

**KUVEMPU**



**UNIVERSITY**

**CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SELECT  
DALIT AUTOBIOGRAPHIES**

**Thesis submitted for the award of  
Doctor of Philosophy in English**

**Submitted by**

**AISHWARYA J S.**

Research Scholar

Department of P. G. Studies and Research in English  
Jnana Sahyadri, Kuvempu University  
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**Under the Guidance of**

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**Submitted to**

**DEPARTMENT OF P. G. STUDIES AND  
RESEARCH IN ENGLISH**

**Jnana Sahyadri, Shankaraghatta,  
Shivamogga – 577451**

**2023**

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**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SELECT DALIT AUTOBIOGRAPHIES**, is a record of original and independent research work carried out by **AISHWARYA J S.** at the **Department of P.G. Studies and Research in English, Jnana Sahyadri, Kuvempu University, Shankaraghatta, Shivamogga** under my supervision for the award of the **Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English**. I further certify that this research work has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship of this University or any other University.

Place: **Shankarghatta**

Date: *29.05.2023*

  
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled **CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SELECT DALIT AUTOBIOGRAPHIES** submitted to **Kuvempu University, Jnana Sahyadri, Shankaraghatta, Shivamogga**, for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in English** is a record of original and independent research work done by me under the supervision of **Dr.Ramaprasad B.V, Professor, Department of P G Studies and Research in English, Kuvempu University, Shivamogga**. I further declare that no part of this thesis has been submitted elsewhere for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship of this University or any other University.

Place: **Shankarghatta**

Date: 29.05 2023

  
**AISHWARYA J S.**

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**AISHWARYA J S**



*Dedicated to*

**TO MY FATHER AND MOTHER**



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# CHAPTER – I

## INTRODUCTION

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Discourse is a term from Latin that means “conversation”. Recently it means different things to different areas of one's life. But while studying linguistics it becomes important to study it in applied linguistics. Linguistics is divided into two groups wherein one group deals with speech and the other one with texts and critical linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis is a part of this discourse.

This study proposes a Critical Discourse Analysis of a selection of English Dalit autobiographies. “*The Prisons We Broke*” by Baby Kamble (2008), ‘*My Father Baliah*’ by Y B Satyanarayan (2011), “*Interrogating My Chandal Jeevan*” by Manoranjan Byapari (2017), and “*Samboli*” by Lakshman (2018). These are the Dalit autobiographies chosen for this purpose.

Critical linguistics was formulated by linguists and educationalists in the 1970s. Initially, it was only concerned with literary theory but later on, its role in uncovering hidden ideological and cultural meanings gained significance.

The study focuses on how Dalit identities are constructed through discourse and how it is portrayed in these Dalit autobiographies. The thesis also focuses on the ‘intentional’ and ‘contextual’ meanings of utterances that are present in these Dalit autobiographies to understand the culture and construction of ‘Dalit identity’.

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The thesis tries to examine new strategies and modes of resistance that are created by Dalits against linguistic practices by using critical discourse analysis in these four Dalit autobiographies. It also studies whether autobiographies constitute a form of resistance to the dominant linguistic practices and tries to gain access to various linguistic strategies for resisting the popular discursive practices that exist in the texts.

### **Concept of Dalit Autobiography:**

The word autobiography was termed by Robert Southey in 1809 which means ‘to react to one’s own life’. An individual can write their autobiography only when they become aware of their ‘self’. Autobiographies formed a literary genre at the end of the eighteenth century.

Dalit writers used Dalit autobiography as a mode of communicating or exposing their history. Ramesh Kumar stresses that Dalit literature has slowly become ‘an expression of caste instead of individuals. It challenges the traditional literary aesthetics, ideologies, and mainstream literature ‘which does not capture the reality of the oppressed’ (Ramesh 28). In Dalit autobiographies, one has to understand that it is a ‘collective consciousness’ of a community that gets recorded in this writing.

Nayar writes ‘the Dalits face several oppressive social forces in society. Writing of autobiography by the Dalit is a form of resistance against various forms of oppression. Dalit autobiographical narratives are corporeal- isolation –isolation a making real through the body of social suffering’ (Nayar 2). This shows that autobiographies were the main part of the resistance. Resistance against the social system constantly restricted Dalits from writing.

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Dalit autobiographies play a key role in the construction of Dalit identity and cultural historiography. But the sad part of current India is that they are just viewed as outbursts of anger by the Dalit writers. It should not be limited to just that because Dalit autobiographies are more than that. The Dalit autobiographies focus on a Dalit struggle for identity. There is an emphasis on language, caste, and culture.

The autobiography then focuses on a period covering the writer's childhood to the current age. This helps in understanding the experiences and events that occurred in their life that meant a lot to them. Their experiences as Dalits and untouchables cover major part of their autobiography and they focus on how they defied a well-established social structure and attempted to reconstruct, rediscover themselves through writing.

Dalit literature has received considerable attention, particularly as a story of oppression, pain, and general exploitation of the Dalit community. The majority of novels, short stories, and autobiographies tell the same story, but not a single work has been produced in which a Dalit autobiography was viewed as a challenge or a revolt against popular writing culture. It is critical to read between the lines and comprehend Dalit literature.

Autobiographies, in particular, are not and should not be limited to tales of sorrow; rather, they should be tales of courage and emancipation. Dalit writers and storytellers have described their works in their mother tongue or native language, which have been interpreted into the English language.

Dalit autobiographies employ language that discusses how tasks are completed and their significance and importance in the field. Generally, the language used by Dalit writers in their autobiographies was considered too coarse and vulgar, as

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opposed to popular refined writers, who polished and wrote their studies rather than writing them as they felt and in the spoken language.

Many of the Autobiographies have been written or are being written in Kannada, Marathi, or Telugu, and these languages all have their distinct dialects and ways of speaking from community to community, especially when these works contain such delicate data about rituals and practices, the translation into English results in the loss of certain important aspects of the work, namely the true native language, its meaning, and discursive practice.

To comprehend Dalit and Dalit writing, one must first examine and analyze how this genre developed. Debgani Ganguli refers to the study of caste and untouchability in the past and present as academic research and attributes them to myths, legends, and ancient texts as Dalit mythographies.

In the 1950s, Dalit autobiographies gained popularity in Maharashtra. Ambedkar was a pivotal figure in Maharashtra's Dalit movement. Their writing reflected their awareness of their Dalit experience and its distinctive content and style of speech, which were markedly different from those of the mainstream.

The autobiographies were not just self-reflective, but they were also critical of their Dalit identity. Their perspective is such that it is a perpetual paradox of searching for and creating one's identity, followed by bringing about the change that would destroy the identity. These writers are not only forerunners of Dalit literature; they are also victims of Dalit society's inherent evils, such as Dalit subjugation in the hierarchy. It has always remained a mode of creating one's identity and consciousness in the Dalit community.

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In the past even though the literary representation of the Dalits were made by the non-Dalit there were many prejudice and wrong representation that was created in the narratives in post-independence and colonial India.

Indian Dalit scholars understood these problems and analyzed how Indian culture and language consist of different sensibilities, and through studying these the scholars attempted to understand the evaluate the various literary values that are written by the Dalit writers of other states as well.

Indian society comes from a hierarchical civilization that never acknowledged or focused on the problems of ‘untouchable’ communities who were at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. Even when the caste Hindus started to portray Dalits in their stories in the twentieth century they portrayed their lives as either being led by ‘zeal for social reform’ or ‘sentimental compassion’ but rarely did any writer treat a Dalit or untouchable character realistically. Realistically, in a sense where he has hope he despairs like any ordinary character.

The Dharma Shastras imposed a set of political, socio-economic, and religious rules and regulations that restricted the lower castes and made them dependent on the castes that were higher than them. They were assigned a position that was filled with humiliation their existence and survival were referred to as either ‘polluting’ or defiling. These issues were not explained or accounted for by the upper-caste Hindu writers.

Low-caste Hindus were kept away from formal education but after post-independence, some educated Dalits got to protest the popular literature that was well established. Modern education launched a literary movement in 1972 under the banner of Dalit panthers. This was created to create a counterculture and to provide a

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separate identity for Dalits. The panthers helped in the reconstruction of the Dalit identity and Dalit literature.

The Dalit poets, activists, and writers built and promoted 'Dalit literature'. The term 'Dalit' is derived from the Sanskrit word which means crushed. It was said that the 'dal' was borrowed from the Hebrew 'dal' which referred to weakness or a lowly position in society.

The term Dalit is being used in place of 'untouchable', 'Shudra', 'ati-Shudra', or 'outcastes' because according to them these terms were coined by the upper caste Hindus so that the identity of these communities felt abusive and derogative as possible. This is the main reason why people belonging to this category prefer to call themselves Dalit.

Dalit writers and scholars produced many short stories, poems, novels, dramas, and autobiographies that represented themes of untouchability, caste oppression, and poverty denounced the caste system, and made aggressive attacks on the Hindu caste system.

Dalit literature is a very different genre of literature that was created by Dalits, even though they were denied education. They revolted against the Hindu institution by using education as their weapon which had initially caused their subordination to the Varna order. The principal ideology of Dalit literature is to bring total revolution to society.

The Dalit has strongly criticized caste Hindu writers as they feel until and unless a person is born as a Dalit and lived a Dalit life he cannot write about their experience. Even though progressive caste Hindu writers like Mulk Raj Anand, and

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Premchand write about the Dalits, their works are not acceptable. They lacked the sensitivity and the experience of a Dalit.

Dalit autobiographies form a large portion of Dalit literature one can see that they are in form of confessions, the writers talk about their bitter experiences that invoke a deep sense of agony that they had buried in their hearts for a long time. One has to understand that Dalit literature is not against any one particular group rather it is against the system of oppression. Dalit literature creates a counterculture against the established social system.

The emergence of Dalit autobiography gives a new aspect to the study of autobiographies. Autobiographies are a social activity for the Dalit community, they believed that writing an autobiography would help them to achieve a sense of identity and this would, in turn, help them to mobilize resistance against different forms of oppression.

Dalit autobiographies were simple tales of people who belonged to the Dalit community. This genre was a vehicle to express and recall one's past to comprehend their life as a Dalit. The Dalit writers have depicted the real image of Dalit reality; it forms the fundamental expressions of the truth of human life. They derive their strength from Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's struggle for equality and rights.

The Dalit writers believed that the true picture of a Dalit's pain and anguish can only be captured by a Dalit. And these aspects can be well captured in the selected autobiographies. Unlike fiction writings, autobiographies have got more prominence among Dalit writers and critics.

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The Dalit autobiographies consist of ‘confessional characteristics’ that invoke the bitter experiences that the writers had gone through in their lives. They narrate their personal pain through a realization that even other people in their community have suffered similarly. This realization is unique to Dalit autobiographies as these were not present in caste Hindu autobiographies.

These autobiographies of Dalit individuals would be considered representative of the whole community. These narratives gave detailed information about their customs, beliefs, and everyday life including the social practices that segregated them from the other group of society. These autobiographies document the memories of suffering, violence, deprivation, and resistance that were posed to them.

One of the most common understandings of autobiography is that there is a trend of self-glorification but when one talks about Dalit autobiographies the Dalit writers write mostly about their identity being crushed, and their denied chances of living a normal dignified life. The Dalit writers do not isolate themselves from their community, family, or society. The testimonies in this Dalit autobiographies talk about oppression, culture, language, and other historical and liberating movements led by the Dalits.

Aston N M’s work on the literature of marginality: Dalit literature and African American literature investigates the differences and similarities that exist between these two marginalized groups.

Rajkumar, Sagar Shivaji, and Sonkamble Uttam in their works on Dalit literature, caste, discrimination, and memories talk about how significant writing is in determining one's identity and an image of ‘self’ in a society that is built on oppressive cultural and social conditions.



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Dr. Rajesh Kumar talks about how Dalit writings are a form of ‘resistance’ literature and more of ‘narratives of pain’ and this made autobiography a genre through which a Dalit can freely enter the literary space. Whereas Dr. Sanjiv Kumar in his article on ‘Dalit aesthetics in Dalit autobiographies’, focuses on resistance and assertion. He speaks about how ‘writing is a liberating process’ through which the Dalit writers vented their silenced voices.

Limbale states that –‘by Dalit literature, I mean writing about Dalits by Dalit writers with a Dalit consciousness. The form of Dalit literature is inherent in its Dalitness, and its purpose is obvious: to inform Dalit society of its slavery and narrate its pain and suffering to upper-caste Hindus’ (Limbale 19).

R.P Singh talks about certain questions posed in Dalit autobiographies in concern with Dalit consciousness such as the portrayal of humiliation due to untouchability, expression, and resistance against traditional Hindu culture, rejection of caste system, social system, support and the quest of self-identity, casteless society (Singh 15-16).

Dr. Tejaswini in her articles talks about how in Dalit autobiographies self-recognition becomes the main motto. Her article on ‘Dalit autobiography: an evolution of individual self’ discusses and focuses on how Dalit autobiographies have evolved with time.

Dr. Ramesh Landage’s research titled ‘a cultural study of Dalit autobiographies in India’ focuses on all cultural aspects that make them different than other autobiographies.

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‘Dalits were almost always portrayed as an object, submissive and pitifully resigned to the malice of caste and destiny. This lacuna has been sought to be rectified in writings by Dalits themselves. They have challenged the hegemonic conventions and the value system of the upper caste discourse and in the process re-examined the authoritarian and unequal caste hierarchies in the society.’ (Chaudhary 30)

The autobiographies that are selected for this research are published during 2008-2018 and not before that. The new autobiographical narratives do not just speak about discrimination and oppression but they also speak about achievements, resistance, and empowerment.

In the previous autobiographies, the fight against caste was always hostile and felt impossible. They lacked supporting bodies like the ‘Dalit panthers’ that were founded only in 1972. So the autobiographies return before that time frame show a narrative wherein the person is trying to fight the caste system but fails eventually.

But the new autobiographies fight against this vicious system and win the battle. This is a resistance of awareness and supporting bodies like the International Dalit Solidarity Network (2000) and National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR, 2005) these helped in awareness against the caste and inequalities that exist in the nation but most importantly in the pre-independent India, the level of educated Dalits was comparatively low so most of the autobiographies were written in regional language. But now we find most of the autobiographies translated in English or directly written in English this shows us the changed status of a Dalit.

The English translations of novels or autobiographies dilute the work's impact. The pain and sadness expressed in the work, that is the original work, would not be visible in the English translation but would be conveyed through a hidden tone that

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would communicate the overall story but would fall short of describing the emotions and sentimentality present earlier.

The Dalit autobiographies are written in an accessible, vivid dramatic narrative style that is influenced by oral storytelling and Dalit consciousness. There is an ongoing resistance directed against the social system, which ignores the marginalized voice.

These autobiographies depict various facets of the world of the untouchable. It encompasses various societal events, interpersonal relationships, and the various struggles of an untouchable society against oppressive caste hierarchy and feudal system-based socio-cultural discrimination.

The critical study of language entails an examination of the relationship between language, power, and ideologies. The autobiographies chosen for the study provide a comprehensive picture of power and language relations. The languages used in the autobiographies demonstrate how Dalit identities are constructed and how Dalits resist discursive language practices. They have a universal appeal and speak to a variety of cultural and political issues on both the international level.

The authors have taken on the issues of identity, social class gap and caste conflict, growing economic inequality, ideological injustice, gender bias, and psychological trauma.

Analyzing the texts in their contexts concerning the acting and reacting dramatic personas can assist the researcher in configuring the criteria of Critical Discourse Analysis.

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**Selected Texts**

***The Prisons We Broke* by Baby Kamble ( Jina Amucha, 1986 in Marathi)**

**Translated by Maya Pandit in 2008**

*'The Prisons We Broke'* was one of the first autobiographies written in Marathi. Even after three decades, it retains great significance because it discusses not only migration but also changes and transformations in the hierarchies. One must understand that, despite the existence of numerous records of caste politics, and regardless of how much one reads about untouchability, one cannot fully comprehend the plight of the people connected to Baby Kamble's community.

It is an example of self-writing; it was shocking to middle-class readers because it was in this autobiography that oppression and cruel humiliation were revealed. This type of reality was largely ignored for a long period, but Kamble used simple language and spoke plainly about instances of anger and grief. Kamble's language and narrative are viewed as a sort of confession, not just a peak, but a leap into the world of an untouchable person's agony.

She writes not only about her family but also about her community, she broadens this narrative to include the entire community, its language, beliefs, and practices. She derives a sense of pride and honor from the community. She feels proud to be born as a Mahar and tries to create a more extensive view into the Dalit movement and the role Ambedkar had in reforming the mindsets of their community.

Reading a Dalit autobiography was once a source of great anxiety and interest. Anxiety, as the violence associated with the caste system, is evident throughout this

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autobiography. It's fascinating because it delves into a new realm of experience. This autobiography appears to be a compilation of several novels.

***My Father Baliah- Y.B Satyanarayana (2011)***

Dr. Satyanarayana's autobiography is a tribute to his father Yelukati Baliah and his forefathers; it chronicles the Dalit Madiga community's journey toward a better world. The entire autobiography chronicles the journey from adversity to a better world, as well as the changes that have occurred over the last two to three generations. Not only does the autobiography represent his family, but also the lived experience of both the Madiga neighborhood through various situations and periods of social history.

The inhuman practice of untouchability is exposed through the language in this autobiography. It demonstrates how language is embedded or propagated internally by members of the same society. However, it also demonstrates the kindness demonstrated by those teachers and peers from other communities.

We see in this autobiography how derogatory suffixes and names were used to name the members of an untouchable community. It was a strategy designed to convince the lower castes to accept and retain their low status within the Indian caste system as well as identify them as someone belonging to a lower caste. There are numerous instances where social violence is denoted by language such as,

*"I am your slave; I lay my hands on your feet."*

The language appellations, salutations, and greetings, or more precisely, the conventional solutions imposed on the invincible community to address the upper

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castes, represented their position/status in society. This was a strategy for establishing social distances and distinctions, as well as segregation within the society.

The Autobiography begins with *vamsha vriksha*; unlike many Dalit autobiographies, it is quite clear that none of the Dalit writers attempted to record their part of history, as it would be far more painful to relive all the harassment and oppression; however, one should recognize that the community did belong to a community that was excluded from education; thus, they were unable to commemorate their part of history, their families, and ancestors.

We see this autobiography as a form of linear practice that is used to define themselves and their community. Similar to how royal family lines and trees are drawn, we see an educated Dalit drawing his family tree to include *vamsha vriksha*, as described in the Puranas. By adopting this upper-privileged section narrative strategy, Y.B. Satyanarayan not only challenges and revolts the mainstream literature but also establishes its lineage.

The entire autobiography uses language to form a narrative without embarrassment or awkwardness. There is a history of the last fifty years discussing the embarrassment, harassment, and humiliation they endured as slaves. Autobiographies attempt to paint a picture of the Dalit's actual lives and the indignities they endured. They intend to make the reader confront the heinous truths of one's past and the catalyst for change in their life.

From superstitions to existential questions, these autobiographies discuss how the great sea of ignorance the society is drowning in. Over many generations, superstition was one of the reasons that the lower castes were controlled.

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Dalit writers decided to write their autobiographies after reading inaccurate stories and representations about various characters associated with lower castes or the Shudra community. They realized that the narratives about various gods and goddesses are quite different from what has been projected for a long time in mainstream stories and local folklore, which felt unjust. The upper castes control the narratives; they suppressed and portrayed the lower caste women and men as they pleased. As we can see, this is a form of rebellion and resistance to mainstream literature. They seized the narrative reins and wrote their own story in their own words.

***Interrogating My Chandal Life- Manoranjan Byapari (Itribrite Chandal Jeeban, 2012 in Bengali) translated to English by Sipra Mukherjee in 2017.***

In Manoranjan Byapari's '*Interrogating my Chandal Life.*' we see that he writes about his community and its names, the names of people and their houses, and how these names gradually became an identity. It speaks about the history of an invisible community or about the fact that the writer is not unfamiliar with him because the reader has seen him in a hundred ways. By saying this, the author provides a list of individuals such as a boy in a tea stall, a laborer, or an uncombed boy with open sores on his feet and arms crying.

The autobiography deals with the partition of East and West Bengal, the Dandakaranya rehabilitation project, and the ensuing food riots. Throughout his life experiences, he discusses various occupations he pursued; he talks about being mistreated due to his caste and specifically deliberates how important it is to be a member of a particular caste to obtain employment. By concealing his caste and being caught lying, he transforms and eventually joins the Naxal movement.

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He receives an education in prison, which he previously did not have. He learns to write and read, and upon his release from prison, begins pulling rickshaws. On one such occasion, he meets Mahashwetha Devi, who encourages him to write about his life. This autobiography becomes significant because it is scholarly research; it contains the previously unknown half of the story.

Chandal makes explicit reference to an untouchable Dalit caste, whereas Manoranjan Byapari is seen to be both caste and class marginalized. In recent years, Dalit autobiographies and narratives have become more integrated into mainstream history, as issues of poverty, hunger, and violence are universal concepts and experiences. Postmodern literature demonstrated distinctions between classes, castes, gender, and ethnicities as a result of the 1971 'Mukti yuddha', which not only demonographed the rural-urban divide in Bengal but also attracted the Dalits to the citadel.

Manoranjan Byapari tells the story of a very hungry boy who was drawn to the Naxal movement for reasons other than survival. Through his narration and conversations from the autobiography, Manoranjan Byapari attempts to establish their identity.

***Samboli! Beware* – Lakshman (*Samboli! Yecharike*, 2003 in Kannada) translated to English by Susheela Punitha in 2018.**

*Samboli* is an unverifiable autobiography written in the language of Lakshman's community. The experiences and shared memories of his youth reveal a great deal about Lakshman's living and social circumstances. *Samboli* serves as an allegory for a man's life and his struggle to maintain his beliefs. By writing an



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untouched narrative, Lakshman attempts to rescue his and his community's self-worth.

This work is an excellent addition to Dalit literature, which has developed a self-writing genre, but the most notable aspect of Lakshman's autobiography is the dialect and language of his community, which add an extraordinary depth to his work.

In his autobiography, he describes his childhood as enjoyable and painful, discriminatory and accommodating in equal measure. The narrative sheds light on a variety of humiliating and isolating physical and psychological experiences faced by Dalit boys growing up on the margins of Indian society. It is distinct from other Dalit autobiographies in that it is set in a city rather than a remote village, much like Siddalingiah's autobiography 'A Word with You, World'.

In Lakshman's words, the city's human face remains inhumane once one learns about his caste. The caste identity continues to play a significant role in identity formation. When a Dalit is questioned but also enquired about his caste, he is made to feel ashamed and unworthy, but discrimination exists in all fields regardless of how an individual feels. Lakshman starts to lose his job as a result of one of these caste politics.

Lakshman had lost his position solely for defying the caste norm by eating lunch with guests at a wedding reception. To Lakshman, it was obvious that the upper caste continued to deny Dalits access to their homes, wells, hotels, and temples, and this issue was much larger than what had happened to him.

*Samboli* announces a Dalit's public entrance and cautions society to make way for them so that no one comes into contact with them and pollution is avoided. This

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was a long-standing, openly discriminatory, and humiliating practice in the past. However, discrimination is now almost imperceptible but not absent. It is implied in the conversations and narratives that Ambedkar was aware of the prevalence of caste prejudices in various institutions controlled by the upper castes.

He believed that nationalizing all public and property resources would enable a secular state and facilitate equitable distribution of housing and other resources, as evidenced by the fact that various private organizations continue to be prejudiced against a caste to this day.

Dalit autobiographies substantiate Ambedkar's analysis of the caste system, and *Samboli* does the same thing; it captures the caste system in all its ugliness. It demonstrates how the caste system works in the background of daily life through language and narrative.

We primarily compare the novels and autobiographies of several Dalit authors to works by mainstream authors. As can be seen, Dalit writers narrate their childhoods in great detail. Through these works of writing, one can live and relive their villages, towns, castes, and memories.

Autobiography contains fundamental elements such as rage, poverty, and humiliation; and also, a new and refreshing flavor. Fear is conspicuously absent when discussing caste dynamics. However, a voice, a story devoid of caste humiliation and poverty would be a fabrication. We see Dalit writers divert their attention away from these elements and toward something more amusing and creative. They have used language to express their resistance.

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Dalit writers' writing style distinguishes them from other writers; the narrators in this autobiography employ irony and they invented new self-images. Within Indian society, groups that have been humiliated and neglected had to develop self-confidence to confront the society's elites. These are all interconnected in terms of communication and cultural politics. These autobiographies attempt to create a new image of Dalit personality from this.

Dalit autobiographies present a different view of life and politics from a Dalit perspective. The writing transforms rage into sarcasm, the mischief which also captures the subtleties of life. The narration of these autobiographies has been used to express them in mainstream literature. They use language to express the changes that occurred in culture and society.

The writers and their autobiographies were chosen for their ability to transform literary writing into a subaltern mode of protest, self-assertion, and identity formation. They are establishing and affirming the existence of a distinct Dalit consciousness and sensibility. The thesis makes use of translated autobiographies because they have enabled regional autobiographies to transcend linguistic and regional boundaries and reach a global audience.

### **Introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical Discourse Analysis is a type of discourse that critically analyses the texts to examine hidden political and social power abuse behind the texts. It deals with the social processes and orders that are usually ideological. It deals with power relations between society and an individual. And they study how individual behaviors are a result of the discourses manifested in society.

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An autobiography is a genre that focuses on the life of individuals, they write about their culture, traditions, and their society. Dalit autobiographies inherently consist of caste discourses, hierarchy, and language that vary from one community to another.

Critical Discourse Analysis is described in three levels by Fairclough. They are description, interpretation, and explanation (Fairclough 26).

Description deals with the formal properties of the text which is autobiography. In interpretation, the texts related to social practice, text as a process of interpretation and production in the sense of how culture, discourse, and language in the autobiography are produced and interpreted through language.

In the explanation stage the relationship between social contexts, interaction and determines the production, interpretation, social effects, and how these popular discourses that are written and interpreted resist this notion by using language in autobiographies.

Critical Discourse Analysis is a collection of linguistic tools. It is traditionally used to analyze language in speeches, news, and conversations. This enables us to bring to light ideas, values, and opinions contained in texts that may not be immediately apparent upon first reading or hearing.

Often, these things are buried in texts as their authors attempt to conceal or evade them, as is the case with political rhetoric, where politicians use language to persuade. However, this process of persuasion and influence through language is not unique to such official discourse and is found in everyday conversation, news, and

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other media texts. This is why studying the language in autobiographies becomes important.

There are no neutral ways to model the world through language, as all of the words we use are motivated and have specific meanings and values attached to them. However, the untrained ear or eye will be unable to discern precisely how this works. Even though it is obvious that everyone is influenced to think in a certain way. In these instances, one may be fully cognizant of what communicators or text producers do but not their methods.

Critical Discourse Analysis can elicit information about how language is used to subtly express ideas and values. And by doing so, one can frequently gain a better understanding of the message that is being conveyed in autobiographies. As critical discourse analysis is a socio-political approach to analyzing various discourses; it seeks to convey the veiled or hidden conceptualizations that exist in the form of writing such as novels and autobiographies.

According to Van Dijk, Critical Discourse Analysis examines how social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, recreated, and resisted in social and political contexts through text and talk. Critical Discourse Analysis evolved during the 1970s as a result of significant advances in sociolinguistics, behavioral science, and social sciences. It is a type of discourse that is analytical and focuses on social abuse of authority, dominance, and inequality as they are enacted, reproduced, and resisted in social and political contexts through text and talk.

Dalit autobiographies are an example of one such genre of literature that speaks of social power abuse, dominance, and inequality, and by using Critical

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Discourse Analysis, one can analyze and understand how these aspects are enacted, recreated, and resisted.

Practitioners of critical discourse analysis seek to comprehend, investigate, and ultimately resist social inequality. It is descriptive, explanatory, and emancipator, as well as raising people's awareness of how language is used and abused. This is why the researcher has used this method to analyze Dalit autobiographies.

Critical Discourse Analysis is defined as a subfield of critical linguistics concerned with the relationship between public dialogue events and socio-political, cultural, and historical factors contained within a text or speech. It examines social practices in terms of the effects on issues such as status, solidarity, social good distribution, and power (Gee 33).

Hodge and Kress (1988) defined Critical Discourse Analysis as a multidisciplinary approach that is primarily concerned with the power, politics, and viewpoints that exist within a society that produces and understands discourse. It becomes clear that the primary focus is on how language works, as discourse is never politically independent.

Critical Discourse Analysis is defined by Van Dijk (1988) as ‘...the study of analyzing written texts to ascertain the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias.’

Fairclough (1993) defines Critical Discourse Analysis as "Research that aims to systematically examine the opaque(transparent)relationships of causality and tenacity between discursive practices, events, and texts and wider societal structures,

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relations, and processes to better understand how such practices emerge from and are ideologically shaped by power relations and struggles overpower."

Critical Discourse Analysis aims to demonstrate how seemingly neutral, purely informative discourses such as newspaper reporting, government publications, and social science reports can convey ideological attitudes just as effectively as more explicitly editorial or propagandistic discourses. (Weiss 300).

This shows us that no matter what, the ideological attitude of the writer influences the end product even though he tries to remain neutral regardless of the fact whether it's a newspaper report or a propagandistic discourse.

This is why while conducting Critical Discourse Analysis, analysts must adopt a position — 'an explicit socio-political stance: they articulate their point of view, perspectives, principles, and objectives, both within their discipline and throughout society' (Van Dijk:1993:252). And this is accomplished through the use of language that expresses support for the oppressed or non-dominant in the analysis, with the primary goal of 'ultimately resisting social inequality' (Van Dijk a:1).

According to Van Dijk, studying resistance is 'critical for our understanding of current power and dominance relationships in society' (Van Dijk 250). Here the narratives of the autobiographies are analyzed. The narratives in the dalit autobiographies describe the life histories of the writers they act as powerful tools for understanding the viewpoint behind the written and verbal texts.

In the Dalit autobiography, the writer is explaining various incidents that are a reproduction of their memories. These memories are suited by their sensibility, the autobiographies are written in a way the writer wants his or her reader to read. Every

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piece of information written or produced in the autobiography is well thought out and placed to suit the agenda. One has to identify where the dominant power exists and identify their source in the working autobiographies and then trace how these are resisting those dominant power through the language. Teun Van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, and Ruth Wodak pioneered Critical Discourse Analysis research by focusing on language, power struggles, and the maintenance of power structures (Wodak 2). While their methods may differ, the doctrines share a common goal. Their work focused on social issues and demonstrates how language is used to create victims of power abuse.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

1. To find out whether the selected texts show an awareness of how languages operate in the exploitative power structures.
2. To find out whether the selected texts show instances of ‘resistance’ to such linguistic practices.
3. To find out if the selected texts in their ‘form’ in themselves practice resistant linguistic practices.

This study tries to accomplish these goals through the use of tools developed through Critical Discourse Analysis.

### **Methodology of Research**

The proposed study attempts to conduct qualitative analysis through the use of content analysis strategies. Critical Discourse Analysis is used in analyzing Dalit autobiographies. The research has been conducted on the bases of methods and tools



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proposed by critical discourse analysts like Van Dijk, Fairclough, Wodok, and Halliday. In this research the analysis is based on Fairclough's three dimensions of Critical Discourse Analysis:

Description

Interpretation

Explanation.

In the Description level of analysis, the analysis lies in dealing with identifying and labeling certain features of language and formal properties like sentence structure, the title of the text, vocabulary, identities, and names. The interpretation of the text is concerned with the process of writing or producing the text. The significance of the title to the text especially focuses on text and interaction. This part also questions about who are the readers, protagonists, and significant characters, changing names and names given by their community and family.

The last part of the analysis is called as an explanation or social analysis. This consists of various social practices, customs, and anxieties that exist in the text. It focuses on how language and social practices manifest discourse. It also studies how a language is used in social contexts. Fairclough (Van Heeuwen 135) states that 'Discourse is a place where relations of power are exercised and enacted'. Language and narratives shape social practices that in exchange shape various discourse practices and the evidence of this impact can be found in autobiographies.

Critical discourse analysis provides analysts with the required tools to explain the structures of social and political issues that exist within discourse. This can expound upon the various orders of language within discourse 'by deconstructing the

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methods used to maintain hegemony by elite groups via their use and influence of media to further their ideological dominance over individual lives within societies' (Van Dijk 353).

This is a discourse that presents itself as a reflection of the social order as perceived by individuals within a society. But this also shapes the social order of individual interactions within a society. When the writer cites the words or thoughts of another, it is obvious that the words or thoughts are in a way important to the communicative purposes of the speaker reporting those words or thoughts. Fairclough (Van Heeuwen 135) states that 'Discourse is a place where relations of power are exercised and enacted'

One of the most basic methods of evaluative stance to intertextual material is one of understanding the implied relevance in the text i.e Dalit autobiography. 'There are hence typical and expected patterns of intertextuality such as a high instance of quotations, allusions, references, and comments' (Bazerman 95).

The conventions might fluctuate according to the community and discipline of individuals interacting. The intertextual analysis not only displays information about the writer but also about the intended audience. The intended audience in turn can draw upon taken-for-granted assumptions, and make essential inferences based on their background knowledge, interests, and values.

It is important to visualize the circumstance when the Dalit autobiography was produced, and the interests that the Dalit writers had in producing or writing it. The Dalit autobiographies consist of events that consist of operative mechanisms that consist of generative powers that operate behind the social events. These contexts of

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the socio-cultural practices can reveal hidden meanings attached to the language, and narratives in the Dalit autobiography.

This research adopts a contextualized perspective on Dalit autobiographies and goes beyond the surface structural description of language patterns of Dalit autobiographies and examines the interpersonal textual narratives. A detailed linguistic analysis is employed to identify the sociocultural factors that could have influenced and mediated the Dalit writers in writing the autobiographies that present themselves as one of the strategies of revolt. The select Dalit autobiographies consist of various mentions of hegemonic power structure hence these autobiographies are studied as discourse.

Critical discourse analysis also studies various ‘articulations’ this is one of the roles of language that is used in building up social practices. Fairclough considered going back into the past to understand how these social practices propagated by language made people accept and learn from the environment, culture, and the society they live in.

### **Significance of the Study:**

The autobiographies chosen for the study offer a broad perspective on power and language relationships. This study aims to capture how the Dalit writers are using different rhetorical strategies to achieve particular social purposes, and how the writers employed different linguistic devices to place themselves with the events that occurred throughout the Dalit autobiographies.

Critical discourse analysis focuses on emphasizing the social situation of writing or producing a text. The analysis focuses on what the texts mean and how

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these meanings are constructed. Bazerman and prior's work focused on what the texts talk about and how they influence the readers and how the texts came into being (2004:a:6) here a text is an autobiography by using critical discourse analysis one can analyze what the Dalit autobiography came into being, its ideology and hidden meanings, assumptions and how they influence the readers.

The languages used in the autobiographies demonstrate how Dalit identities are constructed and how Dalits resist language's discursive practices in their autobiographies. They have a universal appeal that speaks to a variety of cultural and sociopolitical issues on both the global level.

The authors have addressed issues of identity, and social class disparity but also caste discord, growing economic inequality, ideological injustice, gender bias, and psychological trauma, among others. Analyzing the texts in their contexts and the Acting and Responding dramatic personas may assist the researcher in configuring the Critical Discourse Analysis parameters.

### **Chapterization:**

This thesis is divided into seven chapters:

*Chapter one* deals with the purpose of the study, a brief introduction to Dalit autobiography and selected texts-*My Father Baliah, Samboli Beware, Interrogating My Chandal Life, The Prisons We Broke*, introduction to critical discourse analysis, objectives of the study, methodology, significance of the study, the limitation of the study, and the chapterization of the study.

*Chapter two* deals with a review of literature on Dalit autobiographies, critical discourse analysis, application of critical discourse analysis in other fields and

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literature and language, definitions and understanding of the term Critical Discourse Analysis, different aspects of CDA, language, power, and ideology in literary discourse, production of discourse, critical perspectives on power and discourse.

**Chapter three** deals with the introduction and critical discourse analysis of the Dalit autobiography '*The Prisons We Broke*' (2008) by Baby Kamble in relation to caste, gender, class and identity. translated by Maya Pandit.

**Chapter four** deals with the introduction and critical discourse analysis of the Dalit autobiography focusing on naming, calling and identity in '*My Father Baliah*' (2011) by Y.B Satyanarayana.

**Chapter five** deals with the introduction and critical discourse analysis of the Dalit autobiography focusing on identity and representation in '*Interrogating My Chandal Life*' (2017) by Manoranjan Byapari translated by Sipra Mukherjee.

**Chapter six** includes an introduction and critical discourse analysis of the Dalit autobiography -, '*Samboli*' focusing on the rituals and practices (2018) by Lakshman translated by Susheela Punitha.

An attempt is made to subject all the autobiographies to the process of Critical Discourse Analysis respectively.

**Chapter seven** includes the conclusions and findings that the researcher reached after applying Critical Discourse Analysis to select four Dalit autobiographies followed by works cited.

As previously stated, any attempt to study language critically entails an examination of the relationship between language, power, and ideologies. The critical

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discourse analysis of a Dalit autobiography negotiates (rather than imposes) power through consent. They obtain consent by reproducing 'rational and reasonable viewpoints' that are already embedded in the subjects' consciousness through language. Ideologies were also materially spread through the use of addresses to construct concrete individuals as intellectual subjects. It has been concluded that the symbolic practices of language are entangled in the transmission of ideologies that contribute to the maintenance of existing power.

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## CHAPTER – II

# REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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This chapter deals with a review of literature relevant to the study and associated concepts such as Dalit autobiographies, Dalit consciousness, Critical Discourse Analysis, hegemonic ideologies, identity, socio-linguistics, Dalit literature, language and power relations in application of Critical Discourse Analysis, application of Critical Discourse Analysis to non-literature fields such as education, journalism, etc., micro and macro aspects of Critical discourse analysis, language, ideology, and power. This chapter appears to form a bridge between studies on Critical Discourse Analysis and Dalit autobiographies.

### **Dalit Autobiographies**

The enormous focus on Dalit literature put light on stories of oppression, pain, and overall exploitation of the Dalit community. Most of the novels, stories, and autobiographies speak the same stories but not even a single work has been conducted where a Dalit autobiography was considered as a challenge or a revolt against the popular culture of writing. It becomes important to read between the lines and understand Dalit literature. Especially autobiographies are not and should not be limited just to stories of sorrow rather they should be stories of strength and emancipation.

Dalit writers and storytellers have used their native language or native language to describe their stories and they have translated them into the English language. Dalit autobiographies use language to form identity and show their importance and significance in studying the relationship between the oppressors and

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the suppressed. Usually, the language used by the Dalit writer was considered too coarse and vulgar because, unlike the popular refined writers, they did not tend to polish and draft their stories instead they would write as it is what they felt and wrote in the spoken language.

Many of the autobiographies that have been written or are written in Kannada, Telugu, Marathi, and these languages have very unique dialects and ways of speaking from one community to another especially when these works are filled with so much delicate information about rituals and practices get translated it tends to lose its importance from the work i.e., the real native language its meaning is lost some extent and the discursive practice is lost in the process of translation.

The English translations of the novel or autobiography in a way decrease the effect of the work. The pain and the sadness expressed in the work i.e., original work would not be present in the English translation, but a hidden tone would be present in the work that would show the overall story, but it would not be quite able to describe the emotions and sentimentality that would be present earlier. It is seen that the method of writing is also different the Dalit method of writing is influenced by popular culture that is it is getting diluted.

Dalit autobiographies came to prominence in Maharashtra in the 1950's Ambedkar was one of the key figures in the Dalit movement in Maharashtra. The writing consisted of their awareness of the Dalit experiences they had and its distinct content and style of speech which was very much different from the mainstream.

The autobiographies were not just self-reflective but centered on their Dalit identity. Their perspective is such that it is in a constant paradox of searching and creating one's identity and then bringing about the change that would end the identity.



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‘Whenever Dalit writers use Hindu religious symbols, they use them to deconstruct giving them new meaning and purpose’ (Limbale 34)

The language uses and is a set of power structures and representational strategies that transformed literary writing into a subaltern form of protest, self-assertion, and identity formation. Asserting and affirming a distinct Dalit consciousness and sensibility. Since autobiography has been written in a different language the English translation has enabled autobiography to cross-linguistic and regional boundaries and reaches global readers.

The genealogy of the word ‘Dalit’ came into existence in the late 20th century it was a significant conceptual term and expanded its horizons to political modernity. Dalit has been derived by a Marathi word that means depressed and grounds down and since then this category of people who represented as the peasants, women, and working-class tribes were suspected to pose a challenge to the upper-class Hindu Brahmanical hegemony the words can be traced from Jyotiba Phule’s writing. National Congress was getting connected with the hegemonic notions of Hinduism Phule wrote his work on slavery in a book called “gulamgiri” he debunked most of the theories and called out the Hindu Aryan hegemonies and brought an end to the invocation of Aryan invasion theories that were popularized he talked about and traced the origin of the caste system and reinterpreted various mythological stories that were popularized and circulated in the form of songs and bhajans that prompted the strong threshold that the higher castes had the existing hegemony had used to legitimize the caste system.

Hegemonic ideologies were followed by the laws of Manu and all the Puranas and epics under British rule the privileged and the hegemonic class got a kinship, and

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the Aryan race asserted an ethnic and elite kinship between them both. With the rise of Dr. B R Ambedkar rise to give a new identity to the oppressed started to occur in society he gave new power to the word 'Dalit,' he rejected not only Phule's race theory but also declared that he had no homeland Gandhiji. Ambedkar is the founder of Dalit discourse. He re-imagined and re-invented lower-caste and untouchable's identities.

In the 1980s Dalit words started to get associated with "Bahujan" signifying that they were the majority. Gangadhar Pantawane editor of *Asmitadarsh* one of the journals exclusively devoted to Dalit literature wrote:

'To me, Dalit is not a caste. He is a man exploited by the social and economic traditions of this country. He does not believe in God, rebirth, soul, holy books teaching separatism, fate, and heaven because they have made him a slave. He does believe in humanism. Dalits are a symbol of change and revolution.' (Pantawane)

This normative modernity and these ideologies wherein inequalities generated by caste have changed the ways of oppression. The politics of caste oppression cannot be contained in the boundaries of social scientific discourse. Ambedkar in a claim to intellectual genealogy wrote how Hindus wanted the Vedas and they sent for Vyasa who was not a caste Hindu. The Hindus wanted an epic.

Autobiographies in Dalit literature attempt to place Dalit autobiography as a protest against the mainstream Hindu religion and its hegemonic hold on the nation. Dalit literature revolutionized the linguistic register of Marathi literature and Dalit literature that talk about slum and street obscenities and confronting descriptions of stomach-churning realities of lower caste existence in the outskirts of villages.

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Baburao Bagul in one of the Dalit literature conferences in Mahad talked about the established literature of our nation as Hindu literature but Dalit literature was the literature that had revolutionary power to accept science and technology and bring an overall transformation and Dalit is the name of total revolution; it is revolution incarnate (of urban dystopias and new gods) (Arjun Dangle 289).

Arjun Dangle also said that Dalit literature was one that acquaints people with the caste and untouchability in India and that Dalit was not just a caste, but it was to be joys and sorrows taken as a realization that shows us the experiences and struggles of people belonging to lowest strata of society. It grows with sociological points and is related to principles of negativity, rebellion, and loyalty to science; thus, this leads to revolution.

These narratives do not isolate the individual from his environment, family, community, and society at large. Moreover, the oppression, struggle, assertion, and quest for identity of the narrator seem associated with society. They are an expression of the reality of human life in a perspicuous language. There is a relationship between literature language and culture. Kannada Dalit's writing always portrayed the image of the pitiful state of Dalit.

The history of the Dalit literary movement is as old as the Black Panther movement that started in America. The movement started in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. There were various protests throughout India, but the Indian Dalit woman had a double disadvantage as they were discriminated against both for their caste and gender. The sexual harassment and violence the woman had to face in the Zamindari system were horrible. Woman representations in these autobiographies show strong women even though they suffered humiliation, they stood united together all their

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lives. Like the Hindu caste woman is said to consider her husband as protector and breadwinner it is not the same with the Dalit woman. She is independent.

Foucault's discourse theory views power as repressive as well as productive it is considered as negative and positive. Power is not possessed but dispersed throughout society. They are not monolithic. Power is a relation with different degrees of power relations. They are negotiated in relations and the superior is not all-powerful where there is power, there is resistance i.e., resistance is already contained in the power relations and no power relation is total domination.

Dalit writers have been expressing their experiences, thoughts, ideas, and feelings about their lives in the social system of India through their writings. Initially, they resorted to the genre of poetry and later moved to other genres of literature. Autobiography has been a popular genre of Dalit literature. It places an authenticity on the experiences of Dalits in the Indian orthodox Hindu caste system. Dalit autobiography is the most crucial tool of Dalit literature. They are narratives of the self. it transforms an experience of pain into a narrative of resistance. Through this research a bridge between Dalit literature and critical discourse analysis is built.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

The following chapter discusses how critical discourse analysis is used to illuminate the struggle that exists in both spoken and written texts. Unlike many other frameworks, Critical Discourse Analysis research focuses on vocabulary and its relationship to other forms of society but also the power abuse that exists in society.

Critical Discourse Analysis is predicated on the concept of discourse. Discourses are the broader ideas communicated by a text in Critical Discourse

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Analysis (Van Dijk:1993; Fairclough:2000; Wodak:2001) These discourses can be thought of as globe models in the Foucauldian sense (1977). Critical Discourse Analysis is a process that entails examining the word choices and grammar of texts to ascertain the fundamental discourse.

According to Fairclough, discourses such as national unity or racial or cultural superiority project certain social values and ideas, which contribute to the (re)production of social life. In other words, it is through language that one constructs the social world; more precisely, how one talks about the world affects the society we build, the knowledge we cherish and despise, and the institutions we establish. For instance, if the dominant discourse in a society is that crime is simply wrongdoing that requires retribution, then we build prisons and lock people away. Nonetheless, the majority of people who end up in prison come from poorer or more vulnerable segments of society. The punishment is different for the dominant castes when compared with the lower castes even for the same crime.

Nonetheless, researchers do not systematize Indian societies on the assumption that crime is caused by socio-cultural factors. Nor do they tend to associate crime with the incitement of global corporations in third-world countries or the actions of our governments when they wage war or restructure society to benefit the wealthy. The dominant discourse on crime dictates that we construct prisons, employ police in specific ways, implement specific crime prevention measures, and vote for political parties that are tough on crime, rather than creating societies where it is less likely to occur. Naturally, in this sense, certain discourses represent the interests of particular groups. In the case of crime, those with wealth and power will seek to conceal its connection to racial and economic factors.

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Norman Fairclough focuses on how textual features can be ideological when hegemonic strategies are devised through the use of 'common sense' (Fairclough 76). Fairclough (2001) defines 'common sense' as an idea that is made acceptable by an administrative manager by embedding it in a text most rationally and naturally possible. He draws heavily on Halliday's functional-systemic linguistics in his work on communication research and power relations (Halliday:1978, 1985).

He delves deeply into discourse's grammar, phonology, vocabulary, presuppositions, semantics, implicatures, and so on, as well as its 'hidden power' (Khan:2003; Kamila:2004). Fairclough creates a three-dimensional framework for discourse analysis in which discourse is viewed in three ways: as a language text, a discourse practice, and a socio-cultural practice. These three-dimensional approaches in his interpretation establish a connection between text and social practice and vice versa. Discourse and practice are 'interdependent networks' (Fairclough 24), which he refers to as 'discourse orders' (1981).

A society or social sphere is fundamentally predetermined, and it contains a diverse set of practices. For example, in an educational system, there are distinct discourse types for classrooms, playgrounds, and staffrooms. According to Fairclough, structuring in times changes as a result of 'changing power relationships at the level of social establishments or the society' (Fairclough 24).

This demonstrates the importance of studying social structure and power relations when analyzing discourse and language use. As with Van Dijk, Fairclough views those in positions of power as having the 'capacity to control discourse orders' that are 'ideologically unified internally or (at the societal level)' (Fairclough 25). Both Van Dijk and Fairclough also believe that power is not always unidirectional or

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complete, in other words, it is not always approved by the dominated group. Fairclough then discusses the various types of power struggles that can occur within a class or social grouping, such as those between men and women, ethnic groups, or the dominated and the dominating. This shows that while we are studying the practices or discourse that exists in an untouchable community it doesn't just mean that the higher castes wield complete power or supremacy over the untouchables through language. It points out that the untouchables are the ones who approve of the dominance of the upper community and without which either of the groups is incomplete. Such power struggles, he believes, are 'necessary and inherent in the social system (Fairclough 28), as they demonstrate language's power.

According to Fairclough, language is both a site and stake in the class struggle, and those who wield power through language must constantly engage in conflict with others to defend (or lose) their position (Fairclough 29). Many regard Fairclough's concepts and framework as a detailed approach to conducting Critical Discourse Analysis, and they are frequently used and referred to by Critical Discourse Analysis practitioners.

Teun A Van Dijk is another significant contributor to the field of Critical Discourse Analysis. He describes his methodical approach as socio-cognitive, associating ideology with a shared mental representation shared by members of a particular social group' (Kamila 37). According to Van Dijk (2004), such ideologies manifest themselves in text and conversation through generic statements shared by the group or through presupposed shared values. In his work on power abuse and enactment in political discourse in Western societies, he employs Critical Discourse

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Analysis to examine the relationship between language and social cognition (Van Dijk:1987, 1993, 1996, 2002).

As with Fairclough and Wodak, ideology 'controls' discourse (Kamila 37) and is manifested in the organization and practice of society. Van Dijk (2004) proposes a methodological approach to the study of discourse that entails the examination of discursive structures on a variety of levels, including lexical, rhetorical, and semantic. On the ideological front, discourse makes use of Positive Self-representation and Negative Other-representation.

The term 'self' refers to the language user's group, which may be racial, political, gender, or ethnic. Van Dijk identifies self-glorification and national rhetoric as pretty standard semantic micro-strategies for positive mental in argumentative discourses that emphasize one's positive actions while downplaying one's negative actions. This positively refers to the self, while simultaneously invoking the other presentation negatively. This also implies that any beneficial actions taken by them are hedged, mitigated, or even omitted. Said (1981), Karim (2000), Khan (2003), and Poole (2002) all discovered negative portrayals of Muslims in Western media outlets ranging from films, documentaries, books, newspapers, and magazines.

The approach outlined above is also applicable to the study of war and political reporting. Amer's (2009) work is an analysis of Thomas Friedman's writings for The New York Times. Amer realizes that Friedman writes about the Palestinian insurgency (Intifada) using negative lexical choices, portraying them as the out-group who are 'violent, confused, and irresponsible' (Amer 26), which results in a biased and prejudiced construction of the Palestinians. Friedman portrayed Israelis as a benevolent group while doing so. Similarly, in Dalit autobiographies, the writers



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describe their community and other communities. Most importantly the ill-treatment that they experienced at the hands of higher castes forms a prejudiced construction of certain higher caste communities regardless of their current situation.

Amer denotes Friedman's strategy, which is to establish himself as an authority in the Middle East through his conversational writing style and categorical modality. Amer refers to this as 'self-legitimization,' which is an assertion of self-owned power aimed at establishing Friedman as a rational, objective, honest, and 'telling-it-like-it-is' observer in the eyes of the Americans. The audience is then led to believe that what he says are objective facts, thereby supporting Critical Discourse Analysis's contention that discourse performs ideological work.

Erjavec and Volcic's (2007) article, 'Serbian War on Terrorism,' demonstrates how the Serbian community and media repurpose Bush's discourse by drawing 'parallels between the WTC and Pentagon attacks and the former Yugoslav wars.' (Erjavec 123). Serbs do so to legitimize the violence perpetrated against Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo during the 1990s and to demonstrate that they share a common enemy with the US, which is Islam.

The Serbs, in interviews with the general population conducted by the researchers, employ polarization in their discourse by referring to all (we) Western/European/Christians as 'good' people fighting for freedom and civilization, while the 'evil' is the 'other' who is not Western/European/ Christian/Muslim. Serbs echo US rhetoric by declaring that military action is the only way to combat terrorism, even extending the definition of terrorists to 'all violent acts committed by Muslims for political purposes' (Erjavec 133).

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According to Erjavec and Volcic, the Serbs were obsessed with constructing a self-identity that is compatible with the Western group: The struggle among Slovene, Croatian, and Serb elites to define the dominant meaning of 9/11 reflects an ongoing effort to shape a distinct sense of belonging to a 'civilized, European/ Christian/ Catholic' world, and to define what it means to be a 'Slovenian,' 'Croatian,' or 'Serb,' and thus the boundaries of 'acceptable' Slovenes, Croatian-ness, and Serbian-ness. (Erjavec 135). It is critical to note here that the term 'other' does not always refer to non-whites or non-Westerners, as Van Dijk implies (2004). A negative 'other' can also be used to justify acts of violence against the West, as when Osama Bin Laden refers to Americans and President Bush as the 'other' to justify the 9/11 attacks on the United States (Garbelman).

Van Dijk (1993) also examines the 'critical of us' move in his analysis of anti-racist discourse. He discovers that politicians' anti-racism arguments are founded on humanitarian values and standards, such as emphasizing 'equality for all,' which sometimes results in the mudslinging move of accusing anti-immigrant politicians of racism. These movements and features serve primarily as a guide for examining how such movements and structures were indeed articulated in the resistance discourse by Dalit writers while going to write their Autobiography.

Holmer (2008) defines Critical Discourse Analysis as a method for examining how language is used to construct and maintain power relationships in society; the objective is to demonstrate the link between language and ideology.

Within the Critical Discourse Analysis tradition, discourse perpetuates social patterns such as domination and serves to rationalize discrimination, exploitation, dehumanization, and an ideologically motivated common sense of language. It reveals

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social patterns to raise awareness, elicit resistance, and bring about emancipation, but also to promote social action, social change, and justice.

The Critical Discourse Analysis's guiding principle is that language is a social practice. It is interdisciplinary because it demonstrates the dialectical relationship between text and other social subjects; they also highlight the relationship between language and power structures.

Linguistic structures, like power and dominance, are purposeful and organized. Their power relationships and discourse access are dynamic and historical.

The fundamental goals of Critical Discourse Analysis are to perceive language and to comprehend the various ways in which language is used as a social practice. To elucidate the precise mechanisms by which a language is used to create and maintain power relations in society.

Critical Discourse Analysis deconstructs covert ideology, which is frequently concealed in text and speech. They demonstrate the connection between language and power. Critical Discourse Analysis maintains a critical eye on social issues, and they offer possible solutions to a variety of problems. They frequently result in sociopolitical change or reform acting as a catalyst for social change. It examines any text or speech critically; it examines the discourse and its function in society. They not only illuminate the relationship between language, ideology, and power, but also enable us to observe how various forms of inequity are expressed, enacted, legitimized, and reproduced in discourse.

According to Critical Discourse Analysis principles, social and political issues were indeed reflected and constructed through discourse. Discourse is used to

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negotiate and perform power relations. Discourse reflects and perpetuates social relations in equal measure. Additionally, ideologies are generated and reflected through the use of discourse.

According to Rogers (2004:2), Critical Discourse Analysis encompasses not only a contextual description but also an explanation of why and how discourse operates. While conducting analysis, one must consider the text's framing, the concept of foregrounding, the topicalization of the text's sentences, and the agent-patient relationship in discourse.

Numerous readings of texts are constructed not exclusively through the use of words, but also through the combination of words with other modalities, such as images, films, or video images. Critical Discourse Analysis examines how identity is constructed within and through discourse. There are numerous criticisms of Critical Discourse Analysis critics have proposed numerous methods and approaches to critical discourse analysis.

Van Noppen (2004) discusses how Critical Discourse Analysis does not always take the reader's role in text consumption and interpretation into account, whereas Widdowson (1998, 2004) asserts that Critical Discourse Analysis should include dialogue with text producers and consumers.

Schegloof (1997) discusses how Critical Discourse Analysis does not provide a detailed and comprehensive analysis of texts, and Toolan (1997) argues that Critical Discourse prognosticators should be extremely crucial and demanding of their analytic tools.

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Cameron (2001) identified the Critical Discourse Analysis's weakness as its reliance on the analyst's interpretation of the texts. Language, according to Critical Discourse Analysis, is a system of contextually stimulated signs that enables humans to construct and deconstruct reality. The construction of reality is accomplished through cognitive processes that are absorbed by or absorbed by language, thereby scaffolding a dynamic discursive relation between language and social anthropology.

Pilleux (Mansilla:2005) asserts that Critical Discourse Analysis is not limited to the study of language in social relationships; it also intends to investigate comprehensively the relationship between the various linguistic features of texts/oral discourses and the reflections they generate about cultural and social structures while keeping in mind the relationships and processes to which these types of discourses belong.

Ruth Wodok (Dellings:1995) asserts that critical discourse analysis must have as its objective the study of language in natural settings and contexts of social significance. Critical Discourse Analysis's role in exposing these practices is as follows: Critical Discourse Analysis aims to demonstrate how neutral, purely informative discourses such as newspaper reporting, government publications, and social service reports can convey ideological attitudes just as effectively as a discourse that is more explicitly editorial or propagandistic (Weiss 300).

While conducting Critical Discourse Analysis, analysts should adopt an 'explicit sociopolitical stance: they articulate their point of view, perspectives, principles, and objectives, both within their discipline and throughout society' (Van Dijk 252).

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This can only be accomplished by expressing solidarity with the oppressed or subservient class in analysis while keeping the goal of 'ultimately resisting social inequality' in mind (Van Dijk, 1998).

Van Dijk and Fairclough define those in positions of authority as having the 'capacity to control discourse orders,' which are then 'ideologically harmonized internally or at the societal level' (2001:25).

According to Fulcher (2010), Discourse Analysis can be thought of as a lens through which one can view social interactions. Additionally, Fulcher (2010) asserts that a discourse is a matter of text, especially for identification purposes, as evidenced by a statement that reaffirms a viewpoint or the fact that men perceive weddings to be late. Research, unlike theory, begins with a research question. The searcher attempts to decipher the text by identifying categories, topics, ideas, points of view, and roles. Identifying commonly shared resources, that is, identifying spoken sharing patterns.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis in Journalism**

Journalism Critical Discourse Analysis researchers should be politically aligned with the anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist logic that has guided critical theory and similar research perspectives in cultural studies throughout history. The Critical Discourse Analysis owes its origins to Marxist and structuralist thinkers such as Ferdinand de Saussure. Louis Althusser's (1971) and Antonio Gramsci's (1971) political critiques provide what Carvalho (2008) refers to as "an important backdrop" for the development of discourse research, which was popularized by the Frankfurt School and the Birmingham Center for Cultural Studies. In the sprawling field of discourse analysis, Norman Fairclough, Teun Van Dijk, and Ruth Wodak are the most well-known Critical Discourse Analysis scholars today.

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Each views discourse in terms of its "connection to power and social interests" (Philo 176). However, their perspectives diverge significantly. Fairclough and Wodak's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on the "semantic and grammatical characteristics of texts,"... whereas Van Dijk promotes a binary thematic analysis technique called the ideological square (Philo:2007:178). Notably, Fairclough views Critical Discourse Analysis as a technique, whereas Van Dijk views Critical Discourse Analysis as a worldview or theoretical perspective on which to conduct research. According to Wodak and her co-author Michael Meyer (2009), "proponents of Critical Discourse Analysis use discourse analysis to oppose what they view as undesirable social and political practices" (Wodak 2), implying that Critical Discourse Analysis is inextricably linked to scholarly activism.

According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997), discourses are always historically contingent because they are grounded in contextual connections between identity, production, social traditions, social relations, consciousness, and Semiology. The circuit of culture is then analogous to discourse (Du Gay et al., 1997), a metaphor popularized in Stuart Hall's (1997) Representation. Fairclough and Wodak's approach is distinct from other Critical Discourse Analysis research in that it focuses on communication in action—on discourse as a social process. Fairclough (2014) clarifies Critical Discourse Analysis's objectives in the third edition of his seminal text, *Language and Power*, including that Critical Discourse Analysis is a "normative critique" (Fairclough 49) of discourse, that its allegiances are transdisciplinary, that neoliberalism is the main topic of critique, that discourse is socially motivated and interactive, that Critical Discourse Analysis's outcome is socio-cultural activism, and that analyses should be interdiscursive, thematic, and grammatical. Notably, Fairclough provides what he refers to as a "guide, not a blueprint" (Fairclough 129)

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for textual analysis in Critical Discourse Analysis, which focuses on the vocabulary, grammar, and textual structures of discourse. However, critics have argued that social action cannot be understood solely through text and discourse without taking into account the production and reception of media (Philo 2007).

While Fairclough and Wodak represent its linguistic tradition in Critical Discourse Analysis research, Van Dijk's work has concentrated on the reproduction of racism in news content, and, unlike Fairclough and Wodak, Van Dijk views Critical Discourse Analysis as a theoretical perspective rather than a research approach or method in and of itself. Van Dijk (2013, a) notes that Critical Discourse Analysis may employ a variety of methods, including "grammatical (phonological, morphological, syntactic), semantic, pragmatic, interactional, rhetorical, stylistic, narrative, or genre analyses, among others," as well as "experiments, ethnography, interviewing, life stories, focus groups, and participant observation, among others." Scholars unfamiliar with Critical Discourse Analysis frequently regard it as a method in and of itself (Van Dijk,2013:a). Rather than that, Critical Discourse Analysis should be viewed as a descriptive and argumentative process guided by an underlying critical-theoretical lens—one that considers the historical as well as institutional processes that allow for the development of discourse about a subject. The Critical Discourse Analysis scholar should "conduct critical discourse analysis by formulating critical objectives and then explaining how you intend to accomplish them" (Van Dijk,2013:a). We need to chart our coding methods for analyzing power in media discourse in journalism studies, rather than simply citing Critical Discourse Analysis in our methods sections.



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Van Dijk proposes an analytical technique he dubs the ideological square. The ideological square denotes Othering discursive formations, such as us-versus-them discourses. According to Van Dijk (1998,33), ideological formations will:

1. Highlight our positive characteristics/actions,
2. Highlight their negative characteristics/actions,
3. Mitigate our negative characteristics/actions, and
4. Mitigate their positive characteristics/ actions

Although the ideological square is an effective tool for visualizing Orientalism and other forms of racism, its closed-coding approach precludes more nuanced ideological critiques. For instance, the ideological square overlooks "the time plane in discourse analysis of journalistic texts" (Carvalho 163), as well as the longitudinal development of Othering in media. Additionally, the closed coding approach makes it more difficult to identify ideology in media. While the ideological square accurately describes and explains Yellow Peril, for example, does it accurately identify a model minority stereotype? We must bear in mind that news discourses are "always-already" ideological (Althusser,1971), even if they do not readily condemn a particular social group.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis in Education**

Huckin et al. (2012) assert that we propose Critical Discourse Analysis as a promising methodology for the examination of a variety of traditional objects of writing studies (e.g., multimedia texts, composition practices, and instructional practices) and rhetorical criticism (e.g., diction, style, genre, argument, critical

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thinking). Critical Discourse Analysis principles and concepts have also been instrumental in examining how power is rhetorically constructed in educational spheres. Fairclough (1995) goes into great detail about the corporatization of higher education in the United Kingdom, and Critical Discourse Analysis scholars in North America have recently taken up the subject.

Eric Haas, an educational policy researcher, and Gustavo Fischman, an education scholar, compiled a large corpus of texts on higher education to analyze decision-making processes in higher education management. They combined Critical Discourse Analysis with the theories of Eleanor Rosch, and George Lakoff to identify three distinct types of educational discourse prototypes (Huckin et al., 2012). David Ayes, a renowned educator, takes a more local perspective in analyzing 178 texts published on budget websites at three state universities in the United States of America (Huckin et al 2012).

Fairclough (1995) asserts that "language theory is an image form that is invested in language theory." Lake (1996) argues that studying speech in something like a social context combines elements of sociology and Psychotherapy. The discourse is composed of three components: social practice, discourse practice (text production, distribution, and use), and text, as well as specialized discourse analysis to analyze and correlate these components in these dimensions (Fairclough,1995). Critical Discourse Analysis of written and spoken texts is both critical and constructive. The texts are inspired by significant social institutions such as families, schools, churches, workplaces, the mass media, and the government. Human subjects employ texts to generate their meaning and to develop social work and relationships through the creation of diverse world meanings, concepts, and editions, as well as to establish a

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space for text and individuals (Lucke,1996). In classroom confrontations, the discourse frequently begins with unequal, competitive, and unexpected social structures.

Discourses are dynamic and hybrid, constantly changing and producing new material in everyday texts. Each text is a distinct form and feature of a cultural speech function, social action, forces, audiences, and effects language. Each text is composed of repeated statements such as claims, propositions, and words. Individuals make sense of their discourse resource collection based on their prior experiences with language and texts.

All texts were and are multilingual (having multiple meanings or meanings that vary according to their context of use in various discourses), that is, they draw on the realm of knowledge and sound. On numerous occasions, critical discourse analysis casts doubt on the possibility of a non-cytological declaration or text. Rather than reflecting and building, all texts are standard, in shape, and texture. The objective of Critical Discourse Analysis is to connect readers and texts with listeners and to transparently manipulate them (Lucke,1996). It can expose asymmetric information in those relationships, allowing for the discovery, detection, and definition of texts, as well as the activation and control of readers and addresses in some cases (Fairclough:1995). The construction of official knowledge in schools entails the inverse coverage of reading and sites from educated, teachers, and corporate publishers to lecture hall classes and informal discussion, as well as the preparation of legislation and policy letters by civil servants. Students' authentic speech and writing for formal evaluation (McGregor,2010). The critical outcome is to develop itself as a form of common sense to naturalize its functions through appearances in everyday

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texts. Discourse analysis's function or function is to criticize and criticize texts to interrupt the overall average sense. Every day, we make judgments about the effectiveness, value, and truthfulness of advertisements and textbooks.

## **Representational Method**

### **Naming and Reference**

Fairclough (2003) demonstrated that how individuals are named has a significant impact on how they are perceived. We'll generate a variety of naming options once we're ready to speak with someone. This enables individuals to be contextualized within the social world. These choices will enable us to emphasize the constrained aspects to which we are prone to draw attention while silencing others.

The concepts of power and belief are central to critical studies of language. This chapter discusses these concepts concerning their embedding in various types of discourse. According to the definition of class discourse provided in the preceding chapter, discourse is an institution-specific mode of manipulating language and alternative symbolic options. This implies that each social establishment possesses a distinct symbolic repertoire that is utilized in highly predictable ways. The language of television chat shows is not identical to that of a newspaper article or a poster. It implies that each social establishment has its own set of ordinarily controlling or sensing assumptions, dubbed ideologies, and that any use of language within the establishment invariably embodies its ideology.

Ideologies are inextricably linked to authority and language. To begin, language is the most prevalent form of social behavior. Societal divisions are well-established (if they do not already exist) and legitimized (if they do exist) through the

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distinctions in language usage (black and white, poor and wealthy, teacher and student, and so on).

Second, following Althusser, it is discovered that facility relationships, by their very nature, are perpetually asymmetrical. These asymmetrical power relationships, which are a component of its ideologies, are negotiated and sustained through its discourse.

Thus, it is argued that studying advertising discourse entails examining its language, ideologies, and thus the ways it establishes or naturalizes existing power relations. Advertisements perpetuate these favorable attitudes and behaviors through what Althusser refers to as interpellations. Interpellation is a term that refers to a hail, associate address that is used to construct subjectivities. Advertisements reveal their ideologies by constructing concrete people as 'subjects.'

### **Application to Language and Literature**

Important Although discourse analysis focuses on language. Language as a cultural tool mediates power and privilege relationships in social interactions, institutions, and bodies of knowledge (see, for example, Bourdieu:1977; Davies & Harre:1990; Leon Foucault:1969/1972; Gee:1999; Lucke:1995/1996).

Gee (2004) draws a distinction between the capitalized terms "Critical Discourse Analysis" (as represented by the abbreviation CDA) and "Critical Discourse Analysis" in minuscule letters, a distinction that is highly relevant to this review. He argues that Critical Discourse Analysis encompasses the entire field of study as refined by Fairclough, Hodge, Kress, Wodak, Van Dijk, and Van Leeuwen, among others. Miniature "Critical Discourse Analysis" incorporates a "broader array

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of approaches" (p.20) —Gee's (1992, 1994, 1996, and 1999) style of analysis, that of Gumperz (1982), Hymes (1972), Michaels & Scollon (1981), and thus the work of numerous discourse analysts in the United States of America and elsewhere. These students conduct Critical Discourse Analysis but do not refer to their work as Critical Discourse Analysis. Gee (2004) emphasizes the importance of discourse analysis approaches that "consider social practices in terms of their implications for things example standing, solidarity, social product distribution, and power" (Gee 33).

As language is a social practice, and not all social practices are created and treated equally, all assessments of language units are inherently significant. After this section, we'll discuss some fundamental principles that apply to any discussion of critical discourse analysis. This may be necessary because critical theory, a collection of theories aimed at identifying and confronting issues of power, privilege, and social group, has been collectively chastised for reproducing power structures and constructing its regime of truth.

Another widely held belief is that one of the most effective forms of oppression is internalized social group, which encompasses all forms of coercion and consent (Gramsci:1973; Ives:2004). Important researchers collaborate to elucidate the specifics of power-based domination. However, power can manifest itself in a variety of ways: philosophical, physical, linguistic, material, psychological, and cultural. Important theorists occasionally concur that language plays a vital role in the growth of perspectives and subjugation at various points. Post-structuralism, the intellectual movement with which Michel Jean physiologist Leon Foucault is frequently associated was a rejection of the earlier twentieth-century structuralist movement and is inextricably linked to significant theory. Significant discourse associate analysts

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begin by attempting to comprehend, unearth, and rework conditions of distinction. The analysis's starting point varies according to where the significant analyst obtains and defines power. Important discourse analysts observe power as a social following at intervals on the rostrum of language. However, power is capable of confronting both liberating and oppressive forms.

Cook argues that novels, short conversations, or groans can be named discourse. So, this view is used in applying critical discourse analysis to novels. Van Dijk (1983) describes that sociolinguists describe and analyze a novel or a story concerning socio-linguistics. The story depends on who is telling the story to whom, under what circumstances, and how the greeting, culture, and speech events are occurring (Van Dijk,1983).

Chen Hua's (2013) research on Jane Austen's novel *Sense and Sensibility* used Critical Discourse Analysis wherein she discusses gender discrimination among men and women in terms of language, intensifiers, adjectives, and adverbs used by them. The Critical Discourse Analysis is done on a lexical level only. She elaborated on how the differences between men and women in their language are an outcome of their socio-political background (Chen Hua, 2013).

Horvath used Norman Fairclough's framework for his work and presented the determined strategies and the hidden ideologies that were present in President Obama's speech. Caballero in his research on Sen Santaia's speech showed differences that exist between hidden and apparent ideologies whereas Bilal (2012) argued how every television programmer advocates a certain kind of ideology. He chose the socio-cognitive model by Van Dijk to elaborate on various relationships that exist between ideology and language.

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Awan and Yahya (2016) conducted a Critical Discourse Analysis of Ahmad Ali's novel "Twilight in Delhi" using Norman Fairclough's three dimensions of discursive practices. It talks about the roles of women, views of colonized individuals, the aftermath of colonization, and the decaying Muslim civilization. It focuses on and brings out the hidden cultural and ideological differences and their effects on society.

### **Major Aspects of CDA**

Critical Discourse Analysis's micro-aspects include the examination of oral texts derived from transactions, acts, moves, adjacency pairs, and turn-taking. It examines the coherence and cohesion of written discourse.

Power, dominance, ideology, access, mind control, history, and culture are all macro aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis. They employ a variety of discursive strategies, including self-representation, argumentation, reality construction, and resistance. They examine a variety of genres, including politics, the media, literature, religion, and professional, but also academic discourses. They examine the relationships between texts and discourses. Additionally, they examine the complex relationship between text, speech, social cognition, power society, and culture.

The planned analysis will concentrate on critical discourse analysis of hand-selected Dalit autobiographies in English. Discourse analysis unfolds as an integrated approach to three concepts — language in use, belief communication (cognition), and interaction (in a social situation).

### **Language, Ideology, and Power**

In light of these numerous definitions, it may seem pointless to discuss the categories of ideology and power with language theories.



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The argument has been made, however, that the relationship between society and discourse is dialectical: they shape one another. Societal transactions are carried out symbolically. The Symbolic activity is primarily comprised of other forms of language use. Language is used to negotiate ideologies and power relationships. As a result, there are compelling reasons to investigate these concepts through the lens of linguistics. According to Kress, any theory of language that is sumptuous about its social functions and effects must take into account categories, ideology, and power.

This language theory must be accepted, as it must place a strong emphasis on the relationships between language and the material conditions of its uses and users. (Kress 25). By dismantling Bourdieu's (1984) and Fowler's (1991) claims about language's neutrality in social interactions, we can assert that there is no pure expression of a pure Transaction and that any act of symbolic enunciation of a social institution inevitably creates a space for bargaining or contesting the institution's ideologies.

Bourdieu maintains that every linguistic interaction, regardless of how personal or significant it appears, bears the imprint of the social structure it both expresses and helps reproduce. The implication is that, in contrast to other signifying systems such as rituals, food habits, festivals, clothing, modes of transportation, and manners, ideologies find their most explicit expression in and through language. Thus, examining ideological communication through the lens of linguistic communication is a fruitful method of doing so. On the other hand, an examination of the ideologies at work in a given institution sheds light on the forms of language and their articulated Varieties.

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Fowler's thesis on linguistic communication lends additional weight to this argument. He asserts that 'languages perform more functions than simply informing the readers'. Thus, his thesis challenges the conventional view of language as a neutral, transparent conduit. Any representational discourse about the world that is spoken or written is articulated from a particular ideological position; language is not a transparent window, but a refracting, structuring medium. (Fowler 10).

As previously stated, language reflects the Community's social structure in a variety of ways. According to Kress and Hodge (1979:79), a social structure "is an arrangement or distribution of power and social functions." As previously stated, power is asymmetrically distributed in any system of governance, including among social classes, racial or caste groups, and even among consumers of goods and services. Dialectological research demonstrates that power distribution is typically reflected in and sustained by language differences, class languages, and regional and social dialects of various forms. Bernstein's elaborated and restricted codes provide additional examples of how codes generate and sustain asymmetrical power relations. Additionally, feminist criticism explains that, regardless of class, caste, region, religion, nationality, or race, every society has a division.

Pecheux's semantics theory adds an important dimension to the study of Meanings. His theory elucidates the process by which meanings become ideological. Following Volosinov, he expresses reservations about Saussure's view of language as a shared system of meanings. Using Saussure's concept of meaning, he asserted that the meaning of a word/expression/proposition, etc., does not exist in and of itself in its transparent relation to the literal character of the signifier, but is determined by the ideological position that is brought into play during the socio-historical process of

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producing or reproducing words and propositions. He observes that words, expressions, propositions, and so forth change their meaning depending on the positions of those who use them and the media through which they are articulated. (Pecheux 111-112).

Kress and Hodge's argument further solidifies the connection between language and ideology. They believe that ideologies become visible through language. Ideologies are collections of ideas that contribute to the organization of experience and the making sense of the world. Language is used to express the systems of ideas that comprise ideologies. Language provides the mode and categories of thought, and language contributes to people's experiences of the world.

Language categories, like those of ideology, may appear to be fixed and unchanging, but both may be subject to constant change, as they establish, maintain, confirm, and frequently challenge the classification of language and the ideas it expresses through speech. (Kress 81) Thus, language is viewed as a significant intervener in the social construction of reality. As Althusser, Foucault, and Gramsci demonstrate, discourse serves as a tool for consolidating and manipulating concepts and relationships in the realms of power and control, as well as other spheres of social and ideological communication.

The research conducted in this area, namely the constitutive role of language (Kress and Hodge, [1979], Hodge & Kress, [1988], Kress, [1985], Fowler, [1979, 1985, 1991], Pecheux, [1982], Halliday, [1978], Fairclough, [1985, 1992], Van Dijk, [1993, 1996], Wodak, [1989]), demonstrates that the alliance between language and ideology. Following context-linguistic theories, it is now understood that words take on different meanings in different contexts and that the relationship between language

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and ideology is neither simple nor fixed. This is because meanings are generated and determined by the discourse category. When considered in isolation, a linguistic form does not have a fixed meaning, nor does it have any ideological significance or function. This is because, as Kress argues, linguistic forms always appear systematically in a text as a sign of the discourse's system of meaning. At this level, utterances/speech acts acquire ideological significance and are mythically distributed:

Considered in isolation, no linguistic form has a fixed meaning or function, nor does it have any ideological significance or function. We can attribute ideological significance to linguistic forms because they always appear systematically in a text as a sign of the system of meaning embodied in a particular discourse. (Kress 30).

Thus, the presence of a linguistic attribute in a text is always indicative of the presence of a term from a discursive and ideological system co-existing with other terms from that system. That is why a linguistic feature or category never appears in isolation; it is always representative of a system of linguistic terms that embody discursive and ideological systems. Thus, the linguistic term in discourse and text derives its specific meaning from its co-text, i.e., from its position within a system of linguistic terms preceding and following it.

Consider now how theories of language analysis interact with the study of ideology. According to Brogger (1992:48), linguistics has advanced far beyond the formal study of individual sentences over the last two decades. Particularly, advancements in the fields of functional linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis have created opportunities for a rapprochement between the study of language and ideology, though not in a unified paradigm as illustrated above. The

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concern with language use, with viewing language as an act of actual communication, is shared by these fields.

To examine the inflected use of language in terms of power and ideology, this study employs analytical tools from context-oriented linguistic theories such as systemic functional linguistics, critical linguistics, semiotics, social semiotics, and discourse analysis. According to Critical Discourse Analysis, the choice of particular formal structures cannot be separated from the sociocultural designs they are intended to serve.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a collection of linguistic tools, most notably Halliday's (1978) Systemic-Functional Grammar, that are used to analyze language in speeches, news articles, and conversations. These tools enable us to draw attention to ideas, values, and opinions contained in texts that may not be immediately apparent upon first reading or hearing. Often, these things are buried in texts as their authors attempt to conceal or evade them, as is the case with political rhetoric, where politicians use language to persuade. However, this process of persuasion and influence through language is not unique to such official discourse and is found in everyday conversation, news, and other media texts.

There are no neutral ways to display the world through language, as all of the words we choose are motivated and have specific meanings and values attached to them. Yet the untrained ear or eye will be unable to discern precisely how this works, even if we frequently get the impression that we are being encouraged to think in a certain way. In these instances, we may be conscious of what communicators or text manufacturers are doing and how not their precise methods. Critical Discourse Analysis can elicit information about how language is used to subtly convey ideas and

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values. And it is often through this that we gain a much clearer understanding of what has been conveyed.

The Critical Discourse Analysis project has been centered on the issue of power. The objective is to ascertain the types of social relations of power that are implicit and explicit in texts (Van Dijk 249). Given that language can (re)produce social life, what kind of world are texts creating, and what kinds of inequalities are they seeking to enable, create, or justify? Language is not merely a means of communication in this case, but also a method of social construction. Thus, discourse is not merely a reflection of social reality.

However, processes and structures are viewed as contributing to the congregation and replication of these processes and structures. As Fairclough and Wodak (1997:258) state, "the discursive event is shaped by objects, institutions, and social structures, but it also shapes them."

Fairclough (1985), drawing on Gramsci's (1971) ideas, explains that language is one setting in which we can observe the operation of philosophical interests. Ideologies are collections of assumptions or beliefs about how the world works and are inextricably linked to power.

Ideologies are inextricably linked to language, as language is a typical example of social behavior and the primary medium through which we exchange our perceptions of the world.

The language will be used to legitimize various social organizations, associations, and forms of power. Establishments and individuals frequently portray themselves through discourses and practices without thinking, and as a result, they

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appear to have a sense of right. However, by analyzing the language used to create these discourses, we will be able to determine the extent to which they support unambiguous ideologies.

We can summarize what Critical Discourse Analysis is by quoting one of its pioneers, Ruth Wodak: "Critical Discourse Analysis is primarily concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power, and management as manifested in language. In other words, Critical Discourse Analysis seeks to critically analyze social inequalities as they are expressed, signaled, constructed, and legitimized through language use (or discourse)." (Wodak:2002).

Even though Indian society is highly stratified it fails to identify the politics behind the written literature, especially in the case of Dalit autobiographies. A lot of research has been conducted about their stories but this study focuses on the language aspect of the autobiography in assessing and identifying how the characters use language to establish their identity. Critical Discourse Analysis of Dalit autobiography not only finds the discursive practices that subjugate them but also helps in studying the strategies for resistance that are created in these autobiographies against the mainstream discursive practice.

According to Fairclough & Chuliarakis: Hegemony is relations of domination based upon 'consent' rather than 'coercion', this involves the naturalization of practices and their social relations and relations between practices, as matters of common sense, hence the concept of hegemony emphasizes the importance of ideology in achieving and maintaining relations of domination (1999:24). The objective of Critical discourse analysis is to uncover the hidden ideological

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assumptions that are present in the words of written texts, in this case, Dalit autobiography to resist and overcome different forms of “giving up power ” or just to gain a sense of appreciation generally to the point where the dominated, oppressed Dalits begin to see the unfair hegemonic order of things in the society as natural.

Through critical discourse analysis, it becomes easy to unravel the hidden meanings that are present in a text. Dalit autobiography is an important genre of literature that focuses on a group of neglected and marginalized communities by using Critical Discourse Analysis in this work one can gain a complete understanding of through language power is established and maintained and how these communities resist the same discourses through language.



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## CHAPTER – III

### CASTE, GENDER, CLASS AND IDENTITY IN *'THE PRISONS WE BROKE'* BY BABY KAMBLE

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The chapter deals with critical discourse analysis of *'The prisons we broke'* written by Baby Kamble. This was considered as milestone in the Dalit literature as it was one of the first Dalit autobiographies written by a woman. It narrates a story about humiliation that was caste based Maya Pandit translated it in English only in 2008. It focused on the life and suffering of Mahars of Maharashtra.

Baby Kamble has an innovative style and treatment of content. She not only has a Dalit voice, but also an assertion, and distinct language. The way she articulates the Dalit experience exposes the tyrannical tendency of mainstream society. Kamble's autobiography is distinct in its representation, style, and its characterization.

Baby Kamble is not just the forerunner of Dalit literature but also the victim of the inherent evils in the Dalit society that led to the subjugation of Dalits in the hierarchy. In her autobiography, she presents a very easy vivid dramatic narrative style inspired by oral storytelling.

This autobiography is unique because Baby Kamble not only talks about the oppression of Dalit but also the discrimination that exists against Dalit woman. There is a continuous interaction between the woman consciousnesses with that of Dalit consciousness.

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The constant resistance Baby Kamble expresses in her writing is directed against the social system which ignores the voice of the marginalized. The displacement and reclamation of the Dalit community had several commonalities, ideologies of resistance, and new insights into their history, political milieu, and class/gender intersection. Gopal Guru writes about this in the afterword, that Dalit autobiographies are quite different from the western autobiography as the concept of ‘self’ is not just limited to the individual. In the Dalit autobiography the ‘self’ is constituted of life-story and the narrative of the whole community.

Baby Kamble shares a personal account of her grandparents and their house in Veergaon, Maharashtra. Her father worked as a contractor, since all the money he used to earn would go to food, clothes and tea. Her mother found it extremely difficult to survive and meet ends and somewhere Kamble feels that was the reason why her mother was a difficult person to live around. In the autobiography she does not sugar coat anything, she talks and hints at the oppression face by woman in their own patriarchal households.

Kamble writes that outside Maharwada the woman had to bow down in front of uppercaste men and if they failed then they would be punished. She criticizes the Brahmins and also criticizes the patriarchy that exists within the Mahar Dalit community. The autobiography consists of various events like child marriage, domestic violence, complicated pregnancies and the in built misogyny.

Baby Kamble’s autobiography is detailed. It talks about customs, rules and tradition. The Mahar dress codes and beliefs. The practices and the differences between the upper caste and lower castes. The book describes how education and literacy can change and revolutionize a community.

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Kamble narrates that she was humiliated and discriminated not by her classmates but also by her teachers. She talks about the fights that the Mahar girls used to have with caste Hindu girls and punish the Mahar girls. Kamble has a collective narrative in her autobiography.

She not only just focuses on her personal life but also about her community of Mahars. She explains their life and culture in detail. Baby Kamble presents how Hindu's social order is in her autobiography. The Dalits were considered as pollution but not their money.

Baby Kamble idolizes Ambedkar she describes him as 'God of gods' because in a system where the whole community was abandoned and kept away. Ambedkar took care of the whole society by empowering them. He was the perfect role model for Dalits. This autobiography shows how a powerful leader effects the lives of the Dalits and untouchable Mahars.

Kamble feels angry that the youth and her brothers and sisters seemed to have forgotten and left their ideologies that were left behind by Ambedkar. In her autobiography she requests Mahars to organize, unite and help the poor and their community.

'Hindu philosophy had discarded us as dirt and thrown us in into their garbage pits, on the outskirts of their village. We lived in the filthiest conditions possible. Yet Hindu rites and rituals were dearest to our heart. For our poor helpless woman, the haldi-kumkum in their tiny bones was the more important than a mine full of jewels. We desperately tried to preserve whatever bits of Hindu culture we managed to lay our hands on and yet no tried to understand us.' (Kamble, p.18)

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Kamble expresses how the Mahar woman hoped to live and enjoy their lives like that of upper castes. They hoped to worship and practice rituals like that of upper caste.

Generation after generation wasted away in the senseless worship of stones, in utter misery. Generation after generation perished, but it is a basic human need to hope for change. The tiny sapling of hope was reared in their hearts too. It grew tall, draw strength from the the iron in their souls (Kamble, p.11)

Kamble in her autobiography talks about how respect was not given to individuals based on age or experiences rather it was given to people belonging to a particular caste. If an upper caste child was walking or interacting, even the oldest in the Mahar community had to acknowledge and address him with all the respect. The Dalit woman were constantly insulted and not allowed on the main roads; they would walk into thorny shrubs.

‘The humble Mahar women fall at your feet, master.’ This was like a chant which they had to repeat innumerable times; even to a small child it belonged to a higher caste. We children followed the women holding their pallu. Sometimes there would be a young, newlywed girl in the group and she would fail to join the chant out of sheer ignorance or awkwardness. All hell would break loose then. (Kamble, p.52-53)

The higher caste expected a Dalit girl to know that she should bow their head in front of them and when they encountered each other directly it would have been considered a big offence. If the girl failed to acknowledge them then she and her whole community would be considered punishable. When the higher caste person

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mistreated their family the family would ill-treat the girl, punish and thrash her. So the girl and woman were the Dalits among the Dalits.

The way they wore their attires and saris were also determined their castes as they were rules put up by caste an upper caste Hindus. The Mahar woman did not fit in the category or list of upper caste community.

There was caste rules even for how one tucked the pleats. Mahar women had to tuck them in such a way that the border remained hidden. Only a high caste woman had the privilege of wearing their saris in such a way that the borders could be seen. A Mahar woman was supposed to hide the borders under the pleats otherwise it was considered an offence to the high castes (Kamble, p.54)

Kamble and her whole community were influenced by Ambedkar. Ambedkar becomes a real role model of what a Dalit should aspire to be. He becomes one of the very first positive identities of a Dalit. Ambedkar announces that by spreading and educating the children they will be able to improve their condition and only through education the children would bring their community out of this caste created hell.

‘From now onwards you have to follow a different path. You must educate your children. Divorce your children from God. Teach them good things. Send them to schools. The result will there for you to see. When your children begin to be educated your condition will start improving. Your family, your life will improve. Your children will bring you out of this hell. We are humans. We, too, have the right to live as human beings. Your children will make you aware of this. (Kamble, p.64-65)

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Ambedkar says that the betterment and the upliftment of the Dalit community can be undertaken by strong empowered woman. He puts his faith in woman to bring change in the society. These words influenced Kamble. Kamble talks about the constant insults and taunts they had to face by the upper caste girls who studied with them.

‘You know, I have to have bathe again after I go home from school. My mother has come to know that Mahar girls sit in our class and she doesn’t allow me to enter the house unless I have a bath. We have to go to the ram temple. What to do now? Where do we drink water from?’  
(Kamble, p.108-109).

Even though they were educated or getting educated they lacked the basic humanity they would insult and throw stones and dust to the Dalit girls eyes. To retaliate the Dalit girls would curse Gandhi and the upper caste woman would curse Ambedkar.

‘That Ambedkar has educated himself, that’s why these dirty Mahars are showing off! That filthy Mahar, Ambedkar, eats dead animals but look at the airs he gives himself!’ (Kamble, p.109)

All the menial and unclean jobs were assigned to the Dalits. The so called ‘polluting’ jobs such as removing dead body and cleaning bodily waste and all jobs associated with death were assigned to the Mahars. The Mahars had to announce if anyone had died from the upper caste to their families. They were forced to clean this by eating. They did not realize that eating dead animals was derogatory. Because of this Ambedkar tells Dalits not to eat dead animals that are already rotting.

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She encourages her Mahar community to understand about their courage and the revolutionary spirit that exists in their blood. She feels extremely annoyed when the youngsters and her community fail to follow teachings of Buddha and Ambedkar.

‘But look at yourself! Though baba did so much for all of you, you, who call yourselves intelligent, have just discarded his thoughts. Your children have not even the foggiest idea of who Dr. Ambedkar was, and who Buddha was! You are teaching your children to believe in god! There is an explosion of ritual fasts in your families on days of sankashti chaturti, Saturdays, Thursday—you observe fasts on so many days! Bhima made you, and you rub your noses before the very gods that he taught us to discard. Ganesh, Lakshmi—how many gods and goddesses do you introduce your children to? That is precisely what your ancestors did too; they wasted their lives rubbing noses on those stone steps outside the temples! Which god ever took mercy upon them? And yet, once again, you have chosen to become slaves of the same gods. You are inculcating the same culture in your children! You have simply wiped off Baba’s name. All the educated amongst us have forgotten baba because they are basking in the false glory of their so-called greatness. (Kamble, p.119)

Dalit women writers have through their autobiographies attempted to raise their voices against the social and cultural forces, which have marginalized them for centuries. Baby Kamble’s *The Prisons We Broke* is one such autobiography that allows us to venture into the Dalit women’s world, their life struggles, and their community through their lens. Reading the literary genre of autobiography as a means

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of identity construction and self-assertion, it focuses on the Dalit consciousness that is laid bare in Kamble's text.

Baby Kamble's autobiography can be nearly divided into two sections. The first half describes the oppression and exploitation of the Mahar community at the hands of the upper class. The pages are filled with images of grim poverty and the complete impoverishment of the Mahar people. It brings forward all the brutalities and hardships the Dalit women had to endure in the name of norms and traditions. They are victims of both the caste system and the Dalit patriarchy.

The second part accounts for the transformation and development of the Mahar community under the leadership of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. By sharing her activist experience, Kamble emphasizes women's participation and aided the Dalit liberation movement. Under the influence of Ambedkar's radical ideas, the Dalits can challenge the Varna system efficiently and assertively. Like most autobiographies, Kamble begins her book with her birth and an introduction to her family. But gradually the community takes precedence over the individualistic 'I'.

A great emphasis is laid upon the rituals and festivities of the community. Kamble describes the buffalo fair, the jatras or feasts, ritual baths, the nine-day-long marriage ceremony, and the festivities of the month of Ashadh in minute detail. It is because of such depictions that Maya Pandit asserts that Kamble's book 'is more of a socio-biography rather than an autobiography' (p. xiii).

There are very few allusions to her personal life in her autobiography. On being asked about this dissension, Kamble intuitively replies: 'Well, I wrote about what my community experienced. The suffering of my people became my own



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suffering. Their experiences became mine. So, I really find it difficult to think of myself outside of my community' (Kamble, p.136).

Kamble states that most of the stories and myths she read about the Dalits were incorrect. One such story was of Vrinda, a Shudra princess. The upper caste's mythologizing of the oppression of the Dalits makes Kamble angry this is why she decides to write her side of the story. She pictures writing as an efficient way of resisting Brahmanical supremacy.

"I have to express this anger, give vent to my sense of outrage. But merely talking about it will not suffice. How many people can I reach that way? I must write about it. I must proclaim to the world what we have suffered"

(Kamble, p.146).

Thus, writing and literature for Kamble become a means of thwarting the misrepresentation of the Dalit community in the Indian literary discourse. By doing so she reaches a larger audience with her autobiography. Writing itself is a difficult task for women of lower caste. Kamble had to make sure that no one saw or knew that she was writing in her own house. She was scared of her husband and her son; she used to hide her writing in the 'dustiest and untouched' corners of the house. Because of this her autobiography was published twenty years later she had finished writing it.

Baby Kamble's *'The Prisons We Broke'* performs a dual function. It challenges Brahmanical tyranny on one hand and patriarchal dominance on the other. Taking the matter of patriarchal domination into account, the text tries to destroy the myth of a 'democratic' Dalit patriarchy. It shows the brutality of Dalit men towards their wives and daughters. Baby Kamble tells her readers that the Mahar women lived with the principle 'that if a woman has her husband, she has the whole world; if she

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does not have a husband, then the world holds nothing for her' (Kamble, p.41). Their thought process illustrates a deep internalization of the male-controlled beliefs of a 'pativrata' woman.

A Women's identity and existence remain exclusively dependent on their husband. But what exactly does any woman get in exchange for their devotion. Baby Kamble doesn't mince words while explaining the physical, mental, and emotional traumas that are a part of the everyday life of the silenced woman.

The text overflows with occurrences of pain, suffering, and humiliation that draw attention to their subaltern position. It is further disturbing and unfortunate to read horrific details of how noses were being chopped off of woman's faces, who failed to fall in line with the imposed patriarchal clichés. Maya Pandit in the introduction to the text states "if the Mahar community is the 'other' for the Brahmins, Mahar women become the 'other' for the Mahar men" (xv).

Baby Kamble writes, 'My father had locked up my aai in his house, like a bird in the cage' (Kamble, p.5). The more restrictions imposed upon women determined the greater the respect and honor of the family. Indian Sociologist, M N Srinivas calls this a method of Sanskritization or 'emulation of upper caste practices to achieve a higher social status.' The Dalit's internalization of the Brahmin patriarchal ideology makes them impose restrictions on women's education, mobility, and sexuality. Baby Kamble's position in the private and public domain is similar to that of her mother.

Kamble reveals in her interview with Maya Pandit that she, like other women, had to endure physical violence at the hands of her doubting husband. Such male aggression is an assertion of male patriarchal power but at the same time a sign of their desperation. Violence is so common that women never complain about it.

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Rather, they negotiate their way around it. Kamble admits to not writing about this in her autobiography because ‘...it was the fate of most women; I wasn’t an exception. So why write about it, I felt.’ (Kamble, p.156)

The autobiography specifies many more facades on which women have to suffer. Marriages at a young age, followed by consecutive pregnancies shatter a woman’s physical and mental well-being. Kamble notes ‘...a Mahar woman would continue to give birth till she reached menopause’ (Kamble, p.82). Further, pregnant women are victims of malnourishment. The only food that is available to them is the gruel made from stale jowar and rotis. The outer society and the patriarchal family bound the Dalit women into chains of slavery. They also find their slaves, in their daughters-in-law. The mother-in-law is the perpetrator of the mishaps that happen to her daughter-in-law. Usually, she is treated as a work machine.

Once the daughter-in-law attains puberty, her mother-in-law keeps a ‘hawk’s eye’ on the couple to prevent them from having any physical intimacy. Wanting her son to always remain under her control, the mother never misses a chance to fill his ears with false allegations regarding his wife. She even goes to the extent of alleging the daughter-in-law’s involvement in adulterous affairs with other men. Thus, an infuriated husband beats his wife brutally. Kamble’s autobiography shows us how the women of her community suffered degradable atrocities and still endured them.

Kamble’s autobiography recounts the various segregation regulations that were rampant in pre-independence India. The discrimination in the areas was such that Mahars were not allowed to use the same roads as the higher castes. If somebody from the upper castes was traveling on the road. The Mahars would have to come down and walk among the thorny bushes along the curb. If the Mahar women met any

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high caste man on their way, they were expected to perform an act of most humble submission by bowing down and uttering the words: ‘the humble Mahar women fall at your feet master’(Kamble, p.52). Any negligence on their part incurred the wrath of the high-caste community. Each Brahmin household had a high platform in front to avoid the Dalits from coming in direct contact with the house. This was solely reserved for transactions with the Dalits.

Kamble notes the different outlooks of the Yeskar Mahar in different areas. While going out of his house for his usual begging round there is a sense of pride and honor. But as soon as he enters the village, he is forced to bend his head and ring the bell to announce his arrival because even his voice could pollute the upper castes. This reveals that this public space has a ‘diminishing effect’ on him and other Dalits.

It is only after returning to his community that Yeskar regains his confidence and tranquility; treating his black shawl (used for begging) as the coat of a barrister. However, during the Ambedkarite movement, the Dalits begin to question this allotment of inferior places to them. For instance, during a Mahila Mandal meeting, the Dalit women were not given any chairs to sit on. They were expected to sit on the floor. But the Dalit women immediately asked the queen of Phaltan to allow Dalit women to also sit on chairs in the front rows. In this manner, the allocation of space is democratized. But things were not as easy as they seemed. Kamble and her schoolgirls take two years to gather the courage to enter the Ram temple, which was right in front of their school.

Kamble’s autobiography exposes the upper caste's double standards in innumerable ways. For instance, Mahar women contributed to the family’s income by collecting firewood and grass from the forest and selling it to villagers. They were

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always paid less than what they deserved. And after buying the firewood, the upper caste women would ask the Mahar women to keep the firewood in the backyard with instructions to look closely and make sure that not even a strand of Mahar hair or clothes remained stuck in the sticks, as that would pollute the entire household. The upper castes had no issue of pollution while cooking their food on the firewood that was brought by the Mahar woman, but had a problem if hair and clothes were stuck to it. The Brahmin invited to conduct a Mahar's wedding would stand at a distance and conduct the wedding rituals to avoid pollution. But when it came to taking money for the service, he took his dakshina or fees without fearing the pollution. 'That he took away without any fear of pollution' (Kamble, p.89).

*'The Prisons We Broke'* shows us how the Dalits were the victims, as well as participants in preserving the ideology of purity and pollution. They considered an upper-caste individual as sacred. The internalization of this ideology of purity-pollution forced a Mahar to keep his arms folded and close to the body, fearful of touching the upper caste and thus polluting them. On one occasion, when an upper caste boy comes too close to a Mahar woman. She cautions him, 'Take care little master! Please keep a distance. Don't come too close. You might touch me and get polluted' (Kamble, p.14).

The Dalit's acceptance of this purity-pollution binary aided in sustaining the caste hierarchy for many generations. Children observed and then imitated the behavior of their elders and the customs that followed them. Kids, in their games, would act as Potrajas and pretend to beg for food. As they grew up, they never questioned or doubted their lower social status, as it not only appeared natural but also deserving to them. Like this, the community continued the same traditions and customs for more generations to come.

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Baby Kamble was greatly inspired by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, like other radical Dalit thinkers and writers. The political side of her critical inquiry into the Mahar community's oppression is influenced by Dr. Ambedkar's radical, self-assertive politics. Kamble in her story outlines the path of the Ambedkarite movement. And tells the readers how Ambedkar's words made the Mahars aware of their social repression. This led them to critique the caste system efficiently. When Dr. Ambedkar arrived in Jejuri for his first meeting. The Mahars were shocked to see him. 'They had never expected their own man to arrive in a car, dressed in European clothes' (Kamble, p.63-64).

Ambedkar's radical thoughts and speeches compelled the Mahars to improve their community. He inspired them to send their kids to schools, to get rid of their superstitions, to stop cleaning the waste of the village, and to stop eating dead animals. Ambedkar forced the Mahars to start thinking. Discussions and debates began to take place at Kamble's place. 'Everybody began to understand, argue and consider' (Kamble, p. 69).

The traditional Mahars firmly opposed Ambedkar's interference in their inner cultural and religious practices. The strongest resistance comes from the Karbhari: 'Listen, we are born for this work. That's our sacred duty. Why should we give up our religion, our duty?' (Kamble, p.67). Something as dehumanizing as being a potraja is considered as a privilege by the traditional Mahars. It is challenging to demobilize the Mahar from such traditions.

The women's participation in this movement has been highlighted in Kamble's autobiography. They were influenced by Dr. Ambedkar's perspective that only women could bring the community out of the darkness of superstitions. Women

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known for being the worst victims of the caste hierarchy ended up becoming driving forces toward education and change. Kamble opens a grocery store for her son's studies. She chooses a work instead of being allocated one. She displays that emancipation is possible for both Dalit male and female.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis of *The prisons we broke* using Fairclough's three-dimensional method.**

The three levels of analysis are

1. Description
2. Interpretation
3. Explanation

#### **1. DESCRIPTION**

'In this book, the word 'Mahar' occurs at many places. Today, our young, educated and so called 'progressive' people are ashamed of using this word. But what is there to be ashamed of? On the contrary, the word Mahar makes us feel proud. It tells us that we are the great Mahars of this Maharashtra. It proclaims aloud that we are the true, original sons of this soil who were born here.

In this book, I have presented many details of the life of our community without any shame or awkwardness. And readers, too, should not feel embarrassed by them. In the last fifty years, what kind of life did a Mahar lead? What were his experiences? He was crying his heart out with the agony of humiliation. He was bound by the chains of slavery. My only intention is sharing this history with my children and grandchildren, my

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daughters and daughters-in-law is to show them what furnaces of suffering the true sons of the soil have come out of.’ (Kamble,p.xviii)

For a long time, youngsters who are educated and call themselves progressive are ashamed of being associated with the word ‘Mahar’. But Kamble expresses that there isn’t any need to feel ashamed rather one should feel proud of their identity as a Mahar means they are the great Mahars of this Maharashtra, they are the original sons of the land.

Kamble in her book presents details of her life and her community in its rawest form without any awkwardness or shame. She asks her readers not to feel embarrassed by them. In the last fifty years, not many know how or what kind of life they led or their experiences. They were bound by the chains of slavery and humiliation attached to it. Her only intention in writing this is to share their Mahar history with their children and grandchildren so that they know what ordeals their ancestors had to face. Only then they would understand what Bhim had accomplished and understand how he had managed to achieve something that the previous generations couldn’t.

Since this ‘shameful state of being’ (Kamble, P.xviii) was imposed on them by a particular community they did not need to feel ashamed of their past. This autobiography is extremely unique as it focuses on identifying their caste identity positively. In most of the autobiography, a person felt ashamed or hid it because they felt it was demeaning, but Kamble gets a sense of pride by calling herself a Mahar.

‘My father had named my brother, Babu, and me, Baby. For the Maharwada, I was their Begabai. I used to walk in style with silver tassels down my back, silver anklets on my feet, silver chains clinking above



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them, my half-tola nose ring, earrings, and silk clothes! The tassels and the anklets used to make sweet jingling sounds when I walked or ran and everybody used to admire me so in all my finery. I used to roam around from house to house chatting away about something or the other.’

(Kamble, p.7)

Kamble’s father had named her a very modern English name; she had silver tassels, anklets, and chains with a half-tola nose ring, earrings, and silk clothes. For a girl belonging to a Mahar was unheard of. But her appearance compared to another Dalit’s quite different. Everybody used to admire her.

‘I had three aajas from my mother’s side and all of them spoke excellent English.’ (Kamble, p.45)

Kamble had three aajas who spoke excellent English and they lived in cities like Mumbai and Pune where they worked as butlers. They were the only people who were educated in the Maharwada. Kamble’s family in a way facilitated her getting a better education and opportunities. They had a salary of sixteen rupees every month which was a huge amount at that period. His butler’s clothing was elegant, beautifully pressed white uniform and a turban on his head. He appeared nothing less than a minister.

‘Who will be able to say that he’s a Mahar? He looks so smart, just like a king!’ (Kamble, p.46)

Kamble’s grandfather Malari was appreciated by the whole village, he was one of the only Mahars who earned sixteen rupees, spoke fluent English, and sent ten rupees home. He would send his family or wife anything he wanted. He spoke to the

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‘sahibs’ in their language. This made the people from his village look up to him as a role model. In a culture where the potraja, ritual begging, and Yeskar were prominent a Mahar butler working for the sahibs was a big deal. It felt that nobody could say Malari was a Mahar. With his uniform, and language he just looked like a king.

When B.R. Ambedkar had gone to Jejuri for his speech Kamble’s grandfather was among the crowd they were not able to believe their eyes, a man belonging to their community had arrived in a car in European clothes. His speech impressed and motivated his people. They wanted to be like him:

‘...let me assure you, my sisters, what Bhimrao Ambedkar says is absolutely right. We must educate our children. We must not and will not eat dead animals. We must reform our community. Let us resolve to fight along with Ambedkar. He speaks nothing but the truth. Let’s follow him to the end. This is what I say.’ (Kamble, p.65)

They wanted to educate their children, they wanted to follow everything Ambedkar had suggested to reform their community. They had agreed to follow Ambedkar till the end.

‘My, my that Ambedkar! What a dynamic young man he is!’ (Kamble, p.66)

Kamble’s grandparents repeated Ambedkar’s words they described him as a dynamic young man, he had got his education from abroad, and he was a like a white sahib, tall, fair, and had a big forehead. They felt as if the governor was getting out of the car. His speech asked the Mahar community to educate all the Mahar children, he

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had asked them to stop eating dead animals, and asked Mahars not to believe in God or religion and only by this he could reform their community:

‘Why do you want us to put our children in schools? Are they going to become teachers? Or are they going to become Brahmins?’  
(Kamble, p.67)

You survived on the morsels of the army where you served! But we are the real Mahars. We will last forever. God has drawn a line for us and you want us to cross it? Listen, we are born for this work. That’s our sacred duty. Why should we give up our religion, our duty? We are the real original and pure Mahars!’

‘No, no. for us what our ancestors did is the right thing.’ (Kamble, p.67)

Many Mahar who was orthodox did not like the ideas and the things Ambedkar had said in his speeches. They did not want to educate their kids; they questioned Kamble’s grandfather whether by educating the children the kids would become teachers or turn Brahmins. According to them they had to remain in the lane that was designed by God. To them they were born to do their sacred duty and that work and suffering made them the true Mahars. To them whatever their ancestors did was the right thing.

Kamble’s Aaja countered angrily, ‘listen Tatya, if you want to worship those gods of yours, you are free to do so. But why ruin the lives of young people?’ Kamble’s grandfather told Tatya that it was fine if the man wanted to continue worshipping these gods but he also made it clear that meant they should ruin the lives of the younger generation of their community.

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## 2. INTERPRETATION

‘Appasab, could you please give this despicable Mahar woman some shikakai for one paisa and half a shell of dry coconut with dry skin’

(Kamble,p.13)

A Mahar woman would stand near a shop waiting for the shopkeeper, she would address the shopkeeper reverentially and politely and she would beg him with humility to sell her the things she wanted. She would address him as ‘Appasab’ and call herself a ‘despicable Mahar woman’. This shows how the woman identified herself with the shopkeeper.

The kids of the shopkeeper would be doing their morning ablutions while the Mahar woman was still around the shopkeeper would ask his kids ‘can’t you see the dirty Mahar woman standing there? Now, don’t you touch her. Keep your distance.’

(Kamble, p.14).

‘Take care, little master! Please keep a distance. Don’t come too close.

You might touch me and get polluted.’ (Kamble, p.14)

The Mahar woman would ask those kids to keep their distance and not come close to her to avoid pollution. She accepted the superiority of the shopkeeper by confirming the caste system and hierarchy.

We had to fight with cats and dogs and kites and vultures to establish our right over the carcasses, to tear off the flesh from the dead bodies.

(Kamble, p.49)

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Whenever there was a dead body the Mahars were overjoyed to find meat but to get to that piece of meat or carcass they had to ward off the cats, dogs, and vultures who too wanted a bite of the rotting meat. This shows how the Mahars were humanized and it was made to seem that they had to eat dead rotten meat. It was expected of them to establish their right before the other animals.

‘The humble Mahar women fall at your feet master.’ (Kamble, p.52) This was a general way for a lower caste to address a man from a higher caste it was their way of establishing their superiority over the lower caste. And if someone had failed to address a higher caste man, they then would question the whole community in Mahar chawdi, they would beat up them and interrogate-

‘Who just tell me, who the hell is that new girl? Doesn’t she know that she has to bow down to the master? Shameless bitch! How dare she pass me without showing due respect?’ (Kamble, p.52)

The higher caste man would abuse the girl by calling her a shameless bitch and questioning why she did not respect him. The elders of the group would try to protect her by saying that she is a new animal, foolish and arrogant and even the father-in-law of the girl would offer to fall to the higher caste man’s legs just because the Mahar girl had not addressed the man.

‘No, no kind master! That girl is a new animal in the herd! Quite foolish and ignorant. If she has erred, I, her sasra, fall at your feet, but please forgive us for this crime.’

‘No! You Mahars are transgressing your limits. It is all this food that you get free of cost that has made you forget your place, isn’t it? But listen

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carefully. Next time, if anybody passes by me without bowing, you've had it! No mercy would be shown to you any longer. What do you take us for? Are we Mahars like you or do you take us for naïve children? Daring to pass by me without bowing! Think twice before doing such thing again!' (Kamble, p.53)

No matter how respectable the Mahars addressed the higher caste they would reciprocate with words like shameless slut, the higher caste man would tell the Mahars that they were transgressing their limits and if anybody dared to do something like this again no mercy would be shown. He would warn them to think twice before doing such thing again.

Everyone would beg him again, 'no, no, master, we will not let such a thing happen again! Please forgive us this time.' (Kamble, p.53) The Mahar begs him to forgive them, and they would address him as master.

The father-in-law would abuse the girl - 'you bitch, Paru, will you allow us to stay in this village or not? Do you know what havoc you've caused today? Do you know how terrible it was for me today? The whole village has started spitting on my face. We eat their food, don't we? Should we pass by them without bowing? Do your parents belong to the kolhati caste? Don't they have this custom of bowing down before the masters of their village' this seemed like they had to face severe repercussions just because she forgot to address a higher caste man in a way that was decided by the society. The whole village would cut off her in-laws from their society the power that the higher caste yielded to the lower castes made their life extremely difficult.

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Even the sasu or the mother-in-law would sarcastically taunt the girl by saying, - 'her father must be a Patil, you know, that's why she behaving so! What does she know about our customs! Impudent bitch! They are our masters, do you understand? We must behave according to our customs, that's our religion! Was your mother a she-donkey that you behave so? Didn't she teach you anything? Your sasra moves among respectable people and you have blackened his face!' (Kamble,p.54) by not addressing a higher caste on time the girl was blamed to have not just disrespected the higher caste man, but also blackened her in-law's face.

The higher caste women would buy wood from the Mahar women they would instruct them – 'Listen carefully, you dumb Mahar women, check the sticks well. If you overlook any of the threads sticking to the wood, there will be a lot of trouble. But what's that to you? Your carelessness will cost us heavily. Our house will get polluted. Then we will have to polish the floor with cow dung and wash all our clothes, even the rags in the house! Such trouble we'll have to undergo for your foolishness! And how will the gods tolerate this, tell me? They too will be polluted, won't they? That's why I'm telling you, check the sticks well!' (Kamble, p.55) the higher caste woman would claim that if they found any of their hair or clothing stuck to the woods that would end up polluting the house and gods. The practice seemed to be completely irrational.

The Mahar women would check all the bundles thoroughly and would say, 'kaki, we have taken out every strand of hair and thread from the sticks. Each stick has been checked. Have we gone mad that we will pollute your house? You are god's people. Don't we know even that?' the Mahar woman would call them god's people and they wouldn't dare to pollute the house of the higher castes.

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The Mahar children, curious about things lying in the kaki's courtyard, would try to move around and touch them. But with just one step forward, the kaki would scream, 'these idiotic Mahar women! Hey you, why do you bring these brats along? They'll touch things and pollute everything. Tell them to sit quietly.' (Kamble,p.55)

The kids would be asked to sit in a place because their touch was considered polluting. This identity of pollution was built in a Mahars mind from childhood.

They had never expected their own man to arrive in a car, dressed in European clothes. (Kamble, p.64)

'How come these Brahmin and Maratha girls are able to go and see the god's idol? We should see him at least once.' Then another friend, Gulbakawali would vehemently object, 'no! Never! how can you pollute God? (Kamble, p.130)

Then yet another girl Ulka would retort, 'stop it! That's rubbish. Had these gods been real, do you think our Ambedkar would have challenged them?' Ulka was the daughter of Shankar Kakade who had thrown away all his gods.

Another girl Bagad would assert, 'come what may, we must see what this god ram looks like.' I supported her enthusiastically, 'yes, let's face whatever happens. Let's pollute ram at least once. Even, at the cost of death.' Satu exclaimed, 'yes, let us do it. Baby is right!' (Kamble, p.130)

Ambedkar had urged in his speeches to educate the children and spend one percent of their earnings on the betterment of poor children and by this, they would benefit the community. This would help them in organizing themselves and give direction to their struggle. He believed that this task would be carried out by the woman of their community. 'Educate your children. They, in turn, should spend one



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percent of their salary on improving a lot of poor children. Only then will their education benefit the community and the generation next to theirs will be educated. Once they are educated, they can organize themselves and find out various ways of directing the struggle. And I am sure my sisters and mothers will carry out this task with an iron resolve' (Kamble, p.135).

The above advice of Ambedkar was very inspiring statement and it helped Dalits to achieve social mobility and the guiding force to emancipation. This is how we can see- Words possessing power. Kamble as a Dalit writer is self analytical and critical

### **3. EXPLANATION**

The custom was to offer the eldest son to the mother goddess. That was important. He would be called potraja. (Kamble,p.8) at the same time, it is seen how the eldest son was given or rather assigned as potraja, a potraja was the one who used to go out and beg for the family. For the Mahars and Dalits, this was a very respectable opportunity because they associated it with their standing with the higher castes. They did not understand that this was making them dependent on the higher castes for acquiring food and resources.

'Their great-grandfathers, it seems, had traveled as far as the Konkan region! They bought these gods from those faraway places. Such demanding and strict gods! What can I tell you about them! They can immediately make out everything you know. Since their old man passed away, these gods possess the young man' (Kamble, p.9).

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The old Mahars believed that the greater number of gods they had the more blessed their house was. In their culture, they believed many superstitions like gods possessing a human being. They believed that these gods were strict and demanding. This shows the mindset of the people who were willing to believe in these kinds of rituals and culture.

‘Of all the months in the year, Ashadh was their favorite month. The Mahars considered this their own month... it was a month of comfort, of sweet food!’ (Kamble, p.12)

Among many cultures the Mahars considered ashadh as their favorite during this period; they would get access to whatever they liked. They would get more work because it was a month of house cleaning, ritual baths, and polishing the floors with dung. They would get the required sources in that one month while for the other eleven months, they would starve.

‘o yes, yes, that’s right. But let me tell you, saru, your father-in-law was a Vaghya of the same god. You know how much he used to earn! He used to return from his collection round, his rusted bones creaking, his back bent double, with heavy bags of food hanging from his shoulders. Even the neighbors used to survive on that food... (Kamble,p.17)

The culture in which an individual called vaghya was possessed by God. He would get more money from these rituals and begging; he would get enough food that the neighbors would also survive on that food.

These rituals were, in a sense, an outlet for their oppressed souls. This was how they tried to find some solace in their terrible lives. It was to the

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Hindu gods that they prayed for deliverance from their suffering.

(Kamble, p.18)

The rituals were a form of hope for the Mahars even though the Hindu philosophy had discarded them as dirt and had thrown them in dirty outskirts. They held the Hindu rituals with respect. No one tried to understand the Mahars. They hoped that they too could also live like the upper castes and enjoy wealth. The upper castes kept a tight leash on the Mahars.

They were fearful that if they loosened their hold the suppressed Mahar's spring up in revolt and break the domination of the upper castes.

The rituals of possession were outlets for the Mahar's oppression. By doing this they would find solace in their horrible lives. They would pray to Hindu gods hoping that their prayers get answered one day.

'Yet, we kept believing in your Hindu religion and serving faithfully.'

(Kamble, p.37)

These rituals that consisted of gods possessing made the whole Mahar community sink into these horrible superstitions. Mahars were not allowed to acquire knowledge by the upper castes because of this they spent their lives living with those superstitions they rotted and perished by believing in the Hindu religion and serving the superstitions that were a fabrication of the higher castes to control the Mahars.

'The goddess Ambabai specially favours the house that offers her a girl as Jogtin.' (Kamble, p.68)

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Mahar Parents discarded the loincloth for their children and started dressing them up in pajamas. Children got used to the new attire. They started cutting the hair of their daughters. This style of haircut was called English bal. Parents began to admit their children to schools. And ‘Gradually, the wind of Ambedkar’s thoughts turned into a whirlwind. Everybody began to understand, argue and consider.’ (Kamble, p.69)

When the Mahar went on their begging round, he would feel great pride in the sheep-wool blanket that was on his shoulder with his belled stick. ‘His chest would swell with pride. He would twirl his mustache and clear his throat as if he was a very important man. Then he would stride forward, beating his stick on the ground with great flourish.’ The stick he has was like a ‘royal staff and the blanket on his shoulder, the black coat of a barrister.’ But as soon as he entered the village, ‘his chest would deflate like a balloon and he would shuffle around as inconspicuously as possible so as not to offend anyone from the higher castes.’ (Kamble, p.75) this showed us that the Mahar had identified himself with a symbol of respect and honor in his community. But once he entered the village the same sense of pride and honor would turn to shame.

The Yesker would be responsible for taking care of the welfare of higher castes of the villages, whether it was a wedding or other work the Yesker would arrange each and everything for them with humility, he would bend before the master, saying ‘jeedhani, jeedhani.’ The master would command him, ‘look here Ghurya, the feast is over. First, sweep the pandal clean. Then you can take away those two baskets of leftover food.’ (Kamble, p.76). The higher castes had established a delusion

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amongst the Mahars ‘that the Yeskar’s stick was like a royal staff’. And each Yeskar considered this stick as ‘a mark of honor for his family.’ (Kamble, p.77)

The Yesker had to stand with his back bent and greet anybody passed their way, including children. He was to bend down till his head touched his knees and join his palms together and say- ‘Johar mai bap’ three times, and then touch his head with his palms in salutation. (Kamble, p.78).

‘You bastard, tell us quickly! What happened? Why are you stammering, you fool? Is your father dead or what?’

‘...no, no, master...’ frightened, the poor man would try to break the news, ‘you’re your...er...taisaab...has passed away...’ (Kamble, p.79)

The Yesker was the one who was supposed to give or pass on messages from one place to another. If someone had died the Yesker would have to pass on that message. The Yesker would be scolded or abused whenever he came to give any bad message. The Yesker would try to break the bad news as smoothly as possible.

The Mahar girls who started to go to schools were constantly called and abused some of the higher caste girls would call out - ‘Hey you, Mahar women, shoo, shoo, stand at a distance. Don’t touch anything. You will pollute us and our gods and religion.’ (Kamble, p.80) how was it possible that people getting educated still had their backward mindset. How could a touch pollute anything or anyone. The Mahar girls had to live with this kind of mindsets.

People were mesmerized by baba. They would constantly speak about him, his personality and his qualities. Our young minds were absorbed.

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Baba's various names- Dr. Ambedkar, Bhimrao, Babasaheb- became holy chat for us. (Kamble, p.106)

Ambedkar was a big image among the Mahars he was the first individual to reach a position that was ideal for all correct reasons. Ambedkar was educated and well dressed and had urged his people to reform. He was a well-celebrated ideal individual.

These Mahar girls put on such airs. They have even touched the taps! Now, where should we drink water from? Stupid things!' (Kamble, p.108)

The higher caste Hindus would keep on trying to create dismay and insult them by saying. They would call Ambedkar by different names to trigger them-

'That Ambedkar has educated himself, that's why these dirty Mahars are showing off! That filthy Mahar, Ambedkar, eats dead animals but look at the airs he gives himself!' (Kamble, p.109)

And in retaliation, the Mahar girls would insult the higher caste girls by abusing Gandhi,

'You shaven widows, how dare you take our Ambedkar's name! You have your own Baldy, that stupid Gandhi! He has neither a shirt on his body, nor teeth in his mouth! That toothless old bugger hasn't any teeth! Ha haha!' (Kamble, p.109)

After teasing those girls, they would mock them by singing a song from their Jalsa:

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Where's Gandhi's spinning wheel gone?

Bhim has shaved Gandhi's head off. (Kamble, p.109)

Gandhi became an image for the higher castes and caste Hindus whereas Ambedkar became the image of Dalits and Mahars. There existed a constant fight between the two groups. The higher caste would taunt the lower caste and they would do the same.

'Our new year', they said, 'will be on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April. We will raise our Gudhi on this day, hang banners, wear new clothes, and cook sweet chapatis in each house.' (Kamble, p.111)

The Mahars even changed their new year to the birthday of Ambedkar they started to raise their temple and banners, cook sweet chapattis and buy and wear new clothes on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April. They changed and built their holiday around this date.

What a shameless god! How I'm fed up with him!

The stink of Abir and Gulal, friend, has made me lose my appetite

The sounds of the Taal and Mridung make any head ache so!

Why should I see this, Vithoba? He is nothing but a black stone!

(Kamble,p.112)

We have to forge unity in the Boudhdha community. (Kamble, p.113-114)

The Mahars started to write new songs that detested the old gods that subjugated them and confirmed them to age-old practices of the caste system. They moved towards Buddhism and its teachings. Once Ambedkar converted to Buddhism others

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followed him. They believed that the Mahars and Dalits could get united into a Buddhist community. They questioned- ‘Why did Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar convert to Buddhism? Buddhism means good character.’ (Kamble, p.117)

‘But look at yourself! Though baba did so much for all of you, you, who call yourselves intelligent, have just discarded his thoughts. Your children have not even the foggiest idea of who Dr. Ambedkar was, and who Buddha was! You are teaching your children to believe in God! There is an explosion of ritual fasts in your families on days of sankashti Chaturthi, Saturdays, Thursday--- you observe fasts on so many days! Bhīma made you, and you rub your noses before the very gods that he taught us to discard. Ganesh, Lakshmi---how many gods and goddesses do you introduce your children to? That is precisely what your ancestors did too: they wasted their lives rubbing their noses on those stone steps outside the temples! Which God ever took mercy upon them? And yet, once again, you have chosen to become slaves of the same gods. You are inculcating the same culture in your children! You have simply wiped off Baba’s name. All the educated amongst us have forgotten Baba because they are basking in the false glory of their so-called greatness. (Kamble, p.118-119)

Baba was like the sun; we can at least try to be like the fireflies.  
(Kamble, p.119)

Here Baba meant Dr.BR Ambedkar his work towards the betterment of his community and the oppressed was remarkable. With the help of education, he was able to make his and his community’s life better. According to Kamble the



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achievements and the work done by baba made him like the ‘sun’ and one should aspire to at least become fireflies.

These are the examples that are used in analyzing by description, interpretation and explanation. The whole autobiography brings out elements such as ritualistic practices, narratives, naming and calling that is significant in Critical discourse analysis.

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## CHAPTER – IV

### NAMING, CALLING AND IDENTITY IN *MY FATHER BALIAH* BY Y. B. SATYANARAYANA

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The chapter deals with critical discourse analysis of '*My Father Baliah*' by Y.B Satyanarayana. The inhuman practice of untouchability put out in this autobiography showcases how internally it is imbedded and propagated by the people belonging to the same society. But this also brings out how kindness was expressed by many/some teachers and friends belonging to other communities. A Dalit woman waiting with a pot near a tank to get it filled by someone as they are forbidden to touch any water bodies in fear of pollution talks at great length and deals with the severity of untouchability. The derogatory suffixes and calls that were attached to the name of people belonging to an untouchable community were a result to keep their community appearing low or last status in the caste system.

From bonded labour to social oppression denoted by 'I am your slave; I touch your feet.' One can understand the language appellation. The salutations and greetings or rather the conventional salutations that were forced on the untouchable community to address the upper castes represented their stand/position in society. It was a method to build social distances and distinction segregation in society.

Especially in the autobiography, there are references to how railways played an important role in helping the community to overcome their economic status but S.R Sankaran in his foreword to this autobiography states that even though there have

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experiences in railway colonies the colony consisted of mixed castes but it was evident that the gangs, point men, and shunters were from lower castes and other station master and railway guards belonged to upper castes. This autobiography brings all aspects of a Dalit family's struggle to succeed in their life.

British rule offered new opportunities to the untouchable communities as they were offered jobs in the army, railroad, mines, and mills. They were offered jobs that otherwise were not taken up by people belonging to higher castes these jobs would be hazardous/dangerous and most importantly they were based on notions of caste pollution.

Living in railway quarters made a way for Dalits to gain a liberating experience as once those who were treated as outcasts of society were living in the same quarters.

The Autobiography starts with Narsiah of Vangapalli AndhraPradesh great grandfather of Y B Satyanarayana gifting a pair of shoes that were made by him on seeing that Nizam gifts him fifty acres but the local Dora does not give him fifty acres instead gives him just two acres but Narsiah becomes happy that he got two acres of land during that time it was problematic and rare to own property by a Dalit. It was a situation wherein even though the government declared the land to the SC /ST community they would not be allowed to cultivate it because of the local Dora or the socio-cultural restrictions.

In the autobiography, the author gives an elaborative description of the social and physical structure of his village. The author talks about the Indian villages that consisted of two types of dwellings of Varna and avarna communities that were separated by a boundary or a wall just to avoid pollution towards the caste Hindus

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from the casteless untouchables. Untouchable houses were built in the east so that even the wind that comes from the west would come through the caste Hindus first. From the house being built in ascending order.

It appears that the Yelukati family started to get an education from a Muslim teacher and how they were denied the right to education for so many centuries. Their father Narsiah did not want his child to become a bonded laborer in the village. His decision to migrate from his village of all the harassment by the higher castes changed the future of not just his generation but also future generations.

Baliah and Narsiah built a life out of hard work. He provided education to his children and the job that they got in the railways relieved them from feudal oppressions. The real problem was how the caste system followed them a social stigma connected to the caste in the city, from concealing the caste while studying and searching for a house to rent to working in our official site or situation.

Its emphasis on the role caste had and how education paved the way to bring about a transformed consciousness to the Dalits and changed them and helped them in liberating themselves. It is bringing out the whole existential situation about people belonging to a community who are willing to struggle and achieve in their lives.

These narratives not only talk about the oppressions that existed but also inspire others from the community to strive to overcome their difficulties and impediments.

The autobiography starts with vamsha-vriksha. Vamsha vriksha is a method of tracing one's lineage and building a family tree. Unlike other Dalit autobiographies which had not made any attempt to record their ancestors or their family. This

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autobiography with its rather painful past relives all the harassment and oppression and traces their ancestors. One should understand that this community did belong to a community that was kept away from education. They did not record their part of history. But by using vamsha vriksha this autobiography identifies their families and their ancestors and commemorates their family's struggles as they suffered to achieve a respectful life!

We see these autobiographies as a form of linguistic practice that is used in self-defining and defining their community just like how royal family lines and trees are made, we see an educated Dalit drawing his family tree to have vamsha vriksha like in Puranas.

Adopting the narrative strategies of upper-caste privileged section Y.B Satyanarayana is not only challenging and revolting the mainstream literature but also establishing a lineage.

In '*My Father Baliah*' the conversation and the calling can be seen with differences in the way and the hierarchy that exists are visible such as when Narsiah gets land as a gift from the Nizam his Dora gets angry because how can a Madiga own such a large plot of land? Before he gets to tell his wife anything he is called by his Dora and he sees Dora's house he starts to curse himself for gifting shoes to Dora and how this gift of fifty acres may turn out to be a disaster for him.

We see how the society and the caste power structure is the hierarchy and the power yielded by the higher caste and Dora was considered to be the highest even though Nizam gifted Narsiah was afraid of Dora's anger. We see that Dora calls Narsiah 'you son of a bitch, untouchable pig!'

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This shows that they have supremacy and a sense of privilege by calling untouchables like that by calling so they are not only dehumanizing a human being but a method of harassing them. Dora shouts and he asks how he 'dare' to present a gift to Dora and receive his present in form of land and we see Narsiah reply in a very respectful and fearful manner.

'Neegulaponni, Dora, I am your slave. How could I dare to do that! I am at your mercy; I live at your feet; forgive me'.

This shows that they were stigmatized and controlled in the name of their caste. They are made to feel ashamed of their existence to control them and are not allowed to own land. Their status and position in society are only identified with the word untouchable.

Then Dora goes about asking Narsiah if he wanted to become a landlord and start sitting beside Dora. Stating this meant that he was not supposed to own land especially not as much as the Dora. Dora maintained the hierarchy and saw that the untouchables did not own the land and that their position was intact.

But then Narsiah goes about to tell Dora:

"No, no Dora how can I commit such a sin? An untouchable like me can never become a landlord. God will punish me. I will go blind! you are my lord, Dora!"

This shows that Narsiah and his community believed that to own land was considered to be a sin and to sit beside their Dora was also a sin and an untouchable like Narsiah could never become a landlord he is not just conforming to the ideologies and his society that an untouchable can never become independent they were made to

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believe that if they owned land, god would not only turn them blind but also punish them and they were also ingrained the Dora was their 'lord'.

Only after this, the Dora calms down and mercifully he says to Narsiah 'bastard, take two acres from that gifted land and cultivate it for your family' By this the Dora expresses his mercy not only he calls Narsiah a bastard but also he permits Narsiah to take the two acres of land from the fifty acres which were gifted to the Narsiah by the Nizam. Soon after this Dora turns to his clerk and asks him to take the rest of the land as theirs.

Instead of feeling cheated and hurt Narsiah feels relieved because he was able to retain two acres and avoided the wrath of Dora as Dora had not beaten him. So, this fear and power are experienced and subjugated by conversation and the language used.

We see various conversations between untouchable communities. They seem cordial in the dialect, the culture is not just unique but, in a way, it celebrates the community. Marriages and festivals meant everything to them, especially in Vangapalli. There was a feudal community of the Velamma caste who not only hoarded major land but were chiefs around/of many villages they were the ones who collected the revenue and filled Nizam's treasury they were the Doras. Dora's word was everything he was considered the perpetrator of the law. Dora knew every single individual in the village.

He had power like one in the village he not only had access to young untouchable girls but every revenue. The untouchables did not even dare to question the other higher caste Hindus they were not to face the Hindus as it meant pollution to

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caste Hindus. So that was one of the reasons why owning land was a big matter, impossible for an untouchable individual.

The significant aspect of the autobiography is that we see that it talks about how untouchables were addressed and how even to this day they are addressed, this way of addressing reflects the societal bias and prejudice attached to the community for centuries.

For example, there is a reference to how if a man belonging to the caste Hindu his name was Malliah it would remain that way but if it belonged to a man from an untouchable family it would become 'Malligadu' so basically the suffix 'iah' is respectable whereas 'gadu' is contemptible similarly Hindu caste Pochamma became Pochi for the untouchables, 'Amma' was respectable and 'i' was disreputable.

Similarly, Satyanarayana talks about how Baliah gets a job and a respectable position in the railways. Officials used to address 'Baliah' rather than 'Baliga' a suffix that was used for subordinates, 'iah' was considered a respectful suffix, and '-ga' was considered a suffix used for a subordinate. Baliah was someone who would object to the subjugation by the higher officials of their subordinates he had once revolted when an assistant stationmaster had called Baliah 'Arey' according to Baliah it was a derogative term (Satyanarayana, p. 78)

Their conversation shows that Baliah was not going to take any abuse or disrespect from any individual even when it came to addressing. This we can compare with his father Narsiah who would stand still in front of Dora while he abused and shouted at him. Narsiah conformed himself as a slave to Dora. But we see Baliah telling his superior officer that he had no right to disrespect him and that both were railway officials and most importantly he was not his slave. Listening to this when



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Mr. John hit Baliah, he got hold of Mr. John's hair and hit him hard. This shows that Baliah was very liberated and aware of his rights.

Satyanarayana talks about one such experience when his friend and classmate Ram Murthy invites him home. Ram Murthy was the son of a Permanent Way Inspector, a class one railway officer, and since Ram Murthy was a Brahmin his family did not let him play or interact with an untouchable boy.

But Ram Murthy and Satyanarayana's friendship was above caste and untouchability and both of them were innocent and young. One afternoon Ram Murthy forced Satyanarayana to his home despite his resistance as they sat on the sofa and as they were playing and jumping on the sofa the Brahmin cook addressed Satyanarayana as a 'dirty pig.'

'You dirty pig you untouchable! get off! How dare you sit by our baba?' It was the Brahmin cook roaring.

And when Ram Murthy asks why he was shouting and asks his friend to leave the cook replies by saying:

'He is untouchable! Go and bathe or I shall tell your father! And has Ramamurthy chases his cook he runs away saying.

'Don't touch me, babu you are polluted! Go and take a bath'  
(Satyanarayana, p.104)

This showed that no matter what happened even though the children were innocent their minds would be corrupted by the adults to maintain the hierarchy and segregation. To do so they would have been called 'dirty pigs' and 'untouchable' to

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make them feel that their presence is dirty and that even if they touched or walked into a house it would get polluted.

Satyanarayana gets angry and wonders how he caused pollution and recalls that this was not the first time that he had faced humiliation. Many a time he had observed the caste Hindus ill-treating and insulting him. But Satyanarayana had many best friends who were Brahmins and this was the reason why his brothers called him 'Pantulu' another word for Brahmin. And whenever somebody enquired about their caste Baliah would use the word 'Harijan.' Even though he was a proud man who did not believe in insubordination he was quite upset with the practice of untouchability. But he knew that it was a part of the society and its system he was not someone who looked outside the civil society of railways.

Then Baliah was transferred to the city where his elder son was working. He decided to move to the city where he thought it would be possible to give his children a better education. Unlike other untouchable families, Baliah would keep a strict leash on his children, and their studies. As soon as he reached the city the place where he was staying, he had some friends who told him that there were certain rules in this place. Each line had a tap and the water came for a certain period every 6 am but in their line, there was a man named Tulsiram who worked in Train Examiner Department and only after he had used the water others could touch it. But Baliah was curious he asked- "why? Is it his property?"

Baliah insisted that his sons would be the first ones to keep the vessels for water early. Tulsiram who saw that kicked away the vessels and roared.

'Who the hell?'

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We see Baliah revolting against the practice he is not just saying this to avoid the situation but rather he is revolting against the practice as well as the injustice.

But one of the most important aspects is naming in this autobiography is when Satiah gets called by his headmaster while he was studying in Telugu medium here his headmaster tells. By this, we can understand how important naming is. Satyanarayana was happy that his headmaster was giving such personal interest in him and his name. The headmaster was known to show interest in his pupils and sometimes with the permission of their parents he would change their names as well because mostly the names gave out the caste identity in Satiah's case the – 'iah' suffix gave out his untouchable caste identity before one of his classmates named 'simham' whose name meant lion was changed to Narasimham a Hindu god's name as these names would be sent to the board of secondary schools and from ninth standard Satiah became Satyanarayana.

In one such instance, Satyanarayana talks about how after his graduation taken up a job as a teacher in a village. He had lied about his caste and kept hidden because it would have made it difficult for him to find a place in the village. He had said that he was a Tenuga sudra community and the people of the Tenuga community visited him frequently and enquired about his family. Satyanarayana was very much anxious about what would happen if ever they found him belonging to an untouchable community, they would have to drive him out of the village.

Another important incident is when Narsing Rao, Satyanarayana's brother falls in love with a Brahmin girl named Varamahalakshmi and she runs away from her home and arrives in front of Balaraja's house she reveals that Narsing Rao loved her and promised to marry and at that moment he enquires about her caste and when she

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reveals that she is a Brahmin. Balaraja gets angry and asks his father to send her out but Baliah says that they should give her shelter as she is helpless to which Balaraja says: ‘so what? We shouldn’t give shelter to an unmarried girl! What will our community think of us? I have unmarried brothers!’

This shows that Balaraja was worried about how it would affect their family as well as the community they were quite evident that marrying a Brahmin girl into an untouchable family would lead to turmoil moreover the caste identity would have influenced this event. But Baliah managed it just like an Ambedkarite even though he had not yet heard about him. He had refused to send the girl away. According to Satyanarayana, he was better than some claimed Ambedkarite intellectuals who revolted against inter-caste marriages.

When his mother enquired about the caste of Varamahalakshmi she was shocked. She came to Baliah and asked- ‘Balaraja, this girl is a Brahmin; should we marry her to our son? Think of our community think of us if she is married to our son?’ (Satyanarayana, p.185). Even though the mother was worried as it was similar to Balaraja’s thoughts this would have been difficult for them to answer their community.

Once the village Patel had come to their home as he had agreed to help Baliah to get their land his name was Narasimha Rao when they questioned who it was. Baliah replied ‘he is our village, Patel. When I met him in our village, he promised to help us.

‘How can he stay with us untouchable’ my mother asked innocently Patels belonged to a higher caste’

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‘No one knows him in this place, and he is a nice man,’ said Baliah.

So apart from the social system when no one was around it was evident that prejudices about each other caste were very much common. Mother was quite surprised as to how could a man belonging to a higher caste could stay with the untouchables. Patel was a good person he was treated well by Baliah and his family.

As Patel agreed to support Baliah to get his share of land even after so many years of them going out of their village and away from slavery and the evil practice of untouchability there are languages still the way they talk to each other even in this instance they are using the word ‘Dora’. But with time, one can see that the untouchables who were seen as pollution were now addressed with respect and Dora who was an image of hierarchy stayed and ate at Baliah’s house.

In 1979 while he was working in a college Satyanarayana had his share of problems with his Brahmin colleagues. One of the lecturers from the neighboring college named Satyanarayana and also a Madiga came into informing one of the incidents that showcased the mentality of certain people such as the Botany lecturer Reddy of Satyanarayana College. He had gone and told him that he was forced to work under a Madiga to which Satyanarayana took off his sandal and was about to slap him but somebody stopped him.

Another incident was when his library assistant made a comment saying that a Madiga was incapable of leading a staff this did not anger Satyanarayana but it disturbed him a bit and made him think how even after so many years of struggle by Ambedkar still the caste Hindu mentality had not changed according to Y.B.Satyanarayana ‘it was upper caste arrogance, the varna system that made him speak thus’ (Satyanarayana,p.196).

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Ambedkar had told ‘I came into the Constituent Assembly with no greater aspiration than to safeguard the interests of SCs’ while drafting the constitution. After being reminded of this he decided to teach the library assistant a lesson he made him sit at the door and he was to come whenever Satyanarayana rang the bell. This continued for six months. When the assistant understood that he was fit to be his boss and he fell to Satyanarayana's legs realizing his mistake. It can be noticed that education reversed the positions of an untouchable and a caste Hindu. For centuries it was believed that an untouchable’s place was at the legs of caste Hindus but here all the roles have reversed.

In 1982 there was an orientation course at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration. About fifty principals including Y.B. Satyanarayana attended. It was an opportunity for sharing and understanding various innovative ideas in educational administration. He was one of the youngest principals in India.

During a debate about the emancipation of SC and ST students, it was observed that the caste Hindus' attitude was not so good. Instead of talking about their grievances, their socio-economic sufferings, untouchability and segregation, and how long the reservations should continue, the debate deviated from those issues and one of the principals made those previous comments this shows the overall tone of the majority. But Satyanarayana overcame all this hurdles and succeeded in creating his own identity and name in the society.

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## **Critical Discourse Analysis of *My Father Baliah* using Fairclough's three-dimensional method.**

The three levels of analysis are:

1. Description
2. Interpretation
3. Explanation

### **1. DESCRIPTION**

The first aspect of the critical discourse analysis is to understand the description aspect of the autobiography. One has to understand why the author selected the title '*My Father Baliah*' for the title. This selection of title has various assumptions attached to it. Firstly it gives a sense of intimate relationship shared by the author and his father. Secondly the author is giving a tribute to his family and community. Lastly it is his way of establishing his lineage into the past, present and future.

'A village has the perfect Hindu caste set up with the characteristics features codified by Manu. It has two types of dwellings, thinkers' houses and a thinker's huts separated by either a boundary or a well maintained distance' (Satyanarayana, p. 4)

This village setup shows that the hierarchy and the segregation was well maintained and accepted. Nobody questioned and each and every one could make out which house belonged to whom. It was built on the basis of Manu's rules and codes for the society. Narsiah even talks about the toddy tappers practicing untouchability

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with him they were asked to maintain distance while buying toddy. The toddy tappers would take their money by sprinkling water.

‘...Narsiah suddenly found himself owning land and a lot of it! Could he ever take possession of it? How? he ran to inform his wife, but then halted and stood rooted to the ground for a few seconds when a man called him saying, ‘Arey Narsiga, the Dora is calling you!’ he turned towards Dora’s house, cursing himself for presenting shoes to the Nizam. The gift might bring disaster upon him! As he approached him, Narsiah could see Dora’s fury: his face had turned red’ (Satyanarayana, p.5)

In ‘*My father Baliah*’ conversation and calling are significant as they show the hierarchy that exists in terms of the language used. When Narsiah gets land as a gift from the Nizam his Dora gets angry because how can a Madiga own such a large plot of the land? Before he gets to tell his wife anything he is called by his Dora and he sees Dora’s house he starts to curse himself for gifting shoes to Nizam and how this gift of fifty acres may turn out to be a disaster to him.

We see how the society and the caste power structure are the hierarchy and the power yielded by the higher caste and Dora was considered to be the highest even though Nizam gifted the land to Narsiah, he was still afraid of Dora’s anger for receiving it. We see that Dora calls Narsiah- ‘you son of a bitch, untouchable pig! How dare you present a gift?’

This shows that Dora is showing his supremacy and showing a sense of privilege by calling untouchables ‘pig’ and by calling them so they are not only dehumanizing human beings but also harassing them. The Dora shouts and asks how



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he 'dares' to present a gift to Nizam and receive his present in form of land. Even after being called a pig, we see Narsiah reply in a very respectful and fearful manner.

'Nee gulaponni, Dora, I am your slave. How could I dare to do that! I am at your mercy; I live at your feet; forgive me'. (Satyanarayana,p.5)

This not only means that he is accepting his subordination but also accepting the hierarchy. He confirms and identifies himself as Dora's slave and that he is at his mercy and that he would fall to his feet, Narsiah apologizes to Dora with a bent head and folded hands his tone of voice is low this shows that he is showing respect. But the Dora again addresses and calls him as:

'You bastard, you are untouchable! What will you do with fifty acres of land?

'Do you want to become a landlord and start sitting beside me?'  
(Satyanarayana, p.5)

This shows that their caste is used as a method to shame and control them. They were not allowed to own land and their status in society was never to change more than what they were born with as untouchable. This meant that Narsiah was not supposed to own land especially not as much as the Dora. The Dora maintained the hierarchy and saw that the untouchables did not own the land and their position remained intact.

But then Narsiah goes about to tell Dora

'No, no Dora how can I commit such a sin? An untouchable like me can never become a landlord. God will punish me. I will go blind! You are my lord, Dora!' (Satyanarayana, P.5)

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This shows that Narsiah and his community believed that to own land was considered to be a sin and to sit beside their Dora was also a sin and an untouchable like Narsiah could never become a landlord he is not just conforming to the ideologies and his society that an untouchable can never become independent they were made to believe that if they owned land, God would not only turn them blind but also punish them and they were also ingrained the Dora was their 'lord'. Only after this, the Dora calms down and mercifully he says to Narsiah:

'Bastard, take two acres from that gifted land and cultivate it for your family'(Satyanarayana, p.5)

By this, Dora expresses his mercy not only does he calls Narsiah a bastard but also, he in a way permits Narsiah to take the two acres of land from the fifty acres which were gifted to Narsiah by the Nizam. Soon after this Dora turns to his clerk and asks him to take the rest of the land as theirs.

Instead of feeling cheated and hurt, Narsiah feels relieved because he was able to retain two acres and also to have avoided the wrath of Dora as Dora had not beaten him. So, this fear, power, experience, and subjugation can be sensed by the conversation and the language used.

But Narsiah's uncle was better off compared to other untouchables:

"Those like his uncles were better off compared to other untouchables who worked as jeetagallu-men would work for the landlord but be paid, in kind, when the landlord felt especially beneficent. Even the way the untouchables were addressed, in fact, are addressed to this day reflects the deep societal bias against them. A caste Hindu whose name is Malliah that

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name remains Malliah, but if he that way but if he belongs to an untouchable community he is called ‘Malligadu’; the suffix ‘iah’ is respectable whereas ‘gadu’ is contemptible. So too among women: the caste Hindu Pochamma became ‘Pochi’ among the untouchables, the venerated ‘amma’ as distinct from the disreputable ‘i.’” (Satyanarayana p.18)

This shows that even the suffixes of names determine an individual’s caste identity. A man belonging to a higher caste would be addressed with an ‘iah’ suffix whereas an individual belonging to a lower community would be addressed with ‘gadu’ whereas in terms of a woman ‘amma’ was more respectable than just the name. This shows how even suffixes are markers of caste and class hierarchy.

But one of the most important aspects is naming in this Autobiography is when Satiah gets called by his headmaster while he was studying in Telugu medium here his headmaster tells.

‘Look Satiah, you are also good at your lessons. You may become a big man in the future. But your name will come in the way to your progress advise you to change your name to Satyanarayana.’ (Satyanarayana p.138)

By this, we can understand how important naming is. Satyanarayana was happy that his headmaster was giving such personal interest in him and his name. The headmaster was known to show interest in his pupils and sometimes with the permission of their parents he would change their names as well because mostly the names gave out the caste identity in ‘Satiah’s’ case the –iah suffix gave out his untouchable caste identity before one of his classmates named Simham who name meant lion was changed to Narasimham a Hindu god’s name as these names would be

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sent to board of secondary schools and from ninth standard Satiah became Satyanarayana.

In one such instance, Satyanarayana talks about how after his graduation taken up a job as a teacher in a village he had lied about his caste and kept hidden because it would have made it difficult for him to find a place in the new village. He had said that he was from a Tenuga Sudra community and the people of the Tenuga community visited him frequently and enquired about his family. Satyanarayana was very much anxious about what would happen if ever they found him belonging to an untouchable community, they would have to drive him out of the village.

## **2. INTERPRETATION**

‘It was a strange situation: untouchables, who were outcastes, and segregated in every village, were suddenly living in the same quarters as sudras! The environment had changed, and now they had the means to learn many things, not about work, but about society, and social structure too. In many ways, it was the British Indian era that opened the doors of development to the untouchables.’(Satyanarayana,p.20)

One can understand the situation through the eyes of Satyanarayana he talks about the status of the untouchables and the sudras who initially kept the untouchables at bay in the villages were suddenly living in the quarters, sharing the same facilities. The environment had changed not just in terms of work but also the society and social structure that were governing the society. He acknowledges the fact that ‘the British Indian era had opened doors of development to the untouchables’.

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When there was nothing to do, he would be found in a corner of the railway platform, reading and people found it very surprising to see an untouchable reading a book. He could write letters to his father-it was amazing; education had somehow trickled down to an untouchable boy in the 1930s to the extent that he could experience the wonder of learning all by himself.

He was discouraged and sometimes even condemned by people of his community, who told him that it was a sin for untouchables to read and write. But the boy never yielded to this pressure and instead often hid from public view while reading. It was this tenacity that in later days fuelled his determination to have his children educated. Though untouchable, Ramaswamy was liked by all caste Hindus for his behavior and punctuality at work.

‘A number of theories were advanced to account for the accident. Relatives attributed it to his reading of books like the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha; they believed that this had brought Baliah bad luck. ‘It was a sin for untouchables to read and write!’ Baliah laughed on hearing this.’  
(Satyanarayana, P.64)

After Baliah had a gruesome accident, his bad luck amounted as a result of his so-called ‘sin’ of being untouchable reading books called Ramayana and Mahabharata. Initially when his grandfather and father were scared of this irrational claim but Baliah laughs at the ignorance of his community who believed it was a sin for untouchables to read and write.

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‘Baliah was happy around his children and spent a lot of time with them. Narsamma gave them special attention and they were always neat and clean. She would dress her children like upper-caste children, with silver bracelets and gold earrings. She looked like a caste Hindu woman herself, but for the tattoos on her hands that had been made when she was very young.

Children wearing gold was a privilege of the upper castes. The untouchables who lived in the railway colony enjoyed the same freedom as the higher castes. There wasn’t any social restriction here. In colonial times, cantonment areas and railway colonies were ‘free zones’ for untouchables, where they could aspire to better social lives, and earn their livelihoods like caste Hindus. The economic opportunities were similar for the touchable and the untouchables.’ (Satyanarayana, p.67-68)

Baliah and his family were an excellent example of how the untouchable families in the railway colony practiced the same cultural and social practices as that which was initially only reserved for higher castes. Narsamma his wife dressed her kids clean and neat, she adorned them with gold and silver ornaments. She dressed and looked like a caste Hindu woman but the tattoos that she had when she was young gave up her caste identity. This shows how these were free zones that gave them equal opportunities without discrimination of touchable and untouchables.

‘Learning in the English medium was difficult at first, but Abbasayulu was an eager learner and picked up the language in a very short time. When he came home during his vacations, he would read his lessons aloud in English. This made Baliah proud and he would repeatedly ask his son to

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read aloud, although he himself understood very little English and did not know how to read or write in the language. When Abbasayulu read, he imagined his son as a station master. His dream of educating his children was slowly coming true.’ (Satyanarayana, p.75)

Baliah always wanted his children to learn and read. For him to listen to his son read English meant that his dream was getting fulfilled. Whenever Abbasayulu used to read his lessons loud, he would imagine his son to be a station master initially their family consisted of points man for family to dream about being a station master shows how times had changed.

Another important incident is when Narsing Rao, Satyanarayana’s brother falls in love with a Brahmin girl named Varamahalakshmi and she runs away from her home and arrives in front of Balaraja’s house she reveals that Narsing Rao loved her and promised to marry each other and at that moment he enquires about her caste and when she reveals that she is a Brahmin.

Balaraja gets angry and asks his father to send her out but Baliah says that they should give her shelter as she is helpless to which Balaraja says.

‘So what? We shouldn’t give shelter to an unmarried girl! What will our community think of us? I have unmarried brothers!’ (Satyanarayana, p.185)

This shows that Balaraja was worried about how it would affect their family as well as the community they were quite evident that marrying a Brahmin girl into an untouchable family would lead to turmoil moreover the caste identity would have influenced this event. But Baliah handled it just like an Ambedkarite even though he

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had not yet heard about him. He had refused to send the girl away. According to Satyanarayana, he was better than some claimed Ambedkarite intellectuals who revolted against inter-caste marriages.

When his mother talked and enquired about her caste she came to Baliah and asked-

‘Balaraja, this girl is a Brahmin; should we marry her to our son? Think of our community think of us if she is married to our son? (Satyanarayana, p.185)

Even though the mother was worried as it was similar to Balaraja’s thoughts this would have been difficult for them to answer their community.

Once the village Patel had come to their home as he had agreed to help Baliah to get their land his name was Narsimha Rao when they questioned who it was Baliah replied:

‘He is our village Patel. When I met him in our village, he promised to help us’

‘How can he stay with us untouchables,’ my mother asked innocently Patels belonged to a higher caste (Satyanarayana, p.163)

‘No one knows him in this place, and he is a nice man said Baliah

‘Satti, who is the man sleeping there?’

‘He is Patel Narsimha Rao from Vangapalli.’

‘What is he doing here?’ He asked in a serious tone.

‘He’s here to help father get back our land.’ (Satyanarayana, p.163)



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My brother was thoughtful as he went into other room to change his clothes.

The Patel stayed with us for three days, enjoying our hospitality and visiting different places in the twin cities. On the last day, he advised my father to go to the village at the earliest and build a hut adjacent to our land. This, he maintained, would strengthen my father's claim to the land.

So apart from the social system when no one was around it was evident that prejudices about each other caste were very much common. Mother was quite surprised as to how could a man belonging to a higher caste probably stay with the untouchables. The Patel was a very good person they were treated well by Baliah and his family Baliah asked:

‘Dora, will they allow me to do so?’ my father asked, a little wary.

‘Why not? I shall personally stand by while you build a hut, and if you live there for a few months shall settle the matter by taking it to the panchayat.

(Satyanarayana, p.163)

As the Patel agreed to support Baliah to get his share of land even after so many years of them going out of their village and away from slavery and the evil practice of untouchability there are languages still the way they talk to each other even now they are using the word ‘Dora’.

But with the change of time, we saw that untouchables who were seen as pollution were now talked to with respect and even people like Dora staying eating at their house was something unheard by no less, a good change.

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Father was very angry, ‘shut up! What do you know? It is our ancestral property; we have every right to it. Do not interfere when the elders are talking!’

‘One thing I lied about was my caste. My brother had suggested that i keep my caste a secret, lest I find no place in the new village. Untouchability was still prevalent and strictly followed in villages. I was to say that I was a Tenugu; a sudra. I took the risk of hiding my caste, which meant that I lived in danger of being found out every day. Villagers belonging to the Tenugu community often visited me and enquired about my family and marital status, some even inviting me to dinner. I would constantly worry that someone would find out that i was an untouchable. Had the villagers known my real caste, at best, they would have driven me out of the village with contempt shudder to think of the worst-case scenario.’  
(Satyanarayana, p.163)

But in 1979 while he was working in a college Satyanarayana had his share of problems with his Brahmin colleagues, one of the lecturers from the neighboring college named Satyanarayana and also a Madiga came into informing one of the incidents that showcased the mentality of certain people such as the Botany lecturer Reddy of Satyanarayana college he had gone and told him that he was forced to work under a Madiga to which Satyanarayana took off his sandal and was about to slap him but somebody stopped him.

But Satyanarayana kept his calm and said ‘friend, do not take this seriously, after all, in this caste-ridden society, antagonism, and intolerance by the higher castes

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does remain. And he is a Reddy; he expects us to remain at his feet. But now, we have a strong weapon; education let us use it' (Satyanarayana,p.195).

Another incident was when his library assistant made a comment saying that a Madiga was incapable of leading a staff this did not anger Satyanarayana. But it disturbed him a bit and made him think how even after so many years of struggle by Ambedkar still the caste Hindu mentality had not changed according to Y B Satyanarayana 'it was upper caste arrogance, the Varna system that made him speak thus' (Satyanarayana,p.196).

Ambedkar had told 'I came into the constituent assembly with no greater aspiration than to safeguard the interests of Scheduled Caste while drafting the constitution after getting reminded of this he decided to teach the library assistant a lesson he made him sit at the door and he was to come whenever Satyanarayana rang the bell this happened for six months that is when the assistant understood that he was fit to be his boss and he fell to Satyanarayana's legs realizing his mistake. We see how education reversed the positions of an untouchable and a caste Hindu. For centuries it was made to believe that an untouchable place was at the legs of caste Hindus but here all the roles have reversed.

In 1982 there was an orientation course at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration nearly fifty principals including Y.B. Satyanarayana were attending it. It was an opportunity for sharing and understanding various innovative ideas in educational administration he was one of the youngest principals in India.

During a debate about the emancipation of SC and ST students, it was observed that the caste Hindu's attitude was not so good. Instead of talking about their

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grievances, their socio-economic sufferings, untouchability and segregation, and how long the reservations should continue, the debate deviated from those issues and one of the principals made these comments.

‘Aap kitni bhi choot de, ye Harijans sudharne vale nahi Hain’ no matter what reservations you provide and however long you extend it, these Harijans are never going to get any better. Their children attend colleges simply to receive the scholarship money. I could see upper caste arrogance in his words; he had not made a single affirmative suggestion and was showing his contempt and hatred against students from the scheduled castes and tribes. I could not restrain myself anymore and said ‘I strongly protest against the remarks made against the Dalit students. They are derogatory and insulting, and if this is the attitude of the principal wonder how his unfortunate and neglected students can expect any social justice.’ (Satyanarayana,p.202).

This shows the mentality to which Y B Satyanarayana was angry and he revolted by saying how he protests against the remarks made against Dalit students. He identifies them as derogatory and insulting. Unlike his forefathers who never questioned anything about the ill-treatment and abuses we see Satyanarayana quote Jyotirao Phule, ‘Let there be schools for the Sudras in every village, but away with all Brahmin school-masters! The Sudras are the life and sinews of the country, and it is to them alone and not to the Brahmins that the government must ever look to tide them over their difficulties, financial as well as political.’

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### 3. EXPLANATION OR SOCIAL PROCESS

We see the conversations between the untouchable communities. They seem cordial in the dialect, the culture is not just unique but, in a way, it celebrates the community, marriages, and festivals meant everything to them. Especially in a Vangapalli, there was a feudal community of the Velamma caste who not only held major land but they were chiefs of many villages.

They collected the revenue and filled Nizam's treasury; they were the Dora's. Dora's word was everything he was considered the perpetrator of the law. The Dora knew every single individual in the village. He had power like no one in the village. He not only had access to young untouchable girls but also to every available revenue.

The untouchables did not even dare to question the other higher caste Hindus they were not to face the Hindus as it meant pollution to caste Hindus. So that was one of the reasons why owning land was a big matter rather impossible for an untouchable individual. The significant aspect of the autobiography is that we see that it talks about how untouchables were addressed and how even to this day they are addressed still to this day and this way of addressing showcases and reflects the societal bias and prejudice attached to the community for centuries.

“But untouchable that he was, he was not allowed to even enter the school.

One day, he said to his father, 'Father, I want to go to school.'

Narsiah looked at his son's innocent face and drawing him close, said.

'Dear child, we are Harijans, they won't teach us'

'But why?'

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‘Because we are untouchables.’

‘So, what shall sit far away? I won’t touch them in school, just as we don’t touch them elsewhere.’

‘But the teacher will not teach you.’

‘But I won’t touch the teacher, either.’

Narsiah had no answer to his son’s argument; he was unable to explain to his son the laws of Manusmriti, that sage Manu had codified everything about the Hindu way of life, and untouchables had, for centuries together, been segregated. Sin and punishment, papamu, and dandana, these are infallible tenets of Hindu laws regarding Sudras and untouchables.

This ideology conditioned the minds of the untouchables to believe that they would be committing a grave sin if they went against this law. According to Manu’s laws, touching caste Hindus amounted to sin, and so did standing or sitting in front of them, and wearing a turban or footwear in front of them.

Narsiah could only say, ‘No son, we are not supposed to write and read. We commit a sin when we do that.’ However, this argument did not satisfy his young son.

This particular conversation talks about the reality of that period when even though the railways provided education and equal opportunities regardless of caste. The trauma attached to caste is inherent. The untouchable communities were fed with quilt and wrong notions of sins concerning education.

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Throughout history, they had accepted their position in society. They explained their status to be a result of the laws that were imposed on them. The irrationality and the caste politics behind these above conversations show how for a long time the untouchables were kept away from education. The concept of ‘sin’ embedded deeply in Narsiah’s mind stopped him from sending his son to school.

After finishing his work at home, Baliah would spend his time watching the school children and their activities from a distance. One day, a mullah who had been observing him for several days came to him and affectionately asked him, ‘do you want to learn writing and reading?’

‘But I am untouchable’, the boy replied.

‘It does not matter. I will teach you.’

‘But how about the sin?’

‘Don’t worry. I will take care of everything.’

Ramaswamy asked, ‘When shall i come to you? I have to finish my work at home before i can come’.

‘Come whenever you find time, my child. I am always in that mosque,’ he said, pointing to a nearby mosque. (Satyanarayana,p.23)

Ramaswamy who was discouraged by his father when he wanted to join school rather amazed to know that a Muslim mullah offers to teach him without any expectation. He informs the Mullah that he is untouchable but the Mullah says it doesn’t matter and when Narsiah questions about ‘sin’ the Mullah assures him that he would take care of everything. This is a perfect example of how the caste identity was

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passed on from generation to generation using words like sin and untouchables. They accepted their role but when the Mullah offered to help these notions of identity started to change.

‘Baliah was a highly disciplined man now. His commitment at work and respect for higher officials had always been great, but at the same time, he was highly intolerant of officials who ill-treated the subordinate staff. He told his superiors to expect respect only when they gave respect; there had to be reciprocity. The officials would address him ‘Baliah’ rather than ‘Baliga’, an appellation they would have used for a subordinate. He objected to officials addressing their subordinates with contempt. He also politely refused to do the personal work for the stationmasters, such as going to the market or taking their children to school, or washing their clothes.’ (Satyanarayana, p.77)

Satyanarayana talks about how Baliah getting a job and a respectable position in the railways was a result of his commitment to his work. He got his higher officials' respect. Officials used to address ‘Baliah’ rather than ‘Baliga’ a suffix that was used for subordinates. ‘iah’ was considered a very respectful suffix and –ga was considered a suffix used for a subordinate.

‘Arey Baliah, you look very strong. Can you fight with me?’

Baliah retorted strongly, ‘Mr. John, please stop using the word “arey” it’s derogatory.’

‘What! Are you an officer, then?’



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‘No, but you have no right to disrespect me. I am not your slave, and both of us are railway employees.’

‘Are you trying to teach me? You...a point man! Hit me, if you are a man,’ he said, hitting Baliah on his face. Baliah lost his temper and catching hold of Mr. John’s hair with his left hand and hit him on his face hard with his right hand. It was a strong blow, and Mr. John fell unconscious on the platform.’ (Satyanarayana, p.78)

Mr. John was an Assistant Station Master who was eager at showing off his boxing skills and when he saw Baliah, he thought he was a wrestler and he could practice with him. Baliah was someone who would object to the subjugation by the higher officials on their subordinates. He had once revolted when an assistant stationmaster had called Baliah ‘arey’ according to Baliah it was a derogative term. Their conversation shows that Baliah was not going to take any abuse or disrespect from any individual even when it came to addressing.

This we can compare with his father Narsiah who would stand still in front of Dora while he abused and shouted at him. Narsiah conformed himself as a slave to Dora. But we see Baliah telling his superior officer that he had no right to disrespect him and that both of them were railway officials and most importantly he was not his slave. Listening to this when Mr. John hit Baliah and Baliah got hold of Mr. John’s hair and hit him hard so this shows that Baliah was very liberated and aware of his rights.

Satyanarayana talks about one such experience when his friend and classmate Ram Murthy invites him home. Ram Murthy was the son of the permanent way inspector a class 1 railway officer, and since Ram Murthy was a Brahmin his family

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did not let him play or interact with an untouchable boy but Ram Murthy and Satyanarayana's friendship was above caste and untouchability and both of them were innocent and young.

One afternoon Ram Murthy forced Satyanarayana into his home despite his resistance as they sat on the sofa and as they were playing and jumping on the sofa the Brahmin cook addressed Satyanarayana as a 'dirty pig'. The conversation on is as follows:

'You dirty pig you untouchable! Get off! How dare you sit by our baba? It was the Brahmin cook roaring.

I was terribly afraid, and sprang up from the sofa, running out of the bungalow even as my friend pleaded with me, asking me not to leave. As i looked back from the gate, i heard my friend shouting at the man,

'Why did you yell at my friend?' (Satyanarayana, p.104)

And when Ram Murthy asks why he was shouting and asks his friend to leave the cook replies by saying that,

'He is untouchable! Go and bathe or I shall tell your father!' And as Ram Murthy chases his cook he runs away saying 'Don't touch me, babu you are polluted! Go and bathe or i shall tell your father!' (Satyanarayana p.104)

This showed that no matter what happened even though the children were innocent their minds would be corrupted by the adults to maintain the hierarchy and segregation to do so they would have been called 'dirty pig' and 'untouchable' so to

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make them feel that their presence is dirty and that even if they touched or walked into a house it would get polluted.

Satyanarayana gets angry and wonders how he caused pollution and tells that this was not the first time that he had faced humiliation many a time he had observed the caste Hindus ill-treating and insulting him or people belonging to the untouchable community. To most of the caste Hindus they were untouchables and they were the ones to be insulted and discriminated against.

But Satyanarayana had many best friends who were Brahmins and this was the reason why his brothers called him 'Pantulu' another word for Brahmin. Whenever somebody enquired about their caste Baliah would use the word 'Harijan.' Even though he was a proud man who did not believe in insubordination he was quite upset with the practice of untouchability. But he knew that it was a part of society and its system but he was not someone who looked outside the civil society of railways.

Then Baliah was transferred to the city where his elder son was working so he decided to move to the city where he thought it would be possible to give his children a better education, unlike other untouchable families Baliah would keep a strict leash on his children, and their studies.

As soon as Baliah reached the city the place where he was staying, he had some friends who told him that there were certain rules of this place each line had a tap and the water came at 6 am but in their line, there was a man named Tulsi Ram who worked in Railway examiner department and only after he had used the water others could touch but Baliah was curious, he asked 'why? Is it his property?'

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‘He is a wrestler, moreover, he is a Brahmin and has imposed the rule.’

‘That’s sheer injustice. Let me see tomorrow, ’said my father.

That night, he instructed us to be ready early the next day to fetch water. In the morning, my elder brothers were at the tap with our vessels, while father himself sat a little to the side. Soon enough, a huge man with a cross thread on his shoulder approached the tap. Kicking away the vessel that was placed under the tap, he roared,

‘Who the hell placed that pot under the tap? You fellows forgot the rule not to touch the tap before I do!

My father was fuming; his eyes had turned red. Picking up the vessel, he almost pounced on the man.

‘Why did you kick my vessel? This is not your father’s property; whoever comes first will use the tap first.’ (Satyanarayana P.108-109)

Baliah insisted that his sons would be the first ones to keep the vessels for water early. Tulsi Ram who saw that kicked away the vessels and roared. So, we see Baliah revolting against the practice he is not just saying this to avoid the situation but rather he is revolting against the practice as well as the injustice.

‘Although the caste factor usually remained in the background, he and his friends would tease me, indirectly referring to my status in the caste hierarchy. When i entered the class, he would point to the wall and ask his friends whose it was, and they would say ‘Maadi (ours)’. And they would say ‘Maadi (ours)’. And what was it that they were referring to, he would

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then ask, to which they would reply ‘Goda(wall)’. Then he would ask them to combine the words, which they would do, and then loudly shout ‘Maadi-goda’- a man or boy from the Madiga caste. I would feel humiliated and insulted but never countered it i knew i had no support against this group.’ (Satyanarayana, p.115)

These incidents reveal how the upper castes identified and called the Dalits. They would come up with different ways to call, name and identify the Madiga community in order to humiliate them. It was a way of legitimizing the oppression and claiming their right at the highest place in the hierarchy. ‘Maadi’ meant ours and ‘Goda’ meant wall but together it meant ‘Maadi-goda’- a man or a boy from the madiga caste. Satyanarayana would feel humiliated and insulted but he would never counter it has he knew he would not get any support against this so called ‘popular group’.

Ramaswamy had realized the importance of education when he joined as a box man in the railways. Having seen the lifestyle of higher-level and upper caste staff, he wanted to ensure that his brother learnt English. He knew that this could fetch him a better job, a higher post. He took Yelliah to the stationmaster, who liked Ramaswamy. Yelliah would sit in the veranda with a slate, learning to write the English alphabet ...it was the first attempt in the Yelukati family to learn English, another attempt to achieve a better life. (Satyanarayana, p.55-56)

This talks about the importance of language and education in Baliah’s life. He encouraged his children to learn English and he believed that it was an attempt to achieve a better life.

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‘Bidda, do not bend yourself before anyone. No matter whether you are starving, your pride should never be mortgaged.’(Satyanarayana,p.199)

The above words were said by Baliah to his son. This words show how Baliah believed in self-respect. His community had suffered for many decades under the Doras and they had struggled and strived to make better lives for themselves and their children. He asks him never to bend before anyone even if he was starving there pride should never be mortgaged. This mindset was the result of constant struggle, education and the changes that was led by Ambedkarite movement. Even though his father was not a scholar, he had not listened to what Ambedkar had told them but his thoughts matched with him on how one should lead their life.

Yelukati family who were untouchables were among the first to achieve education, among first families to have produced doctorates. Baliah’s children fulfilled his dream by achieving a identity that was reputed and not just limited to their caste identity.

All these conversations are an example of the linguistic practices that show the relationship between the higher caste and lower caste. By using Critical Discourse Analysis of these conversations, we have observed how language was used to subjugate and control the lower castes. Their names, suffixes, culture, and the way they were addressed were all shaped by hierarchy and language. Later on, we see that this changes once they start getting an education, work, and revolt using language and demanding respect.

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## CHAPTER – V

# IDENTITY AND REPRESENTATION OF DALIT IN '*INTERROGATING MY CHANDAL LIFE*' BY MANORANJAN BYAPARI

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Dalit autobiography is not just a genre in literature rather it is a shared history of PRDalit communities, and '*Interrogating My Chandal Life*' is one such account of shared history written as an autobiography by Manoranjan Byapari. He was born into an impoverished Dalit family in a place called Turuk-Khali near the village of Pirichpur which was once a part of the Barisal district that is now in East Pakistan. This autobiography is about the life and community of Chandals or Namashudras and their social history.

Byapari writes about the struggle for survival in the community to get one meal a day. From the birth of the writer, his life consisted of his father who worked as a contractual laborer. Some days when he would be jobless the whole family would starve. Their poor neighbors would give a handful of rice to the hungry stomachs of his family; this shows the tender heart the community had for each other, even though the neighbors themselves were poor they would not mind sharing some food. The autobiography contains references to many historical events such as the partition of India and the formation of west-Pakistan.

The autobiography starts with the birth of the author wherein there is a ritual where the father has to feed honey to his newborn but his father only weeps because

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he doesn't have a grain of rice to feed where he would get honey an unaffordable luxury. Manoranjan tells – “So I got no taste of honey at my birth. My life had not been sweet. I have lived my life as the ill-fated Dalit son of an ill-fated Dalit father, condemned to a life of bitterness”.

Byapari talks about how his father always proclaimed his caste identity with pride as Namashudras of the Kashyap Gotra even though the upper castes called them as untouchables and would talk contemptuously as Chandals or Chanrals, neither his father nor anybody in their community would acknowledge themselves as Chandals. They would claim that they were highborn and that the blood of the Brahmin flowed in their veins and it was not just limited to the Namashudras any community of lowly ranks of the Varna hierarchy would make the same claim.

Byapari in his autobiography talks about Vedas and Shastras as well. He specifies how belonging to the lower strata of the caste hierarchy makes the Shudras be seen only with contempt and a Shudra can lay no claim to knowledge, wealth, or dignity. Any Shudra who would transgress these laws would be killed as Shambuk was killed by Rama for daring to read the Vedas and Shastras. It was ordained that the habitations of Chandals would be outside or far from the villages burning the corpses and tending the animals. These would be the only occupations allowed to them. They would never be allowed to own a property or house, have no education, and have no right to dignity at all.

We also find a reference to Rabindranath Tagore's essay 'The Claim of Dharma' written in 1911 talks about the life of Chandals after becoming Namashudras where Tagore talks about the villages where the Namashudras lived and how their fields were uncultivated. How no one reaped their crops or even built homes for them.



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Co-operation and care expected to survive in the world was denied to them. How society had judged them as unworthy of receiving that humanity and for no faults of theirs. Every moment of their life was made miserable from birth to death.

Even after such inhumane treatment, the Namashudras are still alive. They have survived almost all the oppression and exploitation the first census of this land was carried out by the British raj in 1872 the upper caste colonial officials contemptuously called the Namashudras Chandals and when they rebelled against this there was a strike across four districts of Jessore, Khulna, Faridpur, and Barisal. His autobiography talks about his traumatic childhood in the refugee camps of west Bengal and Dandakaranya.

After the partition of India, many people fled the country in panic, leaving their homeland and heading towards an unfamiliar place only to face new forms of challenges. Riots among two different communities of Hindus and Muslims were very prominent and it created difficulty for the refugees to survive or co-exist peacefully. East Pakistan and India were the countries the people were asked to choose between. But the socially and economically weaker people were in dilemma the rich had the money and sources for a new life in the new country after partition because they were scared about their lives so what were the poor to do?

This autobiography talks about the struggle the Namashudras had during the partition. The partition had made them refugees from the east of Bengal, the Shiromanipur camp was set in 1953-1954; it was situated in a hot climate where there was no proper water or sanitation. The government provided them with rotten rice that was saved up after the Second World War because of these conditions people were dying. The skies would be clouded by the smoke coming from the pyre.

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Even though there was a doctor in the camp he did not have any medicine stocks. Byapari's father was determined in sending Byapari to the camp school but when they went to enroll him there, they came to know that the school had been shut down because of the communal riots that were rising in that place, disappointed and with a heavy heart they returned to home. It was also evident that the government had stopped giving dole or money, and food and had refused to take any responsibility for the refugees. They attributed it to being a newly formed country that was economically weak to take care of the 'unproductive' refugees.

The people who had left Bengal were of two types one was the lower castes poor people such as - Namas, Pods, Jeles, and Malos. They were the poverty-stricken Chhotoloks and another type of people were the educated rich upper castes called the bhadraloks who had refused to stay with the lower castes in the camp and had bought properties in the new country for themselves to stay. In about 149 colonies no lower caste was given houses.

Later on, Byapari talks about his experience in the Dandakaranya rehabilitation project initially the local leaders of that communist party ask the people from the camp not to go to the rehabilitation and instigate the people to go on a hunger strike and that was the time when everyone realized how the government had completely become inhumane even after twenty-eight days of the hunger strike no one from the government came to enquire about the people. Therefore, under the guidance of their leader the people including Byapari's father started a large procession to the Bishnupur court area. They were arrested and taken twenty-five kilometers away from their places and asked to walk back. The police did not need to

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beat anyone because they had a better solution to suppress the crowds by simply making them walk and tire the hungry and exhausted people.

Food shortages and the rumor of famine nearing started taking their toll on people. Byapari's family was also suffering without food and a job. His father started working as a daily laborer in Jadavpur. The lands in those places were claimed by all the high castes and for the construction of their houses; the laborers were Namoo, Muslim, Kaora, and Bagdi.

Byapari talks about the scriptures which state that birth as a human being is a blessing and a rare gift, he feels that it is rare for him because he has seen his father writhing in agony when he was ill and his mother living in a dark hole of a hut to hide her torn clothes and he has seen his sister dying of starvation and his other siblings exhausted and malnourished due to fasting. This is the time when Byapari decides to run away from his home and his family. Without knowing what would happen to him he sets out into the world to find a better place for him, only to get humiliated, abused, and insulted.

From working in a doctor's house for months with just food and shelter as salary to working in teashops, as an assistant chef in police barracks, cook for marriage banquets Byapari does almost all of his jobs with great honesty but would always end up empty-handed at the end of each job either because of his caste or because of the harassment at the workplace.

His only vice being hunger, he works hard for one meal. Byapari talks about how he was raped by his superior at work, havaldar who gives him shelter he talks about this experience with a lot of pain and tells how in reality such rapes were frequent and happening regularly in society and how even dogs and cows were not

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spared. He remembers how he had to fight with hungry dogs for some leftover food when he had nothing to eat and how he had to travel in trains ticketless and get down if the ticket collector found him, he would walk miles together from place to place in search of work because a man whose vice is food finds it difficult to bear hunger.

He travels from Bengal to Assam but once during such travel, he meets a man who hears his entire story and feeds him bread and tea, and asks him to go with him to his home and the very happy Byapari agrees to go. The good person takes him to a cloth shop and gets sarees and asks the Byapari who was then fifteen years to go have a haircut and tells the shopkeeper that he has forgotten his purse and he will leave his son here and come back with his purse in an hour but he goes away and does not return for which Byapari gets beaten up. We can understand that how people will misuse the situation of a small poor boy.

Byapari gets cheated many times by people even while working in the tea shop at Kharibhari railway station the owner said he would pay him a salary at the end of the month but doesn't pay him a single paisa even after ten months. Another time he works in Bihari's tea shop where he works hard and saves money for his family but only to be stolen by the tea shop owner's son. And on asking for the money back he gets thrown out.

After having spent five years away from his family Byapari returns to his native place and comes to Jadavpur where he comes to know about the forests of Terai where the Naxalbari movement was very prominent. He starts working as a khuli (Coolie/laborer) and meets his family and shifts to the Shyama colony. It is here when he gets the job of assisting a man in cooking for marriage banquets.

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He then realizes that since he is an untouchable, food prepared by him would be considered inedible, but Megha Das suggests him never to reveal his name and caste and like this, he starts cooking and earning some money and this is how his family got to taste the leftover delicacies of a high caste marriage feast food that was allowed to be taken by them at the end of their work. But when one day the family of one of the high caste people came to know that the lower castes were cooking the food they were made to apologize and beg for forgiveness this humiliation changed Byapari and he started hating the higher castes.

One day after this incident Chitta Byapari's younger brother was falsely accused of stealing ducks from a higher caste's home but they did not have any evidence and he was beaten up mercilessly and no one came to stop them. It was only later that they came to know that he was innocent. This made Byapari stop believing in humans or gods.

When Byapari started pulling the auto rickshaw, he starts associating himself with the Naxal moment which was fighting against the system and the oppression that was made by the people of power. His companion had died in one of the warfare between the Naxals and the police at Bardhaman that he was filled with revenge, but he was arrested and put behind the bars. At this time, he understood that he would be imprisoned for five to ten years. That realization made him feel sad-the feeling of not being able to be with his family or even being able to meet them made him feel alone and painful. He felt as though he was going to die. But this was the place that gave him a new life. It was here in the jail that he learned to read and write. From learning reading and having to live a life of a prisoner he had more freedom than he ever had outside the society.

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One day when in the prison there was a blood donation camp organized wherein an under-trial prisoner would get twenty rupees for a bottle of blood and they could buy things with that money some would buy cigarettes, bidis, soaps, or jaggery but it was Byapari who one day asked for a paper and pen to learn to read and write so that he can be a writer. His demand was fulfilled. He was given a fountain pen and two-three sheets of paper. After two years in prison, others who had been arrested with Byapari were released on bail and since no charge sheet had been filed by the police, the magistrate granted him bail on payment of thousand rupees. And Byapari never regretted a single day he had spent in prison. All the charges against him were acquitted.

Thirst for books and knowledge never left him he started reading various kinds of books such as Marxist literature, works by Rabindranath Tagore, Saratchandra, Satinath Bhaduri, Tarashankar, Bibhuti, Manik, Mahashwetha Devi, Sunil, Samaresh, Shyamal, Shirshendu, Shankar and the entire canon of Bangla literature. He was quenching his thirst for knowledge.

To quench his hunger, he started to pull a rickshaw. Before he had gone to prison, he would always keep his dagger hidden under the passenger seat but now he would keep his books.

While reading one of the books by Chanakya Sen the word 'Jijibisha' puzzled him, and nobody was able to tell him the meaning of this word. It was only on that day when Byapari had boarded a learned woman whom he was to take to Jadavpur that he asked her the meaning and she was stunned to know that a ricksha-walla was asking her such a difficult word and only on enquiring she told him the meaning of the word- it meant the will to live and after that, he surprised and now silent

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passenger asked him from where he got the word and how far he had studied and it was then that he told her about himself.

She told him how she was publishing a journal and whether he was willing to write about his life as a ricksha-walla and she took out a paper and wrote down something and gave it to him it was only then that he realized whom he was talking to it was none other than Mahashwetha Devi.

He had read her work Draupadi and Agnigarba and one could see rare satisfaction on her face. After some days in the January-March 1981 issue of Bartika his work about his life titled 'I drive rickshaws' was published and he became very famous as the ricksha-walla writer.

He also sent his work under the pseudo name of Jijibisha to five periodicals, Runner, Hathiyar, Lok Vignan, Siriksha, and Banga Barta. All of them accepted his work for publication. After this, he married Anitha a girl whom he had known long back, and settled down near Garia.

One fine day people from Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha from Bhilia had come to meet Byapari. He had heard about Shankar Guha Neogi. They believed that every individual should be able to claim their right to food, shelter, clothes, education, healthcare, and occupation. Byapari was very much impressed with their work and participated in their meetings and other activities. But these activities were unacceptable to the government. Many times, Neogi was attacked an encounter was also instructed by the police. But that day Neogi was arrested many people for whom he was fighting were demanding the police to release him. Neogiji was a role model to Byapari. He had taken up the agency of a paper called the Amrit Sandesh and he was earning some income through this.

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Byapari involved himself in fighting against oppression and wrongdoing without any fear of Neogiji. Neogiji being a great leader worked for the poor and the oppressed were shot dead in his. It was one of the greatest losses to the country and Byapari was deeply hurt by his sudden demise. After his death morcha workers started working more in Bhilia and could not focus on Bastar.

Byapari had taken good care of all these activities after his struggles in the morchas and meeting dons and politicians Byapari did not want to associate himself with politics and later on, he started once again getting associated with the literary field and once again started writing for various journals and magazines such as Padakkhep, Aanon, Rabi-Shashya, Adal-Badal, Bahujan and Nayak.

In this autobiography, Byapari ends by saying that when he closes his eyes, he sees a young boy without books to learn from without marbles to play with two hands covering the hole back of his pants pulling grass and chewing on it because of hunger. Grazing goats, a boy who cannot grow because of malnourishment like a bonsai tree whose growth is stagnant.

He snatches the bread from the jaws of hungry dogs. And these are the images that he sees before his eyes, and this doesn't let him find inside him to tell him to be gentle and speak of love and forgiveness. He says he feels like asking that small boy to rebel. He says that the fire that is burning inside can be assuaged in two ways: either by adding kerosene and setting it aflame and burning it to ashes or by pouring water and covering it to ashes. He asks that boy to go ahead and use whichever he has access to. Out of the ashes will arise a new life?



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**Critical Discourse Analysis of *Interrogating my chandal Jeevan* using Fairclough's three-dimensional method.**

The three levels of analysis are:

1. Description
2. Interpretation
3. Explanation

### **1. DESCRIPTION**

“Our name used to be Mondal, but thanks to my grandfather, we had lost it. The story goes that my grandfather had once taken it into his head to begin trading. With this plan, he filled a boat with betel nuts and coconuts and journeyed down the river to the town of Barisal. The day's business did not go too badly and, on his way back, my grandfather bought a saree for ten rupees for his wife. The beauty of that saree took the village by storm and by and by, somebody asked,

‘How much did this cost you?’

My grandfather, known in the village for his utter lack of business acumen, grew immediately alert. He hesitated to tell the price, fearing ridicule.

Perhaps, being gullible, he had been cheated by the saree-seller! After much thought, he said,

‘Well, the shopkeeper did ask for eight, but after much haggling, he settled for seven and a half. The bastard would not give it for a paisa less.’

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‘Really! Is that the truth?’

‘Now, what’s the use of me lying to you? Would you believe me if I said I had paid ten rupees for this?!’ answered my grandfather brusquely.

‘Please get one for me at that price,’ answered the man with a smile.

‘Why one! I can get ten for you if you want!’ said my grandfather.

As was only to be expected, the next day as my grandfather made ready to set sail with his boat piled with betel nuts and coconuts, he found people running towards him. Some had seven rupees fifty paise clutched in their hands for one saree; some had fifteen rupees for two. As the saying goes, once the bullet is out of the gun and the word out of your lips, these cannot be retrieved. There was little my grandfather could do but buy all the promised sarees, subsidizing each from his pocket. But he never went back to trade at Barisal again. This brilliance of my grandfather did not remain a secret for very long. Other traders traveled to Barisal and the truth got out. Amidst much laughter and joking, my grandfather was awarded the title of Byapari, the businessman. I am, therefore, not Manoranjan Mondal, but Manoranjan Byapari. But you will not find another Manoranjan Byapari. I am only one. In me is the beginning and in me is the end.”

The above narration talks about the way Manoranjan’s family got their name. Initially, their family name was Mondal but after this hilarious turn where his grandfather lies about the cost of the sarees and ends up in a loss, he gets the title of Byapari as a joke and that name sticks on with them.

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This kind of name change is rather common in the Dalit communities to take up other names to hide their identity. But one can also understand that here Byapari's grandfather is lying to save himself from humiliation as he had done to save his face. Even though the saree cost him more he lies to the people and ends up buying sarees and selling them at a lesser value. When the people found out that he was lying to make fun of him they start calling him 'Byapari' instead of 'Mondal', Hence he ends up with the name 'Byapari' which means a 'dealer' in Bengali. This name becomes their house identity.

'My father always proclaimed his caste identity with pride. We are 'Namashuddurs of the Kashyap gotra', he would say. Though people of the uppercaste called us 'untouchable' and spoke of us contemptuously as chandals or chanrals, neither my father nor anybody of our community would acknowledge themselves as chandals. They claimed that we were highborns and that the blood of the Brahmin flowed in our veins. This, however, is not a claim confined to the Namashudras. Almost every community inhabiting the lowly ranks of the Varna hierarchies make similar claims. For every one of these communities, there is some folklore present that allows them to escape the polluted inferiority that the Varna system imposes upon them. Such a legend exists within the Namashuddurs community too. (Byapari, p.5)

One of the sons of Brahma the creator was Marich. Marich had a son named Kashyap and Kashyap had a son named Namas Muni... (Byapari, p.5)

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How then had this community, despite its glorious past, fallen on such misfortune? Sans food for their stomachs, sans cloth for their bodies, sans sandals for their feet, sans oil for their dry hair and sans hay for their thatched roofs? How had they arrived at this state of abject humiliation?  
(Byapari, p.6)

Byapari's father claimed his caste as the Namashuddurs of Kashyap Gotra even though they were considered as Chandals or Chanrals untouchables by the upper caste. But none of them would consider them as Chandals they would claim they were related to the Brahmins. This claim was seen in most of the untouchable communities and this was supported by folklore. The Namashuddurs had one such folklore where Brahma's son Marich had a son Kashyap whose son Namas Muni got immersed in meditation for years together and by the time he came out of that meditation, his sons had crossed the age of upanayana because of this tribe of Namashudras did not get the status of Brahmins rather they became untouchables.

One starts to wonder how this community had ended up in a worse situation like the current caste structure. They were constantly humiliated and led a horrible life all together. This usage of myths and folklore tells how the communities have tried to trace their part of history and origin. The most important aspect one can see is that they want to be associated with Hinduism and Brahmins.

'One was the educated upper castes, those who are called the bhadrалoks. And the other was the poverty-stricken illiterate, lower castes—the Chhotoloks. The upper caste was unwilling to stay at the camps' (Byapari, p .20-21)

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Namos, the Pods, the Jeles, and the Malos were the hardworking communities who left their land as they feared for their lives. But as they reached the Indian border they were made to sit in camps. The people who fled were of two types bhadrалoks and chhotoloks. The bhadrалoks were the educated rich upper castes who had sold their land and already made the necessary arrangements in this new country. Whereas the chhotoloks were poor, uneducated lower castes. This labeling of bhadrалoks and chhotoloks shows how the people understood the dynamics of a new country and the system. Through this usage of words Byapari accepts and identifies their position as the *chhotoloks* and by doing so he accepts the notion of *bhadrалoks*.

‘A few of the prosperous lower caste families managed to hide their real names and claim space. Other pretenders who were discovered were thrown out. In none of the 149 colonies in and around the city therefore you will not find a single nama or muchhi family of that time.’  
(Byapari, p.21).

The above statement tells us how few lower caste families got their space in the new country by lying about their real names. The names were hidden as it would determine their lower caste which would make it difficult for them to get accommodation in this new place. But when some pretenders got caught lying, they were thrown out as well. In about 149 colonies where housing was provided none of the lower caste Nama or munchi families got to stay. Their caste identity with its atrocities had accompanied them to this new country too.

‘At that time, many areas of Jadavpur were being claimed by the refugees forcibly and colonies were being built. These claimants were all members of the upper castes and so, as had always been the usual practice, the

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namo, the Muslim, the kaora, and the bagdi were the construction workers. This is one of the naked truths that the people at the top were all of the Varna Hindu community. As a result of this identity, they had been unable to be as cruel, as unjust, as ruthless with people of their own jati as they had been with the lower castes.’ (Byapari, p.34)

When the houses and colonies for the caste Hindus in Jadavpur were being claimed and built. The claimants were the upper castes, and the laborers were the lower castes. Byapari calls this the naked truth that the people who were at the top were from the Varna Hindu community. Because of this identity, the claimants were unable to be as cruel, unjust, and ruthless with people who belonged to their jati as they used to be with the Namu, Muslims, Bagdi, and Kaora.

“Are you refugees?” all his questions were answered with the nod of my head. Refugee- is there a word more impoverished or humiliating than this in the bangle dictionary?”

To the people of west Bengal, words like ‘refugee’ and ‘bangal’ mean the same. The word ‘Bangal’, a name given to people from east Bengal, was also a word of abuse just like the adjectives ‘reactionary’, ‘bourgeois’, ‘loan shark’, and ‘street mongrel’. Byapari feels that he lived a cursed life. The identity of refugee and Bangal and lower castes seemed one other the same. They would be kept away like outcastes in the urban modern cities as well.

Namashudras called themselves Hindu and worshiped idols. For this particular reason, the Muslims called them *kafirs*. And they belonged to the lower caste-Namashudra community; the upper Hindu castes treated them with scorn and spit on them. Now that they had come to this land, they were abused for being born in

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Bangal. So the identity changed from one place to another but their position in the society never changed it remained the same wherever they went.

‘The bitter experience at the doctor’s house was still fresh in my mind and I changed my surname so people would not know me as Namashudra. That identity could make it difficult for me to get a job or if I did get a job, would get me disdainful and contemptuous treatment.’ (Byapari, p.45).

Byapari remembers his experience as a person belonging to a lower caste in a upper caste household of the doctor. He was beaten and ill-treated there. As he comes out of that place, he gets a job at a ‘Hindustani tea shop’ he decides to change his name so that nobody recognizes his caste as a Namashudra. He also understands that his real caste identity would make it impossible to get a respectable job. The owner was very calculative he would cut his salary mercilessly for breaking glass or spilling milk. The caste identity played extremely important role in whether an individual would get work or not.

‘The man at the shop was a neatly shaven, soft-spoken man. ‘Where do you come from?’ he said, noticing Jeeban’s Bangal accent.

‘From East Pakistan’s Barisal district, sir’ said Jeeban.

‘Our house was in Dhaka, the land of money, talent and education. So, what’s your name?’

‘Jeeban, sir. Jeeban Krishna Datta.’

‘Nice name. Kayastha. Yes, I could do with some help here’

‘How much will you pay me?’

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‘Pay?’ he laughs. ‘Begin work. Let me see how you work for a month or two, and then we will decide about the pay. Am taking you in because you are of my land, my caste. We are saha. Will I cheat you?’ (Byapari, p.69)

Byapari gets a job with a fake name which implied that he was a ‘Kayastha’ the owner gives him a job because he believes him to be from his own land and caste and by this a form of trust gets built on that very claim. The concept of ‘saha’ is unique because it meant that they were equal of equal birth and respect. By saying this it meant that there is a system that considers others as unequal or lower. But once again Byapari gets cheated by the owner.

Byapari wanted to go visit his mother and his family. When he asks for his salary, the owner would tell some reason or the other so when Byapari decides to leave the owner tells him that he would post the salary to the address, he understands that he would not get it any way. He remembers his mother’s face and wonders when his mother asks him why he was not able to get a single seer of rice he would cry to her;

‘This is a cursed life, ma. There is nothing left for us here in this cruel world. Long before we were born, all the wealth and all the good of the world have been taken over. They are not willing to give us anything. They give no value to our tears, our sighs, and our labour. They are still busy finding ways to cheat us, to buy the sweat that trickles down our bodies at the least price. We are less than the goat or the dog here’ (Byapari, p.73)

Byapari feels that they were being dehumanized and put into a situation that seems to have intentionally kept them in a helpless situation that was far worse than



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death. They did not give or share their wealth. Their labour was not valued or paid. And they kept on finding ways to cheat Byapari and his people. Their place in the society was less than a goat or a dog. They led a cursed life.

Byapari belonged to the Namashudras, the lowest of the lowly communities. They were '*jal-achal*' (Byapari, P.110). A term that meant any water touched by this community would be rendered unusable after that. They were untouchables for them to enter the kitchen of a high caste was forbidden. Megha Das who belonged to the fishing community had offered Byapari a cooking job. Megha Das after much searching had located a guru who would give him diksha and the sacred thread. In this way, he had found some stability in his profession. According to Megha Das, if one had the thread around their neck, nobody would ask him of their caste.

'Don't tell people this name. And if people ask about your caste, say it is Kayastha. Once you do the work and get the money, caste can go fuck itself.' (Byapari, p.110)

'I was right. People were happy with the food and praised the cooking. But all our joy was washed away rudely when our caste identities were suddenly revealed.' (Byapari, p.115)

We see that Megha Das tells Byapari, not to anyone his real name, and if someone asks him about their caste, he was supposed to tell that he was a Kayasthas and that once they worked and got money caste 'can go fuck itself'. This suggests that it was his way of living his life he changed his name and caste and cooked food for higher castes. People loved the food.

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‘The son-in-law of the house was no ordinary man. He was one of the tough guys of the Jadavpur area. All this while, he had been in the banana garden beside the house with his cronies, feasting on fries and alcohol. When he came out, he immediately recognized Dukhe.

‘Didn’t you come that day to clean up the pond?’ he demanded.

Upon Dukhe’s frightened admission, the son of the house and the brother-in-law came down heavily on us. ‘So what caste are you?’

‘We could not keep up the façade and it was soon revealed that one of us was a Kaher from the south of Bengal and the other a Namashudra from the east. Both of us belonged to the untouchable community.’

‘They made us hold on to our ears and do sit ups. They made us bend down so our noses touched the ground and were rubbed against it. This may have been simple fun for them but to us it was the ultimate humiliation’ (Byapari, p.115-116)

In this situation, Byapari could not keep up the façade and it was revealed that one of them was a Kaher and the other a Namashudra. Both belonged to the untouchable community. They took them aside, away from the eyesight of the family, into the banana garden. The groom and his friends made Byapari and Dukhe hold their ears and do sit ups and bend down so their noses rubbed the ground. This may have been simple fun for them but to Byapari it was the ultimate humiliation. The next day at the break of dawn, they stole away without telling anybody. Their minds were filled with such shame and inadequacy that they were unable to ask for their dues.

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‘Nobody will go to your house. You are rickshaw-wallahs’

‘In the Indian social system, and the minds of the Bengalis particularly the urban-resident Bengalis, three words are intricately linked with each other: lowly folk, lowly caste, and physical labour. All who are of the low caste are lowly.’ (Byapari, p.120)

Nobody wants to interact with them or go to their houses. Most of the rickshaw-walla was of lower caste, not educated and because of this they were constantly discriminated. The rickshaw-walla was the urban untouchables. Even though they lived in modern city the Bengalis strongly believed that people belonging to lower caste were lowly. So even the young kids were mentality shaped in a way that they would straight forward tell that since they were the rickshaw-walla they could not go to their houses.

## **2. INTERPRETATION (PROCESS ANALYSIS)**

“To get back to the story I had begun. That day, even as my father was returning home with rice tied in his gamchha, I was born. An aunt of my father’s, who had been the midwife at my father’s birth too, cut the umbilical cord with a bamboo sliver, washed, wrapped me in a clean rag, and lay me down beside my mother. The elders of our land say that if you give a child a drop of honey on his entry into the world, his life will be sweetened. So, when my father arrived, she asked him to get a little bit of honey for me. This made my father break down in tears. How would he get honey when he could hardly manage rice? There had been no honey at his birth either.

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And he knew well the agony, the misery, the humiliation of a life bereft of sweetness. But on that stormy night, honey was an unaffordable luxury. So, I got no taste of honey at my birth. My life has not been sweet. I have lived my life as the ill-fated Dalit son of an ill-fated Dalit father, condemned to a life of bitterness.” (Byapari, p.4).

Manoranjan Byapari talks about the day he was born and how one of his dad’s aunts had suggested his dad give him little honey so that his life would be sweet but his dad breaks down in tears as they were distraught and poor, they could not afford rice than from where would he get honey from? Byapari’s father could not even afford honey. Byapari identifies his life as an ‘ill-fated Dalit son of an ill-fated Dalit father, condemned to a life of bitterness.’ His life had not been sweet or easy because of his caste and poverty.

‘In the Indian system of caste, the Brahmin is placed in the highest rank and the Shudra in the lowest. The Shudra, called the dasa, is to be dependent on the mercy of the upper caste all his life. Belonging to the lowest strata and deserving only contempt the Shudra can lay no claim to knowledge, wealth, or dignity.’ (Byapari, p.8).

The outline of the Indian caste system is well defined in the above statement, throughout Indian history Brahmins have held the highest place and Shudras were confined to the lowest strata. Shudra was dasa (slave) to Brahmins and other upper castes and they were dependent on their mercy. They were restricted from education, wealth, and dignity. This process of identifying, segregation and maintaining of this structure is a result of caste system.

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‘The one domain that has remained unchanged is the mindset of the Hindu Varna system. They have not been able to free themselves from the mentality that allows them to humiliate or oppress a person for no fault of his. Nor do they want to free themselves.’ (Byapari, p.9)

According to Byapari even after many years, the caste mentality has not changed. People have not been able to free themselves from this demeaning Hindu Varna system where one gets humiliated and oppressed for just being born into one particular caste or community. The language and the words he uses here tells that this is the state of the community. They were unable to free themselves or others from the mentality of oppression.

‘There are not a few doctors, engineers, artists, politicians, poets, and writers from among the Namashudra community today. While it is true that in the professional sphere, the doctor gets his due respect from his patient, the poet from his reader, and the teacher from his student, the discrimination continues.’ (Byapari, p.11)

The Shastras call the Shudras dasa, a servant. And servility, be it religious, social or economic, is not an aid to human development. (Byapari, p.11)

Even to this date, there are not many doctors, engineers, artists, politicians, poets, and writers from the Namashudra community. The people belonging to those professions get respect for their profession except that the discrimination still works in the background. Even the Shastras call shudras ‘servants’ or ‘dasa’ this servility has not aided the untouchables in any way.

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According to the Shastras the role of a Dalit is to serve and nothing more than that. The statement is extremely problematic because it makes the relationship between two groups quite clear. Here one is master another is slave. Just based on the caste a individual is placed differently in the society.

‘My calculations do not add up. A group of people from the same land and fleeing for the same reason at the same time, and yet how cruelly different the treatment of one from the other. One group is allowed to lay claim to expensive real estate in the heart of the city and the other group is callously pushed out to one of the remotest islands, Marichjhapi, in jungles of Sundarbans, valueless in terms of real estate. They are mercilessly slaughtered; women and children raped, homes and people plundered and set fire to. About thirty thousand families had traveled to this island to set up their homes and of these, two thousand are still missing. Nobody knows how many fell prey to tigers, to the crocodiles, or how many were drowned in the river. My father too had been present there, on the island surrounded on all sides by the single-minded killers.’ (Byapari, p.35)

Byapari wonders how is it possible that people who have fled from the same land at the same time get different treatment. One group gets expensive land in the city, whereas the other group gets pushed into Marichjhapi, the jungles of Sundarbans. They are killed mercilessly; women and children were raped and abused. Among thirty thousand families who had traveled to build new lives, two thousand are still missing no one knows to date what happened to those people.

Since the land allotted to the lower castes was filled with tigers, crocodiles and a river no one is sure how many of the missing people are actually alive. Byapari tells

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how his father too had to be present on that island surrounded by single minded killers here he could be referring to the castiest people who took them to the new land as refuges promising a better land but abandoned the *chotaloks* or the lower castes by only focusing and helping the *bhadraloks* and upper caste intellectuals who were affluent enough to buy better land in the new nation.

‘The question that arises naturally in these circumstances is this: why did the ruling people have such different reactions to two groups of people? I believe what lies behind this is the centuries-old hatred born of the Varna system. If these people on the island had been Brahmins, Kayasthas, Baidyas, and the Namos, the Pods, the Jeles, the rulers would never have been able to do this. Whatever be the cause, about twenty refugee colonies for the upper castes were allowed to develop in the Jadavpur area. The Muslim master masons from Murshidabad and the lower castes of Bengal played a major role in bringing these colonies up.’ (Byapari, p.35)

He questions why the ruling people had a different reaction to two different groups of people. According to Byapari, it is because of centuries-old hatred born of the Varna system. If the people on the island were the Brahmins, Kayasthas, Baidyas and the Namos, the Pods and the Jeles they would have not been able to build the colonies. They built twenty refugee camps for upper castes near the Jadavpur area. This was built by Muslim master masons and lower castes of Bengal. The subtle references to whether it would have been possible to build the colonies if it was for the Namos, the Pods and the Jeles gives about the existing caste biased discourse.

‘People speak of poverty, destitution, starvation, penury. But none of these nice poetic-sounding words describe what we went through then. Possibly

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no language can. The unbearable misery of those days cannot be expressed through any words in any language.’ (Byapari, p.37)

‘The scriptures say birth as a human being is a blessing and a rare gift that is given to a soul after it has passed through forty million lives. And indeed, this has been a rare life for me. I have seen my father writhing in agony as he inched towards death, a day at a time, without any medical treatment. I have seen my mother living the life of a rat in its dark hole, unable to step outside into the sunshine when the cold and dark interior chilled her.’ (Byapari. P. 38)

Byapari talks about how difficult it is to even express what they went through then through any language. He talks about scriptures in which it is written that human life is a blessing and rare gift and one soul gets it after living forty million lives. He believes his life to be rare because he has seen his father die without treatment, and he remembers his mother living in an impoverished condition. The scriptures seem to represent lives in a far different way than what Byapari has lived.

‘Think carefully before you move forward. Remember people will laugh at you, and taunt you. Only if you can hold on despite all the insults should you begin the journey. Our Shastras say the person who breaks off midway from his training will face the misery of hell. Well, firstly all these years of toil laid waste, and on top of that the sneers and the shame of being unsuccessful in the endeavor, isn’t this hell enough? So, think carefully before you come to a decision. If you decide to learn, I will arrange for everything.’ (Byapari, p.202)



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The above conversation is between Byapari and his teacher who tells him that if Byapari wants to learn he should be ready to begin his journey regardless of the insults, he gives an example of Shastras where an individual who leaves his training midway will face the misery of hell.

He points out how so far, many years Byapari had wasted. His teacher asks him to think carefully and that he would help Byapari and make necessary arrangements if he ever decides to learn. The encouragement that he gets inside the prison tells us that the limitations and restrictions of caste do not apply here. Byapari who initially pointed out that they were kept away from education gets an opportunity to learn:

‘What do you want?’

‘Sir, pen and paper.’

‘And what will you do with that?’

‘Learn to read and write, sir.’

His eyes danced with amusement, ‘what will you do with reading and writing? Become a Vidyasagar?’

‘I want to be a writer, Sir.’ (Byapari, p.210)

After working in the prison and with the money he got from giving his blood, Byapari goes to the store and asks for paper and a pencil. The person at the shop gets surprised on asking why he needs them he says that he wants to be a writer this shows how long Byapari has come from a starving troubled individual to a learning person.

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‘I had consistently to remind myself to discard the angry dacoit Ratnakar within me, and usher in the person Ratnakar eventually became, the sage Valmiki, the first poet in Sanskrit who authored the Ramayana.’  
(Byapari, p.216)

He controls his anger and remembers to discard the dacoit Ratnakar within him so that he could turn the Ratnakar within him to sage Valmiki, the first poet in Sanskrit who wrote Ramayana. He makes references to Ramayana in his work just as any caste Hindu would write. This practice of using gods and goddesses can be seen after he gets to learn reading and writing.

‘How was he to know that I had shifted my allegiance from ma Kali to ma Saraswathi? That the man who would earlier move with a knife strapped to his waist, now moved about with a pen clipped to his pocket. Trying to end the conversation, I hastily answered,

‘No, no. I am a changed man now.’’ (Byapari, p.245)

Byapari meets a person from his past with whom he took part in revolts and fights. Byapari writes about how this person would know that he had shifted his allegiance from maa Kali goddess of destruction to maa Saraswathi goddess of learning and how he had replaced his knife with a pen. He only tells this other individual that he is a changed man.

Byapari later starts to work as a cook in the end he talks about how one could not expect sympathy from opponents, as it was natural for them to make his life difficult by criticizing his work and fiercely trying to tie him down to his limited identity:

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‘There was an ‘us’ and a ‘them’ here too, and ‘they’ resented my straining at the limits they had set upon my community. They resented my stepping into ‘their’ domain of letters. This was the same land where Bhagwan Ram killed Shambbuk for daring to yearn for knowledge, and where Guru Dronacharya asked Ekalavya to sacrifice his thumb for daring to aspire to the vocation of the Kshatriya. All the battles I would have to fight and win. In a contradictory way, therefore, my opponents were doing me a favor. For what I cannot do out of love, I can do out of anger. And they have kept my anger alive. My books are born out of my anger.’ (Byapari,p.349)

These examples determine the hatred and cruelty faced by untouchables and lower castes. The segregation and otherness of his existence is evident. He understands that he was resented by ‘them’ for entering ‘their’ domain of writing. After entering the literary field, he seems to use a lot of examples from epics and mythology he talks about of Shambuk and Eklavya who all died and sacrificed for knowledge.

He understands that he must fight his battles alone and win them and in a way, this hatred is only encouraging him and allowing him to do what he wants out of anger. The people who constantly criticize him have kept his anger alive and his books are born out of this anger.

### **3. EXPLANATION (SOCIAL PROCESS)**

The laws of the village were both severe and hidebound in those days. My great uncle had lost his caste by accepting food from a Muslim-he had put his hand into the fire knowingly or unknowingly, and he would burn for it.

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Thus, it came to pass that the youngest son of my grandfather's family became a Khere. One who converted from Hinduism to Islam was called a Khere, just as one who converted from Buddhism to Islam was called a Nere. (Byapari, p.13).

'What inhuman laws were decreed by Hinduism! The person who till yesterday had been my neighbor was rendered untouchable with his conversion to another faith. If he stands in my courtyard, he defiles it. If he touches my body, he defiles it. The contempt and indignity that can be heaped by caste Hindus upon people from other faiths and on the lower castes will arouse anger and feelings of revenge in any human heart. The Namashudras have not been able to articulate this but the Muslims did. They were up to arms now, refusing to co-exist peacefully with a people and a faith that denied them their basic humanity. Fear of their violence was driving thousands from East Pakistan towards an unknown geographical entity called 'India'. Those who were educated, socially established, economically stable, upper caste fled first. Those remaining were also planning an escape. On what assurance could the economically and socially weaker people stay behind?' (Byapari, p.14)

Byapari's great uncle gets thrown out of their community because he accepts food from a Muslim family he is labeled as a Khere. Byapari talks about these aspects of Hinduism where a person who was once treated with respect just because of his conversion becomes untouchable. The way the caste Hindus treated the untouchables and Muslims was inhumane.

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But Namashudras never articulated their hurt but Muslims soon began to express their feelings and refused to co-exist with caste Hindus. This fear made them move towards 'India'. The situation in west Bengal was dangerous, the financially stable and educated elites from the upper class were the first to leave and the other weaker sections followed.

'It was possible for none but this government to deny the hard-working nature of the Namas, the Pods, the Jeles, and the Malos. None of these people had left their lands willingly to sit idle as refugees at the camps. It was out of fear for their lives and their honour that they had fled their lands. Of the uprooted people who had, like a tidal wave, rushed into this part of Bengal, there were clearly two kinds. One was the educated upper castes, those who are called the Bhadrалoks. And the other was the poverty-stricken, illiterate, lower castes-the Chhotoloks.' (Byapari, p.20)

'People say the morning shows the day. Indeed, the circumstances of my birth and my childhood did send grim messages of my later life. It was a miserable childhood. Nobody ever bought me colourful kites or marbles. At the time of the Durga puja when other children ran around in new clothes, I stood at a distance and watched with my hands behind my back covering the tear on my pants. At Holi when everybody shouted in joy at the coloured water, I ran to hide in the depths of a faded, distressed depression, too scared of getting my clothes dirtied. I did not have money enough to buy soap. How was I to wash my clothes? I am that sorrowful boy whom no grandmother has held close to her as she narrated stories of kings and queens. My childhood dreams were never filled with red and

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blue fairies. My dreams thus were not coloured at all. They were dark and fearsome, the face of a real red in its tooth and claw, the flaming blue of her terrifying eyes haunting my life persistently.’(Byapari, p.31)

For any individual, childhood plays an important role in creating and shaping his identity. Byapari remembers his childhood rather sadly. He remembers how the upper castes enjoyed their festivals with new clothes, kites, or marbles and here Byapari would be watching them in their grandeur trying to cover a tear on his pants. During Holi when everyone enjoyed coloured water Byapari would be cautious and depressed worrying about getting his clothes dirty.

He did not have money to even buy soap to wash his clothes. His childhood memories are filled with hunger and poverty, and the words and language used by him show how deeply it affected his life. His childhood dreams, unlike other kids, were filled with the dark fearsome reality of his caste and poverty.

While a Brahmin priest would be called in by our community to utter the sacred mantras for a wedding or a funeral the sole Brahmin among the many Namashudras would remain prudent and not flaunt his caste supremacy. It was my entry to this house that I was a Namashudra, that caste group which had earlier been called Chandal. These people knew this and treated me as a dirty detestable animal. (Byapari, p.42)

Byapari talks about how Brahmins would be called in to perform wedding ceremonies and a Brahmin among Namashudra was supposed to remain ‘prudent’ and not show off his caste supremacy in front of the Brahmin priest who had arrived from outside. He stresses on the way the Brahmin’s were treated in comparison to him who was a Namashudra. He expresses how he was treated like a ‘dirty detestable animal’.

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Byapari comments that to this date he has not seen any prosperous babu show any respect to the lowly So one day this passenger from the Babu class who had come and addressed Haren Ghosh in the language that his ancestors had always used for the Harijans, with the familiar 'you', 'tu'.

'Ae, tui, rickshaw. Will you go?'

He remembers how many days ago when he lived at Shyama colony, a certain Keshto Babu who lived in the Ramakrishna Upanibesh, used to address his father in this way. He was a child then. It would irk him, but he had not been able to say anything then. But this time he did. Byapari was sitting in the rickshaw next to his. He went up. What he feels he should have said was:

'Sir, please mind your language. This is an elderly gentleman. Almost of the same age as your father. Surely addressing him in these tones is not desirable?'

But the words that came out of his mouth were different:

'Ae, tui! Where will you go?'

The words appeared to throw chili flakes on the man's skin. He stuttered and stammered before managing to ask incredulously,

Wh-what? What did you say?'

'Exactly what you heard,' was my defiant answer.

He raised his hand in a threatening slap.

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‘Don’t even think of it,’ I said.’ If you so much as touch me I will break your hand.’ (Byapari, p.153-154)

This shows unlike his ancestors Byapari did not accept any ill-treatment. He demanded respect and would not let anyone talk to him with disrespect. When the babu tried to slap him, he warned him by telling him he would break his hand.

‘There in the dark corner, amidst the cobwebs, I could see her. She whose blessing had made the foolish Kalidasa a scholar and a poet. My father told me the story. The goddess of learning, Saraswati’ (Byapari, p.198)

Byapari receives education and starts learning alphabets very later in his life and in a very unusual place like prison. In the cobwebs and dark corner of the prison Byapari could see goddess of learning about whom he had only heard about from his father. We see how unlike other Dalit autobiographies Byapari has used goddesses in his writing he had not seen her before but had heard from his father about the goddess of learning. The usage of gods and mythology in a Dalit autobiography is quite new and unique.

The whole autobiography focuses on Byapari’s quest for survival and fight for a better life in a society that is predominantly caste and class prejudiced. He manages to make a name for himself even though he was shunned for his caste, class and lack of education he makes a new identity for himself in the literary field as a writer. The anger which had moved him to Naxal movement after getting education, he redirects the anger towards writing.



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## CHAPTER – VI

# RITUALS AND PRACTICES IN *SAMBOLI* BY LAKSHMAN

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*Samboli* by Lakshman is an autobiography that allows the reader to know about the lives of Lakshman and his community. This autobiography is used in studying the personal lives; Caste, representation, and language that are interlinked with one another. Caste is responsible for building a person's identity and this influences one's language.

Each community and caste have its way of utterance and their language changes with each community. Dalit autobiographies were specially written to articulate and expose the deep-rooted caste system. This system was prejudiced and atrocious. Lakshman's '*Samboli*' shows us some of the occurrences where language is used as a tool to label, slur, and create hierarchy. One gets a peek into Lakshman's life where he shares his insults, struggles, and also his success. This writing shows how language practices and maintains hierarchy in society.

Dalit autobiographies have always provided a way to express 'self' and 'Dalit representation' for a long time. Initially, autobiographies were considered as a western genre, these writings stirred and powered the Indian writers to adopt this genre of writing to talk about their clandestine lives, which they had kept concealed for a long time. Like the writers, the autobiographies did not hold the duality of the public and private self.

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In concern with this duality of the public and private self one has to understand that autobiographies pull down the veil from an individual's hidden, ugly parts of life. According to V. S Sreedhara, Lionel Trilling makes a distinction between fiction and Autobiography. This distinction is considered complicated in the case of Indian Dalit writers because readers are completely alien to the concept and experience of untouchability and this may force them to 'assume' that this genre or work has more fictional qualities than facts.

Throughout the autobiography, one comes across conversations that show how various forms of discrimination are legitimized in the discourse. *Samboli* is one of the major reasons why it is vital to read in between the texts as it not only consists of written discourse but also provides a profound and critical understanding of Indian 'casteist' society.

*Samboli* helps one to understand the intricate relationship between power, society, and language. The Dalit consciousness and reclaiming of one's Dalit identity are apparent in the autobiography. Lakshman talks about how various instances shape his ideology and his position in society.

Where he was a small boy when he got caught stealing tamarind fruit and a caste Hindu Narayanappa punishes them inhumanely. Narayanappa says to him:

'Did you think you were enjoying the sweet tamarind from your mother's husband's land, you sons of widows?' (Lakshman, p.87)

He also makes Lakshman search for his slippers by calling out:

'Come and look for my slippers, you son of a Madiga!' (Lakshman, p.87)

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This shows that they felt it was their right to hit a child and make him do what they wanted just because he was born into a lower caste. Lakshman gets a fever in the evening, and he wonders how no one plants tamarind trees they grow on their own in the wild and people gather them and eat them for their taste, but Lakshman only ate them to satisfy his hunger.

The question raised by Lakshman is- ‘why did Narayanappa punish him? Why did he beat him up? Why did he abuse him?’ He even wonders why Narayanappa made him clean the shit on his slippers with Lakshman's shirt. Has he been thinking about these questions he opened his eyes he could see Narayanappa dancing in front of him humiliating him, even more, he closes his eyes and goes to sleep.

One must understand that childhood is a formative stage of one’s personality and identity and this particular incident had a deep impact on Lakshman's life. The language that Narayanappa is using to acknowledge Lakshman shows how language is used to construct one's power relations in society.

In this work, Lakshman is portraying “*Samboli*” as a call to ‘be aware’ of the Dalit uprisings. This work highlights the fight, a community that is fighting for its basic human rights. In this ‘language’ plays a vital role. Here this is a very public ‘announcement’ to the society that the Dalits are entering the mainstream and they should (oppressors) be the ones to avoid their shadows because the Dalits are done hiding and suppressing their rights and wishes for a society that won’t treat them equally.

The language and vocabulary in this autobiography show how a ‘Dalit’ constructs his ‘self-image’ and questions his ‘self-worth’ based on someone else’s misconduct just because they are born into a Dalit family. He remembers how as a

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child he was caught stealing sweet tamarind with his friends, he gets beaten up mercilessly. He remembers all the times he had to beg.

From participating in ritualistic ceremonies to appease 'Maleyraaya' god of rain to deciding not to burn crackers on Deepavali Lakshman turns out to grow into a sensible human being who does not believe in keeping 'ede' and other superstitions that surrounded their caste and community.

He thinks about all the times he went out to make money for himself from begging and stealing.

He remembers how during the Rama Navami festival they would not get cups to drink panaka rather they would be made to cup their hands to drink the panaka. Even during festivals, they were treated differently, he would question why he and his family were treated differently was it because of their behavior. The disrespect that they had to face always seemed unfair. Only later did he understand that it had nothing to do with his behavior but everything to do with his caste.

When they had no rain at all, and the upper castes had prayed to Maleyraayya for seven days and since they were unsuccessful, they turned to the lower castes. A higher community gets to perform rituals by sitting luxuriously in the comfort of their home or temples whereas a Madiga must go from one village to another and beg for Maleyraayya or the god of rain to be appeased.

Lakshman feels different he remembers how generally the upper castes and Vokkaligas used to look down on their community and even their sight would irritate them immensely but, on this day, while they were worshipping Maleyraayya every one of the upper castes looked to them with affection and respect.

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Lakshman as a child loved crackers but could not afford them. He recalls throwing new crackers after coming to know the story of Deepavali, an old man tells him that during one such time their ancestor who had gone to perform pooja had never returned and since then it was an inauspicious day for their people the cracker was considered to be untouchable according to the old man the crackers made them impure, he questioned Lakshman how could one celebrate a festival that took the life of their ancestor.

It was obvious that the old man was saying so because it was not just ritual defilement or air pollution it was more than that. Dalits could not afford to celebrate a festival with new clothes, food, and crackers. It could also be a way that the upper castes kept the Dalit away from celebrating their festivals. He realizes that Deepavali should be a festival that disperses the darkness within oneself rather than bursting crackers.

Once Lakshman and Venkateshappa had to go to Yediyur when they met Beraniajji. Lakshman was thirsty and so she had poured water into his cupped hands, but Venkateshappa was drinking water from a tumbler. He got to go sit inside the house whereas Lakshman sat outside, nevertheless, she fed him well and when he was coughing, she even patted his head she also gave him four annas.

Even though Ajji seemed to be cordial, the rules of the caste system are strict she might have not felt anything wrong when she made him sit outside in the hot sun, and Lakshman too might have not questioned the differentiation because in a discourse that he was born in this was something normal.

His teacher who belonged to a high caste made him and other Madiga students sit behind the Gowda students and had two different canes to punish them. He used

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the short canes to beat the caste Hindus and the longer canes to hit the Dalits to avoid going near them. Even though they had access to education the behavior of the teachers towards them was discriminative and inhuman. They used to beat them, and the teachers never held their slate.

He possessed just a pair of khaki pants and a white shirt. He worked as a laborer. Once accidentally he gets his thumb chopped. By the time he goes back to his school to continue his studies, his classmates were already ahead of him. The caste system and practice of untouchability had stripped away his community from the opportunities and respect they deserved. They were cheated of their basic right of human dignity.

Even though Lakshman was educated and employed in a reputed institution, he gets fired from his job because he sat with other caste Hindus during a wedding reception. He was well educated, dressed, and cordial with the upper caste persons; even after this he was still not accepted in society.

*Samboli* took Lakshman sixteen years to complete. It transcends from an autobiography to an allegory as it talks about a man's struggle toward personal deliverance. It forms a life story of a man and his movement; it considers his efforts to redeem his Dalit family and his 'self-worth' by redeeming the 'self-worth' of his community and their identity.

Lakshman is identifying himself as a 'Madiga' presumed to be the lowest of low castes in Karnataka. He comments in his autobiography about how modernity sits uncomfortably on the shoulders of our country. And how society has reached a point where the caste system is functioning subtly. It is still difficult for a Dalit to find a

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place for rent in metropolitan cities like Bangalore. Dominance and inequality are enacted and reproduced in *Samboli*.

It helps in understanding how the Indian caste system systematically discriminates one individual against another, not because of merit or skill but completely based on the caste they were born into. The ‘social actors’ who were born as upper castes felt a sense of privilege and need to maintain this hierarchy of high and low.

This illogical hierarchy led to thousands of years of oppression and violence against Dalits. Many Dalit writers including Lakshman formed great parts of resistance against this system of abuse. They participated in the Dalit movement, but Lakshman became critical of this movement as it had forgotten its main goal and got caught up in caste and identity politics.

He points out the development of his consciousness as he entered the Karnataka liberation front. He worked towards the eradication of caste discrimination that is when Lakshman realized that this would not just liberate Dalits but also other oppressed populations of society.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis of *Samboli* using Fairclough’s three-dimensional method.**

The three levels of analysis are:

1. Description
2. Interpretation
3. Explanation

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## 1. DESCRIPTION

The text for the current study is titled '*Samboli! Beware!*' which is suggestive of the description of identities. Lakshman's '*Samboli*' in Kannada 'Echarike' originally means 'be careful' this expression is centuries old. It was to warn the touchable that the untouchables are approaching and be careful that they would avoid pollution. This was a practice prescribed by Manu, the ancient lawgiver, wherein people belonging to the untouchable's community were made to hold a pole with bells and make sounds wherever they walked. They had to warn people as they moved around in the crowds about their presence, they had to walk in separate lanes and avoid the main roads to avoid touching upper-caste people. Even their shadows' were considered to be polluting.

By choosing to name his autobiography '*Samboli*', Lakshman is trying to warn people that his autobiography is arriving in mainstream literature. The untouchables are done staying hidden and just like the untouchables this autobiography is surfacing above. A warning that was initially assumed to be associated with an insult to untouchables becomes a mode of warning, a form of resistance to this practice in Lakshman's autobiography.

In another instance, Lakshman's grandfather converses with another individual who one can assume that the individual belongs to the upper caste:

One day, as thatha sat at the door weaving a rat trap, an elderly man came up to him.

'What, thatha? How are you? Who's this boy?'



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My thatha stood up flustered, dhadabhada, crossing his hands across his chest.

‘How’s it you’ve come this far swami? And that too in this burning sun. Come; come; stand in the shade here.’

Thatha welcomed him with great humility. Pointing to me, he said. ‘He’s my daughter’s son, swami. They’d come for the village festival. He’s been here since then. His father has too many children. Too much poverty in that house. Here we’re just the pair of us, mudhuka and mudhuki. And so, I am thinking of bringing him up here, swami...’

‘Arey, thatha, do you have any sense? You’re keeping such a fine boy at home and ruining his life? Is it fair? Anyway, you’ve spent your lives as ignorant people. Should these children to grow up like you, tell me now? Remember to bring him to school tomorrow and get him admitted. Understand...?’ that sounded like a threat.

‘Yes, swami, yes,’ thatha said, bringing his palms together in deep respect.  
(Lakshman, p.32)

The humility and the respect that Lakshman’s thatha shows are significant here. Even though thatha is older than the man thatha calls him ‘swami’ and even the way he gets up quickly crossing his hands shows that this other man is someone from a higher caste. The body language and the salutation is a big giveaway of the hierarchical relationship between thatha and the other person. There is a difference between how thatha and this other elderly man talk together.

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Thatha appears to be submissive to this demanding elderly man talking together. Thatha appears to be submissive to this demanding elderly man of upper caste. In the same conversation when asked about Lakshman thatha explains that he is planning to raise Lakshman with him as his daughter already has other kids. To this, 'swami' asks thatha to bring him to school and not ruin his life as soon as possible in a threatening way. To this thatha obediently agrees this shows that 'swami' indeed held a very authoritative position in Thatha's life.

In another incident, Lakshman feels deeply humiliated when his classmate recognizes Lakshman while he was begging.

'Once, my classmate Muniraju of the Vokkaliga agricultural community and his father were walking along that way. I did not notice who they were.

'Swami, give me three paise, please...three paise,' i begged, going after them. The boy turned, Muniraju! I ran away embarrassed because they were from our town and from an upper Dalit caste. Since then, i made it a point to look closely at the person i followed before saying, 'swami, three paise please...' (Lakshman, p.40)

Lakshman remembers this incident as one of the most humiliating times of his life. He used to visit Doddagutte hill for begging. Every year countless Christians used to visit the shrine of a Whiteman. He felt that the pilgrims and people who visited this shrine would always give him more money than any other place. And he felt that begging from strangers never made him feel bad as they never frowned or scolded him.

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But Lakshman ends up following Muniraja who was his classmate.

Muniraju identified him when he had gone to beg people for three paise at Doddagutte hill where countless Christians used to visit the shrine of a white man. He always felt that the people who visited this shrine would always give him so many, and begging from strangers never made him feel bad as they never frowned or scolded them.

Muniraju belonged to the upper Dalit caste and from his town this made him feel embarrassed. This incident reveals the identities that exist among dalit communities. Here one individual is scared of another based on their position in society. After this humiliating encounter, Lakshman does not stop begging instead he says that since then he started to look closely at a person before begging for money. Similarly, while Lakshman was working as a coolie his classmate identifies him and speaks to him. He once again feels embarrassed.

He came up to me and said, 'Ei, how're you? When are the results expected?' I felt as if the boiling tar had splashed all over me. I bent my head, ran to the mixer- mixing tar and hid behind it.

'God! Who else will see me working here as a coolie? When i go back to school, these boys will look at me and laugh among themselves, won't they? God...! In my heart, i wept. (Lakshman, p.49)

He used to work as a coolie well one day his classmate saw him when he spoke to him, and he once again felt embarrassed it appears that he never wanted anyone to know that he was working as a coolie. One can understand the embarrassment and shame that he felt. This shame was related to how he belonged to

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an untouchable community that had no resources like his other classmates who had money and other facilities that helped them to get an education.

Unlike his classmates, Lakshman had to mobilize his books and clothes. And when people came to know about this, he would always feel embarrassed and that would make him weep inside his heart. This shows the helplessness he feels. He feels and wonders who else had seen him working as a coolie and when he would go back to school the boys who had seen him would look at him and laugh. This was his anxiety and worry. He was untouchable and afraid of the people from upper castes view and do mockery.

Lakshman felt that stealing was easy but enjoying the things they stole was difficult. Lakshman with his other friends who all belonged to untouchable communities used to steal from upper-caste farms and those people used to address them as abusively as possible they would call them as

‘Some sons of whores have taken to raiding our farm,’ they were talking among themselves, ‘they look like boys. If I get my hands on them, I’ll kick them and leave them floating in the well.’

For the *savarnas* beating and killing untouchables meant nothing. When they would see the bundle in which Lakshman would carry the stolen goods the people belonging to the upper caste would ask them, ‘what’s in it?’ and if children of the Vokkaliga community saw their stolen booty, they would force them to open the bundle and show them what they had and then interrogate them:

‘What is this? Who gave it to you? Where did you get it from...?’ If they got suspicious, they abused them and beat them up, and take away their spoils. (Lakshman, p.68)

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After Lakshman moved back to his parent's house, he was admitted to the village school as soon as his parents went to work. This particular school was in the vicinity where the Gowdas stayed. He recalls that –

‘Sometimes, when the old teacher did not come, a new teacher gathered all the students together inside the closed porch of the Marammathaayi Temple, but we had to sit outside. With the blessed sun staring at us relentlessly, our minds and bodies shriveled up. When it rained, we raced home.

Somehow, I managed to enter the third grade. We had a Brahmin master. Most of his head was tonsured, leaving a tuft of hair at the back. He made us Madigas sit in a row behind the Gowda students. He had two canes to punish us, a short one to punish those children of the agricultural caste, and a long one to reach us in the back row. Quite often, the zing of the cane, as it landed on our tender skin, nicked off a bit of flesh and left us bleeding and, later, scarred’ (Lakshman, p.115)

He would not let them anywhere near the blackboard like the previous teacher. When he gave them dictation, he would not touch their slates. They had to place their slates on the floor and stand a little away. He would ground his teeth as he looked at them and then hit them with the long cane.

This discrimination between the ‘Madiga’ and the ‘Gowda’ students by the teachers not only scared Lakshman but it traumatized his mother too. For his mother more than education staying alive made more sense. This discrimination of punishment and teaching based on caste was quite common but unfair but no one

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dared to question this. The inbuilt hate of the ‘teacher’ for the ‘Dalit student’ made their situation worse.

The way Lakshman spoke Kannada was also made fun of as it was a quite different variety, a variety that Madigas spoke to each other, that was completely different from that of caste Hindus.

‘Though I am a Kannadiga and I speak Kannada, I spoke in the variety of the language that we Madigas speak, and I spoke it with a sense of self-worth. The children at school laughed at me and teased me.’  
(Lakshman, p.125)

Each community has its dialect and variety of language that is detrimental to identifying one’s caste. And Lakshman even though was a Kannadiga and spoke Kannada he had a different variety of Kannada that their community as a Madiga he spoke he was proud of speaking but the children at school teased him. Even though he identified and spoke the language with a sense of self-worth he was still insulted.

As Lakshman received his education the way he dressed and presented himself changed his friends started running away and avoiding him because he was dressing differently than them.

‘Le, Kencha,’ I said, ‘what’s this? You’re running away from me as if you haven’t seen me. Why? What wrong have I done to you?’

‘You’re all dressed up smartly, Lachma. And so, I was scared to talk to you.’

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People in our colony hesitated to speak to me. The people from the village saw me from a distance but would not come near to talk to me. Then I realized the impact of education. Wealth, authority, knowledge, and their trappings mesmerize the ignorant, filling them with fear. (Lakshman, p.126)

The people in his colony feared him as he was educated. The image of wealth, authority, and knowledge mesmerized them and filled them with fear. His community was unable to relate themselves to Lakshman. In the same way, the caste Hindus did not like to relate them with Lakshman for example

‘Namaskar, Saar,’ wished the Secretary like a gracious host.

I wished him back with due respect.

Immediately, he looked shocked as if he had stepped on a snake. He seethed with fury, breathed heavily, and stared at me as if he would swallow me. His dark face grew darker.

He came to the school that very night.

‘Namaskar, Saar,’ I said, bringing my palms together reverently.

‘Your work is at night. Why were you in the school during the day?’ he roared. I could not look at his face; it spewed evil.

‘The headmaster told me to, saar. He himself brought me to the lunch in your house, saar.’

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He blew out his cheeks, cleared his throat noisily and spat. Then he went away, mumbling something like a pujari muttering a mantra.

‘A person with no smile on his face, no warmth in his words isn’t human at all; let him be, I felt.

As usual, I went to the school the next evening. The headmaster looked depressed. (Lakshman, p.132)

‘Don’t come over to my house from tomorrow,’ he said (Lakshman, p.133)

This was one of the times when the headmaster of the school where he was working took him to the secretary’s house for a wedding feast. He experiences how much hatred the secretary had for him. The secretary asks him why he had come to his house to which Lakshman says that the headmaster had asked him to come, but he cleared his throat noisily and spat and goes mumbling something like a ‘pujari’ muttering a mantra.

Lakshman does not get bothered by this, and he goes as usual to work the headmaster appeared depressed and asks him not to come to his house from tomorrow. And slowly the secretary started to assign him unnecessary work and they removed him from his job.

The caste Hindus were forced to accept the Dalits and untouchables at their workspace because of reservations. But they felt no need or obligation to accept or welcome them to their houses or their weddings. Lakshman’s mistake was not related to his work but had more to do with him belonging to a lower caste and attending the secretary’s family wedding at his house.



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The above instances are how Lakshman's identity changes. For his community, he is an educated man who they fear and for the non-Dalits, he is still an untouchable who needs to be kept in their place. His identity changes from an untouchable Dalit to a Dalit activist. The autobiography seems to appear as a form of action, and a function or representation of individuals or events that usually helps in the plot of the story here this text is the autobiography, the way Lakshman introduces characters and describes the names, identities, and situations. The discourse and the identity formation become quite clear.

## **2. PROCESS ANALYSIS (INTERPRETATION)**

In the second part of the analysis, the text is interpreted hence the name interpretation or process analysis. Fairclough stresses more about situational contexts and urges us to ask a question like 'What? Who? And why? These can revolve around three factors such as activity, topic, and purpose (Fairclough, 1992 b) here language becomes a vehicle for interpreting the process of producing a text. This gets reflected in the rhetorical and dialectical perspective of a language. If one takes an example from the autobiography '*Samboli*'. The writer selected this particular word for the reader to wonder and interpret why the writer selected this particular word as his Autobiography's title. The writer makes the reader question what *Samboli* means. What is the significance of the title '*Samboli*'?

Lakshman's '*Samboli*' in Kannada 'Echarike' originally means 'be careful' it was a practice that was initially prescribed by Manu, the ancient lawgiver. it was a practice wherein people belonging to the untouchable community were made to hold a pole with bells and make sounds wherever they walked. They had to warn people as they moved around in the crowds about their presence, they had to warn people as

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they moved around in the crowds about their presence, they had to walk in separate lanes and avoid the main roads to avoid touching upper-caste people. Even their shadows were considered to be polluting. Lakshman uses this title to make people or readers understand this concept of untouchability.

But in the English translation by Susheela Punitha, '*Samboli*' is written as '*Samboli! Beware!*' with exclamation marks, denotes that the meaning and the usage could be changing. Initially one assumed that the title was just to make the reader understand untouchability and the lived experience of the untouchable community and Lakshman's life. But '*Samboli*' could also be assumed as a warning to society that the untouchables are stepping out of their 'assigned' roles given by Manu and making their way and identity in society.

In the autobiography, the writer has two names. For his community and the untouchables, his name is 'Lachma', and when he is among the caste Hindus his name is 'Lakshman'. Lakshman's experience with the upper castes is most of the time 'humiliating' and 'painful'. For instance, Lakshman gets caught stealing sweet tamarind. Lakshman explains how he is treated by Narayanappa in the following conversations:

'Did you think you were enjoying the sweet tamarind from your mother's husband's land, you sons of widows?'

He scolded me and thrashed me as if I was a mad dog. He kicked me into a pulp. He had lost his slippers while chasing me.

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‘Come and look for my slippers, you son of a Madiga!’ he said. Abusing and kicking me, he brought me back to where we had been sitting, enjoying the tamarind.

‘First, I came from this side. Then, i ran towards that side,’ Narayannappa was talking to himself. I was sobbing away, wiping my tears from time to time.

‘Ei, my slippers are lost. Find them for me, your mother’s son!’ he kicked me in the waist. Dhabaak! I fell on my face. I hurt my head. I could feel the bump. I cried louder.

‘Don’t try your tricks with me. If you don’t find my slippers, ill crush you with my foot on your neck!’ he said, gnashing his teeth. Clinching my teeth, i looked for his slippers. (Lakshman, p.87)

‘Anno, there it is!’ i shouted. I got into the pit. The slipper had fallen on fresh shit. I picked it up. It was stinking. Narayannappa was furious. His face reeked vengeance. His eyes were bloodshot.

‘Wipe it off, you son of your mother!’ he hissed between clenched teeth, hitting me on the head. I did not know what to wipe it. I stared at Narayannappa.

‘Why are you looking at my face, you thief?’ he roared. ‘Takeoff your shirt and wipe the slipper clean with it!’ quickly, i took it out and wiped the slippers clean with it. Some of the poop stuck to my hand. I rubbed my hand on the shirt.

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‘Smell the slipper and see if it’s stinking,’ he said. I smelt it  
(Lakshman,p.88)

Towards the evening, I had fever. I could not sleep that night. No one ever plants and grows a sweet tamarind tree anywhere at any time. It is a wild tree; it grows anywhere it pleases. While others gather its fruit to enjoy its sweet taste, we eat it to satiate our hunger. Then, why did this Narayannappa abuse me so badly? Why did he beat me up? Why did he make me clean the shit on his slipper with my shirt? Such questions pounded me like torrential rain. I opened my eyes. I felt as if i was watching that Narayanappa dancing thakathai. Frightened, i shut both my eyes with my hands and slept. (Lakshman, p.89)

The language used here itself shows what kind of power dynamics exist between Lakshman and Narayanappa. He abuses and thrashes Lakshman just because he stole some sweet tamarind from his field. He calls him to search for the slippers that he lost while chasing and beating Lakshman. He calls Lakshman all sorts of names with constant thrashing. Lakshman finds that Narayanappa’s slippers had fallen on fresh shit when he gives it to Narayanappa, he demands Lakshman to smell and see if it smells, and he asks him to wipe the shit off the slippers with his shirt. Lakshman does not question this humiliation.

But this incident haunts him. He asks why were they in a position that led them to accept this kind of humiliation and atrocity. Whenever he opened his eyes he would feel as if Narayannappa was dancing thakathai. This image frightened him.

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There were many such instances of caste discrimination. These were accepted by the 'lower castes' and the 'upper castes. There were people who appeared kind to Lakshman but still held their practice of 'discrimination' like Beraniajji.

'Aji, I'm thirsty,' I said.

'Hoon, hold your palms together,' she said, bringing a metal pot of water. I cupped my palms and bent a little. Water gurgled into my hands from above—jol, jola. I drank my fill. Right in front of me, venkateshappa was drinking water from a tumbler. And then, he went inside and sat in aji's house; he was a Gowda. (Lakshman, p.110)

The water went the wrong way and i had a fit of coughing. Immediately, aji patted the top of my head.

'Look upwards at the sky. Look upwards, mari,' she kept saying.

Venkateshappa stepped outside.

'Come, let's get going,' he said. The bullocks, wearied by the sun, were drooling as they chewed the cud.

'Ei, Mari! Ei, Mari! Wait, wait!' we had walked some distance when we heard aji calling out to me. She was coming towards us with giant strides, huffing and puffing. As soon as she reached me, she undid the knot at one end of the pallu of her sari and took out a four-anna bit, and gave it to me. (Lakshman, p.111)

Even though Beraniajji gives Lakshman water she does not give him in a tumbler but rather asks him to 'hold his palms together'. In front of Lakshman,

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Venkateshappa who was a 'Gowda' drinks water from a tumbler. As Lakshman sits outside, Venkateshappa gets to sit inside the house. Even though Beraniajji pats Lakshman's head while he coughs and gives a four anna coin at the end as he leaves, this does not mean that Beraniajji is any different from the society that practices castism. Beraniajji seems kind to Lakshman because she treats him better than other caste Hindus.

A young 'Lachma' does not understand why his life was such a struggle. But Lakshman realizes the reason behind the struggle only after he joined Dalit Sangarsha Samiti. He understands why he got a government job in the first place and also realizes that it was the same reason why he lost the same job.

It is only after I joined the Dalit Sangarsha Samiti in its struggle for justice and wandered through villages meeting other Dalits, whose lives were on the streets like mine due to the malice of caste distinctions, that I realized why I had landed a government job in the first place; what it implied when I sat among the other guests at the lunch arranged by the bridegroom's family and, ultimately, why I had lost my job through no fault of mine.

I understood why people of the upper castes do not permit Dalits to enter their homes, wells, hostels, and temples; the problem was larger than what had happened to me as a person. I read the writings of Ambedkar, Periyar Ramaswamy, and the revolutionary, Basavanna. I got involved in the protests of the samiti and experienced both victory and defeat (Lakshman, p.137)

From the above statements by Lakshman, Dalit Sangarsha samiti opened new doors; he was able to meet Dalits living in villages who were suffering the evil of the

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caste system. He understands how he had got a government job and because he had gone to the secretary's house and sat with the guests at the lunch, he had lost his job. Not because of some mistake he did, but because he belonged to a particular Dalit caste. He understood that people belonging to the upper caste do not allow Dalits to enter their houses, wells, or any personal or public space. Lakshman realizes that what happened to him was a smaller part of a bigger underlying problem. He read works of Ambedkar, Periyar, and Basavanna and involved himself in protests.

Lakshman understands that the caste of Hindus is a matter of arrogance and pride. But for a Dalit, untouchable it can cause more problems than solutions or pride.

‘If anyone asks you which caste you belong to, you must say you’re a Vokkaliga without thinking twice.’ That was the first lesson I learnt on the painting job. (Lakshman, p.138)

After losing his government job, Lakshman starts to work as a painter and the very first suggestion and instruction that he gets from his employer is to lie about his caste. This can be interpreted in terms of how if one told the truth the caste Hindus would not let them inside their houses, let alone allow any painting jobs. To avoid missing out on any opportunities or jobs Lakshman agrees to his employer's idea.

### **3. SOCIAL PROCESS OR EXPLANATION**

The third part of the analysis is explanation. This refers to the use of a language in a social context (Fairclough:1992:a) or in ‘areas of social practices’ (Foucault:1989:25). Foucault and Fairclough have differentiated between language and discourse. Language is a manifestation of a particular discourse; it is a form of knowledge about culture, society, and social events.

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We see that an elder upper caste man asks Lakshman's thatha to send him to school. He questions him and asks him if he has any sense that he is keeping Lakshman at home instead of sending him to school he asks whether it's 'fair'. He tells them they have lived an 'ignorant life' as 'ignorant people'. And whether these kids should grow up like them. Lakshman's thatha agrees to send Lakshman. This event is significant because a person other than their 'caste' is supportive of Lakshman's better future. He makes Lakshman's grandfather understand the importance of education and also acknowledges that if he stays at home and does not go to school his life will be 'ruined'.

Throughout the autobiography, one can see ritualistic practices forming the main base of Lakshman and his family life. Even though he did not share their beliefs, Lakshman's mother was a staunch practitioner of Hindu culture and rituals.

The gates of heaven are opened on every Marnomi day, the ninth day of the Dasara festival. We keep the Yede on the feast of the Marnomi, don't we? The dead of our families come and eat it maga. When I die, you'll keep the Yede for me, won't you?

Every year on the feast of Marnomi, remember, I remember the story my thatha told me. At the same time, I remember the words of the revolutionary poet Basavanna too: There is no other heaven or hell; right conduct is heaven and misconduct are hell. (Lakshman, p.37)

Like many ritualistic practices keeping 'Yede' or offering to the dead in Lakshman's house was also present according to his mother dead relatives visited them during Marnomi (full moon day) and they would eat the Yede (offering) were kept for them. His mother asks when she dies 'would' Lakshman keep Yede for her as



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well. But Lakshman refuses to practice this tradition he remembers Basavanna's words where he tells there is no hell or heaven; right behavior is heaven and misconduct leads to hell. This suggests that he does not believe in an afterlife. He not only rejects previous rituals but develops a modern perspective on life.

Lakshman prefers begging near a Christian shrine to a temple is very much suggestive of three things. One thing is that the people were strangers they would not recognize him. Secondly, they would not abuse him or refuse him like the caste Hindus and lastly, they were generous while giving alms, and this was ideal for him he would ask 'Swami, give me three paise, please'.

But when Muniraju from his town recognizes him he feels humiliated because he recognizes him one can see the minute differences between Lakshman and Muniraju. Lakshman and Muniraju are from the same place, the same town but Muniraju is from an 'upper Dalit caste and Lakshman is from an untouchable Dalit caste even though they are both Dalits Muniraju is visiting Doddagutte hill as a tourist whereas Lakshman is begging to make some money. These social differences are very delicately placed throughout the autobiography.

The following text is an example of the social and ritualistic discourse where there is a vast difference between the Dalits and the upper caste Hindus:

'Come, everybody, come!' he cried. 'The Gowda of the village has sent for us, come! Come and gather at the Durgammathayi temple.' He went around the settlement, shouting out the announcement. All of us gathered near the temple of our mother goddess Durgamma.

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‘Listen, everyone,’ said Byranna softly, ‘The people of the upper castes in the village worshipped Maleyraaya for seven days, pleading with him to send us rain, but not a drop has fallen to the earth, and now they are starving, chewing on stray grains of rice. So, they want us to appease Maleyraaya. All the important people in the village are asking us.’ Exhaustion stole the rest of his words from him. Bylappathatha’s high-pitched voice took over from Byranna.

‘Yes, what will be the plight of men and dumb animals if it doesn’t rain, if we don’t have a harvest?’ he wept. ‘Let the boys get together early tomorrow morning and worship Maleyraaya our way. If he condescends to descend and fill the earth with his fullness, we can survive at least as labourers somewhere or the other.’ (Lakshman,p.56)

The boys repeated the lines after me joyfully, and we wended our way to the village. My Vokkaliga classmates made their way through the crowd towards me to touch me and to pat my back. They stood in front of me and grinned. They talked to me for no reason at all except to talk to me. My throat was parched with singing songs to Maleyraaya; i wanted some water but did not have the nerve to ask for any. Generally, the Vokkaligas look down on us; the mere sight of us irritates them. But today, every man, woman and child of that community looked on us with deep respect and affection. (Lakshman, p.58)

This part of the autobiography shows how the politics of rituals are showcased. The higher castes get to sit in their comfort and perform the rituals required by them to appease the Maleyraayya whereas the boys of Dalit communities,

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untouchables, and other lower castes were expected to perform different, difficult kinds of rituals. That required them to get up early and go from one village to another, half-naked singing songs in praise of Maleyraayya in cold.

The people and upper caste communities who were first abusive and maintained a distance from the untouchables were being cordial. The Vokkaligas would look down on them but on this particular day, his Vokkaliga classmates touched him, spoke with him, and were in front of him grinning. This shows how Hindu rituals are filled with double standards. And people prefer to maintain the discourse of touchability and untouchability according to their preferences. If the dalit boys were not performing these rituals would the Vokkaligas still touch and treat them with the same respect?

People like Byranna and Bylappa thatha were the ones that took care of these rituals, they were concerned with rain. Lakshman and others who performed this ritual successfully were pleased that the rain poured down. It could be a co-incidence but the belief that their community shared was stronger. The Maleyraaya was not appeased by the upper castes rather he was appeased by the Dalit's praise and hardship of rituals performed.

One of the famous festivals 'Deepavali' in the Hindu religion made Lakshman excited he would collect crackers and buy them and enjoy bursting them. But one-day Bylappathatha said

I thought you were a clever boy, Lachma,' he said, 'but you're holding this inauspicious thing in your hands and burning it right here, inside our slum.

It's not proper for you to be doing that. Don't do it.' (Lakshman, p.77)

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Lakshman feels as if someone had poured steaming hot water on him. He wonders what wrong he had done that this old man was saying this to him he was worried.

‘Why, thatha? What did I do?’

The old man cleared his throat, spat, and said, ‘once, on the feast of Deepavali, one of our ancestors had gone to a village fair to get the puja done for the home. You know the red string tied round the wrist during Deepavali? That one. And also, to buy the ingredients for the sweet kajaaya made for the festival. He never returned. Here, everyone’s eyes became holes staring down the lane... watching and waiting for him. They didn’t know what to do without their elder. They felt helpless. They were plunged in grief. That’s why we consider the festival of Deepavali as a sutka, Mari; it’s a ritual defilement. The fire-crackers are ritually impure for us. They are untouchables. We shouldn’t burst them, can’t you see?’ he completed his story and asked, ‘can we celebrate the festival that took the life of our ancestor as a sacrifice? You tell me now.’ (Lakshman, p.77)

Bylappa thatha talks about an ancestor who went out to buy ingredients for sweets and how he never came back, he calls this festival a sutka which means ‘ritual defilement’. He calls the firecrackers ‘ritual impure’ and ‘untouchables’ and that is why one should not burst them. He asks Lakshman how they could celebrate a festival that took the life of our ancestors as a sacrifice.

Bylappathatha had a point in telling Lakshman that the festivities at Deepavali were a ritual defilement to them; that the bursting of crackers was a ritual pollution.

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Lakshman believes that there could be another reason as well. Bylappathatha could be resisting and revolting by avoiding this ritual of the upper castes he says:

‘ It may be a way of protesting that we do not want what we cannot have Dalits, anyway, have no way of celebrating any Deepavali ever with good food, new clothes, and crackers; we just cannot afford them. Though we do back-breaking work, the fruits of our labour have only been half-filled bellies and raggedy clothes because we have no right to land or production. A society built on differences has never ever considered us, Dalits, as human beings.’ (Lakshman,p.78)

‘It could also be a way of fostering an upper-caste notion that Dalits should not observe any of their festivals.

Unless those who believe in humaneness come onto the streets to condemn such despicable practices, the lives of human beings will have no meaning. Unless people internalize the truth that idealism has to be practiced, not worshipped, it is pointless to celebrate Deepavali as the festival of lights or to burst crackers to dispel darkness, year after year. If we want to dispel the darkness within us, we have to incinerate our desire for deception, hatred, and vengeance the way we burst crackers. We have to enlighten our hearts with a people-centered truth that respects human dignity. Only then will human life have any value.

O, Deepavali of polluted light, when will you become a pure light for all people?’ (Lakshman, p.79)

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One can understand and assume that it was the ‘untouchables’ way of protesting and celebrating. When the Dalits did not have the resources to survive how they can celebrate a festival that was built or celebrated around the death of their ancestors? Even though they work hard all their lives they do not get any resources. He recognizes Indian society as that which is filled with differences.

It was an Indian society that never considered or treated Dalits as human beings let alone equals. After much speculation and revelations, Lakshman decides never to burn a single cracker on Deepavali. He talks about how meaningless it is to celebrate the Deepavali festival of light when one is filled with the darkness within. He stresses that one has to destroy that darkness that exists within oneself and respect and value every human life.

We see Lakshman getting caught up in the process of many rituals and practices that were at the gist one form of begging or collecting alms. Especially in the time of ‘shravana’ the fifth lunar month Lakshman was supposed to belong to the ancestry of ‘Venkataramana Swami’ and do upadhane by collecting alms from three houses on every Saturday of shravana month specifically.

We are supposed to belong to the ancestry of Ventakaramana swami. We have the ritual of doing the upadhane by receiving alms from at least three houses on as many Saturdays as there are in shravana, the fifth lunar month. (Lakshman, p.90)

‘Le, Lachma,’ appa said. ‘Your Chikkana doesn’t seem to be coming tonight. You better do the upadhane. Go beg for alms in three houses’

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Amma was busy at the fireplace, feeding the fire with fresh pieces of firewood. She stood up immediately.

‘Yes, Lachma, come, come. nothing should come in the way of our duty to God,’ she said as she held my hand. (Lakshman, p.91)

We never ever went to the Vokkaliga houses in the village near our settlement. When doddappa was a boy, he had gone once to one of their houses to beg for alms. He stood in front of a house and shouted, ‘Shriman Narayana Govindaaa... Govinda.’ Someone came outside, stared at him, went inside again, brought out a cane, and thrashed him. The welts on his body did not heal even after a month. (Lakshman, p.96)

When Lakshman’s brother who used to do these rituals does not come on time to perform these rituals, his father asks Lakshman to perform his duties. Lakshman is forced to take his place. Lakshman’s mother tells that ‘Nothing should come in the way of our duty to god’. Lakshman gets ready and performs these rituals for the sake of his mother. He remembers how their family never went near the Vokkaliga houses near their village and settlement. He gives the example of his doddappa who had stood in front of a Vokkaligas house shouting ‘Shriman Narayana Govindaa...Govinda’ the people who came and saw them and went inside came out with a cane and thrashed doddappa mercilessly. The injuries on his body did not heal even after a month.

‘We are not in trouble when we lie about our caste to strangers in the marketplace. And in the towns, we can live like anyone else among strangers. This is a basic truth I found out when I went for upadhane in the market area during shravana month Saturdays. (Lakshman, p.96)

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Like many Dalit autobiographies, we see that lower caste communities try to associate themselves with an upper caste community or they lie about their caste to receive respect or some other material gain. Lakshman visits three houses to beg for alms during Shravana month Saturday. He feels a constant threat of being found out for lying like how his uncle had gotten thrashed after being caught for lying. But again, Lakshman also felt that it was easy to lie and beg for alms in town or the market as the strangers won't be able to identify their caste.

Lakshman while working as a painter was asked to lie about his caste. He was asked to tell that he was a Vokkaliga if anyone asked him. One can understand how one individual's caste identity determines inclusion and exclusion another example of this is when Kamala Lakshman's friend's sister who later became Lakshman's wife asks her mother a simple question simple practice why she served him food in a leaf instead of a plate.

'Amma, why do you serve him on a leaf? Why don't you serve him on a plate?'

'Tell me, Mari,' said her mother to me, 'can we give up caste distinctions just because you happen to be a good boy?' I bowed my head. (Lakshman, p.95)

Her mother turns to Lakshman and tells Lakshman how they cannot give up caste distinctions just because he happens to be a good boy and Lakshman bows his head. He accepts it without a word. Eventually Kamala and Lakshman fall in love and when this reached the ears of her family it was not taken lightly.



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‘That Madiga, Lachma, and your daughter spend hours on talking and giggling,’ complained one of the overseer’s households to Kamala’s mother, sowing seeds of suspicion in her. It reached Kamala’s father and he, in a moment of insanity, beat her with a crowbar. Kamala’s head had bled, but, for whatever reason, he had not taken her to the doctor. (Lakshman, p.141)

‘Ei, Kamala, why did you go and talk to him knowing he’s a Madiga?’ (Lakshman, p.142)

‘Amma, haven’t you and appa told us many times that he shouldn’t have been born in that caste? That he’s a good boy? What’s wrong in talking to such a good boy?’ Kamala retaliated (Lakshman, p.143)

Kamala gets hit by a crowbar and even though her situation is serious she is not taken to the doctor. They question Kamala why she spoke to Lakshman even after knowing that he was a Madiga, and Kamala would keep on retaliating by saying how both her parents had said that he was a good boy, and he should not have been born in that caste. She questions them about what is wrong in talking to such a good boy. This exclusion he feels all his life even while he was appointed as the attender in government first-grade College.

He had met an attender from the zoology department who belonged to the Lingayat community. Both of them would eat together and drink tea together and discuss many issues. One day as they reached the attender’s rented house, he got a wooden stool and asked him to sit outside this made Lakshman angry and he did not sit he was fuming with anger. He wondered ‘Why do these disgusting people ostracize me as if I were a leper the moment, they get to know my caste?’ (Lakshman, p.167).

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This is a reality for most untouchables even though they got an education, equal pay, and jobs. They never received the respect or human dignity that they were worthy of. They were kept at a distance when it came to letting them inside their houses and personal space. There is another similar incident.

Anjanappa was one of the sweepers in Lakshman's college. He was a Dalit too. a marriage proposal was arranged for him and he had asked Lakshman to accompany him to their house. After liking the girl, the mother of the bride asked them to wash their legs and come inside and have food. But Anjanappa refused to eat, he took them aside and told that he had got a Madiga with him and that's why he did not want to eat then.

So, he would come in the evening alone-to which the girl's father said that it is good people know their places. Lakshman felt it was better to commit suicide than to go through these insults. Lakshman mentions this incident because Anjanappa was also a Dalit like Lakshman, and he too got the job through reservation. Even though they belong to the same group the caste identity they share is different. Even in Dalits, there is a division where one claims to be superior to another group. This is the ultimate tragedy:

‘Ayyo, don't worry!’ said Anjanappa. ‘The man sitting inside is a Madiga.

That's why I don't want to eat now. I'll come alone this evening.’

The man cleared his throat loudly and spat. It's good for people to know their place,’

‘Thu, it's better to commit suicide than to face insults from such people,’

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The tragedy in the story is that Anjanappa too is a Dalit like me; he is a Korama. Like me, he too was appointed to a post reserved for Dalits.

Even to this day, people turn towards ‘Madigas’ to appease the ‘Maleyrayya’ he remembers how their ancestors linked their ancestry to Jambavantha by saying

‘Madigas belong to the ancestry of Jambavantha. They are people of integrity like him. Won't Maleyraayya come down if they invite him?’

(Lakshman, p.188)

According to them if the Madigas sang and did the rituals then Maleyraayya would surely be appeased and rain would pour. This shows how they were trying to shape and acknowledge their identity and narrative with the help of myths and folklore.

People claim that caste-related violence has reduced drastically because they haven't experienced it themselves. One has to understand that caste-related violence is not just physical, it is embedded in the language, labels, names, rituals, and practices and this violates the mind and heart of an individual. It dehumanizes them and steals them of their dignity. Even though there are laws to protect Dalits, atrocities still exist in a veiled society that claims to be progressive.

Lakshman, in the end, quotes Buddha ‘*You are a light unto yourself*’ by this he means to say that the people who are oppressed should take responsibility and fight for their rights and stand up against all kinds of exploitation without any compromise. Only then one can hold their head high and shine. But also show how the Dalits are resisting this oppression through language. Lakshman shows resistance to the social system that ignores the voice of the exploited and marginalized.

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## CHAPTER – VII

### CONCLUSIONS

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Critical Discourse Analysis is a type of discourse that examines the way social power dominates or is abused. It also means critically studying the hidden ideology and social power. They focus on studying social processes, social order, and power relations. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) individual or community's social behaviours that are established in their discourses, and links between society and text. It paves a new way to understand the underlying politics that exist in the language used in the Dalit autobiographies.

Discourse and language are in themselves unique forms of social practice. It not only represents other social practices but also constitutes other social practices like the exercise of domination, power, resistance, and prejudice. Texts obtain their meanings through the 'dialectical relationship' between texts and social subjects. That is the writers and the readers, this always operates with a variety of choices to access and interpret these texts.

Linguistic features and structures are not random. They are purposeful whether or not the choices are conscious or unconscious. Power relations that exist in the texts and narratives are produced, exercised, and reproduced through discourse. Speakers and writers function from specific discursive practices that are resulting out of some special interests, agendas, or aims. These involve 'inclusions' and

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‘exclusions. Discourse is ‘historical’ as the texts obtain their meanings by being situated in exact socio-cultural, ideological contexts, and precise times.

Critical discourse analysis not only interprets texts but also explains them.

Discursive practice, the production, distribution, consumption, and interpretation of texts, is part of a hegemonic society. It contributes to the reproduction of the existing order of discourse with established social and power relations (Fairclough, 1992: 93). By combining this concept of intertextuality with hegemony, he points out how hegemony ‘naturalizes’ unequal power relations and builds them into people’s ‘common sense’. This is why it becomes important to study these select dalit autobiographies so that one can understand how and why the production, distribution, and consumption process of discourse takes place through the language and narratives used in it. Accordingly, this discourse is used in shaping the subjects or characters in the autobiography.

The thesis concludes that discourse plays a significant role in initiating wider socio-cultural changes in contemporary Indian society. These developments have affected discourse practices that are, changes in language, and narratives and this led to the need to analyze the language used.

The CDA of these select Dalit autobiographies focuses on how predominant discourses of socio-cultural change through language are recontextualized and changes are employed to ‘legitimize’ the goal of a fair and just society. This is a vicious circle it explains how the subjugated consent to hierarchies of unequal social power functions as ideology.

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Discourse analysis makes people from seeing language as theoretical to seeing words as having meaning in a historical, social, and political form. Words are used to convey a wide sense of meanings and this meaning creates discourse. One of the attributes of dominant discourse is its ability to interpret circumstances and actions in favor of the dominant group. This is why literary and cultural studies must use critical discourse analysis—to analyze and make the untouchables, and marginalized feel their part of history legitimate and heard, and to take the voice off of people who are in power, to question.

On analyzing the language, narratives, and practices using critical discourse analysis several hidden agendas and motives that served the self-interests of the upper castes were revealed. These strategies helped the upper caste maintain their sense of caste superiority, and ensured the untouchables and Dalit's subjugation.

The Dalit writers understood that change in their current narrative and representation requires the power to communicate as well as means of communication to self-represent and create new discourse, a resistance discourse to the existing discourse that subjugated their whole community for years. Discourses include representations of how things are in the past, and present and should be in the future.

The study focused on the Dalit identities that were constructed through discourse and how they were portrayed in these Dalit autobiographies. The thesis also focused on various narratives and utterances that were present in these Dalit autobiographies. By doing so the researcher was able to understand the culture and its influence on the construction of 'Dalit identity'.

The thesis tries to examine new strategies and modes of resistance that are created by Dalits against linguistic practices by using critical discourse analysis in

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these four Dalit autobiographies. It also studies whether autobiographies constitute a form of resistance to the dominant linguistic practices and tries to gain access to various linguistic strategies for resisting the popular discursive practices that exist in the texts.

The thesis examined new strategies and modes of resistance such as naming, calling, and legitimating their identity through writing that were created by Dalits against the popular linguistic practices by using critical discourse analysis in the following four Dalit autobiographies. The thesis also studied whether autobiographies constituted a form of resistance to these dominant linguistic practices.

Fairclough's three levels of analytical approach are used in analyzing Dalit autobiographies. These levels are description, interpretation, and explanation (Fairclough 1989:26). Description deals with the formal aspects of the text which is autobiography. In the interpretation part, the texts related to that particular social practice, and text as a process of interpretation and production are studied. It focuses on how culture, discourse, and language in the autobiography are produced and interpreted through language.

In the last explanation stage, the relationship between these social contexts, and interaction is explained. This determines the production, interpretation, and social effects of popular discourses that are written and interpreted in text or Autobiography. Initially, these methods were used to analyze newspaper ads, articles, and novels. This thesis is one of the first works where Critical Discourse Analysis has been applied to autobiographies.

Dalit literature has already received substantial attention, as stories of subjugation, pain, and exploitation of Dalits. Novels, short stories, and

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autobiographies tell the same story, but not a single work has been produced in which a Dalit autobiography was viewed as a challenge or a rebellion against popular writing culture. It becomes critical to read between the lines and to understand the real meaning of Dalit Autobiographies.

Dr. Rajesh Kumar considers Dalit writings as a form of ‘resistance’ literature than ‘narratives of pain’ as autobiography were a genre through which a Dalit could freely cross the threshold of literary space. Sanjiv Kumar considers Dalit literature and writing as a liberating process through which Dalit authors vent their silenced voices throughout history.

Autobiography is a literary genre that consists of an account of a person’s life written by that person; their works are intimate writing that is and was not necessarily intended for publication as a formal autobiography. There are six types of autobiography. They consist of a full autobiography, memoir, personal essay, confession, psychological illness, and overcoming adversity. Dalit autobiography falls into all the above genres. The autobiographies are a combination of memoirs, personal essays, and confessions; they talk about the psychological illness as well as overcoming adversaries.

Autobiographies that were taken for the study were translations from different languages and cultures such as Telugu, Kannada, and Marathi. The common thing that they had was that they elaborated a history of caste-biased violence and identity that were seen during that period. The study focused on Dalit autobiographies that are very much focused on the Dalit discourse. Autobiographies like *‘The Prison We Broke’*, *‘My Father Bahiah’*, *‘Interrogating My Chandal Jeevan’*, and *‘Samboli’* are an integral part of Dalit discourse. These autobiographies consist of various ‘Dalit



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identities.’ The identities that existed during pre-independence, as well as post-independence, have vast differences.

Indian society is based on a hierarchical civilization that never cared or focused on the troubles of ‘untouchable’ communities. The caste Hindus portrayed Dalits in their stories as individuals who were either being led by a theme of ‘social reform’ or ‘compassion’ but none of the writers ever treat an untouchable character reasonably.

Untouchability as a practice is a quite difficult concept for western society. It is a practice that is propagated by people belonging to the same culture. A person belonging to a particular lower caste community would be considered as pollution impure. Even touching them is considered polluting. They were kept away from public spaces like temples, ponds, wells, lakes, roads, schools as well as villages. To understand these communities, their language, and culture these autobiographies play a very important role. They show the personal narratives of the Dalit and the untouchables. This opens up a new perspective on studying narratives and discourses.

These autobiographies should not be limited to tales of sorrow they should be considered tales of courage and emancipation. Previous research on Dalit literature or autobiographies has focussed on atrocities, poverty, and shame. But these particular autobiographies are examples of pride. These autobiographies consist of various narratives, conversations, dialogues, and names that tell us about the power struggle that exists in the Indian caste system using language.

Many of the autobiographies have been written and are being written in different languages like Kannada, Marathi, Telugu, and these languages have their separate dialects. These autobiographies contain intricate information about the rituals

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and practises, and the translation from the native language to English resulted in the loss of some important aspects of the text and its meaning.

Normally the Dalit autobiographies are under the presumptions that the writers wrote to gain sympathy but in these select Dalit autobiographies, we see that each of these autobiographies tries to create their identity and, in a way, establish their lineage, which was previously forgotten and neglected.

The Dalit autobiographies that are used in this research are '*The Prisons We Broke*' by Baby Kamble, '*My father Baliah*' by Y.B Satyanarayana, '*Interrogating My Chandal Life*' by Manoranjan Byapari, and '*Samboli*' by Lakshman.

'*The Prisons We Broke*' by Baby Kamble was originally written in Marathi in the year 1986 and got translated into English in the same year by Maya Pandit. The autobiography focuses on the Mahars of Maharashtra.

There are two reasons why the researcher has selected this autobiography for the research; one is that the writer is a Dalit, who has reclaimed her Dalit identity not with pain or shame but with pride. She writes the autobiography with utmost realness. It showcases the Ambedkarite moment, culture, traditions, education, and protest. The second reason was that she is a woman writer; the other three Dalit writers share their personal and professional struggles. But Baby Kamble shares about her community and the Dalit woman's plight in a patriarchal Indian society.

Kamble shared her reasons for wanting to write her autobiography. She wanted to let her descendants know what her predecessors had to go through so that the current generation. By doing so she established the lineage of her family and

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community. She mentions reading a story about Tulsi- a story that had been completely fabricated to their liking by the higher castes.

This story of Tulsi is a story of a Dalit princess Vrinda. This story had been changed to fulfil the needs of the higher castes. She acknowledges that until and unless the Dalits start writing their own stories, others would continue to represent them falsely. These representations and identities were biased and far from reality. These were the cause of the oppression they had faced for many years.

Kamble remembers that outside Maharwada the woman had to bow down as a form of respect in front of upper-caste men. If they failed in bowing down then they would be punished badly. These rituals and culture are criticized by Kamble. She criticizes the Brahmins as well as the patriarchy that exists within the Mahar Dalit community. The autobiography consists of various events like child marriage, domestic violence, complicated pregnancies, and inbuilt misogyny.

Baby Kamble's autobiography is detailed. It talks about customs, rules, and traditions. The Mahar dress codes, beliefs, practices, and the differences between the upper caste and lower castes. The autobiography describes how education, literacy, and awareness can change and revolutionize a community.

Kamble in her autobiography specifies that she was humiliated and discriminated against not just by her Brahmin caste Hindu classmates, but also by her teachers. Even when there were fights between the Mahar girls and caste Hindu girls the punishment was limited to the Mahar girls. Kamble has a collective sense of narrative in her autobiography.

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*My father Baliah* is written by Y. B Satyanarayana it was published in 2011. In this autobiography, he talks about the struggle of three generations of his family. The autobiography is based on the Dalit Madiga community of Telangana in Andhra Pradesh. This autobiography poses the history of the Yelukati family. It depicts the experiences of Madigas throughout decades, and situations. This makes it unique.

‘*My father Baliah*’ unlike any Dalit autobiography starts with vamsha vriksha. Here Satyanarayana tried to record his family ancestry. He belonged to a community that was uneducated for ages; because of this, the community was unable to commemorate their part of history, their families, and their ancestors. But in this autobiography, one can see the writer defining himself and his community. Just royalties, an educated Dalit draws his family tree vamsha vriksha and establishes his lineage. By adopting this narrative strategy, Y. B. Satyanarayana challenges mainstream literature.

This sense of identity for untouchables and Dalits was limited, they saw themselves as the assigned slaves who were at the mercy of the higher castes. They were scared to ask for what was rightfully theirs. Baliah’s father even got fifty acres from Nizam as a gift. He still feels afraid to face Dora. He is worried to offend Dora.

Out of those fifty acres, Dora angrily allots two acres to him. Instead of fighting Narsiah becomes happy and relieved to be able to retrieve at least those two acres. They identified themselves as untouchables who were not supposed to own land or get an education. Many times when Baliah asks Narsiah that he wanted to study Narsiah tells him that they cannot because they are untouchable Dalits. They are restricted to get an education. This kind of narrative shows us the status of untouchable communities.

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In Dalit autobiographies like *My Father Baliah*, the unbreakable societal boundaries, attitudes, cultural divide, and interpersonal relations through language are shown in a diverse light. One can see how insulting suffixes and names were used intentionally to name the members of an untouchable community.

It was a scheme designed to convince the lower castes to accept their low status in the Indian caste system. It was also a method to identify them as someone belonging to a lower caste. There are numerous instances where social cruelty gets expressed by language like- "*I am your slave; I lay my hands on your feet.*" Whereas Dora calls him a 'slave' 'pig'

These language appellations, salutations, and greetings that were imposed on the Dalit communities to address the upper castes, show the researcher the power relationship between the two social actors. These narratives between the upper caste and lower caste established social distinctions, within the society.

But with education and the Ambedkarite movement, the Dalits not only realized what they were going through but saw through the practices and language and the disrespect that was deeply rooted in the conversations and started to change that discourse. They wouldn't let any higher caste address them with disrespect. Initially, an individual whose ancestor would beg the Dora for mercy for no real offense was seen standing up for himself and demanding respect. The notions of slavery and shame are replaced with equality and pride.

Whereas the Dalit autobiography selected is '*Interrogating My Chandal Life*' by Manoranjan Byapari. This autobiography was originally written in Bengali in 2011 that got translated into English by Sipra Mukherjee in 2017. This is a remarkable memoir as it talks about his traumatic life in refugee camps in Dandakaranya, West

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Bengal, as well as the caste exploitation he faces in every aspect. During the partition Byapari and his family moved to India here they had to face a lot of things because of their caste identity and poverty.

The lower caste families would get new houses in the new country only by lying about their real caste identity and names. The real names were intentionally hidden as it would establish their lower castes. But when someone got caught lying they would be thrown out as well. In about 149 colonies where shelter was provided none of the lower castes like the Nama, munchi, or pod families got to stay. Their caste identity with its atrocities had accompanied them to their new country.

Even though the Namashudras worshipped Hindu gods and goddesses they did not get equal treatment as Hindus, the Muslims called them kafirs. They belonged to the lower caste; the upper Hindu castes would look at them with scorn and spit on them. They had come to this new land from Bangal. So the identity changed from Bengali changed to a refugee. But their position in the society at the bottom never changed it remained the same 'Untouchable' 'Chandal' wherever they went.

People of West Bengal, considered and assumed that words like 'refugee' and 'bangal' meant the same. The word 'Bangal' was used as an abusive word. Just like the words 'reactionary', 'bourgeois', 'loan shark', and 'street mongrel' 'bangal' determined that they were refugees and low lives. This identity of being a 'refugee', 'Bangal', and of lower caste origin seemed to pose similar threats to Byapari. They were outcasts even in urban modern cities.

Byapari's father proclaimed his caste identity as Namashudras of the Kashyap Gotra. Even though the upper castes called them 'untouchables' and talk to them condescendingly as 'Chandals' or 'Chanrals', neither Byapari's father nor anyone in

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their community would call themselves as Chandals. The whole community would claim that they were highborn and that the blood of the Brahmin flowed in their veins. It was not just limited to the Namashudra community this was common for every lowly rank of the Varna hierarchy they would make the same claim that they belonged to a higher caste.

Byapari works in a doctor's house for months for just food and shelter. He worked in teashops, the assistant chef in police barracks, and as a cook for marriage banquets. Byapari does almost all types of jobs that were available to him with great honesty. But each time he ends up empty-handed at each job. Either because of his caste identity as an untouchable or because of the harassment he faced at the workplace.

Byapari works hard for a single meal. A havaladar who sheltered him raped Byapari. He talks about this experience with a lot of pain and tells how in reality such rapes were frequent and happening regularly in society and how even dogs and cows were not spared. He remembers how he had to fight with hungry dogs for some leftover food when he had nothing to eat and how he had to travel in trains ticketless and get down if the ticket collector found him.

He would walk miles together from place to place in search of work because a man whose vice is food finds it difficult to bear hunger. One has to wonder whether Byapari would face a similar kind of hardship if he was born into a different caste. He joins Naxal and ends up in prison. This is where he starts learning to read and write. After he came out he started pulling rickshaws to survive in this society.

He meets Mahashwetha Devi who changed his life. Manoranjan Byapari becomes the famous ricksha-walla who became the writer. This autobiography is

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unique because it shows the struggle of a Dalit with various references to partition, caste, hierarchy, life as a refugee, caste-based violence, illiteracy, and then finding hope in an unexpected place like a prison.

The last Dalit autobiography selected for the research was *Samboli* was written by Lakshman in Kannada in 2003 it was translated to English by Susheela Punitha in 2018. Lakshman belonged to the Madiga community unlike other autobiographies that are situated in villages his autobiography is situated in an urban setup of south Bangalore taluk. He was an activist, and writer who wrote his life in a very detailed manner. He describes the minute way- how the caste system works in' the background in the name of culture, practices, and festivals.

The language, vocabulary, and narrative in this autobiography show how an individual's sense of self-worth and image is constructed just because they are born into a particular family. Lakshman remembers most of his childhood being beaten mercilessly for stealing sweet tamarind with his friends.

Lakshman remembers the Rama Navami festival where they would not be given any cups to drink panaka. They would be made to cup their hands to drink the panaka. During festivals, they were treated differently than other caste Hindus; he would question why his family was treated so differently than the other upper castes, was it because of their behavior. This disrespect always seemed unfair and confusing to the young mind of Lakshman. It was only later that he understand that it had nothing to do with his behavior, but everything to do with his Madiga caste identity.

Whenever their village had no rain, the upper castes prayed to Maleyraayya (god of rain) for seven days and when they were unsuccessful in appeasing the god with their very comfortable rituals, they would turn to the lower castes to perform



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difficult rituals that involved physical resilience. A higher community got to perform rituals by sitting in the comfort of their houses or indoors at temples whereas a group of Madiga boys were made to go from one village to another and beg for Maleyraayya or the god of rain so that he would be appeased.

We see that Lakshman gives up many meaningless rituals and traditions such as burning crackers and celebrating caste Hindu festivals. He even tells his family that he would not do something like keeping a Yede or offering to his parents after their death. This shows Lakshman's commitment to his beliefs and principles. Through the language all these new strategies of revolt are visible. This is why this autobiography was also important in this study.

From 'naming' to 'calling' there are many differences between upper castes and lower castes. These differences are very evident in autobiographies. The Dalits and untouchables were limited to names like Satiah, Baliah, Narsiah, and Lacchu which were degrading and could be identified as lower caste names. While the higher castes' names were Sanskrit god names.

The way they spoke together clearly showed that the higher castes were supposed to be treated better and respected more than the Dalits. The higher castes were called and acknowledged as 'Dora', 'swami', and 'master'. Whereas, the Dalits were addressed as 'untouchable pig', 'slave', and 'son of bitch'.

The Indian caste system is functioning subtly in the background. It is still hard for a Dalit to find accommodation in cities like Bangalore. Domination and discrimination are enacted and reproduced through language in *Samboli*. It helps in understanding how the Indian caste system systematically discriminates one individual against another, not because of their merit. But this discrimination is

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completely based on the caste they were born into. The ‘social actors’ who were born as upper castes felt a sense of right in maintaining this hierarchy of high and low.

These linguistic practices such as ‘naming’ and ‘calling’ in the Dalit autobiography show how important names were. The name determined to which caste an individual belonged. Either the surnames or their main names were such a way that they were unique to their communities and caste.

Names like ‘Baliah’, ‘Satiah’, ‘Ranya’, and ‘Byapari’ made the person identify them with lower castes. But one can see that with time the Dalit understand the importance of name and the politics behind it and start revolting against this by changing their names and Sanskritising their way of life. The principal changes Satiah’s name to ‘Satyanarayana’ in *‘My Father Baliah’* as it would give more opportunities to Satiah.

The individual was not just required to study well but also to have a name that would assure his success later on. With a non-Dalit name, he wouldn’t face the discrimination that he would have experienced if he still had his old name. The principal had changed many students’ names in the same way.

The way Dalits were addressed and called in the public and private sphere is also visibly different in this autobiography. The conversations that existed with the lower castes and higher castes during pre-independence and post-independence seem to have changed drastically.

Initially, when the Dalit had no education and no knowledge about the atrocities they seemed to be ignorant of their own identity. They accepted their status as a slave at their master’s feet. They would be scared of Dora and other high castes.

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They would beg, and request anything they needed, no matter how much the higher castes abused them they wouldn't revolt rather they would accept it and apologize.

Culture and traditions in this autobiography play an important role in constructing Dalit identity. The practices like Potraja, Yeskar, Jogtin, and bonded labor were a way of controlling the Dalits by the higher castes. They were used to make the Dalits feel included in their religion at the same time they used these customs to abuse and subjugate the Dalit men and women in the name of traditions begging, prostitution, and superstitions were promoted.

The Dalits were brainwashed with the fake sense of pride that they got from these practices. Only later when they saw Dr. B. R Ambedkar, they understood what it meant to be associated and identified with Potraja, Yeskar, and Jogtin these practices would have limited them to the same age-old caste profession keeping them dependent on the higher caste.

Ambedkar not only identified this but also revealed the politics behind these traditions and cultures and asked people to leave them behind and start educating their children. The people started to identify themselves with Ambedkar rather than Potraja and Yeskar as it meant pride.

The way even the people dressed and spoke started to change initially the Dalits would wear a dress that would show that they belonged to a lower caste like a black blanket or a loincloth the girls or women would wear sarees above their knees, but this changed with time the men and woman started to dress like other castes Hindus- they would wear silk clothing with gold and silver jewelry this was possible because the Dalit's has got education and job this had made them understand their

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self-worth and need for a respectable life which would have not been possible if they had stayed in their village.

The Dalit autobiographies are discourses of resistance as the Dalits were not allowed to write and read. Most of their history is lost in time. The myths and history written by people of higher castes not only misinterpreted them but also changed the stories according to their convenience and leisure.

The commensal relations are restricted to different degrees. Lakshman in his autobiography '*Samboli*' talks about an instance where he gets asked to sit outside of the house of his friend who himself was untouchable. This shows how discrimination exists inside the untouchable subgroups where one group claims to be superior to another. This constant need to identify themselves as superior to the rest of the untouchables shows how untouchability is experienced differently in each different untouchable community.

To avoid troubles related to caste clashes we see that the Dalit authors changed their names and lied about their identity. By changing this they sought jobs and got them as it would not have been possible if they had maintained their original identity as untouchables nobody would have employed them.

Lakshman was suggested to tell people that he was a 'Gowda' whenever someone asked him about his caste while he worked as a painter. We see that Manoranjan Byapari lies about his caste. So that he gets an opportunity to cook at weddings. This assured him that their identity change promised a better life but this was short-lived. They were found out by the castes and were punished inhumanely.

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Another observation that can be made in the autobiographies is hiding and lying about their caste identity. The characters or individuals in the Dalit autobiography hide their true identity to avoid the repercussions that would harm them. When Satyanarayana goes to teach a school, he hides his caste so that he would get a place to stay and that the people would treat him well. Even Byapari lies about his caste while he works as a cook. He thinks that nobody would find out that an untouchable man was cooking a marriage buffet, but when he gets found out he gets a good thrashing.

The study concludes that language and narratives play a vital role in producing consent to power. The logic of critical analysis in Critical discourse analysis helps to understand how discourse works within the social practice. Fairclough's statements conclude the study accurately: "Resistance and change are not only possible but continuously happening. But the effectiveness of resistance and the realization of change depend on people developing a critical consciousness of domination and its modalities, rather than just experiencing them" (1989: 137)

The findings that the researcher was able to conclude by using Critical Discourse Analysis on the select Dalit autobiographies at the end of the research are as follows-

The Dalit autobiographies can be seen as resistance discourse or a counter-discourse to the mainstream discourse. They create and document the history and lineage of the oppressed Dalit communities.

The Dalit autobiographies show awareness of the discrimination in a society that is propagated through language. The conversations between the higher castes and the lower castes are characterized as follows:

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1. The higher caste while addressing lower castes addresses them as if they are animals without consciousness or self. The research also studied how through linguistic discourses such as calling, naming, and addressing how Dalit identities were created and how later on same discursive methods were used to create new identities. The names of Dalit characters have changed over time.
  2. The higher caste Dora, the landlord seems to have a commanding presence, and the lower caste has a complying presence throughout the Dalit autobiographies.
  3. The language used by the higher caste characters in the Dalit autobiography showcases the fake superiority complex that they have used to subjugate and control the Dalits.
  4. The superordinate and subordinate relationships between the higher caste and the lower caste that were reflected in the language used in day-to-life as well as in cultural and ritualistic situations were that of a master and a slave. Even the social rituals, gestures, attires, and the use of dialects that were considered to be non-standard language were studied as to how they shaped the Dalit identity and how they changed with time.
  5. Values like equality, social justice constitutional, and democratic principles seem to pose a threat to the higher castes through the language and conversations that were present in the autobiography.
  6. The emerging expressions of revolt like a question asking and claiming their new identities, insisting upon Constitutional values like equity, social justice, and democratic rights as a result of Ambedkarite moment in all these select Dalit autobiographies.

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**KUVEMPU**



**UNIVERSITY**

**CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SELECT  
DALIT AUTOBIOGRAPHIES**

**Thesis submitted for the award of  
Doctor of Philosophy in English**

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## CHAPTER – VII

### CONCLUSIONS

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Critical Discourse Analysis is a type of discourse that examines the way social power dominates or is abused. It also means critically studying the hidden ideology and social power. They focus on studying social processes, social order, and power relations. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) individual or community's social behaviours that are established in their discourses, and links between society and text. It paves a new way to understand the underlying politics that exist in the language used in the Dalit autobiographies.

Discourse and language are in themselves unique forms of social practice. It not only represents other social practices but also constitutes other social practices like the exercise of domination, power, resistance, and prejudice. Texts obtain their meanings through the 'dialectical relationship' between texts and social subjects. That is the writers and the readers, this always operates with a variety of choices to access and interpret these texts.

Linguistic features and structures are not random. They are purposeful whether or not the choices are conscious or unconscious. Power relations that exist in the texts and narratives are produced, exercised, and reproduced through discourse. Speakers and writers function from specific discursive practices that are resulting out of some special interests, agendas, or aims. These involve 'inclusions' and

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‘exclusions. Discourse is ‘historical’ as the texts obtain their meanings by being situated in exact socio-cultural, ideological contexts, and precise times.

Critical discourse analysis not only interprets texts but also explains them.

Discursive practice, the production, distribution, consumption, and interpretation of texts, is part of a hegemonic society. It contributes to the reproduction of the existing order of discourse with established social and power relations (Fairclough, 1992: 93). By combining this concept of intertextuality with hegemony, he points out how hegemony ‘naturalizes’ unequal power relations and builds them into people’s ‘common sense’. This is why it becomes important to study these select dalit autobiographies so that one can understand how and why the production, distribution, and consumption process of discourse takes place through the language and narratives used in it. Accordingly, this discourse is used in shaping the subjects or characters in the autobiography.

The thesis concludes that discourse plays a significant role in initiating wider socio-cultural changes in contemporary Indian society. These developments have affected discourse practices that are, changes in language, and narratives and this led to the need to analyze the language used.

The CDA of these select Dalit autobiographies focuses on how predominant discourses of socio-cultural change through language are recontextualized and changes are employed to ‘legitimize’ the goal of a fair and just society. This is a vicious circle it explains how the subjugated consent to hierarchies of unequal social power functions as ideology.



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Discourse analysis makes people from seeing language as theoretical to seeing words as having meaning in a historical, social, and political form. Words are used to convey a wide sense of meanings and this meaning creates discourse. One of the attributes of dominant discourse is its ability to interpret circumstances and actions in favor of the dominant group. This is why literary and cultural studies must use critical discourse analysis—to analyze and make the untouchables, and marginalized feel their part of history legitimate and heard, and to take the voice off of people who are in power, to question.

On analyzing the language, narratives, and practices using critical discourse analysis several hidden agendas and motives that served the self-interests of the upper castes were revealed. These strategies helped the upper caste maintain their sense of caste superiority, and ensured the untouchables and Dalit's subjugation.

The Dalit writers understood that change in their current narrative and representation requires the power to communicate as well as means of communication to self-represent and create new discourse, a resistance discourse to the existing discourse that subjugated their whole community for years. Discourses include representations of how things are in the past, and present and should be in the future.

The study focused on the Dalit identities that were constructed through discourse and how they were portrayed in these Dalit autobiographies. The thesis also focused on various narratives and utterances that were present in these Dalit autobiographies. By doing so the researcher was able to understand the culture and its influence on the construction of 'Dalit identity'.

The thesis tries to examine new strategies and modes of resistance that are created by Dalits against linguistic practices by using critical discourse analysis in

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these four Dalit autobiographies. It also studies whether autobiographies constitute a form of resistance to the dominant linguistic practices and tries to gain access to various linguistic strategies for resisting the popular discursive practices that exist in the texts.

The thesis examined new strategies and modes of resistance such as naming, calling, and legitimating their identity through writing that were created by Dalits against the popular linguistic practices by using critical discourse analysis in the following four Dalit autobiographies. The thesis also studied whether autobiographies constituted a form of resistance to these dominant linguistic practices.

Fairclough's three levels of analytical approach are used in analyzing Dalit autobiographies. These levels are description, interpretation, and explanation (Fairclough 1989:26). Description deals with the formal aspects of the text which is autobiography. In the interpretation part, the texts related to that particular social practice, and text as a process of interpretation and production are studied. It focuses on how culture, discourse, and language in the autobiography are produced and interpreted through language.

In the last explanation stage, the relationship between these social contexts, and interaction is explained. This determines the production, interpretation, and social effects of popular discourses that are written and interpreted in text or Autobiography. Initially, these methods were used to analyze newspaper ads, articles, and novels. This thesis is one of the first works where Critical Discourse Analysis has been applied to autobiographies.

Dalit literature has already received substantial attention, as stories of subjugation, pain, and exploitation of Dalits. Novels, short stories, and

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autobiographies tell the same story, but not a single work has been produced in which a Dalit autobiography was viewed as a challenge or a rebellion against popular writing culture. It becomes critical to read between the lines and to understand the real meaning of Dalit Autobiographies.

Dr. Rajesh Kumar considers Dalit writings as a form of ‘resistance’ literature than ‘narratives of pain’ as autobiography were a genre through which a Dalit could freely cross the threshold of literary space. Sanjiv Kumar considers Dalit literature and writing as a liberating process through which Dalit authors vent their silenced voices throughout history.

Autobiography is a literary genre that consists of an account of a person’s life written by that person; their works are intimate writing that is and was not necessarily intended for publication as a formal autobiography. There are six types of autobiography. They consist of a full autobiography, memoir, personal essay, confession, psychological illness, and overcoming adversity. Dalit autobiography falls into all the above genres. The autobiographies are a combination of memoirs, personal essays, and confessions; they talk about the psychological illness as well as overcoming adversaries.

Autobiographies that were taken for the study were translations from different languages and cultures such as Telugu, Kannada, and Marathi. The common thing that they had was that they elaborated a history of caste-biased violence and identity that were seen during that period. The study focused on Dalit autobiographies that are very much focused on the Dalit discourse. Autobiographies like *‘The Prison We Broke’*, *‘My Father Bahiah’*, *‘Interrogating My Chandal Jeevan’*, and *‘Samboli’* are an integral part of Dalit discourse. These autobiographies consist of various ‘Dalit

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identities.’ The identities that existed during pre-independence, as well as post-independence, have vast differences.

Indian society is based on a hierarchical civilization that never cared or focused on the troubles of ‘untouchable’ communities. The caste Hindus portrayed Dalits in their stories as individuals who were either being led by a theme of ‘social reform’ or ‘compassion’ but none of the writers ever treat an untouchable character reasonably.

Untouchability as a practice is a quite difficult concept for western society. It is a practice that is propagated by people belonging to the same culture. A person belonging to a particular lower caste community would be considered as pollution impure. Even touching them is considered polluting. They were kept away from public spaces like temples, ponds, wells, lakes, roads, schools as well as villages. To understand these communities, their language, and culture these autobiographies play a very important role. They show the personal narratives of the Dalit and the untouchables. This opens up a new perspective on studying narratives and discourses.

These autobiographies should not be limited to tales of sorrow they should be considered tales of courage and emancipation. Previous research on Dalit literature or autobiographies has focussed on atrocities, poverty, and shame. But these particular autobiographies are examples of pride. These autobiographies consist of various narratives, conversations, dialogues, and names that tell us about the power struggle that exists in the Indian caste system using language.

Many of the autobiographies have been written and are being written in different languages like Kannada, Marathi, Telugu, and these languages have their separate dialects. These autobiographies contain intricate information about the rituals

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and practises, and the translation from the native language to English resulted in the loss of some important aspects of the text and its meaning.

Normally the Dalit autobiographies are under the presumptions that the writers wrote to gain sympathy but in these select Dalit autobiographies, we see that each of these autobiographies tries to create their identity and, in a way, establish their lineage, which was previously forgotten and neglected.

The Dalit autobiographies that are used in this research are '*The Prisons We Broke*' by Baby Kamble, '*My father Baliah*' by Y.B Satyanarayana, '*Interrogating My Chandal Life*' by Manoranjan Byapari, and '*Samboli*' by Lakshman.

'*The Prisons We Broke*' by Baby Kamble was originally written in Marathi in the year 1986 and got translated into English in the same year by Maya Pandit. The autobiography focuses on the Mahars of Maharashtra.

There are two reasons why the researcher has selected this autobiography for the research; one is that the writer is a Dalit, who has reclaimed her Dalit identity not with pain or shame but with pride. She writes the autobiography with utmost realness. It showcases the Ambedkarite moment, culture, traditions, education, and protest. The second reason was that she is a woman writer; the other three Dalit writers share their personal and professional struggles. But Baby Kamble shares about her community and the Dalit woman's plight in a patriarchal Indian society.

Kamble shared her reasons for wanting to write her autobiography. She wanted to let her descendants know what her predecessors had to go through so that the current generation. By doing so she established the lineage of her family and

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community. She mentions reading a story about Tulsi- a story that had been completely fabricated to their liking by the higher castes.

This story of Tulsi is a story of a Dalit princess Vrinda. This story had been changed to fulfil the needs of the higher castes. She acknowledges that until and unless the Dalits start writing their own stories, others would continue to represent them falsely. These representations and identities were biased and far from reality. These were the cause of the oppression they had faced for many years.

Kamble remembers that outside Maharwada the woman had to bow down as a form of respect in front of upper-caste men. If they failed in bowing down then they would be punished badly. These rituals and culture are criticized by Kamble. She criticizes the Brahmins as well as the patriarchy that exists within the Mahar Dalit community. The autobiography consists of various events like child marriage, domestic violence, complicated pregnancies, and inbuilt misogyny.

Baby Kamble's autobiography is detailed. It talks about customs, rules, and traditions. The Mahar dress codes, beliefs, practices, and the differences between the upper caste and lower castes. The autobiography describes how education, literacy, and awareness can change and revolutionize a community.

Kamble in her autobiography specifies that she was humiliated and discriminated against not just by her Brahmin caste Hindu classmates, but also by her teachers. Even when there were fights between the Mahar girls and caste Hindu girls the punishment was limited to the Mahar girls. Kamble has a collective sense of narrative in her autobiography.

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*My father Baliah* is written by Y. B Satyanarayana it was published in 2011. In this autobiography, he talks about the struggle of three generations of his family. The autobiography is based on the Dalit Madiga community of Telangana in Andhra Pradesh. This autobiography poses the history of the Yelukati family. It depicts the experiences of Madigas throughout decades, and situations. This makes it unique.

‘*My father Baliah*’ unlike any Dalit autobiography starts with vamsha vriksha. Here Satyanarayana tried to record his family ancestry. He belonged to a community that was uneducated for ages; because of this, the community was unable to commemorate their part of history, their families, and their ancestors. But in this autobiography, one can see the writer defining himself and his community. Just royalties, an educated Dalit draws his family tree vamsha vriksha and establishes his lineage. By adopting this narrative strategy, Y. B. Satyanarayana challenges mainstream literature.

This sense of identity for untouchables and Dalits was limited, they saw themselves as the assigned slaves who were at the mercy of the higher castes. They were scared to ask for what was rightfully theirs. Baliah’s father even got fifty acres from Nizam as a gift. He still feels afraid to face Dora. He is worried to offend Dora.

Out of those fifty acres, Dora angrily allots two acres to him. Instead of fighting Narsiah becomes happy and relieved to be able to retrieve at least those two acres. They identified themselves as untouchables who were not supposed to own land or get an education. Many times when Baliah asks Narsiah that he wanted to study Narsiah tells him that they cannot because they are untouchable Dalits. They are restricted to get an education. This kind of narrative shows us the status of untouchable communities.

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In Dalit autobiographies like *My Father Baliah*, the unbreakable societal boundaries, attitudes, cultural divide, and interpersonal relations through language are shown in a diverse light. One can see how insulting suffixes and names were used intentionally to name the members of an untouchable community.

It was a scheme designed to convince the lower castes to accept their low status in the Indian caste system. It was also a method to identify them as someone belonging to a lower caste. There are numerous instances where social cruelty gets expressed by language like- "*I am your slave; I lay my hands on your feet.*" Whereas Dora calls him a 'slave' 'pig'

These language appellations, salutations, and greetings that were imposed on the Dalit communities to address the upper castes, show the researcher the power relationship between the two social actors. These narratives between the upper caste and lower caste established social distinctions, within the society.

But with education and the Ambedkarite movement, the Dalits not only realized what they were going through but saw through the practices and language and the disrespect that was deeply rooted in the conversations and started to change that discourse. They wouldn't let any higher caste address them with disrespect. Initially, an individual whose ancestor would beg the Dora for mercy for no real offense was seen standing up for himself and demanding respect. The notions of slavery and shame are replaced with equality and pride.

Whereas the Dalit autobiography selected is '*Interrogating My Chandal Life*' by Manoranjan Byapari. This autobiography was originally written in Bengali in 2011 that got translated into English by Sipra Mukherjee in 2017. This is a remarkable memoir as it talks about his traumatic life in refugee camps in Dandakaranya, West



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Bengal, as well as the caste exploitation he faces in every aspect. During the partition Byapari and his family moved to India here they had to face a lot of things because of their caste identity and poverty.

The lower caste families would get new houses in the new country only by lying about their real caste identity and names. The real names were intentionally hidden as it would establish their lower castes. But when someone got caught lying they would be thrown out as well. In about 149 colonies where shelter was provided none of the lower castes like the Nama, munchi, or pod families got to stay. Their caste identity with its atrocities had accompanied them to their new country.

Even though the Namashudras worshipped Hindu gods and goddesses they did not get equal treatment as Hindus, the Muslims called them kafirs. They belonged to the lower caste; the upper Hindu castes would look at them with scorn and spit on them. They had come to this new land from Bangal. So the identity changed from Bengali changed to a refugee. But their position in the society at the bottom never changed it remained the same 'Untouchable' 'Chandal' wherever they went.

People of West Bengal, considered and assumed that words like 'refugee' and 'bangal' meant the same. The word 'Bangal' was used as an abusive word. Just like the words 'reactionary', 'bourgeois', 'loan shark', and 'street mongrel' 'bangal' determined that they were refugees and low lives. This identity of being a 'refugee', 'Bangal', and of lower caste origin seemed to pose similar threats to Byapari. They were outcasts even in urban modern cities.

Byapari's father proclaimed his caste identity as Namashudras of the Kashyap Gotra. Even though the upper castes called them 'untouchables' and talk to them condescendingly as 'Chandals' or 'Chanrals', neither Byapari's father nor anyone in

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their community would call themselves as Chandals. The whole community would claim that they were highborn and that the blood of the Brahmin flowed in their veins. It was not just limited to the Namashudra community this was common for every lowly rank of the Varna hierarchy they would make the same claim that they belonged to a higher caste.

Byapari works in a doctor's house for months for just food and shelter. He worked in teashops, the assistant chef in police barracks, and as a cook for marriage banquets. Byapari does almost all types of jobs that were available to him with great honesty. But each time he ends up empty-handed at each job. Either because of his caste identity as an untouchable or because of the harassment he faced at the workplace.

Byapari works hard for a single meal. A havaladar who sheltered him raped Byapari. He talks about this experience with a lot of pain and tells how in reality such rapes were frequent and happening regularly in society and how even dogs and cows were not spared. He remembers how he had to fight with hungry dogs for some leftover food when he had nothing to eat and how he had to travel in trains ticketless and get down if the ticket collector found him.

He would walk miles together from place to place in search of work because a man whose vice is food finds it difficult to bear hunger. One has to wonder whether Byapari would face a similar kind of hardship if he was born into a different caste. He joins Naxal and ends up in prison. This is where he starts learning to read and write. After he came out he started pulling rickshaws to survive in this society.

He meets Mahashwetha Devi who changed his life. Manoranjan Byapari becomes the famous ricksha-walla who became the writer. This autobiography is

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unique because it shows the struggle of a Dalit with various references to partition, caste, hierarchy, life as a refugee, caste-based violence, illiteracy, and then finding hope in an unexpected place like a prison.

The last Dalit autobiography selected for the research was *Samboli* was written by Lakshman in Kannada in 2003 it was translated to English by Susheela Punitha in 2018. Lakshman belonged to the Madiga community unlike other autobiographies that are situated in villages his autobiography is situated in an urban setup of south Bangalore taluk. He was an activist, and writer who wrote his life in a very detailed manner. He describes the minute way- how the caste system works in' the background in the name of culture, practices, and festivals.

The language, vocabulary, and narrative in this autobiography show how an individual's sense of self-worth and image is constructed just because they are born into a particular family. Lakshman remembers most of his childhood being beaten mercilessly for stealing sweet tamarind with his friends.

Lakshman remembers the Rama Navami festival where they would not be given any cups to drink panaka. They would be made to cup their hands to drink the panaka. During festivals, they were treated differently than other caste Hindus; he would question why his family was treated so differently than the other upper castes, was it because of their behavior. This disrespect always seemed unfair and confusing to the young mind of Lakshman. It was only later that he understand that it had nothing to do with his behavior, but everything to do with his Madiga caste identity.

Whenever their village had no rain, the upper castes prayed to Maleyraayya (god of rain) for seven days and when they were unsuccessful in appeasing the god with their very comfortable rituals, they would turn to the lower castes to perform

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difficult rituals that involved physical resilience. A higher community got to perform rituals by sitting in the comfort of their houses or indoors at temples whereas a group of Madiga boys were made to go from one village to another and beg for Maleyraayya or the god of rain so that he would be appeased.

We see that Lakshman gives up many meaningless rituals and traditions such as burning crackers and celebrating caste Hindu festivals. He even tells his family that he would not do something like keeping a Yede or offering to his parents after their death. This shows Lakshman's commitment to his beliefs and principles. Through the language all these new strategies of revolt are visible. This is why this autobiography was also important in this study.

From 'naming' to 'calling' there are many differences between upper castes and lower castes. These differences are very evident in autobiographies. The Dalits and untouchables were limited to names like Satiah, Baliah, Narsiah, and Lacchu which were degrading and could be identified as lower caste names. While the higher castes' names were Sanskrit god names.

The way they spoke together clearly showed that the higher castes were supposed to be treated better and respected more than the Dalits. The higher castes were called and acknowledged as 'Dora', 'swami', and 'master'. Whereas, the Dalits were addressed as 'untouchable pig', 'slave', and 'son of bitch'.

The Indian caste system is functioning subtly in the background. It is still hard for a Dalit to find accommodation in cities like Bangalore. Domination and discrimination are enacted and reproduced through language in *Samboli*. It helps in understanding how the Indian caste system systematically discriminates one individual against another, not because of their merit. But this discrimination is

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completely based on the caste they were born into. The ‘social actors’ who were born as upper castes felt a sense of right in maintaining this hierarchy of high and low.

These linguistic practices such as ‘naming’ and ‘calling’ in the Dalit autobiography show how important names were. The name determined to which caste an individual belonged. Either the surnames or their main names were such a way that they were unique to their communities and caste.

Names like ‘Baliah’, ‘Satiah’, ‘Ranya’, and ‘Byapari’ made the person identify them with lower castes. But one can see that with time the Dalit understand the importance of name and the politics behind it and start revolting against this by changing their names and Sanskritising their way of life. The principal changes Satiah’s name to ‘Satyanarayana’ in *‘My Father Baliah’* as it would give more opportunities to Satiah.

The individual was not just required to study well but also to have a name that would assure his success later on. With a non-Dalit name, he wouldn’t face the discrimination that he would have experienced if he still had his old name. The principal had changed many students’ names in the same way.

The way Dalits were addressed and called in the public and private sphere is also visibly different in this autobiography. The conversations that existed with the lower castes and higher castes during pre-independence and post-independence seem to have changed drastically.

Initially, when the Dalit had no education and no knowledge about the atrocities they seemed to be ignorant of their own identity. They accepted their status as a slave at their master’s feet. They would be scared of Dora and other high castes.

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They would beg, and request anything they needed, no matter how much the higher castes abused them they wouldn't revolt rather they would accept it and apologize.

Culture and traditions in this autobiography play an important role in constructing Dalit identity. The practices like Potraja, Yeskar, Jogtin, and bonded labor were a way of controlling the Dalits by the higher castes. They were used to make the Dalits feel included in their religion at the same time they used these customs to abuse and subjugate the Dalit men and women in the name of traditions begging, prostitution, and superstitions were promoted.

The Dalits were brainwashed with the fake sense of pride that they got from these practices. Only later when they saw Dr. B. R Ambedkar, they understood what it meant to be associated and identified with Potraja, Yeskar, and Jogtin these practices would have limited them to the same age-old caste profession keeping them dependent on the higher caste.

Ambedkar not only identified this but also revealed the politics behind these traditions and cultures and asked people to leave them behind and start educating their children. The people started to identify themselves with Ambedkar rather than Potraja and Yeskar as it meant pride.

The way even the people dressed and spoke started to change initially the Dalits would wear a dress that would show that they belonged to a lower caste like a black blanket or a loincloth the girls or women would wear sarees above their knees, but this changed with time the men and woman started to dress like other castes Hindus- they would wear silk clothing with gold and silver jewelry this was possible because the Dalit's has got education and job this had made them understand their

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self-worth and need for a respectable life which would have not been possible if they had stayed in their village.

The Dalit autobiographies are discourses of resistance as the Dalits were not allowed to write and read. Most of their history is lost in time. The myths and history written by people of higher castes not only misinterpreted them but also changed the stories according to their convenience and leisure.

The commensal relations are restricted to different degrees. Lakshman in his autobiography '*Samboli*' talks about an instance where he gets asked to sit outside of the house of his friend who himself was untouchable. This shows how discrimination exists inside the untouchable subgroups where one group claims to be superior to another. This constant need to identify themselves as superior to the rest of the untouchables shows how untouchability is experienced differently in each different untouchable community.

To avoid troubles related to caste clashes we see that the Dalit authors changed their names and lied about their identity. By changing this they sought jobs and got them as it would not have been possible if they had maintained their original identity as untouchables nobody would have employed them.

Lakshman was suggested to tell people that he was a 'Gowda' whenever someone asked him about his caste while he worked as a painter. We see that Manoranjan Byapari lies about his caste. So that he gets an opportunity to cook at weddings. This assured him that their identity change promised a better life but this was short-lived. They were found out by the castes and were punished inhumanely.

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Another observation that can be made in the autobiographies is hiding and lying about their caste identity. The characters or individuals in the Dalit autobiography hide their true identity to avoid the repercussions that would harm them. When Satyanarayana goes to teach a school, he hides his caste so that he would get a place to stay and that the people would treat him well. Even Byapari lies about his caste while he works as a cook. He thinks that nobody would find out that an untouchable man was cooking a marriage buffet, but when he gets found out he gets a good thrashing.

The study concludes that language and narratives play a vital role in producing consent to power. The logic of critical analysis in Critical discourse analysis helps to understand how discourse works within the social practice. Fairclough's statements conclude the study accurately: "Resistance and change are not only possible but continuously happening. But the effectiveness of resistance and the realization of change depend on people developing a critical consciousness of domination and its modalities, rather than just experiencing them" (1989: 137)

The findings that the researcher was able to conclude by using Critical Discourse Analysis on the select Dalit autobiographies at the end of the research are as follows-

The Dalit autobiographies can be seen as resistance discourse or a counter-discourse to the mainstream discourse. They create and document the history and lineage of the oppressed Dalit communities.

The Dalit autobiographies show awareness of the discrimination in a society that is propagated through language. The conversations between the higher castes and the lower castes are characterized as follows:



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1. The higher caste while addressing lower castes addresses them as if they are animals without consciousness or self. The research also studied how through linguistic discourses such as calling, naming, and addressing how Dalit identities were created and how later on same discursive methods were used to create new identities. The names of Dalit characters have changed over time.
  2. The higher caste Dora, the landlord seems to have a commanding presence, and the lower caste has a complying presence throughout the Dalit autobiographies.
  3. The language used by the higher caste characters in the Dalit autobiography showcases the fake superiority complex that they have used to subjugate and control the Dalits.
  4. The superordinate and subordinate relationships between the higher caste and the lower caste that were reflected in the language used in day-to-life as well as in cultural and ritualistic situations were that of a master and a slave. Even the social rituals, gestures, attires, and the use of dialects that were considered to be non-standard language were studied as to how they shaped the Dalit identity and how they changed with time.
  5. Values like equality, social justice constitutional, and democratic principles seem to pose a threat to the higher castes through the language and conversations that were present in the autobiography.
  6. The emerging expressions of revolt like a question asking and claiming their new identities, insisting upon Constitutional values like equity, social justice, and democratic rights as a result of Ambedkarite moment in all these select Dalit autobiographies.