

**REFLECTION OF ALIENATION OF WOMEN, CASTE, RACE
AND GENDER THROUGH SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

D.R. MANE
ACS COLLEGE,
SHANKARAGAR, NANDED

SANDEEP INGLE
S.R.T.M UNIVERSITY,
NANDED, INDIA

The present paper tries to examine how the other women negotiate their identities inside and outside their groups in the context of sexism within patriarchal society. Dalits and African Americans are recognizably the others in their respective societies. The place of women in society was always a question as they encounter too many problems, like their status in society, their education etc. Women all over the world stand at the same pole in relation to the problems they face. When we consider the historical perspective of the world, we realize the fact that, women from every corner of the world always fight for their identity. The historical subjugation of people based on their race and caste assume a further paradigm of gender discrimination when the women struggle for identity and respect not only against the respective social structure which have historically exploited them sexually but also against the men of their own groups who often fail to acknowledge their rights and contributions in the struggle against oppression.

Moreover, social, political and economical issues have also informed the struggles of underprivileged women and have divided feminists of color from white feminists and Dalit feminists from upper caste and urban feminists in India. Angela Davis, Alice Walker, Maya Angelou and Cherrie Moraga, among others, have discussed the experience and need for organization among women of color. In India, there are women like Babytai kamble, Bama, Viramma, Shantabai Dani, Kumud Pawde, Urmila Pawar etc. wrote their autobiographies

which throne the light on the pathetic condition of dalit women. Dalit feminism is an emerging phenomenon dalit women asserted their selfhood and emerged as activist in the movements inspired by Dr.B.R. Ambedkar. Their work can help to show the exclusion of Dalit women's voices in the two important new social movements of post 1970s Dalit movements and women's movement in general. Dalit literature, historically, have been writing of protest and part of a large social movements. It articulates the voices against the inhuman conditions of existence to which the Hindu caste system has subjected Dalits for thousands of years. As Vidyut Bhagwat clarifies in her essay, according to her, "dalit women, imbued with dalit and feminist consciousness, could provide critical new dimensions, as well as energy and leadership, to both the dalit movement and the women's movement".(Jogdand, P. G. 1995:p-04)

The question of African American and Dalit women is a critical concern that shows internal differentiation among these groups while indicating a similarity between the African American and Dalit consciousness. Black feminist has established African American women and their contributions to the making of both their racial consciousness and that of American identity which is impossible without this consciousness. Dalit feminism is emerging in different parts of India. In situation of being conscious and being neglected in Dalit and women's movements, dalit women recognize and articulate of socio-historical explanation of caste and gender. They deal with these subjects by their own point of view and give the new dimensions of protest as human being.

Autobiographies and social movements discourse bridges individual experience with structural explanation of experiences. "New social movement theorists focus on the crucial role of culture in generating and sustaining social protest. Centering attention on the intersection between culture and social structure, they point out that structural oppression does not necessarily generate recognition and articulation of specific structural grievances" (Klandermans 1992: p-120).

The social movements discourse had a profound influence on the autobiographers' to understand their life experiences. This paper tries to reveal a crucial distinction between articulations of caste, gender and racist experiences and articulations of socio-historical structures of casteism, sexism and racism. Black women autobiographies present the process of victimization of race and sex, and protest their voices and show new black vigor and literary canon towards a close examination of black culture and community. Autobiographies written by black women during the Civil rights movement 1960 to 1975 focuses on experiences of inequality and oppression. It concerned with dual oppression of race and gender. These autobiographies try to focus on the representations of discriminatory experiences in which race and gender intersect. Gender, race and class structures are recognized as interlocking system of domination and marginalized position of black in a white dominated society and female in a male- dominated society.

Civil rights movement and other women's movements failed to specifically address black women's multiple interlocking oppression. During the sixties black men were getting their rights but not a single word was uttered about the basic dignity and genuine rights of the black women. Black men and women fought for their liberation from slavery but not they did not utter a single word against the sexism by black male activist. Therefore, sexism became the sole responsibility of black feminists or activists. In such circumstances black women began to define and identify themselves and tell their stories from their own point of view.

Dalit woman in a society infected with caste and gender privileges and that of African American women in a society that similarly privileges the white race and the masculine gender. Benita Roth's a black feminist in her books *Separate Roads to Feminism and White Feminist Movements in America's Second Wave*, emphasized race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality as crucial informants of feminism by women of color. They illustrate that white women's feminism cannot and does not speak to women of color and their specific crises. In the Indian context, the work of P. G. Jogdand's *Dalit Women in India Issues and Perspectives* and Sharmila rege in her book *Writing Caste /Writing Gender: Reading*

Dalit Women's Testimonies portrays the various aspect of dalit women's life and thrown light on the material circumstances under the dalit women asserted their selfhood and emerged as an activist in the movements. The essence of these works shows that the mainstream women's movements and Dalit movement both failed to address the specificity of Dalit women's oppression. They did not emphasize the different category and did not consider their problems were different as a being Dalit woman. Dalit women have been victims of violence and discrimination inflicted by the caste system. They have been victims of intersection, intersectionality of caste, gender and class and became the weakest among the weaker in Indian society.

It can be found in African American women writers who claimed their racial and gender identities while resisting both racial supremacy and intra-racial patriarchy. African American women stood up against early white feminists in the late 19th century, as Hazel Carby discusses at great length in *Reconstructing Womanhood*. In India, as early as the eighth century, the *Bhakti* movement witnessed the articulation of women from state in southern India, who began resisting patriarchy and caste-based discrimination.

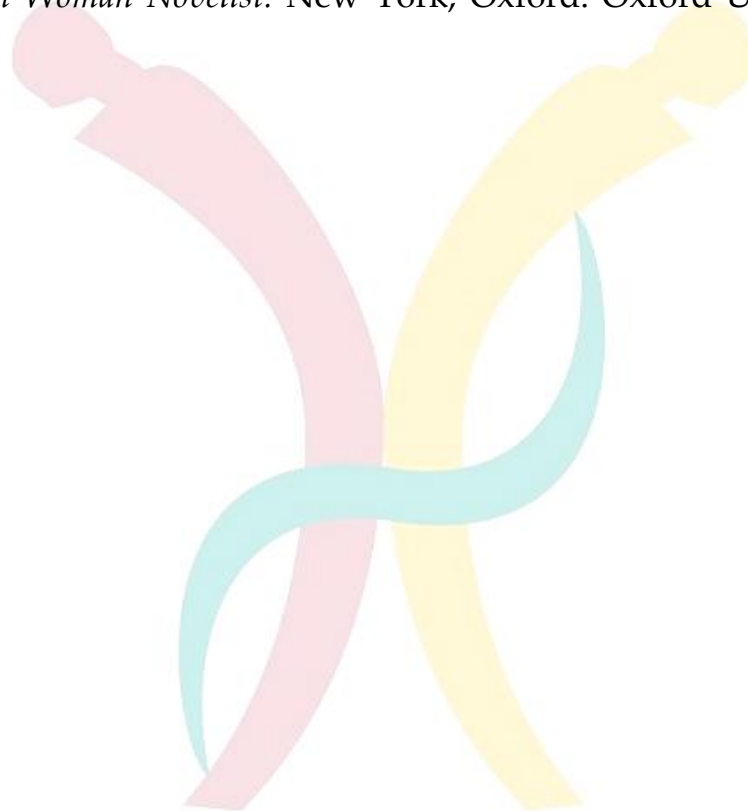
Dalit women are certainly making themselves heard, confronting the continuing tyranny of caste in Indian society and the prolonged neglect of caste issues in the women's movements, while at the same time challenging gender injustice in society and the belittlement of gender issues in the Dalit movement. In the process, they are clearly moving beyond the presentation and analysis of their cause in Dalit women in India and arguing their own case both realistically and forcefully. The influence of the Civil Rights movement changed the perspectives of the Black women. And thereby, they have interpreted the structural oppressions by their own view point which offered them new vision of what they expect and offer them a collective identity.

WORKS CITED

Jogdand, P. G. 1995. *Dalit Women in India: Issues and Perspectives*, New Delhi, Gyan Publication, p.

Paula Stewart Brush. 199. *The Influence of Social Movements on Articulations of Race and Gender in Black Women's Autobiographies*, Sage Publication, P.120

Carby, Hazel, 1987. *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987 P



Higher Education &
Research Society