




## CREATIVE WRITING ON GENDER AND CASTE IN DALIT AUTOBIOGRAPHIES AND BIOGRAPHIES: A VIEW FROM WITHIN

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**Abstract.** This paper critically examines the *oeuvre* of Kaushalya Baisantry and Sharmila Rege, focusing on their creative writing, *Twice Cursed* (orig. *Dohra Abhishaap*, originally published in 1999) and *Writing Caste/Writing Gender: Narrating Dalit Women's Testimonios* (originally published in 2006), respectively. The writings discuss the empirical reality of caste and gender-divided society. The difficulties and challenges that come with being a member of a lower caste in society and being a woman primarily concentrate on gender and caste, which become subjects for investigation and analysis in everyday life. This contrasts standard academic debates regarding gender, which display an anxious curiosity about their own experiences. Critical content analysis is utilized to analyze the data. In order to analyze the intersectionality of gender and caste, several works have been combined. It examines the idea that being a woman and belonging to a lower caste is akin to having "twice cursed" on one's life. However, autobiographies, biographies, and life narratives have attempted to challenge the hegemony of patriarchy and shed light on the oppression experienced in everyday life on the basis of gender and caste.

**Keywords:** caste, creativeness of Dalit autobiography and biography, Indian society, narratives, women.

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## 1. Introduction

Dalit literature is a significant genre within Indian literature, and it represents the voices of voiceless and experience and trauma of the Dalit community who are historically marginalized due to the caste system (Prasad & Gaijan, 2007; Abraham & Misrahi-Barak, 2016). Creative writing of gender and caste in Dalit autobiographies and biographies in the Indian context is a complex and multifaceted one that combines elements of literature, social justice, and identity politics. It illuminates the specific lived realities of Dalits, a community that has long faced systemic marginalization within Indian society. Autobiographies are a powerful medium through which Dalits have expressed their personal stories, struggles, and journeys towards self-assertion and empowerment (Beth, 2007). These autobiographies often serve as a means of reclaiming their identities and challenging the dominant narrative of the caste-based hierarchy.

Gender and caste are intricately linked in the Indian context, and Dalit women often experience a double burden of discrimination, as they face both caste-based oppression and gender-based discrimination (Alam, 2024; Rege, 1996, 1998; Baisantry, 2013; Rao, 2009). The creative exploration of these intersectional experiences in autobiographies and biographies allows for a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by Dalit women and their resilience

in the face of adversity. Creative writing in Dalit autobiographies and biographies allows individuals to reclaim their voices and agency. It enables them to share their unique perspectives on caste and gender, challenging stereotypes, and prejudices.

Moreover, these narratives serve as a powerful tool for self-expression and activism, fostering a sense of solidarity within the Dalit community and raising awareness among the broader society (Beth, 2007). Through creative storytelling and writing, Dalit authors and biographers can challenge the dominant, casteist narratives perpetuated by mainstream literature and society. These narratives often center on upper-caste perspectives and stereotypes about Dalits. By sharing their stories from within the community, Dalit authors contribute to a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of caste dynamics in India (Rege, 1996, 1998).

The creative writing of gender and caste in Dalit autobiographies and biographies is closely tied to the broader struggle for social justice and empowerment. It provides a platform for Dalit voices to be heard and encourages social change by exposing the injustices and inequalities faced by the community (Deo & Zelliot, 1994). Additionally, it is important to note that Dalit experiences are not monolithic; they vary across regions, communities, and individuals. Creative writing allows for the exploration of this diversity, highlighting the unique experiences, and challenges faced by different Dalit individuals and communities.

Women throughout the nation are passionate about improving the status of women via gender equality (Caprioli, 2000; Mill, 2009; O'Connor, 2018; Sisson Runyan & Peterson, 2018; Sainsbury, 1996; Sharma, 2016; Sen & Grown, 2013). The position of females in Indian culture reflects imbalanced relationships supported by religion and patriarchy (Jejeebhoy & Sathar, 2001; Parashar, 1992; Williams & Deo, 2020). Patriarchal society is based on hegemonic masculinity (Das et al., 2024a) and woman's weakness, gendered defined tasks, obligations, and socioeconomic and political domination of a male-centric society (Alam, 2023; Hunnicutt, 2009; Parashar, 1992; Sultana, 2010–2011).

Women are socialized to depend on men through their understanding of religion and patriarchy in our society (Cremer, 2021). In this way, our family set up a play to carry out the legacy of hierarchy and stratified system, called "organizational habitus" (Garcia Coll & Pachter, 2002; Stevens, 2008). Women endure substantial challenges in Indian society, manifesting as exclusion and inequality at various stages of their life.

Many Dalit women's autobiographies and biographies have begun to appear in different languages, *i.e.*, Marathi, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, *etc.*, in the 1990s (Abraham & Misrahi-Barak, 2016; Bhaumik, 2017; Guenther, 2016). It reflected the atmosphere of unhappiness, disappointment, and anger towards caste and gendered society (Alam, 2025; Bhaumik, 2017; Guenther, 2016). The role of gender is constructed, and in this journey, religions and castes have played a significant role (Rege, 2013b, 2015; Baisantri, 2013; Kamble, 2018; Pawar, 2015). Sociology of gender, Dalit feminism and Dalit bahujan are the areas where the hegemony of gendered society can be reduced through demystifying the social construction of reality.

Creative writing of Dalit autobiographies and biographies provide a unique and powerful perspective on the experiences of those who have been historically marginalized and oppressed. These narratives offer a first-hand account of the lived experiences of individuals who have faced discrimination and violence based on their caste and gender identities. Engaging with these narratives enables a deeper understanding of the intersectionality of caste

and gender, and how their interplay reinforces structures of oppression in Indian society. Dalit autobiographies and biographies can help us understand the intersection of caste and gender. Lower caste women are frequently subjected to double prejudice because of their caste and gender. Their narratives can shed light on their challenges and how they resist and navigate oppression. Through the narratives, one can gain critical insight into the intersection of caste and gender in shaping the socio-cultural realities of Dalit women in India. Secondly, Dalit autobiographies and biographies reveal how the dominant caste and gender groups in Indian society have constructed and perpetuated oppressive social structures. Such narratives contribute to an understanding of the ways in which social structures are produced, and how they operate as mechanisms of marginalization and oppression against Dalits (Brueck, 2014).

Furthermore, Dalit autobiographies and biographies help us to understand how Dalits resist and challenge oppression (Beth, 2007). Through creative writings, these narratives exemplify the ways in which Dalit individuals and communities resist marginalization and actively assert their agency in contexts marked by caste-based discrimination and violence. By foregrounding acts of resistance, these narratives reveal how Dalit communities actively contest the dominant social order and assert alternative modes of existence. Lastly, narratives from Dalit writings contribute to the larger discourse on social justice, legal rights, and human rights in Indian society. Moreover, by foregrounding the subaltern epistemologies and lived praxis of Dalit subjects, these narratives function as sites of counter-hegemonic discourse, fostering critical reflexivity and mobilizing socio-political imaginaries towards the realization of emancipatory social justice and decolonial human rights frameworks within the postcolonial Indian milieu (Hunt, 2014; Abraham & Misrahi-Barak, 2016; Rao, 2009). They also serve to destabilize dominant narratives surrounding caste and gender, thereby contributing to the construction of a more inclusive and equitable epistemology of social relations in India.

## 2. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore the subject matter. Specifically, the data is subjected to critical content analysis of Johnson et al. (2017). This analytical technique places great emphasis on the identification of social and cultural influences. Furthermore, it aims to scrutinize, disclose, and modify situations of inequality, with a view towards promoting greater equity (Short, 2017; Johnson et al., 2017). It should be noted that critical content analysis is distinct from the simpler contentment analysis method. This is because it entails the ability to reorganize existing theories, create new methodologies, and develop new compositions.

## 3. Data

The data is primarily taken from the creative works of Rege (1996, 1998, 2003, 2013a, 2013b, 2015) and Baisanry (2013) for this study. The domains of sociological understanding and Hindi Dalit literature have been included. The works of these writers represent the intersectionality of women and lower castes in everyday life. The works discuss the empirical reality of caste and gendered societies from within. Although a woman inscribed within the socio-symbolic matrix of a subaltern caste location contends with interlocking modalities of structural violence, epistemic erasure, caste-gender stratification, and hegemonic patriarchy.

#### 4. Critical content analysis and discussion: understanding the intersectional relation among gender, caste, and religion from within

Rege's (2013b) creative writing *Writing Caste/Writing Gender: Narrating Dalit Women's Testimonios* can be seen as one of those kinds of literature challenging the patriarchal society. In her work *Writing Caste/Writing Gender*, she raises important questions on the issue of caste, class, and gender. She says that caste and class are very much linked with gender (Rege, 2013b). She focused on the Marathi Dalit autobiographical work (Rege, 2013b) by different authors such as Shantabai Dhanaji Dani's *For Us – These Nights and Days* (orig. *Ratrandin Amha*, 1990), Mukta Sarvagod's *Closed Doors* (orig. *Mittleli Kavade*, 1983), Shantabai Kamble's *The Kaleidoscope Story of My Life* (orig. *Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha*, 1998, originally published in 1983), Babytai Kamble's *Our Life or The Prisons We Broke* (orig. *Jina Amucha*, 2018, originally published in 1986), Kumud Pawde's *Outburst* (orig. *Antahsphot*, 1995), Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs* (orig. *Aidan*, 2015, originally published in 2003), Janabai Kachru Girhe's *Deathly Pains* (orig. *Marankala*, 1992), Vimal Dadasaheb More's *Heart of Three Stones* (orig. *Teen Dagdachi Chul*, 2000). She also raised and said that all these autobiographical Dalit works are a testimony (Rege, 2013b). The word *testimonio* is a Latin-American term (from Latin *testimōnium*). Beverley (1989, pp. 12–13) defines *testimonio* in his article "The Margin at the Center: On *Testimonio* (Testimonial Narrative)":

"[...] a novel or novella – length narrative in book or pamphlet (that is, printed as opposed to acoustic) form, told in the first person by a narrator who is also the real protagonist or witness of the events he or she recounts, and whose unit of narration is usually a 'life' or a significant life experience [...] *testimonio* is by nature a protean and demotic form [...]."

One of the creative and critical features of *testimonio* is that the individual life narrative is always and mostly linked with the whole community of a country or a society. The individual talks about his/her life and the community/people of the society where he/she lives. A well-known *testimonio* by women authors is *My Name Is Rigoberta Menchú, and That Is How My Awareness Was Born* (orig. *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia*, 1994, originally published in 1982) by Rigoberta Menchú, *Let Me Speak! Testimony of Domitila, a Woman of the Bolivian Mines* (orig. "*Si me permiten hablar...*" *Testimonio de Domitila, una mujer de las minas de Bolivia*, 1978) by Domitila Barrios de Chungara and Moema Viezzer, *Hear My Testimony: María Teresa Tula, Human Rights Activist of El Salvador* by María Teresa Tula (Stephen, 1994), etc. There are so many mediated and unmediated *testimonio* available in Latin America. *Testimonio* or testimonial literature can help us better understand past events and re-represent the voiceless or subaltern's history and life. These *testimonios*/Dalit autobiographies are the life narratives of those who were at the margin, and still, they are struggling to come and urge for their space in the mainstream/center.

The creative writings of Dalit autobiographies chronicle the life-experiences of the subaltern. The Subaltern Studies Group were formed in India in the 1980s. The well-known group leaders are Ranajit Guha, Gyanendra Pandey, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Sudipta Kaviraj, Partha Chatterjee, Shahid Amin, etc. According to Guha (1989), subaltern studies refers to the broader condition of subordination found within South Asian society,

encompassing hierarchies based on class, caste, age, gender, position, and other forms of inequality. Spivak (1988), in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" says that Third World women are caught between tradition and modernization. She also raises the question of the issue of the voiceless/the marginalized/oppressed.

Rege (2013b) raises some questions related to caste, gender, and class to the prominent academia/university/intellectuals. She writes in *Writing Caste/Writing Gender*:

"How can pedagogical strategies address this and help develop critiques that empower subaltern students to represent themselves more positively? How can the more dominant students in the classroom interrogate their complicity in class and caste privileges without remaining locked in guilt? How can teachers and students address their ignorance about Dalit and working-class cultures?" (Rege, 2013b, p. 14).

What should be the "pedagogical strategies" that help develop the condition of subaltern students and empower them? Dalit and working-class cultures need to re-represent themselves. Caste and class conflicts in our society create a significant gap for women. Women in this scenario of class and caste battle are doubly oppressed. In the Hindu religion, a widow sacrifice was called *sati* or *suttee*. The British abolished sati and understood it as a case of *white men are saving brown women from brown men*:

"The recognition of caste as not just a retrograde past but an oppressive past reproduced as forms of inequality in modern society require that we integrate questions of caste with those of class and gender. For feminist pedagogues and activists who seek to engage with these challenges, it is politically and academically an exciting moment of reflection. It requires thinking out classroom practices in which students' social and political heterogeneity is articulated and engaged in searching out new dimensions of the battles of our times. Recognizing differences, power, class, caste, and community connections means transforming subjectivities, politics and pedagogies. At the level of practice, for those of us who have been complicit in the power and privileges of caste, one of the first realizations is our lack of knowledge of cultures that have been violently marginalized. Much of the feminist discourse of experience has been an autobiography of the upper caste woman, her conflict with tradition and her desire to be modern" (Rege, 2013b, pp. 12–13).

Rege sees the autobiographical Dalit works are stories of anger against injustice and shows the pain of individual and gendered society:

"Can reading and teaching of Dalit autobiographies radicalize the perception of readers? Do readers conveniently consume these narratives as narratives of pain and suffering, refusing to engage with the politics and theory of Ambedkarism? Translator and teacher Arun Prabha Mukherjee argues that autobiographies are not 'sob stories' but stories of anger against injustice. Narendra Jadhav, whose life narrative 'Amcha Baap Aani Amhi' (Our Old Man and We) has been translated into English [...] and French, argues that first-person accounts generate empathy among non-Dalits. Anand Teltumbde finds the autobiographical narratives too individualistic, often glorifying the author, romanticizing Dalit backgrounds and failing to represent collective pain" (2013b, p. 16).

Understanding the realities of oppression requires attentive reading of texts authored by marginalized voices, as these narratives challenge hegemonic representations and offer alternative epistemologies. Omvedt (2006) also writes about the issue of the anti-caste movement, Dalit politics, and women's struggle in India. The intellectual and creative contributions

of Savitribai Phule and Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, as discussed by Rege (2013a), were firmly rooted in a critique of the caste system. The pursuit of an egalitarian society necessitates the annihilation of the caste system. While this discussion engages with only a select few works, a significant example is Pawar's (2015) acclaimed autobiography *The Weave of My Life*, originally written in Marathi in 2003 and later translated into English. Rege (2013b) divides the Marathi Dalit autobiographical work into different parts of memories of...

- ...childhood, household and community;
- ...food and more;
- ...caste, culture and labour;
- ...courtship and marriage;
- ...humiliation and resistance;
- ...caste inequality, writing and activism in Maharashtra, India.

Rege (2013b) characterizes Dalit life narratives as *testimonios* – accounts that go beyond personal stories to represent collective experiences of caste oppression and resistance. These narratives serve as powerful tools of political assertion, giving voice to those historically silenced. Rege (2013b) argues that such testimonies challenge the “official forgetfulness” embedded in dominant historical accounts, which often erase or downplay caste-based violence and struggle. In *The Weave of My Life*, Pawar (2015) writes that the temple priest always treats them as untouchables (Rege, 2015). She tells one of the situations during the marriage ceremony:

“Brahman priests used to perform marriage rituals and ceremonial worship for lower caste people like the Mahars and Chamars, etc. However, the priest would never enter the maharwada to perform these tasks. He would climb a tree on the outskirts of the locality, muttering some chants. Suppose there was a marriage taking place; the bride and groom would be standing in the pandal (the tent erected for the ceremony) in the maharwada with the antarpāt (a piece of cloth that is held between the bride and groom at the time of marriage, prohibiting their looking at each other). The brahman priest would be up on a tree at a distance. Then he would shout the word ‘sawadhan’ (a ritual chanting which means ‘attention’) from the tree” (Rege, 2013b, p. 177).

Dalit communities have historically faced systemic oppression and marginalization due to their caste status, and such injustices persist well into the 20th century, with numerous documented instances of inhumane treatment. Among the many challenges confronting Dalit society, issues of food insecurity and hunger remain particularly severe, reflecting the deep-rooted socio-economic inequalities perpetuated by caste-based hierarchies. They do not get the opportunity to eat proper and healthy food. Forget about the excellent and friendly food! Pawar (2015) recounts one of the situations where Dalits have to struggle to eat mango (Rege, 2015):

“In the Konkan region, among the poorer families, fruits like jackfruit were served before the meal to economise and cut down on the quantity of food to be prepared. She reminisces, ‘I never met a doctor who said have fruit after your meal’” (Rege, 2013b, p. 79);

“Of course, they never got to eat the Alphonso mango, but the rich children would smell these mangoes during the season. Urmilatai's family-owned Alphonso trees in the village, but her mother had rented them out to the landlord to cultivate in return for cash. Sometimes if they were lucky, they got Alphonso mangoes that birds had

eaten, but otherwise, the Rayval (the lower variety) fell to their lot. Ganya, a watchman of the mango gardens, did not have a home and lived in their front yard. He would bring them the slightly spoilt Alphonso mangoes and charge them nothing for them. Moreover, because of this, the children thought this homeless, penniless man was rich!" (Rege, 2013b, pp. 182–183).

Rege (2013b) also describes one of the heinous crimes that happened. We can imagine and see where we are as human beings. She says:

"In one instance, a pregnant widow was ordered to abort the baby. She refused, and panchayat members from nine villages met and decreed that several women would get together and kick the widow until the fetus was aborted. The woman died after a week. Speaking of this terrible story, Urmilatai asks, 'Why should this issue of honour that kills humanism and is like an axe for women be so ingrained in women themselves?'" (Rege, 2013b, p. 190).

We, as human beings, fail to understand the pain of others. Where women become the enemy of women. Pawar (2015) says that men and women are different and distinct from each other. They both have power in their way. Men have the muscle power on the one hand, and women can give birth another hand:

"On the one hand, the woman is also an individual like a man. She must get all the rights and power a man has. If a man has muscle power, a woman can give birth. These two powers are distinct and different; they should not be evaluated together; but individually. All these thoughts had started taking root in my mind and growing; however, I was often admonished, 'Are you going with 'those' women? Take care. Those thoughts are not at all necessary for us, for our community!'" (Rege, 2013b, p. 201);

"Moreover, the person would make such a face that I used to feel like I had joined some criminal gang. However, I had gained a new way, a new perspective of looking at the women around me. I was becoming fearless. The women's movement had given me a clean, clear, unbiased view of looking at any man or woman as an individual and had given me the strength to adhere to this in the actual practice" (Rege, 2013b, p. 202).

It is observed that the caste system divides our society in a discriminatory way. However, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel's work *The Communist Manifesto* (orig. *Das Kommunistische Manifest*, 2022, originally published in 1848), discusses that the class divides the society into two large groups: bourgeoisie and proletariat. The working class/proletariat are farmers, vendors, labour workers, vegetable sellers, etc. They are the most exploited people in our society. The creativity of Dalit literature explains that gender and class are inextricably linked with the caste system. Dalit writers must write Dalit literature with Dalit consciousness. Who can explain the context and situation of Dalit life better than non-Dalit?

Rajni Tilak's poem *They Want to Divide Us* empowers us and gives us strength to abolish caste-based society:

"They want to divide us  
In the false perplexity of subcastes  
Into Valmiki, Raigar, Chamar, Khatik,  
Dhanuk, Kanjar, and Adivasi.  
Manu says hates the lower castes,  
Consider them lower than even the second and third,

Then their status will be fixed  
 Moreover, casteism will flourish.  
 Do not go along with their prescription.  
 Their purpose is to set us against each other.  
 The formidable tree of Brahmanism,  
 Rooted in inequality,  
 Should not flower and bear fruit.  
 We have to fight against inequality,  
 To create language, expand knowledge;  
 Only then will we make a casteless society" (Brueck, 2014, p. 41).

The poem brings hope to so many Dalits. Brueck's (2014) *Writing Resistance: The Rhetorical Imagination of Hindi Dalit Literature* did an excellent investigation into Hindi Dalit literature. She says that Dalit people struggle for power and authority over their representation. So many American authors have worked on caste and Dalit feminism. Zelliot's (2013) *Ambedkar's World: The Making of Babasaheb and the Dalit Movement* deals with the vision of Ambedkar (Rege, 2013a), who always want a casteless society. Nancy Fraser's works *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory* (2008, originally published in 1989) and *Fortunes of Feminism: From State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis* (2013) both deal with the issues of identity, emancipation, labour, and power in the society.

The creative work by Baisantry's (2013) *Twice Cursed* (दोहरा अभिशाप) was the first Dalit Hindi autobiography written in 1999 by a woman in Hindi, which discusses the pain and trauma of Dalit women in everyday life. *The Weave of My Life* (Pawar, 2015), *Twice Cursed* (Dohra Abhishaap) (Baisantry, 2013), and *The Prisons We Broke* (Kamble, 2018) – in all these works, women's experiences of discrimination cannot be understood in isolation from their caste and class identities, which together produce layered and intersecting forms of oppression. They are doubly marginalized, firstly, by their gender and secondly by their caste. Baisantry (2013), in her autobiographical work *Twice Cursed*, says that women are the most deprived and oppressed section of our society. Do we think that women are a machine for giving birth (Das et al., 2024b)? A deeper understanding of the consequences of educational exclusion among Dalit and oppressed communities can be gleaned from a compelling paragraph in Baisantry's autobiography:

"Mother gave birth to five daughters in succession.  
 After the eldest sister, there was a son but he died when he was one and a half years old.  
 After that she had two daughters, they also died when they were 10–11 months old.  
 After that the mother gave birth to four daughters in succession.  
 Now we are left with 5 sisters.  
 Later gave birth to two sons and a girl.  
 One of them, a boy and a girl, died" (2013, p. 11) (English translation).

Through her narrative, Baisantry (2013) documents the exploitation her mother faced, offering a powerful lens into the intergenerational struggles of Dalit women. Baisantry (2013) draws attention to the historical neglect of women's health within marginalized communities, observing that crucial decisions regarding healthcare were often overlooked. This neglect led to the loss of numerous lives during childbirth. Dalit communities, positioned at the lowest rung of the caste hierarchy, have endured multifaceted oppression – religious, eco-



nomic, social, and cultural – demonstrating the pervasive and intersectional nature of their marginalization. Baisantry (2013) says that so many women are suffering. They are not able to stand for their life. She says that she got the opportunity to talk about her experiences herself and all the women who could not get the opportunity. She discusses that her life surrounds the suffering of many women in her community. Baisantry writes:

"Male dominated society does not tolerate openness of women...  
But I also want freedom so that I can present my views in front of the society.  
Other women may have had experiences like mine.  
But due to fear of society and family  
Afraid of revealing the experience to the society and  
Lives in suffocation all her life" (2013, p. 7) (English translation).

Men and women are distinct in their gender, possessing unique biological and social characteristics that contribute to their identity. It is essential for society to recognize that both genders are integral components of our social system and that one cannot exist without the other. The absence of one gender would cause an imbalance in our society, leading to a breakdown of cultural norms and social structures. It is important to acknowledge and appreciate the differences between men and women and work together to promote gender equality and social justice. The notion that men are the physical embodiment of society, while women are the emotional and nurturing force, is an antiquated and limiting view that perpetuates gender stereotypes and reinforces gender inequality (Das et al., 2024a). Instead, we must recognize that both genders possess a range of physical, emotional, and intellectual traits that contribute to their unique perspectives and experiences. By fostering an inclusive and equitable society, we can leverage the strengths of both genders and work towards a brighter and more prosperous future for all. It is time for our society to recognize and celebrate the diversity of gender and work together towards a more just and equitable world.

## 5. Discussion from the narratives of within

The creative work of Rege (2013b) and Baisantry (2013) gave a broad picture of social stratification and hierarchy in Indian society and their effects on Indian society. The idea of Ghandy (2012), Phule (Rege, 2013a), and Ambedkar (Rege, 2013a) have been included for demystifying the social construction of accepted reality. Narrating life experiences have been discussed. The exploitative nature of caste and gendered society where have played a decisive role in pushing back women in society. Rege (2013b) sparks a discourse about prominent authors' adoption of Dalit narratives by providing a detailed overview of several Dalit philosophers, including genuinely talented writers who have pondered the subject.

This research is grounded in the scholarship of Rege (2013b) and Baisantry (2013), focusing on the interplay between sociological insights and Hindi Dalit literary narratives. The creative works of these writers offer a nuanced representation of the intersectionality of women and lower caste in everyday life, thereby providing a rich source of data for our analysis. In particular, Rege's (2013b) work has great relevance to research, as it sheds light on the significance of Dalit women's biographies in understanding the complex interplay of caste and gender in Indian society.

Rege's (2013b) work brings to the forefront the lived experiences of caste oppression and gender issues that Dalit women face in both public and private domains, thereby highlighting the need to situate these experiences within broader sociological and cultural contexts. In this regard, the historical and cultural aspects of gender exploitation in Indian society are also discussed in detail, providing a comprehensive framework for our analysis.

Another important source of data for the study is Baisantry's (2013) *Twice Cursed*, which is an autobiography that provides a rich and nuanced account of the empirical reality of caste and gendered society. Through her personal experiences, Baisantry (2013) offers valuable insights into the challenges and issues that women from lower castes face in contemporary India. In particular, her work sheds light on the various forms of discrimination and oppression that are perpetuated against women in lower caste societies.

The creative works of Rege (2013b) and Baisantry (2013) provide a rich source of data and insights into the complex interplay of caste and gender in Indian society. By situating the experiences of Dalit women within broader sociological and cultural contexts, our study seeks to contribute to the existing literature on this important and under-researched topic. Ultimately, our aim is to shed light on the various forms of discrimination and oppression that women from lower castes face, and to offer recommendations for policy and practice that can help to address these issues and promote greater equality and social justice at large in Indian society.

Rege's (1996, 1998, 2003, 2013b) analysis suggests broader lessons about the institution-alization of caste and gender. Dalit women's experiences, through their life narratives, give them empirical knowledge and pragmatism. These works highlight the multifaceted nature of exploitation experienced by Dalit women, rooted in the intersections of gender, caste, and religion. These works also illuminate the experiences of oppression shaped by gender, caste, and religion, while critically examining the patriarchal and psychological underpinnings of dominant ideologies in everyday life.

Stratification factors have taken considerable time to evolve into a complex social structure in Indian society. The nature of exploitation, on gender and caste basis, has been understood as a double curse for Indian women discussed by Baisantry (2013). Discrepancies between theoretical (book view) perspectives and empirical (field view) observations regarding gendered social practices are evident. While women are often revered symbolically as deities, this reverence does not extend pragmatically to Dalit women, who continue to face marginalization and exclusion.

## 6. Conclusions

Caste and gender are two features, which stratify Indian society. Testimonies have provided a platform for Dalit feminists to make the history of women for a Dalit moment. The creativity of Dalit autobiographies and biographies have played a significant role in understanding the new paradigm of mental oppression of lower caste in Indian society. Patriarchy and hierarchical system exist through the support of the dominant class and the acceptance of the proletariat class, which is normalized through false consciousness of otherworldly asceticism. The deeply rooted subordination of females in Indian society is perpetuated through the influential socio-cultural and religious norms of the twice-born communities.

Patriarchy is upheld not only by a male-dominated hegemonic society but also through the active and passive contributions of women. Literature serves as a reflective medium that reveals the workings of patriarchy through various social, cultural, and religious phenomena. Central to this is the division of labor, which is also intricately connected to the dynamics between the oppressor and the oppressed. The nature of work remains deeply gendered, reinforcing and reproducing existing social hierarchies. Dalit literary creativity challenges the notion that numerical majority is a prerequisite for resistance. Instead, it asserts that meaningful opposition to structures of oppression is already emerging from the collective alignment of marginalized, depressed, and disenfranchised communities within modern capitalist Indian society. Within this framework, religion plays a dual role: while it often perpetuates gender-based exploitation, it also offers a critical lens through which such exploitation can be interrogated and analyzed. Through case studies of women's engagement with conservative religious traditions, scholars are able to uncover and articulate nuanced forms of agency exercised by women in these settings. Simultaneously, religion remains a central and powerful force in Indian society, raising important empirical questions about its pervasive influence on social structures and power relations in everyday life.

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