

Portrayal of Dalit in the novels of Indian English Writers

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ABSTRACT: This paper deals with the representation of Dalit in Arundhati Roy's *God of Small Thing*, Mulk Raj Ananda's *Untouchable*, Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*, Amitabh Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies*, Bhabani Bhattacharya's *He Who Rides the Tiger*. An introduction part is about the history and writers of Dalit literature. Features of Dalit literature is about the features and characteristics of Dalit literature. Representation of Dalit in this four novels explains about views on Dalit literature and representation of Dalit in the novels. The Conclusion sums up the things of Dalit literature in the novels.

Introduction

The word **Dalit** derives from the Sanskrit language that means suppressed or crushed. The Oxford dictionary defines Dalit as a member of the caste that is considered the lowest and that has the fewest advantages. Untouchable was denied to participate in religious ceremonies. They were denied prestigious job and had to cope up with menial occupation, like leather works, butchering, and lower grade works. And they were also denied to access public amenities, like wells, rivers, and schools. They were even restricted from entering temples. Socio-religious movements in India advocated for the liberation of the Dalits from the oppressive forces. They were denied existence and reduced merely to the state of slaves. The Power of Vedas did allow anybody to question the social order. Dharmasastras were powerful enough to justify their miserable state with all illogical conceptions like 'past sins' and 'God's will'. To start with, there will have to be a definite explanation of the word 'Dalit' in Dalit Literature. Harijans and neo-Buddhists are not the only Dalits, the term describes all the untouchable communities living outside the boundary of the village, as well as Adivasis, landless farm labours, workers, the suffering masses, and nomadic and criminal tribes. In explaining the word, it will not do to refer only to the untouchable castes.

The range and intricacy of Dalit experience can be grasped by English-language readers through the works of non-dalit scholars and critics such as Arundhati Roy, Mulk Raj Anand, Rohinton Mistry, Amitabh Ghosh and Bhabani Bhattacharya. We draw from an exciting and extensive list of important works, and have generally focused on pieces written in English Literature. We have purposely chosen work that represents a range of political perspectives and genres, from writers who themselves are known for their range. Among the work that Arundhati Roy's *God of Small Thing*, Mulk Raj Ananda's *Untouchable*, Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*, Amitabh Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies*, Bhabani Bhattacharya's *He Who Rides the Tiger* to share the actual position of Dalits with the help of these literary works.

Dalit literature is not a mere fiction. It is part of the larger movement to bring about changes. Dalit writings are based on real life experience. Some critics have the view that writers, like Mulk Raj Anand and Arundhati Roy do not represent the Dalit life as it is, but they represent Dalits as hapless and mischievous who are unable to take their own decisions and action. One of such an examples is Bakha in *Untouchable* who concedes to Gandhi's pacifism rather than to go for revolution. The same opinion is having about the Dalits by Rohinton Mistry as Mistry's *A Fine Balance* has been written totally in focus to the Dalits atrocities, centred by different subaltern characters both of Men and Women. In Hindu caste system, Dalit is always considered to be impure who were considered to coming from the families of cobblers, leather worker or Mochi. They were assigned to as lower caste if they engaged in such kind of profession. The novel shows the perspective of subaltern people whose voice has been raised by Mistry and showcase their point of view in the novel.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, Ammu appears to have represented the fourth world, having been put to inequity both in family and in society. If dalits are deprived of basic amenities, health, education, right to possess property, social security, moreover respectable social identity, Ammu, who was born in a Syrian Christian petty-bourgeois family is also deprived of the same in the caste-stricken class society in India. At several instances, Ammu appears a Dalit. The aim of this paper is to show how a pathetic social reality is reflected in this novel through the character of Ammu.

Arundhati Roy's *A God of Small Things*: *The God of Small Things* is a novel written by Arundhati Roy and published in 1997. The novel follows twin brother and sister Estha and Rahel, and the events that build up to and follow the drowning death of their cousin while all three are children. Though the novel ostensibly deals with the interpersonal complexities of one Indian family, it delves deeply into questions of social and cultural boundaries-particularly the long shadow of the Indian caste system and its limitations on who one can and should love. The novel is notable for its non-chronological framework which makes extensive use of flashbacks and flash forwards to highlight the interconnectedness of the various events, both big and small, that shape Estha and Rahel's lives. *The God of Small Things* is the most widely-sold novel ever to come out of India. The novel won The Man Booker Prize for Fiction.

Mulk Raj Ananda's *Untouchable*: *Untouchable* is a novel written by Muk Raj Anand. Published in 1935, it charts the path of one day in the life of a young man named Bakha. Bakha is a member of the Untouchables, a designation for people so far below even the lowest caste in Indian society that they are considered outside of the system. His job is to sweep streets and latrines for the upper class, who are forbidden from cleaning or touching human waste. Because he was born as an Untouchable, this will be Bakha's job for his entire life, unless there are reforms in India. The entire novel takes place on one day of Bakha's life, a day in which his tolerance for the mistreatment endured by the lower castes begins to erode.

Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*: *A Fine Balance*, is a long, complex work, with four protagonists and a variety of settings. Moreover, although most of the events in the novel take place in the mid-1970's, there are also lengthy passages tracing the early lives of the major characters, thus placing them within the context of their families and their communities. These accounts are also important because they explain why the three men left home to come to what is assumed to be the city of Bombay and also why the widow, Dina Dalal, whose older brother has a home there, is living alone, attempting to support herself.

Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies*: *Sea of Poppies*, a novel by Amitav Ghosh published in 2008, tells the intertwining stories of several people who find themselves aboard the *Ibis*, a former slave ship, in the early 19th century. The principal characters are aboard the ship under varying and more and less desirable circumstances, and employing varying levels of deception. The novel takes place shortly before the First Opium War, and its major themes are of imperialism and colonialism under a backdrop of drug smuggling and human trafficking by the hands of the British in India and (though largely unseen) China. It is the first in the *Ibis* trilogy of novels, which also includes *River of Smoke* (2011) and *Flood of Fire* (2015). *Sea of Poppies* was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2008.

Bhabani Bhattacharya: "He who rides a Tiger" is a novel by Bhabani Bhattacharya depicting the hunger of Bengal feminism in 1943. Kalo, the protagonist of the novel, is a straightforward, honest and hard-working blacksmith. Kalo resides in a remote city of Bengal, Jharna, with his Daughter, Chandra Lekha. In this novel, we will see how hunger drives him to steal bananas because he could not withstand hunger. What is ironic is that he was trying to steal bananas which he doesn't even like to eat and ended up in prison. Kalo is stripped of his innocence after three months in prison. The seed of vengeance was sown in his heart when he learned that according to upper-class people, lower-class people have no right to live. The novel clearly portrays how wealthy people were cruel to the hungry masses and were untouched by the suffering of the hungry masses.

Conclusion- Dalit literature is characterized by its fundamental criticism of the caste system and all kinds of discrimination and by its call for destroying social hierarchies. It is the literature of social and political commitment that challenges the status quo. It is the literature of questioning the exclusion from the mainstream of society and culture. It is the literature that promotes equality and human dignity. Dalit is a distinction for a group of people traditionally regarded as untouchable. Dalits are a mixed population, consisting of numerous

castes from all over the world. These novelist are unique in their perspective of social justice and liberation in the context of a national situation marked by systematic oppression of an overwhelming majority of the people by colonial powers or forces within that are exploitive. He is committed to the emergence of a new society free from external intrusion, domination, exploitation, social and political marginalization.

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