

**DALIT EXPERIENCE IN AUTOBIOGRAPHIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY
OF GOVERNMENT BRAHMANA AND MURDAHIYA**

Dissertation submitted to the Central University of Punjab

For the Award of

Master of Philosophy

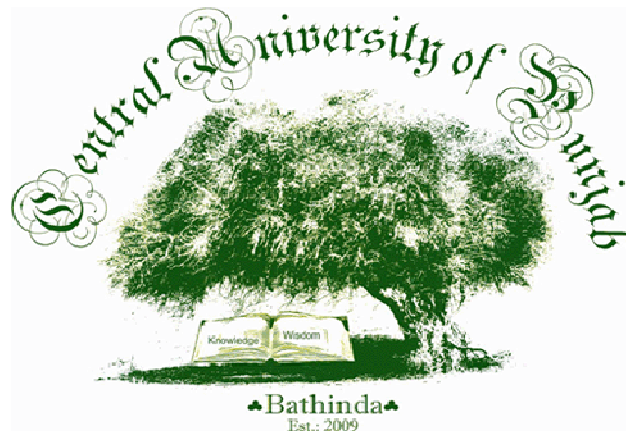
In

Comparative Literature

By

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CERTIFICATE

I declare that the dissertation entitled “DALIT EXPERIENCE IN AUTOBIOGRAPHIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF *GOVERNMENT BRAHMANA AND MURDAHIYA*” has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr. Rajinder Kumar Sen, Assistant Professor, Centre for Comparative Literature, School of Languages, Literature and Culture, Central University of Punjab. No part of this dissertation has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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ABSTRACT

Dalit Experience in Autobiographies: A Comparative Study of *Government Brahmana* and *Murdahiya*

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Dalit Autobiography, a recent offshoot, introduces a new world of experience in Indian literature. It widens the range of expression and makes use of the language of the Dalits who have been excluded from the mainstream Indian society and discriminated, exploited, humiliated and marginalised on the basis of low caste status. There are various Dalit autobiographers who portray the sufferings of Dalits in their creative works. Aravind Malagatti and Tulsi Ram are two significant Dalit autobiographers who have made attempt in raising the voice of Dalits in hierarchical society. The foremost objective of this research is to highlight social, cultural and economic conditions of Dalits and role of Education in their development within the reference of the autobiographies of Aravind Malagatti's *Government Brahman* and Tulsi Ram's *Murdahiya*. Both Aravind Malagatti and Tulsi Ram represent Dalit society in their personal narratives. Both Aravind Malagatti and Tulsi Ram interrogate social norms in different episodes of autobiographies and use their personal experience to expose the domination and subjugation of Dalits. A thematic approach from Dalit perspective has been adopted for this study.

(Name and signature of Student)

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CHAPTER 1

Dalit and Autobiography: Conceptual Understanding

Dalits are the people who are known as untouchables, separated from rest of the society by the caste system. The term Dalit has been derived from Sanskrit word 'dal', which means cracked, down trodden, broken, crushed and destroyed. It generally refers to the people who were once known as 'untouchables'. They are known with different names in different parts of the nation such as Outcastes, Exterior-castes, Depressed Classes, Untouchables, Ex-Untouchables, Harijans (used by Gandhi ji) or Dalits etc. Dr. Ambedkar used 'depressed class' for Dalits in *Who were Shudras*. In the 19th century Marathi social reformer and revolutionary Mahatma Jyotiba Phule used this term to describe outcastes and untouchables as oppressed, broken and victims of Indian caste society. (Michael 108)

According to the 2011 census, there are 167 million Dalits in India (Government of India 50). They are termed as 'outcaste' as the architects of social system do not permit their inclusion in the fourfold graded caste structure of Indian society. They remain at the lowest rank of Indian society. The term 'Dalit' is defined by different writers in various ways. According to government of India act 1935, Dalits are:

Who occupy a low position in the Hindu social structure; their representation in government services is inadequate; they are inadequately represented in the fields of trade, commerce and industry; they suffer from social and physical isolation from the rest of the community; and there is a general lack of educational development amongst the major section of this community. (qtd. in Thorat 2)

But its literal meaning is the masses that have been depressed and exploited socially, politically and culturally on the name of religion, god, goddess and other factors. Thus, Dalit represents marginal section of society which is denied access to the worldly affairs. Indian constitution designates Dalits as 'Scheduled Castes'.

Dalits live in the most insanitary conditions with limited access to public health and sanitation amongst open sewers and open air toilets. They live their life beyond the margins of social, economic, political, cultural sphere. They are not allowed to enter into houses or temples and are ostracised as untouchables. They are forced into the inappropriate occupations due to the reason of their descent. Dalits are forced to work as menial labourers, landless farm workers and peasants, and pushed into various other improper labours such as, beating drums, washing clothes, cutting hair, burning dead bodies etc. All these menial works are expected of them as a part of their caste based role in society. There is no escape for Dalits from this fate in rural and semi-urban Hindu society where caste system rules the roots. On the basis of this status they were made to bear extreme kinds of disabilities in the form of oppression for centuries which made them almost lose their humanness. Prof. Aravind Malagatti opines:

The people who are economically, socially, politically exploited from centuries, unable to live in the society of human beings have been living outside the village depending on lower level of occupation, and unable to spell out their names, lived as 'untouchable', are regarded as Dalit. (qtd. in Kargi 17)

The word Dalit is synonymous for depressed classes. Apparently it was used in the 1930s as a Hindi and Marathi translation of 'Depressed classes', the term British used for what are now called the scheduled castes mainly. Today also it is used in the same sense in the context of Indian society. In Indian society, caste is forced upon as an identity determinant rather than religion or class. Social stigma and a variety of disabilities are based on caste, and to a significant degree, are the defining characteristics of a Dalit, even if a Dalit moves up in social class or changes religion. One of the best definitions of the term is given by a Marathi Professor Gangadhar Pantawane:

Dalit is not just a caste, Dalit is a symbol of change and revolution. The Dalit believes in humanness. He rejects existence of God, rebirth, soul, sacred books that teach discrimination, fate and heaven because these have made him a slave. He represents the exploited man in his country. (qtd. in Ganguly43).

Their social status made them to bear the different sort of disabilities. These disabilities were in different forms which made them almost lose their humanness. Today the term “Dalit” is in use and means in a much broader context. It includes all the backward castes, depressed, oppressed and everyone who is exploited in society. Limbale defines:

Harijans and neo-Buddhists are not the only Dalits. The term describes all the untouchable communities living outside the boundary of the village, as well as Adivasis, Landless farm-tribes. In explaining the word, it will not do to refer only to the untouchable castes. People who are lagging behind economically will also need to be included. (11)

Division of society in various groups is a common feature of all human societies. Traditional pattern of stratification of Indian society has certain unique and pervasive features that are rooted in past. Indian society was divided in four fold varna system which is interlinked to the theory of caste system. The four major varnas or castes are Brahmins (the priestly class), Kshatriyas (the warrior class), Vaisyas (the trading class) Sudras (the servants). The references are found in Holy Scriptures. The primeval myth is that of the Purushasukta in which the four orders of society emerge from four parts of the great sacrificed *Purusha*.

His mouth became the Brahmin; his arms were made into Warrior, his thighs the People, and from his feet the servants were born (Doniger31).

They have been created from the body of the great God Brahma. The names of those four orders are given as Brahmana, Rajanya, Vaishya and Shudra. *Manusmriti* and the *Puranas* speak of Varna which grouped the society into four types. M.N. Srinivas writes:

In the *Rigvedic* hymn *Purushasukta*, the four varna or order formed the limbs of primeval man (Purusha), who was victim in the divine sacrifice which produced the cosmos. The Brahmin emerged from his mouth, the Kshatriyas from his arms, the Vaishyas from his thighs and the Shudras from the feet.(qtd in Karnath 88)

One group of people who fall outside of the caste, are called Dalits. They stand at the lowest rank of social order. It was not only that 'Varna model' had been mentioned in the sacred texts but they had been assigned their duties as well. Accordingly, the Brahmins were assigned to perform the religious activities and the class of Kshatriyas was made responsible for taking care and protecting the society from the invasion forces. The Vaishyas were supposed to handle the economic activities and Shudra were prescribed the agricultural works. Dalits who were out of four fold division, were allowed to do the menial work and service for the rest four classes. They were considered inferior to the first four castes and forced to perform menial jobs. (Kolekar 9-11)

Many social reforms and various constitutional measures and governmental policies have led to certain amount of development and change among Dalits. British Indian Empire provided some reforms to these historically disabled castes. After independence Government of India introduced reservation for the welfare but the problem of untouchability, discrimination and other human right transgression of Dalit are present in excess in our society. "Even after more than six decades of India's independence Dalits are still struggling for freedom, dignity and justice. Day in and day out Dalits are humiliated, killed, Dalit Women are raped, discriminated and various other human rights are violated. Incidents like beating, torture, arson, usurpation, molestation, rape, killing, and so on of the Dalit people by the caste-Hindus have become a regular feature of caste-ridden Indian society. Dalits are not safe anywhere in India" (Nayak 2). One aspect of Indian constitution is that it is based on the principle of growth with equality and social justice. Indian constitution has incorporated a number of provisions for SCs and STs. Government of India has prescribed several legislations, ordinances and policies time to time to increase the income level as well the socio-economic development of the weaker sections. But in practice, due to number of reasons, these policies and legislations hardly reach these people to elevate them from social and economic disabilities.

Indian constitution was prepared with the hope that it would provide equality, liberty, fraternity and justice to every citizen of India. Democratic Indian Constitution abolished every sort of discrimination to help the backward section to come up. Certain temporary measures and permanent safeguards are provided for the protection of Dalits and backward section of society. In the form of reservation

constitution provides a mechanism for the upliftment of down trodden as well as the removal of the institutionalised inequalities in social, political and economic conditions which are deep rooted from past years.

Main intention of the reservation policy was to assure empowerment of Dalits, who constitute around 16 percent of Indian population, were disempowered from times immemorial. Thus, the policy can be considered just as an inclusive one that ensures social representation in education and employment. In the case of employment, both the sectors, public and private were essential in securing empowerment of dalits. (Reddy 1)

Article 29 of Indian Constitution provides certain cultural and educational rights to every section of Indian society who are residing in the territory of India “or any part thereof, having a distinctive language, script or culture of its own, shall have the right to conserve the same” (qtd. in Gokulsing 107). ‘Unity within diversity’ prime cultural feature of India is provided by this article. This article permits special provisions for the backward classes to protect their interests. Every citizen has right to education and cannot be denied “admission into any educational institution maintained by the state or receiving aid out of state funds on grounds only of caste, religion, race, language or any of them” (qtd. in Revankar 56).

Article 14 of Indian constitution, guarantee the equality before law. It is an extension of the principle which is ensured in the preamble. According to this article “the state shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the law within the territory of India” (qtd. in Diwan and Diwan 594). Further Article 15 denies discrimination against “any Citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, and place of birth or any of them” (qtd. in Arora 61). It provides right to state for making any special provision for the upliftment of the weaker or disabled class of citizens. It provides equal rights to access shops, hotels and public places such as wells, tanks, bathing *ghats*, roads etc.

Article 16 provides the equality of opportunity in government employment. This Article specifies the reservation for Dalits. It provides that state can make any provision for “the reservation in appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the state, is not adequately represented in the services under the state... Nothing in this Article shall prevent the state from

making any provision for reservation in matters of promotion to any classes of posts in the services under the state in favour of scheduled castes and the Scheduled Tribes”(qtd. in Syed176).

Article 17 is about the abolition of ‘untouchability’ and forbids the practice of untouchability in any form. According to this article “Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of ‘untouchability’ shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law (qtd. in Das and Mohanty 80)”.Article 46 provides the special attention for the promotion of educational and economic interests of SCs, STs and other weaker sections. This article reads: “The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections in general and particularly the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation” (Paswan and Jaideva 145).

After independence political reservation was also given to Dalits to secure their interests by providing them proper representation in law making bodies of our country. Article 330 and 332 provide reservation of seats in state Assemblies and Parliament as per the population of Dalits. Under Article 338 a special officer is provided for investigation of all matters of Dalits regarding constitutional safeguards. (145-146)

These constitutional safeguards have made considerable amount of change and development among Dalits and contributed for the welfare of Dalit community. They live a life of non-entity, non person or second class citizens. At many places their condition is worse than animals. They are not allowed to draw water from common wells and visit worship places. After independence India got freedom from English rule. People of independent India were expecting better life particularly Dalits but still they are waiting for freedom from poverty and discrimination. Although, there is no place for any type of discrimination (Rao 42-46) and all are equal in the eyes of Law as Indian constitution provides equal rights to every citizen. Many provisions are organised for Dalits but they remain only on papers due to the inadequate and defective implementation. All over India caste based discrimination and atrocities against Dalit communities have increased which leads to the bloody and brutal killing of Dalits many a times. They do not feel safe anywhere in India. Between 2000 and 2001, about 58,956 cases were registered with the police nationwide as cognizable crimes against the

Dalits(Thorat 303-304). The actual figure could still be higher as there is distinct possibility of all the cases not being registered for various reasons.

National crime record Bureau statics show crimes against Dalits have increased manifold. There has been a rise in the number of incidents of murder recorded too. Figure Indicate that total number of murder cases against SCs were 493 in 1981. It increased to 610 in 1991 and again increased to 763 in 2001. Though the number of murder showed decline in 2012 with 649. Similarly 1576 number of cases of rape of Dalit women by non-Dalit are registered in 2012 and rate of crime was 1.64 in same year. The total numbers of crimes committed against SCs in recent years were 26127 in 2005, 33615 in 2008 and a marginal decline is noticed in 2012 with 33585. (National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs)

Due to distinct historical events Dalits, being impure and unskilled, were denied education but by the span of time they began to articulate their identity and dignity in speeches and writings. All writers, non- Dalits and Dalits became aware of the impact of caste system in India. They started producing research articles, poems, drama, short stories, novels, and other genre about the exploited social life from Dalit angle and this literature was named Dalit Literature.

Dalit literature attempts to expose the experience of discrimination, poverty and human rights violation against Dalits in contemporary India. The phenomenal growth in Dalit literature came in front on the fore front when Dalit began to give voice to their experience. These voices question the previously set ideologies, practices and institutions that are responsible for their vulnerable condition. As Arjun Dangle observes:

Dalit Literature is one, which acquaints people with the caste system and untouchability in India, its appalling nature and its system of exploitation. In other words, Dalit is not a caste but a realisation and is related to the experiences, joys and sorrows, and struggles of those in the lowest stratum of society. It matures with a sociological point of view and is related to the principle of negativity, rebellion and loyalty to science, thus finally ending as revolutionary... 'Dalit' means masses exploited and oppressed economically, socially, culturally, in the name of religion and other factors. Dalit writers hope that this

exploited group of people will bring about a revolution in this country.
(Dangle 2-3)

The thoughts and ideas of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar are considered to be the driving force of Dalit literature. Vamana Nimbalkar, one of the contemporary Dalit writers, opines “The immense potential of Dr. Ambedkar and his philosophy was not restricted to himself or any one particular individual. He handed over them the flares of his philosophy of development...his thoughts contained a graph of the progress of the people at the grass roots of the society. For this, Dr. Ambedkar’s life itself had become a revolution. This revolution had changed consciousness of Dalits...that is why, Dr. Ambedkar and his philosophy is the source of Dalit literature. The root of new consciousness can be traced in the thoughts of Buddha” (Nimbalkar 40).

Dalit literature gives voice to the depressed people and their rescue by targeting the fake hierarchy on name of caste, class and gender as African American Literature raises the voice of Blacks targeting slavery and injustice. Dalits and African American struggle for human rights and against exploitation. They share common groundings at different levels. Dalit Panther Movement has been compared to Black Movement of American Black Panthers by a human right activist Eleanor Zelliot because both movements endeavour to attain their yearning goal of equality and to break down barriers of racial and caste segregation. She writes:

In the early 1970s, two Maharastrian movements achieved enough prominence to be noticed by the English language press, The Dalit Panthers and Dalit Literature. By substituting the word “Black” for “Dalit” the reader can immediately understand that a phenomenon comparable to the American Black Panthers and Black literature has surfaced among the lower castes in social and literary affairs in western India. Like the American movements, the Dalit Panthers and Dalit School of literature represent a new level of pride, militancy and sophisticated creativity... there is in the word itself an inherent denial of pollution, karma and justified caste hierarchy. (Zelliot 267)

Dalit writers believe that their literature should be analysed from a sociological perspective focused on social values than on beauty. An exclusively aesthetic consideration of Dalit literature will disregard the Dalit writer's fundamental role and hence it is not acceptable to Dalit writers. Dalit literature is precisely that literature which artistically portrays "the sorrows, tribulations, slavery, degradation, ridicule and poverty borne by Dalits" (Burke 178) where every human being must find liberty, honour, security and freedom from intimidation by the powerful elements of society. These values are now being articulated in a particular kind of literature, its name being Dalit literature.

Recognising the centrality of the human being, this literature is thoroughly saturated with humanity's joys and sorrows. It regards human beings as supreme and leads them towards revolution. Life of Dalit people is successfully portrayed by both Dalit and non-Dalit writers in different genres of literature as poetry, short story, novel, autobiography etc. Arun Prabha Mukherjee, in her introduction to *Joothan*, says, "Autobiography has been a favourite genre of Dalit writers" (25).

There are several theories about autobiography. It is commonly used term for life writings and coined by Robert Southey in 1809. An autobiography is the written document of a person's life written by an individual himself who writes the past events. Regarding this Philippe Lejeune says "an autobiography is a retrospective prose narrative produced by a real person concerning his own experiencing his own existence, focusing on his individual life, in particular on the development of his personality"(4). Autobiography is a term for a particular practice of life narrative, a concept which celebrates the impact of the autonomous individual and universalises the meaning of life story. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines an autobiography as, "The story of a person's life, written by that person" ("Autobiography"). According to Oxford English Dictionary "An autobiography is an account of a person's life written by that person" ("Autobiography").

Autobiography has Greek etymology, that is – Auto means Self; Bios means Life; and Graphis Writings (Kumar 2). Taken together in this order, the words self life writing offer a brief definition of autobiography. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson briefed the legacy of autobiography as: "We call autobiography the retrospective narrative in prose that someone makes of his own existence when

he puts the principle accent upon his life, especially upon the story of his own personality” (1).

The important role of autobiography is to organise the life story and reflect the past in order to better understanding of present. Roy Pascal views that, “Every experience is a nucleus from which energies radiate in various directions. In any worthwhile life there is a dominant direction that is not accidental; therefore ultimately the life is a sort of graph linking the experiences” (17). To write an autobiography one should have worthwhile life and that popular personality should have great experience to create impact on a vast community. Autobiography discusses not only about writer, incidents but also about their experiences. It is true representation of experience and achievement of popular men`s life but Dalits, tribes, women who are at the margin of Indian society also write autobiographies. In that they do not follow the previously established style of writing autobiographies.

Dalit autobiographer gives more importance to communal life rather than individual life. They are concerned with pathetic condition of fellow Dalits. Author has some common grounding with the behaviour of people because similar incidents occur in social life of both. In a literary work author responsibly convey social behaviour which he or she experience in his or her real life. Regarding the feature of autobiography Dr. Johnson says:

The writer of his own life has at least the first qualification of an historian, the knowledge of the truth; and though it may be objected that his temptations to disguise it are equal to his opportunities of knowing it, yet I cannot but think that impartially may be expected with equal confidence from him that relates the passages of his own life, as from him that delivers the transaction of author. (qtd. in Prasad 236)

Eleanor Zelliot discusses two ways for understanding the situation of Dalits in India closely. She tells that first way is to carefully examine statistical records of violence and discrimination against them and the second is to examine Dalit autobiographies. This is mainly because they not only depict the real world of unique practices, of social exile, insults, humiliations, caste discriminations, economic, political and sexual exploitation, but also the dreams, aspirations, struggles of Dalits. (Zelliot 113-115)

Dalit autobiographers portray the contemporary situation of the deprived, disabled and offer an account of poverty and exclusion. The oppression, struggle, assertion, deprivation of economic power and social welfare, benefits by reservation policy and quest for identity of the individuals are the subject matter of Dalit autobiographies. Finally Dalit writers through their autobiographies try to prepare a platform for Dalit community so that they can express their anger with the help of their writings. Dalit autobiographers have concern with the pathetic condition of Dalits. They alert the fellow Dalits to struggle for their rights, which are denied to them by the so-called upper castes. Dalit autobiography portrays different forms of legal and social injustices.

Dalit autobiographies are different from the mainstream autobiographies because they focus on the ordinariness of Dalits' life instead of their uniqueness. It helps to establish themselves as representative of their own community. It is different in theme, content, writing style and use of ordinary language. Subjective narration is used in Dalit autobiographies. They help to raise consciousness in Dalits and make them aware about human rights which are denied to them from centuries by so called upper castes. Dalit autobiographies are mainly concerned with the social and economic conditions of Dalits. Dalit writer depicts the life of those people who face the cruel reality of society because they are neglected from economic and social power. They expose the difficulties of life they face throughout the whole journey. Through their autobiographies they want to start a revolt against injustice. About the necessity of autobiography Omprakash Valmiki states:

Dalit writer should write autobiographies so that not only our history will stay alive but also our true portrayals of wrong doers. Dalit autobiographies will provide inspiration to our future generations.
(Valmiki 28)

Till the arrival of Britishers, Indians were not aware about the art of systematic documentation of the events and writing one's life experience and memories. It was favourite art of Europeans and was alien to Indians. From second half of 19th century life narratives made a considerable development in Indian literature. The autobiographies belonging to the pre-independence time were mainly devoted to the theme of freedom struggle. Abdul Latif Khan's *A Short*

Account of my Public Life, Surendranath Banerjee's *A Nation Making*, Mahatma Gandhi's *My Experiment with Truth*, Jawaharlal Nehru's *An Autobiography* and N.G. Chandavakar's *A Wrestling Soul* are important living record of Indian history. As upper caste people mentioned above wrote autobiographies about anti-colonial Resistance in first half of century, in the same way but later people belonging to the oppressed section of Indian society particularly Dalits, wrote autobiographies for the assertion of their hitherto neglected selves. (Naik 283)

The first Dalit Autobiography is supposed to be Hazari's *Untouchable: The Autobiography of an Indian Outcaste* (1951). Later on Dalit autobiographies are written in various languages. "James M. Freeman's *Untouchable: an Indian Life History*, D.P. Das's *The Untouchable Story*, Balwant Singh's *An Autobiography in the IAS*, Dr. Jatava's *A Silent Soldier: An Autobiography* and Shyamlal's *Untold Story of a Bhangi Vice-Chancellor*- all these have been written in English"(Kumar 158).Kannada Dalit writing was influenced by the philosophy of Ambedkar, Marx and the leftist movement. Outstanding Kannada Dalit writers such as Siddalingaiah, Chennanna Waiker, Devanur Mahadev and Aravind Malagatti have produced original works. In Marathi, there are many autobiographies which include Daya Powar's *Achoot*, Laxman Gaikwad's '*Uchalya*' (translated as *The Branded* in English) Laxman Mane's *Upara* (translated as *Upara* in English), Sharan Kumar Limbale's *Akkarmashi* (translated as *The Outcaste* in 2003), Narandra Jadhav's *Amcha Baap Aani Amhi* (translated in English as *Outcaste: A Memoir* in 2003).

In the Hindi speaking states such as Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh and even in the newly formed states like Uttarakhand or Chhattisgarh, many Dalit writers have written autobiographies such as Mohan Das Naimishroy's *Apne- Apne Pinjre* (1995), Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan* (Translated in English by same title), Soorajpal Chouhan's *Santapat* (2002), Ramashankar's *Ghootan* (2007), Shyoraj Sing Baichain's *Mera Bachapan Mere Kandho Par* (2009), Dr. Dharamveer's *Meri Patani Aur Bediya* (2009), Shushila Takbhore's *Shikanje Ka Dard* and Tulsi Ram's *Murdahiya* (2010). Recently Punjabi Dalit Writers have made an entrance in the genre of life narration. Balbir Madhopuri's *Changiya Rukh* (translated as *Against the Night* in English by Trapti Jain), Prem Gorkhi's *Gair- Hajir Aadmi*, Garnam Aakida's *Kakkh Kande* and Lalsingh Dil's *Dastan* are Punjabi Dalit Autobiographies.

Therefore, all these autobiographers represent contemporary condition of Dalits in contemporary Dalit autobiographies. They highlight the socio-economic conditions through their literary works. For a proper appraisal, I have selected two autobiographies *Government Brahmana* by Aravind Malagatti and *Murdahiya* by Tulsi Ram. The main thematic concern of the present research is to discuss the conditions of Dalit in hierarchical society.

1.1 Review of literature

Guy Poitevin's paper "Dalit Autobiographical Narratives Figures of Subaltern Consciousness, Assertion and Identity" presents specificity of significant trend in recent Marathi Literature which qualifies the western definition of genre. It gives an illustrative display of various different figures of Dalit subaltern consciousness.

Manujendra Kundu's review paper on Aravind Malagatti's *Government Brahmana* claims that "this autobiography suggests that Arvind Malagatti's life has been a journey of a 'no-man' in search of his own identity and rights as a human being, on a more personal level, and as an academic personality" (67).

The thesis "Depiction of Poor in the Works of Aravind Malagatti" by Vijay Kumar C.E. makes an attempt to examine the life of Dalits as depicted in the works of Arvind Malagatti. The views of the author, his opinion about the poor and the sympathy he shows towards the poor are also analysed and interpreted in this present study. This study estimates the works in new light and investigates the prevailing caste system in Indian contemporary society. The research finds the impact of castism in Indian social structure, and reflects the real condition of India.

Raj Kumar in *Dalit personal narratives: Reading caste, Nation and Identity* exhibits the issues involved in studying autobiography both theory and practice by comparing western autobiographical tradition with recent real life writings of India. The researcher analyses the western, upper caste men and women, Dalit men and women autobiographies and make it clear that autobiography, a literary genre, is diverse and complex. He finds that after five decades of literacy programmes and educational facilities, the number of Dalit men and women is still abysmally low.

Bijender Singh in his research paper “Sharan Kumar Limbale’s ‘The Outcaste’: Misfortunate Dalit Femaleness” discusses the pitiable condition of Dalit women in male dominated society. They are used as commodity and exploited socially, economically at every walk of life. Bijender states “The repeated exploitation in male dominated society they are battered, deserted and physical violence. Unemployment, illiteracy, resource-free is the sanction for their sufferance. Further they are the sufferer of patriarchy that gets sanction from the religious scripture across the world. Consequently it is predominantly the religious scripture that is the root cause of all above- illiteracy, unemployment, resourcelessness, caste system and patriarchy that has reduced Dalit women to level of commodity” (32).

Rajesh Kumar in an article “Exploring Covering Dimensions: Dalit and Australian Aboriginal Autobiographies” discusses about Australian Aboriginal and Dalit autobiographies considering them resistance literature and narrative of pain respectively. Both Australian Aboriginal and Dalit autobiographies represent the communal identity which helps these marginalised groups to unite. He says that these “narratives are based on the idea of the communal identity. As Stephen Butterfield writes, the self belongs to the people, and the people find a voice in the self.subjectivity in these autobiographies is thus complicated by the deep connection between the individual self and the communal self” (36).

An article “Bama’s Karukku: Dalit Autobiography as Testimonio” by Pramod K. Nayar explores the shift between the generic conventions of individual life-writing and collective biography. He makes an argument to treat Dalit autobiographies less an individual’s “life-writing” than as a testimonio.

The research entitled “A Study of Social Realism in the Select Indian Dalit Autobiographies” by S. Bharathiraja examines the portrayal of socio-economic-political exploitations and developments of Dalit’s through the autobiographies of Baby Kamble, Omprakash Valmiki, Vasant Moon, K. A. Gunasekaran, Siddalingaiah and Bama.

Sat Narain’s thesis entitled “Hindi Mein Dalit Rachnaakaaro ki Atamkathae Aur Bhartiya Sanskritik Pareevesh Ka Sandarbh” examines selected Hindi Dalit autobiographies from cultural perspective. Research explores every aspect of Dalit life and points out the impact of globalization on Dalit community.

Paper entitled “The Dalit and non-Dalit autobiographies” by Yeshwant Madhav Radhakisan observes the impact of education and aim to compare two autobiographies which belong to same century but have completely different perspective of their life. This paper presents a critical reading of ‘*I Follow After*’ and ‘*The Prisons We Broke*’ and deals with feministic argument having religious conversion and domestic life as themes.

The thesis “Writing the Self: A Thematic Study of Select Dalit Autobiographies” by Siva Nagaiah attempts to examine the aspects of marginalisation, oppression, discrimination and the Dalit response in the forms of resistance and rebellion. Research examines autobiography and its growth in India and focuses on the emergence of Dalit literature and the influence of Phule and Ambedkar on the Dalit writers.

An article “Hindi Dalit Autobiography: an Exploration of Identity” by Sarah Beth mainly deals with the exploration of the identity of Dalits in Hindi autobiographies which are an important source in the broadening the social and political identities of the Dalits. These autobiographies are an important source as they try to represent the Dalits in very affirmative and positive terms and also turn the pages to re inscribe Dalit identity as a positive asset. These autobiographies not only represent the one who writes them but they represent the whole public consumption. It also discusses about the main purpose of these autobiographies that is the creation of the new cultural form of the Dalit identity.

Although, much research has been done from Dalit perspective but the comparison between Aravind Malagatti’s *Government Brahmana* and Tulsi Ram’s *Murdahiya* has not been done yet. Methodology of this study is to compare both the autobiographies *Government Brahmana* by Aravind Malagatti and *Murdahiya* by Pro. Tulsi Ram. In the present study, entitled “Dalit Experience in Autobiographies: A Comparative Study of *Government Brahmana* and *Murdahiya*” an attempt has been made to examine the autobiographies of Aravind Malagatti and Tulsi Ram. The dissertation has been divided in four chapters. The first chapter “Dalit an Autobiography: conceptual Understanding” provides a detailed introduction to Dalits, their historical background and development of autobiography in general and Dalit autobiographies in particular. It also discusses about the constitutional safeguards and its impacts on Dalits.

The second chapter “Experiencing Dalit Body in *Government Brahmana*” describes the experience of ordinary Dalit in the autobiography. In this chapter, there is a discussion about the writer Aravind Malagatti and his writing style and his autobiography *Government Brahmana*. The chapter explores experience of Dalits who are forced to face atrocities, humiliation, discrimination and exclusion from social, economic and religious activities. It also explores the condition of Dalit women how they are forced to perform the sanctioned role and are exploited to fulfil the lustful desire of upper caste people. The chapter focuses on how Aravind Malagatti has exposed the experiences which are considered shameful.

The third chapter “Representation of Society in *Murdahiya*” deals with struggle and life of Dalits as a whole. In the Third chapter there is a discussion about the writer Tulsi Ram and about his autobiography *Murdahiya*. It also illustrates the experiences of struggle, oppression, exploitation, marginalisation and agonies of Dalit community in different spheres of life. The chapter interprets discrimination of Dalits and their struggle for achieving pride, dignity, liberty and status of human being.

The fourth chapter “comparative analysis and conclusion” deals with the theme, style and techniques used by both writers- their use of symbols, imagery; their art of narration and other structural aspects of autobiographies.

The foremost objective of this research is to highlight social, cultural and economic condition of Dalits and role of Education in their development. This research analyses the societal norms of caste, gender and social inequalities with references to the autobiographies of Aravind Malagatti’s *Government Brahmana* and Tulsi Ram’s *Murdahiya* in which they use their personal experience to expose the domination and subjugation of Dalits.

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CHAPTER 2

Experiencing Dalit Body in *Government Brahmana*

Dr. Aravind Malagatti is one of the most significant and a well-known name in Kannada Literature. He has made a bold effort to raise voice against discriminatory behaviour, frustrations and disappointments of Dalits in the hierarchal society that is “famous for its hierarchical caste system, in which the highest rank is occupied by the Brahmins and the lowest by the untouchables” (Fox 54). He has been popular due to his involvement in the field of literary writing, research and creative writing. He has written more than forty lucrative works for Kannada literature in varied forms like prose, poetry, folklore study, essays, and criticism. Karnataka government has awarded him with the prestigious Ambedkar Fellowship Award after considering his corpus of writing. Among all his valuable literary works his autobiography *Government Brahmana* being the first Dalit autobiography in Kannada has got the Karnataka Sahitya academy Award. His area of concern is the social aspect of Dalits, being a spokesperson of Kannada Dalit literature; Dr. Malagatti grabs the attention of people and makes them think over issues like the exploitation of Dalits and their poor condition. His writings are equally sharp.

He hails from Holeya Community of Karnataka and he is called by upper caste people by his community name. Dr. Aravind Malagatti was born on 1st May 1956 at Muddebihal, a small town in Bijapur district in Karnataka state. His father, Yallappa, was a teacher by profession and mother, Basava, a homemaker. He had two brothers, Ramasamy and Basavaraju. When he was only ten months old his father passed away by scorpion stinging. It was his uncle who brought up, educated and supported him to settle down in the village. In his village he completed his primary education. At primary level education his performance was very poor. Most of the time, he used to leave home in the morning and would return home at the end of the day by hanging around by the nearby places. As he was admitted into M. G. V. College, Muddebihal for Pre University and Graduation he became serious towards study. In 1978 he joined Karnataka University, Dharwad to continue his further education. He completed his Ph.D. in folklore studies and won Gold Medal for best thesis in 1985. In 2011 Dr. Aravind

Malagatti, writer and Professor in Kannada department, won the Rajyothsava award in the literature category because of his valuable contribution to the University of Mysore and to Kannada literature. Dr. Malagatti is considered one of the outstanding writers of Kannada literature. Presently Dr. Malagatti is working as a professor in the Kuvempu Institute of Kannada Studies and Director of Jayalakshmi Vilas Palace Museum, Mysore University. He has also been the Director of the publication wing of Mysore University.

There are three generations of Dalit writers in Karnataka. Aravind Malagatti belongs to the second generation of Dalit writers with good educational background. He emerged in creative field in early 1980s. He is gifted with a rare literary mind. His literary creation involves about forty two books which include novels, nine volumes of poetry, one volume of short stories and two plays. He came into literary prominence with the publication of first collection of the poetry *Mookanige Baayi Bandaaga (When the Mute Gets Speech)* in 1982. In this collection of poetry patient opinion are found. Such was the effect of the title of his poetry as if it bestows voice to the people who were dumb from the times immemorial. His second poetry collection *Kappu Kaavya (Black Poetry)* was published in 1985. It is in the form of a letter written by a dead man to his grandchild. It discusses about the present and past of Dalit society. His third collection *Mooraneyya Kannu (The Third Eye)* was published in 1996. Here Malagatti extends his concern from Dalit problem to the problems faced by country as a whole. His fourth collection *Naada-Ninaada (Rhythm and Melody)*, published in 1999 turns to folk influence. Recently in 2003, the collection *Silicon City Mattu Kogile (Silicon City and the Cuckoo)* was published. It focuses on national and international issues. In the same year *Sri Chandala Swargaarohanam (Sri Chandala Reaches Heaven)* appeared. Though he is primarily a poet but his fame rests on his novel *Kaarya (The Death Ritual)* where he narrates funeral rites in surrounding of village. In this novel, Kaarya, he portrays a real picture of the Dalit's day-to-day life and their usual habits. It depicts how the Dalits are ignorant and unaware of the world and how they are lost in their narrow and confined world. 'Karya' is the ceremony held on the third day of the death. This novel exposes the exploitation of the religious and financial tools of a society in a very lucid manner. Meanwhile this novel also renders the means by which the upper class people

make use of conventional faith and practices of Dalits and also foregrounds the minute details of the life that helped preserving the Dalit zeal.

There is a collection of short stories to his credit *Mugiyada Kathegalu* (*Neverending Stories*), published in 2000. He has written two plays *Mastabhisheka* (*Holy Bath given to Gods as Worship*) in 1983 and 'Samudradalgana Uppu' (*The salt inside the ocean*) in 1999 which discusses the contemporary burning issues related to Dalit people and reveals the experience of Dalits. This play gives out the multifaceted roles and is not centred on certain specific roles. This work is totally an innovative work, putting forth the political conspiracies, inner struggles if religions and familial straits.

Aravind Malagatti is a well-known folklore scholar, worked on many folklore of coastal Karnataka. Aanee Peeni (1983), Janapada Vyananaga (1985), Janapada Shodha (1990), Thuluvaraatikalenja Anthar Dristhiya Samshodane (1993), Janapada Atagalu (1992), Thalikota Dvamavva (1995) are his folklore works.

Aravind Malagatti has worked in all genres of Kannada literature. His writings portray the realistic account of Dalit history and contemporary Dalit world. Caste discrimination, hunger, poverty, physical exertion, exploitation are the recurring themes of his writings. The most significant aspect of Aravind Malagatti's writing is that he questions the system that is responsible for their pitiable condition. He put forward a voice of protest and anger through his writings. The feeling of anger and protest has been deep rooted in him since Dalit movement of 1970. He has been active in all activities of movement. He marched on road holding banner and performed many street plays. He closely worked with Dalit Sangharsh Samiti. It helped Dalits to "organise protest and wrote and performed a street play in the campaign they conducted" (Satyandra 116).

Aravind Malagatti's writings are considered unique. The reason behind this uniqueness is the use of language, theme and style. The language, he uses is different from other writers. Malagatti uses the language that is spoken in northern part of Karnataka. From the beginning he has been very experimental with language. In the afterword of *Government Brahmana* by Tharakeshwar V. B. Malagatti says about the use of language:

The language expressed in each of works differs. The language of novel *Kaarya* was different from that of the story” *Ashimsa Chappali Ayyappa*”. The language of *Government Brahmana* is quite different...We see a gaping divide with regard to subjects in Old Kannada poetry and new Kannada poetry. Though we cannot clearly demarcate the line, there is an abstract shape to the divide. It is not easy to deconstruct the concepts in old Kannada with new Kannada language. Though attempts have been made in this direction, they have not convincingly shown that new Kannada is capable of breaking the concepts prevailing in Old Kannada. It is more effective to deconstruct Old Kannada concepts with same language. In order to cut diamond we need to use diamond. (127)

The central theme of most of Malagatti’s works is Dalitism which includes the issues of post-colonial society. In his writings he discusses globalisation, communalism, nationalism, regionalism and casteism from different point of view. In most of his poems, criticism and articles, it can be seen what affects these five points have been made on the life of Dalits. His theoretical grounding is equality among human beings. Thus his main concern is human in his writings. Dr. Keshava Sharma says “His writings take up a social criticism in the process of searching for a human being. Therefore his writings have become a social question rather than an expression of writing skill. Structurally this is the secret of the uniqueness of his works” (Sharma 18). Malagatti faced many cultural and political problems in the span of his life which are expressed in his works. Being second generation writer of post independent era, he manifested the prevalent issues in his writings. He dealt with different social issues of Dalits with different point of view. He discusses the crucial concerns of post-colonialism in different way.

Government Brahmana is in a dialogue form between writer and reader. Malagatti is very conscious about reader. He does not let the reader go without thinking about the issues raised through episodes. Thus with the end of chapter he asks questions which make reader to think and feel the life of Dalits. He does not answer himself. The main purpose is to get the readers response. Thus Malagatti help readers to test themselves. The autobiography opens with the following lines

where Malagatti addresses the readers directly: "I do not have any illusions of becoming Mahatma by presenting these few pages of my life story. I am quite ordinary"(1). In these sentences, Malagatti intends to say that he may not be as great as mahatma, but he is an ordinary man. He writes his experience directly because he thinks that "the Dalitism of a Dalit could simply be caught and held by directly narrating experiences"(9).

Each person lives his own experiences and through these experiences he or she make the path of the future life. It seems personal when these experiences are represented in life narratives. The experience becomes visible when something is written about. Writing about marginal group does not mean to romanticise the life of particular group but it helps to break the silence. Thus this sense provides 'political power' to the masses of that oppressed group. As John W. Scott says "By writing about the bathhouse Delany seeks not, he says, "to romanticise that time into some cornucopia of sexual plenty," but rather to break an "absolutely sanctioned public silence" on questions of sexual practice, to reveal something that existed but that had been suppressed" (Scott 775).

Oxford advance learner dictionary defines experience as "the things that has happened to you and influence the way you think and behave or events or knowledge shared by all the members of a particular group in society that influences the way they think and behave" ("Experience"). Thus it can be said that experience is a reflection of reality which leads to change. Due to the direct contact between perception of writer and reality, it has become the a reliable source of knowledge. It is socially produced. Similarly, Scott defines experience as "a process . . . by which subjectivity is constructed. Through that process one places oneself or is placed in social reality and so perceives and comprehends as subjective (referring to, originating in oneself) those relations—material, economic, and interpersonal - which are in fact social, and, in a larger perspective, historical"(qtd. in Smith and Julia 25). So, experience is a process by which an individual turns out to be a certain sort of subject that owns certain social identity and this identity is made through cultural and economic relations. Social identities such as women, children, Dalit, black and heterosexual seem natural to individual. Thus individual becomes subject and it is subject who is constituted by experience. In autobiographical text narrator finds himself as a subject loaded with the experience of social identity and status.

In autobiography, narrator shares his experiences bringing out what has happened to him and made them available to them to bear. In this process narrator become reader of his own past or lived life. Therefore, in Dalit autobiographies authors directly narrate their experiences of pain, suffering, poverty, exploitation, discrimination, identity crisis and deprivation without any sort of hesitation. They write the instances that make one weak and venerable and show the weakness of society and individual too. Dalit writer purposes to change the mind-set of people in a softer way by exposing their experiences because it is generally believed that psychological revolution is much powerful than a blood revolution. In his works Malagatti shares his experiences to speed up the change.

Government Brahmana(1994) is the first autobiography of a Kannada Dalit writer which has been translated into English by Dharani Devi Malagatti, Janet Vucinich and N. Subramanya. Considered as marginal literature, Dalit autobiographies often describe humiliation, exploitation, marginalisation, suppression, oppression and maltreatment experienced by the communities mutely from centuries. The tension throughout the *Government Brahmana* is between self and the community. It is not only related to the life of the author alone, but it also encompasses the community around him and their troubles, tribulations, their struggle for existence. *Government Brahmana* points out the striking state of poverty. It is the worst polluter in the lives of Dalits. As ensured by Gurung S. Ghana and Michael Kollmair in article "Marginality: Concepts and Their Limitations":

Marginality and poverty are often used as synonyms....In another words, poverty is a state of economic, social and psychological deprivation occurring among people or countries lacking sufficient ownership, control or ownership, control or access to resources. (16)

In context of Dalits, poverty and marginality are employed as synonyms. *Government Brahmana* is a remarkable social document of his own community. People of his community were forced to live in separate settlement that was called *Keri*. The house of author is biggest in his *Keri* and his family is considered rich but even they are not able to make both ends meet. Therefore, to fulfil the basic needs the elders of family seek occasions as their grandmother do.

She is depicted as the treasure trove of love and plays a role of guide to her grandchildren. The news of any death which occurs in upper caste family in the village used to make them feel happy because the people used to throw coins on corpse while it was carried to cemetery. It was the job of Dalits to pick up the coins. This is vividly portrayed Malagatti's autobiography *Government Brahmana*:

The coins were thrown such that they would roll through the feet of the corpse-bearer and the mourners who followed them...After everyone had walked on them, we had to pick up the coins. No sooner had they walked on the coins than the older ones among us scrambled for the loose change. We youngsters would break their rules and try to catch the loose change even before they hit the ground, but we managed to pick them up at their feet...Among the loose change they threw on the corpse, the highest denomination would be the five paisa coin. Coins with a hole in the centre, one paisa and two paisa coins were more in number. If the family was rich, then ten paisa coins would be the highest denomination. The more their value, the lesser the number of coins that were thrown. When we got coins of higher denomination, our joy knew no bounds.(8-9)

The narrative very clearly highlights stricken state of poverty not only of the author but also of the whole Dalit community. There are two angles to this episode one is the poverty stricken state which forces them to collect the coins and another is about a ritual in the village that the coins thrown on the corpse should be collected by Dalits. Otherwise the upper castes always believe that dead one will not attain moksha or the salvation. Really, it is very paradoxical, where the death is always dreadful but for these helpless Dalits it is a rejoicing moment because, it is an occasion where they can collect few coins.

Similarly, in one of the chapters of the autobiography entitled "Coins on the Corpse, and Wedding Feast," Malagatti describes a joyous occasion of Shetji's daughter's marriage ceremony in the village. On the joyous occasions as fairs and marriage etc, there is a grand announcement of feeding for the entire town *Laddu feast, Mysore Pak* and *Rasama*. It always delighted Dalits because, they have this sort of food twice in a year that is on Deepawali and Nagpanchami. They enjoy rice and laddus instead of their routine food 'rotis'. Aravind help to know the

difficulties of Dalit's lives they used to struggle to make the two ends meal. He describes:

As we were used to eating roti and nuchchu...we considered even rice and saaru festival food. We had those items only once or twice a year, during Deepavali or Nagarapanchami. Dalits of surrounding village also attended Shetji's daughter marriage. Of course, for the meal. That day, the dalit had outnumbered the others.(9)

Another experience of poverty is depicted in narrative "Dead Sheep and Meat Heaps". Generally it is believed that childhood is the stage in which child undergoes all the natural experiences of speaking, playing, enjoying, reading and writing. No one has right to snatch these joyous experiences. They are not supposed to do any kind of physical work which is imposed on them. But contrary to this belief, the boy Aravind in early phase of life is assigned to look after the meat shop when his maava (uncle) is 'gone out'. The boy Aravind's work is to pour water while dead animal was being skinned and the inner parts such as intestines, livers, hearts, lungs etc. were being cleaned. They played games using the shit and intestine of sheep as toys. Due to poverty the innocent child played these games and looked after the business at his early age. The meat is put in heaps and measured roughly by hands. He has to work hard to control the shop. It is a kind of child labour he shows off in detail:

I was the owner if Maava was out. A big heap fetched eight annas and a small one four annas. The buyers were none other than the people of our lane. Most of our energy was spent driving away the flies. Not one or two, but many! And so many varieties too! There were the blind flies, green flies-all flying in front of our eyes. Sometimes we were so fed up of chasing them away that we killed them with our hands.(33)

The poverty is rampant in his community because they work once or twice in a week. In remaining days there is nothing to do. This economic insecurity motivates his uncle to indulge in odd professions such as selling the meat of stolen sheep which results to pay penalty for his wrong deeds. But it is the stricken state of poverty that made him to commit such filthy works. It is noticed that his uncle and his contender used to sell meat of the stolen sheep secretly:

They came to my maava's house discussing something among themselves. ... Just when I was slipping away, Maava came in. a quarrel took place. I did not come out till they went away. The person who had provided me chakkulis had lost his sheep. No doubt, that day's heaps were the meat of that animal...Maava did not open his mouth about him. And I think he paid the penalty to those men himself. (36-37)

The author portrays the Dalits livelihood in which they have been living without proper house, water, electricity and sanitation. He remembers that due to lack of electric supply to houses, he used to read under kerosene lamp light and street light. People of his village have been wandering in the darkness of illiteracy and that's why author failed to receive any sort of co-operation for study because they did not understand the importance of education:

My study would take a serious turn only when there was a month or two left for exams. Electric bulbs had just then made an entry into our village. But they had not yet entered any of houses. I had hence made it a habit to study under the street lamp. Sometime even when there was no power, I would light a kerosene lamp and study under the same pole, waiting for the electricity to be restored. (57)

Another testimony of poverty, in his village, is the practice of prostitution. The women of his colony does not find alternative to earn money. Women belonging to lower class and having poor economic status often adopt this profession of prostitution. Once they are involved they never come out of this nexus. Malagatti brings to light their pitiable condition:

Every prostitute in the colony had her own story. Some lived by tying replica of goddess Yellamma's feet around their neck...some women had settled into it after being deserted by their husband and few others were simply continuing their traditional profession.(55)

Government Brahmana shows that poverty is the most awful spoiler in the life of Dalits. These ignorant people are deliberately misguided by the others. Smita Narula in a report entitled "Hidden Apartheid: Caste Discrimination against India's Untouchables" put forth the same point. She considers Dalits the most "vulnerable and exploited people in India"(14).The boy Aravind wished to eat

sweet but due to poor condition they were unable to provide him sweet. The desire to eat sweet made him find his own way to get it. Thus, he steals the cotton to purchase 'white undi' (a sweet). Being a small boy, he was unaware of the goodness or badness of this act of stealing. The shopkeeper who belonged to upper caste indirectly encourages the poor child to steal more cotton:

Get double of what you have brought just now.

I will give to you then.'

He looked at another fellow sitting in his shop and giggled.

'What a boy you are!

You should bring more cotton.

Then people will appreciate you.'

The other fellow too encouraged me,

'Go and bring a lot more, he will give you two undis.'

I decided to collect double the cotton the next day. Usually two or three of us would go together to steal cotton. (40)

Caste based atrocities and discriminations against the most vulnerable group are common phenomenon which still continues in the world's largest democracy. The social stratification on the basis of caste has been a historical fact. It exists as an adverse feature of contemporary India and dominates in marriages, house settlement, general communication and interaction. Autobiographies are the only means to express authentic experience of discrimination and atrocities of Dalit authors. Regarding this P. K. Nayar in his article says:

Victim life writing here functions as a claims narrative. Claims narratives could be those within a court of justice or they could be life narratives that consciously or unconsciously set up "affective communities," making a claim upon us of the readers, demanding an ethical response. Claims narratives remind us of the narrator's identity as humans by showing us brutalised bodies – the narrator is the witness to inhuman context, social event or life. It is by establishing this role of victim, sufferer, the tortured and the inhuman that claims narratives reveal what has been left out of the ambit of Human Rights. (15)

It is of no surprise that the theme of autobiography of Aravind Malagatti is his struggle to get education. He tolerated all insults and worked hard which came

his way to materialise his dream. At once he realised the value of education, he was determined to get it by any means and tried his best to achieve it. In *Government Brahmana*, Aravind Malagatti has narrated his life story, full of agony and pain caused by hegemony of upper class. He suffered a lot at the hands of upper class as being an inhabitant of rural area. Through this, he has attempted to lay bare the hollowness of the outdated social system in which individual is discriminated on the basis of caste so much as his individual gets crushed time. In a way, he has raised voice for human right of equality. Malagatti came across many disastrous activities from his childhood. Whenever he was accompanying non-Dalit friends, he experienced humiliations and insults. For instance, when he was at college he and other Dalit students were maltreated by non-Dalit teachers and students. Malagatti confesses about rude and strange behaviour of his classmates who never missed even a single chance to taunt and abuse him. On other hand he took pride in getting acquainted with upper caste people:

During my college days, rather than shunning or hating the company of those upper caste students who abused me using my caste name, either to my face or to my back, I was keen to cultivate their friendship. Getting acquainted with them was like being in seventh heaven. I took pride in bragging about having such upper caste friends. Though my attempts would invariably be futile, the instinct to wag my tail at them never really subsided. They teased me endlessly. Since I was getting the benefits of the government's reservation policy they called me 'Government Brahmana'....When I went to college wearing the dress Appa had got stitched for me, they would question me, 'Is your dress a gift from Indramma?' (Referring to the then prime minister, Indira Gandhi). Even then, I was unable to refute their words. There was every possibility of my answer leading to another taunt. So, I never attempted any justification. (61)

Malagatti asserts, that he never got equal sort of treatment. He accepted all degrees of maltreatment because he was a product of a complex web of caste society and could not find any solution except bearing it silently. Malagatti remembers that students came from different caste background but most of them were from high castes. Four students including Aravind Malagatti were from Dalit community. Sitting arrangement was according to different community, high caste

students were allotted wooden benches. Dalit student used to sit in a separate section on floor. Once Malagatti carried gunny bag to sit on it presuming that people sitting on desks, would be amazed on seeing this. But opposite to it, the privileged students ridicule him. With clapping their hands they uttered “hey, it seems his chonna gets dirty. Wow! The great chonna! ” (15). Listening to these words, Malagatti burned within himself. He was humiliated by this incident. He felt very angry about his loose chonna and gunny bag. Apart from dividing the student on the basis of caste, the teachers make the use of Dalit students for all menial works. It was mandatory for Dalit students to come to school early and sweep the classroom before Morning Prayers. Skipping of this reserved duty leads cruel punishment. Malagatti remembers:

Fold your hands in the style of a namaskar. Then interweave your finger together, okay? Now the fingers of your right hand are clutching your left hand, and the fingers of your left hand are clutching your right hand, aren't they? All right. Now hang yourself on a peg on wall, such that there is sufficient distance between the floor and your legs...the peg should be located between your braided fingers. Yes, that's right...when we hang in such a manner, we could not even loosen the grip of our fingers and fall on ground. (12)

Aravind Malagatti and his friends from his lane have experienced this type of punishment in school days. Due to such punishments, human body turns into logs and loses all sensations. The offence behind atrocious beating was not the incompleteness of homework or untidy look or their poor performance in study but it was for missing out the sweeping of classroom. There was another severe punishment. Malagatti states:

One had to stand (half sit) in the posture of a chair, bending one's knees. It is not possible to maintain this position for long: after a while, one would inevitably sit down by folding the knees fully. To prevent us from doing so, two thick and slightly sharp pieces of wood were placed in the hollow behind the kneecaps. If we bent our knees further than the permitted level, the wooden pieces would hurt and cause bleeding. (13)

When Aravind Malagatti was in school, his experience was bitter. Fellow students, along with teachers, also participated in this practice of humiliation of

Dalit students. The name of Dalit students used to twist on black board to make them feel insulted. Both Aravind and Mallagatti were not insulting term on any way. Therefore, it was written as “Mala Katti” or “Katti” because the word ‘Katti’ indicates donkey or ass. Once he had attempted to correct “Ka as Ga” (16) by standing on teacher’s chair. There was nobody in the school. Everyone had left for home. His teacher entered into classroom to supervise the task of Aravind. By seeing the unprejudiced work, the great teacher started to cane him. He speaks in anger “so what if it is written as “Katti”? The bastard has just learnt to write and he already wants to correct what is written. A Katti is a Katti anyway. Can a donkey ever become a horse...?”(16).He continued to beat him till Aravind took off his shirt and mopped the chair. Teachers are expected to contribute in the development of society as a role model. They should have taken initiative to rectify the evil practices and attitude of upper caste people. But it could not be done honestly. Thus Malagatti threw virulent charges against the atrocious social system and reckless bureaucratic formalities.

Aravind Malagatti, as a conscious citizen of country was serious about exposing the hypocrisy that existed in public life. As an enlightened person he criticised some of the orthodox practices of his community. Through his narratives of his life, he exposes the hypocrisies of Indian caste society. He exclusively talks about how the Dalit women were exploited on the name of traditions. These traditions work to detriment of Dalits and to the advantage of others. They practice these traditions in the affairs of village. They put their life in fix to perform the given role. Aravind narrates a disturbing tradition-Okuli. It is a strange social practice in Karnataka which is celebrated every year in the month of Shravana which is the fifth month of the Hindu calendar. Folks of Dalit women had to remove their blouses and were compelled to wear sari to cover the waist and head. Standing opposite to these women were Non- Dalit men. The men splashed yellow and red coloured water forcefully on women and women are expected to chase them. Aravind Malagatti describes:

As the men splashed coloured water on the women repeatedly, the women chased them to take revenge, not bothering about their wet bodies and the loose end of their sari falling down from their heads. Their wet bodies, breasts and thighs-all bared to give free entertainment to the lecherous audience and the lustful players. The

red and yellow shades of colour that splashed on the women's bodies time and again gave the scene of effect of an Eastman colour movie.(43)

Here hypocrisy of upper caste can be seen. They pretend about their purity, belief and sanctity but these things never come in way when they take part in this sort of traditions to fulfil their lustful desires. It is most important to examine that women who belonged to upper castes were exempted from participation in those exploitative practices. Through this incident the author highlights the situation of Dalit women. It is interesting to note that some ideologies were constructed to continue these traditions through which Dalit men and women were scared on the name of divinity. Here, the word 'ideology' suggests "artificially constructed set of ideas, somewhat remove from everyday life, (which) are manipulated by the powers that be and want to be. They attempt to control the world of politics and to force us into a rut of doctrinaire thinking and conduct" (Freedman 1). They are made to believe that the village would face diseases, drought and crops would be infested, if such practices are prevented. There are more disgusting traditions. As at Dharward, both upper caste male and Dalit women had to perform nude dance together. In Savadatti where programmes like 'feeding shit to Dalit' are still held. To refer it a sacred act of worship, phrases like 'Mala Prashana' or 'Ameedhya Prshana' has been used.

Aravind Malagatti also recounts how caste, class discriminations are perpetuated on him and his community people. He gives instances of how he was ill- treated by superior caste people. Undi Muthya shop was on the way to school. That shop was built on a higher ground. One had to climb minimum three steps to reach the shelf of the shop. Untouchables were not allowed to go upstairs. Shopkeeper used to hold a long handle to collect cotton from Aravind. In order to give sweet, shopkeeper tossed it in air. He had to widen either hands or the front of shirt to collect. Sometime it touched dirt of ground if skipped from the hand of boy. Once he climbed up to the steps to get fresh 'Undi'. Seeing him at steps, shopkeeper shouted at him with anger "Yeh, get off the step first" (40). Untouchables were not considered equal to other upper castes. They were treated as inferior therefore these lower castes were not permitted to enter from front gate of shetji's compound. It was reserved for the people of upper caste. Even place of god (temple) was not free from caste discrimination. Aravind was a great fan of

actor Rajkumar and Lord Raghavendra in his childhood days. He became a devotee by the extinction of his devotion. At peak of his devotion, he drew a picture of Lord Raghavendra to put on the wall of temple. He donated it to temple. Priest was his friend's father so accepted and appreciated it and kept it inside the temple after purification by holy water. Suddenly it vanished and after some days it was replaced by another picture. It proves that Dalit theist can spiritually be very close to God but they are physically not allowed to worship in public spaces. Similarly when protagonist visited Manthralaya he found that people who belonged to the upper strata of society were provided easy access to the inner sanctum room of the temple. Another experience of discrimination was at the Barber's shop. The Barber was immovable and refused to cut the hairs of Dalits. In this situation Malagatti became expert in the art of cutting hair. His brother used to get his hair cut from Malagatti.

The author exposes the hierarchies created by caste system which persist not only between human beings but also among animals. In the episodes "The she-buffalo on heat and the he-buffalo after her" and "Handya's hose slashed" mating of animal, a natural act, gets entangled. The owners are from different caste. That's why animal of certain caste owner were not allowed to mate to different caste owner. In the same way union of lovers is ruined in caste society. In many cases society fails to stop the physical union of them for a span of time but ensure that the union is shorten. Author falls in love with a girl who belongs to Brahmin community. Both of them love each other. Once author got engaged in thesis writing therefore he could not reply the letters in the time. Delay turned into fasting, she did not eat for twenty days. Her sister visited to Aravind and said to him:

You are a fool,

She is a fool too...

Aravind, she has stopped eating food. (75)

This relationship completed six years long period but suddenly she came with two photographs and asked Aravind to choose one of them as her husband. The reason behind this decision was that she had two younger sisters. If she gets married to a lower caste then no one from their community would marry them. This narrative makes it clear that caste play a vital role in building relationships. Malagatti presents a symbolic representation of the Dalit community. Author used to

avoid most of the invitations except of Dalits. He expresses hesitation when he is invited by any upper caste. Many times he had seen that Dalits are not served in plates. Remembering an incident Aravind says that in one of his friend's house he washed his plates after having lunch. After sometime child of his friend came and took his father's plate. After that Aravind Malagatti could not participate in discussion actively. His mind was wandering and thinking about the fate of his plates. He reminded the statement of his ayyi (grandmother):

If a Dalit happened to touch an uppercaste person's vessel, it had to be smeared with cow dung and burnt in fire. It would then be immersed in a solution of tamarind and salt. Afterwards, it would be immersed in cow's urine and only then would it be placed along with the other vessels of the house. (102)

Malagatti narrates story of his father who faced such discrimination when he went to join as a government teacher in his village. Headmaster and teaching staff of that school belonged to non-Dalit communities. They warned him to leave the school otherwise be ready to pay for it. Even they did not show mercy to offer a seat. Finally, with a great difficulty, he managed to get transfer to another school near his place. He was humiliated by the village head who said "why do you people need a teacher's job?"(111). Finally he got permission to teach there under certain strict conditions. He played the role of a teacher, a student, a peon and a guard himself because teaching to non-Dalits by a Dalit teacher was not acceptable to villagers.

India got independence on 15th August 1947 but the meaning of freedom for ordinary Dalits was to get freedom from the clutches of caste. On freedom each person holds different idea. As Malagatti says:

Vivekananda had his own idea of a new nation; Sardar Patel's idea of the nation revolved around gallantry and vigour. Nehru had a vision of a modern India and Gandhiji had a vision of the Rama Rajya or the ideal nation while Ambedkar had the idea of a land where human rights could be claimed.(113)

Malagatti's father who celebrated freedom in a different way, it was limited to draw water from village well like people from other castes. He distributed sweets to everybody in his lane, sharing celebration of freedom. Breaking the rules of society, he gathered the youths of his lane and drew and splashed water from the

wells of village. But next day they reverted to the old way of drawing water from the wells which were allotted to them. These type of conditions existed even in post independent era in most of the villages of India. R. Janani says that “Malagatti questions this denial of Dalits for ages and he has become the voice for his whole community whose struggle still continues” (Janani 10).

Government Brahmana is a story of an ordinary Dalit entering into the modern spaces against the odds that caste society placed before him. In modern spaces caste hierarchy does not end to operate. Dalits are not completely emancipated in modern period although they have got certain amount of mobility and occupied certain spaces through education and constitutional safeguards. New hierarchies have come into existence. Title of Malagatti's autobiography is driven from the upper caste way of referring to Dalits who have taken the benefits of reservation. Dalit who utilise the legal opportunities, leaving their traditional occupation then he/ she will be called Government Brahmana. Thus the title of autobiography takes the name of Dalits who enter in modern spaces with the benefits of reservation. Some episodes of this autobiography, unlike other autobiographies of this genre, reveal the new type of mechanism that have developed in modern spaces to sustain caste structure. In episode “Some girls who flirt with the future”, many students reappeared for exam because they failed to score minimum fifty percent marks. Then it was commented commonly, “Why do you need second class at all? Apply somewhere for a job, you will get it. Anyhow there is reservation for you people!”(91). Similarly, The author describes a story of a Dalit researcher. He was his roommate. He was an intelligent student, passed B.Sc. with first class. He was sent to pursue research by Bhabha Research Centre due to his significant finding there. He fell in love with a girl who belonged to upper caste. He lost interest in study and became mad in love. People came to know about them. He was attacked thrice. He turned in bitter condition due to physical attacks and finally he was sent back to his home. Dr. Maane told to Malagatti in last that “it was a treacherous game played in order to destroy his life. When an intelligent Dalit emerges as a researcher, this is the way they pluck out the sapling (90)”. The ghost of caste does not stop to haunt even they have got constitutional rights and are capable to receive good education and improve their economic condition.

In Indian hierarchal society Dalit lives a life of insulted and humiliated creature due to the institutionalisation of caste and untouchability. In rural areas Dalits are physically excluded from the locale where upper caste people reside to a venerable area outside the village. Social movements and education resulted in the growth of Dalit. Education becomes a powerful weapon that challenged Brahmanical hegemony and hierarchal social structure and raised social awareness among Dalit. *Government Brahmana* proves that now Dalits need not be ashamed of their caste identity, and it bluntly exposes their experiences which are considered shameful. This attitude may help to gain self-respect and liberation from discrimination and humiliation.

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CHAPTER 3

Representation of Dalit Society in *Murdahiya*

Dr. Tulsi Ram was born on 1st July 1949 in Dharmpur village in Uttar Pradesh. Right from his childhood he could not get a proper environment to live a comfortable life. His father Tehrsi and mother Dhiraja were great devotees of Lord Shiva. He completed his primary education in his village, and secondary school education in Azamgarh. As he grew up, he became more serious about his studies and this seriousness took him to the climax. At present he is working as a professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He is very much committed to his community. He is not only concerned with his own family but treats all his neighbours as his own family. In this respect he attained everything he deserved in considering his neighbours as his family members. He is influenced by the philosophy of Karl Marx, Gautam Buddha and Dr. Ambedkar. He has written *Angola ka Mukti Sangrash*, *CIA: Rajniti Vidwansh ka American Hatiyar*, *The History of Communist Movement in Iran Persian to Iran (One Step Forward Two Step Back)* and *Ideology in Soviet Iran Relations (Lenin to Stalin)*. He is highly specialised in communist movement and Russian matters: politics and literature and Buddhist movement. He has presented a lot of political and social elements in his works and the most important work for which he renowned he has become well renowned is his autobiography *Murdahiya*.

Since author has no tendency to engage with any literary activity, that's why, he has no pretension to be a writer. He writes because he wants to articulate the experiences of struggle, oppression, exploitation and agonies of Dalit society. Tulsi Ram's unending struggle started from his childhood and it reached its zenith when he was beaten up by a fellow student. Tulsi Ram through his autobiography reveals experiences of oppression and marginalisation and also his strife for achieving liberty, dignity, pride and status of human being.

In the case of Dalit autobiographies, it is possible to claim that community collectively plays the role of protagonist rather than the author himself. Sharan Kumar Limbale in his critical work *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature* states "Dalit Literature is not only concerned with the life of individual but of the

community” (Limbale 12). Thus, the life of every Dalit represents the life of all Dalits. Many Dalit poets recuperate figures as “Eklavya, Shambuka from religious texts, portrays the contemporary Dalit experience” (Limbale 12). This is what Tulsi’s *Murdahiya* gives evidence to it. Title of autobiography *Murdahiya* is evident which proves commitment of Dalit writer to community over self. Prem shashank judges *Murdahiya* as the best Dalit Hindi autobiography because it depicts the life of Dalit society. He says that:

Yah sirf nayak ki jeevan gatha ke drasyon ka sangrah bhar nahi hai balki pura samaj usme apani dhadakane pata hai. (DainikJagran)

This autobiography is not only concerned with the life of the author but it represents the whole community or the society. (Dainik Jagran) (Translation by me)

Autobiography by Prof. Tulsi Ram offers the Dalit social milieu and a glimpse in the life of depressed castes in India (particularly in the state of UP) and struggle. The book is full of humour and it tells the stories of the people belong to his community. *Murdahiya* covers the journey of author’s life until his inter college studies in Azamgarh.

Every human being has his place in a society which is a beautiful living organism. Society is the organisation of people, and therefore society plays a vital role to construct the individual subjectivity and helps him to acquire other important social skills. Every human being is a product of culture that emanates from a society and vice versa. In this way the experiences of individual represents the phenomenon of a society as a whole. Sarah Beth in her article “Dalit Autobiographies in Hindi: the transformation of pain into resistance” states about the agenda of Dalit autobiographies:

Their agenda is not localised in individualism but links the individual to his entire caste community as a way of gaining power and support in a group struggle against similarly experienced oppression. Consequently, there has been much debate over who is the subject of Dalit autobiography. A senior Hindi scholar, Manager Pande claims, for instance, that, “if it is an autobiography, then it is not of an individual but of a community. Putting community in place of the

individual...the past and present of the community itself becomes the plot of the story.” An unstable attention to the individual ('I') is certainly a common characteristic of Dalit autobiographies, even despite the dictates of the autobiographical form. In Hindi Dalit autobiographies, focalisation jumps quickly between the individual protagonist, other Dalit friends, neighbours or family members, and the Dalit community as a subject in its own right. (4)

Dalit autobiographies are not only about the writer's life but the representation of Dalit community as whole. Tulsi Ram's autobiography *Murdahiya* was published in 2010. It is the first of its kind to appear in Hindi literature. *Murdahiya*, the autobiography of Dr. Tulsi Ram is a landmark in contemporary Hindi Dalit Literature. *Murdahiya* is the documentation of social interest of Prof. Tulsi Ram because he mainly focuses on the experience of Dalit community. Tulsi Ram portrays his childhood with the significant memories of poverty, hunger, humiliation, injustice, exploitation and discrimination. He gave an account of people who were admitted to the school for the first time after a long gap of many centuries. Chikhuri, Ramghu, Babu Ram, Yadu Nath, Mulku, Ramker, Dalsingaar, Jaggan, Ram Nath, Birju, Babu Lal and Meva were the first students who, first time, entered in the premises of school for the improvement of their status. All of them belonged to surrounding area of Dharampur village. Upper caste people undervalued them, in consequence, they forsook it in the middle.

The title, *Murdahiya* means cemetery on which Dalits depend for their livelihood, suggests that this is about the history of an entire deprived community of Dharampur village who have been pushed at brink of caste based discrimination for ages. As an untouchable community, traditional roles of Chamars were to dispose and skinning dead animals, guarding the field and to work in the field of upper caste without any hope of wages etc. It not only gives a vivid account of Dr. Tulsi Ram's painful life-struggle but also of his own community inherent caste structure of the Hindu society. Dr. Khanna Prasad Aameen says:

Murdahiya Dr. Tulasi Ram ke jeevan sangharso aur unke samaj ki dard bhari dastan ka aakalan karane vali mahattpurn aatmakatha hai. (134)

Murdiya, Tulsi Ram's autobiography documents the portrayal of his struggle in his life and also vivifies the painful story of his society. (134) (Translation by me)

He begins his autobiography with a pessimistic note, describing that foolishness has been permanent feature of his community from previous generations. Absence of education was the root cause of that foolishness which made them to indulge in superstitious acts, prevalent from centuries in Indian society. He begins like this:

Murkhata meri janmajat virasat thi. Manav jati ka vah pahala vyakti jo jaivik roop se mere khandani purvaj tha. Uske aur mere beech na jane kitane paida hue, kintu uname se koi padhaa-likhaa nhi tha. Lagabhag tehis – sau varsh purv Yunan des se Bharat aye Minandar ne kaha ki aam Bharatiyon ko lipi ka ghyan nhi hai, isaliye ve padh – likh nahi sakate. Unke samkalino ne koi pratikriya nhi di, kintu aadhunik Bharatiy pando ne Minandar ka khub khandan-mandan kiya. Hakikat to yeh hai ki aaj bhi karodo Bharatiya Minandar ki kasti par khare utarate hai. Sadiyon purani is asiksha ka parinam yeh hua ki murkhata aur murkhata ke chalte andhavishvaas ka bojh mere purvajo ke sar se kabhi nhi utara. (9)

There was foolish innate hereditary gift i.e., first person of human race who was my biologically ancestor. It could not be known how many had been begotten between him and me but among them no one was educated. Around 2300 years a Yunani came in India and said that common Indians did not know even the script of a language, in consequence they were not able to read and write. His contemporaries have not reacted but modern Indian pedanticians have refuted it out of limit. It is a reality that even today thousands of Indians cannot challenge the principal of Minander. The result of this, centuries old illiteracy, is foolishness and because of this, the load of superstitions had never been unloaded. (9) (Translation by me)

In the darkness of illiteracy Chamars have been wandering since hundreds of years. They have their own rules, laws, customs and traditions. Their disputes

are solved within the community Panchayat. His uncle was Choudhary (Judge). The complete family is excommunicated from the society if anyone disobeys the judgment of the Panchayat. Excommunication meant that nobody would dare to touch and talk to entire family. They are served food and water from a distance; and nobody from the family is neither invited nor permitted to attend marriages. Even such persons would not be allowed to have marital relations to the community people. This is an example of social exploitation and the tragedy of Tulsi Ram's Community is that they are exploited by their own community and by the Hindu society at large. The matters of eating dead animals and sexual relation were solved in dramatic way. It was very hard to live as excommunicated. The family had to offer 'pig and rice' to the whole community to rejoin the community. In the state of abject poverty it was difficult to make both ends meet. Poor condition made Ramauti to steal the meat of dead ox of Jokhu Pandey. Prof. Tulsi Ram explains that how community Panchayat solves Ramauti's case:

Vah dangar ki laalach me khurpa lekar... Mre hue bail ka kaleja kaatakar unake khukhaar choncho se bachate hue ghaas se bhari tokari me chhipakar ghar lai . Mere sath anek Dalit bachche yah najara dekha rahe the. Sabhi bachche chillane lage: Ramauti ghare dangar le jati hau . Do din baad Panchayat Bulaai gayi . Ramauti ke parivar ko kujati ghosit kar diya gaya aur usaka samajik bahiskar suru ho gaya. Yaha tak ki unake parivaar se baat tak nhi karata tha. Samajik bahiskar ki pida se ghabrakar kuch dino bad Ramauti ke parivar ne apeel ki. Chaudhari chahca Ne faisala sunaya ki Ramauti ka parivar biradari ko'suar- bhat' ki davat dega...Is davat ke piche Ramauti ka parivar phir bhaari karj me doob gaya. (89)

In the greed of a beast, by taking khurpa (a weeding or scraping instrument)... she brought by cutting the dead heart of a bull in a full basket of grass by avoiding herself from the cruel hands of them. With me, many Dalit children, were watching this scene. Every child started to cry: 'Ramauti is going to take beast in her home'. After two days, the Panchayat was called on. The family of Ramauti had been announced out of caste and her social boycott had been started. Even as much, no one was talking to her family. Afraid of the social

boycott, after passing a few days, the family of the Ramauti appealed. Chaudhari uncle announced the judgment that the family of the Ramauti would invite the party of 'pig and rice' for the familial members...as a result, the family of the Ramauti had been drowned again in debt. (89) (Translation by me)

Superstition has been widespread among Dalits which does not let them think rationally and they blindly follow as they are told. Consequently, it becomes a barrier in the development of scientific attitude. Many myths have been framed to spread it among masses and natural things such as river, hills, trees, sun, ponds etc. are used. It is so deep rooted in Dalits that they do not think outside the boundary because of the fear of mishappening and they practice this superstition silently. Most of the time it stands as an obstacle on their way to get education, medical treatment and they harm themselves by avoiding medication.

Tulsi Ram describes in detail how Dalit had to depend on mercy of priests, witch doctors, and god and goddess to find relief from different disease. In the rural areas, medical facilities were almost absent. Tulsi ram was about three years old, when he became victim of chickenpox. He was about to die with it but instead of going to hospital his parents started to pray 'Sheetla Mai' (local deity). They considered that it is an anger of 'Sheetla Mai' therefore, in that environment it was impossible to think that anybody would be ready to take him to hospital. They started to pray to make her happy and sacrificed goat and pigs. Tulsi Ram writes:

Andhavisvaas ke kaaran dava lene se inkar karate the. Vaise bhi un dino chechak lailaj bimari thi . Ghar vale ise Sheetla Mai ka prakop samaghte the. Pas ke gaav se ek Ojha aata aur kabhi na spast hone vale kathith mantr ko badabadata tatha long todote hue jhad- phuk karata. vah Neem ke ped ki choti dal torakar patte samet puri deh par pherata rahata tha. Udhar meri budhiya dadi, jo Chamariya Mai ki atoot bhagat thi, kande ki aag me ghee da – dal kar 'jai Chamariya Mai' ki Baar- baar rat lagate hue agiyari karati rahati thi ...Antatogatva chechak ki avasyak bimari vali avadhi samapt hone ke sath mai thik hone laga. (12)

Because of superstitions, they were denouncing to take medicines and in those days, the disease of chickenpox was incurable and the

family member also considered it the rage of Sheetla Mai (the local deity). A witch doctor used to come from the nearest village and started to exorcise rattling so called unclear mantras, and by breaking up clove he used to ramble the small branch of Margosa tree with its leaves, on whole naked body. And in another case, my oldest grandmother who was the complete devotee of 'Chamariya Mai', by pouring ghee in fire, often started to chant 'Jai Chamariya Mai, and used to throwing incense in the fire ...At last, having been finished the period of disease, I began to recover. (12) (Translation by me)

Finally, as the expected period of the chicken pox finished Tulsi Ram started to get better but unfortunately he lost his one eye. He became inauspicious. He was not single person of that community, there were many others who were deprived of living a simple life. Along with him, Jangu Pandey and an old widow were in the same category. It was considered that nothing good can take place in their presence. It shows his concern to his society. He attempts to give an idea about the life of Dalit community as a whole through his story.

This practice has pushed Dalits back to the world of darkness. Sometime superstitions are used as a tool to construct conspiracy against them. They are psychologically made to believe that whatever wrong happens to them is because of their own stance. His grandfather became the victim of conspiracy when he went to field for safe guarding the crop from the animals and killed by ghost. Tulsi Ram remembers:

Dada ji, jinka name jhuthan tha, gaav se thoda door jhariyo vale teele ke paas chote se khet me matar ki phasal ko der raat bachane ke uddesy se gaye the. Matar ke khet me unhe sahi naamak janavar dikhai diya...Dada ji ki laṭhi lagate hi sahi antardhan ho gaya. Gharwalon ke anusar vah sahi nhi, balki vaha ka bhoot tha....Sabhi kahane lage ki bhoot badala avsyha lega. Isi beech Dada ji ek raat khalian me soye hue the ki sahi ka bhoot lathi lekar aaya aur usane Dada ji ko pit- pit kar mar dala. (9)

My grandfather, whose name was Jhuthan, had gone for the purpose of securing the crops of peas in the field late night which was a few

miles away, near the small ridge of the village. In the field of peas he saw an animal named as porcupine...As soon as Dada ji stroked by his Lathi (stick) on porcupine, it vanished. According to family members, it was not porcupine but the ghost of itself. Everyone started to say that ghost would revenge necessarily. In the security of the field Dada ji was asleep in the barn and that time the ghost of Porcupine came by taking stick (lathi) and killed Dada ji beating mercilessly. (9) (Translation by me)

A few pages later, he describes in other episode how superstition traps the poor and they easily consider it as their fate. It has been inseparable part of village traditions. In this way, a close relationship remained stagnant between society and superstition due to illiteracy and lack of wisdom. Even in modern era, the villages could not be freed from the stereotyped mentality. Children hear many tales of ghosts and witches which make permanent place in their mind. Through the incident with Pattu Mihir, Tulsi Ram opines about the psychological diseases:

Galati se mera ek pair dal ke niche latak raha tha. Pattu ped ke niche khade hokar apani lathi ko kamar ke piche bade bade apane hatho se uthae hue upar ki taraph anvesi nigaho se dekhane lage. Sayogavasa unhone mere latakate pair ko dekha liya. Ise dekhate hi 'jai Suddhu baba ki jai suddhu baba ki' kahate hue Pattu mihir pet ke bal gir pade...Girate padate ghar pahuch kar ve bimar ho gaye. Yakayak bukhar se grast ve anistakari kalpana me dub gaye. Is vikaral Pralayakari bhaya ka rahasy yah tha ki unake pokhar par sthit ek bade Neem ke ped se kuch vars poorv suddhu namak unhi ke gaav ke ek dalit datun todate hue girakar mar gaye the. Ata: Hamare kshetr me unhe pokhare a sabase khataranak bhoot ghosit kar diya Gaya tha... Sayogavas Pattu Mihir mere latakate pair ko suddhu bhoot ka pair samgh baithe the. Ata: Unaki durdasa honi hi thi. Antatogatva pokhar par suddhu baba ko unhone murge ki bli tatha neem ke ped ki jad me ek botal sarab ki ahuti dekar apane is bhuteha manorig se chutakara paya. (94)

By mistake, my one leg was hanging beneath the tree. Puttu, standing under the tree and lifting his stick behind his waist, started

to see with his explorative eyes upward the tree. By chance he saw my hanging leg. Having been seen this, Puttu laid prostrate with the stomach and began to cry 'Jai shuddu Babba jai shuddhu baba'. When he reached home painstakingly he fall ill; suddenly, he drowned in unnecessary imagination with feverish pain. The mystery of this destructive fear was that before some years back, a Dalit named as Shuddu, had been died because of falling from that tree, which was grown up near the pound of village, during the picking up tooth brush (datuan). So, in our area, he was announced as most dangerous ghost of the village... By chance, Puttu Mihir had understood my hanging leg as the leg of Shudhdhu ghost. So it was clear that he would fall in worse situation. Eventually, He got rid of this ghostly psychological disease by offering the chicken and a bottle of wine at the pond of Shudhudhu Baba. (94) (Translation by me)

Likely, his cousin became the victim of 'bhuteha' disease. One woman from his lane fell down in the colony well and died. The people deemed that she has turned to a ghost. Fear of witch badly seized in Dalit colony due to the gross superstition and caused a panic of ghost. People stopped drinking water from the colony well, believing that loud sound of moving water is heard in at night. Sometimes the prank of superstition had undergone stern outcomes. His uncle died believing in witchcrafts and witch doctors. It was very difficult for innocent Dalits to escape from the powerful web of superstition in contemporary social conditions.

Tulsi Ram himself bore the pains for being the member of the deprived class of society. His status of an untouchable kept on tormenting him every day and night. He consistently tried to set himself free from the bondage of caste but he remained unable to get over the existing social structure that does not allow any individual to grow. No doubt, breaking the convention he joined school but social acceptance remained a dream for him. The deep rooted social order never allowed him to find a space among the upper caste people. In that environment individuality got crushed under the burden of outdated social conventions. He

tried to break the myth of silence but his voice was not listened at all. Dalit community was deprived of the education system since centuries.

In *Murdahiya* Tulsi Ram portrays different shades of Dalit experience. Tulsi Ram makes it clear that, at that time education was limited to upper castes and lower castes were not given opportunity of getting any kind of education. Even if anyone gets admission he had to deal with the problems and abusive language. Prof. Tulsi Ram dedicates considerable space towards highlighting own and other Dalit student's struggle for getting education. He has also given a lively account of other things. He was identified by caste name instead of his name by class mates and teacher. They were allowed to sit on floor close to class room door. The students of Dalit community were called 'Chamarkit' by teacher. They were branded untouchables and treated inhumanly. Even they were not allowed to touch any object and any person of upper caste as it was believed that their touching might pollute them. With the curiosity, he touched his finger to the school well. Mihir shouted by seeing him "Chamara touched well" (55). It resulted in continuous beating and abusing whole day. Some time he had to suppress his thirst for natural resources like water because he was not allowed to touch the jug for the fear of its being polluted. He was also humiliated for his dress code in his school. Whether he wore neat and clean dress or down at heel, the sting of satire definitely clung him. He went to school wearing 'Payjama' that was symbol of richness and civilised. The privileged caste student ridiculed him with a pejorative statement "Baap ke paad na aave – poot sankh bajave" (140). Even the attitude of headmaster towards Dalit students was not good and many time it cause a great humiliation to them. He obliged Dalit student to work which suites their caste during 'shramdaan'.

... Skuli chhatro ke beech sramadaan ek avasyak kriya hoti thi, jisake tahat ham skul pahucate hi pure skul ki saphai karate the. Sabhi bachche apani kameej ya kurte se jhadu lagate. Skul se karib ek kilomitar dur ek bavali thi, jisame cikani Mitti pai jati thi. Vaha se ham sabhi gili mitti apane kaparo me bandhakar laate... Gair – Dalit bachcho ke lie alag sramadana tha. (56).

... 'Shramdan' was a necessary action for the school boys, under which, as soon as we reached the school we started to clean it. All the kids, with their shirt and Kurtas, swept the school. There was a

pond (Bavadi) a kilometer away from the school which had clay. From there, we brought wet soil by packing with our cloths ...There was a different 'shramdan' for non Dalit students. (56) (Translation by me)

Even untouchability was abolished by Indian constitution but ordinary people of India were not able to set themselves free from the narrow mentality based on caste discrimination. There were about forty three students in Tulsi's class. They had to sit in three lines roll number wise, first line contained thirteen students. Tulsi Ram reveals:

Hum sabhi dalit the. Munsi ji ki upasthiti me koi bachcha hame chuta bhi nahi tha. Aise hi vatavaran me suru hui meri siksaSuru – suru me adhikatar bachche upasthit shabd ka uchcharan nahi kar pate the jis par Munsi ji avilamb galiyun ki bauchar kar dete the. Visesakar, bachcho ko ve Chamarkit kahkar apana gussa prakat karate. Ve choti –choti galatiyon par bachcho se hi arahar ke bade bade danthal todakar mangate aur usi se unaki hatheli par jor-jor se marate tatha sath me galiya bhi dete jate. Is tarah pahali hi kaksha me Munsi ji ka aatank bachcho par cha gaya. (23-24)

We were all Dalits... In the presence of Munsi ji, no child dared to touch us. In such atmosphere, my education began. At beginning, most of the students were not able to pronounce word 'present' on which Munshi ji started to abuse continuously. Especially he presented his anger on Dalit children by saying 'chamarkit'. He often abused and hit the harder on the palm of the child by the hard stem of Arhar plant, by breaking themselves even if they committed small mistakes. In this way, in the first class, the horror of the Munshi ji could be seen on the face of child. (23-24) (Translation by me)

This kind of brutal punishment led them to leave school and affected the psyche of students. Tulsi ram writes that due to caste abuse 'chamrkit' and with severe punishment he was afraid to go to school and sometime he started to cry. Tulsi ram was convinced by his determined parents to resume his schooling. But the question of what happened to other students who have left the school because of discriminative attitude of government authorities in school. Such atrocities

cause mental displacement that's why Tulsi Ram could learn to write alphabets very late in comparison to other students. He remembers:

Suru – suru me dar k mare narakat pakarate hi hath kapane lagata tha aur likhane ke liye ki har kosis asaphal ho jati thi aur upar se Munki ji ki Chamarkit vali gali itana bhay kar deti thi ki vaha antogatva mai skul jane ke nam se chillane lagata tha. Pitaji mujhe aise avasaron par pitate hue skul le jate the aur sath me kahate jete: "Iskule na jaibe ta cithiya ke parhi?" Kintu mera man padhai me nahi lagata. (24-25)

In the beginning, because of fear, hands were started to tremble even pick the pen of Markat (a kind of reed) and every effort of writing got failed. In addition to the abuse of "chamarkit" word, it created much horror as a result. At last, I started to cry even in the name of going to school .My father often used to take me school by beating on such occasion and used to say "if you do not go to school, who will read letters". But my mind does not think about education. (24-25) (Translation by me)

It has been noticed that people of Dalit community don't have any options to encourage them for taking any further step. Not only social but also economic conditions of the untouchables lay hindrance in continuing their education. Tusi Ram somehow studied up to second standard but due to the poor financial conditions of his family he could not give 'Passkarai'. 'Passkarai' was a kind of bribe to upgrade in next class. Every student had to pay, but, in third standard due to the poor condition of his family member, they refused to pay two rupees for 'Paskarai'. He was declared fail for not submitting 'Paskarai' in contrast government declared free education for Dalit students. Over the time he had distinguished himself as most intelligent student of the school that's why 'babu saheb Balram Singh favoured him to pass. Tulsi Ram confesses:

Ek bar kaksha teen me mere ghar valo ne do rupaya pasakarai dene se mana kar diya. Parinamasvarup Munki ji ne mujhe phel kar diya. Yah khabar babu sahaba ko malum hui to unhonne Munki ji ko bahut danta. Isaka ekamatra karana yah tha ki Mai kaksha teen me

pahucate – pahucate us skul ka sabase tej vidharthi ban chuka tha. Vishesh roop se ganit me mujhe bahut ruchi thi. (26)

Once, my parents refused to pay two rupees for getting passed in the examination at class three. In consequence, Munshi ji failed me. When this news was known by Babu Shaheb he scolded too much Munshi ji. The reason of this was only one that, during upgrading at class three, I became one of the most talented students of the school. Especially in Mathematics, I was interested a lot. (26)
(Translation by me)

The existing state of poverty has a close relationship with Dalit community. It has weakened the backbone of Dalits. Even the fulfilment of basic needs for a human being remains a dream to them. Autobiographer has portrayed the panic condition of Dalit *Basti* in winter season. They could not sleep due to paucity of warm clothings. He says:

Barsat me ek badi samshya yah utpann ho jati thi ki lagataar paani برسne se sabki jhopdiyon se paani chune lagta tha... Jade ki rate bari kastadayak hoti thi. Hamara sayukta parivar bahuta bada tha, kintu ghar me ek bhi rajai ya kambal nahi thaOdhane ka intajam nahi hone se gaav ke sare Dalit raat bhar thithurate rahate the. Hamare ghar me sone ke Liye jaade ke dino me dhaan ka pora bichha dia jata tha. Us par koi leva ya gudadi bichakar ham dhoti odhakar so jate the. Isake baad mere pitaji punh dher sara pora ham logo par bichcha dete the. (34)

There was a great problem in rain because of persistence raining, the water started to ooze from the huts of Dalits. The night of the winter season was very painful. Our joint family was very large but in our house, there was not a single quilt or blanket. Because of lack of arrangement of wrapping oneself in the village of Dalit, All the Dalit used to shiver in entire night. In our houses, there were knuckles of paddy to sleep in winter season. On it, we sleep by spreading a mat of beggar's bedding and cover ourselves by dhoti. After that my father spreaded a lot of knuckles of paddy upon our body to cover up. (34) (Translation by me)

He had to suffer financial crisis when his family was unable to pay thirty rupees as exam fees. His family members were ready to break up his study as he remembers that “My whole joint large family was intended not to help me” (155). In such a condition his teacher Sugreev Singh paid thirty rupees to make Tulsi capable of appearing in exam. Obviously, economic dependency of deprived caste on upper caste is also responsible for their social standard. Regarding it Beena Agarwal and Neeta state that “poverty is the root cause behind the oppression of Dalits in the hand of the higher caste people” (62). The unequal distribution of wealth has given privilege to certain sections of society to enjoy power while the deprived are forced to lead life in such conditions which cannot be called human. Tulsi Ram had to go to Chandesar Degree College to appear in secondary examinations. They had to stay there for a month so he planned to go two weeks earlier in order to make arrangement of a room. He was humiliated by the statement of land lord who said “chamar – siyar ko nh rhne diya jayega(155)” “Chamar i.e. siyar will not be allowed to stay (155)”(translated by me). It was not easy to go to exam centre to appear in exam in such worst conditions. Dalit students became victim of caste violence. As in Chandesar Dalit students are beaten up and warned not to appear in exam:

Un dino Chandesar pariksha kendr par Dalit pariksarthyo me se anek jatiy hinsa ke sikar ho jate the. Kolej prasaasan dvara aisi hinsa ko rokane ka koi prayas nahi kiya jata tha jisase pariksha ke daurana sthiti kafi tanavapurn ho jaati thi. Anek skulo se jo chaatr yaha pariksha dene aate the ve apane hi skul ke Dalit chatro ko akaaran peet diya karate the, jisake chalute kai chatr gambhir chot lag jane ke karan pariksha se vanchit ho jate the...Yadhapi meri kisi se Dusmani nahi thi kintu tatkalin vaataavaran se mai kafi bhayabhit ho gaya tha. (155)

In those days, on the Chanderpur examination centre, most of Dalit examinees were being victim of caste violence. No efforts being taken by college administration to stop such type of violence, as a result of this, the situation during the examination used to tense.

Many students, who used to come for attending examination, here, they used to beat the students of their own school without any reason, consequently many of students used to be deprived of attending their examination because of serious injury...although no one was my enemy but I was afraid of the prevailing atmosphere. (155) (Translation by me)

Tulsi Ram describes the problems of Dalit students in getting education from the beginning of *Murdahiya* to the end. The threat of discontinuing education always haunts to them.

Sabase bdi chinta is baat ki thi ki dasvi ke baad padhai ki koi aash nahi thi. Kyonki hamari kaariyat me koi inter college nahi tha jisaka matalab yah tha ki sirf Chandesar ya Ajamagarha me tikakar padhana likhana sambhava ho sakata tha. Kul milakar yah sab kuch mere liye asambhava tha. Yahi chinta mujhe khae ja rahi thi. (157)

The biggest anxiety was that there was no hope of education after the tenth. Because in our area, there was no inter college, which meant that I could study only on Chandesar or Ajamgarh to stay continue. Overall this was the anxiety which was bothering me. (157) (Translation by me)

Dalit students cannot free themselves from the tricks of upper caste people. These tricks help to prevent Dalits to grow their standard and compel them to engage with their conventional occupation. Tulsi Ram's admission into inter college did not change the picture and humiliation. He had to bear it in one way or the other way owing his caste identity though he proved his worth by standing first in class. He was single student who passed with first division out of forty six. Tulsi Ram writes:

Mere gaav ke anek Brahman bhi ghar aakar meri taraif karate nahi thakate the. Kintu ve sabhi punh yah batana nahi bhulate the ki jyada padhane se log pagal ho jate hai. Aisa lagata tha ki mere gaav ke Brahman mujhe har haal me pagal hone se bacha lena chahate the...Brahmano ki baato se mere ghar vale puri taraha aasvast ho gaye the. Ata: Age ki padhai ka raasta ekadam asambhav ho gaya. (160)

Many Brahmins of my village were not tired by giving compliments in praise when they came home. But, they all did not forget to tell that people got mad by a lot of studying. It seemed that Brahmins of my village wanted to save me of getting mad at any cost... My family members became ascertained by the statements of Brahmin, in consequence, the next step of my education had been blocked. (160) (Translation by me)

The permanent neglect and persistent humiliation made him introvert but his introvert behaviour proved a boon. In spite of the hostile condition he continued his study. He left home and joined D. A. V. College in Ajamgarh for higher studies. Higher education is the philosophy of life from where the way of life originates. Thus in awakened state man often opens the outlook in which he begins to interpret thing in an entirely changed and new manner. In this way he realised that the education which is imparted in schools and higher institutions are not free from the religious acts instead of being secular it turns students into narrow mindedness and fundamentalists. Tulsi Ram observes:

Ajamagarh ka D. A. V. Kolej sampurn roop se R. S. S. Ke adheen tha...Yaha kolej sampradayik tatvo ka garh tha. koleja ke prinsipal chavil chandra shrivastava bhi R. S. S. se jude the. Isa kolej ke sabhi adhyapak R. S. S. se hi jude hue the. Angreji ke adhyapak kattar Hindutvavadi the....Kolej me pared karati R. S. S. ki sakhao se hokar raste me gujarate hue ekadam bhayabheet ho jata tha. isaka ekamatra karan tha,sakhayiyo dvara bhanji jane vali lathiyo se nikalati hinsatmak bhanabhanahat .(167-168)

The D. A. V. college of Ajamgarh was completely under the authority of R. S. S. this college was the hub of communal elements. The principal of the college, Chhavil Chandra Shrivastava, was also linked with R. S. S. All the teachers of this college were connected with R. S. S. The teacher of English subject was staunch believer of Hinduism... I was terrified when the parade of R. S. S. performs their action passing on the way. Only reason of this fear was the violent buzz emanated from Lathis of the Shakhayiyon (R. S. S. members). (167-168) (Translation by me)

Tulsi Ram adjusted himself according to the changed conditions in Ajamgarh. The exposure of city life made him to face the challenges of life. He began to participate in different activities as debates, speeches which made him express his ideas about social problems. It gave a new life to Tulsi Ram. When he was in tenth standard his friend, Sanvaari Ram introduced him about the idea of Ambedkar about casteless society that impressed him.

Sanavari Ram ne hi pahali baar Dr. Ambedkar ki prasiddh ukti jativihin samaj ke bina swaraja prapti ka koi mahattva nahi, se mujhe avagat karaya tha.....Sanavari Ram se hi pata chala ki Dr. Ambedkar Buddha dharm grahan kar lie the tatha unhone hi Gandhi ji se ladakar daliton ke lie aaraksan haasil kiya tha. Ambedkar Buddh ban gae the, yahi baat mujhe sabase jyada priy lagi thi. (168)

Sanwari Ram had me known for the first time about the famous dictum of Dr. Ambedkar that there was no meaning of getting Swaraj without casteless society. Sanwari Ram exposed that Ambedkar had converted himself into Buddhism and fought with Gandhi ji and won reservation for Dalit. Ambedkar became a Buddhist, this thing pleased me the most. (168) (Translation by me)

He was much concerned to Philosophy of Buddha and ideology of Karl Marx from childhood. But knowledge about Ambedkar's contribution opened a new chapter of his life. His silence began to melt and he became more conscious about space and identity in social order. Consciousness makes people aware about their rights. The excessive pressure of social conventions often leads to hazardous consequences and such exploitation by the privileged class makes it compulsory to raise the voice of protest against this tyranny. *Murdahiya* is questioned for not having the voices of protest. But it seems wrong because it offers a different kind of resistance with the softness of language instead of using violent language. Tulsi Ram himself asserts:

Meri aatmakatha alag hai kyonki adhikaans Dalit atmakathae bahut krodh me likhi gai hai. (Jati Virodhi Sahitya hi Dalit sahitya hai)

My autobiography is different, because most of Dalit autobiographies have been written in rage. (Jati Virodhi Sahitya hi Dalit sahitya hai)
(Translation by me)

Feeling of equality rose by the protest whether it is non-violent or violent. The voice of protest began to come from this deprived section of society. In Tulsi Ram's autobiography, the origin of protest is seen when his uncle, leader of twelve village Panchayats, decides to send Tulsi to school by breaking the rules of society. Because of the inhuman behaviour of Brahmins, who were only educated, he decided so. They used to maltreat Dalits when they went to get their letter read. Tulsi put his best effort and gave an excellent result for his community's sake. Environment plays a considerable role in determining the difference between communities but oppressive and exploitative environment does not prevent Dalits seeking change in their situation. *Murdahiya* is concerned with the endeavour of change and progress. Tulsi put his ideological resistance against Swami Karpatri after getting acquainted to his role in preventing Dalits to enter in Kashi temple. It became stronger after the opposition by Dr. Ambedkar. It pinched to Tulsi Ram for neglecting Dr. Ambedkar:

Swami ji ne Dr. Ambedkar dvara 1951 me prastut Hindu kod bil ka virodh karate hue kaha tha ki Dr. Ambedkar Hindu dharm ko nahi samajhate kyonki unhe Sanskrit nahi aati. Smaran rahe ki Dr. Ambedkar Hindu kod bil ke madhyam se Bharat ki samast mahilao ko puruso ke saman adhikaar dilana chahate the, kintu Hindu kattarapanthiyo ke virodha ke chalate Jawahar Lal Nehru ne bil ko vapas le liya tha jisake virodha me Dr. Ambedkar ne kendriya mantrimandala se istipha de diya tha. Istiphe ke baad Dr. Ambedkar ne kaha tha ki jo yogadan ve sanvidhaan likhakar nahi kar paaye the. Use ve Hindu kod bil ke madhyam se pura karana chahate the. In tamam janakariyon ke baad swami karpatri ji ke prati satave darje me padhate hue jo agadh sradda jaagi thi, vah yakayak cakanachur ho gai. (131)

Swami ji said by opposing the Hindu code bill presented by Dr. Ambedkar, that Dr. Ambedkar did not understand the Hindu religion

because he did not know Sanskrit. It should be remembered that Dr. Ambedkar, with the help of Hindu Code Bill wanted to provide equal authority of whole Indian women to men, but, by the opposing a follower of rigid Hindu religious person, Jawahar Lal Nehru had withdrawn the bill, in protest of that, Dr. Ambedkar had resigned from central cabinet. After the resignation of central cabinet, Dr. Ambedkar stated that he wanted to accomplish through the Hindu Code bill, what he could not contribute by writing Indian constitution. After all these information what deep devotion had been emerged during the seventh class, had been shattered suddenly. (131)
(Translation by me)

Tulsi Ram narrated that the social and historical hostility was unavoidable between Chamars and Brahamins. Dalits were labourers in the field of upper class landlords. They have to lend the seeds from them and had to return much bigger share as the interest. Dalit used to be cheated while weighting the crops. They got self and social consciousness to boycott their jobs and the violent fights used to take place between two groups. Tulsi remembers:

Kisi nirdharit sthan par ek khoob lambi rekha khichi jati thi. Rekha ke dono taraph dono virodhi paksh khade rahate. Rekha ke is paar khade Dalit us paar khade Brahamano ko chunoti dete ki yadi himmat hai to rekha paar karake dikho. Yadi Brahaman rekha paar kar lete to turant ladai suru ho jati. Brahman hamesa bhale aur ballam se laisa rahate kintu Dalit sirf lathiya rakhate... Lekin dalit mahilae pratirodha banakar samane aati aur mare janavaro ki pasaliya, gaddo me pheki gandagi - ' biyana' handiyo me bharakar un par toot padati to brahman bhaag jaate aur ksamaa bhi mangate.
(64)

In a certain determined place, there was marked a long line. On each side of long line, both opposing parties were standing. Either side standing of Dalit were challenging to the other side standing of the Brahmins, that if they dare to cross the line, battle would begin immediately. Brahmin always armed with lance but Dalit kept only Lathis...but Dalit women came in resistance of taking ribs of dead

animals, thrown garbage in the pit- calve etc and all attacked on Brahmins. As a result they ran away and asked for forgiveness. (64)
(Translation by me)

Through the portrayal of different characters of his community he attempts to clear his concern for his society. Character of Jaidi uncle, a Dalit of his lane, shows that a little exposure makes everyone aware about their rights and the also influence them to change their condition for better. Jaidi uncle participated in Second World War as temporary soldier, and he stayed in Bagdad. He resumed his 'Harvaahi' to Bansu Pandey but his behaviour changed. He remained under the influence of foreign country and continuously questioned Bansu Pandey. His demand of payment mostly led to quarrel. In conspiracy he was beaten up by police in a fake case of stealing goat of Bansu Pandey. That's why he started a non- violent protest to get justice.

Bansu Pandey ke is chaliya kapat se aghatit hokar jedi chacha pratirodhasvarup nae kism ka satyagrah karane lage. Ve sab kaam-dham band kar daadhi-munchhe badhana suru kar die tatha nichand dhup me charpaai dalakaer ek chadar ordhkar din bhar sote rahate the. Puchane par kahate the ki jab tak baaman nyaay nahi karate, mai daadhi-munch badhata rahunga tatha dhup mei hi sounga. Ve is maamale mein nihayat jiddi the. Pannchayat aadi dvara kisi anya samajhaute ko ve manane se saaf inakar kar diye the. (92)

Having been deceived by new type of fraud of Bansu Pandey, Jedi uncle started a new type of satyagrah. By stopping all the works, he started to expand bear and hair and by covering himself by bed sheet, and used to sleep whole day under hot sun. Having been asked, he said that he would sleep under the sun and expand his beard and moustache until Brahmin did not do justice. In this case, he was totally stubborn. He refused to accept any agreement what was done by Panchayat etc. (92) (Translation by me)

Later on he was released from jail but he continued his 'Satyaagrah' till death which lit a light of consciousness among Dalits. He gives a powerful message and emboldens Dalits not to bear any kind of injustice and discrimination. Change in attitude and resistance against wrong doings lead to the

feeling of equality and dignity. It helps to fill the gap between oppressed and oppressor which was constructed centuries earlier. In this way Dalits of Dharampur began the tradition of 'Majalis' on the marriage ceremonies. It provided an opportunity to argue on the religious texts. It offered a platform which assisted them to shape their wisdom.

Tulsi Ram does not end by introducing the sufferings and plight of Dalit community. This autobiography makes us a visit to the interior premise of Dalit culture and claiming its richness. Francois Gross (2004) observes:

Dalit communities do indeed have a very rich and deep cultural heritage, a folk tradition of tales, songs and performing arts, an amazing variety of practices and usages in their daily life, and craftsmanship etc. and a wonderful world of gods, goddesses and devils, all elements contributing to the creation of an original, imaginary world which is no way less important nor less fascinating than classical mythology or orthodox manners and customs. (qtd. in Subramanian 4)

Indian societies are culturally diverse. Every culture is divergent to other. Dalits have their own glorious culture, different from non-dalits. *Murdahiya* helps to understand and see the difference: "*Us samay gaav mein dalito ke alaga-alaga devi- devata hote the jinaki pooja savarn nahi karate the. Hamare gaav me Dih Baba aur chamriya Mai aise do devi devata the jinaki puja dalit karate the*" (11). "In those times, there were individual god and goddess that were not worshipped by upper caste. In our village there were two god and goddess i.e. Dih baba and Chamariya Mai which were worshipped by Dalits" (11) (translation by me). Worship style of Sati Mata and Bram Baba has been prevailing cultural notion of the Indian society. These are worshiped somewhere as family deity. Now a day, there are a lot of tales about Baba's although these are miles away from reality. Tulsi Ram says:

Vastav me Baram Baba koi vides devata nahi the. Kintu bagal me sati mai ke caure se pata chalata tha ki Baram Baba gaav ke bahut pahale ke koi Brahman tha jinaki mrtyu ke baad unaki patni chita me jalakar sati ho gai thi. Isalie dono ka vaha bahut purana chaura bana diya gaya tha. Baram Baba ke chaure par ek bahut mota aur visal

pipal ka jarjara ped tha jise dekhane se pata chalata tha ki vah ped 19 vi sadi ke purvardha ka avasy hoga kintu gava me yaha kisi ko bhi nahi pata tha ki ye dono chaure sati pratha ke pratik the. (78)

Actually, there was no such god like Baram Baba. It was known that beside the dais of Sati Mai, Baram Baba was any unknown Brahmin of the older time, after whom death, his wife had self immolated and became a sati that's why, an old dais had been built, for both of them, there. There was a dilapidated, tallest and thick tree in the middle of Baram Baba's dais, which signified that the tree should certainly be the prior half of the 19th century but in the village, no one knew that both the daises are the symbol of sati convention. (78)
(Translation by me)

Folk songs have a close bound to Dalit culture. Mostly conversational style of Folk songs along with dance is described in this autobiography. On the different occasions such as marriage, death, child birth, first rain of season, drought etc. different songs are sung with recurrent themes. These folk songs points toward the awareness in the darkness of illiteracy. 'Harwahe' (Labourers) give message against social evil such as child marriage, discrimination of untouchable etc. through folk songs and dance:

*Harijan jati
Sahai duhkh bhari ho
Harijan jati sahai duhkha bhari ho
Jekar khetava dina bhari jotali
Hai dela gari ho, duhkha bhari
Harijan jatisahai, duhkha bhar. (106)*

Dalits always suffers pain;
Whose land they plough whole day abuses them. (106) (Translation by me)

In India gender discrimination is long lasting and is acceptable in all religions. On the basis of gender, this practice denies the freedom to an individual. Gender inequality impinges the overall growth of women. Dalit women face dual oppression on the base of caste and gender. The issue of gender is raised

magnificently in this autobiography, *Murdahiya*. Being faithful to landlords, Dalit works very hard in the fields for the whole day and night but do not receive the proper wages. Tulsi Ram's father worked in the fields without uttering any words. Conditions turned very hard during drought because the level of water resources decreased and the irrigation style was also based on the very old technologies. Tulsi raises the issue that women suffer equal to men and do the same work but they are separately paid nothing. His mother participated in every activity for the welfare of family. Being a woman she had to handle the household also. It became very crucial condition when she was caught talking to any male of lane. His father used to get annoyed and question her character. It led to severe beatings to the women by hard sticks. In the same way the Upper caste women's condition was not any better. Like Dalit boys, women of upper castes were not allowed to get education. Anyway if any upper class girl managed to get admission in the school, she had to stay away from the boys. Daughter of his father's landlord, Asha was enrolled in the same school. Once she was returning from the school a channel was overflowing due to the heavy rain therefore, Tulsi helped her to cross it. This scene was seen by other students. Suddenly she dropped school and was married. She was very intelligent. If a slave can become a professor then what the daughter of master cannot achieve? It is the matter of gender discrimination which prevents women to participate in social, political and economic activities.

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CHAPTER 4

Comparative Analysis and Conclusion

Aravind Malagatti and Prof. Tulsi Ram belong to Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh respectively. Despite their marked cultural and geographical differences, a close examination of the works of Aravind Malagatti and Tulsi Ram reveals a definite similarities and differences between the two authors when their works are studied within the framework of Dalit marginality.

To prove the authenticity and liveliness which are the hallmarks of Dalit literature, both Malagatti and Tulsi Ram make use of the vocabulary, idiom and spoken language of the downtrodden and under-privileged of their respective states. Their language is socially constructed which share the flux of social variable. The main stuff of both Malagatti and Tulsi Ram's autobiographies is shame, anger, sorrow, strong hope and vision of better life. They convey their anger and protest by making use of vernacular language and presenting their conditions. The anger against the oppression sharpens expressions of both writers but these expressions are given shape with the softness of language. Generally in autobiographical narratives, the past tense is preferred. Both Malagatti and Tulsi Ram have used the same tense in their respective autobiographies. Malagatti has also employed other tenses to make narrative mode more interesting and alive. On the other hand Tulsi Ram, according to need, uses a perfect blend of three tenses throughout his autobiography.

Tulsi Ram writes in Hindi but in his autobiography *Murdahiya*. He has perfectly used vernacular language that is spoken in the north- east part of Uttar Pradesh. He has tried to use the language of rural area in similar way as it is spoken:

Pipra pe gidhva baithal hauve. (Ram 163)

Vultures are sitting on Pipal. (Ram 163) (Translation by me)

When Tulsi Ram went to Kalinganj with his friends Narayan and Deep Chand to see 'Mujara', Narayan Singh began to describe the beauty of dancer. In praise he speaks:

Ee ta istudent jaisan lagati hau. (Ram 175)

She looks as student. (Ram 175) (Translation by me)

Are! Bahiya! Ee t ranrejee bakat huvai. (Ram 85)

Hey brother! He is speaking English. (Ram 85) (Translation by me)

When Tulsi Ram was going to take bath in the nearest pond of Sherkuti village, Ram Charan Yadav met him and ordered him to go back:

Jaldi se bhag Chamar khi k. Badkan logn ke pokhar me tu nahaibe?

(Ram 83)

Move fast Chamar. Will you take bath in pond of rich people?" (Ram 83) (Translation by me)

Aravind Malagatti writes in Kannada but his first language is Kuvampu. Thus in *Government Brahmana*, Aravind Malagatti makes the use of Kuvampu, spoken in the northern part of Karnataka. He has used many words of this particular language such as *Undi, Keri, Maava, Chonna, Desi daaru, Ajja, Aayi, Katti and Lattu* etc. Sometime he uses words during greetings or in conversation:

'Appa! Ey appa!

Small boy, can't walk

...give him a lift please...appa...' (Malagatti 21)

Both Aravind Malagatti and Tulsi Ram do not use slangs and language full of rage. They use poetry in their autobiographies. Aravind Malagatti uses in episode "My ex- beloved":

Let me

Have a tender bit

From the

Lunchbox of your life. (Malagatti 67)

Similarly Tulsi Ram employs this technique in his narrative of life. In episode "Chale Buddh ki Raah" he makes use of some lines of Shyam Kiran Pandey's poem:

Ran Beech choukdi bhar bhar

'Chetak ban gya niral tha.

Rana Pratap ke ghode se,

Pad gya hava se pala tha. (Ram 142)

Chetak became unique when he ran in the field of war.

The steed of Rana Pratap faced the stroke of wind. (Ram 142)

Both Aravind Malagatti and Tulsi Ram have used proper nouns to construct this non- fictional piece of art as a realistic document of their life. They have used

the real name of geographical locations, Gods and leaders. In *Government Brahmana* Aravind Malagatti has mentioned the names of places as school, university hostel, Bhabha Research institute, hotel, botanical garden, Solapur, Bidarakundi, Dharward, gods like Lord Raghvendra, bachelor god Hanumantha, leaders like Dr. Ambedkar, Sardar Patel, Nazeem Saab. Similarly in *Murdahiya* such nouns are used such as school, D. A.V. college, Banaras Hindu University, Ambedkar Hostel, Waterway, Ponds, Chandesar, Sarahanpur, Azamgarh, Banaras, Chandigarh, Bagdad, Kolkatta, local deities like Chamariya Mai, Baram Baba, leaders as Nehru, Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar, Babu Jagjeevan Ram.

In literature, symbols and images are used to evoke sense, impression and to signify something. Dalit autobiographers also employ various symbols and images to convey the meaning lucidly. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, an image is “that evokes sense- impressions by literal or figurative reference to perceptible or ‘concrete’ objects, scenes and actions” (Baldick 164). Thus an image is not merely a mantle picture but it appeals senses rather sights. In *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, M. H. Abrams states about the use of symbol in literary texts. He says “in the broadest sense a symbol is anything which signifies something; in this sense all words are symbols. In discussing literature, however, the term “symbol” is applied only to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something, of has a range of reference, beyond itself. Some symbols are “conventional” or “public” (311).Tulsi Ram’s *Murdahiya* encompasses the symbols according to the contexts. The members of R. S. S. organising parade symbolises staunch believer of Hinduism. Ambedkar is source of inspiration and his conversion to Buddhism symbolises the hope of better life for Dalits. Thus Hinduism stands here for inequality, in which Dalits are not treated better and find the lowest place in Indian caste hierarchy. The title *Murdahiya* symbolises the life of Dalits in his village. Superstition and illiteracy are wide spread in Tulsi Ram’s village thus both superstition and illiteracy symbolise the deep rooted darkness. Being superstitious Dalits of Tulsi Ram’s village used to sacrifice animals like pig, goat etc to their god and goddess, therefore pigs and goats symbolise the helpless creature. Sanwari Ram who told to Tulsi about contribution of Dr. Ambedkar to Indian constitution; here Sanwari ram stands as guide. Jedi uncle symbolises light of consciousness for the Dalits of Dharmpur

Village. Tulsi Ram was enrolled in school to read letters of Dalits; once he decided not to go to school then his father took him to school by saying:

“Iskule na jaiba ta ciṭhiya ke paṛhi” (Ram 24)

“If you not go to school, who will read letters.” (Ram 24)

Here reading letters stands for the equality and education symbolises the breaking of previously established conventions.

Aravind Malagatti also uses images and symbols in *Government Brahmana*. The title of autobiography *Government Brahmana* symbolises the untouchables who avails the legal opportunities of reservation provided by Indian constitution. ‘Okuli’ signifies plenty and feeding the plantain leave stands for fertility cult. Lord Hanumantha symbolises sacrifice. Lake stands for superior and clean. On the other hand pond denotes inferior, impure and dirty. Mantralya stands for holiness and purity. In Dalit colony poverty is rampart which symbolises helpless. In school, Dalit students were discriminated on the basis of low caste standard. They have to work according to their caste status as sweeping the classroom. Thus school turns into a place of work for Dalit students and teacher who beats them brutally stands as heartless authoritarian.

You look like people who wear the janivara and we thought that you might have removed. (Malagatti 65)

Here, Janiwara- sacred thread symbolises identity mark of caste hierarchy, can only be worn by upper caste people.

We always swam like Bahubli, removing all our cloths. (Malagatti 30)

Here Bahubali whose idol in nude form stands in Karnataka. Thus nude Bahubali symbolises renunciation of all worldly shackles and inhibitions.

At some places, both Aravind Malagatti and Tulsi Ram use similar narrative techniques also. Aravind Malagatti uses the combination of first person, second and third person narrative (both singular and plural) coupled with the detail description of events to depict the condition of Dalit in a realistic manner. With the combination of first and third person, he wants to depict the situation in order to take both the subjective (first person) and objective (third person) approach. In *Government Brahmana*, Malagatti acquaints the reader about the struggle, oppression and exploitation of other characters like his room partner, his father and other people of his community. He uses second person narrative in conversational style.

'Hey, old woman,
Have you brought enough fodder?'
'I have brought fodder, yavva.'
'How much have you brought?'
Looks too little in your sari knot.'
'No, yavva, it's two kilograms.'
'Have you brought a man with you?'
What is this? You have brought such a small boy!
Is he a hero to catch the buffalo?!'
'No, yavva...how can he catc... (Malagatti 22).

On the other hand, Tulsi Ram avoids using second person narrative and conversational style. He uses first and third person narrative.

Both autobiographers have composed their individual life stories in their autobiographies *Government Brahmana* and *Murdahiya* in the sequence of events. They have arranged the stories of childhood in the beginning. In the middle part Aravind Malagatti uses the adolescent stories and ends with stories of grown-up mind. Unlikely, the narrative of *Murdahiya* move slowly with the detailed description of events. Tulsi Ram narrates the stories of teenage from middle part to the end of the autobiography in the sequence. He ends his autobiography when he has appeared in senior school examination in Azamgarh.

Both autobiographies mainly emphasise upon the events that highlight the reality of untouchability which is continuously practiced in modern India. Both Aravind Malagatti and Tulsi Ram begin their autobiographies from childhood in villages and gradually move to the cities – Dharwad and Ajamgarh respectively. In villages pain is experienced bluntly in the form of social exclusion or corporal punishment because caste is easily known and identified. Both autobiographies under study demonstrate that life in cities is better comparing to village life but not completely free from caste discrimination. Both Aravind Malagatti and Prof. Tulsi Ram almost lived early days of their life in villages but on the account of caste discrimination Tulsi Ram undergone bitterer experiences than Aravind Malagatti. Tulsi Ram says that being a Dalit he could not escape from caste discrimination in Ajamgarh too. Heera Lal, who slapped Tulsi Ram during high school examinations, reached to him and insulted with a caste centric greeting "Hey Chamara, how are you?" (Ram 182).

The prime concern of both writers is to utilise their memories, which play a key role while writing autobiography. They have portrayed everything from childhood to a particular phase of their life. Apart from knowing and remembering, they also narrate what have been told to them by their reliable persons. Aravind Malagatti narrates his infant life which was told to him by his family. "According to my family, when I was born I used to cry all days like a buzzing bee... Two people who tried to console me were my ajja and my appa. After appa's death, half my crying stopped. When ajja died, the crying stopped completely" (Malagatti 110). Similarly Tulsi Ram was told by his family about his grandfather who had been killed protecting the field from wild animals.

Gharwalon ke anusar... Isi beech dadaji ek raat khalihan me soye hue the ki sahi ka bhoot lathi lekar aaya aur usane Dadaji ki pit-pit kar mar dala. (Ram 9)

According to family members... securing the field, Dada ji was asleep in the barn and that time the ghost of Porcupine came by taking stick (lathi) and killed Dada ji by beating mercilessly. (Ram 9)

A number of social concerns have been identified in the works of Aravind Malagatti's *Government Brahmana* and Tulsi Ram's *Murdahiya* on basis of their involvement in social activities. Tulsi Ram recounts that his community has been inseparable part for him because he was brought up among inhabitants of it and helped when he was in need. Whenever his family was not able to fulfil his essential needs like food, financial aid to deposit admission and examination fees etc, he was supplied by his community people. When he passed high school examination he had left hope to continue his education. His maternal uncle helped him to get admission and arranged hostel. Since his childhood he lived with his community people who greatly influenced him. In the abject state of poverty he lived in his colony with the feeling of togetherness. He participated in almost all the social activities whether they were superstitious or not. In his community, there was a custom of sacrificing animals as pigs, cocks and goats etc. to their deities. He performed every ritual although he was not interested. Once he sacrificed a pig to 'Chamariya Mai'.

On the other hand unlike Tulsi Ram, Aravind Malagatti was not much connected to the society. He suffered a lot at the hands of non Dalits and became victim of social inequalities in his village. The feeling of togetherness was absent in

his society that's why his interaction with society was not like Tulsi Ram. He was only guided and supported by his elder brother.

The identity crisis remains a big question in Aravind Malagatti's *Government Brahmana*. His ancestors converted to Veershaivism but they could not mix with Veershaiva community people. Even they were not accepted and branded as Veerashavia Harijan. Although they took diksha and begun to hang the linga around their necks. Linga is the symbol of Veerashavia identity. Aravind Malagatti as educated person of his family could not throw linga because it marked his identity as Veerashaiva. But Tulsi Ram's condition was different to Aravind Malagatti. He became alienated after shifting to Azamgarh for study. Due to the pain of alienation, discrimination and poverty he decided to convert to Christianity.

Aravind Malagatti's *Government Brahmana* and Tulsi Ram's *Murdahiya* share experience of their caste people in their states- Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh respectively. Their experience, depicted in autobiographies can be considered as the fragments of total reality. Both Aravind Malagatti and Tulsi ram try to claim that the life of Dalits is very painful and shaped by their experience. The central focus of *Government Brahmana* and *Murdahiya* is the struggle of Dalit boy to get education. Tulsi Ram with the support of his uncle and community as well attended school. The unsecured life of his father must have made him realise the importance of education. Although he was not much interested in education but later on he became serious to study. He worked hard against all the odds devoting to study. He attended classes without food and proper clothes. His experience was bitter at school. First day was like a nightmare for him because he was welcomed with the caste abuses. Similarly, Aravind Malagatti faced the maltreatment in school. His condition was like Tulsi Ram. He went school wearing the loose half pent.

Unlike Tulsi Ram he was not the first boy who joined school from his lane, he was from an educated family. His grandfather was clerk during British rule, father a teacher but first day of school was also nightmare for him while for others it was like a public exhibition. Therefore, he was teased by upper caste students as they were afraid of having any physical touch with him. Like Tulsi Ram, Aravind Malagatti was not studious boy in his early days of schooling life but understanding the necessity of education he became serious. In the very opposite condition he

studied under the street lights. By the course of time he developed the habit of reading books which helped him in composing poetry and songs.

Education played a pivotal role in changing the attitude and arising consciousness among Dalits. Both texts advocate that a Dalit is always helped by other Dalit when they are in need of anything. In *Government Brahmana* Malagatti's attitude changed towards his roommate in hostel when he came to know about his caste. Aravind Malagatti states:

His pathetic condition changed my attitude. I even wished to nurse him after getting to know that he was a dalit. (Malagatti 87)

In the same Tulsi Ram was helped by Tapsi Ram to get admission in Banaras Hindu University. Tapsi Ram recognised him by dressing style and asked him "Biradar haua ka" (Ram 172) "are you Dalit" (Ram 172) (Translation of mine). After knowing caste Tapsi Ram helped him to get admission in Banaras Hindu University.

Both Aravind Malagatti and Tulsi Ram show their anger against the injustice. They express their anger with the same range by their action against the accused whether they are Dalits or non- Dalits. Tulsi Ram expressed his anger against his father when he beats Tulsi's mother. He slapped his father with great force.

Similarly Aravind Malagatti does when he is wrongly blamed by lecturer.

The lecturer had come to take me to task.

'Should you not advice him, being the same caste?

Are you doing research work? Or are you also indulging in...?'

I listened to him patiently for a while. When he started talking about

'me, I could not tolerate it anymore.

Get out now!

Go to that girl and advice her.

Why do you tell me all this? (Malagatti 90)

Both Aravind Malagatti and Tulsi Ram portray dreadful picture of Dalit women, although they belong to the same gender that is male. Aravind Malagatti's *Government Brahmana* has portrayed many custom and traditions which are imposed on Dalit women and they are force to play their sanctioned role for the betterment of the society. These double marginalised women are exploited to entrain and fulfil the lustful desire of the upper caste people. Malagatti discusses

about four traditions in which Dalit women are victimised as they have to dance with non- Dalit men. Every tradition has different rules regarding dance such as Okuli – women had to remove blouses and wear and Ugachche, Bevina Udge- only Neem leaves are worn around the waist, Gandhada Uduge- only Neem sticks are worn and Bettale Seve- demands celebrations in the nude. Similarly, in Thunnaganooru village women are exploited in auspicious month of Sharavana in front of bachelor god, Hanumantha. Malagatti narrates:

Both the male and female had to be nude, and had to dance together. Following which, the female had to sit on the male's shoulder, peel a plantain and put it into his mouth. When the male tried to bite it, she had to pull it away. Finally she too would not eat the plantain but only lick it. The licked plantain would then be eaten up by upper caste male. (Malagatti 44)

On the other hand in *Murdahiya* women work hard along with male of their family in fields. They work calmly inside and outside the home as a machine at every step of live. As he discusses sweeper women, they work the same job before marriage being a doll of father and after marriage condition remains same.

From the beginning of the episode of “Bhoothi Pariwarik Prastbhumi” Prof. Tulsi Ram has portrayed how the demons and superstitions have made an incurable web in the society. It was the time when he was born in the Dalit community. It is said that the conditions and atmosphere where a child is born are reflected in his personality. Therefore, he was also not untouched by these social conditions in which he was born. In this autobiography he has given a very clear account of the differences in the God's and goddesses which are different for upper class and lower class. Even their modes of worshipping are quite different. Along with their gods they also believe in devils, ghosts, spirits etc. They don't know what they are doing and what is right and wrong. In the spell of fear they harm themselves. Tulsi Ram lost one of his eyes only because of this how for this he was considered to be ill man or inauspicious:

Dih baba aur Chamariya Mai aise do devi devata the... Andhavisvas ke karan dava lene se inkar karate the. Vaise bhi un dino chechak lailaj bimari thi. Ghar vale ise Shitala Mai ka prakop samaghte the... Meri budhiya dadi, jo chamariya Mai ki atut bhagat thi, kande ki aag

me ghee daal – daal kar 'jay chamariya mai' ki baar- baar rat lagate hue agiyari karati. (Ram 11-12)

There were two god and goddess i.e. Dih baba and Chamariya Mai.... Because of superstitions, they were denouncing to take medicines and in those days, the disease of small box was incurable and the family member also considered it the rage of Sheetla Mata (the local deity)... My grandmother who was the devotee of 'Chamaria Mai', by pouring ghee in fire, often started to chant 'Jai Chamariya Mai, and used to throwing incense in the fire. (Ram 11-12) (Translation of mine)

Same is the case with Aravind Malagatti. No one was free from the clutches of superstition in his society. Aravind Malagatti describes the state of superstition by narrating his mother's blind faith:

She filled water, turmeric powder and kumkum in the pot and removed the effect of the evil eye apparently cast on me. She cut a lemon into three pieces...finally she said, 'now with that pot in his backyard, he will suffer twice as much as he has made you suffer. (Malagatti 41)

Apart from social taboos, Both Aravind Malagatti and Tulsi Ram recollect the quarrels of their community people with upper caste people. In *Government Brahmana* Aravind Malagatti's family and others from his lane used to go to lake to wash clothes. There were five stones at different places. On seeing Dalit women, women from upper caste used to start abusing them and turn their face in disgust. Most of the time the abusing session used to turn into fight.

My avva, her sisters and other womenfolk used to set out together from the house to wash clothes. This was together a troop- in case any upper caste began a fight. Then all mouths of our lane would join together and open up....eventually they would pull at each other's hair. (Malagatti 27-28)

Similarly, in Tulsi Ram's village the inter caste fight used to take place against the cheating of upper caste landlords. They used to ask one and half time extra crops as interest. Against their illegitimate demand, fights used to take place as protest:

Brahman hamesa bhale aur ballam se laisa rahate kintu dalit sirf lathiya rakhate... Lekin Dalit mahilae pratirodha banakar samane aati aur mare janavaro ki pasaliya, gaddo me pheki gandagi - ' biyana' handiyo me bharakar un par toot padati (Ram 64)

Brahmin always armed with lance but Dalit keeps only Lathis...but Dalit women come in resistance of taking ribs of dead animals. (Ram 64)

Both Aravind Malagatti and Tulsi Ram have depicted the problems of Dalits and consider education as only solution of the problems of Dalits. But Aravind Malagatti has given the constructive solution for the problems of Dalits. Being writer with progressive thoughts Aravind Malagatti finds out inter-caste marriage and inter caste dining a remedy to change the mindset of Dalits and Non- Dalits in his autobiography *Government Brahmana*.

Though there has been a progressive development in various fields over the years, the social system in India is yet to see drastic changes with regard to the status of Dalits. In spite of enjoying the ever-increasing privileges, Dalits still continue to be largely subjugated hierarchical mindsets. They cannot aspire for anything more than what is allotted to them to do; that is why they continue to be insignificant other. Despite various laws and constitutional safeguards, Dalits continue to be defined in terms of untouchability, impurity and regarded as outcastes. Aravind Malagatti and Tulsi Ram through their respective autobiographies depict the role of the social and cultural structures in perpetual reinforcement of caste inequalities. Both writers take a stand to fight against the hierarchical society and upper caste domination and interrogate and deconstruct caste supremacy. Through their texts they give voice against humiliation, subjugation and call for implementation of social justice.

Both Aravind Malagatti's *Government Brahmana* and Prof. Tulsi Ram's *Murdahiya* have documented the continuous injustices on Dalits in Indian caste society. Dalit autobiographies are the creative piece of art of downtrodden people which articulate the oppressed voice and provide an account of awareness about their rights among Dalit community as a whole. Through the narrative of pain, under the influence of Dr. Ambedkar's philosophy, the trauma of Dalit society has been highlighted to give a glimpse to the world reader about status of Dalits in Indian society. Both Prof. Tulsi Ram and Aravind Malagatti survived in the striking

state of poverty, bearing atrocities and societal injustice, and in the foolish and superstitious environment. But, without sharing the feature of the mainstream autobiographies, both autobiographer Aravind Malagatti and Tulsi Ram shamelessly assert the Dalit self under the influence of Ambedkar. They exhibit that this assertive approach has awakened this marginal group to reconstruct the social structure based on the principles of equality, liberty and fraternity. A new consciousness has come to Dalits that discards the burden of discrimination, exploitation, social and political injustice and helps them to give a shape to mental horizon. Thus, Autographies play a very significant role, in stopping injustice against the Dalits and also play a poignant role in identifying their self.

The autobiographies under study highlight the reality of Indian caste centred society and present a real description of Dalits – as a deprived section of caste based Indian society. *Government Brahmana* is a testimony of tragic life of Dalits in Karnataka. He represents life of Dalits; giving space to customs, traditions, exploitation of women, poor economic condition and history. *Murdahiya* is the reflection of Tulsi Ram's life in his village and in Ambedkar hostel, Ajangarh. He discovers the reality of Dalit life and questions the religion, discrimination, exploitation by the land lords, untouchability and injustice. Tulsi Ram expresses his struggle to get education in the superstitious environment and struggle of Dalit community for the survival where Dalit males are beaten up and killed and female are forced in the profession of prostitution. The present study is to focus on the socioeconomic conditions of Dalits, being thematic in nature, such as their poor settlement, lack of basic needs as hospitality, electricity, water, food; and discrimination against them at the every walk of the life as public places, schools etc.

Despite marked cultural and geographical differences and similarities both autobiographies *Government Brahmana* and *Murdahiya* are aimed to highlight the problem of Dalits and deals with the same issues and help to understand the originality of contemporary Dalit life through discourse. On the basis of analysis of these two autobiographies, it is appropriate to say that Dalit autobiographers have become aware of their situation in the Indian Society. Meanwhile, education has played a pivotal role in the growth of this marginalized group.

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