



02

**A STUDY OF CO- RELATION BETWEEN IDEOLOGY AND LITERARY MOVEMENT
WITH REFERENCE TO DR.BABASAHEBAMBEDKAR AND DALIT LITERATURE IN
MAHARASHTRA**

Dr Mukta Mahajan

Professor

*School of Language Studies and Research Centre
North Maharashtra University, Jalgaon,
MS, India*

• **Introduction:**

The paper is based on certain assumptions such as:

1. There is a co-relation between ideology and literary movements/ literature.
2. Literary movements are kind of silent social revolutions.
3. Ideologies can be better communicated to society through literature.
4. Literary movements related to ideology culminate into the anticipated result dreamed by ideologists.
5. All literary movements/ literature do not carry/represent ideology.

The Paper is divided into following parts- understanding the terms ideology and literary movements, ideology and its relevance in the making of a society, ideology of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Dalit literature in Maharashtra.

• **Understanding the Terms:**

Ideology- 'Etymological survey of the term 'Ideology' records that the term was born in the highly controversial and political debates and fights of the French revolution and acquired several other meanings from the early days of the first French empire to the present. The word was coined by Anoine Destutt de Tracy in 1796 assembling the word idea and logy. He used it to refer to one aspect of his 'science of ideas'. The meaning of the term kept on changing. Napoleon Bonaparte used the word ideologues to ridicule his intellectual opponent, Marx situated the term within class struggle, Taine added to it his concept of milieu' (www.wikipedia, retrieved on 17/04/2015). Manfred Steger and Paul James define ideology as 'ideologies are patterned clusters of normatively imbued ideas and concepts, including particular representations of power relations. These conceptual maps help people navigate the complexity of their political universe and carry claims to social truth'. Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary explains ideology as a 'set of ideas that an economic or political system is based on' or 'a set of beliefs, especially held by a particular group that influences the way people behave' (P.770).

Literary Movement- is a particular period in the history of literature in which many writers or a group of writers practice the same pattern of devices, techniques and features for writing the literary text. They may share the common issues and contemporary subjects as the content of their writing. A

literary movement may emerge in response to or against any important happening or the existent literary mode.

Can there be co-relation between ideology and literature? :

Literature is not always deliberate or intentional activity. It is the creative urge of an author that brings literature into being. Whereas ideology is a deliberate activity meant for a bigger purpose. But study of literature in particular context may reveal the fact that here literature is not creation for self-satisfaction of the writer but as an activity of recreation. Then the literature definitely takes a stand. Here the interpretation of literature can be two fold- first, creativity of the author and entertainment for the reader. Second, it becomes a message with code. The careful comparison between both- ideology and literature, brings an interesting common element between both to the notice i.e. idea. An ideologist frames his ideas in theoretical manner and it becomes ideology, whereas, a writer frames his ideas in imaginative manner and it becomes literature. Thus idea becomes a common ground which sets a co- relation between ideology and literature, although it is true that ideology is a matter of higher intellectual realm whereas literature is connected to common man through the medium of entertainment. Another striking commonality between both is, ideology rests on ideals and the ultimate aim of literature is to convey ideals and values through the characters, dialogue and story. In short, what is conveyed in abstract manner in ideology is illustrated in simple manner through literature. Both an ideologist and a writer hold their own positions, views about a particular notion. At this juncture literature becomes instrumental in simplifying the abstract notion. In case of Dr. Ambedkar's ideology, through his theories- legal, political, social, economy holds a position about ideal society, democracy, religion and the other systems of society based on the principles of liberty, fraternity and equality. Dalit literature also holds the same position i. e. liberty to live like a human being. Of course it cannot be claimed that there is always a co relation between ideology and literary movement.

• Ideology and Its Relevance in Society:

A society is always in the process of flux. The transformations in the society take place due to the advent of science and technology or due to emergence of parallel or paradoxical ideologies. The progress of a society is always multipronged but two important dimensions decide the fate of the society and shape the being of the society. The material life of a society is designed by the progress of that society in the field of science and technology but the intellectual and spiritual life of the society is shaped by the ideologies and philosophies. Ideologies are not only the repertoire of the social wisdom but also mould the life of generations to come. In a way, ideologies keep on churning the social mind so that it can help the society in moving towards the better and better destination of human existence. The cross currents of ideologies extend a fair chance to the promising intellects of the society to investigate and reinvestigate the suitable possibilities of survival ethics in contemporary times. The readings of various ideologies prove the fact that they have been very instrumental in initiating the social movements as well as social revolutions. Of Course, ideologies also prove beneficial for boosting the health of other inherent systems of the society. Since this paper is related to a social movement rather to the social revolution, more attention is paid to the social function of the ideology. Ideology comes to life if it pervades to that class of society for which it is meant. The surficial spread of ideology like oil spread on the water, delimits it to and for the intellectual classes and remains in the books in the form of words. The dripping of the essence of ideology through the rock bottom humanity of the society makes it an entity to remain alive for centuries. Such deep rooted ideologies may result into literary movements. It can be interpreted as recreation of the ideology through literary mode. It is here ideology and literary movement can be co- related and such co- relation culminates into the making of a new society.

Who were/are Dalits:

Indian society was structured on the frame work of chaturvarnai. e. four *Varnas*. *Brahmin*, *Kshtriya*, *Vaishya* and *Shudra*. The Shudras were declared as untouchables. Dalit is supposed to be the translation of the English word depressed classes. There are many overlapping terms such as *Harijan*, untouchable for the term Dalit. Pradip K. Sharma points out that ‘The untouchables or the Dalits, as they are presently known are one of the most vulnerable sections in society of our country. They constitute nearly 17% of the total population in the country but have been subjected to multiple of oppression and subjugation for centuries and lived miserable life’ (Sharma, 1). Further he adds that ‘The Dalit Panthers in 1972-73 widened the meaning of the term Dalit, when they incorporated various religious minorities, women, tribal backward castes and economically deprived sections in their definition’ (Sharma, 2).

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, His Ideology and Social Background:

As it is mentioned earlier, Indian society is characterized by caste hierarchy since its history of thousand years. Earlier the society was divided into *varnas* which later on changed into castes. The lowest strata of Indian society are known as Dalits. They were deprived of their natural rights in the name of religion and tradition. They were denied of right to education and strategically made to stay at the periphery of the society. The birth of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar brought sunshine in the life of Dalit people not only in Maharashtra but all over India,

Colonial period in India was responsible for the damage of the life and density of Indian people but the only boon of colonial period that brought awareness to Indian people is the British education system. Introduction of British education system in India opened the doors of education to all, irrespective of their class, caste and gender. Dr. Ambedkar’s education brought him the realization of the exploitation and suppression of the untouchables and he took it as his moral responsibility to bring his people out of the hell of dehumanization. Though he himself suffered frustrating humiliations, irrespective of his higher education and name and fame in USA and UK, he continued to express the need of treating untouchables as human being and conferring on them their due rights. His seminal book *Annihilation of Caste* reflects his vituperative and polemical criticism in India. His views on economy, polity, tradition and religion in India set his ideology. Just as he attacked on the hypocrisy and double standard nature of upper class Hindus, he also appealed his people to take education and change their lifestyle. He consistently made hard efforts to reshuffle the existent systems in India that caused inequality and discrimination. He dreamed of that society that was based on liberty, equality and fraternity. He exposed the intentional misdirection of the upper classes to keep the lower classes under their thumbs to continue the slavery in the disguise of religion. He researched the history of *shudras* and how they were made fourth *Varna*. His seminal views on the systems that comprise the society explain his ideology. Through his writings and speeches he awakened the untouchables of their dehumanization and asked them to shed out their double consciousness and look at themselves as human beings and demand their rights. He was always troubled by the question why there were no social revolutions in India? He himself answered that, ‘--- the lower classes of Hindus have been completely disabled for direct action on account of this wretched system of *Chaturvarnya*’ (P. 63). Ambedkar thought that education was one way for the downtrodden people to find out way for their emancipation. In this regards, in the monograph on Dr. Ambedkar, K. Raghavendrarao writes, ‘Ambedkar regarded education as a crucial instrument for raising the overall level of the depressed and deprived classes. He believed that through the acquisition of education, especially higher education, socio economic equality could be promoted. Not only was he keen on the lower classes acquiring education but he was equally keen on members of these classes participating in the teaching programme as well. His reasoning was that the content of education reflected the ideology, interests and values of those in charge of teaching’ (Rao, 8-9).

Dr. Ambedkar's motivation and their own education brought a new dawn of self-respect in the life of Dalit people. The freedom struggle of India and the use of literature by Indian Writers in English for making the world aware of the atrocities done by British people to Indians was a beckoning for the Women and Dalit writers to express the atrocities done to them by their own people. British education system conferred on them freedom to write and they used the write for their freedom. Dr. Ambedkar's ideology has the framework of democracy, humanism, pragmatism, non-violence and instrumentalism.

Though Dr. Ambedkar says that there were no social revolutions in India, the movement of Dalit literature can be considered as non-violent social revolution that has brought the reformation, to some extent, Dr. Ambedkar dreamed about. Literary movements can be interpreted in terms of social revolution in non-violent manner.

Rise of Dalit Movement:

The rise of Dalit movement was caused by the contemporary religious, social and the consequent economic and political scenario. Pradip Sharma rightly grasps the nature of Dalit movement in India, when he writes, 'The Dalit movement in India have occupied significant place in the history of social movements as well as in the discourse of social sciences. These movements have undergone several phases, particularly during the 20th century, right from its struggle for recognition, mobilization and co-option, power sharing to cultural and literary assertion as well as identity assertions through variety of methods and strategies which covers effectively every aspect of human life. The broad canvas of the Dalit movements encompasses multiple tiers of long painful struggle for universal values of equality, democratization, freedom, human dignity, solidarity and radical transformation of society that could ensure dignified human existence' (Sharma, 1).

What is Dalit literature?:

Prof. Sharatchandra Muktibodh defines Dalit literature as, 'Dalit viewpoint + Dalit feeling = Dalit literature' (Meshram, 54). There are many definitions given by the researchers of Dalit literature. Dr. M. N. Wankhede defines it as 'Literature of revolution created by Dalit writers and the Dalit's' (Mesharm, 60) whereas Baburao Bagul says, 'Dalit literature is the literature that propagates emancipation of human being who treats human being as great. Dalit literature strongly opposes superiority of race, *Varna* and caste' (Mesharam, 60).

With Dr. Ambedkar's call to Dalits to awaken themselves and join the movement, the broken man replied the call with all his power. Of course, the earlier writing that started in the last phase of 19th century by Dalit writers, was lacking the characteristic features of literature. They started with the form of folksongs like *Powada*, *Jalasa*, songs and tried to support the movement continued by Dr. Ambedkar. But the creativity was meant for propaganda and therefore did not last long. These writers were Kisan Fagu Bansode, Shivram Kamble, Shahir Ghatage, Kerubhau Gaykwad, Waman Karadk etc. Even some non-Dalit writers like Vyankatesh Madgulakr, Vibhavari Shirurkar reflected the life of Dalit people through their writings but theirs was not the direct experience. So they failed to do justice with the problem of Dalit people.

With the inspiration by Mahatma Phule, Dalit writers came ahead to articulate the storm that was hovering on their mind since centuries. The visible tradition of Dalit literature begins with the writings of Mahatma Phule. Dalit literature conferred new dimensions to the traditional forms- poetry, short story, and autobiography- of literature.

Some critics have traced back the origin of Dalit literature to Saint Chokha Mela who opposed the customs and depicted his grudge that being *Mahar*, he was not allowed to enter the temple of *Vithoba*. After him, Saint Kabir also questioned mankind for the discrimination done to the untouchables. He was great humanitarian revolting poet.

Dalit poetry with its vitriolic and bitter criticism on the established stream of Marathi literature posed a challenge to the subject and content of poetry. Along with the earlier poets like Kisan Bansode, Waman Nimbalkar, Dalit poetry comprises a huge list of bright poets like Narayan Surve, Keshav Meshram, Namdev Dahsal, Daya Pawar, Tryambak Sapkale, F. M. Shinde, Yashwant Manohar, Raja Dhale, Prilhad Chendwankar, Arun Kamble etc. These poets mainly delineate the suppression of Dalit people and indifference of Hindus to their miserable condition. Their sensitivity explodes the stereotyped images and symbols of poetry and creates a new world of images to pinpoint their agony. These poets of second generation dedicate themselves to fight back the injustice done to them in the name of religion since ages. The double edged words and language of Dalit poetry changes the very face of the poetry. The centre of their poetry is a human being and his hunger. Dalit poetry opens up a war against the deprivation and exploitation.

Dalit novel and short story emerged after 1950. Baburao Bagul is addressed as the father of Dalit short story. Before him, Shankarrao Khart, N.R. Shende also practiced their hands at short story. Most of the short stories are the reflection of the personal experience of the writers. Dalit novelists also relived their own life through their novels. Annabhau Sahte wrote almost all his short stories and novels about social categories that were declared as criminals for no good reason such as *Manng*, *Paradhi*, *Ramoshi*. All these protagonists come from the periphery of the society. The world of his fiction is the world of reality where the downtrodden are not ready to surrender and die easily rather they practice anarchy for survival. Annabhau's fiction reflects strong influence of communism. Sahkarro Kharat presents a very balanced picture of the subalterns- *Bara balutedar* who have been facing the serfdom the slavery since ages. They are the representatives of the marginalized people. Unlike Annabhau Sahte's Kharat's characters are the perpetual sufferers. He focuses on the hunger of these poor people and the ordeal they go through. Kharat rightly portrays the problems of the untouchables. He shows strong influence of Babasaheb Ambedkar through his characters. Another story writer N.R. Shende shows impact of romanticism, idealism in his writing. Bandhumadhav's short stories are called the true Dalit stories. His services in the police department brought him the fact that untouchability cannot be removed by law. It needs change in the heart and attitude of human beings. His experiences of facing the criminals become the stuff of his stories.

Baburao Bagul's story collection, *When I had concealed My Caste* proved a milestone in the history of Dalit literature. His personal painful experiences steep his writing. His experiences compel the readers to be introspective. He poses certain fundamental questions to the upper classes such as who has made man like an animal. He roundly rejects the philosophy of Hinduism that dehumanizes the untouchables.

Keshav Meshram, Waman Howal, Yogiraj Waghmare, Arjun Dangale are some more prominent Dalit novelists and short story writers.

Dalit writers also explored the form of drama. Kisan Faguji Bansode is credited as the first Dalit dramatist. The dialogues in his plays throw light on the hypocrite and double standard nature of the Brahmins. Along with him, Dr. Prabhakar Ganveer, Dr. Gangadhar Pantawane, Suresh Meshram, Kamalakar Dahat, Premanand Gajvi, Ratnakar Matkari write social plays on the problems of the untouchables.

Above all these forms, Dalit autobiographies have proved the most significant contribution to not only Dalit literature but also Marathi literature in general. Dalit autobiographies are the search for self at three levels- as a Dalit, as a gendered Dalit and as a human being. Not only male writers but female writers have also contributed invaluable to the form of autobiography. Shankarrao Kaharat, Daya Pawar, Tryambak Sapkale, Madhav Kondvilkar, Prof. Kumad Pawade, Shantabai Kambale, Kishor Shantabai Kambale, Heera Bansode, Yogiraj Waghmare, Dr. Gangadhar Pantawane, Sharankumar Limbale are some of the names who have enriched the genre of Dalit autobiography.

The noteworthy features of Dalit literature is that majority of the literary figures were and are the activists and it is the literature of first-hand experience.

The brief review of Dalit writers and the forms they have explored and the issues they have handled in their writings bring us to the fact that they follow the path shown by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. His ideology and dream of a democracy based on equality, liberty and fraternity, his dream of economy that will give equal opportunity to everyone to earn his living on the basis of his capacity and not on his birth, his dream of the legal system that will not allow discrimination only because a person belongs to lower caste, his dream of religion that secures a person on the basis of equality and equal opportunity and not on the basis of his birth, his dream of society without caste is upheld by the Dalit writers in their writings and like Dr. Ambedkar they too speak the optimism, of such a dawn of equality, liberty and fraternity. The importance of Dr. Ambedkar's efforts and the movement of Dalit literature have resulted into emancipation of Dalit from the age old chains of inferiority and subordination to some extent and have taught them to ask questions, to think about their identity. The most important achievement of the both is that they have successfully brought out the Dalit from his double consciousness and have taught him to look at himself as a human being.

Dalit literature is not different only because it draws the life of Dalit people but because it has shaken the traditional forms of novel, poetry and drama. It does not use the circumlocutory language of upper classes. It does not follow the clichéd binary oppositions and stale pairs of signifiers and signified. The scorching words, inclusive irony, realistic images and symbols, naked facts, visible contradictions and paradoxes, exploding pathos, plain rejection of sympathy, empathy with other sufferers, clear anger and use of dialect transforms the very nature and function of literature. Dalit literature is not meant for the primary function of literature i. e. entertainment. Rather it serves the higher purpose of catharsis. It snatches out the literature from the world of fantasy and roots it in the harsh and horrifying reality. The distinguishing feature of Dalit literature is that it exposes the local colonization by their own people and in a way, when they write; it can be understood as rewriting of history and identity. Dalit literature, though blamed for the repetition of the same sorrow and sufferings, truly defines the words like sorrow, insult, pangs, shame and helplessness. The repetition of their sufferings is justifiable because it is not only their individual suffering but the sufferings of their generations saturated in them; unspoken, unuttered and suffered mutely. The non-violent, verbal revolution of Dalit literature beckons at the hope as Marx thinks, 'History does not move smoothly and evenly forward. History is driven forward by qualitative leaps, by revolutions. The situation often gets worse before the transformation occurs. But the transformation results in a synthesis of a higher order' (Marx, 324).

REFERENCES

1. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, *Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 1, Bombay 1979
2. Manfred Steger and Paul James, (2010), *Globalization and Culture*, Vol. 4 : Ideologies and Globalism, London, Sage Publication, taken from www.wikipedia
3. Marx from *A History of Western Thought* (From Ancient Greece to the 20th Century) by Gunnar SkirbkkNad Nils, Gilje, 2001 Roultege, London
4. Mesharm, Yogendra (1988), *Dalit Sahitya*, UdgamAaniVikas, Nagpur, Shri Mangesh Publication.
5. Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, OUP, 7thed.
6. Rao, K. Raghvendra, (1993), *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar*, Mumbai, SahityaAkademi
7. Sharma, Pradip K. , (2006), *Dalit Politics and Literature*, New Delhi, Shipra Publication
8. www.wikipedia, retrieved on 17/04/2015



This is an Open Access e-Journal Published Under A Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

To Cite the Article: Mahajan, Mukta, “A Study of Co- relation between Ideology and Literary Movement with reference to Dr.BabasahebAmbedkar and Dalit Literature in Maharashtra”.Literary Cognizance, I-2 (Sept., 2015): 10-16. Web.

