The topic selected for this project “Dalit Writing: Issues and Interpretations” came to be felt very vast during this study. Hence while proceeding further on the hypothesis the utmost care was taken to restrict it only to the Dalit Female and Male Autobiographies. The first chapter is of introductory that is entitled as ‘Issues of Verna and Caste: the Source of Dalit Literature’ gives the brief social history of India, without which the emergence of Dalit writing would not be stressed out. Further it discusses in brief all the genres in the Dalit writing till date the Dalit writers have attempted. The oral traditions prevailing in the Dalit communities began to transform into the written form only after the emergence of the new genre called Dalit writings of various types which have its roots in the Dalit Movement named as Dalit Panther. And the foundational force of it is in the ideology and life-mission of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. Ambedkar struggled hard for the human rights, dignity and self-respect of the untouchables, tribes and Shudra throughout his life. He asserted that India should have social democracy so that the political democracy would succeed. In his opinion political democracy will be of no use if the social democracy is not there in India. He knew well that till Caste is there in India social inequality would continue and there would not be sharing of democratic power in the Indian political democracy. Though the British would hand over the power to India, the power would be only in the hands of the Brahminical forces that would continue to dominate Shudra and untouchables. Hence this chapter stresses out the history of Chaturvarna, Caste, untouchability, etc. though in brief, and then proceeds to the history of Dalit writings that too in brief.

In the second chapter the three Dalit Female autobiographies – Karukku by Bama, The Prisons We Broke by Baby Kamble and The Weave of My Life by Urmila Pawar – are discussed. The third chapter the interpretations of six Dalit Male autobiographies – An Outsider by Laxman Mane, The Outcaste by Sharankumar Limbale, The Branded by Laxman Gaikwad, Outcaste: A Memoir by Narendra Jadhav, Joothan – A Dalit’s Life by Omprakash Valmiki and The Scar by
K. A. Gunasekaran – have been made. The fourth chapter has been devoted to interpret Dalit Autobiographies as the outcome of the lived-experiences of untouchables and tribes who have been victimized for ages due to Caste hegemony. The efforts here are made to show that these autobiographies are certainly different to the other autobiographies in the mainstream literature. Dalit autobiographies may not have the potential of entertaining the readers but it has proved to show the world the wretched life they have been leading for ages because of inequality and pollution theory in the caste system in the Hindu Social Order. And on the basis of these four chapters conclusions have been drawn in the fifth and final chapter of the project.

The history of India is incomplete sans the reference of Varna and Caste, which has divided the Hindu society in several castes and sub-castes. Several problems like unrest, social tensions, corruption, crime, sex vices, terrorism, etc. are being faced by all the nations in the world in lesser or greater degree but the most inhuman problem in India is casteism and untouchability. Caste, the most complicated issue in India, has shackled human society by creating social and economic disparities for Shudra and most wretchedly for untouchables. It has done a great damage to human society by bringing in untouchability and social inequality. Thus the caste system has become ‘a black spot’ not on Hindu society but on human hearts also. Caste, being a combined social system of occupation, endogamy, culture, social class and political power, has created not only the division of labours but also the division of labourers, in addition to social and economic inequalities. Caste should not be confused with class. The members of a ‘caste’ are deemed to be alike in function or culture whereas not all members of a ‘class’ may be so alike. Due to the social disabilities, the untouchables could not retain any interest in their caste-bound occupations. Moreover they were not permitted to choose any profession reserved for the higher castes. Indians blame the British Rule for India’s undeveloped or developing status but due to only the British changes came in urbanization, industrialization and education. It was due to their rule some sections of the lower caste could raise their heads high in different parts of the country.

Dalit literature got momentum in Maharastra because of the legacy of Chhatrapti Shahu Maharaj, the first Shudra king who took initiative in the provisions for scholarships in education for untouchables, Mahatma Phule, who started the first school for women in 1848 in Pune and Babasaheb Ambedkar, the sufferer of untouchability in spite of being highly qualified and ‘the
symbol of knowledge’, who devoted his life for the cause of annihilation of castes to bring in social equality, dignity and self-respect for Shudra, tribes and untouchables who have been segregated for centuries. These great social reformers brought awareness of education among untouchables. Because of education and Dr Ambedakr’s conversion to Buddhism initiated these groups to express their thought, emotions, anger and protest in the written form against heinous social system in the Hindu fold. In addition to it, Dalit Panther propped up their writing to be published through Little Magazine in Maharashtra. Later on this writings by untouchables took the form of separate genre called Dalit literature. But before it came into being in the 1960s, people like Baburao Bagul, Bandhu Madhav, Shankarao Kharat were already presenting Dalit emotions and thoughts in the written form. Poets like Namdeo Dhasal and Annabhau Sathe expressed their anger against social system. Poems, short stories, novels, dramas, autobiographies and Dalit aesthetics provided useful insights on the question of Dalit identity. There were authors like Mulk Raj Anand, Premchand, Godawari Parulekar, to name few, who were giving some pace for the untouchable characters in their writing as the sympathizers of the untouchables. In short, due to Verna and Caste Dalit literature emerged in India as a separate stream of literature. Since then, Dalit literature became an authentic genre for expressing the suppressed emotions, feelings and desires of the ‘dumb-for-ages’ people.

To say ‘unity in diversity’ in India is a farce as there is the ‘hierarchical stratification of society’. Hence there shall be no unification till the stratification of Indian society lasts. Caste is a shameful system of social segregation, which works on the principle of purity and impurity. Historically the caste system is a socio-cultural menace of Hinduism that has also affected other religions like Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, etc. Dalits are the victims of physical and mental torture. Caste-system is the gradation based on professions people follow in the Hindu Social Order. Of course, the caste-system has not arised all of a sudden. It took several years to grow but it is difficult to trace out the exact period of its birth. Today Dalit literature questions the mainstream literary theories and upper caste ideologies and explores the neglected aspects of life. It is experience-based. Unlike Hindu mythological theory, history is not illusionary or unreal for Dalit writers. They have proven their capacity in creating their own history. That is why authenticity and liveliness have become hallmarks of Dalit literature. There is a problem with Dalit writers as related to their use of language in their writing but that cannot be targeted. Their
language is sharp due to anger and protest against the age-old oppression. Dalit writing also got some inspiration from the Bhakti movement and Buddhism, the way of life based on liberty, equality, fraternity, social justice and morality. Dalit literature is for the ‘quest for identity’ and ‘Dalit awareness’.

Bama’s *Karukku*, the first Dalit female autobiography in Tamil, asserts strongly to be Dalit as well as a woman. She states that a Dalit woman is a Dalit amongst the Dalits and she is doubly oppressed by her caste and gender. She is also marginalized as a Dalit Christian. Thus oppression is based on caste, gender and religion. Due to the marginalization in the church, Bama resolved to move away from the life of a nun to lead the life of a Dalit woman. She also has been the target of Dalit patriarchy. For some times, she has been under the influence of Marxist thinkers in India, whose aim is classless society. But when she became aware of Ambedkar’s mission, she began to feel that classless society cannot be formed as there are castes in India. So, though she likes the Communist ideology, she ponders over why the communists make no mention of caste differences. The concept of ‘identity’ has emerged due to the emergence of movement of the oppressed people. The Paraiyar, an untouchable caste in Tamil Nadu to which Bama belongs, converted to Christianity to get rid of caste oppression at the hands of the upper castes but they were shocked to find the same oppression within the church. This suggests that caste is so heinous that it does not get abolished even if one converts to any other religion. Perhaps this is the result of Hindu fold coming into contact with Christians. Hence the nuns in the convent used to say, “caste-difference counted for a great deal within convents” (20). Shockingly Bama questions to herself seriously: “They all go about filled with caste-hatred. Why even the nuns and priests, who claim that their hearts are set upon service to God, certainly discriminate according to caste” (24). She quits the convent and goes out. It shows her courage for liberation. So she expresses, “In this society, if you are born into a low caste, you are forced to live a life of humiliation and degradation until your death. Even after death, caste difference does not disappear (23). The caste is such a wretched thing that it never disappears even after the death. In short, Bama narrates not only her exploitation being a Dalit but a woman and that a Dalit woman too. Her autobiography explains the effect of Caste hegemony, patriarchy and discrimination at church on Dalit community and Dalit women.
The Prisons We Broke by Baby Kamble’s autobiography is a mile stone in the history of Dalit writing in Marathi. It is an expression of the protest against inhuman conditions of existence for Dalits in Hindu society. She does not try to glorify her life in her autobiography but she explicitly presents the life of her community. Hence, The Prisons We Broke is more of a socio-biography rather than an autobiography. She gets the inspiration for such criticism of Caste from the radical leader Babasaheb Ambedkar. The text also makes the Dalit feminist critique of patriarchy. So Baby remarks, if the Mahar is the ‘other’ for the upper castes, Mahar women are the ‘other’ for the Mahar men. Common to all Dalit autobiographies The Prisons We Broke is “the narratives of exploitation, humiliation and starvation” (162). Sharankumar Limbale says, “Dalit questions are linked to the caste system” (2012:125). To overcome the problem of Caste, Baby Kamble finds solace in the thought and ideology of Dr. Ambedkar and the philosophy of the Buddha. Limbale asserts, “Until the caste system is annihilated, our problems will not be eradicated” (2012:125). Caste is the birthplace of patriarchy. Therefore the patriarchy in the Mahar community too will continue to have its influence till Caste gets annihilated.

Baby Kamble narrates that the Mahar community has been suffering a lot because of the untouchability in the Hindu society. Caste made their life wretched and closed all the doors of progress. For equality, dignity and self-respect, there is the need of the annihilation of Caste. Caste will be annihilated only because of the mental change and mental change will take place only because of education. “A life without food, living space and clothes – it was a story of permanent deprivation and suffering” (79) for the Mahars in those days because they were deprived of education. Today their status is changed due to Dr Babasaheb Ambekdar. So Baby feels, “We have true power, because we have sheel, satwa and neeti, and they stand supreme in the whole world” (62). All her thoughts tell us that Dalit literature is the outcome of the struggles of Dalits for liberty, equality and fraternity, the principles of democracy adopted by Ambedkar not from the French Revolution but from his master Lord Buddha. So, in the praise of Ambedkar’s work Baby Kamble gratefully says, “First he gave us life; then he made us human beings. The first need of a human being is education” (117-118). In spite of all her and her community’s pitiful conditions, she struggled hard for human rights. “I have remained happy in my poverty because I managed to keep my righteousness” (117). She feels that the righteousness
can help man lead a life of honesty and happiness. She overcame the double marginalization of caste and patriarchy only because of the advice of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar.

In her ‘memoirs’ *The Weave of My Life* Urmila Pawar describes the awakening of Dalit selfhood. Urmila expresses her deep interest in Dalit literature and women’s literature. It is her interest that made her to take creative writing. She fought on two counts: struggle for Dalit liberation and for feminism that reinforces her activism. So far *The Weave of My Life*, it is written in a realistic fictional mode. It is characterized by an honest, frank and bold articulation of Dalit women’s experiences. She struggled against Caste and patriarchy. Urmila says, “In fact, I was an unwanted child because I was a girl” (64). It shows an example of patriarchy. *The Weave of My Life* is located in this tradition of direct self-assertion. The Dalit literature is the literature that struggles for identity, dignity and self-respect. *The Weave of My Life* portrays the conditions of a subhuman existence of an entire community called Mahar to which Urmila belongs, shamelessly exploited by the upper castes, reduced to a status of beasts of burden extremely marginalized. On every path of life Dalits were subjugated to marginality. The documentation in the form of the memoirs *The Weave of My Life* is not just the life story of a single woman Urmila Pawar but it is the record of the community that has been marginalized for centuries by the Hindu social order.

Today Dalit Literature is not restricted to any caste or language but found all over India. Due to translations, it has gone beyond seas helping the world-wide readers know the facts about Dalits in India. Gail Omvedt (1994) considers that Dalits are all those who are oppressed. Dalit literature intends to delineate the historical circumstances that are behind the production of the Dalit Literature. They want solidarity for them so that they could share this solidarity with each other among all the Dalit communities all over India. Discrimination of Dalits and social injustice is related to Chaturvarna and Caste. And untouchability is the product of Varnashram dharma. Patriarchy plays an important role in literatures in India and Dalit patriarchy is an important subject of concern in Dalit female autobiographies. Dalit protagonists are able to show not only the hostile circumstances in which Dalits live, but also their struggle for emancipation from caste and patriarchy leading to solidarity. They also want to enjoy liberty, equality and fraternity, which are the golden principles of democracy.
Dalit Literature is a very powerful stream in the world literature. It manifests widely the rejection of vague tradition, the aesthetics, the language and the literature that is based on Caste and cultural structure. It has instituted its own observance with the inspiration of the Buddha, Phule and Ambedkar. The most important point of Dalit literature is the factual experiences of Dalits. These are not individual occurrences but are the portrayals of the society in which they have been living for ages. The sufferers, the colonized or the minority groups have rights to alter their awful condition. Dalit writers neither expect pity nor condolence from anyone. But they expect the involvement of all the humanitarians to annihilate the Caste. Dalit literature arose out of Verna and Caste. Autobiographies are having the pragmatic illustration of agony and wretchedness of the untouchables. Their live experiences in it are the richest ingredients of Dalit literature. The purpose of Dalit writing is to present the ‘lived experience’ by the untouchables in any form of genre. The Dalit women had to be in the constant confrontation with upper castes as well with their own husbands. But they struggled hard to bring change in the life of their people. The common thread in all the three Dalit Female Autobiographies studied here is Caste and gender discrimination but in *Karukku*, there is religious discrimination as well, Bama being a Dalit Christian.

In the Indian social structure, the nomadic tribe is treated at the lower rung. Nomads have been deprived of all the basic amenities: food, clothes and shelter. The members of the tribal communities move from one place to another and live in the huts at the outskirts of the village. They are badly treated even today. All these tribes have been experiencing the utter poverty. In such circumstances they cannot even visualize to get basic education. Therefore they are off the beaten track from the civilized society. But Laxman Mane’s father was convinced for Laxman’s education. As a result of it, Laxman could get stability in his life. When he was to pen his experiences in the form of an autobiography entitled *An Outsider*, again he had undergone the same mental agonies. Before Laxman Mane, there was not the written record of vagrant’s traumatic occurrences in autobiography. In fact, his autobiography moved the literary world and forced the elite group to take its note. His testimony is not personal but a saga of his Kaikadi tribe. Mane’s attempt is to bring his people into the flow of transformation and mainstream of the enlightened society. Right from his school days, he is in contact with the good friends and the
convictions of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar helped him know the root cause of his suffering. After getting well settled in his life, still he is treated by his caste.

Due to the superstitious viewpoint, inhuman traditions and unendurable injustice the Nomadic tribes are entirely immersed into the bamboozlement of life. Laxman tries to attract the attention of the government and the society to the conspicuous life of his people through the marches and agitations. He expresses his confidence that education only can bring the light into their deep dark life. The social and cultural life of the tribe is beyond the inventiveness of common people. The tribe has its own Panchayat that controls every issue of their social life. This makes them operate their own governance and keeps them away from law and order. The itinerant people observe superstitious ways by which it becomes difficult for them to come out of perpetual ignorance. Whatever they earn, most of the expenditure is done on the worshipping, offering animals to their family deities, liquor, etc. This kind of attitude increases their poverty very rapidly. Other tribes like Vadaris, Kolhatis, Gondhalis, Makadvale, Govasis, Mang-Garudis, Vaidus, etc. worship the same Goddess. Laxman turns upset while he thinks to efface the blotch of caste but it has been getting darker and darker. Therefore along with him, the thousands of his people embraced Buddhism at Nagpur in 2006 and chose a path of Dr. Ambedkar who hugged Buddhism for subjugated community on 14 October 1956 at Nagpur. From An Outsider it comes to notices that all the tribes are victims of Chaturvarna and Caste.

Sharankumar Limbale is a scapegoat of the caste system in India. He considers his birth as a blot on his family as he is born from a Lingayat Patil, an upper caste and Mahar mother, an untouchable. Therefore he is a half-caste (Akkarmashi). Right from his birth, he has been experiencing the brutality of casteism, untouchability and starvation. He tries to exhibit the social conduct in the form of socio-cultural aspects through his autobiography The Outcaste. Mahar, Mang, Chambhar, Dhor, etc. are badly treated as untouchables by the caste Hindus. It is Sharan’s expectation that all untouchables should come together to fight against the high castes for their human rights, equality, dignity and self-respect. On the contrary, it is very surprising that these lower caste people observe casteism among them. Santamai considers Sharan as if he were the upper caste as he is born from a Patil father. In addition Caste, starvation is another issue for the lower castes. Rarely, the untouchables can manage to make the adjustment of both ends meet. Many times they have to go to bed with empty stomach. At the time of wedding season, the
untouchables would linger around the wedding house. The hunger of stomach is unimaginable. It forces Dalit girls and women to sell their bodies to propitiate its intensity. Therefore Sharan says the hunger makes the poor people even to eat shit. In a nutshell, poverty is a jinx for the pauperized people and this poverty is the result of caste discrimination.

Dalit writers’ chief motive is to depict the tyrannical social system in which they live and to exhibit how difficult it is to get settled in life. Being a half-caste, Sharan feels antipathy for his life and still there are many unanswered questions before him. He asks himself why his mother grew in her embryo his foetus when the society must have treated her prostitute. He is bewildered to declare himself the descendant either of upper caste or of an untouchable. He thinks he has been divided into two parts- half of the village and remaining half of the excommunicated society. Santamai lives with Dada, a Muslim but they treat Sharan like their own son. Though Dada was a cooolie, he would offer him some money for his education and occasionally half the tea that people would give to him. Like a father, he would advise the writer to study hard. This attitude of Santamai and Dada makes Sharan ponder over that humanism is always greater than any religion. He opines that people can live without caste and religion. He remarks that for the peaceful and healthy society, everyone should follow the religion of fraternity. They should not go for superstition which is another obstacle in the progress of the Dalits. Had he not gathered his courage to fight against the psychologically strenuous caste issues, he would have collapsed in his life and he could have not been able to hold the higher post that he is holding today. Wherever there are atrocities on women and Dalits, he becomes restless. He is impressed by the ideology of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar that encouraged his self-esteem. It helped him to scrutinize the Hindu ideology and found the basic principles of it which are based on inequality and casteism. Sharankumar Limbale wants human rights to lead the life of dignity and self-respect for all untouchables. Not Caste but social equality is required for all on equal level.

In Narendra Jadhav’s Outcaste: A Memoir, his father, Damu is a central figure. Like other people of Mahar community, Damu was also assigned the work such as- to give messages of the dead people to the relatives of the upper castes to various villages, to serve Mamledar, to drag the dead animals, digging the well, to guard the corpse in emergency at night time, etc. While performing such kinds of duties, savarna people had no problem of untouchability. But it was,
when the Dalits were to give some basic rights like allowing them to drink water from their well or pot, to pay good wages, to have discussion with them with equal status and self esteem, etc. Their psyche is the subjugated persons should remain forever their slave and servants. But their savior Babasaheb Ambedkar broke all the fetters of slavery and made the untouchables free and self-governed. His work and movement solely is the inspiration for Damu, the father of Narendra. Due to his close association with Ambedkar and his movement, Damu learnt many things. Damu recalls Ambedkar’s advice to his followers at the time of agitations that though the Hindu people call the untouchables Hindu but they don’t treat them equally. He used to say they would not die if they are not allowed to drink the water from the Mahad Lake or not permitted to enter the Kala Ram Temple. These agitations are only to project that the casteist Hindu people don’t treat the unotuchables their brethren. But they discriminate them on the basis of caste.

Righteous fellows follow compassionate ways of life and not the wicked one. But especially in a country like India, there is stupendous need of open-minded people in large number to check the casteist hooligans for the well-off society. Hence to bring the Dalits in the main stream of the social activities, Ambedkar appealed his followers to discard all the disgraceful work and diet. Damu thinks that the conversion turned the Dalits self-honoured and because of it they could flourish in all walks of life. Owing to Damu’s active participation in the movement and his faith in Babasaheb, it brought comfort in his next generation. Janardhan Jadhav, an elder son of Damu became a collector; Narendra Jadhav has been working as a member in the Planning Commission of India. The author expresses his gratitude for Babasaheb. Dr Ambedkar could not pay his attention towards his family due to his busy schedule in social and political life but he could settle millions of families of oppressed people. Therefore he is an exemplary for the world. For his righteous work, he has been considered by the Columbia University ‘a symbol of knowledge’. Throughout his life he worked for annihilation of Caste but still it has its strong roots in the society.

Also in the twenty first century, the fourth generation of Damu faces the casteism. Apoorva, the daughter of Narendra knows nothing regarding the casteism, but the casteist people don’t want to wipe out the blot of it. Hence she is asked whether she belongs to that Narendra Jadhav who is a Dalit scholar. In fact, Apoorva has been living in a mixed culture as her mother belongs to the Brahmin caste and father is the Buddhist and she got her education at abroad. Therefore she says
that she is not bound by religion, race or caste. She insists that no one can resist her from marching towards the freedom of her clans. Very philosophically she considers herself a ‘global citizen’. In true sense, she has been adopting the ideology of Buddha, Phule and Ambedkar by breaking the laws of caste and religion. The writer has successfully given the treatment to the socio-cultural issues through his autobiography.

Like Laxman Mane, Laxman Gaikawad has also presented the heart-rending life and the social status of Uchalya (the branded) community in his autobiography named after his caste *Uchalya* in Marathi and translated as *The Branded* in English. This nomadic tribe is known as Santamuchchar throughout India. Its name itself suggests the occupation of the inhabitants of the tribe. Without any identity of Indian nationality, they wandered randomly throughout the country to lessen the voraciousness; they had no option except thieving. As they were in need of skilled burglary, they established their unauthorized schools. But most of the times these people have to go through terrible situations. When caught either by police or villagers, they were thrashed fatally. If they have to bring out of this rotten stage of life, education is only the option. Unfortunately, this tribe cannot live permanently at one place. Therefore schooling is beyond their approach. Laxman Gaikawad wishes the society and the government should look at tribes from the humanistic point of view and they must be very responsive towards their basic amenities.

Martand, Laxman’s father, proved himself a mile stone in the progress of Laxman and the tribes. Had he not been taken honestly the schooling of his son, Laxman would not have settled in the life and thought in respect of the basic issues of the itinerant communities. Martand didn’t surrender before his brethren when they were forcing him to send Laxman for larceny. The vagrants have been caught in several complications in their day to day life. They are governed by fallacies, injustice of the society and police, Panchayat’s atrocities, ignorance, etc. Hence their future seems un-illuminated. Several times they are tortured and beaten charging over them false allegations of looting the booty. Dhondamai, the writer’s mother never went for thieving, she was beaten and violated by pressing her breast. The police snatched her mangalsutra that she bought after hard working. Another major obstacle in the advancement of Uchale community is their superstitious nature.
Dr. Ambedkar warned the members of the Parliament seriously regarding the implementation of the constitution very cautiously. If they wanted the promising society, the proper implementation of the constitution is must; otherwise there will be a wide gap between the poor and rich people. So called Indian leaders boycotted the execution of the constitution and as a result of it one can easily find the economic imbalance among the communities in India that is due to caste discrimination which has resulted in social and economic disparity. When Laxman Gaikawad reads the pledge: ‘India is my country. All Indians are my brothers and sisters’ he doesn’t reveal anything suitable to his tribe because nobody in this country behaves with his tribe as its brother and sister. They are mortified and embarrassed by non-tribes. Therefore there is no question of being proud of its heritage and culture although there is in the pledge, ‘I am proud of its rich and varied heritage’.

Marx brings the workers and bourgeoisie at the equal level. He insists to eliminate the discrepancy between two classes that is haves and have-nots. It is in the hands of capitalists to take the initiative for the balanced financial state. So far the socio-economic condition of the workers is concerned, throughout the world more or less it is the same situation. But in India there is Caste working heinously and it does not permit to form the class. Hence Marx fails in India. The author led the workers in the mill and to some extent persuaded the owner to pay good salary. Later on, he could not tolerate the tyranny of the upper caste hoodlums over his community, so he left the mill and started his movement for the liberation of nomads. Laxman expresses that the paradox is that the thieving gang hardly could make both ends meet from their thieving and rest of the so called white collared officers and leaders enjoy themselves living in bungalows only on the stealing from the mill. Unless all these people join together for the uplift of the oppressed community, it is difficult to bring them into the main flow of the society. All the oppressed castes and tribes lead their heart-aching and nasty life under the dictatorial upper caste hooligans. The educated people from such communities have attempted to characterize their socio-cultural life style in their writings.

Omprakash Valmiki has made remarkably a note of his aching and offensive life in his autobiography *Joothan: A Dalit’s Life*. He is from the enslaved society that is ‘Chuhra’ from Uttar Pradesh. Since hundreds of years, his community has been keeping the houses, toilets and roads clean for high caste Tyagas and living themselves in the filthy neighboring, the locality of
the open latrine where pigs and dogs inhabit. Rarely they are given the wages otherwise they are offered leftovers in exchange of their labour. His intention is not solely to pass adverse comment against the casteist people but to show the rest of the world how difficult it is to survive in the caste-discriminated society. Omprakash makes a plea to the upper castes that if Hindu is an ideal system then just live in the locality of Chuhra for a day or two, they would transmute their remark. Every village has been divided into two parts: Savarna and Avarna. Most of the tribes like Kaikadi, Uchale, Wadar, Masanjogi, etc. live in the shit-yard. Though constitutionally untouchability is banned but the psyche of high castes is not yet changed. They want the tribes and the Dalits forever at their feet to sever them without demanding for any return or just leftovers.

Education was beyond their reach. Omprakash used to sit at the door of the school so that he should pollute the other students from upper castes by his mere touch. Kaliram the headmaster wished that Omprakash should not be the competitor of Tyagi boys. Moreover he used to think if these Chuhra boys get educated there will be no servants for the village and high caste people. Then who would serve them in that situation. Hence he was of the opinion that the untouchables must not get education at all. The educated person breaks all the shackles of ignorance and gains foresight. He becomes ready to prove right and wrong to compare the issues, to guess his bright future, etc. Indian constitution is solely based on liberty, equality, fraternity and justice. It gives equal rights to every citizen of India. There are certain traditions in the downtrodden communities, it loses their self-esteem. In Chuhra, ‘Salaam’ is a tradition in which a newly married couple goes to the houses of upper caste to Salaam them. Valmiki ponders over it because their remarks humiliate the self respect of lower caste people. When he discusses the issue with his father, he decides not to follow these conventions. When Omprakash reads for the first time, Dr Ambedkar’s biography, he gets stunned at two levels. At first he thought why his school didn’t keep a single book of him or utter his name at the time of Independence and Republic day, and he found his own life equal as Dr Ambedkar’s.

_Vadu_ by K. A. Gunasekaran, is an autobiographical novel in Tamil translated as _The Scar_ in English. It narrates its author’s bitter life experiences in the caste-ridden Hindu society. Gunasekaran grew up as a boy from the Paraiyar, an untouchable caste in Tamil Nadu. He narrates the familiar tale of caste oppression and prejudice prevailing in the villages of Tamil
Nadu which is not a new tale at all in the caste-ridden India. The readers are shown how the low caste negotiates differently with the three religious communities: Hindu, Muslim and Christian. It is not a complete story of Gunasekaran’s life but a narrative of his childhood experiences till his graduation. The deep pain of the Paraiyar is presented in *The Scar* which also narrates the fact that Indian villages are doubly caste-conscious and cruel. Gunasekaran has gone through the bitter experiences of Caste and untouchability. But Christian and Muslim communities could not make any discrimination. Moreover he used to get help from Muslims in his education. There is no exaggeration in his autobiography but the narration of actual life not of his alone but of the whole Paraiyar and other untouchable communities in Tamil Nadu. It is the mirror image of social, political, economic, cultural and historical context and injustices heaped upon Dalits in India by caste hierarchy. Due to his education he is today leading a comfortable life.

All the autobiographies by Dalit female and male evaluated in this project present the heart-aching socio-cultural lives of the untouchables and tribes. They are written not only to gain the sympathy of the literary world but the authors have wide expectations from all the humanitarian people to solve the genuine problems of these subjugated people so that they lead the life with equality, dignity and self-respect like the upper caste people. In all the nine autobiographies some issues such as untouchability, superstitions in the society, lack of education, ignorance, frame of mind of the upper caste people, dreadful financial issues, love affair and the obstacles of the caste, casteism in new form, and success of the authors are presented. The common thread of all these autobiographies is Caste discrimination in the case of Dalit males and in the case of Dalit females, in addition to Caste is gender. Only Bama has different experience of religion in the church.

It is a great paradox that the place like India where the seeds of the humanism are sowed by Lord Buddha, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and Babasaheb Ambedkar even today that tree is growing the fruits of inequality. A few sufferers of untouchability came out of it in the last six decades. Most of them still have been taking up the cudgels against the dominance of savarna people. Poverty is the malediction for the ill-treated human beings and is major stumbling block in their progress. Hunger is the byproduct of the poverty. Due to starvation, the oppressed women are easily deceived and sexually exploited by the thugs. Thus, mentally the downtrodden became too weak to raise a voice against the tyrants. Therefore Dalit literature pays attention to this enslavement.
Ambedkar raises his voice against communists in India as they do not say anything against Caste. He prefers Buddhist ideology that advocates democracy and non-violence. Dalit literature has strongly taken the stand against fatalism. In the state of ignorance, they cannot take the proper decisions and suffer forever in the life. Such events in Dalit writings have come on the scene through social situations.

It has become a communal document in the sense that it is a concrete reconstruction of the truths about the lives of downtrodden. Hence it is societal rather than individual in character. Dalit literature is often accused of being found in unambiguous monotony. In fact, it has been inspired by the common ideological view to all the Dalit authors. Being suffers of caste, poverty, ignorance and oppression their narrations seem same in tone and experiences. The place of oppressed community may be different but the ways of repression against them are identical. Untouchability, issues of cremation grounds, social expulsion, separate localities, tyranny of the upper caste hooligans on Dalit women, dragging and cutting dead animals, etc. are the same. Hence the unique feature of Dalit literature is its ‘cooperative aspect’.

The creativity of Dalit literature has to be judged in the context of Buddha, Mahatma Phule and Babasaheb Ambedkar’s social movement, their ideology and the socio-economic-political illustrations. It has added feather in the crown of regional, national, and international languages and enriched the literary vocabulary. For women, Dalit literature has played a very crucial role. They witness two worlds: the brutal past is dying for them and the bright present is shining. Unless the atrocity on Dalits ceases, the Dalit writing cannot change its form. They must change a political democracy into a social democracy. Social democracy is a way of life that gives space to liberty, equality, fraternity and social justice on equal grounds.

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