



An overview of the social change during the colonial period

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Abstract

These memoirs are powerful tools for social change, with the goal of improving the circumstances of modern-day Dalits in India. In its many forms, Dalit literature is an intellectual and artistic expression that aims to shed light on social realities. It changed the face of Indian literature by establishing itself as a separate school of thought. Dalit literature primarily acts as a human and social history record, exploring the experiences of those who have lived through centuries of economic and social exploitation in India. On the other hand, social equality is making inroads into Indian society. Activists' efforts and the revolutionary potential of Dalit literature are responsible for this encouraging trend. More and more Dalit people are speaking up and sharing their experiences, which is helping to propel conversations about social justice and equality, which is leading to a more equal and inclusive society.

Keywords: Dalit, people, Mesopotamian and belief, social, Dalit literature

Introduction

We have already established that the primary focus of Jotirao Phule's early endeavors was the education of the common people. Without a doubt, he knew exactly why his people were so far behind the times: they had been denied education for hundreds of years. Nearly four thousand years before the birth of Christ, the Mesopotamian region became the birthplace of modern education. The lowest castes of Hindu society, however, were purposefully kept ignorant via the medium of religious belief.

Education was to bring about the transformation. As mentioned above, the Mahars first sought to enrol their children in government or mission-run public schools. They began to build their own schools after realizing this was insufficient.

Keeping this in mind, Jotirao Phule saw the need of educating the populace and fostering intellectuals from the Dalit caste as the key to ending the centuries-long Brahman dominance.

Phule swiftly established a peasant base after beginning his social service activities with schools for Untouchables and women. He then launched the Satyashodhak Samaj with support from the well-to-do non-Brahmans, mostly contractors and a few professionals. We can only presume

that the migrations were a trickle when we think about how the low castes had traditionally made up the bulk of India's overpopulated population (Shudras 58%, untouchables 24% apprx.).

As a result of the low castes' total lack of exposure to Western and Indian intellectual ideologies, the low castes' cultural, institutional, and organizational development lagged behind that of the educated Brahmans. Two or three newspapers were still being produced by the Dalit community after Phule's battle. This shows that there weren't many individuals with the intellectual capacity to communicate effectively and that the atmosphere was not conducive to the ideas' growth.

This was not the case, however, with the Brahmans. "Slavery: (Under the Cloak of Brahmanism)" is a well-known work by Phule that touches on this subject.

Since every editor of one of Poona's Marathi newspapers is a Brahmin, it stands to reason that they would rather not publish anything critical of their fellow caste members. There was no way the Englishman serving as chairman of the municipal council would fall for the Bhat's deceit. The Bhats then united in their condemnation of him, claiming-utterly falsely-that his policies were detrimental to the riots' interests; this greatly upset him. At last, he was so sick of

the disgraceful state of affairs that he resigned as chairman out of pure frustration and decided he would no longer be involved with the Municipal Committee.

From Phule, we may deduce that the British government was heavily reliant on Brahman bureaucracy, and that the intellectual climate was similar, with all of the newspaper editors being Brahmins.

Rather than starting out as an urban and intellectual movement, the Dalit movement was primarily a peasant movement due to the terrible reality of the non-Brahman people's illiteracy. Although it was not simple to generate thousands of intellectuals in a single day, it was feasible to address large audiences and inform them of their current position. This was the reason the political Dalit movement was able to gain traction among the non-Brahman people.

This is the only way to make sense of Phule and colleagues' efforts. Because of the intermittent character of non-Brahman organizational growth, Phule's writings are similarly unsystematic and erratic; they are more visual than discursive and hard-hitting, with the intention of shocking readers into awareness of the issue rather than providing an in-depth explanation. In addition, he admits in the book's preface that he had planned to produce a more comprehensive work, but ultimately decided that the book's practical application to people's lives was more essential. For non-Brahman leaders, appealing to the public took precedence than engaging in well-crafted research.

Literature Review

Sanjay Kumar *et al.* (2024) ^[1] Despite its status as one of the world's most rapidly developing economies, India is nonetheless burdened by its long-established caste system. A look at the oppressive past, the oppressed present, and the origins of Dalit literature are all part of this paper's historical context. It takes a close look at the Dalit literary movement's path and scope, which is generally based on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's philosophical principles. It also delves into the difficult lives of Dalits and their admirable fight against societal inequality. Within India's caste-based socioeconomic structure, Dalit literature is a potent means of communicating the social and political realities faced by the Dalit people. It elucidates the complex web of social forces that affects Dalits and their relationships with other Dalits and non-Dalits. It sheds light to the hardships faced by the Dalit people in their fight for freedom and equality via moving stories. There has been a noticeable trend towards equality within Dalit social dynamics, thanks to the doggedness of Dalit movements and the powerful language found in Dalit literature. A major step forward in this ongoing process is the legislative ban on gender and caste discrimination. From navigating issues of identity to fighting for social equality, Dalit literature captures the experience of the downtrodden. This study explores the dynamic nature of equality and justice among Dalit communities and highlights the power of Dalit literature to inspire social change. Dalit authors have always been and always will be vocal advocates for gender and caste equality in literature, and for social justice more generally.

Pavan Mandavkar *et al.* (2016) ^[2] Despite being one of the world's most populous nations, India's strict caste system has brought them international shame. The root of Dalit literature, the history of oppression, and the plight of the

oppressed are all explored in this article. The breadth and development of Dalit literature are part of this field of study. Many people think that the ideas put forward by the Ambedkarite ancestors form the basis of all Dalit literary works. Additionally, the study analyzes the harsh reality faced by Dalits and their admirable efforts to improve society. These works provide vivid descriptions of the social and political struggles faced by the Dalit people in India's caste-based society. It follows the Dalits as they navigate their social environments in India and the ways in which they interact with both other Dalits and non-Dalits. It delves into the fight for equality and freedom by the Dalit people. There is a hopeful trend toward equality in the social lives of the Dalit community presently, thanks to powerful Dalit movements and the hammering on upper caste society, the government, and intellectuals via Dalit literature. It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their gender or caste. Through their works, oppressed people go on a journey from a search for identity to a fight for social equality.

Cielo Festino (2015) ^[3] Jacques Ranciere notes that modern artists aren't interested in making art anymore; instead, they seek to "[...] induce alterations in the space of everyday life, generating new forms of relations" outside of museums. The purpose of this study is to analyze the work of Indian Dalit writer Bama's 1994 book *Sangati* to explore how literature may transform personal experiences into life-narratives that ultimately give birth to a distinct kind of societal experience. Since the community's voice superimposes itself on the individual's voice in her story, Bama rewrites the genre of autobiography as understood in the West in order to make public the experiences of the Dalit women. By doing so, she modifies the standard and style of literary canonical tales in order to include the experiences of marginalized people expressed via a distinct aesthetic.

K. Satyanarayana (2017) ^[4] This essay makes an effort to provide a critical review of cultural critic D. R. Nagaraj's methodological framework for examining modern Dalit writing. Nagaraj argues that modern Dalit writings express libertarian claims to rights and entitlements and are therefore written by deculturated Dalits. He proposes a new aesthetics for Indian culture and argues against the idea of a distinct aesthetics for Dalit literature, instead situating Dalit literary achievements within the larger context of Indian culture. He is on a mission to unearth the folk and oral cultural forms that Dalit authors contributed to Indian culture. Modern Dalit literature's theoretical novelty and aesthetic importance are undermined by this approach. According to Baburao Bagul, a writer and critic from the Marathi Dalit community, Dalit literature is a modern, written, and Ambedkarite tradition that reimagined modernity, created new forms of expression, and imagined Dalit as a generic identity, lived experience, and viewpoint in the history of modern Indian literature. Bagul argues that Dalit literature is a kind of contemporary politics within the realm of modern Indian literary culture. Bagul contends that Dalit literature is democratic and humanistic because it incorporates the teachings of Western enlightenment thinkers like Ambedkar, Buddha, Christ, Phule, and the humanism tradition of India. After discussing Bagul, reading certain Dalit writings shows where Nagaraj's approach falls short.

Suratha Kumar Malik (2019) [5] It is well-known that Varna and Jati were the cornerstones of traditional Indian society. Even after seventy-five years of India's freedom, the caste system is deeply ingrained in our religious, political, and social systems, despite its lengthy history and many revisions. To this day, the concept of untouchability remains the caste system's most baffling and problematic feature. After independence from British rule, Dalit groups in India sought to rebuild the pan-Indian Dalit identity via various forms of social and political activism, in contrast to their colonial-era counterparts, who sought to deconstruct the elite history of the upper castes by focusing on Dalit history, heritage, epistemology, and worldview. In light of the foregoing, this article seeks to investigate a few of India's current Dalit movements, delving into their connections to events like the Bhim Army, the Rohith Vemula case, and the Koregaon Bhima incident, all of which have had an impact on these movements and helped stimulate Dalit awareness in the pursuit of a pan-Indian dalit identity, organization, and movement. Additionally, the article delves deeply into the problems and obstacles faced by Dalit movements in the twenty-first century as a result of neoliberal globalization.

An overview of the social change during the 19th century

As perplexing as India's social system had been for a thousand years, the reformation of the Indian populace had been much more complex. One may argue that the desire to emulate the British imperials was the primary impetus for the changes. The irony here is that non-Hindus and foreigners are looked down upon by the Brahman religion more severely than the untouchables were. However, as we can see from past events, this criterion becomes irrelevant when dealing with foreign invaders who can demonstrate their might. The new rulers' belief that the occupied people were ignorant and in need of education was the defining characteristic of this period. The conquered country also adopted this strategy, regardless of its veracity.

As a result of British administration, long-established customs that were unpopular with the general populace could finally be dismantled. One of them is sati, also known as widow burning. Especially when we consider that the death of Ram Mohan Roy's sister at one of these ceremonies served as his first impetus. For Hindus, the pursuit of equality and fairness has always been a driving force for religious conversion. This is further supported by the fact that Muslims make up almost half of India's population, which includes the Muslim-majority states of Bangladesh and Pakistan. Plus, it's likely that the majority of their forefathers were peasants who fought for social justice.

Christianity failed to attain this level of respect inside Hindu culture. Without a doubt, the Western invasion coincided with a time when the religion's very validity was being questioned in its own nation. An unprecedented amount of pressure was being exerted on the church. There were new Christian groups that emerged in the 16th century apart from Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Over the course of roughly two centuries, new ideas supplanted religion as the dominant social force in Western civilizations.

Furthermore, it is intriguing to note that the majority of India's contemporary Christian population resides in and around Goa, the renowned Portuguese port where Jesuit

missionaries spread medieval Christianity. British efforts to preach Christianity were never both effective and motivated. While the British were the preeminent imperial power in the subcontinent, innovative thinking flourished. Freedom, fairness, and patriotism. Religions around the world also taught the first two. On this occasion, however, the enlightenment ideas were carried, particularly in the aftermath of the French Revolution in 1789.

We have seen that India has always been a very religious and diverse nation, home to thousands of jatis and dozens of sects. It is worth noting that the majority of these social groupings are present in every civilization. On the other hand, Brahmanism had the effect of making these social groupings into tangible, autonomous parts of Indian society. The responses of these several social groupings were, however, strikingly distinct from one another.

An same Indian civilization that had been open to Muslim influence a thousand years earlier was once again prepared for transformation in the nineteenth century. It is only fair to state that Hinduism was another way in which the community was impacted by foreign ideologies. One crucial component must have been Hinduism's free structure, which allows each tribe to bring their own deities into the religion without the need for prophesy or a central authority.

A new Indian society was to emerge within the boundaries formed by these circumstances and the emergence of self-consciousness within the 19th century natinalist framework. When it came down to it, the new institutions that were seeking change were really more Western in nature. Also, for the first time in recorded history, an Indian identity has emerged in popular culture. Viewed in the context of India's societal transformation from the early nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, it becomes much more apparent.

At the outset, the expectations of people who were both constrained by religious and cultural norms and who aspired to emulate their British rulers brought about the first changes. Afterwards, we saw an increase in demands, particularly from lower castes, as well as a rise in caste awareness associated with the everyday humiliation experienced by those in higher castes. Another intriguing development is the gradual shift from a more liberal to a much more religious outlook among the academics and groups involved. Around the same time, a sense of national pride, particularly in opposition to the British, was on the increase.

Even the lowest castes who wanted to do away with the religious practices that had oppressed them for two thousand years were swept up in this sweeping change. Simply put, the liberal movements among the higher castes eventually became religious. The colonialists no doubt found religion to be the most convenient means of differentiating themselves. Religion was also well-received by Brahmins. British control had already resolved some of the issues (such as Sati).

Social uprising against the brutal Brahman control over the rest of society should not be limited to the 19th century or the British. There has been many conflicts in the past. For the most part, they included struggles for dominance between Brahmins and Kshatriyas. However, the Kshatriyas very certainly wouldn't have a fighting chance against the Brahmanic authority if the lower castes hadn't helped them. The more fundamental conflict, though, was not that which

existed between the upper-caste Kshatriyas and Brahmins, who shared authority and prestige, but rather between the "twice-born" castes (Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas) and the lower-caste Shudras, tribal people, and Untouchables, who were typically not part of either group. They were mostly impoverished farmer and artisan groups, thus their anger sprang from both a desire for social rank and economic concerns related to the caste system. No "Kshatriya" uprising could have succeeded without a "Shudra" foundation. For instance, in an effort to establish a populist foundation for his rule, the King of Travancore sought to divide the middle-level castes of southern India along political lines. The Brahman and the most powerful ruling group, the Vellalar, tried to stay on the outside at first but were eventually entangled. Similarly, the most significant cultural uprisings occurred in southern India, where there were no "true Kshatriyas" and even powerful organizations were seen to be of the Shudra varna; in this region, the "Kshatriya-Brahman" and "Shudra-twice born" factions sometimes overlapped.

In the course of India's societal transformation, religion emerged as a lynchpin in the effort to create a very cohesive country. Nationalist sentiments emerged thereafter. It would be easy to see a similar trend here, taking into account instances from the West and the Middle East. Religion in such areas was much more structured and maintained for a long time. So, it's safe to argue that reformist movements and parties, like Satyashodhak Samaj, are essentially religious groups that have gathered a large following. Whatever their grievances with Hinduism may have been, we know that the Dalit movement also made use of some Hindu deities. To legitimate their movements, the people's faith was crucial, as this illustrates.

This is how the current religious affiliation of Indian nationalism came to be. Additionally, this must be the reason why Muslims and Hindus split off in a country where religion was a national identity. Out of a single civilization, two states emerged. While lower-caste people attempted to establish a new country, they were unable to do so due to their deeply held animosity toward the Brahman religion. This is an intriguing subject to consider.

It should be recalled that starting with the Phule, members of the Dalit intellectual elite had a tendency to identify with the oppressed, the victims of the Aryan invasions. The idea led both Phule and Ambedkar to classify the lower castes as non-Aryans. Therefore, they fought the ruling classes throughout the nineteenth century in an effort to forge a new national identity. Their story goes something like this: some 3,500 years ago, during the Aryan invasion, the local Indians, who were a diverse mix of races such as mongoloids, aborigines, and others, were enslaved and made to serve as the foot of the deity Brahma.

Because they relied so much on the sentiments of the manipulated masses, the veracity of these ideas is open to much debate. This held true for both the higher castes, who felt the dominance of the British Empire, and the Dalits, who were subject to Brahmin pressure. Thus, the Aryan theory served as a useful tool for manipulating each side of the story. The Europeans used it to legitimize their global control by citing three thousand years of history, the Brahmins used it to overcome the supremacy of the ruling British by claiming they were relatives, and the Dalits used

it to explain how they became such a humiliated class for so long.

We may see how a classical culture responds to modernity by looking at the many ways different strata in Indian society have sought for historical connections. In the midst of this enormous upheaval, Indian civilization was facing its greatest test. The 20th century in India was defined by these debates over religious, caste-based, and nationalist notions of identity.

Reformation of the Dalit movement at the beginning of the 20th century

Even while Satyashodhak Samaj remained a powerful force in the original province of Maharashtra, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the rising leader of the untouchables, did not seem to be affected by or associated with it.

As previously stated, Dr. Ambedkar's initial appearance coincided with the gradual disintegration of Satyashodhak Samaj. Consequently, Dr. Ambedkar's cognitive environment was totally distinct from Jotirao Phule's context.

It was never even contemplated that the Dalits should have a voice in a national congress. The first Poona political group, the Sarvajanik Sabha, was described by Phule as a bath (Brahmin) sabha. The Indian National Congress didn't seem to make much of a difference to him:

All humanity is little in the eyes of these crafty Aryabhat Brahmins, who secretly harbor feelings of jealousy and hatred for them. I can state categorically that Shudras and Atishudras will never be members of their National Congress, even if these Aryans were to draft hundreds of national conferences mimicking the religiously unified Americans or French.

His prediction came true in 1885 with the formation of the first Indian National Congress. Brahmins continued to dominate the assembly, with 80% of Madras delegates and 100% of Poona delegates being Brahmins in the first session.

During that period, the non-Brahman community began to see the Indian Congress as a symbol of the higher castes. This was something they believed for valid reasons.

Legal Abolishment of the caste system

The scope of this research does not provide a comprehensive description of the social politics of nineteenth and twentieth century Indian society. However, a methodology had to be settled upon in order to paint a picture of the previous century. In this instance, we choose to construct the topic around the big individuals, or maybe we should say the cornerstones, of the lower caste movements, namely Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Jotirao Phule, and Ram Mohan Roy.

Dr. Ambedkar

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is the final person to be discussed in order to provide a full historical and comprehensive picture of the lower castes' situation and movements. We thought it would be more useful to begin with an account of Ambedkar's life and work by an Indian writer, Dhananjay Keer. The writing style will also provide light on the significance of Ambedkar to some Indians.

The Konkar area gave India famous thinkers and warriors

like Tilak, Karve, and Paranjpye; the Ambedkars are from this region. Ambedkar was born and raised in the hamlet of Ambavade, which is located five kilometers distant from the Rantnagiri District town of Mandangad. They were a prominent family in that town. The family took great pride in hosting the palanquin of the local deity and used the annual festival as an opportunity to showcase themselves to the rest of the community. Maloji Sakpal, Ambedkar's grandpa, was born into a respectable Mahar family. The Mahars are the most powerful, resilient, bright, courageous, adaptive, and prominent caste among Hindu society's untouchables.

As soon as we start reading, the author sets the stage for an epic tale. A tale in which he had an innate belief. That the aforementioned literature reflects the infiltration of the caste system into Indian thought is what makes it so intriguing. As a person that the writer admires, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is described as being from a respectable family and the esteemed Mahar caste. As we have seen, there are other communities among the untouchables that are courageous, flexible, clever, combative, virile, and leaders. A guy who was born into a decent family and hence innately gifted with leadership skills became one in this little book. As Keer goes on:

Their lineage was deeply rooted in the religious Kabir tradition. Compassion, kindness, and submission to God were seen as a source of solace by this Bhakti school of thinking. Because the school's founder, Kabir, had harshly denounced the caste system, the adherents of this Bhakti school had eliminated its rigidity, which had a profoundly enlightening influence on the minds of these devotees. This is why the Kabir cult attracted members of the Untouchable caste. According to the Kabir's disciples, God accepted all people regardless of their caste or nationality as long as they worshiped God.

The Second Dalit Generation

It seems that Ambedkar's spirit of resistance was passed down through generations of his family. One intriguing aspect of Ambedkar's life is his father's occupation—he served in the British military. It is well-known that the majority of the colonial army's soldiers belonged to lower-caste communities and were hence not British. Those from higher social classes tended to favor civilian bureaucracies over military ones. There must be more evidence of the British influence on Indian culture like this. For the simple reason that, contrary to popular belief, Ambedkar's father was literate. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata, two national epics, are books that he would often read to his kids. Additionally, he had the ability to read and speak English, which allowed him to instruct his children in the language. It was in this setting that Ambedkar began formal education at the tender age of five.

An intriguing example of a comparable conflict exists, however with a crucial distinction. In this case, it was the Mahars themselves who fought the battle. They had served in the British Army in the past. A significant number of individuals from the Untouchable Mahar and Chambar castes enlisted for duty in infantry battalions at Ratnagiri District, which served as the primary recruitment ground for the British Bombay Army. Once they finished their duty or retired, they would settle down in a calm, central hamlet or

town with a plot of land, where they would raise their children and grow crops. Dapoli became home to a small number of these individuals, including both commissioned and non-commissioned officers. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the Untouchables' liberator, spent his formative years and completed his elementary education here.

Along with nine other military pensioners, Ambedkar's father was one among them. On 1 July 1892, they petitioned the president of Dapoli Municipality to allow their kids to attend the Municipal school and be educated alongside other boys. They said that by doing things this way, their sons would be more motivated to study hard and follow the lead of boys from other castes if they wanted to rise up the ranks of their classes.

While the lower castes did not want this outcome, the conditions in which Bhim (Dr. Ambedkar) was raised reveal the profound transformation that took place in their lives as a result of the advancements made by nineteenth-century leaders like Jotirao Phule and British rule. At the time of Ambedkar's birth in 1891, the non-Brahman and untouchable movement was gaining momentum.

This helped to separate religious beliefs from drastically divergent ways of thinking and behaving among the populace. Unhappy castes might rise up against Brahmin dominance thanks to the policy of comparative non-interference. Subsequently, as industrial cities expanded, many individuals sought refuge in diverse urban centers, far from the scrutiny of their traditional communities and the sway of their families. Here we may see the modern caste system in action.

In this way, we can see how the first generation of Untouchables used education to change their children's fate, and how the second generation of educated Untouchables followed suit. Dr. Ambedkar belonged to the second generation that, against all odds, took advantage of opportunities to further their education.

However, it must be noted that the schools and other institutions of the non-Brahman movement, which was led by Phule, did not physically connect with the newborn Ambedkar. However, Ambedkar would subsequently refer to Phule as his mentor.

Childhood and Education of Ambedkar

Because of his exceptional intelligence and boundless curiosity, Bhim knew even as a young boy that he was different from other students. Simply put, he was not a member of the higher castes. He was just an untouchable; no one wanted to talk to, touch, or even see him. At every stage of his schooling, he encountered the painful truth of prejudice. Neither by his classmates nor by his Brahmin instructor.

On a piece of gunny cloth that they brought to school, Bhim and his brother were often compelled to sit in the corner of the classroom and squat. For fear of contamination, the professors would not even touch the students' note books, much alone ask them to recite poetry or answer questions. These two students would tilt their lips upwards in a funnel-like fashion whenever they were thirsty at school, and someone would generously pour water into their mouths.

Despite the fact that the majority of the upper class had excellent educations in Britain, these instances demonstrate that they had no shame in treating the lower class like

animals. These actions undoubtedly prepared Bhim for his subsequent fight against the aristocracy. It just so happened that Bhim's one and only kind instructor was a Brahmin. An educator whose legacy Bhim chose to continue by adopting the surname Ambedkar.

In 1913, when Ambedkar completed his elementary school, he left India on a scholarship to pursue further study in the United States, thanks to the patronage of the non-Brahman Maharaja of Baroda.

After almost a decade of study in the US and UK, Ambedkar returned to India in 1923. His extensive education included the following: B.A., M.A., Ph.D., M.Sc., D.Sc., Barrister-at-Law, M.Sc., and other degrees. In one of the Mahar songs honoring him, the words "law" are chanted in a manner similar to an incantation. He was a very pragmatic, politically active man. Nonetheless, he had to accept the Mahar tales for both private and public reasons.

By the end of his life, Ambedkar had become a legend in contemporary India, and not only among the Untouchables.

The British government finally gave in to the demands of the Depressed Classes' groups and spokespeople for special electorates in 1930, after years of lobbying. Even though the Statutory Commission had previously suggested that they be granted joint electorate seats, the British government sent two representatives, B.R. Ambedkar and R. Srinivasan, to the Indian Round Table Conference, which began on November 21, 1930, in London, to clarify their place in India's future constitution.

Ambedkar's ideological stand

Following India's independence, Ambedkar gained the respect of people from all social classes and was a member of the constitution-drafting council. At least in legal circles, he was the one who succeeded in doing away with the "untouchable" designation.

Additionally, he was a reformer who guided his people to choose Buddhism rather than Hinduism. In the end, he chose to abandon Hinduism altogether because, after all his fighting with the Brahmins, the religion's leaders, he saw no need in continuing to treat them as people.

In discussing Buddhism in the subcontinent, it is impossible to avoid touching on the very contentious figure of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and the Neo-Buddhist Movement, which he founded in an effort to convert the Dalits, also known as the ex-untouchables, to Buddhism. Ambedkar, a lawyer and one of the creators of the contemporary Indian constitution, converted a large number of people to Buddhism. Today, out of India's 6.5 million Buddhists, more than 90% are neo-Buddhists. It is truly astounding to think about how Buddhism nearly vanished from its birthplace in India in the 11th and 12th centuries until the mass conversion (which included Ambedkar, who formally renounced Hinduism and embraced Buddhism) in October 1956 in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

What Path Freedom?

D. B. R. Ambedkar (trans. Vasant W. Moon)... Conversion involves two parts. Social as well as religious; material as well as spiritual. No matter the angle or perspective, knowing the origins, characteristics, and use of untouchability is essential. You must grasp this in order to grasp the whole significance of my proclamation of

conversion.

I want you to remember the horrors that were inflicted upon you so that you can grasp the concept of untouchability and how it was really implemented. It is very uncommon for caste Hindus to beat you just because you want to do something you've never done before, like send your kids to public school, use a public well for drinking water, or ride horseback in a wedding procession with the groom. Such situations are familiar to you all since you see them firsthand. Nonetheless, outsiders would be shocked to learn of a number of other reasons why caste Hindus perpetrate crimes against the Untouchables. The Untouchables are subject to physical punishment just for wearing high-quality clothing. The usage of metal utensils (copper, etc.) led to their whipping. Because they have begun cultivating the land, their homes have been set on fire. Just for donning the holy thread, they are thrashed. 88 Some of the reasons they are beaten include: not wanting to eat carrion, not wanting to bow down to the caste Hindus, wandering about the hamlet in socks and shoes, and collecting water from a copper pot when they go to the fields to relieve themselves. It has just come to light that the Untouchables were whipped for bringing chapattis to a dinner function.

Such horrors must have been known to you, and maybe even experienced by some of you. In situations when physical force is not an option, you are aware of the tactics used to oppress us via boycotts. By excluding your men from the hamlet, the caste Hindus have made everyday living intolerable. But few of you have grasped the reason for this. Where does their despotism originate? It is quite critical that we grasp it, in my opinion.

The aforementioned examples are completely unrelated to personal ethics. This has nothing to do with a rivalry between two guys. Class conflict is at the heart of the untouchability issue. Hindus based on caste and the Untouchables are at odds with one another. This has nothing to do with unfairly treating one individual. One social group is unfairly targeting another in this situation. Concerning social standing, this conflict arises. A class's relationship with another class may be better understood by looking at this conflict. The fight begins the moment you begin to demand equality with other people. Serving chapattis, wearing high-quality clothing, donning the holy thread, retrieving water from a metal pot, placing the bridegroom on the back of a horse, etc., would not have been a cause for contention if it hadn't been so. Here, you're on the hook for the cash. Consequently, why are the high-caste Hindus so irritated? There is a straightforward explanation for their wrath. Your behavior is disrespectful since it is on par with theirs. You have no place among them; they consider you unclean and inferior. Will they then let you live a happy life? When you get over your level, the fight begins. One additional point is also shown by the examples presented above.

The quality of being untouchable does not expire or disappear; rather, it remains indefinitely. To put it bluntly, the conflict between Hindus and Untouchables has persisted throughout history. Religion, which has degraded you to the lowest rung of society, is believed by the high-caste people to be everlasting, thus it must be eternal. There can be no adaptation to fit the passing of time or specific conditions. Today, you are starting from the very bottom. Your status

will be perpetually diminished.

Because of this, the conflict between Hindus and Untouchables will never end. What matters most is how you intend to stay alive while you face this challenge. There is no escape route until you give it some serious consideration. Those who would rather live in submission to the Hindus' rules, who would rather continue in their service, are not required to give any consideration to the matter. Those who value equality and self-respect, however, will need to give this some serious consideration.

Conclusion

The fundamental goal of Dalit literature is not just artistic excellence, but rather the genuine expression of lived reality. One defining feature of Dalit literature is the Dalit consciousness it embodies, which is based on the idea of human-centered defiance of the caste system. This awareness is influenced by the wisdom of the Ambedkar school of thinking. Even though Dalit writing has been criticized for being too political and not having enough artistic sophistication, it is nonetheless a strong and urgent statement of a movement. The oppressed people of India are not the only ones it addresses; it brings attention to the problems of all oppressed communities across the globe.

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