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## THE RISE OF DALIT LITERATURE AS COUNTERCULTURE THROUGH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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### ABSTRACT:

This paper discusses on how Dalit Literature act as counter-culture which is a cultural reformation. The essence of Dalit literature is community feeling and it is a literature of humanity which serves the right cause and possesses all the merits to be called a true literature. Dalit literature has formed an alternative culture, ruptures the structured social frames and it results in the production of counter cultural resistance to existing culture. The literary tradition of Indian narrative technique and language replaced by the auto narrative of Dalit writers. Dalit writers who dwell in democratic society rebound their affinity with their community and come up with their own specific cultural reformation and to register their subversive voices through their works.

### INTRODUCTION

Identity of Dalit is all about culture and living experience. Dalit literature is based on the existence of Dalit and revolution in nature. In Raymond Williams' *'The Long Revolution'* (1961), he talks about Dominant and Emergent culture. Dominant culture is the visible practice and attitude of particular culture and Emergent culture is the counter culture that challenges or deconstructs the Dominant culture. Dalit Panther movement in India established through Dalit literary movement where the leaders of that movement were writers. They create a distinct identity for Dalits and their main objective was to create a "counter culture".

### *Literature Review*

Dr.Ambedkar as a journalist wrote about social, political and religious issues which mostly paved the way for Dalit's development. The article

“*Dr. Ambedkar and Media: An Empowering process of Dalits in India*” focuses on Newspaper and Journals which acts as an empowering tool for Dalits, Dr. Ambedkar wants Dalit people to take part in the field of media. On those days journals or magazines were new to Indians, only educated upper caste Indian citizens hold the position and so there was no proper medium to represent and reflect Dalit’s problem. Dr. Ambedkar started Newspaper for Dalit’s awareness and paved a way for Dalithood. To get awareness, a Dalit need to be educated to acquaint a proper knowledge from newspaper. Dalits autobiographies actually reflects and resembles the African-American autobiographies. ‘Autobiography’ or ‘Memoir’ is chosen by both African-American and Dalit writers to show their authentic experience, representation, emotion and their way of life. Narendra Jadav’s “*Outcaste*” talks about four generation of Jadav’s family members. In this book he represents the two generation of an educated family members where they represent themselves through language that they are free from bondage and their progress towards freedom. He says that he has nothing against non-Dalit writers but he adds that the translation of Dalit writers by themselves will be more efficient. Baby Kamble’s “*The Prison We Broke*” sets an example of transformation from illiterate generation to educated and self-employed generation through education. Education paves way for alternative option for their career and position which is rooted over their duty and affinity that has been created by their ancestors. The translation of Dalit’s autobiography by themselves gives an effective and authentic expression of felt experience.

### **Research Question**

With the above mentioned aims and statement this study tries to answer the following Research questions.

1. What role does Raymond William’s concept of Dominant, Residual and Emergent Culture plays in the revolution of Dalit literature.
2. Why Dalit literature doesn’t fit in the Indian literary theory.
3. In the process of counter culture formation of Dalit Literature far Language play a role.

### **Method**

Raymond Williams, the literary critic mentions in his essay about ‘Culture and Culture is Ordinary’ and this view of culture gave a theory ‘Cultural Materialism’ in cultural studies. Cultural expression was identified with only upper caste but when it is grounded as ordinary it becomes common for everyone in the aspects of ‘ordinary culture’. This theory views on culture as a productive process and it identifies the cultural elements such as “dominant culture”, “residual culture”. and “emergent culture” used by Raymond Williams in his book ‘*The Long Revolution*’. The emergent culture is a new cultural practice that are being created in modern culture through the text of Dalit writers, has the language of their own that doesn’t exist previously in the traditional literary text which is ‘dominant culture’. The arrival of Dalit literature among the dominant literary culture of Indian Literature can be seen as ‘emergent culture’ which sets its own language, style, aesthetics approach, revolution and counter narrative. In order to support Dalit literature as counter narrative here we link the theory and concepts of Raymond Williams.

## COUNTER NARRATIVES AND LANGUAGE OF DALIT WRITERS

The intellectual reconstruction of the Dalit identity in India is a long tradition which includes the process of contribution by eminent writers and activists include Phule, Ambedkar and Periar. The counter narratives of Dalit literature act as a mediator between Dalit writers and Dalits. It forms a mode of social protest through literature by reformative, constructive and a new literary canon which disregard the traditional form, style and content. Dalit's response to life is more flexible and real and so Dalit writers could come up with their literature that emphasizes the centrality of the human being their emotions, feelings, oppression and struggle. This shows their affinity over nativity with regard to art, gesture, language and spectacle. Sharan Kumar Limbale's '*Towards an Aesthetics of Dalit Literature*' come up with all the options of how Dalit literature has formulated an alternative culture which solemnly rejects pleasure and beauty which is the traditional standard of evaluating aesthetics. Are human beings only beauty-mad? Do they only want pleasure? The answer to both questions is no, because hundreds of thousands of people appear to be passionate about freedom, love, justice and equality (*Towards an Aesthetics of Dalit literature* 119). The pleasure giving literature always places the pleasure giving aesthetics on the first hand but the literature which emphasize on society and human being and their sufferings is the revolutionary literature which could be uttered from the voice of suffering and thus Dalit literature and Dalit writer's works revolve around their pain and unheard aesthetics. Hence Dalit text has become interventionalist text that changes the notion of aesthetics and Dalit writers find themselves within their community, their Dalit consciousness narrates about themselves due to personal and community history and it is a collective social voice. Dalit writers are rejecting the notion of aesthetics and deliberately using their regional language which is the language of common people used in everyday communal and relationship. The language of unrefined and uncouth is the language of Dalit literature which reflects the life of untouchables and the language of ghettos used by them in their day to day life. The Dalit writers speak the reality and address the pains and condition of a Dalit that results in aesthetics of their life which is real and it is the better way to do justice to Dalit writings. Dalit writings become counter narrative where it rejects the theoretical writings and forms, it includes Dalit dialects which is used by all the Dalit writers intentionally where they could not find an alternative word to represent their feel and it set as a counter voice of their life and emotion.

### *Essences of Dalit Literature*

Dalits seeks the regime of exclusion in the world of caste they opt for migration within the state, outside the state or country. Dalits migration from one place to another due to poverty, caste oppression, association with traditional profession, constructed community, improvement in education and economic life. Mobility is clearly an important part in Dalit's life and as such it is open to change and challenge from resistant sub-culture. Knowledge that a Dalit gain out of migration provides self-definition with the help of language and law, where the Dalit writers dwells in the democratic society rebound their affinity over their community through their works. The Dalit works reflects the politics of location and portrayal of geographical space and the use of their regional language in their narratives in a certain way because language is the vehicle through which they could reveal their trauma. The essence of Dalit

literature is community feeling and it talks about their walks of life, perspective of life and purpose of life where their aesthetics too serves different meaning where every act revolve around their life and spirit of living. Dalit literature deconstructs the conventional sense of aesthetics and talks about the aesthetic of painful reality. The importance phenomena of Dalit narratives are all about the public exposure of their self and collective trauma.

### ***Dalit Aesthetics***

Dalit is not a caste but a realization. Culture and living experience. Dalit literature teaches equality to the humanity and it is the literature of exploited people. The revolutionary power of Dalit literature undergoes transformation by accepting new themes, styles and language and it has made a distinguishing place in the Indian literary field. 'Principle of beauty' is the idea of AESTHETICS in traditional literature. Dalit literature rejects the creating and enjoying beauty of 'high culture' and it is not the literature that gives pleasure. Reality, New Sensitivity, Alternative Vision Rejection of abstract beliefs formulates a new aesthetic compounds called "Materialistic Aesthetics" in Dalit literature. The revolutionary idea of Dalit literature is to affect the reader, to arouse a Dalit consciousness in readers, promotes equality, freedom and justice. The aesthetic aspects of a Dalit writing will be made possible by the writers from the Dalit background in accordance with aesthetics of life narratives. Bama's Karukku is a life narrative of collective self rather than individual due to its social significance of sexual economics, casteism and dialectic expression of her language which is inter connected with her community life. According to Sharan Kumar Limbale aesthetics of Dalit literature rests on three essence: that is commitment, values and consciousness. Dalit literature is committed to its society and social responsibility, the value of artistic satisfaction of writer's creation and the fundamental value of equality, freedom and justice. The consciousness of writer towards his community and emotion as well as readers affinity over the text. When revolt and rejection that Limbale talks in his text and it becomes inevitable in every works of Dalit literature and the revolt against society's valorized literary forms and so the imagery of beauty that is seen in Dalit literature could not be set into the frame of traditional aesthetics. The discussion of beauty in Dalit literature is always reconciled with Dalit consciousness. Thus, the aesthetics of Dalit literature that becomes the representation and reflection of their life.

### ***Dalit Cultural Assertion***

In culture studies the process of meaning production becomes a signifying practice where the language gives meaning to material objects and social practices which may exist outside of a language. To understand culture of a specific society, the language must be understood through production and generation of its sign and symbolic representation of its very meaning and knowledge. Culturalism stresses on 'ordinariness', the ordinariness of culture is capable to construct a meaningful practice. It is an everyday lived experience and not elite or high culture. It focuses on identification and forms of culture which is the representation of society. Stuart Hall states "By culture here I mean the actual grounded terrain of practices, representation, languages and customs of any specific society. I also mean the contradictory forms of common sense which have taken root in and helped to shape popular life". The

selective tradition of meaning practices involving both social order and social change which specify cultural products, aesthetic purpose, expresses meaning and its production. Dalit literature framed a philosophy that paves the way for a liberal tradition. The liberal tradition primarily rejects casteism and it frames its culture and art. Tradition is not the prerogative of a particular class and it is not of elite alone and that is what stressed by Raymond Williams where he focuses on everyday lived experience which is 'ordinary'. Raymond insists education is ordinary were it equip and enable the ordinary members of the society. It gives full meaning along with their personal experience and he believes that education could bring change by getting rid of restriction. Representation and practice of representation is socially constructed. Representation is produced and it has certain materiality which is enacted and used in objects, images, sounds, inscription and books which could be understood in specific social context. Cultural studies writers accept the centrality of the concept of power and representation which enables the process to generate social action and it shows a concern with subordinated groups by giving voice to the voiceless. , The democratic spirit of Dr. Ambedkar gave a scientific culture for Dalits where the Dalit writers regenerate the spirit of life through modern version and aesthetic purpose of Dalits in Dalit cultural assertion.

### ***Contemporary Cultural Studies and Dalit Literature***

Cultural studies developed in Britain as a reaction against Liberal humanism and orthodox Marxism. Matthew Arnold's '*Culture and Anarchy*' (1869) talked about high and elite culture and he believed in art for life sake. Richard Hoggard and Raymond Williams the pioneers of cultural studies, re-evaluated the class/elite character of cultural that appeared in the traditional literary studies. In the book '*Culture and Society*' (1958) he asserted "culture is the whole way of life", he was against the notion of lived culture which is High culture. He stressed the idea of living experience of common people which could be related to everyone. The democratic view of culture is everybody's life and he related the concept "Culture is ordinary". The emergence of Dalit literature in India challenges the dominant assumption of the elites and rewrite the Indian literary subjects from the perspectives of the 'ordinary', and oppressed people. Dalits began to articulate Dalit discourse and synthesized various subjects in all the form of Dalits existence in history, art, sociology and literature. There is always a connection between socio-political life and cultural production. In ancient India the Indian literature is dominated by works which gave power and authority to upper caste. The lower caste was described as thieves, robbers and mostly they were silenced. In the book "*Dalit Literature and Criticism*" Raj Kumar writes that the 'untouchables' had no way to counter such views and there was no alternative narrative could not be heard. Later during Bakthi movement there came some works like "*Chokhamela*", but only could be seen evidently. The Dalits had no way to articulate their voice for a long time. The lack of education was a barrier for the low caste people at that time to an alternative narration and they were kept out of culture and literary production of Indian society. John Beverly acknowledged that culture studies emerge against literature and it appears as the progress of giving new positioning for the progressing intellectuals. As John Beverly mentions that the representation and expression that every cultural product demands an emergence of a voice. The voice that could

interlink with the hermeneutical approach of representation. The people who suffers demands the representation of their agony and thus they could create their own space form of writing Dalit discourse.

### ***Theorizing Dalit Literature***

Dalit literature itself rejects the existing traditional frames and it opt for a new artless form which could register their pain, sorrow, joy, expression, exclusion and experience. The comprehensive feeling of a Dalit literature cannot be expressed through the structured cultural regime of any existing literary forms and values. The educated Dalits has emerged and they have become a speaking subject, their experience at the educational institution has a greater impact on them. SharankumarLimbale, Bama and Valmiki describe the terrible condition to get an education and to give education in the educational institution in their autobiographies such as *Akkarmasi*, *Karukku* and *Joorthan*. SharankumarLimbale says, *Dragging and cutting dead animal how will non-Dalits write about their experience of Dalits with the power of their imagination*. (Limbale qtd. in Mukherjee xxiv), theorizing Dalit literature is needed to express their inner trauma and experience where it cannot be expressed through imagination since most of the Indian literature is courtly and religious in nature where it reflects purity and beauty. C.B. Bharathi claims “There is an urgent need to create a separate aesthetics for Dalit literature, an aesthetics based on the real experiences of life” Omprakash Valmiki, Sharan Kumar Limbale and other Dalit writers has come up with a new aesthetic theory in Dalit literature such as materialistic aesthetics, search for freedom, sentiment of freedom and self-respect.

### **CONCLUSION**

Dalit writer demand for dignity, self-respect and the right to be treated as human through their works and they counter the structured form, the high language which is unfamiliar for a Dalit and superficial view on Dalit's misery. It is through text the social control, domination and ideologies are operated by the existing literature and by the intervention of Dalit literature gave a way for new perspectives of aesthetics and by the introduction of dialectical language in the text. Dalit writers construct their own culture out of their lived experience and grounding the theories of Dalit literature which could not be matched into any constructed forms, refined language of Indian literature and literary aesthetics. The Western counter culture and Dalit literature travels in a different path and takes different turnings but both movements are struggle against exploitation and the Dalit literature has registered the counter movement through the usage of its uncouth language.

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