



**THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN SHAPING DALIT IDENTITY: A COMPARATIVE
ANALYSIS OF INDIAN AND GLOBAL DALIT LITERATURE**

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ABSTRACT

Language is perhaps the most complex and inspiring component of being a part of a civilisation, even yet it is the most ubiquitous of all human resources. The development of their abilities, skills, originality, ingenuity, and creativity is encouraged by the use of this communication medium. Ultimately, friendships are formed via the sharing of ideas, emotions, and sentiments, which creates the opportunity for a distinct culture to develop. Examining the relationship between language and culture, primarily from a subalternist perspective, is the primary objective. In Indian Dalit literature, the authors' struggles against their individuality—typified by the caste's negative perceptions—form their identities. The politics and culture of the Dalit people are greatly influenced by Dalit literature. To combat the haughty, exaggerated, ritualised, and highlighted character of the oppressive society, Dalit authors must upend and enhance it. In traditional literature, Dalits are not given a position, and authors from higher social groups depict them as strange individuals. According to Spivak, Dalits are the underprivileged segment of humanity, and their opinions deserve to be valued. Dalits are hence the class symbol. In addition to the subaltern, who are the real populations, the Dalit literature as a whole provides a more comprehensive picture of these marginalised groups, who have been perverted for ages. It seems that the two are closely connected based on the information presented in this article. Language is directly influenced by culture. The connection between language and culture is inseparable.

Keywords: *Language, Shaping, Dalit, Identity, Indian, Global*

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the factors that influences one's capacity to comprehend the cultures of people throughout the globe. Since language reflects the cultural identities that are embedded in it, people may assume certain things about a speaker's origin, country, culture, religion, and ethnicity when they converse in that language. According to Hall (1997), language is the medium through which individuals of a certain culture communicate meanings to one another and is a representation of the shared meanings among them.

Language is perhaps the most complex and inspiring component of being a part of a civilization, even yet it is the most ubiquitous of all human resources. The development of their abilities, skills, originality, ingenuity, and creativity is encouraged by the use of this communication medium. Ultimately, friendships are formed via the sharing of ideas, emotions, and sentiments, which creates

the opportunity for a distinct culture to develop. This essay's main goal is to investigate, from a subalternist perspective, whether language and culture are related. It seems that the two are closely connected based on the information presented in this article. Language is directly influenced by culture. The connection between language and culture is inseparable.

Language and Cultural Identity

Through language, members of a community may communicate with one another about their cultures. This is because speaking a language requires both an awareness of the culture and the process of assimilating into it. Fuller (2007) provided support for this claim by emphasising how interlocutors' interactions and linguistic choices in many social contexts were crucial to the development of their cultural identities. Vygotsky (1980), using language as a linguistic and cognitive instrument, claimed that children might first internalise other people's social and cultural ideas before forming their own psychological ideas in the society. Vygotsky also claimed that the semiotic functions were carried out by interactions between people and the community. By claiming that language may potentially cause a cultural identity crisis in society, some scholars have questioned the function of language as the only means of defining cultural identity. In Nepal, minority language speakers were subject to greater authority and control by English and Nepali speakers, according to Giri (2010). This led to identity crises and socioeconomic displacement, as well as sociocultural and linguistic problems. Some studies, however, have disputed this claim.

Dalits were seen as illogical, archaic, and inferior to other people until they started writing their own literature. The characters' identities in Indian Dalit literature are shaped by their opposition to their uniqueness, which is the caste's unfavourable opinions in their eyes. Dalit literature plays a significant role in the Dalit people's politics and culture. To achieve the intended objectives, it is necessary to support and disrupt the imagined, exaggerated, ritualised, and glorified society that suppresses Dalit authors. Classical literature does not have any portrayal of the Dalits, and authors from upper castes also depict them as strange individuals. Ironically, the readers are left with the impression that Dalits bear too much of the blame for their current problems.

*"Let us all hope that the ominous
clouds of racial prejudice will soon dissipate and
that the brilliant stars of love and
brotherhood will shine over our great nation with
all their scintillating beauty in some not-too-distant tomorrow."*

Martin Luther King Jr

A complex and interdependent connection exists between language and culture. Language is what forms culture and creates fissures within it, while culture is what shapes language. Language is the medium through which culture is communicated. Furthermore, language differences are often seen as an indication of a different culture and often result in a rift amongst individuals who live in close proximity to one another or even between different groups within the same nation. Given this, it is evident that language may act as a conduit to culture. The key to fully understanding your cultural identity is language.

The subaltern emerges as the product of a network of identities that are different from one another and may even be at odds with one another, rather than as a positive identity that is fully self-conscious. The Wood 43rd

Every human being is born in the same way and experiences the same stages of life, according to Leveridge's interpretation. However, what sets each individual apart from the others is the environment in which they are nurtured and the language to which they get accustomed. One creates identities that are linked to a certain language and culture, setting one person apart from others. "A defining feature of a person's identity, contributing to how they see themselves and the groups with which they identify," is how the article Understanding Racism of the journal Understanding Racism defines culture. In a broad sense, culture may be defined as the collection of lifestyles that a group of people have created and that have been transmitted from one generation to the next. Every ethnic group, cultural group, and community has its own set of values, beliefs, and lifestyles. This makes it quite evident that a person's personality is shaped and developed in large part by their language, culture, and upbringing.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To research cultural identity and language
2. To research the caste-based sociocultural and economic structure of Indian society

Caste-based socio-cultural and economic structure of the Indian society

"Dr. Ambedkar's life and vision provide Dalit chetna its primary energy, and all Dalit writers are united with respect to this truth," according to the academic Omprakash Valmiki. Dalit literary critics throughout the world have used Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" as a reference to the colonizer-colonized paradigm. Indian society's caste-based sociocultural and economic structure is defined under this framework. The emancipation of the oppressed people, whose voices have been muted, has built their own self-identity and produced a realistic picture of their pain and suffering. The milieu of subalternity must acknowledge this. Given this, the question of who is the current author of Dalit literature emerges. Do Dalits have the ability to create their own stories, or can someone else do it for them?

She is the author of Sheetal Sathe's Ek Maitra Raangadya. The poems she writes are anti-caste and are dedicated to Babasaheb Ambedkar, whom she really admires. She demonstrates her will to oppose the government's tyranny and the violence connected to caste in each and every one of her songs and poetry.

In 2011, she was given a jail term for her bold lyrics when the authorities took notice of her poems. She composes music.

"The indescribable discomfort presented on the dish

The impenetrable loathing develops in the stomach.

It may be heard in lovely tunes and in the buds of flowers.

This is the place where it occurs for a guy to consume another man's blood.

Hellish sickness is the norm here.

Without a doubt, Arjun Dangle is a well-known and significant figure in Maharashtra's literary and political scene. At this stage, Dangle's poetry, essays, and short stories have been translated into several Indian and other languages. He wrote a poem called "Chhavni Hilti Ha".

*We engaged in combat with birds without
ever removing our snot from our nostrils.*

*We divided the meat among us
after dragging the dead animals from the Upper Lane.*

Using Om Parash Valmiki's autobiographical book "Joothan" as an example, Valmiki said, "My speech patterns changed." In addition, I became more polite. I encountered individuals in my social circle who were passionate about current affairs and often participated in discussions about them. I participated in cultural events in addition to lectures. I got involved with and immersed myself in the Jabalpur literary scene. I also started to have my own opinions and sentiments about literature. The type that most interested me was social realism, as opposed to formalist and aestheticist writing.

In the 12th century, the Dalit poet Kalavve used the following statements to confront the upper castes:

*"They refer to those who consume goats,
foul, and small fish as caste people."*

*People who consume the sacred cow that
gives Shiva foaming milk are said to be outcasts.*

Hindus from exceedingly low castes are not permitted to study the Vedas, the ancient sacred texts, or even to hear the Vedas read aloud, as Manu makes clear in the Manu smriti, which is generally considered to be the primary source on Indian law. The Vedas themselves are prohibited as well. In addition to being an avid classicist, he has classified the many sorts of chores according to caste distinctions. The untouchable, or "Sudra," is therefore taught via a sloka, which functions as a Hindu code of ethics:

“Ekameba tu Sudrasya Prabhu:

Karma Samadishat Eteshameba Varnanang sushrusamanasuyaya”

To serve the three higher races selflessly, the Sudra (untouchable) has been granted just one Karma (action) by the Lord. In the slokas that follow, Manu goes into further depth on the better worship of Brahminism: For example:

“Uttamangobdhawajaisthaya Braman Shaiba dharanat,
Sarbasaibasya sargasya dharmato Brahmanah prabhu”.

Language attitudes are people's sentiments and emotions towards their own language variety, as well as towards other languages or language variants. It is also possible to apply linguistic attitudes to other languages or language variants. Women talk too much, according to the general public, and children cannot develop correct reading, writing, or speaking abilities until they are old enough. Other frequent misconceptions that are widespread include the following: "Everyone but me speaks with an accent," "American English is better than British English, or vice versa," but "native speakers of English can speak good English." The standard language ideology is the idea that there is a proper way to speak English and that everything that does not follow this pattern is wrong,

stupid, or indolent. This phenomenon, which happens when there is no structure, norms, or regulations in place, is also known as ideology of the standard language. The bulk of Dalit writers' works are a blatant representation of this mindset, and their memoirs and poetry often draw attention to the oppression of upper-class people because of their caste. Joopaka Subhadra, a Dalit writer from the state of Telangana, has been able to portray the despair that Dalits over the world are going through in his poetry. She was the one who aired the concern and raised the topic of the disparity in treatment between Dalit men and women. Through her poetry, we get the chance to understand more about Dalit women from impoverished and rural origins. She composes music.

*"Mallanna is well-known in our waada (colony),
despite being a slave to the rest of the world."*

I've been become Mallanna's slave because I tied the wedlock.

*Dammakka ayyo! At Ayyayyo Dammakka,
the hamlet's border stone, my tales and my sufferings vanish.*

Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* recounts the same horrifying story of the Dalits' brutal torment. Working with Dalit tribes and other disadvantaged groups in society, Arundhati has been active in the field as a social activist. Since she has spearheaded and taken part in several initiatives against what they see to be the government's anti-poor and undemocratic stance, she has extensive first-hand understanding of the challenges they face on a daily basis. We are introduced to Velutha, the paravan, who works as a professional carpenter as well. It is obvious that he is not middle class and is an untouchable since he is shown as having a bare body. With a broom in hand, the paravans were compelled to crawl backwards in order to clear the footprints. This action was used to stop Brahmins or Syrian Christians from inadvertently walking into a paravan's footprint and contaminating themselves. (Pages 73–74 of *The God of Small Things*)

Velutha's grandpa converts to Christianity in an effort to save his family the suffering caused by untouchability, but this only serves to exacerbate their issues. They are no longer eligible for the advantages provided by the constitution as they have lost their caste.

Another founder and leader of the Dalit Panthers organization, Namdeo Dhasal, supports protest poetry. He loves to use terminology from Mumbai's underworld and the Red-Light neighbourhood, despite the fact that he is not a member of this world. His distinctive writing style revolutionized Marathi literature, which in turn led to a complete Dalit literary movement in other Indian languages. This was done to help the Dalits living in India light the flame of knowledge. Dalit writing, according to Namdeo, is becoming the most outstanding poetry our nation is now generating as it enters the twenty-first century with fury, sweat, and blood. The Dalit Panthers' political actions and the most recent Marathi literature are two instances of this tendency.

Cultural Conflict and Medium of Instructions

Organic thinkers like Kancha Iliah advocate for Dalits to get their education in English. It is mandatory for Dalit pupils to attend English-speaking schools. In 2006, Chandrabhan Prasad and other activists honoured Lord Macolay's birthday and helped build the temple honouring "English Devi" (also called Goddess English). According to their beliefs, Indian languages are very brahmanized and sanskritized, and they are isolated from Dalit presence. Because of their brahmanization, these standardised languages are regarded as brahmanized languages. In the Indian context, standardisation refers to Brahmanization, which has been seen as the main obstacle to Dalit freedom.

This viewpoint holds that we should not care if the languages or dialects of these small communities are dying or experiencing a last scream. They are not motivated to elevate their dialects in any way, despite the fact that they are the oral recordings of a community's cognitive processes, reflecting that community's worldview. According to Gail Omvedt, as language problems are closely related to a number of social and political problems, it is necessary to study the historical history of language as a social variable in order to understand the power dynamics in society. In addition, Kancha Iliiah explained in his book how English became the dominant language of the governing elite as a result of the tribal language's extinction.

These Dalit philosophers have also emphasized the democratization of English and the debrahmanization of Indian languages, so blindly adopting English is not the only option. Regarding the pedagogical options, Ramakant Agnihotri said that the educational media will have a pyramidal structure with a large number of languages at the base and a small number at the top. It becomes imperative to transition students from the mother tongue to the prevailing language at that moment. The method I used for this was called the transfer model of bilingual education. Multilingualists in the classroom may promote meta-linguistic awareness and reflection on possible societal change via subversive conversations on the nature and structure of language as well as a range of social and political issues. Being able to speak two languages is part of our identity. It not only acts as a conduit for information acquisition but also forms a child's thinking and forms the basis of social identity.

It is necessary to address the mistaken notion that language proficiency might be achieved by imitating the textbook's examples. The reason for this is because the conversations in these types of publications are often inappropriate for young readers. The inability of youngsters who have only been exposed to English in academic contexts to speak the language on a daily basis is also widely apparent in society.

Dalit literature is often seen as protest literature, akin to Afro-American slave stories, since it provides detailed and vivid information on the autocracies of dominating civilisations. The term "poetry" refers to a literary art form in which the reader's conceptual and semantic content is either employed in place of or in addition to the beautiful qualities of human language. Literature has taken on the role of a tool when it is utilised to communicate a message. In the past, literature has inspired Russians to fight in World War II, aided Indians in their struggle for independence, and supported Carl Marks in his battle against the establishment of his views. What's wrong with utilizing literature to disseminate a message to the public and as a weapon in battle? The creation of universal self-identification is the goal of their work. The use of literature as a weapon gained prominence in the fight against the atrocities perpetrated by the upper classes. Om Prakash Valmiki defines literature as "that discourse which stands on the side of human beings who are oppressed, who are in great peril, and who want to live." He should find meaning in life via reading. Instead of making him weaker, forcing him to submit to hegemony, or forcing him into servitude, literature should shake him up and teach him how to fight. We must dismantle the social order that envelops us. I believe that literature that wakes us to such freedom is helpful.

Dalit poet Namdeo Dhassal told photographer Henning Stegmuller that "poetry is politics" and that "I enjoyed discovering myself." Writing poems and planning a protest of sex workers standing up for their rights are two things that bring me delight. As a result, writing about oneself is the first step towards self-realization, estrangement, and marginalised identity. Despite the fact that Dalit poetry is an attempt to protect the neglected and overlooked self to a living one through poetical images but limited literary devices, the impression of a shackled and downtrodden Dalit self endures despite the fact that Dalit poets have made every effort to affirm identity and self in a variety of ways. Only when translated into English does the Dalit Language Register have a distinct identity in contemporary Indian literature; otherwise, it is restricted to its own regional tongue, which is often disregarded and undervalued.

CONCLUSION

The term "language discrimination" refers to the practice of seeing certain people more negatively than others. Dalits sometimes lament that certain of their works are not appreciated as memoirs since they are not considered a literary form. In addition to being very poetic, Dalits' works are not fluent in English. Every dialect that is seen as marginalised globally has its own distinct set of values and practices, in addition to having own discourses and tales. The poets' language conveys the Dalits' genuine feelings, and their culture demonstrates their way of existence. When they are left out, alone, and excluded from a culture that is rife with caste hierarchical superiority, tears are the emotions that spill out of their hearts. Through their tears, they are expressing their feelings. To conceal the caste system, the Dalit ethnic groups have been suppressed and denied the chance to demonstrate their true status. According to Spivak, Dalits are the underprivileged segment of humanity, and their opinions deserve to be valued. Dalits are hence the class symbol. In addition to the subaltern, who are the real populations, the Dalit literature as a whole provides a more comprehensive picture of these marginalised groups, who have been perverted for ages. Attitudes towards language lead to contractions and difficulties comprehending anything. When assessing an artwork, one must consider its originality, aesthetic value, idea, choice and application of materials, and level of complexity.

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