

## GENDER INCLINATION IN SANGATI BY BAMA AND COMING OUT AS A DALIT : A MEMOIR BY YASHICA DUTT

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### ABSTRACT

Dalit literature describes their fight for freedom from caste oppression in addition to depict the harsh conditions in which they live. Although this gives them hope of escaping their lower status, Dalits can achieve ultimate freedom not just by demanding justice and equality, but only after bringing about social change in which people respect and value their human identity. Dalit patriarchy is a significant issue in Bama's Sangati. Bama denounces the sexual and professional harassment that Dalit women experience from upper caste men and the police, as well as the domestic violence and abuse that Dalit males inflict on them at home. Coming Out as Dalit by Yashica Dutt discusses how caste is so subtle among us that it is frequently overlooked. The author describes her path of self-discovery and walks us through the history of the Dalit movement in this personal memoir, which is also a story of the Dalits; the effects of her community's lack of access to culture and education; the necessity of reservations; the dearth of Dalit voices in the media; the efforts of Dalit women's groups and their continuous contributions; and the attempts to address important issues of privilege and caste. The current study will focus on Bama's Sangati, which investigates the gender discrimination and violence Dalit women face at the hands of upper caste men and women as well as inside their own community. Additionally, it will depict how they are subjected to such cruel treatment in order to stand up for their rights and defy gender and caste standards.

### KEYWORDS

Discrimination, Movement, Feminism, Oppression, Equality

### INTRODUCTION

The Indian ideology of feminism which means the movement of women rights in society in India. Indian feminist like the feminist around the world of varieties seek for same gender equality in the society and harmonious relationship between the men and women. Indian Feminist Radha Kumar in her work "The History of Doing" (1993) studies this journey of Indian feminism as taking within three phases. The first phase may be assumed to have started in 19th century when the British

officials initiated the voicing out against practice of sati among Indian women. The second phase could be seen as the large participation of women in the wave of independence of India from colonial rule, especially when Gandhi in 1915 integrated the Indian women's movement in Quit India movement. The Third Phase of Indian Feminism is the Post-Independence Phase which empowered Indian women to fight against oppression in marriage, in the workforce and the right to political equality. While Western and Indian feminism may have a shared goal, the hurdles, as well as the process of its evolution, differ significantly in both movements. Hence, the ideology has a different style of pursuit to mitigate the feminist problems and the challenges being faced by contemporary Indian feminism. India has its own feminists, but they question the Indian male domination structure of their society.

Dalit women make up the lower echelons of Indian society and experience the combined disadvantages of being Dalit because of the socioeconomic and cultural marginalization of women, which entails subordination and gender-based inequality. The first social reformers were focused on two primary issues: women's independence and improving the lot of the downtrodden masses. Their initial attempts were focused on dismantling specific traditions, including as female infanticide, the ban on widow marriage, and Sati. These discussions lacked topics pertaining to the upsetting sale of women after the new land settlement, the marginalization of lower caste women by the new land legislation, and their exposure to the risk of sexual violence under the Zamindari system. There were gender-specific requirements for caste bondage.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Silverberg James offered a social interpretation of Shantabai Kamble's works in his 1968 book *Social Mobility in The Caste System in India*, highlighting the terrible conditions Dalit women suffered as a result of gender and caste oppression. In *Dr. Ambedkar's Role in National Movement (1979)*, Jatav examined Bama's books from a political perspective, emphasizing Ambedkar's impact on changing public attitudes.

According to Parmod K. Nayar's article "The Politics of Form in Dalit Fiction: Bama's *Sangati* and Sivakami's *The Grips of Change*," the novel by Bama and Sivakami introduces a fresh experimental technique to the genre. Both authors proactively included Dalit legendary and folklore language into their works. Three categories of narrative accounts—mythical, historical, and immediate—that appear in both novels were summed up by the author using the term "narrative hybridization."

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study's proposed technique combines a theoretical and textual approach. The research will examine selected novels written by contemporary Dalit women authors through the prism of Dalit feminism, with a focus on feminist theoretical frameworks. Dalit feminism highlights mainstream feminism's inadequacy in addressing the caste system and provides critical insights on it. In this context, Dalit women writers extensively question the idea that gender is a socially constructed construct, highlighting the more negative effects it has on women than on males.

## DISCUSSION

### Caste, Class and Gender in Bama's *Sangati*

Koteswar Rao's "Dalit Feminism: A Reading of Bama's *Sangati*" identifies the novel as "an account of the experiences of Bama's maternal grandmother and her contemporaries". Yet, the novel symbolizes, indeed, every Dalit women's history.

The story describes the Dalit women's two-fold oppression based on caste and gender. The main focus of Dalit feminist writing is on the self-reflectivity of Dalit feminist discourses on caste and gender issues. Bama is upset about Dalit women's actual social status in a male-chauvinistic society that treats them inhumanely. The reading of *Sangati* shows how patriarchal culture forced and conditioned women with cultural norms that directed the growth of prejudice based on gender. Just as Black girls suffer from the start of their lives, young Dalit girls barely enjoy their childhood. The limitations are imposed on them under the guise of culture, tradition, and custom. The patriarchal culture claims that the boys are always able to do whatever they want. However, even if the girls choose to sleep at home, their parents are the only ones who may dictate their wishes. A wife is reliant on her husband, men have historically treated women cruelly in the family structure, which is influenced by a fiercely patriarchal history. In addition to discrimination, Dalit women have experienced a great deal of domestic abuse and mental torment. Their men abuse them without giving any particular explanation. The depressing stories of Dalit women are portrayed in *Sanagti*. Additionally, Bama highlights the significance of Dalit women in their culture. Women are allowed to sit close to the corpses. They are permitted to visit the graveyard and sing dirges. Her assertion stands in stark contrast to the denial that a woman from a higher caste was involved in the death rituals. A ceremony is also held to honour the freedom that Dalit women enjoy, which includes the ability to swim, bathe in ponds, and socialize with other women in the community. Bama is shocked by their husband's orders and their cramped living situation in their home. The men in low-income Dalit households tend to be intoxicated, careless, and ignorant. Their responsibilities end at the end of the day, and they are free to roam around, drink, and do as they please. They don't care as much about their kids as women do after a long day of work and prepare meals for the whole family, and at night they voluntarily surrender to their husbands' whims. Through her book *Sangati*, Bama depicts the pains and sorrows of Dalit women in a most realistic manner. Dalit women suffer the worst, despite the fact that all women are men's slaves. They must endure the abuse of their spouses at home and the suffering of upper caste masters in the fields. The problems of a Dalit lady start with her husband at home. She experiences sexism both within and outside of her home, as well as caste persecution outside. When Bama's grandmother recounts the life of her battered daughter, she displays her extreme opinions and bitterness. They are killed by their husband's passion. However, it also serves as a reminder that a Dalit woman has started to respond and express her disapproval of the internal dominance and her efforts to escape this marginalized life. Bama pays attention to disparities and opposes the gender inequalities that are present in her community from an early age.

Bama explores the predicament of a Dalit lady who must conduct her life in accordance with the rules established by the oppressive patriarchy. Men are paid more than women, even when it comes

to wages. She opposes this patriarchal inclination designed to control women throughout their entire lives. She says:

*Whatever happens must be according to their pleasure and their convenience. If anything is ever arranged for a woman's convenience, they will never stand for it. They will leap between heaven and earth to prevent it. They will insist you must not cross the line they have drawn. And what have we ever gained by never crossing that line all this time.*

Hence, the autobiographical book *Sangati* by Bama is a representation of women's twofold oppression. The book is a seminal work of Bama and a noteworthy Dalit autobiography. It portrays the anguish and rage of Dalit women under the twin oppression. The oppressed ladies have to face many problems in the society. In addition to their male counterparts, members of the upper caste have also oppressed and exploited some segments of society. They are now among the most marginalized and exploited groups in society as a result. In order to highlight Dalit women's empowerment, activism, and consciousness as a strategy for social change, this study makes the case that Dalit women fabricate their own narratives about their atrocities and undermine other narratives. In addition, research in this field could assist other underprivileged populations develop potential through their stories, such as memoirs, autobiographies, and biographies. This book, which is woven from personal accounts from both her own and other Dalit lives, compels us to acknowledge the inequities of caste and gender discrimination in the society.

### **Yashica Dutt's Coming Out as Dalit Memoir and Its Significance in the Dalit Feminism Spectrum**

*Coming out As a Dalit: A Memoir* by Yashica Dutt describes the oppression upon the women based on gender, identity, and culture. She describes her path of self-discovery and walks us through the history of the numerous Dalit movements in her personal memoir that also tells the story of the Dalits. She also discusses the effects of her community's lack of education and cultural access; the necessity of reservations; the lack of Dalit voices in the media; the efforts made by Dalit women to address important issues of privilege and caste and more. This book, which is composed of personal accounts from both her own and other Dalit lives, compels us to acknowledge the inequities of caste and also acts as an action. The young Yashica Dutt suffered greatly as a result of pretending not to be a Dalit. Shashi, her mother, pretended the family was Brahmin in order to shield her three children from the prejudice of the Hindu caste system, which pushes Dalits to the margins of society. Shashi put a lot of effort into finding the funds, hosting birthday celebrations, have window coverings and appropriately perform customary rites. For the kids, however, it meant that if they were playing with friends or purchasing candy from a store, one incorrect phrase or gesture could reveal the deception. The author describes how she was afraid of being discovered and how hard it was to live with the secret. When she ultimately defended herself and her community and rejected the false upper-caste persona she had to create for herself, she writes about the overwhelming sense of empowerment she felt. This only occurred once when Rohith Vamula, a well-known Dalit social activist and Ph.D. scholar, took his own life. Yashica had to cope with the agonizing shame of suppressing her past, the hardships of her grandparents, and the numerous Dalit reformers who battled for equal rights as she came to comprehend the injustices of the caste system. In addition to sharing her own narrative, Dutt educates her readers

about the history of caste-based discrimination and the Dalit movements. Consequently, anyone interested in learning more about casteism, how it affects Dalits, and how chances granted to upper castes. The greatest place to start would be with this memoir, which is a result of their luxury. According to Sharmila Rege's book, she wrote it to document how Dalits made history and to educate the next generation of Dalits about Dr. Ambedkar's outstanding achievements so they won't be ashamed of their own fight history.

Despite seven decades of independence, Dalit and its synonyms—Bhangi being the most common—remain profane terms in Hindi. It was an incredibly enlightening encounter on a type of injustice that requires immediate attention. In this book, Dutt discusses a number of intricate topics in a way that is simple to comprehend and follow. From the activity of Phule and Savitribai to Dr. B R Ambedkar's coordinated efforts, and all the way down to Rohith Vemula's advocacy and eventual death. Casteism must first be recognized as an evil in order for Dutt to convince her readers that it is a problem that must be eliminated.

## CONCLUSION

This paper examines the subtleties of caste and how it frequently goes unrecognized. And this paper is unquestionably for those who simply shrugged their shoulders in the belief that they were beyond caste. It is past time for educated, upper-caste urbanites to recognize and embrace that being casteless is a luxury. In essence, Bama concentrates on the violence committed by men against the women in her culture and the masculine dominance. She questions whether the men's exercise of power and authority over their wives is a self-gratification tactic because it wasn't there in their existence. They must serve as their owners' slaves in the fields, and when they get home, they abuse their wives to vent their resentment. As stated by Dutt, the road to questioning the status quo will eventually be paved with acceptance and acknowledgment. In order to highlight Dalit women's empowerment, activism, and consciousness as a strategy for social change, this study makes the case that Dalit women construct their own narratives about their crimes and undermine other narratives. In addition, research in this field may assist other underrepresented groups in realizing their potential through their narratives, such as memoirs, biographies etc.

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