

**Dalit Voices in Indian Literature: A Study of Selecte**

**Autobiographies.**

A Dissertation for

Course code and Course Title: ENG-651& Dissertation

Credits: 16

Submitted in partial fulfillment of Masters Degree

MA English

by

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Date : April 2024

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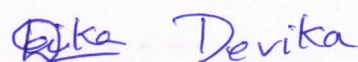
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I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation report entitled, "Dalit Voices in Indian Literature: A Study of Select Autobiographies." is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the Discipline Of English at the Shenoi Goembab School of Languages and Literature Goa University under the Supervision of Dr.Sangeeta Dessai and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree or diploma by me. Further, I understand that Goa University or its authorities will not be responsible for the correctness of observations / experimental or other findings given the dissertation.

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## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Discipline of English and Goa University, for providing me with the opportunity to complete this research. Special thanks to Dr. Sangeeta Dessai ( Assistant Professor) , my dissertation guide, for her invaluable patience and assistance throughout this journey. I am also grateful to Ms. Poorwa Naik, the Programme Director, for her unwavering support. I extend my appreciation to the library of Goa University for granting access to additional resources and online documents, which were instrumental in enriching this study.

Lastly, I am deeply thankful to my family and friends for their constant support and encouragement, motivating me to persevere through challenges. Your belief in me has been

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**Title: Dalit Voices in Indian Literature: A Study of Select Autobiographies.**

**Abstract**

This research explores the Dalit voice as depicted in autobiographical narratives, focusing on primary texts such as “*The Weave of My Life*” by Urmila Pawar, “*Prison We Broke*” by Baby Kamle, and “*Joothan*” by Om Prakash Valmiki. The aim of this study is to offer comprehensive insights into Dalit consciousness and identity formation within these autobiographical accounts. By employing postcolonial theory, particularly drawing on and utilizing Subaltern studies as a framework for analysis, this research delves into the complexities of the Dalit experience as portrayed in these texts. Through thematic analysis and comparative study, this research aims to shed light on the intricacies of power, identity, and resistance embedded within the narratives of the oppressed Dalit community. Ultimately, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of caste-based discrimination, social inequality, and human rights in



India, while also advocating for social justice and equality for marginalised communities

Key Words : Dalit, Discrimination, oppression, resistance and marginalised

## **Chapter One**

### **1.1. Background**

Dalit literature refers to writings by authors from marginalized caste groups in India that depict their lives, struggles and aspirations. With the emergence of Dalit activism since the 1960s, many writers from Dalit communities started publishing literary works voicing their experiences of caste-based discrimination. Dalit autobiographical narratives comprise a major part of this literature of protest writing originally in regional languages, and later in English as well.

Dalit's, meaning 'broken' or 'oppressed' people, were previously known as 'untouchables' and occupy the lowest strata of the Hindu caste system. Dalit writers started emerging in Indian English literature from the 1930s onwards, bringing to light the discrimination and injustices faced by their community.

A key feature of Dalit literature is its authentic first-hand perspectives depicting the realities of caste-based discrimination. Dalit writers document the customs, language, folklore and lives of subaltern communities. Their works question Hindu religious texts that have been used to justify caste hierarchy. They interrogate Indian history from a Dalit viewpoint.

Dalit literature emerged as a distinct literary genre in India during the Dalit Panthers movement of the 1960s-70s. Marathi, Hindi, Tamil and Kannada were early languages of Dalit writing. From the 1990s onwards, increasing English education among Dalit's led to significant Dalit literature in English as well.

Today, Dalit writers are integral to Indian literature, bringing marginalized voices to the mainstream. Their works highlight the need to annihilate caste for an egalitarian society. They assert Dalit identity and convert pain into resistance through writing. Dalit literature continues to grow and evolve with new writers and themes.

This research aims to explore the nature of Dalit consciousness as articulated in the autobiographies. It will analyse how these texts depict caste-based oppression and also assert Dalit subjectivity and identity. The study focuses on English translations since they make Dalit life-writings accessible to wider audiences, both within India and globally.

The caste system in India has historically marginalized particular social groups as 'untouchables' and excluded them from mainstream society. Dr B.R. Ambedkar led anti-caste movements among the 'untouchables' and advocated for their rights. He called for them to embrace a new emancipatory Dalit identity.

From the 1970s, second-generation Dalit writers started writing authentic accounts of Dalit life and their movement towards liberation. Leading authors included Namdeo Dhasal, Daya Pawar, Baby Kamble and Urmila Pawar in Marathi; and Bama in Tamil. Dalit autobiographical writing from the marginalized castes themselves document experiences of oppression and family histories of caste-based violence and occupation. They articulate a Dalit consciousness and identity that moves away from upper-caste representations.

## **1.2 . Scope**

This research will undertake an in-depth literary analysis of the following Dalit autobiographies available in English translation. These seminal texts cover Dalit lives in North and South India from the 1930s to the present. They include both male and female perspectives on caste oppression. The selected autobiographies .

## **1.3. Research Questions/Aims**

- Whether there is a ‘Voice’ that is distinctively Dalit?
- How Dalit voice is seen in the Dalit autobiography a voice

## **1.4 Hypothesis / Research problem**

- There is a distinctive Dalit voice

## **1.5 Objective**

- To examine the distinctive Dalit voice and examine its dynamic nature
- To use postcolonial and subaltern Studies to examine the Dalit voice.
- To examine the narrative Strategies in the selective Dalit Voice autobiography

## 1.6. Literature review

Autobiographical narratives comprise a significant part of Dalit literature. Written in Marathi, Daya Pawar's *Baluta* (1978) is considered the first modern Dalit autobiography depicting the boy's experiences of segregation and abuse. It triggered other autobiographies like Limbale's *Akkarmashi* (1984) exploring childhood trauma and alienation.

Critics have highlighted the importance of autobiographical narratives in Dalit literature. For Rodrigues (2002), autobiographies serve as tools for Dalit's to rediscover their identity and dignity through reflecting on individual life experiences shaped by caste. Valmiki (2003) notes that Dalit life writings provide raw, first-hand accounts of injustice and humiliation inflicted on Dalit communities.

According to Dangle (2009), Dalit autobiographies articulate an experiential language that conveys suffering and protests violence. For Guru (2009), they record quotidian incidents of caste-based abuse often overlooked in upper caste discourse. Pundit (2018) argues that Dalit autobiographies dismantle dominant cultural narratives by presenting subjugated standpoints.

Feminist scholars have also analysed representation of Dalit women's experiences in autobiographies. Rage (2000) examines how texts by Dalit women like Pawar resist both patriarchy and caste hegemony. Darokar (2018) notes that Dalit women's autobiographies reveal the double marginalization they face due to both caste and gender, arguing for a Dalit feminist standpoint.

The book "*Joothan: A Dalit's Life*" by Om Prakash Valmiki is mentioned in the context of postcolonial theory in the research paper "Perspectives on Postcolonial Theory: Said, Spivak and Bhabha". The paper explores and defines postcolonial theory, its roots, and its relevance to understanding the experiences of marginalized communities, such as the Dalit community in India.

The book is also mentioned in the context of subaltern studies in the article "*Introduction. 'Learning to Learn from Below': Understanding Subalternity*". The article discusses the concept of subalternity and its relevance to understanding the experiences of marginalized communities, including the Dalit community in India.

How all the studies of Dalit autobiographies focus on the nature of the voices. They do not combine the 'Dalit' and see it through Postcolonial lens. Also, there is no comparison of the research of 3. Primary texts selected for study in terms of its narrative strategies and how these "voices" emerge as a formidable one. Thus the present research intends to fill the research gap adopted by examining the texts through postcolonial lens and narrative strategies used.

## **1.7. Methodology**

The methodology used in this research involves qualitatively analysing Dalit autobiographies.

The methodology adopted is as follows:

- Close reading
- Use of critical theory that is postcolonial theory

Findings will be interpreted using key concepts from Postcolonial and Subaltern studies around Othering, colonialism, hybridity, And mimicry, the voice of resistance, social justice and equality and oppression

## **1.8 Chapter Outline**

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1.2 Scope

1.3 Research Questions

1.4 Hypothesis

1.5 Objective

1.6 Literature Review

1.7 Methodology

1.8 Outline

## **Chapter 2 Dalit Voices: An Overview Conceptual understanding/concept**

2.1: Introduction of chapter

2.2 The Voice of Oppression

2.3 The Voice of Despair

2.4 Discrimination

2.5 Voices of Struggle and aspirations

2.6 Voice of resistance against caste hierarchy

2.7 Conclusion

### **Chapter 3 Theorising the Dalit voice**

3.1 Introduction of chapter

3.2 Colonialism

3.3 Othering

3.4 Hybridity And mimicry

3.5 Language

3.5 Subaltern Studies and autobiographies

3.6 Conclusion

### **Chapter 4 Dalit voices and narrative strategies**

4.1 Introduction of the chapter

4.2 Narrative Strategy on resistance

4.3 Narrative Strategy on Social justice and Equality

4.4 Narrative Strategy on Oppression

### **Chapter 5 conclusion**

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## **Chapter 2:**

# **Dalit Voices: An Overview of Conceptual**

## **understanding/concept**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The Dalit voice is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as a member of the caste that is considered the lowest and has the least advantages in the traditional Indian caste system. The term "Dalit" is derived from Sanskrit and means "oppressed". The Dalit voice represents the struggle for social and economic rights of this marginalized community, which has faced exploitation, squalor, poverty, and discrimination in various forms. The meaning of Dalit has evolved over time and now encompasses any person subjected to exploitation, discrimination, or poverty, regardless of their caste background. The Dalit voice is also associated with literary and cultural movements that express the experiences, struggles, and aspirations of the Dalit community, challenging the caste system and advocating for equality and human dignity.

The 'Dalit voice' means the aspirations, struggles, and demands of the Dalit community in India. Dalit's were historically known as "untouchables". They have faced discrimination and caste-based social exclusion for centuries. This voice means, demanding justice, equality, and the eradication of caste-based prejudices. The Dalit voice challenges the generations-old caste hierarchy. It demands equal rights, dignity, and opportunities for the oppressed community. The Dalit voice is expressed through various mediums such as; as literature, art, activism, and advocacy. This Dalit voice is expressed through various issues/ modes like oppression, depression, discrimination,



Voices of Struggle and aspirations, Voice of resistance against caste hierarchy, and loss of dignity. In the next section the voice will be seen through these various modes.

## **2.2 The Voice of Oppression:**

According to the Oxford Dictionary oppression is termed as cruel and unfair treatment of people, especially by not giving them the same freedom, rights, as other people.

Oppression is seen in various forms in the autobiographies.

Oppression is the prolonged unjust treatment or exercise of authority over marginalized groups. It involves denying basic rights, dignity and opportunities.

The following quotes illustrate the experience of oppression faced by Dalit women due to caste-based discrimination, as they are excluded from participating in religious practices because of their social status:

"I remember the day when we were denied entry into the village temple because we were Dalit's. It felt like a heavy weight crushing down on us, reminding us of our place in society." (Pawar: 45)

"I watched as upper-caste women passed by, their eyes looking down on us as if we were dirt beneath their feet. We were invisible to them, unworthy of acknowledgement or respect." (Kamble: 78)

The above quotes illustrate the oppressive treatment Dalit women endure from upper-caste individuals, reflecting the systemic discrimination ingrained in Indian society.

In the case of Joothan it is more scathing and brutal:

"Every day, we faced the disdain of the upper castes. They spat at us, hurled insults, and treated us worse than animals. We were forced to accept our fate as *Jhootan*, the leftovers of society." (Valmiki: 45)

This quote exemplifies the oppressive treatment inflicted upon Dalit's by the upper castes, emphasizing the dehumanizing nature of caste-based discrimination. Oppression has been a primary mode of discrimination against the Dalit's and it is seen through acts of discrimination in the two works. The consequences of this oppression has been psychological turmoil and a deep sense of despair.

### **2.3 The Voice of Despair:**

The concept of discrimination is a central theme in Dalit literature, which represents the voice of a suppressed community that has faced marginalization and exclusion for centuries.

"I often felt a deep sense of despair, as if the weight of the world rested upon my shoulders. The constant discrimination and marginalization took a toll on my mental health, leaving me feeling hopeless and despondent." (Pawar: 112)

This quote highlights the psychological impact of caste-based oppression, showing how it can lead to feelings of despair and hopelessness among Dalit individuals. Further in Kamble there is a fear that is expressed thus:

"Our spirits were broken, crushed under the weight of centuries of discrimination and injustice. We lived in constant fear, never knowing when the next act of violence or humiliation would occur." (Kamble: 82)

This quote suggests the psychological impact of oppression, conveying a sense of hopelessness and despair that Dalit women endure in the face of systemic discrimination and violence.

For the male Dalit writer too things were no different. Valmiki speaks of how he felt suffocated and despair

"Every day felt like a struggle just to survive. The weight of caste oppression pressed down on us like a heavy burden, suffocating our hopes and dreams. It was as if there was no escape from the darkness that surrounded us." (Valmiki: 110)

This quote reflects the psychological anguish and despair experienced by Dalits due to the pervasive discrimination and social exclusion they face. It conveys a sense of hopelessness and emotional distress that permeates their daily lives, highlighting the profound effects of caste-based oppression on mental well-being.

## **2.4 Discrimination**

According to the sources provided, discrimination, as discussed by critics, encompasses various forms of unfair treatment based on factors like race, gender, and caste. In the context of Merve Emre's lecture, discrimination is linked to the idea of repetition, which stabilizes claims about what is like and unlike, training writers to align with specific traditions and critics to discern between interesting elaborations and tedious ones.

"I vividly remember the day when I was denied entry into the village temple because of my caste. Despite my longing to participate in the religious rituals like everyone

else, I was ostracized and made to feel unworthy simply because of my Dalit identity."

(Pawar: 45)

This quote exemplifies the systemic discrimination faced by Dalits in accessing religious spaces and participating in societal customs. It highlights the pervasive caste-based prejudices that govern social interactions and reinforce hierarchical structures, thereby underscoring the theme of discrimination prevalent throughout the narrative.

In Addition the discrimination towards women was within the family too :

As if I wasn't discriminated (against) enough by others outside, now (my) family too, has set rules for me" (Kamble: 51).

This quote highlights the intersectionality of caste and gender discrimination experienced by Dalit women in their personal lives.

"I watched as upper-caste women in the village sneered at us, refusing to let their shadows touch ours as we walked past. We were treated as untouchables, unworthy of even the most basic human dignity. Their disdainful glances and contemptuous remarks served as constant reminders of our marginalized status in society." (Kamble: 63)

This quote exemplifies the everyday discrimination faced by Dalit women, where they are subjected to degrading treatment and social exclusion solely based on their caste identity. Kamble's narrative highlights the deeply ingrained prejudices and systemic inequalities that perpetuate caste-based discrimination, underscoring the pervasive nature of this injustice within the societal fabric.

Also access to religious places is denied :

"I remember the day when I was denied entry into the village temple by the upper-caste priest. He sneered at me and said, 'You are not allowed here, you are untouchable.' It

felt like a dagger to my heart, a reminder of my lower status in society solely because of my caste." (Valmiki: 72)

The above quote exemplifies the overt discrimination faced by Dalits, where they are denied access to religious spaces and subjected to derogatory treatment based on their caste identity. Valmiki's narrative exposes the deep-rooted biases and prejudices prevalent in society, shedding light on the pervasive nature of caste-based discrimination experienced by Dalit communities.

## **2.5 Voices of Struggle and aspirations :**

The voices of Dalit's in India have long been suppressed and marginalized by the caste hierarchy, leading to a struggle for equality and dignity. The political aspirations of Dalit's have evolved over time, with their assertion and struggle becoming more recognized and respected. Despite facing numerous challenges, Dalit's are turning difficult and unfavourable situations into opportunities

Voices, struggle and aspirations refer to the expressions, challenges and hopes of marginalized or oppressed groups seeking justice, dignity and a better future. They represent the human spirit's resilience and resistance against adversity.

"We, Dalit women, may have been oppressed for generations, but we are not voiceless. Our struggles are woven into the fabric of our existence, each thread representing a battle fought for dignity and equality. Despite the odds stacked against us, our aspirations for a better future burn brightly within our hearts, driving us to persevere and resist the injustices that seek to define us." (Pawar: 97)

This quote encapsulates the resilience and determination of Dalit women as they tackle life's challenges and strive for a more equitable society. Pawar's narrative amplifies the voices of marginalized women, highlighting their struggles and aspirations in the face of systemic oppression.

The enduring spirit of Dalit women as they deal with the complexities of caste-based discrimination and societal marginalization. Kamble's narrative amplifies their voices, showcasing their unwavering resolve to overcome obstacles and pursue their dreams despite the odds:

"Our voices may have been silenced by generations of oppression, but within the confines of our struggles, we find strength and solidarity. We refuse to be defined by our circumstances, for our aspirations transcend the limitations imposed upon us. Each day is a battle, but in our collective struggle, we find hope and the courage to resist."  
(Kamble: 63)

The same resilience and determination reverberated in Valmiki's narrative:

"Our voices rise from the depths of oppression, echoing the collective struggle of generations past. We refuse to be silenced by the chains of caste, for our aspirations transcend the boundaries imposed upon us. In the face of discrimination and injustice, we stand united, our spirits unbroken by the trials of our existence." (Valmiki: 87)

This refusal encapsulates the resilience and determination of Dalit's as they confront systemic discrimination and societal prejudice. Valmiki's narrative is that of resistance illuminating the struggles and aspirations for a future free from oppression and inequality.

## **2.6 Voice of resistance against caste hierarchy :**

The voice of resistance against caste hierarchy, discrimination, and loss of dignity in India is exemplified by the struggle of the Dalit community. Dalit literature, such as the works of Bama Faustian, Palanimuthu Sivakami, and Gogu Shyamala, uses narrative strategies to portray the digitisation of the female body, subjugation by men, and resistance to male oppression.

The tales of Dalit's oscillate between resistance to caste oppression and oppression because of it, mirroring their life experiences. The use of narrative strategy in Dalit literature is intricately linked to the concept of resistance, challenging societal norms and power structures, and promoting freedom and challenging the status .Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a prominent Dalit leader and scholar, fought against the inequalities inherent in the Hindu caste system, inspiring a force of resistance against inequality in India

Pawar voice of protest and refusal to be relegated to the margins of the society is expressed thus:

"We refuse to be relegated to the margins of society, our identities defined by caste alone. Despite the weight of discrimination and the erosion of our dignity, we rise with unwavering resolve. Our voices echo the spirit of resistance, challenging the oppressive structures that seek to confine us. In reclaiming our narratives, we reclaim our humanity." (Pawar: 104)

This quote reflects the defiance and resilience of Dalit women as they confront the pervasive caste hierarchy and assert their right to dignity and equality. Pawar's narrative

is a voice of resistance, inspiring readers to stand in solidarity against caste-based discrimination and oppression.

On the other hand Kamble reclaimed her lost identity :

"We refuse to be silenced by the chains of caste oppression. Despite the relentless discrimination and indignities we face, we rise as warriors of resilience. Our voices, though often marginalized, echo with defiance against the entrenched caste hierarchy. In breaking the shackles of societal expectations, we reclaim our agency and dignity."  
(Kamble: 67)

This quote reflects the unwavering spirit of resistance among Dalit women as they confront the systemic injustices perpetuated by caste discrimination. Kamble's narrative powerfully amplifies their voices, serving as a rallying cry for social change and empowerment.

The unbroken spirit and determination is evoked by Valmiki as he declares that :

"We may be labelled as 'untouchables,' but our spirits remain unbroken. Despite the degrading treatment and humiliations hurled at us, we refuse to accept our inferior status. Our voices rise in defiance against the oppressive caste system, demanding justice and equality. Through our collective resistance, we reclaim our dignity and challenge the hegemony of caste hierarchy." (Valmiki: 87)

This quote encapsulates the courageous stance of Dalit's in the face of systemic oppression and discrimination. Valmiki's narrative provides a platform for marginalized voices to assert their agency and demand social change, inspiring a movement towards a more just and equitable society.



## 2.7. Conclusion

The Dalit voice from the texts ``*The Weave of My Life*," "*The Prisons We Broke*," and "*Joothan*" collectively portrays the struggles, subjugation, and resilience of Dalit's in Indian society. These narratives shed light on the challenges faced by Dalit women, encompassing oppression, depressions, discrimination, Voices Struggle and aspirations, Voices of resistance against caste hierarchy, loss of dignity, caste discrimination, gender oppression, and class-based marginalization. Through these works, the authors, including Baby Kamble and Omprakash Valmiki, articulate the multifaceted forms of discrimination experienced by Dalit women, emphasizing the need for societal acknowledgment and action to address these issues. The texts not only expose the harsh realities of Dalit women's lives but also serve as a platform for empowerment, resistance, and the assertion of identity within the Dalit feminist discourse, challenging existing power structures and advocating for social justice and equality

In conclusion, the examination of Dalit autobiographies reveals a unique Dalit voice that reflects the collective experiences, struggles, and hopes of the Dalit community. Through thematic analysis and comparison, this chapter has brought attention to the recurring themes and stories that shape this distinctive voice in autobiographies. By highlighting Dalit voices and stories, these autobiographies not only bear witness to the resilience of Dalit's but also inspire social change and justice Looking ahead, further study of Dalit literature is essential to fully

grasp and honour the depth and complexity of the Dalit experience in India's social and political landscape

### **Chapter 3 :Therosing the Dalit voice**

#### **3.1 Introduction:**

In this chapter the Dalit voice will be examined through the postcolonial lens and subaltern studies.

In "The Weave of My Life" by Urmila Pawar, postcolonial theory will help understand how British rule affected the caste system in India. It shows how colonialism made caste discrimination stronger. The precepts of subaltern studies will also be used to show the experiences of Dalit communities who were often not heard in mainstream stories. By using these theories it can be seen how colonialism and caste oppression are connected.

In "Prison We Broke" by Baby Kamble, postcolonial theory is used to understand how colonial ideas still affect caste in India today. The book talks about how these old ideas have sustained discrimination. Also subaltern studies will provide a method to examine the stories of Dalit women who are often ignored.

In "Jhootan" by Omprakash Valmiki postcolonial theory will help to understand how caste discrimination started in India because of colonialism. The book talks about how colonial rulers made caste divisions stronger. Also, using subaltern studies the Dalit people who were treated badly will be brought to the fore.

The books "The Weave of My Life" by Urmila Pawar, "Prison We Broke" by Baby Kamble, and "Jhootan" by Omprakash Valmiki can be looked at through postcolonial and subaltern studies. These studies focus on how colonialism

and imperialism affect culture, identity, discrimination, and more. In these Dalit texts, postcolonial and subaltern studies help us understand the power dynamics, colonial history, and marginalization faced by the Dalit community. They also show us how gender and caste intersect, the importance of education, social systems, and how Dalits fight for their rights.

In these books, we see Dalit voices speaking up for themselves, telling their own stories, and pushing back against the silence imposed by caste discrimination. This shows the agency of the subaltern, or marginalized, in shaping their own narratives and asserting their identities.

These narratives serve as platforms for empowerment, self-assertion, and the assertion of a distinct Dalit identity that challenges traditional power structures and colonial legacies.

Postcolonial and subaltern studies can thus provide a framework for analysing the power dynamics, colonialism, and marginalization experienced by the Dalit community in these works, revealing the nuanced representation of Dalit lives, their struggles, and the intersection of caste, gender, and power in these narratives. The following section will look at some key concepts of postcolonialism in the selected texts.

### **3.2. Colonialism**

Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another

Colonialism refers to the practice of acquiring and maintaining political control over other territories, often through settlement, military conquest, or economic domination. Imperialism, on the other hand, extends beyond colonialism to encompass broader systems of domination, including economic exploitation, cultural imposition, and political hegemony. These concepts are foundational to postcolonial theory as they highlight the historical processes through which Western powers exerted control over non-Western societies, reshaping their social, economic, and cultural landscapes.

Colonialism, as a system of political control and domination, can be seen reflected in various ways in Dalit autobiographical texts such as "The Weave of My Life" by Urmila Pawar, "Prison We Broke" by Baby Kamble, and "Jhootan" by Om Prakash Valmiki.

In "The Weave of My Life," Urmila Pawar reflects on the impact of colonialism on the caste system in India, stating, "Colonial rule further entrenched caste divisions, reinforcing the hierarchies that continue to oppress Dalit communities" (Pawar: 59).

Similarly, in "Prison We Broke," Baby Kamble discusses the lasting effects of colonial ideologies on caste dynamics, noting, "The legacy of colonialism

continues to shape societal structures, perpetuating caste-based discrimination and oppression" (Kamble: 117).

In "Jhootan," Om Prakash Valmiki explores the historical context of caste-based discrimination exacerbated by colonial policies, stating, "Colonialism deepened existing power dynamics, perpetuating social hierarchies based on caste" (Valmiki: 35).

These quotes illustrate how colonialism is intricately connected to the experiences and narratives of Dalit individuals, shaping their social, economic, and cultural landscapes.

### **3.3 Othering**

Othering, as described in postcolonial theory, is when the colonizers see the people they are colonizing as very different from themselves and not as good as them. (Peter:193) This made it easier for the colonizers to control and take advantage of the colonized people. They would say the colonized people were not as smart or civilized as them, and they needed the colonizers to help them become better. This way of thinking helped the colonizers justify treating the colonized people unfairly and taking control over them.

The concept of "othering" in postcolonial theory is intricately connected to the narratives of colonialism present in Dalit autobiographical texts such as "The Weave of My Life" by Urmila Pawar, "Prison We Broke" by Baby Kamle, and "Jhootan" by Om Prakash Valmiki.

In these texts, we see the colonized Dalit communities being depicted as fundamentally different and inferior to the colonizers. This process of othering is evident in the portrayal of Dalits as backward, uncivilized, and in need of guidance or intervention from the dominant caste groups or colonizers.

In "Prison We Broke" by Baby Kamble, the concept of othering can be seen in the way Dalit women are treated by the upper caste society (Kamble: 114). Throughout the book, Kamble recounts instances where Dalit women are portrayed as inferior and undeserving of respect or dignity by the dominant caste groups. This reflects the colonial mindset that depicted colonized peoples, including Dalits, as backward and in need of guidance from the colonizers. By highlighting the discrimination and marginalization faced by Dalit women, Kamble sheds light on how othering continues to perpetuate caste-based oppression in contemporary India.

For example, in "The Weave of My Life," Urmila Pawar reflects on how Dalit communities were marginalized and subjected to discriminatory treatment, reinforcing the notion of their inferiority in the eyes of the dominant castes (Pawar: 78). Similarly, in "Prison We Broke," Baby Kamble highlights the ways in which Dalit women were oppressed and marginalized, further perpetuating the narrative of their inferiority.

In "Jhootan," Om Prakash Valmiki discusses the experiences of Dalits facing discrimination and exploitation, showcasing how they were often othered by the dominant caste groups (Valmiki: 98). These texts shed light on the ways in which colonial discourses and ideologies contributed to the construction of Dalits as inferior and in need of domination and control.

Overall, the concept of othering is central to understanding the dynamics of colonialism and its impact on Dalit communities, as depicted in these autobiographical narratives.

### **3.4 . Hybridity and Mimicry:**

Bhabha argued that hybridity and mimicry create ambivalence in the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. The theory of hybridity suggests that new identities are created through cultural exchange. Mimicry is the process by which the colonized subject is produced as 'almost the same but not quite' (Bhabha 1994)

Homi Bhabha's ideas about hybridity and mimicry help us understand how colonized people respond to colonial rule (Bhabha: 185). Hybridity is when cultures mix in colonial and postcolonial settings, leading to new expressions, identities, and ways to resist colonization. This blending of cultures shows how people adapt and create new ways of living in the face of colonial domination.



"Mimicry" is when those who were colonized imitate the customs, behaviors, and beliefs of the colonizers. But it's not just about blindly copying them—it often involves clever or subtle strategies. When the colonized mimic the colonizers, they're not simply submitting to domination; sometimes, they're trying to challenge the system from within. By adopting colonial practices, they can resist colonial power and assert their own autonomy and independence. Hybridity, for example, helps us recognize the blending of different cultures and identities within these narratives, showing how Dalit individuals navigate between their traditional heritage and the influences of colonialism and modernity.

### **3.5 Language**

Language is a purely human and noninstinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols" (Sapir, 1921)

"We were taught to be ashamed of our language, our food, our clothes, our customs, our festivals, our gods, our history" (Valmiki : 53). This quote highlights the internalized oppression experienced by Dalits who have been subjected to colonial education and cultural assimilation.

"Our language is not recognized, our literature is not recognized, our history is not recognized" (Pawar, 2009, p. 127). This quote highlights the challenges faced by Dalit writers in gaining recognition and legitimacy in a postcolonial literary landscape that is dominated by upper-caste perspectives and narratives.

"Our language is not recognized, our literature is not recognized, our history is not recognized" (Valmiki : 55). This quote illustrates the challenges faced by Dalits in gaining recognition and legitimacy in a postcolonial literary landscape that is dominated by upper-caste perspectives and narratives.

In Urmila Pawar's "The Weave of My Life," postcolonial issue of the experiences of marginalized communities, particularly Dalits, and their struggle for identity and dignity in a postcolonial context.

One quote from Pawar's work that highlights the postcolonial dilemma is, "We were born in the wrong country, at the wrong time, with the wrong skin color" (Pawar: 123). This quote reflects the sense of alienation and exclusion experienced by Dalits in a postcolonial society that continues to be shaped by caste hierarchies and discrimination.

It is learnt how colonialism affects people, especially those who are treated unfairly, like the Dalits. Postcolonial Theory has helped understand how colonial powers made some people feel less important to control them. It also

shows how people fought back against this unfair treatment. Dalit Voice shares the stories of the Dalit community in India, showing how they've been treated unfairly because of their caste. By combining these ideas, it can be seen how colonialism has hurt societies, and how some groups still face unfair treatment. By listening to these stories and understanding their experiences a fairer world for everyone could be created

Colonialism has left a lasting impact on societies, and marginalized groups like the Dalits continue to face discrimination and inequality. By listening to their voices and understanding their experiences a future where everyone is treated with fairness and respect, regardless of their background could be envisaged.

In the next section of the study, the Dalit voice will be analysed using the concepts of subaltern studies and autobiographies

### **3.6 Subaltern Studies in the Dalit autobiographies**

Subaltern studies is a part of postcolonial theory that looks at the lives of the marginalized groups in colonial and postcolonial societies. It is based on Antonio Gramsci's

idea of the "subaltern," which means people who are pushed to the sidelines (Gramsci: 98). Subaltern studies aim to bring back the stories, voices, and power of those who are usually left out of the mainstream stories we hear. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" brings attention to the difficulty of giving a voice to the subaltern within academic discussions. Spivak says that the subaltern, who are often pushed to the sidelines and silenced by colonial and male-dominated systems, have hard time making themselves heard (Spivak: 67). Subaltern studies try to fix this a making space for these marginalized groups to talk about their challenges: hopes, and ideas for a fairer world.

In conclusion, these concepts form the foundation of postcolonial theory, offering critical insights into the legacies of colonialism and imperialism and their ongoing impacts on global politics, culture and society. By interrogating power dynamics, cultural hegemony, and identity constructions, subaltern studies is a suitable tool for examining the Dalit voice (Gramsci:154)

The term subaltern is used by Gramsci's as "Subaltern studies aim to recover the silenced voices and agency of marginalized groups within colonial and postcolonial societies, challenging dominant narratives." (Gramsci : 145)

Subaltern studies are all about bringing back the stories and power of groups who are pushed to the edges in places that were once colonized or still are. This idea comes from Antonio Gramsci's thought about the subaltern, which means people who are subjugated and not heard. Subaltern studies try to challenge the main stories that leave out or ignore the experiences of oppressed people. By making the voices of the subaltern louder, scholars want to give a better understanding of what really happened in colonial and postcolonial times, showing how these groups fought back and had power even when they were pushed aside in the big stories.

“Subalternity” as a concept that includes marginalization—’ will be explored through the texts

Using Subaltern Studies as a way of looking at history that focuses on the stories of people who are often ignored the following section will analyse the primary texts through the subaltern perspective:

In "Joothan: A Dalit's Life" by Omprakash Valmiki, this approach helps to see how Dalits in India face discrimination because of their caste. Valmiki tells his own story, showing the difficulties he went through as a Dalit. He talks about how caste discrimination is deeply rooted in Indian society, comparing it to something that never changes, like a birthmark on your forehead. This shows us how caste hierarchy is deeply ingrained in Indian culture.

Valmiki's observation, "Caste is the 'unchanging' within change, just like the birthmark on one's forehead" (Page 27), highlights the entrenched nature of caste discrimination. Through Subaltern Studies, we get a broader view of the challenges faced by marginalized communities. Valmiki's experiences are not just about him—they reflect the struggles of many Dalits in India. By understanding his story, we can see the bigger picture of how power dynamics and unfair systems affect people's lives. This helps us recognize the injustices that marginalized groups face and work towards a fairer society for everyone.

In "The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs" by Urmila Pawar gives a deep understanding of the challenges faced by Dalit women in India. Pawar talks about how being both Dalit and a woman brings extra struggles because of caste and gender discrimination. Subaltern Studies helps us see the layers of oppression that Dalit women experience. It shows how caste and patriarchal structures work together to make life even harder for them.

Pawar's statement, "The traditional Bahun castes will have to change their outlook on women" (109), highlights the need to challenge old ideas about women in Dalit communities. Through Subaltern Studies, it can be seen how important it is to redefine power dynamics and create a fairer society for everyone. By sharing the voices and experiences of Dalit women, Pawar's memoir adds to the wider conversation about intersectionality within Subaltern Studies. It shows that by listening to these stories, we can understand the

struggles of marginalized communities better and work towards positive change.

In "The Prisons We Broke" by Baby Kamble the struggles of Dalits against caste-based oppression is shown. Through Subaltern Studies, Kamble's story shows how Dalit communities fight against unfair systems. Kamble's memoir tells us about her journey from being oppressed to feeling empowered. She emphasizes the importance of grassroots activism and working together to fight against caste discrimination. Subaltern Studies helps us understand Kamble's story better by showing how it fits into the broader fight for equality among Dalits.

Kamble's reflection, "They were sentenced to life imprisonment for opposing this system" (115), shows the sacrifices Dalit activists make in their fight for social justice. Subaltern Studies focuses on the power of marginalized voices in challenging dominant narratives. Kamble's memoir adds to this conversation by highlighting the bravery and determination of Dalit communities in standing up against oppressive structures. Through her story, the resilience and agency of Dalits, inspiring us to work towards a fairer and more just society for all.

In Dalit autobiographies, the voices that emerge are those of individuals who have long been pushed to the sidelines of society. These autobiographies are like personal stories written by Dalit authors about their own lives, struggles,

and dreams. They're important because they give a voice to people who have been ignored and mistreated for a long time. Through these stories, Dalit authors share their experiences and challenges, showing the world what it's like to live as a Dalit person in India. Dalit authors write about their experiences in a way that's easy to understand and relatable. They want people to know what it's like to walk in their shoes, facing discrimination and prejudice at every turn. These autobiographies are like windows into the lives of Dalit people, showing us their hopes, fears, and dreams for a better future. Through their stories, Dalit authors challenge the stereotypes and misconceptions that exist about their community.

In conclusion, Dalit autobiographies are powerful testimonies that give a voice to the marginalized and oppressed. They help to understand the realities of caste-based discrimination and inspire us to strive for a more just and equitable society. By listening to and learning from Dalit voices, we can work together to create a world where everyone has the opportunity to thrive and succeed. Using the concepts of post-colonial theory and the perspective of subalternity the Dalit voice emerges as a voice for change and freedom from oppression.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

By applying theoretical concepts like hybridity, colonialism, and othering, we gain a deeper understanding of the diverse nature of voices found in Dalit



autobiographies. Hybridity, for example, helps us recognize the blending of different cultures and identities within these narratives, showing how Dalit individuals navigate between their traditional heritage and the influences of colonialism and modernity.

Colonialism, on the other hand, sheds light on the historical context in which these voices emerge, revealing how colonial powers have shaped social hierarchies and perpetuated systems of oppression, including caste discrimination. Through the lens of colonialism, we can understand how the Dalit experience has been influenced by centuries of colonial rule and its lingering effects on Indian society.

Additionally, the concept of othering illuminates the ways in which Dalit voices have been marginalized and silenced by dominant caste groups, perpetuating a narrative of inferiority and exclusion. Othering highlights the construction of the Dalit community as fundamentally different and inferior, reinforcing caste-based discrimination and social inequalities.

Overall, the application of these theoretical concepts enriched the understanding of Dalit voices in autobiographical narratives, revealing the complexities of their experiences and the resilience with which they navigate systems of oppression. By examining hybridity, colonialism, and othering the

variegated nature of Dalit voice can be appreciated and the significance of their stories in challenging dominant narratives and advocating for social justice.

## **Chapter 4:**

### **Narrative Strategies and the Dalit Voice**

#### **4.1: Introduction**

Dalit Voices and Narrative Strategies encompass the unique methods employed by Dalit authors to articulate their life stories, viewpoints, and challenges, especially within autobiographical works. These voices and strategies are marked by their genuineness, defiance against oppression, and a quest for societal fairness and equality. In essence, Dalit authors utilize their narratives to offer genuine and unfiltered accounts of their experiences, devoid of any attempts to sugarcoat or gloss over the harsh realities of caste-based discrimination and marginalization. Through their writings, they aim to shed light on the lived experiences of Dalit's, portraying the struggles, triumphs, and aspirations of their community with honesty and authenticity.

The selected Dalit voices use narrative strategies of resistance, as they challenge the hegemonic narratives propagated by dominant caste groups and societal norms. Dalit authors often use their writings as a means of resistance against oppressive structures and systems, reclaiming their agency and asserting their right to self-representation.

Also the Dalit voices and narrative strategies are driven by a deep-seated desire for social justice and equality. Through their autobiographical texts, Dalit authors advocate for systemic changes that dismantle caste-based hierarchies and foster inclusivity and fairness for all individuals, irrespective of caste or social status.

Overall, Dalit voices and narrative strategies serve as powerful tools for amplifying marginalized perspectives, challenging oppressive structures, and advocating for a more just and equitable society. Through their writings, Dalit authors pave the way for greater recognition, understanding, and empathy towards the Dalit community, contributing to broader discussions on social justice and human rights.

#### **4.2 Narrative Strategy of resistance**

In the research paper “*narrative resilience for society*” by Michelle N Lafrance concept that attends to power and oppression, narrative resistance provides a platform for tangible applications to support people’s efforts to resist harmful storyings of their lives

In "*The Weave of My Life*" by Urmila Pawar, the narrative strategy of resistance against caste hierarchy, discrimination, and loss of dignity is intricately woven throughout the text.

"I refused to accept the limitations imposed upon me by caste and gender. Despite facing countless obstacles, I persevered, challenging the unjust social norms that sought to confine me. My story is a testament to the resilience of Dalit women, who refuse to be silenced or oppressed any longer."(Pawar: 94)

This quote means that the speaker didn't let the rules of society, which were unfair because of their caste and being a woman, hold them back. Even though they faced many difficulties, they kept going and didn't let those unfair rules stop them. The speaker's story shows how strong Dalit women are, because they won't let anyone silence them or treat them badly anymore.

In "*Prison We Broke*" by Baby Kamble, the narrative strategy of resistance is powerfully depicted through the first-hand accounts of Dalit women who have endured unimaginable hardships.

"We may have been confined to the margins of society, but our spirits remain unbroken. In the face of adversity, we rise with unwavering determination, refusing to be reduced to mere victims of caste oppression. Our stories are a testament to our resilience and our relentless pursuit of justice." (Kamble:67)

This quote means that even though society has pushed us to the edges, our inner strength is still strong. When things get tough, we stand up with strong determination. We won't let the unfair caste system make us feel weak or powerless. Our stories show how we keep fighting and never give up on seeking fairness and equality.

In "*Joothan*" by Omprakash Valmiki, the narrative strategy of resistance against caste discrimination and injustice is vividly portrayed through the lived experiences of Dalit's.

"Though society may try to silence us with derogatory labels and degrading treatment, we refuse to cower in fear. Our voices echo with defiance, demanding recognition of

our humanity and dignity. Through our narratives, we reclaim our agency and challenge the oppressive caste system that seeks to keep us down." (Valmiki: 115)

This quote means that even if society tries to put us down by calling us names or treating us badly, we won't be scared into silence. Instead, we speak up loudly and confidently, demanding to be treated with respect and fairness. By sharing our stories, we take back control of our lives and stand up against the unfair caste system that tries to keep us oppressed.

These quotes from each of the three books highlight the narrative strategy of resistance employed by the authors to amplify the voices of Dalit communities and inspire collective action against caste-based discrimination and oppression.

#### **4.3 First person narrative:**

The first person accounts used in the selected texts are used effectively to bring about Social Justice and Equality, an approach that uses storytelling and narrative voice to promote equity and justice. By crafting narratives in the first person voice that challenge dominant narratives that perpetuate injustice, social change activists there aim to shift public opinion and create a more equitable society.

In "*The Weave of My Life*" by Urmila Pawar uses this narrative strategy to bring about social justice and equality, through the lens of personal experiences and reflections on caste-based discrimination:

"I have dedicated my life to advocating for social justice and equality for all Dalit women. Through my writing, I aim to shed light on the injustices we face and challenge

the oppressive caste system that perpetuates inequality. My hope is that our stories will inspire change and pave the way for a more equitable society." (Pawar: 122)

The commitment towards fairness and equal treatment for all Dalit women is used effectively here, The writing is used 'to talk' about the unfair treatment meted out to Dalit women and to *speak out* against the caste system that keeps them from being treated equally. There is hope that by sharing their stories through a first person narrative can make a difference and help create a world where everyone is treated fairly.

In "*Prison We Broke*" by Baby Kamble, the narrative strategy is used to powerfully depict the resilience and agency of Dalit women.

"We refuse to accept a world where caste determines our worth. Our fight for social justice and equality is fueled by the belief that every individual deserves dignity and respect, regardless of their caste or gender. Through our collective strength, we strive to create a society where everyone has equal rights and opportunities." (Kamble: 83).

In the case of Kamble it is rather a collective first person voice that says that they don't want to live in a world where caste decides how valuable one is. There is a belief that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect, no matter what caste or gender they are. The use of 'We' conveys the sense of working together to build a society where everyone is treated equally and he is provided with equal opportunities.

In "*Joothan*" too Omprakash Valmiki conveys this collective voice the narrative strategy that vividly portrays caste-based discrimination and its impact on Dalit communities:

"Our struggle for social justice is a fight for our very existence. We demand equality not as a privilege, but as a fundamental human right. Our voices unite in solidarity to challenge the injustices of the caste system and advocate for a society where every individual is treated with fairness and dignity." (Valmiki: 145)

This assertion becomes a collective voice in a fight for fairness that is really important because it's about their survival. They believe that fairness isn't something special, but something everyone should have as part of being human. They 'come together' to speak out against the unfair practices of the caste system and to push for a world where everyone is treated equally and with respect.

Through the use of the singular "I" and the collective "we" a sense of urgency is created and a call for action is elicited.

Thus, each of the three books highlight the narrative strategy of the first person to advocate for the rights and dignity of Dalit communities and to inspire collective action towards a more just and equitable society.

#### **4.4 Narrative Strategy of storytelling:**

The narrative strategy in the three autobiographies involve using storytelling to highlight the suffering and discrimination faced by Dalit's due to the persistence of the caste system.

In "*The Weave of My Life*" by Urmila Pawar, the narrative strategy of storytelling is depicted through personal anecdotes and reflections on the experiences of caste-based discrimination.

"The weight of oppression presses down on us like a heavy burden, suffocating our dreams and aspirations. Every day, we are reminded of our 'untouchable' status, relegated to the margins of society by the caste system that deems us inferior. Our voices are silenced, our humanity denied, as we endure the relentless cycle of discrimination and humiliation." (Pawar: 57)

This lament weaves a story of how they feel crushed by the unfair treatment they face every day. The caste system makes them feel like they don't belong and aren't as good as others. They're constantly reminded that they're considered lower by society. Their voices aren't heard, and they're treated as if they're not even human. It's a cycle of being treated unfairly and feeling humiliated that never seems to end.

In "*Prison We Broke*" by Baby Kamble, the narrative strategy of storytelling is powerfully portrayed through the first-hand accounts of Dalit women facing systemic discrimination and violence.

"We are shackled by the chains of oppression, bound by the confines of a society that sees us as less than human. Our bodies bear the scars of centuries of caste-based violence, our spirits weighed down by the burden of discrimination. But we refuse to be broken. We rise up, defiant in the face of oppression, reclaiming our dignity and our right to exist." (Kamble : 94)

This defiant assertion narrates the story about feeling trapped and weighed down by the unfair treatment they face because of their caste. The feeling of being 'less human' by society is conveyed. The violence and discrimination they've experienced have left scars on their bodies and made them feel heavy-hearted. Despite all this,



they're determined not to let oppression defeat them. They stand up against it, reclaiming their dignity and fighting for their right to live freely.

In "*Joothan*" by Omprakash Valmiki tells the story through the exploration of caste-based marginalization and exploitation.

"We are condemned to a life of Jhootan, relegated to the lowest rungs of society by the oppressive caste system. Our bodies are treated as objects of scorn and ridicule, our voices silenced by the weight of centuries of discrimination. But beneath the surface of our oppression lies a simmering resistance, a defiance that refuses to be extinguished."

( Valmiki : 73)

This quote conveys how they feel trapped in the lowest parts of society because of the caste system. They're treated badly and made to feel worthless. Their voices are ignored because of all the unfair treatment they've faced over many years. But even though they're oppressed, they still have a strong feeling of resistance setting in them. They refuse to let the oppression take away their spirit.

The three autobiographies highlight the use of narrative strategies of resistance, first person voice and storytelling employed by the authors to shed light on the nature of caste-based discrimination and challenge the oppressive systems that marginalize Dalit communities.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

The use of first-person voices and storytelling methods in these Dalit texts in the selected autobiographies are strategically used by the authors. First, it lets the readers see the Dalit experience up close and personal. Authors like Urmila Pawar, Baby

Kamble, and Om Prakash Valmiki share their own stories, giving us a glimpse into what it's like to be Dalit in India. They talk about the ups and downs they face every day. The singular “I” and collective ‘We’ bring out the turmoil and suffering of the Dalit voice effectively.

Second, these stories challenge the ideas and stereotypes that many people have about Dalits. By telling their own stories, Dalit authors show us a different side of things. They help readers see that the stereotypes have to be dismantled and that Dalit people are just as complex and diverse as anyone else.

Lastly, these stories are a powerful way to push for change. A narrative strategy of resistance used tactfully, sharing their experiences and speaking out against injustice wherein these authors are fighting to make things better for Dalit communities. They want to break down the unfair caste system and make sure everyone is treated equally.

Thus these first-person stories are essential for understanding the Dalit experience, breaking down stereotypes, and pushing for a fairer society for everyone.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion**

#### **5.1: Introduction**

This study undertook to see the stories of Dalit people in the selected autobiographies. The focus was on three main books: "The Weave of My Life" by Urmila Pawar, "Prison We Broke" by Baby Kamble, and "Jhootan" by Om Prakash Valmiki. The goal was to understand how Dalit's create themselves and how they become who they are through their life stories.

The critical ideas from literary theories These ideas were taken from postcolonial theory and a field of study called Subaltern studies. These ideas help to see the complexity of the Dalit experience in these books.

## 5.2 Findings:

These are the findings from the analysis of chapters:

Chapter 1 provided background information, explained the research questions, and stated the objectives, questions and hypothesis. A literature review was conducted a research gap was identified, the chapter outline was also formulated.

These research aims to provide in-depth perspectives on Dalit consciousness and identity information in autobiographical narratives, while some studies examine individual Dalit autobiographies few undertake, a comparative literary analysis of multiple text as proposed here, this study will address this gap through a focused analysis of selected the lead autobiographies.

All the studies of Dalit autobiographies focus on the nature of the voices.

In Chapter 2, the nature of the Dalit voice was examined through close reading of the texts. The voice of oppression, despair, resistance, suppression and aspiration were identified using textual examples. In each of the texts common concerns of aspirations, desires and a call for action was seen. A collective voice of resistance was palpable in the three texts.

In conclusion, the examination of Dalit autobiographies reveals a Unique Dalit voice, that collects the collective experiences, struggles, and hopes of the Dalit community. Through thematic analysis and comparison, this research has brought attention to the recurring themes and stories that shape this distinctive voice in autobiographies. It highlighting Dalit voices and stories, these autobiographies not only bear witness to the resilience of Dalits but also inspire social change and justice.

In chapter 3 postcolonial concepts like hybridity, colonialism and Othering helped to gain a deeper understanding of the diverse nature of voices found in the autobiographies and helped to recognise the blending of different cultures and identities within this narrative

The concept of Colonialism sheds light on the historical context in which these voices emerge revealing how colonial powers have shaped social hierarchies and encouraged systemic oppression including caste discrimination. Through the lens of colonialism it

could be understood how the experience has been influenced by centuries of colonial rule and its lingering effects on Indian society.

Additionally, the concept of Othering illuminates the ways in which the Dalit voices have been marginalized in silence by dominant caste groups, perpetuating a narrative of inferiority and exclusion. Othering highlights the construction of the Dalit community as fundamentally different and inferior, reinforcing caste-based discrimination and social inequalities.

Additionally, subaltern studies explored the issues of being marginalized . Thus by using postcolonial theory and subaltern studies. It has been found that the voice is historically marginalized.

In Chapter 4 there was a closer look at the Dalit author's strategies . The strategies they use to describe their lives and to question the ideas that are usually accepted in society were examined . . The strategies of resistance, first person account and storytelling were seen in the texts to convey the voice of the repressed. It was found that the first personal voice was strategically used to convey the sense of despair , whereas storytelling helped to make the account interesting . In Addition this Dalit storytelling strategy was not just about telling stories but was also about challenging the beliefs of those in power and taking back control of their own narratives.

All the studies of Dalit autobiographies focus on the nature of the voice. Narrative strategies and how this "voice" emerges as a formidable one. Thus the present research

gap adopted by examining the texts -theory of postcolonial lens and narrative strategies used.

#### Limitations :

1. The focus was on Dalit Autobiographies and not other marginalized group
2. Male and Female autobiographies were not compared
3. Only select narrative strategies were explored others like foreshadowing, Symbolism, imagery, allegory were not explored.

#### Areas for future studies :

1. A comparative study of male and female autobiographies could be undertaken.
2. :Further research should explore the intersections of caste with other social categories, such as gender, class, religion, and region
3. Analyzing the challenges faced by Dalit students in educational institutions and exploring strategies to promote educational equity and access.

#### Chapter 5 Conclusion :

The dissertation has shed light on the many layers of the Dalit experience. The aim was to promote fairness and equality for all communities that are often left out or not treated equally. This research helped to better understand the discrimination based on caste and the discrimination that exists in Indian society. Through the study it is hoped that measures would be taken to take action and to create a society where everyone is treated fairly and equally.

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### **Appendix 1 Interview questionnaire**

1. Can you share specific instances where your identity as a Dalit has shaped the themes in your work?
2. What motivated you to become a writer, and how do you see your role in advocating for the representation of Dalit voices in literature?

3. Have there been particular events or experiences that pushed you to express yourself through writing?
4. Can you share instances where you've drawn strength and resilience from your identity to navigate the challenges?
5. Are there specific literary techniques or styles you find effective in conveying your messages?
6. In what ways do you see your work contributing to the cultural identity and pride of the Dalit community?
7. What steps do you think can be taken to further promote diversity and inclusivity in the literary world?

Ba. Ba. Kothambe's work contributes to the cultural identity and pride of the Dalit community by Focusing on Dalit, tribal, and rural literary production. By immersing himself in the customs, beliefs, and culture of these communities, he brings authenticity to his writing. He believes that understanding the questions, joys, and sorrows of these communities adds a different edge to his writing, reflecting their lived experiences and struggles. He says "I have been focusing on Dalit, tribal, rural literary production. Be it knowing their customs, Sanwar, their beliefs, the culture of rural areas or meeting them. It helps to bring an Authenticity authenticity to your writing. It is actually our need to

participate in their questions, joys and sorrows, it gives a different edge to our writing. When asked what steps does he think can be taken to further promote diversity and inclusivity in the literary world? He replied “The most important thing in this is that we should increase our Scope of reading, it is not right to limit ourselves because we are Dalit’s or produce Dalit Literature. In fact, the writer should not be bound by certain topics,the writer decides to write on

A specific topic or stream, but by reading different types of literature,the scope of the writer increases and the variety of topics in writing increases, the writer tries to find answers to the questions that arise. Diversity in writing increases our readership, which of course helps increase inclusivity.”

In conclusion, there’s still much to explore in Dalit literature. Researchers could further compare books in different languages to understand cultural differences. They could also focus on the experiences of Dalit women in these stories. Understanding how these books affect society and laws could be important too. Studying how Dalit narratives have changed over time could provide valuable insights. Lastly, looking at Dalit literature from different angles, like history and sociology, could give us a fuller picture of its impact.