

## THE THEORY OF EMOTIONS IN DALIT WOMEN AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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### **Abstract**

*Our emotions play a significant role to establish our character and behavior. Emotionality establishes fear, anger and stimuli in the environment. According to James Lange Theory, the bodily changes follows directly the perception of the exciting fact or action first, than feelings of the same enters at the last in the form of emotions. In the beginning of Dalit women Autobiographies women were depicted to face the physical problems by society thereafter, she would feel disgust, fear, anger, distress, feeling of creative, feeling of loneliness, Positive self feelings (self-assertion) and Negative self feelings (submission). Sometimes we can't control our feelings, those wounded nostalgias convert into emotions in every human behavior according to their personal perspectives. In the process of framing the identities, emotions play its own significant role in making or destroying the personality. However these emotions are prevalent in every living organism and stimulates in different situations. Emotions can help to upsurge the intelligence or decrease the reasoning. Especially, Dalit women autobiographies are pregnant with many emotions which were practically handled by the depressed class in the society. Marginalized selves are very powerful in its nature but the external force made them to suffer in the societal phenomena. The problem of 'constructing self' is the challenging aspect to marginalized self because more or less primary emotions have their own impact on human understanding, but to overcome all those problems and how they managed their emotions are the subject matter for this paper.*

**Keywords :** *Emotions, Dalit, Marginalized, Self*

**THE THEORY OF EMOTIONS IN DALIT WOMEN  
AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

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**M**any Dalit autobiographies are dealt with female problems. Social issues are highlighted in the works of many critics. The psychological perspective of life was neglected by the society and concerns.

The current paper measures the extent of emotions incorporated in some of the autobiographies of Dalit. These stories include a study of translated fiction that revolves around in different emotional developments. The passions as well as emotions are subjective as they are gaining an universal appeal owing to the spontaneous, careful handling.

The theory of emotions in Dalit women autobiographies of 21<sup>st</sup> century can be studied very effectively in the autobiographies of Baby Kamble's "The Prison's we Broke" and Urmila Pawar's "The Weave of My Life" are written with a deep rooted urge with the concerns of Mahar community operation. Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar stood a measure source of inspiration for Baby Kamble as a Dalit writer in Marathi. Her engagement is with the history of Dalit operation she never tried to glorify the life of the Dalit community. Where as she expresses to demonstrate how Bhraminical dimension had turned the Mahars into slaves. The significant features of Kamble's Autobiography The Prisons we broke is a transparence with which she brought out the internal trauma of psyche of her people situations of the threshold of a fundamental transformation.

Kamble writes Dalits have been victimized through the structure hierarchy of water tight compartments of caste that maintain by the inequality of the upper class people. On the contrary the high class people were the masters of the low caste and were privileged the life with all luxuries and comfort.

She concentrated on the dalit women where the labors on socio- economic unrest lack of freedom equal opportunities and justice by the contemporary society.

One of the theories of emotion is triggered in the autobiography with its subjugated emotions. Kamble presents newly married young woman suffering the worst fate , girls are usually married off wedded daughter in law was to prepare food for the family without being given the chance of making any complaint. So many time she was abused by her in laws like :

"Look at the bhakris this slut has prepared. She can't even make a few bhakris properly, Oh well, what can one expect of this daughter of their dunce"<sup>1</sup>

They lead a very pathetic life in their husband's home. They were the worst victims of patriarchy, caste consciousness, and gender proclivity and domestic violence. Kamble describes about her pathetic situation and her emotions are making her 'self' strong. She minutely and painfully portrayed the torches a dalit woman had to undergo. In her autobiography her world is physically located on the margins of the village and also on the margins of imaginary, it shows the they were being cut off from the village as unclean, impure, polluting and untouchable, her narration reflects people without seeming to glorify their terrible condition. The love for her suffering people organically fused to evolve the self critical and yet humane and mature tone. She never narrated sinking into self pity.

In one of her incidents, one can notice that the subtle sense of humor as evidenced by her descriptions of ritual baths , unwashed children dripping noses, the games and weddings , it was intense struggle an oppressive way of life and the promise of more dignified . Yet unfamiliar new world brings to light her view from within which was totally lost. She graphically describes the physical and psychological violence of women experienced at Mahar community. She had shown the remarkable dignity of Mahar women, in their struggle through the agents of transformation of community. 'The Prisons We Broke' reveals the construction of the resistance of the selfhood and subjectivity of a person and even on entire marginalized community. It can be taken as a tremendous transformative potential of oppressed people to change the world.

The saga of dalit women is not craving for wealth but for satisfied life in every extent. Her father was a contractor in Phalton, and a successful person in his profession but he had caged his wife in four walls. She expresses the custom of keeping women in home. She says:

In those days, it was the custom to keep women at home, behind the threshold. The honour enjoyed a family was in proportion to the restrictions imposed on the women of the house. When no one could see even a nail of the women thus confined within the four walls of the house, then this 'honour' became the talk of the town-a byword among the relatives and friends in the surrounding village. Then people would tell each other, how one Pandharinathm Mistry kept his wife completely hidden in his house and how even the rays of the sun didn't know her. <sup>2</sup>

The anxiety evokes in her mind by the act of her husband. This kind of activity hurts to their feelings and they try to find a way to get off from that problematic situation.

As some philosophers spoke of feelings of fear and anguish as an enriching response to discovering one's own freedom. She has provided a narrative discourse of a marginalized self. His journey towards the self , her self conception rests on the Psyche of oppressed society. The battle between the society and her 'Self' is continued. Over the ages. The dalit women were exploited by the society and in her own community. She puts one incident where a father in law is advising to his son and preparing him for the upcoming future, before marriage he says:

You are a man, you must behave like one! You must be proud and firm. You must walk tall. Twirl your moustache and show us you are a man. Are you

wearing bangles like a women? Then? Do you know about that Aaja of yours? He was a distant relative of course relative, of course! He was a real hero among men ! He could fell down any wild beast, however ferocious, at one stroke! He used to carry an axe with him at all the time . Once his wife smiled at his cousin. Finished! He lured her with sweet words. Took her to a field and just axed her down. Cut her into pieces then and there! The entire maharwada trembled on hearing his name. such is you lineage, remember! Never mind if you have to go to prison six months! You have to chop off your wife's nose and present it your brother and father . they mustn't have any respect left to sit with the members of the panch. <sup>3</sup>

Her farther in law and mother in law poisons the ears of their, every night such a new kind of punishment is fixed for a women. The readers can see the dialogues which evokes on false pride , it is an emotion which blinds the human from reality, philosophers distinguished pride into two kinds , one is 'true' which arises at the time of achievement and another is false, where it blinds human to their limitations, make them overreach and commit the sin the ancients called 'hubris'. In the above incident, women is humiliated by their own community people and suffered by the ignorance of her husband. The reason is hunger, poverty and lack of education. In another incident, a poor girl is guided by a woman that Mahar women were supposed to draw their pallav forward from the forehead down to the nose. If that girl stood against the custom than she should face the provocation by the surrounded women .this disgruntle attitude of the community creates humiliation and this humiliation is a kind of feeling of degradation and helps her to get retaliation in the society. As Kofi Annan , Noble Laureate and former UN Secretary –General ,says :

'all the cruel and brutal things , even genocide, start with the humiliation of one individual'. It's for this reason that humiliation has been called the ' nuclear bomb of the emotions', fuelling a desire for revenge at all costs. <sup>4</sup>

In the autobiography 'The Weave of My Life' by Urmila Pawar explores her life as an activist in the history of Dalit feminist movement in Maharastra. Her unique reconstruction of 'female self' is the center point of the autobiography. As she says at the beginning of the Autobiography 'Aayadan' the generic term is used for all the household objects and things made by bamboo, weaving household things with bamboo is the traditional work by the old tribal community called Burud and maximum Mahar Community people carried out this profession in Konkan region. Urmila Pawar belongs to that community her mother used to weave some things like basket, utensil, and weapon, her act of weaving the stories is metaphorically compared how her mother used to weave the objects. It was the act of two people in the different generation but a traditional work has been changed according to the situation. Urmila weaved the stories as mother weaved the baskets.

Marginalized memoir opens with the description of Urmila Pawar's Village life and working class women who travel from their village to Ratnagiri market to sell various things.



Urmila Pawar believes that, the Dalit is oppressed and suppressed by the social system of India. She takes readers back to those days , where her ancestors used to climb the mountains to sell wares in the markets of Phansawale, Ratnagiri. Phansawale, was a remote area known for its wild animals with snakes and haunted noises. The Forest area was not completely safe for women threatened by many sex perverts at that place. She suffered in the orthodox and conservative society. Her experience reflected through emotional feelings, which are captured by Urmila Pawar, herself in sequential order. Urmila Pawar, recalling her inner turbulence plummeting in the pathetic dimensions. Her social experiences are highlighted in her memoir and the set of emotions in deferent conditions. As Judith Harrias observes in his work 'signifying pain' says,

"Writing can perhaps help to transform intense psychological pain into a discursive art form that has significance for others and serves to aid or abet their own emotional trials".<sup>5</sup>

Pawar's experience in primary school was:

"One day I soiled my pants while crossing the compound and that is when I realized the real meaning of school. I just did not go back to that school again. Later I was enrolled in the first standard of the Damle School. On the first day we were let off after prayers. I went home. My sister asked me, 'What happened in school?' I answered, 'Nothing.' She burst out laughing. For the next three years I studied only because I was afraid of my father."<sup>6</sup>

She understood the harsh realities of life in first standard, her emotions took new dimension about the school, her father was forcing her to attend the school but she refused to go. This makes her to feel afraid to her father. This situation made her to focus on schooling. Throughout her childhood she failed to understand the nature of her father because her age and cognitive strategy of understanding was very low. Finally her father died at the beginning, she felt joy but when she came to know that her father was very positive about his children's education before his death, Urmilatai felt sad.

After the death of her father, mother took the responsibility of the house. She started toiling hard whole day, she would sit and weaving baskets till late at night in that situation we can analyze the feeling of self pity and worry after the death of her husband Urmilatai says: Aaye changed. Earlier she was thrifty, now she became sordidly sting.<sup>7</sup> Another kind of emotion triggers here in the form of responsibility, working is healing, her isolation taught her to lead the life and be in comfort zone, the feeling of comfortable state for her life is matters now. Changing human emotions to better contend for their selves' betterment and development in future, are important aspects in their life, timorous attitudes in life teaches her to overcome from her grief.

Urmilatai relives another situation when women from the surrounding villages would come for Urmilatai's house to purchase bamboo baskets and utensils, that time her mother was busy with the customers and she used to scold her children. She intended to be serious in life, now she became combative. Many times she cursed her children. This shows her feelings of responsibility triggered through emotions, she frightened with life of

loneliness after the death of her husband. By scolding children she started to teach some responsibilities. Eventually her children also became serious about their newly marginalized life, they started home delivery to regular customers. Once Urmilatai was sent to home delivery for regular customers. She confesses:

“Some of the people she sent me to never allowed me to enter their houses. They made me stand at the threshold; I put the baskets down and they sprinkle water on them. They would drop two coins in my hands from above, avoiding contact, as if their hands would have burnt had they touched me. If the house belonged to one of the classmates, the shame of it was killing.”<sup>8</sup>

Urmilatai's mother propelled her children towards new life, which is filled with sorrowfulness and shamefulness. When Urmilatai went to give some baskets that time she encountered with the another face of life, had been humiliated by upper caste woman. She sprinkled water and dropped two coins, the reader should observe one thing carefully that the little girl, she was unaware of these kind of social conditions; she felt shame of being a lower caste. She continues her thought and assumed that if that house would have been belonged to one of her friends than she should feel ashamed. These emotions are not common because somewhere that motivates for strong life. Confronting and confessing her feelings of shame and irritation. In this way they deploy the emotions in the hopes of better comprehending.

It seems that another aspects of negative mirroring is also essential for positive emotions like: anxiety, humiliation, self pity, shame and embarrassment are the reasons for joy, excitement and hopefulness as Judith Harris observes in his signifying pain :

“Out of a sense of personal tragedy or conflict, these writers have sought a literary representation that would help them to comprehend better their histories from present perspectives.”

Such a therapeutic outlet on once emotions is helpful for the readers to understand human emotions and its causes and effects. The realistic experiences with the concrete emotions are related in the life of Dalit woman, she encountered with another horrific experience in her life while she was playing in the ground near to the temple as usual and the priest was busy in his puja(worship). Usually she waited for him for Prasad(offertory or A devotional offering made to a god, typically consisting of food that is later shared among devotees ) but he didn't come out after a long time the door opened and Ulgawwa , a Komti girl came out, she was frightened.

Urmilatai says: Suddenly I was frightened of the priest. I wanted to ask Aaye why Ulgawwa was crying but could not do so. My secret would have been out.<sup>9</sup>

Repeated painful experiences help us to redirect the new notions, about the dreadful experience by the little girl. The effect of this situation on her mind made her to think about Ulgawwa and the priest. This mental event associated with her emotions and forced her to think about that girl badly. Out of deep suffering in her life, self triggered to accept what the society had taught them through experience.

Many times the suffering self demands the speaking self, because suffering always there behind the narration and its narrator to explore his ethos and pathos systematically in writing especially in Autobiographies. Urmila tai explores and shows her cognitive development in the work. In her surrounding men dominated over their wives. In front of her a husband used to beat his pregnant wife. Her nostalgias of being a woman are melancholic life. Already women are discriminated twice as a marginalized by the society and political, but now she found within the society by her husband, that kind discrimination was called gender.

Freud observes that,

“An individual who cannot remember the whole of what is repressed in him or her is obliged to repeat the ordeal as a contemporary event, rather than remembering it as something that belongs exclusively to the past, helps to explain in part why painful experiences are often dramatized in confessional art”.

The storm fallen over her son's death, was the same experience which her mother had felt after the death of her elder son. That made her to think the reason about his train accident here, zal (kind of emotion) triggers after his death, which means melancholic feeling at irretrievable loss, after her meeting with Meenakshi she returned her house while her husband was sitting in front of television, watching some programme when doorbell rang. The door was opened by her elder daughter she narrates:

“A policeman was standing there. Mr. Pawar immediately got up and went to the door. One of my nephews was in the police department and sometimes his police friends used to drop in to enquire about him. “It must be one of his friends”, I thought when I looked out from the kitchen to see who it was.

Mr. Pawar asked something of the policeman and then suddenly started beating his forehead with his palm, then he quickly turned inside, calling me loudly. I ran to him. Behind the police, I could glimpse some cold unknown faces. “What happened? What happened?” I asked. My heart in my mouth with fear and tension. Mr. Pawar wailed, “What a blow; it's all over”, and ran out following those men. My heart skipped several beats. I also followed him running. Those strange men stopped me saying, “Your son has met with an accident. He fell down from the train. You wait here. Don't come. They will bring him here.” It was an earthquake; the ground under my feet gave away and sank.”<sup>10</sup>

In this disgruntle situation, her feelings turned into grief and suffering. Her husband started crying and beating his forehead because he lost his lovable son. This moment had changed their life then, they were in morbid curiosity to know the reason of their son's death. She kept thinking about how had he fallen off the train? By this kind of a situation stimulate her to think about her life once and such an emotion forced her to know the reason she compared her son's death with her brother's death, who committed suicide in college hostel because he had been falsely implicated in a fraud in the rationing office where he worked. Her thinking level had been totally changed in the life's situations and circumstances. All the emotions in her life made her strong to think and act wisely. At the

last she found the reason from his friend that the college was against reservations. Such personal emotions were caused her to think about the betterment of her community she activated in Ambedkarite movement. As Charles Darwin, a naturalist, proposed that emotions evolved because,

“They were adaptive and allowed humans and animals to survive and reproduce. Feeling of love and affection lead people to seek mate and reproduce. Feelings of fear compel people to either fight or flee the source of danger.”<sup>12</sup>

To conclude about emotional theory in Dalit woman Autobiography, the emotions prepare human being for the future and to make the use of particular stimuli in the environment. In Dalit women Autobiographies, women shared their personal and social emotions to confess the problems and strategies of overcoming from the critical situations. Today they are capable to evaluate particular incidents cognitively.

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