like dogs on the street. It was so risky work but before hunger they have to be bear anything.

### **3.2.11. Episode of *Chabhu*:**

Laxman Mane had failed in the seventh class but passed in previous exam therefore he continued his studies. Phaltan was five mails away from his place, Somanthali. It was new experience for him due to novel region but still he everyday went to school. There were number of boys from Nirgudi, who were met at Phaltan. They too behaved well with him. Once, few of them hired a room at Phaltan, which become a shelter for him. Regarding to this, he said: 'I stayed with them, but I didn't touch their food. When my food didn't arrive, I ate whatever they gave me.' [Ibid: 123] Though he could not touch their food but he was to live with them. Among them there was a Muslim boy named Cchabya, who came with him to Phaltan. Both of them were at the same class but he was much older than him. He had made wine and earns more than two hundred rupees.

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On holiday, while the school remained closed, he would fetch a stove, a tin boxes, pipes and thick rice flour. Ammonium sulphate, bark of Hivera (kind of tree), and rotten Jiggery were the main component of liquor. It was his business in school days. Influenced by him, he has taunted girl who led to quarrel among the boys and both of them were beaten. Whenever the bark of Hivera could not get he had went to his village for collecting bark of the tree. Instead of bark of tree he gave four to five rupees for Laxman. As a result of this he had a lot of fin such as betel leaves, cigarettes, restaurants and films. Those days were unforgettable and enjoyable.

One day, Chhabya and Laxman were going to Phaltan on bicycle with the liquor tubes at evening. Due to receiving information, the police have approached them and search the Chhabya. Laxman saw the van and informed him therefore they stopped the bicycle and run away. But the police caught to Chhabya, bicycle and liquor while Laxman was slipped at the field of cane. He was half-dead with the fear of police. He doesn't know what happened in between Chhabya and the police. But Policemen go away and Chhabya came near the cane field and called out: 'Hey, you Kaikadi chap! Wear bangels on your hands! [Ibid: 129] As a result of this, Laxman compares his cowardice with Chhabya's bravery. From this incident he left Chhabya's company and given thanks to Goddess Kalubai.

### **3.2.12. Episode of Narayan:**

At the class of ninth, Laxman have spent his six months for up-down. The festival Dushera was over and his parents migrated for living. As a result, it become very difficult to him was getting food once in day. He had always money-less fellow. But he could get tobacco while he has ignored his pride. During that time, the temple of Savta Mali was only ray of hope for slipping. Opposite to it there was a restaurant named 'Santosh Bhavan' owned by Dada Karne and next to it Ramdas Cycle Mart, which gave him a

mentally support during that time. He was always wandering at this locality. Dada Karne was broad minded man, whose nephew Narayan Bodke was his classmate. Only because of Narayan his uncle allows him to eat in his restaurant. Being understood Laxman was studied on tea and *Bhajas*- snacks, Dada appreciated him. Therefore, he works like to clean cup-bashya and saucers at the restaurant. Being familiar Narayan, Ramdas and Laxman were studied together. Regarding to this, Laxman said: ‘Narayan was the first godlike man I met. He never ate dinner without me. In the Ramdas family, I ran all sorts of errands. His mother was a kind surplus. Karne and Rasker became my benefactors.’ [Ibid; 131] He means to say that Narayan was a godly figure for him. They had become very thick friend at the tenth class. During tenth class he met a new friend Popat Jagtap, belongs to Mahar, who were become close to each other. Being understood Narayan said: ‘Hey. I don’t think you should work here like this... We’ll get you some other work. As for money, I’ll give you some.’ [Ibid: 132] As a result, they have collected ten rupees and give him as investment of business, which started his small business of Bread and butter. He made two rupees profit daily but sufficient for living as student.

### **3.2.13. Episode of Sugarcane:**

Being started new business of Butter, Laxman sell it to the workers of Sugarcane. It was watching everything by Narayan keenly. There were more than five hundred huts of sugarcane workers those who came to harvest the sugar cane. They were lived in the huts of leafy tops of sugarcane. There were no toilets around there. Whenever he went to sell the butter he had saw the women who come for latrine. Some were seen half-naked women who were busy to bathing. By saw this picture he remembered his mother and sister those who were done at the similar. They were comes by season like Kaikadi therefore he memorized his childhood. Regarding to this, few questions were raised in his mind. Why are certain people poor? Why does God keep them that way? He had never got the answer of theses questions.

#### **3.2.14. Episode of Gambling:**

The exam of tenth class had come to close but still Laxman was struggle for food. Once, he saw a notice on the board of Rudrabhat's shop which expected a boy to sell newspaper. It was golden opportunity to him therefore he joined as salesman. Up to six o'clock in the morning he sold bread and after none o'clock he went to sold the newspaper. One day, the school was over as usual and works at the restaurant of Karne till seven o'clock. He has kept out his school bag and returns to his room. On the way of room, he saw a group of people was busy in playing cards. By seen this, he stopped there and observed it very keenly. Being understood the trick of cards he had joined it and won more money. Being jealousy the owner stopped the game and take new cards for playing. Annoyedly he said, 'Hey, you! Mother-fucker...!Come!...sister screwer!what happened ?' [Ibid: 137] The narrator was completely afraid. On such occasion, the owner said to him play where as he don't want to play again. Therefore, they snatched the money which ever he won and beat up like animals. As a result, he had suffer silently for two days, neither he work nor went school.

#### **3.2.15. Episode of Prostitute:**

Once, the family of Laxman was settled before the Shanti Cinema, Phaltan. It was a time of night, Laxman, Kaikadi's son Ithalya and Datya were left their huts and decided to go into the village by shortcut which led to the bus stand. They were walking in the dark smoking and telling the interesting stories of festival to each other. Abruptly, a middle aged woman approached them and called out: 'Hey! Big guys!' [Ibid: 139] They were surprised to hear the voice in darkness. Therefore, they were stopped and whispering about the voice. After few minutes they have understood that it was not mystery but a woman wants to say something. She said: 'You big kids! Want to have a session with me?' [Ibid] They don't know what she means to say therefore they followed her and reached at the hut which has little lamp and ruined blanket. An empty tea pot, a broken

cup and a piece of cloth using for filter were lying in a corner. Being seeing this atmosphere Laxman feels dirty. The woman inquired about money and started to close the door, Laxman sacred: 'Let her go to hell! There is something fishy going on here, I said myself and began getting up.' [Ibid: 139-149] As a result, the woman going to started abuses like, 'Eh! You little nipper, sit down! Have a 'paan', smoke a cogitatte. You appear to be in a hurry to go and piss!' [Ibid] Therefore, Laxman run away from this hut. Lastly, Ithalya come with laughing because he had seen a circus. He doesn't understand what Ithalya means to say. On discussing fun, they understood she was a prostitute who sells herself on money. It was funny experience for them but it makes social awareness among them.

### **3.2.16. Episode of Barga:**

Barga was landlord of the village. He had first by the tractor and maximum quantity of sugarcane had sent to the factory. There were more than fifty men worked at the house of Barga. One day, an entire village was going to attend the wedding ceremony of Barga. More than hundreds of bullock carts were decorated. The marriage of Barga was like a village festival, because it was the marriage of Barga's daughter. Regarding to this, the narrator said: 'The ceremony of dressing the girl with a sari for the first time was celebrated by inviting the whole village for a grand meal. A bangle merchant was instructed to slip glass bangles on the wrists of al the women and girls in the village, irrespective of their castes, creed or religion. The celebration went on for three days from the day of her engagement and the guests were served with tea and meals on all those three days.' [Ibid: 142] This kind of ceremony was arranged by Barga for the guests. He had invested the money which was sufficient for four poor wedding ceremonies. Entire village was happy therefore hundred and one bullock carts were going to state their journey. At this joyful manner, the wedding party reached to Kamblisara where wedding have been took place.



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On the wedding day, the rush was in full of swing. The guests were to come for wedding from about ten villages. The ceremony of honour of guests has started and someone called out: 'Hey! Where are the band players?' [Ibid: 144] Therefore, the band players including Laxman appeared at the wedding pandas. It was the tom of noon, the band players and bridegroom had gone to the *Gadangan* (feast before God) with their friends. The young boys and girls from both the sides were engaged in fun and play. Bridegroom's friends had suggested taking a photo of the bride and the groom. As a result, the groom's brother expresses his idea and said: 'The groom desires to take his photo with the bride. Let the bride also sit on the swing.' [Ibid] However, the Barga become silent and said: 'You see, you are our guest of honour! The wedding ceremony is not yet over.' [Ibid] Such like interaction among them become the reason of quarrel. Thus, the wedding crowd dispersed and Barga had left out without wedding of his daughter Ratna. The days passed out but Ratna could not maintain her life. She had never seen out of her house again due to shock of her wedding. Once, Laxman's father said that Ratna become mad and started to scream and shouting whenever she had seen the bride-groom. During that suffering she had died. The whole credit of Ratna's tragedy goes to the upper caste mentality.

### **3.2.17. Portrayal of College Life:**

Doing odd jobs such as selling newspaper, bread-butter and washing dishes in Karnya's hotel, Laxman has completed the metric. As usually he has failed in Mathematics and English, next six months he had studied hard and given the exam repute and passed finally on boundary. During that time, Narayan had got the admission in agriculture college, Kolhapur. Due to admitted in eleventh class, Laxman had given respect to his parents. He had improved his language and manners. His father was happy but angry too because he couldn't marry according to him. He had joined the Kirti College, Kolhapur. Ramdas, Subhash, Nana, Popat and he himself were begun to live together once again. His college life passed joyfully. The college staff was superior. There were hundred and fifty students in each class. The teachers delivered their lecture daily; everyone was prompt in his

work. There were most of girls were pretty but he could not dare to talk to them. The college was belongs to Rayat Education Foundation therefore all teachers and principal too were from rural area. They have talk to students very freely and happily. Due to this atmosphere, he has certain improvement in his life style.

### **3.2.18. Portrayal of bravery:**

The first year of college was unforgettable for the narrator. Once, the lecture of Hindi was going on, unexpectedly a boy like rowdy, long hair and strong, was entered to the class and sat next a girl. Therefore, the atmosphere of classroom was changed. By saw this the teacher left out the class and Principal was comes but still the boy could not left the class. As a result, the college boys attacked him next even the girls too join them. It was first time Laxman was emerged Victorians in fight. If the question rose to measure the bravery has seen by the narrator in fight. The answer of this question was nothing. It was assemblage victory. From this incident Laxman become famous among in College students and in college staff too. The pre-degree year examination was coming to close. The whole six months were studding hard and as a result of this he had passed pre-degree in all subjects first time.

### **3.2.19. Portrayal of Love:**

Around this time, there was a new drama began. One day Laxman and Narayan were busy in cooking; a letter had come for Narayan. It was shock for them while reading this letter. Because it was send by a young girl from Phaltan, who was a daughter of Shinde family. Bothe of them was in confusion therefore they don't know what to do. It was not easy to give her any suggestion. Once again a letter has come which was written in extremely desperation. But they could not send her reply of these two letters. But soon they received third letter and called to Narayan at Phaltan. As a result, both of them went to Phaltan and meet a girl and discussed on nearby all issues. She has to tell him you are

explaining such wonderful thoughts. Why don't marry me? Narayan have tried to explain her about love and other but she could not hear anything. Finally, while leaving them she said: 'If you return alone to Kolhapur, I will kill myself!' [Ibid: 155] Finally, the Narayan had decided to marry her and went to Kolhapur with the help of friends and married her. It was not a matter of fun but a revolutionary step taken by Narayan.

### **3.2.20. Portrayal of Caste-Conflict:**

During that time, the college has transferred at new place where he has work as caretaker. The class was going on but he could not attend a class. At that time, he knew that he was included in the list of Backward Classes. Therefore, he had started to get the scholarship. On such occasion a letter of his parents was came and invited to him for wedding ceremony of his father's sisters' daughter. It was both happy and sadness, because father had to suffer from humiliation on his account and happy because she was finally married. Though his fixed marriage was broken but at the same time the new episode of love has been started. Once, a letter was sent by Brahmin girl through the book. It was read out at the latrine and discussed with Narayan who has tried to explain the reality. Finally, he had asked her about marriage. She has replied that 'I have not yet thought about marriage. But we will talk about it.' [Ibid: 161] When she comes to know that Laxman was Belongs to Backward Classes, she said: 'I had presumed that you might at least be a Maratha... Now that I know your caste, I don't think I can marry you.' [Ibid] This is real life understood by the narrator.

### **3.2.21. Portrayal of *Dalit* Consciousness:**

It was time of social awareness, an issues was spread to entire Kolhapur that Shankaracharya of Jagganathpuri have come to Kolhapur to lay the foundation stone of temple. Dr Kumar Saptarshi had opposed to this man and opened a public debate on this issue. It was read out through the newspaper that Dr. Baba Adhav and Kumar Saptarshi

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were openly opposed to the Shankaracharya. He was ready to agree with them and tried to think about the issue of caste and religion. He was known to many people who were sympathetic about the downtrodden included Bapusaheb Patil. He was busy to attend the speeches given by Scholars.

Shankaracharya was a supporter of *Chaturvarna* and caste system. Therefore, he had hate him and tried to started arguing with his friends on this topic. As he was determined to prove him wrong, Laxman began to read more. He had involved in the procession which was arranged in against of Shankaracharya. He ad seen human beings can carried out the Goddess on their Shoulder but unknown towards the man who have sat in the silver palanquin containing human being. As a result, the rain of shows can flying towards Shankaracharya. In this way, Laxman became aware of the social movement. He came in contact with Prof. Mangaokar, Baburao Paritekar and Nansaheb Mane, who were the members of the *Dalit* Youth Association. He became the member of this association but could not live long. Due to internal dispute among *Dalit* themselves he had founded a new association named Dr. Ambedkar School of thoughts. Under its auspices they had started a primary School of children in the settlement of the nomadic tribes but didn't last for long.

### **3.2.22. Portrayal of Inter-caste:**

During that time, Laxman fell in live with Shashi, who was belongs to Marata community. Therefore, it spread in allover the friends. They tried to convening that could not marry her only she belongs to Maratha. Due to that his friends likes Narayan, Ramdas, Maruti, Kalokhe, Bankar and Kumbhar were left the room. Their close friendship has been broken out. But it is the rule of nature where there is end, there is birth. According to this nature law the old friends can far away but new friend can attached him included Matkar. But he was hurt as his friends those who were shared the meal in one plate; they were kept away on the caste issue. Only positive matter of this issue was that at least Narayan was on talking him. Finally, with the help of Prof.

Patangaokar, Prof. Dhoble, Sursh, Bapusaheb and Prof. Deshpande, Laxman had married with Shashi.

### **3.3.23. Practice of Untouchability:**

The Kaikadies were treated as untouchables. Anybody who accidentally touched a Kaikadi would bathe again. Women from the villages served them water and food by keeping distance. They were not allowed to attend auspicious ceremonies like marriages, engagements, birthdays, etc. They were denied to sit and speak with the high class people in the villages. Laxman was memorized marriage ceremony along with his friends. He was forced to leave half eaten meal because of his birth in a Kaikadi family. Laxman recalls: 'The row was full of Maratha children. Then there came a bearer who happened to be from our village and an invitee to the wedding. As he approached me, he opened his eyes wide, bent down and thundered- Son of a Kaikadi low caste! Have you taken leave of your senses? Get up and get out!' [Ibid] When Laxman's father came to know that his son had attended a marriage of a high caste friend and polluted the whole ceremony, he beat Laxman very cruelly. Kaikadis believed that they were untouchables and they had no right to participate in the marriages of high class people and eat along with them. This is an example of self- exploitation.

### **3.4. Self Identity and Roots of *Dalit's* Humiliation and Injustice:**

Laxman Mane's *An Outsider* is gives the details of Kaikadies Humiliation and Injustice.

#### **3.4.1. Episode of Wild Tradition:**

Kaikadi community have a tradition to inform the village chief of their arrival in the town and provide all the information of their belongings. They were allowed to live out of towns in huts under the trees. They were treated as untouchables. Anybody who

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accidentally touched a Kaikadi would bathe again. Women from the villages served them water and food by keeping distance. They were not allowed to attend auspicious ceremonies like marriages, engagements, birthdays, etc. They were denied to sit and speak with the high class people in the villages. Laxman was humiliated when he went to attend marriage ceremony along with his friends. He was forced to leave half eaten meal because of his birth in a Kaikadi family. He recalls: ‘The row was full of Maratha children. Then there came a bearer who happened to be from our village and an invitee to the wedding. As he approached me, he opened his eyes wide, bent down and thundered- Son of a Kaikadi low caste! Have you taken leave of your senses? Get up and get out!’ [Ibid: 2] When Laxman’s father came to know that his son had attended a marriage of a high caste friend and polluted the whole ceremony, he beat Laxman very cruelly. Kaikadi’s believed that they were untouchables and they had no right to participate in the marriages of high class people and eat along with them. This is an example of self-exploitation.

### **3.4.2. Humiliation at School Days:**

Due to efforts of his father Laxman could went to school. His parents dreamt of him becoming a ‘master: teacher’. During school days, the children from high class were going to tease him. Even the teacher too harassed him by no reason. Being a backward caste, he always was tortured by well-off and upper class people. Still, he went to school regularly and be never paid attention towards the teasing and mocking. He was ignorant about book; notebook, pen and pencil, as no one from his family and also from his community had ever attended school. His oppression was same in all the villages. They never tried to speak to him and Laxman also didn’t feel like speaking to them. Regarding to this, he said: ‘I was going to school regularly, when we made a halt in a village, I had to go to school of that village. Now I was used to it. I do not mix with the other students. They too were not prepared to approach me.’ [Ibid: 69]

### **3.4.3. Portrayal of Dagdu Ramoshi:**

Kaikadi community was always a first suspect of any theft and crime that occurred in village, even if they were not involved. They used to be picked up by police for no reason and were subjected to jail for days. As saw the Dagdy Ramoshi who was coming to opposite direction, the Kaikadi community was stopped their journey. Laxman's father was fall at the feet of Dagdy's feet and begging the forgiveness. But Dagdy could not ready to understand them. He has refused to oblige repeating that he would be held responsible for any theft that might have occurred in the village. Therefore, he was going to claque the bags and luggage of them. Regarding to this, Dagdy said, 'I have to search all your bags. What do I know about you? Beggars that you are! Mother- fuckers! Who knows whether you have stolen anything from someone in the village!' [Ibid: 29] As a result, father gave him a hen and some money as they were blameless but not theft.

### **3.4.4. Portrayal of Balut:**

Once, the narrator was gone with his mother to Sascal for selling wares. Sascal was his village where no other Kaikadi family done this work. It was the tradition among Kaikadi community to sell their wares in a particular village, which was given him in the form of *Balut*. During harvest days, Kaikadies were gone to the field and gratefully accept whatever the farmer gave. In exchange of this Kaikadies had to work free of charge throughout the year. It includes green chillies, groundnuts, sometimes something to prepare curry with, by way of their rightful due known as *Balut*. Regarding to this Laxman said: 'As mother begged the village women to buy her wares, she had to sell them very cheap. She would feel distress. She had to take whatever was given to her. Then she would tie the *bhakri* and the rest of the things in a bundle.' As saw this picture the narrator feels awful and thought about her mother's earning, how she had worked and how she got only leftovers. It was the Indian society. Once, Regarding to this, Laxman memorized: '... caught red-handed cutting down the canes, she would be cursed and

abused held by the hair and even mercilessly beaten up by the peasants. Even Father would be beaten up in such a situation. They called themselves lucky if they were allowed to go home after being beaten. For, at times, they were taken to the village chief and then to the police station and then before a magistrate.’ [Ibid: 60-61] It was daily routine to bear the humiliation of villagers and landlord.

#### **3.4.5. Insult at the Wedding Feast:**

Once, Laxman had attended the wedding ceremony of Jagtap Family with his friends in Jinti. There he was happy to move freely and play with the other boys; they were his classmates who had behaved with him differently. At the time of feast, because of their force Laxman was standing in the row of high class people. His friends said to him that no one could recognize therefore he was ready to join them for meal. Their meal was half over, the feast server had seen him to standing in the row of Maratha children and therefore he became angry and said: ‘Son of a Kaikadi low-caste! Have you taken leave of your senses? Get up and get out!’ [Ibid: 107] Laxman had left his meal and gone away. No one can intervene to them however he was angry about this state of mind. Due to this a question haunted him that return to his home, he would be roasted alive and that thought brought tears to his eyes.

Thus, Laxman narrates, ‘Kaikadis, in a helpless condition, turned towards begging and robbing. They were hungry for food, education, equality, liberty and identity.’ [84] He courageously has narrated all the sorrows and sufferings of a community that was wandering in the darkness of suppression, exploitation, oppression and marginalization.

#### **3.5. Rejection to Traditional Hindu Culture and Acceptance to Buddhist Culture:**

The Kaikadi community is a nomadic tribe. The people from these community have been moving from one place to other for generations together, loading their hearth and home



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on the backs of donkeys, selling baskets made of cane, doing seasonal jobs like cattle tending and working in farms during harvesting. They have no records of their birth-death. They remember their birth dates as per seasons or important seasons or important incidents. In relation to this, Laxman said his birth date was remembered by his father because he was born on the day when Mahatma Gandhi was died. As a result of his father's effort, Laxman admitted to school. But he was always teased by his classmates because of his community, clothes and his language. Still, he went to school regularly. Such subjugation can be seen all over India. Therefore, since hundreds of years Kaikadies have been wandering in the darkness of illiteracy. Being educated he has broke out the the tradition of marraige, which is took place at the age of fifteen to seventeen, and married with Shashi as as an intercaste marriage. He was not only attracted towards Buddhism but also **'converted to [Buddhism](http://en.wikipedia.org/) along with his people from his community.'** [<http://en.wikipedia.org/>] He has been starteetd the work for his communit as a social work till today.

### **3.6. Summing up:**

*Upara* is world famous *Dalit* autobiography, which was written by Laxman Mane.

The author had no pretensions to become a writer, nor was he engaged with any literary activity. He writes because he wants to tell the experiences of struggle, oppression, exploitation and agonies to the society. Laxman Mane's unending struggle started from his childhood and it reached its peak after his inter-caste marriage. Laxman Mane through this autobiography revealed experiences of oppression and marginalization and also his strife for achieving liberty, dignity, pride and status of human being. Reviewing *Upara* by Archana Parashar said,

**...this autobiography clearly indicates the writer's intellectual struggle and the social fervour to bring to forefront the acute suffering of the oppressed classes, their psychic disruptions and their systematic strive to create space**

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for themselves and their respective cultures and communities.

[[www.ijhss.com](http://www.ijhss.com)]

There were many celebrities conveyed their response with a deep sense of sympathy. The reviews appeared in all over India including the newspaper *Tarun Bharat* (Belgaon, KN), most of the dailies, weeklies, fortnightlies and monthlies in Maharashtra. All India Radio and Television too critically appreciated *Upara: An Outsider*. An editor of Sakal newspaper, S. G. Mungekar wrote regarding to the assembly of people at Satara: **‘I have seen many people felicitated, but today I am seeing for the first time such an enormous crowd gathered to witness the felicitations rendered to a writer. [Mane: 1997: 8]**

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**Chapter IV: A Cultural Study of Siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri***

## 4.1. Introduction:

Siddalingaiah is one of the India's foremost *Dalit* writers. He has written *Ooru Keri* first in Kannada language as an article in the Kannada magazine *Rujuvatu*, and the English translation by Dr. D. R. Nagaraj [editor and critic] came out in the magazine section of Deccan Herald during 1995. With five parts of nostalgic memories, *Ooru Keri* was again translated by S.R. Ramakrishna [Founder and Editor, The Music Magazine] in 2003 and was published as *Dalit* autobiography. Siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri* portrays his life-long struggles with poverty, hunger, and humiliations in the village Magadi of Karnataka. *Ooru* is the place (village, a town) where all non-*Dalit* castes- from the Brahmins and the land-owning castes to the service castes like the barbers- live, and it contains the settlement's main temples. *Keri* is the place where *Dalits* live; it is geographically separated from the main body of a village; socially, it is set off from the mainstream society. Therefore, the principle aim of this chapter is to focus on the cultural study of Siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri* as a *Dalit* text. It can be interpreted and analyzed under the following points:

- A cultural study of siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri*:
- The life experiences of pain i.e. cultural assertion:
- Self-identity and roots of *dalit's* humiliation and injustice:
- Rejection to traditional hindu culture and acceptance to buddhist culture:
- Summing up:

## **4.2. Cultural Study of Siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri*:**

Siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri* exposes bitter truth, and anxiety of *Dalits* in Karnataka state. His autobiography portrays his life-long struggles, atrocities, caste discrimination and poverty. Thus, the present research has done cultural study of Siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri*.

### **4.2.1. House Structure:**

By traditionally, village has various lanes which have represented Indian caste system. But there was no place of *Dalit* in lane of village; they have thrown out of the village. In relation to this, Siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri* begins with same view: '**Ours was the last house in the colony.**' [Siddalingaiah: 2003: 1] His house was last in the village, its roof had collapsed. It was made by mud and slight high which shows that how *Dalits* are backward. He further narrates regarding to his house: 'Our house was very small. It was not enough for four or five people to sit comfortably, leave alone seep.' [Ibid: 70] Due to economic troubles, his family migrated from place to place. Graveyard settlement was one of the migration places, where he lives out of house. It shows that *Dalits* have no firm address, they are migrate states.

### **4.2.2. Living and Thinking:**

Living and Thinking is the state of mind and society. *Dalits* have no think tank like other community. They lives simply and wore old and torn clothes. Regarding to this, Siddalingaiah narrates: 'Occasionally, Ainooru also give me some old, tattered shirts and pants that his son had discarded. I was younger than his son, and the clothes fitted me very loosely. Yet I wore them folded up, looking odd among my companions.' [Ibid: 3] *Dalits*, thus, lives like animal which has no logical power.

### 4.2.3. Food:

Food plays a fundamental role in *Dalit* society. Once, Siddalingaiah's father Dyavanna took him to an orthodox Brahmin house. Land-owner gave them previous night's leftover. Siddalingaiah never saw and ate a complete food like the leftover. Therefore, he narrates: 'When Appa, Avva and I went town and stood in front of his house, he gave us the *citranna* and *poori* leftover from the previous night. I had never tasted these delicacies before.' [Ibid: 2-3] Though he stood in the front of door, but his concentration was at leftover.

Similar incident can be seen in Baby Kamble's *The Prisons: We Broke*, when *Yeskar* Mahar roam for collected a bundle of stale food and returned home, where everyone waiting to taste the leftover:

**When he stood at the door of the high caste house, he was forbidden to call out. He had to sound the bell on his stick thrice. . . His entire family would dine on this food. . . [Kamble: 2009: 75]**

It shows that how *Dalits* state was worst. Siddalingaiah further describes the pitiable conditions of the *Dalit* community who starve for daily bread: 'That was a time of drought everywhere. People had to struggle even for a morsel of food. Some threw ceremonial fests to appease the rain god. During fests, the Holeyas were made to sit in a corner. We were noticed only after people of the upper castes had been served. I felt contented with whatever little food came my way, and wouldn't think much about the discrimination.' [Siddalingaiah: 2003: 7]

Famine and natural disasters affect all people equally, but *Dalits* were considered the last beneficiaries. Due to famine, Siddalingaiah's family moved to Bangalore and his father worked in nearby firewood depots to run the family. Siddalingaiah joined a government primary school where he admitted to third standard. By inspiring and given support to Andalamma, Brahmin teacher, he settled at a slum area called Srirampura in Bangalore



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and began to concentrate on his study. There everyone has his own problems and quarrels. One day, there was quarrel took place in between father and son. All of a sudden, son loses his temper and said: 'Why did you father me if you can't take care of me? his father would retort equally hotly, 'If I knew a worthless fellow like you would be born, I would never have fathered you.' [Ibid: 37] Regarding to wretched condition of *Dalits*, Siddalingaiah further narrates: 'Some women would shout loudly to their husbands, why did you get married when you can't bring home enough to feed us? Silence was the men's answer. Some little children beat up their parents when they felt hungry.

A boy called Ramu hadn't the least respect for his father. When people asked him (Ramu) about his father's health, he would say indifferently, He isn't dead yet. [Ibid] It means though *Dalits* married but they couldn't solved the subject of food. Siddalingaiah's mother fixed the name to R. Gopalaswamy Iyer, a *Dalit* hostel in Srirampura. She herself works as a sweeper there. Every day after the hostel boys were served, the leftover was given to the workers. She used to take home the *mudde*, and *saru* (meal), it solves the food problem of Siddalingaiah's family.

The food served at hostel was not enough to fill stomach. Therefore, there was quarrel takes place in between boys for leftover meal. In relation to this, Siddalingaiah narrates: If there was any *mudde* left, the practice was to serve all those sitting in line. They used to call his extra. Very young refused it. Older boys would rush in and reserve seats for younger boys.' [Ibid: 47] In relation to this, Siddalingaiah wrote a bunch of poetry around this time. The quality of hostel food was cheap. Therefore, he has written a poem about it. It began like:

*Koduvaru namage jola, Kadime haakuvaru kaala,*

*Aaguttade rakta bedhi, Aadaroo kodalollaru ragi godhi.* ' [Ibid: 61]

It means hostel given them maize, and very little gram. Due to that blood goes in their motion, yet they refuse their ragi and wheat. However, Siddalingaiah's self-survival and

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progress show that he was a representative of *Dalit* people whose life is surrounded with poverty and struggle.

### **4.2.4. Occupation:**

Siddalingaiah's parents were uneducated and worked as farm labourers. Ainoru's field was only income source for them. However, they worked in their land. They worked as cultivate the Ainoru's land on the basis of sharecropper. When his parents went away to work, the work of Siddalingaiah was taken care of the house. At the evening, he would look for the hens and put them under the coop. He was to make a light in his house. His family belongs to farm labourers and gets low-income, sometime nothing. He grows up like any *Dalit* wanton boys- humiliated and unable to comprehend why his family was made to suffer. His early memories, he said, were of how his father was unable to find work in Magadi, causing the family to move finally to Bangalore. Being as citizen of Bangalore, his father worked in nearby firewood depots to run the family. His people used to go Shivanahalli tank and collected tuber, yams, and greens to make night meal. They are their main food. The people of his colony got into debt by Marwadi shop. Many times they even failed to pay the interest upon the debt.

In this way, Siddalingaiah's father became a huge debtor. In spite of miserable poverty, Siddalingaiah attended free night-school. He began to realize self-respect and dignity from his teachers at the school. Siddalingaiah's mother worked as a sweeper in a *Dalit* hostel in Srirampura. Every day, after the boys were served, the leftover was given to the workers. His mother used to take home the *mudde* and *saru* (meal). This leftover solved many of *Dalits'* starvation. As soon as his appetite for food was fulfilled, he began to ponder over the thoughts of Ambedkar.

By his hard work and the influence of Periyar and Ambedkar, he got some transition in his poverty overwhelmed life. Similarly, Siddalingaiah read Ambedkar's books and gave

speeches. Thereby, he earned sufficient money and bought clothes and books. Sometimes, he sold the prize cups to get books. Besides, he narrates: ‘Once, when I was returning after emptying the garbage into the pit, someone recognized me and came forward to talk to me. Before he could open his mouth to say Aren’t you Siddalingaiah? I contorted my already grimy face and limped my way to the owner’s house. ...I wonder how much of the book I understood then. But there was no limit to my joy I worked for three or four months here and bought good books with the money I earned. [Siddalingaiah: 2003: 70] Thus, he got the books for study by working in the house, factories, and by making speeches.

#### **4.2.5. Custom, Rituals and Festivals:**

As Maxine Berntson stated in the Introduction to Marathi version of *Jina Amucha* that, **‘The customs, rituals, festivals and the *Jatras* are indeed a source of unexplored treasure for a sociologist.’** [Berntson: 2009: VII] *Ooru Keri* talks about *Dalits*’ blind beliefs and superstitions. Both men and women possessed the evil spirit and considered it as the curse of God and Goddesses. There was a temple of Mari in Siddalingaiah’s colony, which was worshipped by old woman as a priest. They have celebrated the Mari festival in his colony. There was another Goddess named Jaldagere Amma, who worshipped by entire village. She had many devotees and therefore she becomes conscious in the village.

Siddalingaiah’s mother was one of the strong devotees of Goddess Jaldagere Amma. If something happened badly, *Dalits* go towards Goddess Jaldagere Amma and tried to make a solution from Godly figure, devotees of Goddess. She believes that Goddess come in her body and talk like common men. Siddalingaiah narrates: ‘When she greeted her teeth, making a *nore nora* sound, people trembled and broke out in a sweat.’ [Siddalingaiah: 2003: 4] Like this she makes the solution on family matters. There was a

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disease to dream a variety of dreams in his village. Dead human beings and relatives were goes in their dreams and teased them. A dead girl was so famous in their village to propagate by villagers. She could not wonder alone to the villagers. If someone walks alone, she will make a sound and confused them. He further said: 'Go, I spare you this time.' [Ibid] Due to this, crop of God and Goddess developed in *Dalit* society. It points out that *Dalit* society had totally sunk in the flow of superstition.

Siddalingaiah came to know that he has a separate God and *gurus*. Once, his mother said 'our guru had arrived; our entire family went to the mulberry tree up the street. They fell at his feet and presented their offerings. He was in the lineage of Mentaswamy's disciple.' [Ibid: 8] Mentaswamy was his family deity which worshiped by entire village. Therefore, it was believes that to visit guru is nothing but to meet Mentaswamy. The Mentaswamy tradition was not a commen in Magadi but found in Manday and Mysore district too. Once, guru had come to his village by such a long way but, doesn't come to Holeya colony. He was a higher caste guru and goes to only caste people. Siddalingaiah's family felt grateful to that he had come at least mulberry tree. They had happy to meets him and feel satisfied by acquiring his bless.

Once, Siddalingaiah and his family went to Avverahalli, maternal aunt's town. It was a beautiful and nature made village, where he experienced well rather than his native place. He narrates: 'In the morning, peacocks came in clusters to dance at the foot of the hill across their house. A little way down, the Arkavati, river, flowed with *a julu julu* cadence. The river ran towards Manchanabele, narrator's native place, striking the trees and meandering along the hills and mountains.' [Ibid: 16] His aunts husband Kalingaih was a well known hunter therefore who tasted varied meats. Due to his uncle, he tastes the rabbit meat at his maternal aunt's town. There was, once, a festival took place in honour of the village goddess.

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On such occasion, a deity had possessed someone and run away. Devotees of its deity have followed and stopped at the place where deity has stay. It was a tradition in this festival. There was also making a conversation in between deity and *yajaana*. To be possessed is a common phenomenon in *Dalit* society. It was a sheep deity, neighboring village of Siddalingaiah, who demands a sheep when possession took place. When sheep deity comes in human body, it would shout, 'sheep, sheep.' [Ibid: 20] The simple and mad devotees would ask humbly, 'Which sheep, mother?' [Ibid] Then, sheep deity says any sheep therefore priest and devotees make avail a sheep which would be expected to sheep deity and enjoyed sheep meal before the Goddess. It was a fear of God and Goddess to make sheep ceremony. It was not devotee's desire to done but due to fear of Goddess they done like this.

Once, as usual, God possessed a priest and demands the sheep. By fearing devotees grabbed sheep and brought it before him, the Goddess said, 'I don't want this sheep. Bring m another. The crowd was astounded. Why don't you want it, mother?' [Ibid] Thus, there was no solution in dialogue between devotee and deity. But devotees understood the intention of priest to demands healthy sheep and therefore they beat him till he resembled a crushed coconut. It points out that on the name of God, religion and caste priest were tried to looted (exploited) poor people. Thus, regarding to the ritual, in an Interview with Bhartiraja S., K.A. Gunasekaran said:

**India is a caste based society. Here, caste pride is sustained in marriage, election, festivals, and other rituals.'**

[<http://cantorion.org.archive.org/>]

### **4.2.6. Superstitions:**

Regarding to *Ooru Keri* it is true that *Dalits* have not escaped from the clutches of the blind faith. They are not God- loving but a God-fearing people. Ghost is a common phenomenon of superstition. Siddalingaiah narrates varied ghost episodes, but he says

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that he is an atheist now. Narrator's father had three bits of land which was cultivated by his parents. Besides of his field, there was a mango tree land. No one can walk alone near to this mango tree. Everyone feel there was ghost who makes a terrified sound like *tap tap*. He said: 'One evening, when I was returning home all by myself, I heard a clapping sound. I was aghast, and fled, stumbling and falling along the way. I caught my breath only after I reached home.' [Siddalingaiah: 2003: 2] Not only ghost but also Hakmari, a Marathi word, meaning 'caller' plays a major role in *Ooru Keri*.

There was a Goddess Koogu Mari, who tried to shock the village. It was believed that Mari would stand in front of a house and call out the name of one of the women. If the woman answered innocently with an 'O?' she would vomit blood and die right there. Many women started saying, 'I heard a call, but didn't answer because I already knew about it.' [Ibid: 4] They came to think that such women as being very intelligent. The villagers had 'Come tomorrow' incomprehensible on their doors, in the belief that Mari would read the message and go away. Some said the cause of all this was the sighting of a comet in the early morning sky. To see if this was true, people woke up early. They cited a comet, and ended up even more terrified. At this time, a holy man came to the village, and predicted that a rain of fire and a deluge would end the world within fourteen days. Such superstitious feelings can emerged in minds of uneducated people.

Being migrated from Magadi to Bangalore, Siddalingaiah joined R. Gopalswamy Iyer, *Dalit* hostel in Sirampura. Three hundred students can live at one place but ghost there too appeared. Ghost is not physical matter but a state of mind which has hammered on our mind from childhood. That is why; we could not live without the idea of ghost. It was believes that hostel has a huge sampige tree which was the home of ghost. Every student believes on ghost but not seen others. Once, hostel boys bathing at early morning, 'a fire broke out in the field in front. The boys, shouting that it was a torch ghost, started running.' [Ibid: 43] Being frightened, they wore clothes and come out to bathrooms.

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It was a tradition to pray to God at the morning after bath. All the students attended this spiritual ceremony at every morning. One day, a prayer was going on daily routine. Suddenly, a boy loudly said in Hindi, 'Stop the prayer.' [Ibid: 44] The warden stooped his praying and enquired about the problems of that boy who make loud. Regarding to this, Siddalingaiah said: That day, someone had said, 'Get up and go for prayer. He had a flung aside his blanket thinking it was the warden, but it wasn't. This man's feet were on the floor, near the mat, but his head was high up, near the roof!' [Ibid] Being understood it was ghost he make loud. Siddalingaiah once again experienced the ghost at dinner in hostel. All boys were sat in row expecting dinner. There was a suspicious student sat with them, who never seen before at hostel. He looked at his face which seems normal. 'His misgivings not put to rest, he glanced at his feet. They were not only three times the normal length but also flipped backwards.' [Ibid: 45] Being understood he was not normal, he called, ghost, ghost. Thus, all boys were runs here there.

### **4.3. The Life Experiences of Pain i.e. Cultural Assertion:**

Siddalingaiah was born at Magadi, Ramnagar district of Karnataka, where his childhood was submerged into poverty. In his article, *Siddalingaiah's Self Sprung Achievement in Ooru Keri- an Autobiography: A Study*, S. Bhartiraja said: **Siddalingaiah's childhood was submerged into poverty. His family belongs to farm labourers and gets low-income, and sometimes nothing.** [Bhartiraja: 2012: 76] Thus, these were not only life-long experiences but its journey of pain travelled by Siddalingaiah that is known as cultural assertion.

#### **4.3.1. Episode of Ainoru:**

The Ainoru was a land owner or head of village like patil in Maharashtra. He has a beautiful house with a huge well and a pump set cabin in his field, which prolonged 500 to 600 feet. The water from his pump set irrigated his land. It means he has wastage the water in land but couldn't give to trusty *Dalits* from Magadi. Once, the narrator noticed a

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strange incident when he climbs on squat walls. There was a man had fastened a yoke into the shoulders of two others, and was ploughing Ainoru's land. It was an amusing picture two men who were work like bullocks and third one was swinging a whip and making them plough. It was a strange agony gripped him because of one of the men carrying the yoke was his father. Suddenly, a woman come and said: 'What a plight has befallen poor Dyavna (Father of narrator)!' [Siddalingaiah: 2003: 2] It makes a agonize feelings in him.

Siddalingaiah's parents were illiterate therefore they nurture flowers and vegetables from Sanjeevaiah's garden. By selling it, they earned two *annas* (money) in Magadi market. One day, he go back to garden and stood on the near to the embankment tank. There was a crowd who buses in their work on the tank. Unexpectedly, a stranger has shouted therefore women, men and children were starting to run towards a Brahmin house. Siddalingaiah too runs like others and reached to Brahmin's door. As a result of this, Brahmin had given leftover *poori* and *chitranna*. He was nervous to be the last get there, but was happy too by seen his parents receiving leftover.

### **4.3.2. Episode of Friendship:**

There was a poor family besides narrator's house in his native place, Megalahtti. There was always a quarrel in between husband and wife. The husband was short and lean, who smoked a *beedi* always. His wife was always argued with him and beats him. He had a close friend, which shows a figure of friendship for society. One day, both of them were went to photo studio and got themselves photographed together. It was hung on their wall of homes by giving a message of love and friendship. But the friendship could not go long therefore both of them had tore out the photograph. No one can guess about their broken friendship. Now there was only a glass which shows the single photo. It is the symbol of broken friendship.



### 4.3.3. Episode of Minister:

Megalahatti was a tiny place where narrator's family lived. It has Manteswamy tradition which shows the culture of *Dalits*. Once, early morning was abuzz with a festive air. A thatched enclosure was erected and chairs lined up. The streets were decorated with garland of mango leaves. Every house had pooled in money for a public ceremony was saying, 'The minister is coming today.' [Ibid: 9] Being curious *Dalit* children want to see the minister and how he looks like. Therefore, they were at the road till sun rose to the middle of the sky, but minister doesn't come. Everyone saw the crowd of women and children on the road. The hired chairs were sent back. It makes anger towards minister in *Dalit* society.

### 4.3.4. Portrayal of Accident:

There was a tarmac road which divides in two parts: one was a village and other was the Holeya colony. One side there were houses of caste people and other side were a houses of *Dalits*. Therefore, it was always seen a rush on the road, which makes horrible sound like *pom...pom*. One day, *Dalit* children were watching buses and made fun. The boys on the side were more adventurous, they were playing up and down on the iron ladders at the back side of the parked buses. A bus suddenly pulled backwards. The boys on the ladder fell to the ground with a *dhap* sound, and the bus ran over a girl. She was crushed. Everyone becomes emotional and search to driver and conductor. The driver has managed to escape from the crowd but conductor couldn't escape. The crowd caught hold of the conductor and thrashed him. Finally, other side crowd too thrashed him till he couldn't get unconscious. Someone from crowd said: 'The conductor is also dead.' [Ibid: 10] It was heartrending to the narrator.

### 4.3.5. Portrayal of Sheep Delivery:

Siddalingaiah had an uncle named Doddappa, whose daughters don't go to school. They would graze cattle. He went along with these cousins to graze his cows and sheep. He was varying fond of a particular sheep. Among them, one sheep was pregnant which have grazing by me. Once, when he goes to forest for grazing cattle a pregnant sheep gave a birth in his hands. The new born started hopping around. He called out others and drink it a milk of its mother. It was unforgettable moment for him. He gave a new experience at childhood which was remained in his mind.

### **4.3.6. Portrayal of Mimicry:**

Due to the effort of his mother, Siddalingaiah admitted to school. Nagappachar was a class teacher, who was very strict fellow. One day, a school inspector visited his school. Therefore, entire school spent a long time in school and teased the students by asking questions like to write and read. On such occasion, his lips were connected with each other like *chaper...chaper*. It was keenly observed by Siddalingaiah and make fun among his classmates to create mimicry of School inspector. He thus becomes popular among the classmates. Due to bored feeling, teacher said to students that sing a song. Suddenly, a boy said: 'Sir, he can show inspector lips.' [Ibid: 12] By humorsly, he asked: 'What is it... come on, show it to me.' [Ibid] In this way, Siddalingaiah mimicked inspector's speech, gestures, facial expressions and gait. It makes a full of laughter in the class. This incident creates an interest towards education.

### **4.3.7. Tragic episode of Doddappa:**

Doddappa was an elder uncle of Siddalingaiah, who was most educated, courageous man among the *Dalits*. One evening, a crowd had coming towards his house in the form of precession. It was Doddappa who seated on the horse which makes as a role of procession head. It was a victory procession in honour of uncle Alayya, who won an

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election of Magadi Muncipal council. He comes to home and touched the feet of grandfather. Without spending single money, he won this election. Therefore, he worked sincerely and earned a name and fame. Socially, he was harsh disciplined. Though his wife died before two years ago, but he hadn't married second time. It was his character but couldn't maintain his future safe. Once, he had borrowed money from a woman, who was money lender, and couldn't repay. Therefore, his life ended in tragedy.

### **4.3.8. Experience at Manchanabele:**

Manchanabele was maternal village where Siddalingaiah lived with his family. It was a more colourful than his native place Magadi. Everyone was speaking to him very affectionately. He has a grandfather named Pooraiiah, who was an assertive man. The members of his family were frightened whenever he comes at home. He was spending his long time to fresh at the morning. He always discussed about Mahatma Gandhi because he has attended Gandhi's speech once in very close. His wife, Siddalingaiah's grandmother, was a wealth of folk tales. She always took him along to festivals and weddings in other towns.

One day, Siddalingaiah was running at the street wildly, on the same time a man comes on the opposite side, which dashed me and make quarrel with me. Therefore, she had begged his forgiveness and went ahead. She said to join him his hands and say: '*Namaskara, swami*'. [Ibid: 15] It referred the Indian culture to feel less in compares to elder person. Once, he visited a wedding ceremony with his Ajji-grandmother. The groom was very old than bride. It was his second marriage. His Ajji was an expert in to catch the fishes. She had many cows. Regarding to this, Siddalingaiah said: 'Memories of Magadi town flooded my heart whenever I was with this cow. I also thought of my father in Bangalore.' [Ibid] There was number of folk stories heard by the narrator. Once, news comes that thieves had come to nearby village and everyone becomes disturbed being

heard the news of thieves. Thus, these are the life long experiences given by Siddalingaiah at his maternal village which can't forget him.

#### **4.3.9. Episode of Bus Journey:**

His memories of Manchanabele were adventurous. Being come back to Magadi, his family migrates to Bangalore. It was first time he experienced the Bus journey. Regarding to this, he said: ...including my father, mother and sisters, started feeling sick. Their faces looked pinched.' [Ibid: 21] Due to first journey they feel suffocated. Others those who were sited without windows they get vomit out. With dirty smell and uncomfortable seat they have to complete their journey.

#### **4.3.10. Experience at Srirampura:**

Srirampura was a slum area belongs to Bangalore, where people were buses to grow banana, drumstick and papaya. It was a big drain very close to Siddalingaiah's house. It was fresh water passed by this drain, which used for bath, wash clothes and clean vassals. However, this area was new to the narrator. Fighting, thieves, trouble, chaos, affairs, exploitation and family matters were common I this area. Several events have been took place at this area which haven't seen before this by Siddalingaiah. Among them rowdy and drunks was a common problem to his colony. There were many rowdies lived around his house. One night, a rowdy walks on the street where he felt going to lavatory. But suddenly a dog barked at him and tried to barge in. Being heard the voice, narrator's mother used to quarrel with him. As a result, this quarrel becomes riot in between commoners and rowdies. Being drunk they make a noise, dance and fight with his wife. Regarding to this, Siddalingaiah narrates: 'Some sang song in whatever manner they could. Their love for their wives and children brimmed over. Some would try to have sex with their wives in public.' [Ibid: 24] At such circumstances he made the grown up.

#### **4.3.11. Episode of Teacher, Andalamma:**

Siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri* is entirely a document of educational and political development of *Dalits*. He got food and basic needs from a Brahmin teacher Andalamma. In spite of poor background, he did not reveal his poverty. In school, free study materials were given, but Siddalingaiah did not get them. The teacher Andalamma saw the submissiveness and pleading face of Siddalingaiah and gave him more support in his studies: 'I joined a government primary school near the graveyard. I had completed the first and second standards at Magadi and Manchanabele, so I joined the third standard. [Ibid: 31-32] However, he settled at a slum called Srirampura in Bangalore and began to concentrate on his study. He also developed the art of speaking.

#### **4.3.12. Portrayal of Ice Candy:**

Every parent's wished their children would study hard and grown up. Siddalingaiah narrates that a man sends his son to school and had been given his study regularly. Once, they assemble for his study and demands to him for reading. A son has studied fourth class but doesn't learn properly. Pretending to read, he would speak whatever came in his mind. His parents were delighted to come to know that his son can read. It was bad experience given to Siddalingaiah at Srirampura. It was boy deceives his parents whereas someone who studied while works. He said that a boy stands in front of his high school. He was far away from him therefore he called out, 'Ey, ice candy.' [Ibid: 33] Being heard the voice of narrator he warned him to never call to him that again. He was getting surprised to see him with books instead of ice candy.

#### **4.3.13. Portrayal of Letter Reading:**

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By studied school Siddalingaiah got a job to read out the letters in his village. Whenever the letter arrived for reading he has invited with respect and sympathy. It gave him tasty foods like idli, dosa and others. People were so happy on him because he doesn't only read the letter but explained the meaning of this letter. He had got another job to write the letters and thus used this money to buy the books. During that time, his father worked as woodcutter. This job fetched him ten paise a killo and became his family's source of income. This money was not enough to maintain the family therefore his mother work at Shivanahalli tank.

### **4.3.14. Episodes of Puttapa's Tragedy:**

Puttapa was a close friend of Siddalingaiah, who met at fifth standard. His mother was fallen sick, that's why his father wasn't paying attention to her illness. In anger, she got admitted to the hospital for many days. Therefore, his father got ready to marry a second time. Suddenly, Puttapa's mother comes and known that her husband had married again. She became mad therefore they locked her in the room. When Puttapa goes to find her, his father and step-mother were thrashing him wildly. In this way, the crowd took his mother's side and relived them from these troubles. Puttapa's mother took him and goes to her mother's house, where she died within a year.

### **4.3.15. Portrayal of Hostel Life:**

Siddalingaiah had joined the R. Gopalaswamy Iyer, *Dalit* hostel of Srirampura, where his mother worked as a sweeper. It was new experience to him, because there were thousands of students live there. They were coming from different parts of Karnataka therefore they spoke varied languages. The hostel has four acre land which has used for playing volleyball and Kabbadi. He has fond of such games during the hostel life. Due to huge area of hostel there was number of ghost's myth. Marakunna was an adventurous boy, who doesn't afraid of ghosts. Once, he was on the bed and ghosts snatched his chopper with singing a song. He woke up and looks towards the ghosts those who were mocking

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him and dancing with his chopper. Instead of panic he joined and dance with them. As a result of this, ghosts became the slave of him and their friendship grown up. `

There was a tradition of prayer at early morning. The warden went each of the room and woke up every student for prayer. But among them there was a boy who most likes sleeping than prayer whose name was Govinda. Siddalingaiah also left prayer many times and stay at the cupboard like monkey. During that time, students were goes to morning walk therefore they feel hungry. The food served at the hostel was not enough to feel stomach and hence the boys concentrate on fruit trees from outside. Once, the boys climb on the tree and pluck the mango, guava and chakkota fruits. But suddenly the owner of the tree had come with stick. When house owner comes to the tree he said: 'This house is not your's father, come down, you thief.' [Ibid 49] However, boy couldn't come down he throw the stones towards him. The boy have been crying like, 'Ayyayyo.' [Ibid] Finally, he jumped from the tree and escaped.

The warden doesn't allow eating non-vegetarian at the hostel. Once, when the boys returned from market they have surprised to see the leg piece on dining hall. It indicates someone was eaten the non-vegetarian at the hostel. Therefore, boys feel that it was an insult of the name R. Gopaldaswamy Iyer, given to the hostel. During the eighth standard, Siddalingaiah met Rangadhamaiah, who encouraged for study. Regarding to this, he said: 'You are very bright. Don't go around with those three good for nothing. You are very poor. They are the children of wealthier parents. You are my friend from today. You must listen to what I say.' [Ibid: 55] As a result of this, all hostel felt that he was his guide. But it was not true he was only a good well-wisher.

Eating contest was common phenomenon in hostel life. A boy named Ramanjini was a master of this game, who always participated and won the game. Once, his father sends money for paid school fees. But he used it for contest and accepted the failure. Due to this, he drops out his school and joined waiter ship in Bangalore. There was another

tradition to said 'sir' to seniors. One day, Siddalingaiah was at the outside of hostel where a student have coming to opposite direction. He said, 'Hello, where have you been coming?' [Ibid: 57] being he inquired Siddalingaiah said, 'Just been here, kano.' [Ibid] On heard his voice, the student heat him and pushed in the gutter. This matter goes to warden, where he understood that said 'sir' to seniors at the outside of hostel too.

#### **4.3.16. Portrayal of Poetry Creation:**

Srirampura had many libraries, where several newspapers and journals were available. There was a student Basavanna in hostel, who gave Siddalingaiah a slim book named, *Avatarapurusha Ambedkar* (Ambedkar the Massiah). Being influenced this; he has started to write poetry. Siddalingaiah wrote revolutionary poems and had delivered them in his speeches. He first emerged on the public scene as a student leader in the 1970s, a period when *Dalit* rights issues had begun triggering conflict with the upper caste people. However, Siddalingaiah did not join active politics then because he had too much work as a Post-Graduate. Although he is a poet, it is his autobiography *Ooru Keri* that is shaping the literary thinking of researchers.

During the span of hostel life, he had read several books about Ambedkar and gained enough confidence to speak about him. Once, a letter comes from D. C. Hostel, Nazarbad, Mysore. It was invited to him for speech of Ambedkar. He accepted the invitation and goes to Nazarbad. It was his first speech delivered by him before hundreds of students in hostel. It was an unforgettable experience for him. In speech, he has given two myths, which impressed by the students as well as the warden. One day, there was Ambedkar day therefore Chief Minister Veerendra Patil, High Court Judge Bheemaiah, IAS Officer Bharanaiah and Minister B. Rachaiah was invited as guest in Town Hall. Among them Shataveri Gopal Gowda was the main speaker on Ambedkar. Due to Arekari Siddalingaiah had got an opportunity to deliver the speech on the same topic. Being heard the speech everyone fell in love with high school boy named Siddhlingaih.



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As result of this, they encourage him and became famous in his school as well as in town. This incident gave him a representation in other inter-high school debates and colleges.

### **4.3.17. Portrayal of College Life:**

Siddalingaiah admitted the Government Arts College and lives at *Dalit* hostel on Mahatma Gandhi road. Though he studied higher education but his poverty could not escape him. He had a broken trunk and tottered mat carried out to the *Dalit* hostel. The food of college level was good than school level. He got there a rice and chapatti twice in day. Due to this, his external appearance can be changed. He has bad experience at the school level that's why he doesn't said 'no' or 'enough' to food. He has turns his face whenever food was not served. As a result of this, his friends called him 'envious.' During the college life, he met a revolutionary poet Gajigatti, editor of English magazine People's Guard, and write poetry. He has comes contact with D.R. Nagraj, a member of Yuvaka Sangha, who encouraged to writes poetry therefore he could published his book of poetry entitled *Hole Madigara Hadu: Songs of the Holeyas and Madigas*. He has been participated various college debates and won the prize and cups. He has also joined the scheme of earn while you learn at Bangalore.

Siddalingaiah joined the Karnataka Association and was elected the Joint Secretary. He got an opportunity to associate himself with leaders like Dejjagow, Mariyappa Bhatta, G. Venkatasbhaiah and G.S. Shivarudrappa. Later he founded a society called *Vicharavadi Parishat* and visited all *Dalits* hostels around Bangalore. The association brought out the problems of hygiene, food, etc. He demonstrated the plight of *Dalits* to the Government of Karnataka. Under the leadership of Prof. M. D. Nanjundaswamy, Siddalingaiah was misused by politicians. Prof. M.D Najundaswamy asked Siddalingaiah and his followers to through 'handbills' at *Vidhana Soundha visitors* gallery where Ministers and Legislators participated. After that, police arrested Siddalingaiah and his friends. They were put in the lock-up. At midnight, they were released. Therefore, he understood that it was nothing but the political drama. This incident gives them a moral support to

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confidence to make a black flag demonstration against Indira Gandhi. It was the time of drought, instead of coming to Karnataka she goes to the *Darshan* of Swamiji. Therefore, on such occasion, the slogan of this association was 'Not to Udupi, go to Bidar.' [Ibid: 86] In this way, he established a society called *Vicharwadi Parishad*. The purpose of this society was to solve the problems of *Dalit* student. Regarding to this, a student said: 'We don't even get food, why do we need lavatories?' [Ibid: 89] Under its banner, *Dalit* students first protest procession taken out in Bangalore. Its demands were to increased scholarship amount, to repaired *Dalit* hostel. This meeting was took place with chief. Minister Devraj Urs, which paved the way for to construct the new buildings besides the two hostels on M G Road. The scholarship amount has been increased.

Once, Biligirirangaiah, guru of Siddalingaiah, comes at the hostel and said 'to arrange a function and invite the higher-ups of Syndicate Bank.' [Ibid: 90] On such occasion, he gave a welcome speech and vote of thanks like: 'Thanks to this function, schemes to help *Dalit* students take up higher studies came to be implemented by Syndicate Bank.' [Ibid] Basavalingappa was a controversial Minister in Devraj Urs's cabinet, once he said: 'Gandhiji didn't know the meaning of truth, to fling god's picture in gutter and the Kannada literature was boosa agitation' [Ibid: 94] The reply of these statements was to demands the resign of him by traditionalist and students. Indirectly the congress party was goes against him. It makes him anti-god, anti-Kannada and anti-Gandhi. As aresult of this, his resignation made him very popular among *Dalit* society. Due to this, a traditionalist group wanted the resignation of Siddalingaiah from secretary of Fine Arts. During this time, he came in contact with communist (Marxism) party of India. Not only he works for *Dalit* students but also started night school in slum area. As a night school student, he realized the importance of night school. He started night schools for Bangalore's slum children. The night school enlightened many downtrodden lives. They shout, 'Do something to get us to attend you classes.' [101] In this manner, Siddalingaiah evoked his tragic experiences to educated fellow men and women. In this way, his

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political affairs improved with rationalists. He also published his poetry in the magazine *Shudra*.

Another association was founded by Siddalingaiah as *Dalit Sangharsh Samiti*, which goes to the last part of society and makes awareness among them. He walked to many parts of Karnataka to establish *Dalit Sangharsh Samiti* movement (DSS). Through this movement, he brought out *Dalits* basic issues to the government. His movement began to progress. As far as his education was concerned, he got first class in M.A., Kannada language, and won the D. L. Narashimhachar Gold Medal. He was honoured with the post of Research Assistant at the Kannada Study Centre. In this way, Siddalingaiah's struggles made him self-empowered and got a desire for formal education from the beginning. Thus, as years passed, he considered that learning to read and write are the first steps toward self-empowerment.

#### **4.4. Self Identity and Roots of *Dalit's* Humiliation and Injustice:**

The sufferings and humiliations are an integral part of the *Dalit* struggle. As a result of this, Siddalingaiah is forced to live a neglected life and carry out the traditional roles without proper welfare. Besides narratr's house Banjara women went to the forest and collect firewood. It was ther daily routine. They have to done their task like Gandharvas, divine beings. But it was not easy work for them; because on the way of settlement some mischievous boys were tease ant taunt them. Being curced them, they had done their work continuously. Regarding to this, Siddalingaiah said: 'A young man called Puttanarasa once claimed, with some pride, that he had teased an old Banjara women from close quarters and that, flinging to the ground the bundal of firewood was carrying, she had lifted her sari and clapsed him under it.' [Ibid: 6] It was unbearable for Banjara women but due to low caste they could not do anything.

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Siddalingaiah narrates another incident, which contains severe humiliation. There was a woman who had no husband and children. She was forty years old lady but look like young. She has only one weakness was that she was always drunk. She was a labour by professionally, and returned home with drunk. It was a daily routine of her, because she passed day on the name of work but night always teased her. Therefore, she has used drink at night. Once, she was lay down at the streat due to more drunk. It was seen by rowdy and tried to exploit her physically. She was in conscious but could not resist to him. Others have also harrassed her as the same way. Thus, as a crowd make and waiting for squeezed her. It was happened all over night and when she comes in consciousness, she goes on work as usually. The narrator described the pain, humiliation and injustice in the form of humour. Humour was his essential weapon to present society before the world.

Money-lender plays a vital role in the life of Siddalingaiah. Mostly poor people suffered into debt. There was a tradition of moneylender to take away small children for work in the form of interest. Once, a woman had borrowed money on weekly interest. Four weeks passed away but she could not pay the interest therefore her child took away her little son. She sold her ancestors cauldron and refund the interest of moneylender and took away her child. Siddalingaiah's father too suffered through this situation. His father had become a huge debtor. Regarding to this, the narrator said: 'My father had become a huge debtor...One day two toughs beat him on the street.' [Ibid: 37] Lack of work, he was unable to refund the loan therefore he drunk regularly. One day, an agent of moneylender comes and thrashed him. Unable to bear the humiliation, he had attempt to suicide once.

Siddhlingaih memorized his college incident, which shows the the treatment of injustice: 'A lecturer used to feel thirsty in class. He would give me the key to his *Godrej* almirah and ask me to fetch water. I would do as told. He was very orthodox. Why he still chose me to fetch water became a subject of discussion in class. He had mistaken me for a Lingayat. I was liberated from the task of fetching water after he came to know my

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caste.’ [Ibid: 75] It indicates caste remains paramount factors in India. As long as neighbours are not aware of a person’s caste, a *Dalit* is safe and things will be fine. The moment they find out the caste particularly that of *Dalit*hood, everything changes. *Dalits* are emerging as an indispensable force in India today but their problems could not change. Regarding to this, Bhagwan Das comprehends the livelihoods of *Dalits* today:

**A professor, a lawyer, a doctor, an architect born in untouchable family is considered inefficient and inferior without even seeing his performance. [Das: 1995: 58]**

Thus, these all make suffered experiences through his life long story.

### **4.5. Rejection to Traditional Hindu Culture and Acceptance to Buddhist Culture:**

Being educated and influenced by Ambedkar and Periyar, Siddhlingaih began to deliver speeches on Ambedkar and caste system. His attitude towards the religion was rational and started opposing Hindu beliefs. Therefore, he acquired more knowledge about the orthodox Hinduism and caste system. He and graveyard workers always discussed on the subject o God. They were strong believers of God whereas Siddhlingaih was rationalist. Therefore, they could not accept his aegument that God does not exist. Once, he narrator attended fest ceremony which was organized by graveyardworke for his friends. On the occasion of this, the owner of house said his faith of God was too diminished. Suddenly, Siddhlingaih asked but why? The story was told by himwas intresting. He said: ‘When he was standing devoutly in a queue to get darshn of the diety, the man behind him had tried to pick his pocketand rob him ll his money. If he had continued to stand devoutly, he would have lost his all money. Immediately becoming alert, he had bent backwords and caught the pickpocket. If he had lost the money, the very return of his family to Bangalore would have been difficult.’ [Siddalingaiah: 2003: 73] It indicates if God is exist, so why could not punish him, who have been torrured the pilgrims. But still the workers could not lose their faith from God.

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Once, the college has sent Siddhlingaiah to inter-collegiate debate. He began his speech with poetic language:

Temples are houses of black magic

Religious leaders are magicians

Pilgrim centres are places of diseases

Innocents, idiots, these pilgrims [Ibid: 77]

He means to say temples become the houses of black magic and priests are their magicians. The place of pilgrim becomes the places of diseases and idiot. He satirically interpreted the God and religion. It was not a speech only, but a satire on entire orthodoxical system. Therefore, the judges impressed his speech and selected for as first in debate. D R Nagraj, a student one class ahead to him, met at debate. He was a rationalist and revolutionary poet therefore he encouraged to him for future. His friendship gave a new turn to his life. It was time of debate and won the prize of it.

Once, there was an inter-collegiate debate took place at A P S College, Bangalore. The subject of this debate was 'God does not exist'. The inauguration function was started with the lighting a lamp. It was a symbol of God existed and incarnate. Having to say that god did not exist; Siddhlingaiah was annoyed with the lamp. He put off the light which was pointed out as evidence to the existence of God. He challenged, 'If God does exist, will it stop me speaking.' [Ibid: 81] He openly said God does not exist in the form of speech. Due to his stinging speech upper caste people planned to assault him, but still he got the first prize in debate. One day, he walks on the street where he saw secondhand books on footpath. A book entitled *Devaru Satta: God is Dead* took attention towards them. He brought it and read out and decides to meet its writer Vasudeva Bhoopalan. He was lived at Lavelle Road near to Richmond Circle. When he meets to the writer, Siddhlingaiah understood that he was living under the pressure of traditionalist. They were discussed on the title of the book and said annoyedly: 'When you have God is dead for a title, doesn't it mean that you agree that he did exist?' [Ibid: 81-82] It shows that

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Siddalingaiah not only read books but also met to the author whenever the objection rose in his mind.

Once, Siddalingaiah saw an advertisement in the news paper. The news was that those who did not believe in god could meet a Swamiji who would show god to them. Having seen this news, Siddalingaiah and his friend Devarajappa decided to meet him. Once, both of them met the Swami and said, 'show us god'. [Ibid: 82] Like this, they have raised number of questions. Being scared, the Swamiji said: Why are trying so hard? I am god myself'. [Ibid] Soever Siddalingaiah said Swmiji if the god is in yourself. There are millions of gods on the earth. The Swamiji further said not only god is in me but myself as Shiva. Siddalingaiah replied if you are Shiva then you have committed murder of Manmatha. The Yogi was denied his statement: 'What murder? I haven't murdered anyone'. [Ibid] Siddalingaiah said Didn't you burn Manmatha to death with your third eye because he ruined your penance? The yogi said oh! That Manmatha, he was so smart with me. As result of this, this conversation has become the symbol of rationalism.

Once, the Swamiji tried to awaken the consciousness of humanity that there is neither God nor caste system: '...the Swamiji had visited *Dalit* colonies. He had been speaking of reform. In the given set-up, what he had done was quite big. Yet I, being a fiery revolutionary, publicly asked the Pejavara swamiji, 'if you are really concerned about the *Dalits*, make an untouchable the head of your religious order. The swamiji did not give a clear answer, but explained the concern he had for reform. The organisation took care of me very well till I left Udupi.' [Ibid: 106] Siddalingaiah asked Pejavara Swamiji to give equal job or treatment of a *Dalit* in his ashram. But the Swamiji kept silent. Siddalingaiah enlighten himself by reading books of great scholars, teachers and political leaders who worked for the welfare of *Dalits*. Thus, the *Ooru Keri* is the record of consciousness of self and Humiliation. It became a source of motive for entire *Dalits*.

### **4.6. Summing up:**

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Autobiography is a very influential genre through which *Dalit* writers have portrayed a realistic picture of the *Dalit* world. *Ooru Keri* is a *Dalit* autobiography of world-wide writer Siddalingaiah which deals with his childhood and youth, recording the emergence of a new, confident, educated *Dalit* from a very humble background. S. Bhartiraja said:

**Siddalingaiah grew up like any *Dalit* wanton boys- humiliated and unable to comprehend why his family was made to suffer. His early memories, he said, were of how his father was unable to find work in Magadi, causing the family to move finally to Bangalore. All through his growing up, hungry, suffering, and humiliation at odd jobs while studying are his chief memories; they made him lose faith in God, and also mark the beginning of his *Dalit* introspection. He first emerged on the public scene as a student leader in the 1970s, a period when *Dalit* rights issues had begun triggering conflict with upper classes. However, Siddalingaiah did not join active politics then because he had too much work on hand. Although he was both a teacher and an activist, it was his autobiography that would be most influential, shaping the literary thinking of the time. [Opp. Cite., Bhartiraja: 2012: 76]**

It describes Siddalingaiah as a poet, thinker, activist and professor. It is not only recount the personal anxiety and turmoil's involved in the difficult process of transformation from one state into another, but simultaneously cites at the new historical and political processes which made possible this change. This equilibrium between the micro and the macro is one of the features of this autobiography. As Sumit Guha, Professor of History, Brown University, was reviewing *Ooru Keri*:

**...A Searching memoir of the life of a sensitive and intelligent *Dalit* youth in Independent India. It tells us how he overcome contempt, humiliation and violence to gain and education and join the slowly**



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**growing ranks of *Dalit* intellectuals in India...indispensable to those who would understand modern south Asia. [www.indiaclub.com]**

Indeed, he means to say Siddalingaiah have been in search of a record of the life-long struggle of a sensitive and intelligent *Dalit* youth in Independent India. He narrated how he overcome contempt, humiliation and violence to gain and education and join the slowly growing ranks of *Dalit* intellectuals in India. It is an essential to those who would understand modern south Asia. Thus, the entire autobiography is full of lively anecdotes, memorable pen sketches and inimitable caricatures. But the personal and the general are so organically bound each other that the book is as much about Siddalingaiah the individual as it is about all major social, political and cultural movements of Karnataka in the last four decades.

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**Chapter V: A Cultural Study of Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan***

### **5.1. Introduction:**

Omprakash Valmiki is a leading Hindi *Dalit* writer and author of celebrated autobiography *Joothan*, published in Hindi in 1997 and translated into English by Arun Prabha Mukherjee, Professor of English, York University, Toronto, with a foreword and Introduction that help the world readers to understand *Dalit* literature in 2003. It was originally published as an essay *Ex Dalit ki Atmakatha* in Marathi language in a book *Harijan se Dalit*. The Hindi word *Joothan*, explains Mukherjee, literally means **‘food left on an eater’s plate, usually destined for the garbage pail in a middle class, urban home.’** [Mukherjee: 2003: XXXI] However, a story of narrator’s self-glorification or self-confession represents the predicament of his community. Therefore, the principle aim of this chapter is to focus on the cultural study of Omprakash Valmiki’s *Joothan* as a *Dalit* text. It can be interpreted and analyzed under the following points:

- Cultural Study Of Valmiki’s *Joothan*:
- The Life Experiences of Pain i.e. Cultural Assertion:
- Self-Identity And Roots Of *Dalit*’s Humiliation And Injustice:
- Rejection To Traditional Hindu Culture And Acceptance To Buddhist Culture:
- Summing Up:

## **5.2. Cultural Study of Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan*:**

The most oppressed of all *Dalits* in Uttar Pradesh- and indeed in India- are the Valmikis or *Bhangis*. The *Bhangi* was described by Manu as '**descended from *Chandala*, said to be the off spring of the union of between *Shudra* male and a Brahmin woman.'** [Magdum: 2009: 11] This community, the victim of the worst social discrimination and injustice, has been immersed in ignorance and caught in the pernicious net of untouchability and rejected despite giving crucially important service to society. Therefore, a community of *Bhangi* mired in filth, poverty, and slavery, it is to be found in all over India. This kind of circumstances makes *Dalits* culture. As a result, the present chapter makes the Cultural Study of Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan*.

### **5.2.1. Living and Thinking:**

Every community has made its culture on the basis of living and thinking. *Dalits*' social thinking and writing emerged out of the authors' social stratifications. *Dalits* are displaced and remain as fugitives due to caste atrocities like burning huts. In observing these events, the *Dalit* writers felt to be of as well as for. Their creative writings documented their lives, social and political events which play a key role in the study of literature, and who are sample contemporary documenters of social crises or the social reality.

### **5.2.2. House Structure:**

House Structure shows the status of their society. In relation to *Dalit* autobiography, *Joothan*, community of *Bhangi* haven't a concrete house or home. They were lived outside the village, the place reserved by upper caste people. A high wall and a pond segregated their brick houses in the village from the *Chuhra basti*, or cluster of shanties. Upper caste men and women of all ages came out and used the edge of the pond as an

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open-air lavatory, squatting across from the *Chuhra* homes in broad daylight with their private parts exposed. Regarding to this, Valmiki writes:

**There was muck strewn everywhere, the stench was so overpowering that one would choke within a minute. The pigs wandering in narrow lanes, naked children, dogs, daily fights, this was the environment of my childhood.’ [Valmiki: 2006: 1]**

In the rainy season, these narrow lanes of the *basti* filled up with muddy water mixed-in with pig’s excrement; flies and mosquitoes thrived. Everybody’s arms and legs became dirty and developed itchy sores. There was one drinking well in their *basti* for about thirty families, and despite a guard wall around it, it became full of long worms during the rainy season. They had no choice but to drink that water, as they were not permitted to use the well of the upper caste folks. Their homes were made of clay that sprang leaks all over. During heavy rains, the ceilings or walls often collapsed, as it did for Omprakash’s house more than once. One season most of their homes collapsed; as always, there was no outside help or insurance, and they had to rebuild on their own. In this circumstances Omprakash lived and grown up.

### **5.2.3. Education:**

Education was free and opens for all in India including upper caste people and untouchables in post-independence. Each one was made equal by the constitution of India. In these circumstances, Omprakash Valmiki’s father begged admission for his son to Master Harphool Singh. After several days of begging, Omprakash got admission but he was not allowed to sit on chair or bench. He had to sit on bare floor; behind everybody. There was no fair treatment and security for a *Dalit* student in the government and non-government schools. Regarding to this, Arun Prabha Mukherjee said:

**While the education system is indicted as death dealing for *Dalits*, Valmiki pays tribute to the *Dalit* organic intellectuals who help nurture the growth of a *Dalit* consciousness in him. While one of these is his**

**father who has the temerity to name the headmaster a Dronacharya, another is Chandrika Prasad Jigyusu (means ‘curious’ and is an acquired identity after shedding a caste-based one) whose rendering of Ambedkar’s life is put into Valmiki’s hands by his friend Hemlal. Like Valmiki’s Hemlal, too, has shed his stigmatized identity as a Chamar by changing to Jatav. [Opt. Cite, Mukherjee: XXXIV]**

Giving education and influenced by R. Babasaheb Ambedkar Omprakash rejected old tradition of Hindu society and opened the door of Buddha religion. Omprakash was very particular on the education of his men and women. Yet, *Dalits* were still considered inferior either in education or in life style. Thus, every person is important in a society. But, *Dalits* were not given chances to think and work towards personal and national progress.

#### **5.2.4. Food:**

Across the country, different communities have widely varying food habits. It is also well known that food is closely linked to ideas of the sacred and the wicked, and must vary along the scale of social diversity. As far as *Dalits* food is concerned, in *Joothan*, *Bhangi-Chuhras* are far behind than other people in India. Omprakash gave a detailed description of collecting, preserving and eating *Joothan* which, food left on an eater’s plate, is the food of *Bhangi* community. It, according Martin Macwan, is divided into three types:

**a food that which is fresh and not half-eaten; second that which is fresh but spoilt by eating, especially children’s leftover; and third , stale food left from prepared earlier in the day. [Franco: 2004: 261]**

This kind of *Joothan* collects from the upper caste society where *Bhangis* serve. Whenever there is a festival or marriage in an upper caste society, the *Bhangis* and *Chamars* expect to be given more food; so they go and collect it; alternatively, someone will ask them to come and collect the food. Regarding to this, Valmiki memorized the wedding of Tyagi’s daughter, where narrator’s mother works hard as a cleaner and

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demands more than just leftover from the wedding feast for her children. The pieces of *poories* are one of the preferred foods which were collected from the wedding season. It was useful during rainy season. Pieces of *poories* soaked in water and then boiled. The boiled *poories* were delicious dish when it was mixed the chili powder and salt. In 1962, there was a flood and due to non-stop rain, *Bhangi* community suffered a lot. Their house began to leak, wall collapsed and roof began to slide. Therefore, there was no work and eating food for a long time. At such time the dish of *Mar* was favorite among the *Chuhras*. *Mar* means a liquid made by the mixture of salt, rice and water. Regarding o this, Valmiki said: ‘the taste of those salted gram, the feeling of content that they provided has not come my way again, even in five-star hotel food.’ [Valmiki: 2006: 22] This *Mar* or rice water was as good as milk to them. Whenever rice was cooked at home, the narrator got very excited. Because it gives energetic power while drinks the *Mar*. Especially, *Bhangis* are meat eaters and they ate some special dishes like *Manda*- oily piece of meat, and *Bhatwa*.

### **5.2.5. Occupation:**

It is said that the work is the identity of its society. In relation to the *Joothan* autobiography, the work of *Bhangi* was mostly engaged to clean the latrines of upper class society. Traditionally, *Chuhras* were cursed to sweep the roads, clean the cattle barns, get shit off the floor, dispose of dead animals, and work in the fields during harvests, carrying death-news and perform other physical labour for all upper caste people, including the Tyagi, and Brahmins. During Omprakash’s childhood, his entire family worked hard including cleaning, agricultural work and general wok, yet they did not manage to get two decent meals a day, not the least because they often didn't get paid for their labour and instead the labourers were abused. Most of the families of *Bhangi* worked at farm-harvest. The poor *Dalits* should work in the field of *Tagas* in the hot sunshine in order to earn food grains for survival. Most of the harvesters are the *Chuhras* and *Chamars*. They wore cloths scarcely and their daily wages were not given



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properly; rather, they got whatever Tagas gave including leftovers. In addition to this, *Dalit* women were assigned to clean the cow-dung. It is more difficult in winters. During the rainy season there was no work for them, however, they were living in poverty a long time. They were doing anything which included harvesting lentils, cutting sheaves of wheat in the midday sun, and transporting them via bullock carts, each person got one out of 21 parts produced—about two pounds of wheat—as wages. For the rest of their labour in the cowshed, they got paid in grain and a leftover *roti* each day (made by mixing the flour with the husk since it was for the *chuhras*), and at times scraps of leftovers from their employer's plates, or *Joothan*.

### **5.2.6. Superstitions:**

In relation to the Superstition, a person who feels unwell in *Bhangi basti*, instead of treating him with medicine, people tried things like getting rid of the evil spirit that was deemed to be the cause by tying threads, talismans, spells, and on. If disease was prolonged or got serious, they called *bhagat* for *pucha* or exorcism. The *pucha* is a ceremony of *bhagat* or *baba* which makes a person free from the control of ghosts and spirits. Such ceremony edifies the god which is known as *Paun*. God Kalwa, Hari Sinh Nalwa and Others also worshiped in the *Dalit* society. Goddess Madaran is among the most important ones. *Bhangi basti* had strange ideas about ghosts and spirits. If there was someone feels sick, a *bhagat* or *baba* would be called instead of Doctor. The *Bhangis* were believes that *bhagat* or *baba* is the mediator of god and being influence of god he talks to the ghost. When he caught the insatiate soul he demands pigs, roosters, rams ad liquor for offering to the gods. Such hungry god and goddess worshiped in every house of *Bhangi basti*. They are different from Hindu deities and could not found in any *Purana*-epic like book. But these are worshiped in any family or clan where there is birth, festival, wedding, or funeral ceremony.

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Due to the loss of Sukhbir, their family was disturbed. Therefore, Jasbir went to Adampur and works in the construction company. After some time this company moved to Bagdogra, Bengal. It was heard that Jasbir works at Bengal by mother who sinks in the ideas of Bengali myth, ‘...idea of Bengal was based on folk myths about black magic and casting of spells, about women who transformed a man into a ram with their magic and tied him up in their courtyard.’ [Ibid: 23] Thus, there was a firmly believes on the existence of ghost. Omprakash narrates, when he was at Dehradun, during summer holydays, he felt sick with dysentery, which took a longtime to get better. Therefore, he comes back to village before the school re-opened. His father tried to show a number of quacks but the physical condition of Omprakash did not improve. As a result he became awfully weak. Finally, is father called out the *Bhagat* from Kendki who examined and said to his *pitaji*: ‘Why do you bother about doctors and medicines...He has become possessed by a spirit.’ [Ibid: 42] Being observation all the Bhgat starts his *puja* and *mantras* o relieve Omprakash from the control of spirit. He makes frightening sound and to flashed the whip in the air and on his back. It was not tolerable to him, therefore, he shouted on the Bhagat and said to his father, ‘He will kill me if you don’t stop him. I don’t have any spirit sticking to me.’ [Ibid: 43] In this way, Omprakash saved his life from superstitious people. \

### **5.2.8. Custom and Tradition:**

Customs and traditions are attached to people and their culture. But the upper caste people imposed certain intolerable customs on *Dalits*. The tradition of *Salam* is one of the big celebrations among *Bhangi* community. It means the newly wedded bride and bridegroom should go to the upper caste people’s street and salute in order to get some gifts or money. Omprakash had a big argument with Hiram Singh for going to do the *Salam*. But he went with Hiram Singh to do the *Salam*. For *Salam* both of them walk on the street of upper caste people and Hiram Singh mother-in-law demands for something else which is given to the newly married couple. Another tradition of *Bhangi* community is that

whether it was a wedding or birth or death, it was essential to worship the God and Goddess. Third tradition of *Bhangi* community is that to offer piglet cocks and rams to the God and Goddess to be found in their village.

### **5.2.9. Ritual and Festival:**

Religion forms an important role in the life of Omprakash Valmiki and his society. The most striking point about the religion of the narrator is that it does not adhere to the traditional brahminical system of worship, nor is it linked to brahminical God and Goddess (*Kul Devtas and Kul Devis*). Deep faith in their *Kul Devi* leads them to believe that a desired boon asked of her will be unfailingly fulfilled. Sometimes fulfillment of boon involves extended rituals to please the God or Goddess granting that boon; the life of *Bhangi* community revolves continuously around the rituals petitioning the Goddess and offering thanks giving for boons that have been granted.

Most of *Dalits* in India including *Bhangi*, Mochi-Chamars and Jatav worship the same deities as the Hindus do and observe more or less the same rituals. They honour all the saints and *sadhus* of the Hindu religion. Mochi-Chamars worship saint Raidas whereas *Bhangi* worship all deities of Hindu. Regarding to this, the *Antyodaya Vikas Shikshan* Centre, Khambhat (Gujrat) described:

**There are differences between the God and Goddess of the upper castes and those of the Scheduled Castes. The Valmiki- *Bhangi* community has its own God and Goddess, namely, Zampdo and Zampdi, also called to by the name of Sikotar Mata-Goddess. In Addition, they worship Hadakai Mata-Goddess, Meladi Mata-Goddess, Khodiyar Mata-Goddess and Kalka Mata-Goddess. Some *Bhangi-Valmikis* community in Khambhat taluka worship Bhathiji Maharaj. Each God and Goddess is worshiped for special reasons. Within the entire group of deities, there is pure and impure Goddess. The Goddess**

**to whom they offer vegetarian offerings (like rice and ghee) are pure d those to whom they offer non- vegetarian offerings (like chicken and mutton) are impure. [Opp. Cite., Franco: 23]**

This showing the extension of hierarchy even divinity reelects the ideology of Varna, with its concept of purity and impurity that has permeated all aspects of thought and action, including even the world of spirituality and religion.

In *Joothan*, the *Bhangi* community worshiped God Kalwa, Hari Sinh Nalwa and others. Goddess Madaran is among the most important ones. Though Indian *Dalit* belongs to Hindu religion but they did not worship Hindu God or Goddess. At janmastami- birth ceremony of Lord Krishna, it is not Lord Krishna but God Jahirpir, another God, whom they worshiped. Dipawali- festival of light- is a Hindu festival where Hindu people worshiped the Goddess Laxmi. Instead of Goddess Laxmi, *Bhangi* people worshiped and offered piglet to the Goddess Madaran. Thus, the *Bhangi* community has its own God and Goddess. It shows that how *Dalits* are influenced by Hindu culture.

#### **5.2.10. *Jat Panchayat*: Caste Council:**

Valmiki narrates one such incident where the Chuhras had refused to work without wages when a high official was visiting the village. ‘As usual a government employee came to the *Bhangi basti*- settlement. The surveyors needed some people for cleanup work, for which they would not be paid. As always, it would be unpaid labor. For days on end hungry and thirsty people would work to clean the *kothi*- big house. In return they would be sworn at...’ [Valimiki: 2006: 44] When they refused this unpaid work, they were severely punished. Fifteen days after their refusal, two policemen came and arrested whoever they could lay their hands on and took them to the office of the village *panchayat* (council) where they were made to squat in a rooster position and beaten mercilessly. ‘The women and children of the *basti* were standing in the lane and crying loudly.... They could not think of what else they could do but cry... [Ibid: 45] The

narrator reflects that Why is it a crime to ask to be paid for one's labor? Those who keep singing the glories of democracy use the government machinery to quell the blood flowing in our veins. Thus, all these factors are important to make the culture of society in India.

### **5.3. The Life Experiences of Pain i.e. Cultural Assertion:**

*Joothan* is considered as an epic of the *Dalits* sufferings- Life Experiences of Pain, which have been narrated with various experiences. The power of *Dalit* autobiography's narrative agenda is its use of the author's life-experiences of pain as a means of cultural assertion. By writing about his own experiences as a *Dalit*, Omprakash Valmiki reveal two objectives in his autobiography. One is to challenge the basis of caste discrimination. The other clear narrative agenda of this *Dalit* autobiography is to expose the reality behind the institutional narrative that caste functions as a significant force in the public sphere of modern India. Regarding to this, Surajpal Chauhan addresses this issue in his autobiography *Tirskrit*:

**In this country, the pain and insult of being born as a *Dalit* can only be known by a person who has experienced it. Today, everyone is crying out in the whole country that there is no racism and that things have changed in the towns and villages in these thirty-five years. I would really like to discuss with these people an incident which took place in 1987.**

[<http://www.sasnet.lu.se/>]

Thus, *Dalit* autobiography composed a challenge to this institutional narrative by presenting what he claim is factual experiences of untouchability from the writer's own life.

#### **5.3.1. Depiction of Harvest:**

During Omprakash's childhood, his entire family worked hard, yet they did not manage to get two decent meals a day, not the least because they often didn't get paid for their labour and instead the labourers were abused. He narrates the incident of season of harvest. At such time, entire family and neighborhood used to go to the field of Tagas to reap the crop. It was very hard and painful task to cut the sheaves of wheat in the midday sun. It was agonizing to work in midday sunlight and warmth earth ground. Instead of such atmosphere, the roots of cropped wheat pierced their feet like spikes. The work at mustered and gram lentils was more difficult than the crop of wheat. The leaves were sour and stick all over the body during harvesting such work. Due to this the *Chuhras* were suffered through a lot. The harvesting would often lead to argument in the fields. Omprakash described: 'Most of Tagas were exploited the *Chuhras* and *Chamars* at the time of giving money. Whatever they got, they took after protesting a bit. They kept fretting after coming back home, cursing the Tagas. But their protests died when confronted with hunger.' [Valmiki: 2006: 8] Every year the *Bhangis* and others make criteria towards harvesting, but every criterion has been collapsed during the harvesting season. Finally, they got one sheaf- less than one kg grain- for cutting of twenty-one as wages. It means a day's income wasn't worth even a kilo-gram of wheat. How this pain-suffering works done by the *Chuhras* and *Chamars*.

### **5.3.2. Incident of Wild Boar:**

Omprakash has an elder brother named Sukhbir who works at Suchet Taga, at such time Omprakash studied fifth class. Sukhbir was young fellow by dark complexioned, tall and muscular. Once, a wild boar was come inside the village. He had injured a lot of people with his sharp horns. He had entered the cowsheds of the Tagas and injured the oxen, buffaloes and cow. Being frightened all villagers had climbed on the house and to watch this spectacles. No one have the courage to fight with wild boar and throw him out of village. At last, 'young Sukhbir drove that boar out of village with just a stick.' [Ibid: 11] It makes an impression on entire village. One day, he suffered though a fever and goes to

bed for week. Suddenly, he was died. Omprakash doesn't believe on this news. But it was true, lack of medicine he was died. At the time of Sukhbir's death his wife was pregnant and he has a child named, Naredra. Though she was pregnant, Jasbir-younger brother of Sukhbir-married to widow pregnant. As a result of this, the total responsibility of whole family fallen on Jasbir's shoulder. Due to this tragedy, the financial condition of his family was insecure.

### **5.3.3. Image of Pig:**

Due to economical background, Omprakash dropped his school. During these days he suffered a lot. He becomes noisy having seen his schoolmates passing by with books in their hands. Omprakash and his elder brother, Janesar went to farm at early morning and collecting grass for his buffaloes. It was a work for them to beware of buffaloes during that time. The responsibility of pig has also given to them by their parents. Like Indian cow, pig was an important part of *Bhangi* lives. At any ways like in sickness, in life or death, in any feast or wedding ceremonies pig played a vital role in their lives. Even their religious ceremony could not fulfill without pig. Though it was symbol of dirty, but for them the existence of pig was a way of prosperity and a sign of richness. One day, Omprakash was coming home after grazing the pig. At the way of home, he met Sukkhan Singh who asked him, 'why have you stopped coming to school? Aren't you going to study further?' [Ibid: 13-14] He just shook his head in refusal. Thus, he returned home with miserable feeling. As soon as he comes to home, he said to his mother, 'Ma, I want to go to school.' [Ibid: 14] By seeing tear his mother too cried. At last, because of his *bhabhi* he has started his education.

### **5.3.4. Depiction of Friendship:**

Back in school, Omprakash got admission to the sixth class. Ram Singh and Sukkhan Singh were studying at a different section. Shravankumar was looking smart and

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handsome like a girl. But his caste never makes a difficulty among them. Booth of them met third friend named Chandrpal Sharma who was a Gujjar by caste. He has tried to make a fun towards the behaviour of Shravankumar. One day, as they were coming out of the classroom, Chandrpal Sharma holds Shravankumar tightly and bit him on his cheek. As seen this picture by entire class no one said a word but everyone laughing loudly. Sharankumar narrates that at that moment he don't o what happened but how he has kept his neck tightly and fallen on ground. As a result of this, Chandrpal doesn't angry on him but laughing loudly and finally begged a forgiveness to Shravankumar. The three of them had become good friends after this incident. The effect of this friendship with Chandrpal had become instantly visible. Omprakash and Chandrpal were released from the taunts and the harassments of Tyagi boys. They did not have to stand waiting near the tap for a drink of water. They all have lost their tongues when Chandrpal was around. When Omprakash comes first in his section in the half-yearly exam, he became the Monitor of his class. Though he increased his image but still the behaviour of some teachers hasn't changed. They were unsympathetic and contemptuous towards him.

### **5.3.5. Portrayal of Teja Taga: Money Lender:**

Teja Taga was money lender in Barla village who demands the pork and liquor before he would give loan. Most of the villagers took loans from him and fulfilled his all desire. Omprakash memorized the incident where his father had taken a loan from him. Teja Taga was having a liking for the food which was cooked in the house of *Bhangi*. Therefore, he preferred *Bhangi* for loan than others. Before taken the loan he was enjoyed pork and liquor at narrator's house too. Omprakash said during such feast, '...his face had resembled a spotted dog's. His eyes red from drinking, had looked satanic. [Ibid: 18] His interest rate was so high because of that one could spend an entire life paying the interest but the basic balance would remain untouched. Most of *Bhangi* basti was drowning in debt. Therefore, they were silent and no one can in demands to afford a complaint against any injustice done by Teja Taga.



### **5.3.6. Portrayal of Rainy Season:**

The rainy season was miserable to the *Dalits*. In the rainy season, the narrow lanes of *basti* filled up with muddy water mixed-in with pigs' excrement; flies and mosquitoes thrived. Everybody's arms and legs became mangy and developed itchy sores. There was one drinking well in their *basti* for about thirty families, and despite a guard wall around it, it became full of long worms during the rainy season. They had no choice but to drink that water, as they were not permitted to use the well of the upper caste folks. Their homes were made of clay that sprang leaks all over. During heavy rains, the ceilings or walls often collapsed, as it did for Omprakash's house more than once. One season most of their homes collapsed; as always, there was no outside help or insurance, and they had to rebuild on their own. One night, due to heavy rain the narrator's has opened a big hole on the roof. Consequently, he climbed up on roof whereas his father guides him from below, 'Careful, Munsiji...steady feet...don't walk towards the middle...stay near the wall.' [Ibid: 20] By lovely *Pitaji* celled him Munsiji. However, he tried to search the hole, but because of heavy rain and darkness he had failure. Finally, as he slowly climbing down, he heard his father's voice and slipped but his father's experienced eyes caught him in darkness too. That night most of the houses were collapsed. The voice of screaming and shouting was everywhere.

### **5.3.7. Depiction of Poverty:**

*Joothan* is an account of pain, humiliation and poverty of Omprakash Valmiki and his community. Due to heavy rain and flood *Bhangi* community suffered a lot. The house began to leak, wall ruined and roof began to slide. Therefore, there was no work and eating food for a long time. During a wedding, when the guests and the *baratis* were eating their meals, the *Chuhras* would sit outside with huge baskets. After the *baratis* had eaten, the dirty *pattals* or leaf-plates were put in the *Chuhras* baskets, which they took

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home, to save the *Joothan* sticking to them. The little pieces of *pooris*, bits of sweetmeats, and a little bit of vegetable were enough to make them happy. The *Joothan* was eaten with a lot of relish. The bridegroom's guests who didn't leave enough scraps on their *pattals* were denounced as gluttons. Poor things, they had never enjoyed a wedding feast. So they had licked it all up. During the marriage season, the elders narrated, in thrilled voices, stories of the *baratis* that had left several months of *Joothan*. Omprakash has given a detailed description of preserving and eating the *Joothan* after reprocessing it, during the 'hard days of the rainy season'. The memories of his childhood associated with *Joothan*, often come back to haunt him and cause him renewed pain and humiliation. It seems to be giving a glimpse of the scale of poverty and suffering due to hunger in Omprakash's community. Each task in India is important and the pay scale is determined by where you are in the caste system. Over a hundred million people are degraded to manual scavenging, removing and carrying human excreta on their heads. This is the ultimate human tragedy that one can see and witness in India as well as in *Joothan*.

### **5.3.8. Depiction of *Salam*:**

The Depiction of *Salam* refers the big celebrations among *Bhangi* community. It means the newly wedded bride and bride-groom should go to the upper caste people's street and salute in order to get some gifts or money. Omprakash had a big argument with Hiram Singh for going to do the *Salam*. But he went with Hiram Singh to do the *Salam*. For *Salam* both of them walk on the street of upper caste people and Hiram Singh mother-in-law demands for something else which is given to the newly married couple. It was summer days and they wandered in the lanes until noon. The shouting of the children drowned the sound of the drum. The drummer would stop the drum in front of Tyagis house and loudly bang the drum. Whenever someone comes out the bride Hiram Singh would offer his respect in the form of *Salam* them. Once the crowd at house of Chaudharain, where bride's mother said: 'Chaudharain, do I have three or four other

daughters that any other son-in-law will come to your door? Please give something so that I can send my daughter away honourably...' [Ibid: 31] It was unbearable for Omprakash. Another experience of Tyagi house was so bitter than first, Tyagi woman screamingly said, 'The stomachs of These *Chuhras* are never filled.' [Ibid] Thus, someone wants to take one rupees on the hands of Hiram Singh.

#### **5.4.9. Experience at *Bhangi Basti*, Dehradoon:**

Valmiki too left to pursue college education in the city of Dehradoon, where his brother and uncle worked. They all shared a single room in a *Bhangi basti*. It was here that he encountered the works of Ambedkar, which shook him up; he spent many days and nights in great turmoil. He grew more restless; his stone-like silence began to melt, and an anti-establishment consciousness became strong in him. Ambedkar's books, he writes, had given voice to my muteness, and raised his self-confidence. His rage grew sharper and he became more active in college events, until his penury made him quit college and seek technical training in an ordnance factory, with its promise of a shop floor job that would judge him only for his work. But quitting college made no dent whatsoever in his love of reading. After a year of training, he got posted to the city of Jabalpur in 1968, moving in the ensuing years to Bombay and Chandrapur, Maharashtra.

#### **5.4.10. Experience at Maharashtra:**

After a year of training, he got posted to the city of Jabalpur in 1968, moving in the ensuing years to Bombay and Chandrapur, Maharashtra. The last third of his memoir is on this phase of his life. Now he really came into his own: he met a bunch of Marxists, read Chekov, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Hemmingway, Zola, and other Western writers. He joined a local theater group, saw Vijay Tendulkar's plays, read the entire works of Tagore

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and Kalidasa, was drawn to the Buddha's teachings, and discovered Marathi *Dalit* literature, the most sophisticated in all of India, which energized him and forged his literary consciousness.

***Dalit* literature is an indispensable part of our lives. *Dalit* literature is not just literature but it is a genuine effort for social realism that is: equality, justice and fraternity.**

[<http://apnaharf.blogspot.in/>]

In his whole twelve year schooling never heard the name of constitution maker- Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Teacher never mentioned him during their patriotic speeches and sermons. *Dalit* related books gave new direction to author. Omprakash said that these books had given voice to his muteness. It was during this time in his life when an anti-establishment consciousness became strong in him and soon he developed his views on literature and writes, 'I was more attracted to social realism than to aestheticist and formalist type of writing.' [Valimiki: 2006: 87] Therefore, He began to publish poems and write a column in a local weekly, later also plays and short stories. Almost two decades later, he published *Joothan*. In this way, *Joothan* is considered as an epic of the *Dalits* sufferings that have been narrated with various existing references.

### **5.4. Self Identity and Roots of *Dalit's* Humiliation and Injustice:**

There are a number of tear shedding incidents of humiliation and injustices faced by Omprakash Valmiki in village, school, and government offices. Omprakash, at the opening of *Joothan*, says that *Chuhras* were not considered as human. But upper caste people use *Chuhra* for domestic works like cleaning the toilets, cowshed, and labouring in agricultural farm lands, 'Untouchability was so rampant that while it was considered all right to touch dogs and cats or cows and buffaloes, if one [a higher-caste person] happened to touch a Chuhra, one got contaminated or polluted. The Chuhra were not seen as human. They were simply things for use. Their utility lasted until the work was done. Use them and then throw them away.' [*Joothan*: 2006: 2] The Children of the Tyagis

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would tease Omprakash by calling him *Chuhre ka*. Sometimes they would beat him for no reason. This was absurd and baseless atrocity.

### **5.4.1. Childhood Experience:**

Depiction of Omprakash's childhood has the significant memory of caste discrimination, poverty, injustices, and humiliations. Omprakash, the author, was born into the *Chuhra* caste (aka *Bhangi*), whose ordained job it was to sweep the roads, clean the cattle barns, get shit off the floor, dispose of dead animals, work the fields during harvests, and perform other physical labour for upper caste people, including the Tyagi Brahmins. He was identified not by his name, but by his caste, like *Oe Chuhre* or *Abey Chuhre* in his village. This is a Hinduian Culture to identify everyone by his caste, but not his name. *Chuhra* is not a name but it is a community or caste in Utter Pradesh, which is branded as untouchables or *Dalit*. Omprakash Valmiki remembered his childhood in the village of Barla district of Uttar Pradesh.

### **5.4.2. Basic Primary School Experience:**

Omprakash Valmiki was grown up in those days of the post-independent India, when people in general were not ready to accept the right even to primary education for the people of *Dalit* community. In these circumstances, the decision had taken by Valmiki's father to send his son to the school. With encouragement of his father, Omprakash got admission. But he was not allowed to sit on the benches but on the floor, away from the upper caste boys, at the back by the door, from where he couldn't see the blackboard well. Other boys hurled epithets and beat him casually, turning him into a cowering introverted kid. Even the teachers looked for excuses to punish him, he writes, 'so that I would run away from the school and take up the kind of work for which I was born.' [Joothan: 2006: 3] The children of the Tyagis would tease him by calling '*Chuhre Ka*.' [Ibid] In spite of heart breaking ill- treatment by his classmates and teachers, he attended

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the school. There are two more untouchable students, Ram Singh and Sukkhan Sing, along with Omprakash who are good in studies and their parents are government employees. Though they are good in studies but their lower caste background dogged at every step. If they ever went out wearing neat and clean clothes, they had to hear their taunts that pierced deep inside like poisoned arrows. If they went to the school in neat and clean clothes, then their class fellows said, '*Abey Chuhre ka*, he has come dressed in new clothes.' [Ibid] If one went wearing old and shabby clothes, then the children of Tyagis said, '*Abey Chuhre ke*, get away from me, you stink.' [Ibid] This is not their no-win situation, but they were humiliated whichever they wore.

### **5.4.3. Headmaster: Kaliram- Figure like Dronacharya**

In fourth class, a new headmaster- Kaliram arrived, who thrashed Omprakash almost daily and one day asked him to take a broom and sweep all the rooms and the playground in school. The helpless boy spent two days sweeping, hoping it would soon be over. The third day he went to the class and sat down quietly. After a few minutes the headmaster's loud voice was heard: '*Abey Chuhre ke*, mother-fucker, where are you hiding... your mother ...' [Ibid: 5] He had begun to vibrate wildly. A Tyagi boy shouted, '*Master Saheb*, there he is, sitting in the corner. The headmaster had pounced on his collar. The pressure of his fingers was increasing. As a wolf grabs a lamb by the neck, he dragged him out of the class and threw on the ground. He shouted at him, 'Go sweep the whole playground ... Otherwise I will shove chilies up your arse and throw you out of school.' [Ibid] As frightened, the narrator picks up the three-day-old broom- now only a cluster of- thin sticks. Tears were falling from his eyes. Therefore, he started to sweep the compound while his tears fell. From the doors and windows of the school rooms, the eyes of the teachers and the boys saw this spectacle. Each pore of his body was submerged in an abyss of anguish.

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As it turned out, narrator's father was passing by that day and saw him sweeping the grounds. Sobbing and overcome by hiccups, the boy told him the story. Father snatched the broom and with eyes blazing, began to scream, 'Who is that teacher, that progeny of Dronacharya, who forces my son to sweep?' [Ibid: 6] Regarding to this, Arun Prabha Mukherjee said:

**Valmiki places his and his *Dalit* friends' encounters with upper caste teachers in the context of the Brahmin teacher Dronacharya tricking his low caste disciple Eklavya into cutting his thumb and presenting it to him as part of his *gurudakshina*, or teacher's tribute. This is a famous incident in the Mahabharata. By doing this, Dronacharya ensured that Eklavya, the better student of archery, could never compete against Arjun, the Kshtriya disciple. Indeed, having lost his thumb, Eklavya could no longer perform archery. In high caste telling, the popular story presents a casteless Eklavya as the exemplar of an obedient disciple rather than the Brahmin Dronacharya as a perfidious and biased teacher. When Valmiki's father goes to the school and calls the headmaster a Dronacharya, he links the twentieth-century caste relations to those that prevailed two thousand years ago.**

[\[http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/\]](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/)

However, all the teachers stepped out, including the headmaster, who called his father names and roared back, 'Take him away from here... The *Chuhra* wants him educated... Go, go... Otherwise I will have your bones broken.' [Valmiki: 2003: 6] On his way out, his father declared in a loud voice, 'I am leaving now... but this *Chuhreka* will study right here... in this school. And not just him, but there will be more coming after him.' [Ibid] His father's courage and fortitude left a deep and decisive mark on the narrator's personality. His father had faith that the Tyagis of the village would chastise master Kaliram for his behavior, but the response was the opposite. Thus, by the order of Chaudhari *saheb* Valmiki has dared to attend the class.

#### **5.4.4. Incident of Wedding:**

Omprakash Valmiki witnesses the humiliation of his mother at the hands of Shukhdev Singh Tyagi, a high caste person of his village. At the wedding of Tyagi's daughter, narrator's mother works hard as a cleaner and demands more than just leftover from the wedding feast for her children. This infuriates Shukhdev Singh Tyagi and insults her as, 'You are taking a basket full of *Joothan* and on top of that you want food for your children. Don't forget your place *Chuhri*. Pick up your basket and get going.' [Ibid: 11] The words of Shukhdev Singh entered in his heart like a knife. It was first time to see Valmiki his mother being as *Durga*: 'That night the Mother Goddess *Durga* entered my mother's eyes. It was the first time I saw my mother so angry. She emptied the basket right there. She said to Sukhdev Singh, 'Pick it up and put it inside your house. Feed it to the *baratis* (marriage guests) tomorrow morning.' She gathered me and my sister and left like an arrow.' [Ibid] Sukhdev Singh had pounced on her to hit her, but his mother had confronted him like a lioness. Here, caste name *Chuhri* used as an abuse or a way of reducing the scavenger's sense of self to her destined caste. Therefore, one of the most powerful moments in his autobiography Valmiki's mother's overturning of the basketful of *Joothan* after Tyagi humiliation her. Her act of defiance shows the seed of rebellion in the boy Valmiki. This incident makes the start of the narrator's transformation from a title *Chuhra* boy, reconciled to assigning his hunger from upper caste's leftover food to a *Dalit*, a battle of *Dalit* movement.

#### **5.4.7. Experience at High School:**

In these circumstances, Valmiki had finished fifth class but their deepening poverty, they didn't even have enough food, meant that he could not continue with school. He dropped out and began tending buffaloes in the field, watching with a heavy heart his schoolmates going to school. His widow sister-in-law *Bhabhi* gave her silver anklet for the admission of Omprakash, and he continued his study. He writes: 'I had stood first in my section in



the half-yearly examination. The behaviour of some teachers, however, was still unfriendly; they were indifferent and contemptuous of me.’ [Ibid: 16] Back in school, Valmiki continued to face severe discrimination. Though he consistently did well in his studies, his memories of school are suffused with pain and humiliation: from taunts and beatings by schoolmates and teachers in a terror-filled environment’, to his exclusion from extracurricular activities like school plays; during exams, he was not allowed to drink water from a glass when thirsty. He had to cup his hands, and ‘the peon would pour water from way high up, lest our hands touch the glass. At times, he writes, ‘I feel I have grown up in a cruel and barbaric civilization.’ [Ibid: 17] He does remember fondly a couple of boys who befriended him and didn’t let caste come between them.

#### **5.4.6. Incident of Washer Man:**

One day the scout teacher Rameshchand had to go to the city for a district level meeting. When Omprakash was asked by his scout teacher, he said come in a neat and well pressed uniform, he tried his level best to come up to his expectations. Up to this time he had never worn and ironed his clothes. Whenever he saw the starched and freshly washed clothes of the Tyagi boys, he has his own wish to wear such clothes. When he went to *dhobi’s* shop to get his, uniform ironed, the washer man saw him and shouted, ‘*Abey, Chuhre ka*, where do you think you are going? Omprakash said, ‘I need to have the uniformed ironed.’ [Ibid] *Dhobi* replies tormented his heart and said: ‘We don’t wash the cloths of the *Chura-Chambhars*. Nor do we iron them. If we iron your cloths, then the Tagas won’t get their cloths washed by us. We will lose our *Roti*.’ [Ibid] This reply of washer man has packed down the narrator. He becomes soundless. He felt that one can become free from the torture of poverty and physical punishment but one can never escape from one's caste.

#### **5.4.7. Double Standard of the People:**

Omprakash Valmiki while narrating bitter experiences of his life as a *Dalit* also comments on the double standard of the people of so called upper caste. The people of upper caste used to come secretly in the darkness of night to their *Basti* to enjoy the pork meat. He had realized the double standard of the people of upper caste that at night they can enjoy pork prepared by *Chuhra* but during the day time they observe untouchability. In relation to this he remembered the school teacher Yogendra who was a nice teacher fellow. He knew the father of narrator very well. Whenever he meets to the *pitaji*, he says, ‘Chotan, don’t prevent your son from studying.’ [Ibid: 18] It means he want o say that you’re on is studying well. Whenever he made mistake, instead of beating him, the teacher had grab his shirt and drag him towards his father. Though his intention was good but it makes anger on the teacher when he said, ‘How many pieces of pork did you eat? You must have eaten at least a pao.’ [Ibid] It would become his reason of cry. The entire class used to laugh at the narrator being heard as this comments. The classmate also tormented and said: ‘*Abey Chuhre ke*, you eat pork.’[Ibid] At such moments, the narrator think of all that Tyagi upper caste people those who are come in darkness to come *Bhangi basti* and enjoyed the pork meat. Therefore, Valmiki asserts that education is the only medium to escape the trap of Conspiracy. Being disgusted with blind Hindu orthodoxy, he denies his identity as a Hindu and interrogates: ‘I also wondered why one has to be a Hindu to be a good human being.’ [Ibid: 41] Such moments of helplessness in the life of someone are capable to stir his faith in the established principles of life and the same happened with Valmiki.

### **5.4.8. Lesson of Donacharya:**

At the class of eight, once the teacher was teaching the lesson of Donacharya who describes the poverty faced by Donacharya and how he has feed flour dissolved in water to his hungry son Ashwathama. Being heard the story of Donacharya’s dire poverty; an entire class was emotionally felt badly. It was written by Vyasa in the epic Mahabharata

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to emphasize the Dronacharya's poverty. Suddenly, the narrator stands and asked a question to his teacher regarding to this episode, 'So Ashwathama was given flour mixed in water instead of milk, but what about us who had to drink mar? How come we were never mentioned in any epic? Why didn't an epic poet ever write a word on our lives?' [Ibid: 23] He means to say who our epic poet is to writes our pain and suffering in his book. It was first time to raise the question by Omprakash as a result of consciousness. It is not an emotion but attitude given only by education. Though he was educated but could not escape from the conspiracy of conventional society. When Omprakash raised issue of equality in class, *master saheb* shouted and said: 'Darkest *kaliyug* has descended upon us so that an untouchable is daring to talk back...*Chuhre ke*, you dare compare yourself with Dronacharya...Here, take this, I will write an epic on your body.' [Ibid] This kind of incident is permanently memorized by Omprakash. Omprakash's social consciousness of poverty showed that he was really attached to the truth of his contemporary society. For the question, the Master wrote a new epic of brutal beating on his back. Regarding to this a well known critic said that:

***Dalit not only left out in society but in literature too. Their accounts find no narration and articulation.'***

[<http://apnaharf.blogspot.in/>]

Literature too left *Dalits*- literature claim itself pure, without boundary, region, religion, creed and caste but this so called literature could not see *Dalit* humiliation and hell-like life. Thus, the lives of *Dalit* people are a saga of discrimination, deprivation and exclusion.

### **5.4.9. Episode of Brajesh:**

At the class of eight, Omprakash faced further experience of humiliation from classmate as well as from villagers. He has kept in mind that took place in 1962. One day Surajbhan Taga's son Brajesh saw Omprakash near to the kothi, the canal inspection house, he said, *Abey Chuhre ke*, stop.' [Valmiki: 2003: 28] He, out of jealousy, wants to get into trouble

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and picked up his books at scattered into the bay-mud soil: In angry voice he said, 'I hear you are clever in your studies.' [Ibid] But do study what you want, you will remain a *Chuhra*. There a little argues had takes place in between the narrator and Brajesh. As result of this Brajesh takes his school bag and put on the stick and twirled it around. Finally, the school bag had fallen into the muddy ditch therefore books were to be getting wet. Being washed his hands and dried books n sunlight he goes to school. Because of this incident he could not concentrate on his study in whole day. But his father's face and words, you have to improve the caste by studying, was inspired to him. By the time he reached eighth class, he began to think in broader perspective. It sharpened his sensibility.

### **5.4.10. Episode of *Salam*:**

The tradition of *Salam* is one of the big celebrations among *Bhangi* community. It means the newly wedded bride and bride-groom should go to the upper caste people's street and salute in order to get some gifts or money. Once, Omprakash goes with Hiram Singh to do the *Salam*. It was a time of summer and for *Salam* both of them walks on the door by door and demands for something else which is given to the newly married couple. Omprakash remember when they go to the Chaudhrain's door, she gave a one rupee to Hiram Singh said to his mother-in-law: 'Arri, your son-in-law is quite handsome. What kind of work does he do? [Ibid: 31] And after looking towards the narrator, she asked in the same tone you study too? When he replied 'yes', she said, 'the *Chuhras*' progeny also study in the school?...However much you study ...you will still remain a *Chuhra*.' [Ibid: 32] She means to say you learnt whatever but can't change your caste which is your identity in society. This inferior treatment or inhuman attitude faced by Omprakash very badly. Thus, there are many such incidents of his childhood are covered inside him, bearing witness to the dark days of past.

### **5.4.11. Episode of Brijpal Singh Tyagi:**

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Indian culture has so called the great tradition of hospitality, which is summarized in *Atithi Deo Bhav*. However, the narrator's experiences of life show that in the case of *Dalits* it fails. While studying in school, Brajpal Singh Tyagi was a science teacher who sent Bhikhuram and Omprakash to his village to bring wheat and vegetables. The family members of the teacher take them as high caste boys and give warm welcome. After knowing that these two are from Barla, Brajpal Singh Tyag's father asked question: 'what is your caste?' [Ibid: 51] Omprakash answered, 'We are of the *Chuhra* caste.' [Ibid] As soon as they came to know of their caste, both boys are beaten by the villagers from breaking the rules of caste by entering the house and eating from the plates of family members. His truth on telling the caste had resulted in humiliation-beating and insults. This kind of humiliation is in every village of India. However, this assumption has been proved false by the caste discrimination faced by *Dalits* in rural life in public and private society. Therefore, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar suggests and said, **let's go to city, where the caste discrimination can be seen less than rural area.** [Ambedkar: 1945: 12] But it is not true; Omprakash gets same experience in Mumbai with his friend Mr. Kulkarni. The narrator experienced the practice of untouchability in city too. Regarding to this, Omprakash Valmiki writes:

**One can somehow get past poverty and deprivation but it is impossible to get past caste. [http://www.mouthshut.com/]**

With this statement, Valmiki highlights the rigidity of the caste system in India that has resulted in the socio-economic oppression of thousands across India over centuries merely because of the lesser caste to which they belong.

### **5.4.12. Episode of Fauz Singh Tyagi:**

When Omprakash was in the Tenth standard, he experienced a great humiliation. He was the first student of his caste, not just from his *basti* but from the entire region. Fauz Singh Tyagi came to *Dalit Vasti* and stood before him, a huge staff on his shoulder. He said, 'Abey, *Chuhre*, what are you doing?' [Valmiki: 2003: 57] He replied in a stumpy voice,

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‘Tomorrow I have to do the math test.’ [Ibid] Eventually, Fauz Singh Tyagi held him by the elbow and dragged out to his field. Being threaten the narrator does the work and digested the vulgar abuses. It was not first time to bear but also he suffered a long time such tyagis inhuman treatment. During that day, he spent the whole morning sowing cane. With Omprakash there were about eight or ten others who had one the same work. At middle of the day, Fauza’s mother had brought lunch. All he members belong to Tyagi family sat down under the shelter of tree and *Chuhras* were sat down in the sun with taking two *roties* and a piece of pickle. It was seen by Omprakash and refused to eat with them. Fauz shouted at him and swearing: ‘*Abey Chuhre ke...*Just because he has learnt to read a little he has above himself... *Abey*, don’t forget who you are.’ [Ibid] This attitude makes as a result of education. The birth of revolt had taken place in the mind of Omprakash. Finally, Fauza’s mother called: *Khajoriwali ke...come...eat your rotis*, Omprakash accepted the food given by Fauza’s mother. She too dropped the *roties* into his hand from way above, lest her hand touch him. This symptom was become insult of the boy Omprakash, who throws it in the face of Fauza’s mother and run away towards his home.

### **5.4.13. Episode of *Bhagavad Gita*:**

One day, Omprakash’s father gave him a copy of *Bhagavad Gita*. After reading the book, he found that *Dalits* were not given importance, but only the Hindu men and women. Of course, the *Gita* inspired Omprakash to ask questions, and made him a rationalist. It is unusual that upper caste people never ask questions to God that why *Dalits* were discriminated? However, Omprakash questioned, and for that he was punished by the upper caste teacher: ‘My discomfort with my reading was arousing a new consciousness in me. I began to get bored by the *Gita*. I wanted answers to the questions bobbing inside my head. Whenever I dared to ask my School teachers to answer my doubts, I got punished. They beat me up, gave me lower marks in the examinations. The taunts of my teachers and fellow students pierced me deeply. Look at this *Chuhre ka*, pretending to be

a Brahmin.’ [Ibid: 71] Omprakash realized that he was given opportunity not only for study and also to change the society. Gradually, the study of Omprakash developed and began to concentrate on his dreams of emancipation.

#### **5.4.14. Episode of Omdatta Tyagi:**

By encouraged Chamanlal, Omprakash got admitted to the science faculty. Post-high school, he had gained considerable self-confidence. But a life experience doesn’t change. In relation to this, Omprakash narrates: Omdatta Tyagi was the English class teacher. He usually speaks at satirical. He has used a ‘that is’, additional word, at the end of every sentence which makes laughs in the class. Everyone laugh at Omdatta Tyagi and imitates his habit. Whenever Omprakash asked any question or problem, make him aware about his caste *Bhangi*. At such occasions, he felt that Omdatta Tyagi was not a teacher but an illiterate feudal lord, drunk on his caste arrogant. When Ram Singh and the narrator were feeling upset, they wrote character sketch of Omdatta Tyagi, entitled as *A Profile of That Is*. One day, in the lecture of Omdatta Tyagi who has read *A Profile of That Is*. Subsequent to reading the paper, he throws the book on desk and look fiercely at Ram Singh. As recognized the handwriting of the paper, he concentrate on Ram Singh and called him to the staff room. He has welcomed with kicks and slaps as he entered. It was unbearable incident for him. As result of this, Omprakash was mortally afraid of physical punishment and lived in a state of permanent nervous tension.

#### **5.4.15. Episode of Narendra Kumar Tyagi:**

Omprakash was studied in the Eleventh standard; Narendra Kumar Tyagi was Lecturer of Mathematics. Omprakash narrates, it was a time of summer and Narendra Kumar Tyagi was going taught. By thirsty he said to me, ‘Go, bring me a glass of water from the pitcher.’ [Ibid: 64] He replied, ‘Master *Sahib*, I am not permitted even to touch those pitchers. Please send someone else.’ [Ibid] In confusion the Teacher asked him, why? Omprakash quietly said, ‘I belong to *Chuhra* caste.’ [Ibid] It was shock to him and to

staff room enjoyed water by his own hand. Omprakash felt how he is coward. He could dare to drink water with untouchable's hand. What's the use of his education? If he has gives support to the Untouchability. Education is not a collection degrees but it is an attitude which understood human beings.

#### **5.4.16. Experience at DAV College, Dehradun:**

Due to the conspiracy of Brajpal Singh Tyagi and the principal, Yashveer Tyagi Omprakash failed in the Intermediate examination despite securing good marks in all subject except Chemistry practical papers. It suggests that before the power of upper caste teachers, the poor Omprakash was unable to survive. These kinds of deliberate caste assaults have been scratching Omprakash from time to time. After experiencing such assaults, Omprakash's older brother Jasbir, who was working in the Survey of India, took Omprakash to Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (DAV) College, Dehradun. The atmosphere of DAV, College was different from Tyagi Inter College. In the village it didn't matter which you have wore but in Dehradun everybody wore shirt and pants. Due to lack of proper clothes, Jasbir gave him one of his old pair of pants which was quite loose on him. As a result, other students used taunt and make fun on the clothes of the narrator. Once, Omprakash come out of the English class, a boy from another section who stopped him and make fun on his pants. One of them began to pull down his pants and said: 'Which tailor did you go to? Give us his address too.' [Ibid: 69] And others were laugh at him. He had said entreated piteously, 'It will tear...please let go.' [Ibid]But they could not control their laughing which is stressed his rural accent. This drama had gone for a long time. Finally, because of a teacher he escapes from the trap of boys but could not concentrate on his study. Omprakash experienced the same in the winter season. The first winter was extremely difficult for him due to lack of woollen clothes. It was easy to manage with bed-sit or a blanket in Tyagi Inter College, but that wasn't an option in Dehradun College. So ever, he bought a Khakhi jersey from municipal employee. When he was went college wearing this jersey, the boys began to tease him by calling a



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*Jamadar*. Though it was protect him from the wintry, but the taunts of boys were even more piercing than the cold. Many time he determined not wear it. But finally he made up his mind and decides to see how long they would tease him. It means wherever you go your caste could not gone.

### **5.4.17. Experience at Ordnance Factory Training Institute:**

During his college days, Omprakash got a job at the *Ordnance Factory Training Institute*, Khauaria and Jabalpur. After employment in the Ordnance Factory Tainting Institute (OFTI) in Khamaria, Omprakash was scolded with dirty word *Sohare*, father-in-law, by his higher-officer Mr. Gupta. The government officer assaulted Omprakash by the word *Abey sohare*, it pierce the heart of Omprakash: seeing Barla, Muzaffarnagar, as my permanent address, his anger and surprise had burst out together: ‘*Abey, sohare*, he has got this far! I felt that his way of speaking to me was unjust ... After we left Gupta’s office, he said, you are in training right now. These people want you to take a wrong step so that they can throw you out of the institute. Learn to recognize their traps.’ [Ibid: 82] Omprakash was trapped everywhere by his caste. He has been stung by uncounted upper caste scorpions. His suffering is greater than Macbeth’s innocence and King Lear’s disappointments in the storm because of the ungrateful daughters. No way inferior to those great characters, Omprakash had been facing all sorts of discrimination, injustices, atrocities, and humiliation. It was a time to developed self-hood and gain more knowledge and confidence. Here he attracted to wards Marxist Literature, because it rejects class and cast system.

### **5.4.18. Experience at O. F. T. Institute, Mumbai:**

Omprakash came to Bombay in 1970 and lived at the hostel of Ordnance Factory Training Institute, Ambernath. Among the Ordnance Factories, this institute and its hostel old a special place. Along with gymnastics and indoor games facilities, the hostel

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also had a swimming pool and a library. It was in this library that he read Pasternak, Hemmingway, Victor Hugo, Pierre Louis, Tolstoy, Pearl Buck, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Stevenson, Oscar Wild, Emile Zola, and other Western writers. He joined a local theater group, saw Vijay Tendulkar's plays, read the entire works of Tagore and Kalidasa was drawn to the Buddha's teachings, and discovered Marathi *Dalit* literature, the most sophisticated in all of India, which energized him and forged his literary consciousness. He began to publish poems and write a column in a local weekly, later also plays and short stories. Almost two decades later, he published *Joothan*.

During the training at Bombay, Omprakash heard an incident of *Dalits* exploitation by the upper class people in Mumbai- Puna area. He had shocked by listened this news and wrote an article on the problems of *Dalit* which was published by *Navbharat Times Newspaper*, Mumbai. This essay aroused a lot of controversy. As a result, the government employees who were Shiv Sena supporters complained against his essay to the Principal of the institute. Once, the Principal asked him, 'you have written this?' Omprakash said, 'yes.' The Principal said: 'you are in a government institution. There could be disciplinary action against you on the bass of this article...Don't do all this during training... You will be thrown out. Go now. Be careful in the future' [Ibid: 91] However, this kind of writing gave him fame and sympathy of *Dalits* from Maharashtra. Therefore, he came in contact with Marathi-*Dalit* Literature which 'pulls a spark in his veins.' (91) He begins to change the definition of literature which should primarily have a social motive beyond its aesthetic sense.

At the hostel of Ambernath, the narrator meets Vinayak Sadashiv Kulkarni, a Maharastrian Brahmin, who used to come to the mess and ate meat in the mess account of Omprakash. Therefore, Mrs. Kulkarni and Savita also became friends to him. One day when Valmiki observed her behaviour with Prof. Kamble that she was served tea and snacks in a different kind of dishes owing to his lower caste. Valmiki asked her to the reason behind this behaviour. Shavita said, 'SCs were uncultured, dirty.' [Ibid] After this

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incident, Omprakash realized that *Dalit* attain anything, but his cast will never change. However, Savita developed love affection for him without knowing his caste. She persuaded him on many occasions to go to the movies. But when he realized that she had fallen in love with him, he refused and maintained his respect. Later he acknowledged his caste to her, and consequently, Savita left him forever. In relation to this, Bhagwan Das, in his article *Socio-Economic Problems of Dalits*, provides a comprehensive picture of how untouchability affects the day-today lives of *Dalits* today. He says in addition to that:

**A superior gives bad reports to a *Dalit* subordinate in order to obstruct his promotion. In every day talk in the canteens, buses, trains and air-planes, offices and establishments, aspersions are cast on the men and women of untouchable origin and derogatory remarks are passed.**

**[Das: 1996: xxiv]**

While talking about his life in Mumbai, he mentions that he was invited and well-treated by the Deshpande family. Because of his surname Valmiki, that family was under the impression that Omprakash was a Brahmin but the moment they realize that Omprakash was not a Brahmin but a *Dalit*, there came a change in their attitude and it never remained the same as it was formerly.

### **5.4.19. Experience at O. F. T. Institute, Chandrapur:**

Mr. Kureshi, a sub-inspector in Maharashtra police and friend of the narrator wants to introduce him to a new commandant of the DSC, who came to Chandrapur district of Maharashtra on transfer from the narrator's village Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh. Here, the narrator shows that the hesitation to meet a new DSC because he knew even after becoming a high official, for high caste people, he is only a *Chuhra*, a low caste person who cannot get equal status with them. However, Mr. Kureshi, it is narrow-mindedness about him. The new commandant of the DSC gives them warm well-come but as he learnt of the narrator's hometown, he asked: 'Barla is a Tyagi village. Which caste are

you from? I looked at Kureishi, whose faced had changed color. He had asked the question conversationally. The moment I said that my caste was *Chuhra*, the Commandant became uneasy... This was a new experience for Kureishi.' [Valmiki: 2003: 115] By understood the caste of Omprakash Valmiki as a *Chuhra*, he feels uncomfortable. In an Indian society, most of the times the status person is decided by one's caste. Omprakash by narrating the harsh experiences, of his life as a *Dalit*, wants to make one thing clear that untouchability needs to be removed, abolished from the psyche of an average Indian and then only equality can be experienced. The constitution has not much helped because untouchability is already removed on a piece of paper by the way of constitution. Yet, it is to be found everywhere in the attitude, relations and interactions. One has to drive it out of one's mind then only untouchability would end in a real sense of term.

#### **5.4.20. Experience at a Train Journey:**

At a train journey, Omprakash and his wife faced the dreadful act of discrimination by a caste Hindu's family when they were returning to Chandrapur via Delhi after a trip of Rajasthan. Being discussed the beauty of Rajasthan, the subject changed midstream. Suddenly, Hindu woman asked his wife: '*Bahenji*, are you people Bengali?' [Ibid: 133] Chanda replied easily, 'No, we are from Uttar Pradesh. My husband is posted at Ordinance Factory, Chandrapur.' [Ibid] Then, the officer's wife fired second question: 'What is your caste?' Before Chanda say anything, Omprakash replied, *Bhangi*-Untouchable. As soon as they heard the word *Bhangi*, they lapsed into total silence. As result of this, there was no any discussion between the two families during the rest of the journey. Only the name *Bhangi* made a partition among two families. The atmosphere had turned oppressive; therefore, the journey had become painful. In this way, Omprakash was assaulted in every sphere of life. Moving from childhood to youth, when his personality was being shaped, he had to live in this terror-filled environment. Therefore, he said, 'how those who have never suffered the needle will pricks of hatred

and jealousy feel my pain? Who have never endured humiliation? How will they know what it feels like? Dreams, like sand dunes, do not make a sound when shattered.’ [Ibid] Thus, he has grown up in the vindictive and barbaric civilization.

Thus, it is not one but many such incidents, right from his childhood to youth, countless stings have stung not just his body but also his heart. Regarding to this it is said:

**Though Valmiki faced humiliation and insults from both upper caste teachers and students in school and college life, he never suppressed his desire to continue with his studies. Due to his hard work and determination, he became the first graduate in his community. He inspired his caste people to join their children in schools. Valmiki developed the Dalit consciousness among his people.**

[<http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/>]

It is said that if person is born, caste determines his destiny. If it is in our hands, why should Omprakash Valmiki born in Bhang community? On these questions, there is big argument but as a result of this we have suffered from poverty, illiteracy, narrow-mindedness, religious inertia and priestocracy, a social order embroiled in ritualism, which, fragmented, was defeated by number of eastern and western empire. Hence, Times have changed, but there is something somewhere that continues in trouble which is *Dalits* pain.

## **5.5. Rejection to traditional Hindu culture and acceptance to Buddhist culture:**

Autobiography is viewed as a genre which makes use of imagination to search truth, to discover a truthful, honest metaphor of the self. Self is a multifocal word. It is argued that autobiography is an important part of the narration of the second manifestation of self called reflection, and that it is highly dependent on context. This is the dominating narrative feeling in most subaltern autobiographies; Omprakash’s sense of self and community were juxtaposed in his *Joothan* as heat and soul.

### **5.5.1. Rejection of *Joothan*:**

One of the most powerful experiences in *Joothan* is when his mother overturned a basketful of *Joothan* at a wedding after a high-caste Tyagi humiliated her. After this incident his mother never went back to his door. Not only this but also the family of Omprakash had stopped taking the *Joothan* as imposed on them by Hindu culture. It was the first rejection of Hindu tradition which was digested by little Omprakash. Being educated and giving inspiration from the incident of his mothers revolution, he started oppose the Hindu tradition.

### **5.5.2. Rejection of Salam:**

On the occasion of Hiram Singh' wedding, Omprakash had a big argument with Hiram Singh for going to do the *Salam*. Finally, he went with Hiram Singh to do the *Salam*. For *Salam* both of them walk on the street of upper caste people and Hiram Singh mother-in-law demands for something else which is given to the newly married couple. Whenever someone comes out, the bride Hiram Singh would offer his respect in the form of *Salam*. It was awful for Omprakash. Come back to home the narrator furiously asked his father, 'Is it right to go for *Salam*? [Valmiki: 2003: 32] *Pitaji* look at him as saw him first and quietly said: Munshiji, sending you to school has been a success... I, too, have understood your point... We will now break this costum.' [Ibid] Not only saying but also done they have said and implemented in the marriage of Maya. They have stopped the tradition of *Salam*.

### **5.5.3. Rejection of old Tradition and Customs:**

In *Joothan*, the *Bhangi* community worshiped God Kalwa, Hari Sinh Nalwa and others. Goddess Madaran is among the most important ones. Whatever it was a wedding or birth or death, it was en essential to worship the gods. There was a superstition that if someone forgot to worship the gods, there was something terrible might happen to them. Being grown up in such atmosphere, Omprakash never faith on these believes. Whenever his

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family performed such ritual, Omprakash was sitting outside or wander around. As a result of this, his father was angry upon him due to his behaviour. Regarding to this, his father get annoyed on him and asked: 'Munshiji... I hope youh haven't a Christain.' [Ibid: 41] But something came to a boil inside him n he wants to say, 'Neither am I a Hindu. If I were really Hindu, would the Hindus hate me so much? Or discriminate against me? Or try to fill me up with caste inferiority over the smallest things? I also wondered why does one have to be a Hindu in order to be a good human being... I have seen and suffered the cruelty of Hindus since childhood. Why does caste superiority and caste pride attack only the weak? Why are Hinds so cruel, so heartless against *Dalits*.' [Ibid] In this way, Pitaji scolding him and to tart their *puja*- prayer. But the narrator doesn't take company to them, whereas he avoids the *puja*. It is the rejection Hindu culture.

### **5.5.4. Rejection of Untouchability:**

One day Omprakash had go to woks at the farm of Fauza Singh Tyagi. At middle of the day, Fauza's mother had brought lunch. All the members belong to Tyagi family sat down under the shelter of tree and *Chuhras* were sat down in the sun with taking two *roties* and a piece of pickle. It was seen by Omprakash and refused to eat with them. Fauz shouted at him and swearing: '*Abey Chuhre ke*...Just because he has learnt to read a little he has above himself... *Abey*, don't forget who you are.' [Ibid: 57] This attitude makes as a result of education. The birth of revolt had taken place in the mind of Omprakash. Finally, Fauza's mother called: '*Khajoriwali ke*...come...eat your *rotis*. [Ibid: 58] Omprakash accepted the food given by Fauza's mother. She too dropped the *roties* into his hand from way above, lest her hand touch him. This symptom was become insult of the boy Omprakash, who throws it in the face of Fauza's mother and run away towards his home. This incident had an impact on the entire Bhangi basti and, therefore, people were started to refuse wage less work.

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At Chandrapur, Omprakash got many new friends which were connected with *Dalit* panthers. During that period of his creativity, *Dalit* consciousness was further sharpened by only because of *Dalit* Movements, run by *Dalit* panthers in almost Maharashtra. The idea of *Dalit* Consciousness is basically an issue that is related with the realization of human sensibility. *Dalit* Consciousness is a reformative thought of *Dalits* life. It includes optimistic point of view, sorrow and pain, and social relationship with society. Sharadchandra Muktibodh in his Essay entitled, *What is Dalit Literature* laid emphasis on the fact that the state of being *Dalit* is a state of revelation of the anguish of exploitation and humiliation. It is not a literature of caste but of a Consciousness. He, therefore, elaborates his views on *Dalit* Consciousness and states:

**The nature of *Dalit* Consciousness is obviously not subjective. It is true that pains and pleasures are lived and experienced by individuals alone but the sufferings of *Dalits* are common reasons. Hence, there content is essentially social. [Muktibodh: 1994: 267]**

It is true that *Dalit* Consciousness is a kind of power of oppressed and exploited people in India, which is given to them a freedom of speaking, writing and living. Concerning to *Dalit* Consciousness Daya Pawar said:

***Dalit* Consciousness is a revolutionary feeling which goes against middle class society. It is a system which makes sympathy about downtrodden people. [Ibid: 29]**

Thus, *Dalit* Consciousness is not an attitude but feelings of *Dalits* in India. The reading of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Marxist literature changed his consciousness so much that he said, 'I have no interest in religion.' [Valmiki: 2003: 93] Humanity is greatest religion in his eyes and that's why he turns towards Buddha's Philosophy. There is no cast and class system, everyone has become equal as well as same. No one can poor, untouchables and rich.

### **5.6. Summing up:**



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Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan: A Dalit's Life* is originally written in Hindi and later translated into English. It is a vivid and sensitive portrayal of a *Dalit* youth's struggle to survive with dignity in a world that humiliates and subverts his every attempt at emancipation and progress. Omprakash has witnessed many bitter practices which he had to face during his childhood and youth simply because of his being a boy from the *Chuhra* community. Reviewing, *Joothan: A Dalit's Life*, Namit Arora says that, **Valmiki's narrative voice brims with a quiet sense of outrage at what he had to endure as a human... it attempts to shame them into introspection. This is the kind of book that becomes the axe for the frozen sea inside us.** [www.shunya.net] As Sarah Beth, in *Dalit Autobiographies in Hindi: the Transformation of Pain into Resistance*, says, **'Dalit individual uses his narrative to raise his voice for those who are silenced by caste oppression.'** [www.sasnet.lu.se] Omprakash points out that he grew up in those days of the post independent India when people in general were not ready to accept the right even to primary education for the people of *Dalit* community.

*Joothan* describes Omprakash's experiences as he moved from his native village to Dehradun, Roorkee, Jabalpur, Bombay, and Chandrapur. Everywhere he was isolated, insulted, ill-treated, and ridiculed by the people of upper caste. As long as the people did not know to which caste he belongs, their attitude remained sympathetic, positive and mixing but the moment they realize that Omprakash belongs to *Chuhra* community, there came a change in their attitude. Thus, Omprakash Valmiki by narrating the bitter experiences, of his life as a *Dalit*, wants to make one thing clear that untouchability needs to be removed, abolished from the psyche of an average Indian and then only equality can be experienced. The constitution has not much helped because untouchability is already removed on a piece of paper by the way of constitution. Yet it is to be found everywhere in the attitude, relations and interactions. One has to drive it out of one's mind then only untouchability would end in a real sense of term. However, reviewing by Sumit Guha, Professor of History, Brown University:

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**A searching memoir of the life of a sensitive and intelligent *Dalit* youth in Independent India. It tells us how he overcome contempt, humiliation and violence to gain and educations join slowly growing ranks of *Dalit* intellectuals in India... indispensable to those who would understand Modern South Asia. [[www.indiaclub.com](http://www.indiaclub.com)]**

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**Chapter VI: Summing Up**

### **6.1. Brief summary of conclusion and findings:**

The present dissertation entitled, *A Cultural Study Of Dalit Autobiographies In India*, an attempt has been made to examine four Dalit autobiographies in India that include Sharankumar Limbale's *The Outcaste*, Laxman Mane's *The Outsider*, Sidhlingaih's *Ooru Keri* and Ompraksh Valmiki's *Joothan*.

The present research has been divided into six chapters. The first chapter i.e. Preamble traced the evolution of culture, Indian Culture, Hindu Culture, Dalit culture, history of Dalit movement and literature in India with special reference to Maharashtra, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, and Dalit autobiography. It deals with the legacy of the *Bhakti* movement, Social Reformers and contribution of Babasaheb Ambedkar to the formulation of an alternative egalitarian, secular and modern identity for the Dalits. However, it focuses on cultural ideology of Indian Dalit and the genre Dalit autobiography which is considered to be as a narration of pain.

The second chapter, *A Cultural Study Of Sharankumar Limbale's The Outcaste*, attempted to examine the tear shedding experiences and culture of Mahar and Lingayat

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community. It is interpreted the agony and agitation of Sharankumar Limbale as an *Akkarmashi* literally means half-caste. The present chapter is discovered how upper class system of exclusivist pedagogy made the Dalits undergo the experience of insult, humiliation, psychological and physical violence and ultimately a sense of alienation from the mainstream society. However, it has been argued in the chapter that the Dalits challenged their exclusion from education, and came out of what may be termed the Dronacharya syndrome. The Dalits used the denial of education to their advantage, and accomplished in the fields of education. The autobiographies of Sharankumar Limbale have been illustrated as to how the protagonists overcame the hurdles so as to excel themselves in education and career.

The third chapter, *A Cultural Study Of Laxman Mane's An Outsider: Upara*, throws light upon the existence of Kaikadi boy who has sought education in an unfavorable condition. He came forward and achieved liberty, dignity, name and fame in the ironically called petrarchial society in which he was denied from the basic rights of human being and treated as inhuman. It narrates social injustice with Kaikadi community of Maharashtra. It is the canvas of poverty, humiliation and superstitious life. It clearly shows the sincerity, honesty of the author. He wishes to have a social debate in the problems of the nomadic tribe. It is the search of the author in search of justice, respect, and Hindu culture. Thus, it express downtrodden class and is a plea for social justice.

The fourth chapter, *A Cultural Study Of Siddalingaiah's Ooru Keri: An Autobiography*, is the reflection of Siddalingaiah's life in village and slum of Bangalore. It reveals the experiences which juxtapose ordinary day-to-day struggles like caste discrimination, injustice, and identity. It is almost evocative of distorting the hunger and humiliations of Dalits of Karnataka. It is not only recount the personal anxiety and turmoil's involved in the difficult process of transformation from one state into another, but simultaneously cites at the new historical and political processes which made possible this change. This equilibrium between the micro and the macro is one of the features of this autobiography.

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However, it focuses on Siddalingaiah's determination, creativity, and courage helped him to outwit the brutality of the caste system.

The fifth chapter, *A Cultural Study Of Omprakash Valmiki's Joothan: A Dalits Life*, is discovers the degraded facts of Chuhra- Bhangi community of Uttar Pradesh. It is considered as an epic of the Dalits' sufferings that have been narrated with various existing references. It portrays the struggle between Chuhra (Dalits) and upper caste Tagas of Barla. It explored the injustices of narrator at village, school, and government offices. However, it is sum up the pain, humiliation, and poverty of Dalits.

Having summed up the research, the sixth Chapter presents the conclusions and findings as follows:

- Influenced by Shahu, Phule and Ambedka Dalit authors deals with the aspect of asserting the self identity, which in turn is aimed at the liberation of the Dalits.
- The Dalit autobiographies in general are the narratives of the pain, which is focus on Dalit culture.
- Though the Dalit autobiographies are full of pain and pangs, they are aimed at awakening the Dalits and raising their consciousness.
- The Dalit autobiographies are not merely the writings of vengeance to spread hatred against the caste Hindus but also to promote the heritage of the Dalits.
- The Dalit autobiographies are aimed at rebuilding society to promote honour, dignity, justice and equality.
- The Dalit autobiographies by re-defining and re-constructing the self identity demand for the authentic space in culture and literature.
- Quest for identity is an important aspect of the Dalit autobiographies, which represent the struggles of the Dalits for social equality and justice.



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- Dalit autobiographies are the store house of pain and pathos as a means of cultural assertion and *Dalit's* humiliation and injustice.
- . The select *Dalit* authors penned their soul-numbing survival stories equivalent to American slave narratives.

Thus, the conclusion of this research is to rejection of Hindu culture and to accept Buddhist culture which is based on classless society and equality. Dalit autobiographies, in India and abroad, focus on the pathetic and challenging past and their community, which is struggling for present and hopeful future.

R. S. Gavai said:

**At the first time the suffering of Dalit and tribal people tormented by the great soul of Lord Gautam Buddha. He introduced the concept of equality to the society. This was the first opportunity imparted to these people to prosper and live in dignity. His 'sainted' path was later adopted by the world saints like Kabir, Eknath, Tukaram and so on. They actively participated to eradicate untouchability which was a blot on humanity. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the social reformers especially Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar started many movements to impart them human rights.'** [Gavai: 2008: II]

However, the post decades of the twentieth century witnessed both in Europe and in several countries of the Third World including India, a diminishing away of the old, established value systems because they were accused of catering to the needs of the privileged few. The new concepts like, 'subversion', 'deconstruction', 'post-modernism', swept away the old literary theories. Consequently, *Dalit* literature, created a new wave in their respective country.

The emergence of *Dalit* literature was an inevitable phenomenon in Third World Literature. It portrays the life of *Dalits* in India, which is a perennial story of drudgery

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and struggle. One of the best representatives of this new wave of *Dalit* liberation and literary movement was *Dalit* panther in Maharashtra, which revived the term and expanded its reference to includes scheduled tribes, poor peasants, woman and all those being exploited politically, economically, and on the name of region. The primary motive of *Dalit* literature is the liberation of *Dalits* in India, which is based on presentation of reality. Therefore, the authenticity and liveliness is the essential feature of *Dalit* literature.

Revolutionary movements of Rajarhsi Shahu Maharaj, Mahatma Phule and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar paved the way for Indian *Dalits*. Only because of them, education reached at the door of *Dalits*, *Adivasis* and nomadic tribes living in remote areas. *Dalits* sought education and came forward and tried to express their past, which means darkness of deprivation, oppression, suppression, marginalization, degradation, humiliation and maltreatment. Besides, *Dalits* understand their identity by reading the works of Mahatma Phule and Babasaheb Ambedkar in religion and education. However, *Dalit* society actively participated in Ambedkar's ideology.

In the 1960<sup>s</sup> the flow of *Dalit* literary writings increased in the form of poetry, short-stories, drama and autobiography. As a result, autobiography became favorite genre to express *Dalit* experiences before the world. Numbers of *Dalit* writers were going to publish in India in regional languages. Through their writing, *Dalits* were demanding for liberty, honor, security and freedom which were the right of every human being. Sharankumar Limbale's *The Outcast*, Laxman Mane's *The Outsider*, and Siddalingaiah's *Ooru Keri*, and Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan* are the representative of this era to struggle for self identity.

The narrator in each text shows a remarkable ability to shift narration between his own life and the lives of the communities, with the text functioning as a social document with a specific cultural agenda. These autobiographies are reflecting enhanced level of social and cultural awareness among the exploited community. However, *Dalit* autobiographies

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are being appreciated for the social purpose. It portrays the surroundings of *Dalits* and their social behaviour of Indian society.

Though education goes to each door but Dalit authors like Sharankumar Limbale, Laxman Mane, Siddhlingaih and Omprakash Valmik have seen to beg for education. Sharankumar was first child to admit school in his caste, but then other *Dalit* children were ready for going to school. Laxman have also same experience of school admission. Siddhlinhaih and Omprakash Valmiki too suffered a lot for getting admission to the school, but still they could not allowed to sit on chair or bench. There was no fair treatment and security for a *Dalit* student in the government and non-government schools. On such occasion, present *Dalit* author realized that education was the only way to overcome all the sufferings and so, they went to school regularly and studied hard. Giving education and influenced by Babasaheb Ambedkar they rejected old tradition of Hindu society and opened the door of Buddha religion.

The long history of Indian tradition is witnessed for the subjugation of women, major theme of *Dalit* autobiography, as marginalized. Women are suppressed, humiliated and considered as a property whether in the hands of parents or in the hands of husband. *Dalit* autobiographies reflected women as weak, scrawny, pathetic and sad, and not one of them without a serious complication in her life. There are widows, children, women, deserted women, and as the ultimate of all this divine and social injustice. Sharankumar presents his own mother who has been cheated again and again, exploited most blatantly in every relationship, she strikes burdened with a roll call of children and their upbringing. Regarding to this Bama-a well known Kannada *Dalit* writer- said,

**The position of women is both pitiful and humiliating, really. In the fields, they have to escape from upper caste men's molestation.'**

**[Bama: 1992: 299]**

Therefore, *The Outcaste* points out that the *Dalits* are given inhuman treatment by caste Hindus. Moreover, if any *Dalit* lady is good looking and happens to be ignorant, and

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powerless, she is bound to get sexually harassed and victimized by them. Masamai is one such victim who has to suffer at each and every step in her life. Some farmers even harassed them sexually, pulled them into the crop, and raped them.

Sharankumar asserts that *Dalits* are branded as inferior human beings in the names of gods, goddesses, religious scriptures, and such metaphysical phenomena. It can be said that the root cause of the pathetic condition of the *Dalit* women lies in the unfair structure and nature of the caste system. Regarding to this, Subhash Chandra, a researcher, remarks in relation to the dependence of *Dalits* that,

**The *Dalit* class is completely dependent on the non-*Dalits* to fill their stomachs. They are helpless to eat the discarded food of the non-*Dalits* to satiate the hunger of the stomach.**

[[www.ambedkar.org](http://www.ambedkar.org)]

Thus, it is truth that *Dalit* society was dependent on the non-*Dalits* to fill their stomachs. That's why they have dared to exploit them.

Laxman Mane's *The Outsider* narrates the traditions of *Sati- Pratha, Bal-Vivah*. These are witnessed for placing the women not only as marginalized but also makes them puppets in the hands of patriarchal society. A number of caste-Hindu men often try to have illegal sexual relationship with *Dalit* women and badly insulted. They were beaten as if they were slaves. Regarding to this, Raj Kumar said,

**...a majority of *Dalit* women live in rural areas amidst poverty and backwardness. Majority of *Dalit* women are daily wage labourers, agricultural workers, servants and unskilled workers.**

[<http://cantorion.org.archive.org/>]

Bama, Tamil *Dalit* author said that '**women identity as a mirror of society**'. [Opp. Cite. **Bama: 155**] Like Indian woman, in *Joothan*, the position of women is also secondary and treats them as inferior or others. Though she may be wage earner, she has to consult her father, husband, son or an elder person from her family. Whatever she earns she spends in

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the house. The life of *Bhangi* women is governed by certain rules and taboos as prescribed by Manu. Therefore, she has used busy in untrained work like to clean unwanted things, grind corn, gather fuel, tend to the fields, bathe younger siblings, and prepare meals.

Religion forms an important role in the life of Indian *Dalit* society. The most striking point about the religion is that it does not adhere to the traditional brahminical system of worship, nor is it linked to brahminical God and Goddess (*Kul Devtas and Kul Devis*). Deep faith in their *Kul Devi* leads them to believe that a desired boon asked of her will be unfailingly fulfilled. Sometimes fulfillment of boon involves extended rituals to please the God or Goddess granting that boon; the life of *Bhangi* women revolves continuously around the rituals petitioning the Goddess and offering thanks giving for boons that have been granted. *Joothan* is considered as an epic of the women sufferings of Pain, which have been narrated with various experiences. As Anjabai Derhbhrator, who attended the Nagpur conference of the *All India Women's Conference* in 1938, comments:

**The saravna sister's behaviour towards their untouchable sisters was distant, cold, mean and lowly attitude. During the lunch hour, the untouchable women delegates - Jaibai and others - had been asked to sit aside and had felt humiliated,**

[<http://cantorion.org.archive.org/>]

Thus, *Dalit* women's place in family is secondary if she is earns. She does not take self-determining decisions. She does the menial and dirty work that Manu designed.

Caste council plays an important role in *Dalit* society. In an interview with Alka on IBN News channel on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2013, Hari Narke explained the term Caste council, '**Caste council is a system which solved the problem among its caste only.**' [Narke: 2013] He further said it works as a similar court and solved the problem, quarrels of caste people. The purpose of Caste council was to give justice in least time and to save their money. But today it has controlled by the representative of village chief or landlord.

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Regarding to this, Laxman Gaikwad, on IBN, newschannel on 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2013, said: **‘Caste council become the center of exploitation.’** [Gaikwad: 2013] Thus, *Dalit* autobiographies are not simply the narration of life-stories, but reveals cultral assertion. The portrayal of socio-economic conditions like poor settlement and shelter, living and thinking, food, education, language, custom and tradition, rituals, festival are traced to support the analyses of the research. In schools, employment institutions, public places, travel, and politics, *Dalits* were discriminated.

The significances of *Dalit* identity in the caste hegemonic society are brought out in the autobiographers. Thus, Sharankumar Limbale, Laxman Mane, Siddalingaiah and Omprakash valmiki are belong to various states, but their attention of writing was *Dalit* identity and struggle for equality. They had given optimistic measurements for the young generation. These all autobiographies are written in different regional languages, which enriched Indian literature. These are tried to to open new world of experience that was never herd and read earler. These are to expose the brutal past of Indian *Dalit* and brings to the surface: exploited communités of Maharashtra, Karnatak and Uttar Pradesh asking for librtty, fraternity and equality that was denied to them by the traditional, orthodox Hindusim in India. However, it is said that the Buddhisim is only way before suppressed in Indias to get free from the slavery imposed by Manu, desiner of *Manusmruti*, made set up in India. Hence, the present research concludes with the poem of Prof. Rajpankhe, Marathi Gazal writer in Maharashtra, which shows the way of Buddhism for Equality:

**Future will bloom to whom pathos have pained,**

**Education humanized and honour gained,**

**Dissonant past was frustration, rebel rebirth...**

**[Rajpankhe: 2007: 138]**

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