

# **INTRODUCTION**

## INTRODUCTION

The literature on the problems and sufferings of the Indian depressed classes has been produced in Indian languages both by dalits and non-dalits before and after the Independence. The Dalit literature is produced in poetry, short story, drama, novel and autobiography forms. The dalit literature, produced by the dalits, originated out of self-revelation and cry, is mostly autobiographical in nature while the literature produced by non-dalits on dalit life originated out of the writers' compassion for the untouchables, need for eradication of untouchability and its realism. The dalit literature is a literature with human sensibility for dalits. <sup>1</sup>

*Shyamsundar* is the first Marathi novel on the life of untouchables by Shripad Krishna Kolhatkar written in 1925. Similarly, *Untouchable* is a novel in English by Mulk Raj Anand, a Punjabi writer published in 1935. It is a classic of its

kind. Further, so many novels in the same vein are written in Marathi also before and after the Independence.

Marathi Dalit literature is mainly the product of socio-cultural changes in Maharashtra accelerated after the Independence. It is a literature of protest.<sup>2</sup>

Dalit literature has attracted the attention of scholars and critics. But the scholars and critics concentrated on particular independent aspects of it. For example, G.S. Balarama Gupta<sup>3</sup> made an intensive study of Mulk Raj Anand's novels from humanist perspective and Ambujkumar Sharma<sup>4</sup> attempted thematic study of Anand's novels. Many more critics and scholars also contributed a lot to the interpretation of the literature. Similarly in Marathi also Sharankumar Limbale, Baburao Gaikwad, Sushila Dhage and a galaxy of scholars concentrated on Dalit literature from various view points. A number of critical articles and scholarly dissertations for M.Phil. and Ph.D. have been written. Many critical books have also been produced by great scholars like Baburao Bagul<sup>5</sup>, Chandrakant

Bandivadekar<sup>6</sup> and others. However, no scholar seems to have concentrated on comparative study of different novels of different regions on dalits' lives from different phases of the literary history of India that may reveal the true nature of the changing socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-religious spectrum of the dalit life in India so far.

Therefore, two representative novels on dalit life viz *Untouchable*<sup>7</sup> and *Bahishrut*<sup>8</sup> by non-dalit writers in two different languages and from two historically significant phases are selected for the study.

*Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand, a Punjabi writer in English belongs to the colonial period and *Bahishrut* by Arun Sadhu, a Marathi writer belongs to the Post-Independence period. The selected writers are non-dalit writers on dalit life from different regions of India. Ample critical material in and outside India is written on *Untouchable*. Similarly, some critical responses to *Bahishrut* are available. But no concentrated comparative study of *Untouchable* and *Bahishrut* on the

common thematic basis is done so far to know the sensibility of these two novelists from two historical phases.

So, the area of the present study is confined to Indian comparative literature and further to two novels on dalits' life by non-dalit writers from different regions of India belonging to Pre and Post-Independence periods.

The objective is comparative thematic study of these two novels in the context of changing social ethos. It is expected that the study of these selected two novels may throw light on:

- [1] The realistic portrayal of the miserable life conditions of dalits i.e. untouchables or low castes during two historical phases.
- [2] Poverty of dalits caused by their deprivation of the basic [fundamental] human rights.
- [3] Humiliation and harassment inflicted on them by the upper caste people.
- [4] Social, economic and religious exploitation of the low cast people at the hands of sawarnas.

[5] Sawarnas' unchanged attitude to the low castes in spite of changing social conditions during the Post-Independence period in India.

[6] The novelists' sincere compassion for the low castes.

[7] The novelists' earnest desired for the end of untouchability.

The present study adopts the following scheme of chapterisation :

Chapter I : Background to Indian Literature on depressed  
Classes

(A) Caste System in India : Origin and Development

(B) Work of Social Reformers for Untouchables

(C) Survey of Dalit Literature by Non-Dalits.

Chapter II : *Untouchable*

Chapter III : *Bahishkrut*

Chapter IV: Conclusions

Thus the approach of the present study is an overall comparative thematic study of the selected novels in the contest of changing social and political reforms in India. It

is hoped that it will be a valuable contribution to novel on  
dalit life in India.

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### **REFERENCES**

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