



Perspectives on Aesthetics in Dalit Literature

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Abstract- The tradition of Indian aesthetics was explicit in Vedic civilization of India and the contributions of Pre-Aryan, Co-Aryan and Anti-Aryan are self-evidenced in the fields of dance, drama, music and paintings etc. Indian aestheticians endeavour to justify and establish that the sweet sources of human beats are beyond the reach of words and binds or the criteria of reasoning. From western point of view it is known ordinarily by the name of philosophy of literature and literary criticism but from Indian point of view, it is the system of Indian Aesthetics. But the question is, as this science and philosophy can be applied in the different field of fine art as dance, drama, music, literature and painting? Is it applicable in Dalit Literature also or Not? Because Dalit literature is the literary representation of the social reality of the marginal and the dispossessed groups of society. The present paper aims at dealing with the dalit literature from the perspectives of Indian Aesthetics.

Key Words: Aesthetics, Vedic, Aryan, Dalit, Tap, Rasa, Samajik, Canonical, Satyam, Shivam, Sundram, Liberty, Fraternity and Equality, Rasa, Alankar, Dhvani and Vakrokti.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the context of India, aesthetics means "Science and Philosophy of Fine Art." It is science of fine art because we have to focus on how creatively and innovatively the idea has been presented by writer through the different techniques of art. The works, wherein the aesthetics is discussed, are primarily concerned with techniques; and the philosophy is closely related to it. It is philosophy of fine art because the experience that a work of art arouses in an aesthete is accounted for in terms of different schools of philosophic thought in India. The tradition of Indian aesthetics was explicit in Vedic civilization of India and the contributions of Pre-Aryan, Co-Aryan and Anti-Aryan are self-evidenced in the fields of dance, drama, music and paintings etc. Indian aesthetics endeavor to justify and establish that the sweet sources of human beats are beyond the reach of words and binds or the criteria of reasoning. From western point of view it is known ordinarily by the name of philosophy of literature and literary criticism but from Indian point of view, it is the system of Indian Aesthetics. But the question is, as this science and philosophy can be applied in the different field of fine art as dance, drama, music, literature and painting, Is it applicable in Dalit Literature also or Not?, because Dalit literature is the literary representation of the social reality of the marginal and the dispossessed groups of society. Falling in line with the traditions of humanist and realist writers like Daya Pawar, Annabhau Sathé, Laxman Mane, Arun Kamble, Shantabai Kamble, Raja Dhale, Namdev Dhasal, Sharan Kumar Limba Le, Narendra Jhadhav, Urmila Pawar, Om Prakash Balmiki and many others, for whom literature has been a medium of constructing social reality along with means of transformation of life, Dalit writers use their mind and act for the sake of depiction of social reality.

In context of Dalit literature, the definition of aesthetics of Indian aestheticians like Acharya Bharat, Acharya Bhamah, Acharya Kshemendra, Acharya Vaman, Acharya Anandvardhan and Acharya Kuntaka which is based on their tap and devotion, rise many subtle questions as, Why literature is produced? In *Natyashastra*, Acharya Bharata Muni holds that literature aims at giving rise to *rasa* (to entertainment) in the *samajika* (spectator) and later this experience is followed by moral improvement (welfare of society). He adds dramatic presentation of literature imparts aesthetic pleasure to all who are unhappy, tired, bereaved and ascetic. The protagonists of Dalit writers including themselves are also unhappy and bereaved, so the question is, Could they impart themselves to aesthetic pleasure? If suppose the answer is Yes, Is it the basic purpose of dalit writers?

In fact, the things described in Dalit writings do not delight us in literature. Since *dalit* literature rejects canonical literature, at also rejects the established standards of evaluating literature i.e. the aesthetics. Is basic purpose of Dalit writing only to entertainment? or to enquire, or to welfare of society. If the answer

is, to welfare of society or to establish a new system from the point of view of equality then we can say dalit literature stands truly on some standards of Indian aesthetics.

Similarly, Acharya Kshemendra dictates in *AuchityVicharCharcha* in literature the writers become the institutors of laws, founders of civil society, investors of the arts of life and teachers who draw into a certain propinquity with the beautiful and the true. But, in the said words of Acharya Kshemendra What is so beautiful about Dalit literature, mainstream literary aestheticians ask irritably. From their point of view it contradicts the terms – beauty and Dalit writing. The purpose of traditional literature is to provide aesthetic pleasure based on *satya* (truth), *shivam* (goodness) and *sundaram* (beauty). Dalit writers violate these fundamental principles of aesthetics, laid down in the beautiful trinities of *satya* (truth), *shivam* (goodness) and *sundaram* (beauty) as well as 'Liberty, Fraternity and Equality'.

Second question is How Literature ought to be read? Indian aesthetician says that to enjoy a piece of literature we should be equipped with the tools and devices to interpret it. They add, a cursory look or certain words / phrases may appeal to them but to understand them scholarly we should be equipped with literary tools. It is the creative use of language only which either delights or disturbs us. The literary beauty ensues from formal and structural features of a composition. It is this creative use of language that makes a writer different from others. Generally, It is said how we say is more important than what we say. But the question is, In Dalit literature, the writer or protagonist seems to be disturbed by his own personal life so how he/she could use the creative language?

Dalit literature is based on reality and for it man is superior even to God or the nation but no beauty is there. The abusing and offending, the stinking and sacrilegious, the vulgar and violent, the crude and casteist, the rotten and rude - these are the choicest epithets they scornfully use to characterize the revolutionary genre. So the question is, how aesthetics can be bind up into words in context of Dalit writings?

The third question is, What effects does a piece of literature produces in the mind of the reader? The basic function of literature as defined by Indian aesthetics also is to promote basic human values and here it is this promotion of basic human values which gives aesthetic pleasure, and without it the text becomes a site of report and agenda. Here Dalit writers want to promote basic human values but without pleasure, so again a question rises, Is Dalit literature a site of report or agenda? or Is there a politics of main stream writers against Dalit writers?

Aesthetical criticism of philosophy of literature which probes the nature of art in general and literature in particular raise many questions. These questions include metaphysical, psychological, epistemic, logical and critical point of view. Some of these questions are discussed here and others may be as, Does the subjectivity of the reader contribute to the meaning of writing? Is meaning an objective reality? Who is a writer? Who is a reader? Dalit writer are accused of fails to be impersonal. There is no feeling or emotion or vision, resulting from his writings. Rather their writings are impregnated with feeling or emotion or vision of their own mind. They do not look at the subject from a distance, rather they become very part of it. That is why, there is no universal rhythm in Dalit literature.

But Dalit writers essentialize the aesthetics of literature to register protect against the multiple oppression related to class, caste and gender discrimination and to describe the courage and resilience of several of their victim protagonists in a crippling milieu. There are many Dalit writers, their unique content and distinct dazzling style make them unconventional writers. Purpose of their creativity in not only to report about social evils, rather it abounds in its own aesthetic beauty. Their creative art resists the conventional canons of literary art. If on the one hand dalit literature acts as a counter discourse to mainstream hegemonic discourse, on the other hand the radical aesthetics designed by dalit writers serves to rupture and expand the established notions of narrations. They deconstruct the stereotypical symbols, myths and imagery by adopting the terse, direct style of modern journalism. The history of literature suggests that different socio-economic conditions give birth to diverse literatures and each is born with its distinct aesthetics. A true and genuine literature is always beautiful even if it is its lot to portray most ugly reality of life, most evil nature of mankind. And it is the lot of the dalit literature to depict the unwholesome part of life that deprives a section, of people elf their human dignity and human rights.

The dalitwriter is never shy of pronouncing his verdict on what is beautiful and what is vulgar, what is good and what is evil, what is moral and what is immoral. That is the clarity of his ideas that is the

decency of his emotions. Aesthetic evaluation of literature involves a big exercise: right from the selection of its content by the writer to its execution.

The dalit writings have been valued not merely because they are concerned with giving a voice to the suppressed, not because they are all determined to narrate, and thus put on record their past-bequeathed memories, also not because they espouse social and political ideology but they are important because they intend to offer a theory that explains how politics works in a society; they intend to provide a profound insight into the forces that shape a new society, its new literature and aesthetics. Dalit creativity has blossomed through all recognized form of literature such as poetry, autobiographies, novels, short stories, critical essays, dramas and street plays. Guy Poitevin says, "Dalit autobiographies are literary frames of social protest practices." Dalit poetry shows its own beauty as it transcends all barriers to compose poetry.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is no dearth of critical material available in different languages on the entire canvas of dalit writing. But as far as the critical commentaries of dalit writings from aesthetics point of view in English are concerned there is scarcity of material and that too is not easily available. Some eminent scholars like Shrawan K Sharma, Sanjay Saxena and Neerav Patel and such others raised some issues of Indian aesthetics in context of dalit writing.

The review of articles of different scholars on dalit writing makes it evident that a critical research has not been carried out on dalit literature from the aesthetics point of view. However, the present paper aims at unravelling layers of politics and to set a new way dalit aesthetics. The study may add a new dimension to the in-depth study of dalit literature from aesthetics point of view.

III. CONCLUSION

No doubt dalit literature is remarkable for its inwardness. They have the ability to look within one's community and critique their short writing that distinguishes dalit literature from other writing. Dalit drama also shows a great contribution of dalit drama in the enlightenment of society. It expresses heartfelt emotions. It has a simple plot revolving round one or two families. Sometimes it is based on personal life, history of writer or it relies upon the eye witness account of the sufferings of their brethren.

The diction is unfigurative and coarse and even vulgar. These are the epithets the mainstream critic uses while making aesthetic evaluation of dalit literature. But the dalit writer has different notion of aesthetic beauty: he believes for example, in the beauty of the arrow that is sharp enough to pierce the evil. The anti-human social system that robs man of his dignity must be purged and overhauled. But for *dalit* writer, his benevolent content, his message of brotherhood is the foremost aesthetic appeal.

Dalit literature rejects western theories like Freud's psychoanalysis, Barthe's structuralism or Derrida's deconstruction theory along with theories of Indian aestheticians as *rasa*, *alankar*, *vakrokti* and *dhvani* theory. Indian dalit writers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are proving themselves not only through their works but also trying to raise the issues related to casteism with a fresh perspective. These dalit writers have presented life through literature with great vividness. One of the important aspects of these writers is that all of them are highly educated, involved in social issues, and moreover, ready to experiment with their writings. For dalit writers, Literature is seen as a weapon, a mode of attack designed to destroy the enemies of our community and to set right a social order. The depressing uniqueness of the *dalit* situation demands a separate aesthetic, unlike any other. They have made a conscious effort lest their literature should be an echo of literature written in India so far. Rather it should be unique and original in itself. It would avoid and target classical myth and symbols and would replace the savarnaprotagonist with the *dalit* protagonist, threaten the existing system based on cast and would give way to a new system, based on castless society.

Finally concluding dalit aesthetics, it can be said when sincere and honest documentation of life becomes a mission, the work of art thus produced is elevated to an inspiring level above mere documentation and assumes the shape of a torch, a campaign and a preparation ground for a struggle evoking both emulation

and adoration. Certainly, it sets the path and offers a ray of hope to those, who want to establish an egalitarian society based on the principle of human love, freedom, dignity and respect.

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