

## Dalit's Quest for Identity, Cultural Allegation, Political Convocation in Social Context

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### Abstract

Indian Dalits have been socio-economically exploited, culturally dominated, and politically depreciated for a long time. They belong to a low class and initiate to expressive for their identity and existence. They start contending not only for equality for themselves but also facing the struggle to bring innovative societal changes based on equality and liberation. This paper aims to evaluate the essential step towards establishing a dignified social, cultural, and political identity impressed by the Dalit self as the Hindu perception of caste based on social division. After the independence of India, untouchability is formally overturned in the constitution of India. Though, the negative dishonor of Dalit Identity continues right through India in one form or the other. Thus, the struggle of Dalits for meaningful existence is leading to dignity, pride, self-respect, decorum, government services, status, and demonstration. Dalits imagine society as comprehensive for everyone, but their struggle is real to survive for their identity. No detailed scrutiny is available regarding the political affairs of Dalit identity, social renovation, hierarchy, and contention of Dalit communities. The broader dispute of this paper is that Dalit identity is linked with the communal living experience and the traditions, such as economic exploitation, caste inequity, gender domination, and refutation of Dalit awareness. The new contradicting culture and language of protest, including the narration of Dalits regarding class, caste, and gender issues, played an essential role in illustrating the Dalit Identity.

**Keywords:** Cultural Allegation, Dalit identity, Exploitation, Identity, Untouchability.

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### **Introduction**

The word Dalit is a common practice in many languages of India, like Punjabi, Marathi, Hindi, Gujarati meaning the poor downtrodden, and exploited people of Indian society. Modern Dalit consciousness is sensitive to dealing appropriately with them. The deprecated section of society that faces difficulty of every type because of lack of self satisfactorily is the Dalit community. The Dalit in Marathi means compressed, broken down, and reduced to pieces. The postcolonial term subaltern (someone with low rank in social aspect) defines the Indian Dalits because they remain inferior to the confidential sections of society and take notice of their interior status in society. The Dalit Social Movements aimed to abolish untouchability, equal rights, and recognition in the twentieth century, with the beginning of the policy introduced by the British in India 'divide and rule policy' aimed to demand and struggle for social equality, self-esteem, dignity, self-respect, demonstration in the decision-management and jobs in government services. This policy was strongly advocated by well-known Dalit leaders and especially the draftsman of the Indian Constitution, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The real explosion happened with the temple entry movement in India for the social liberation of Dalits. After independence in India, untouchability is formally abolished in the Indian constitution. However, impacts harmful disgrace of Dalit identity continues all over India. The battle of Dalits for meaningful survival is the first step towards achieving dignity, self-respect, self-esteem, access to government services, and representation in society as a whole.

The vigorous dispute of this paper is that Dalit identity is related to the collective existing experience and ethnicity, such as caste prejudice, class discrimination, economic exploitation, gender supremacy, and negation of the Dalits' knowledge. The new structure of alternative society through various modalities also brings Dalits to the same level for realizing their social status. The alternative society and language of protestation also include the Dalits' narration

regarding class, caste, and gender issues. It plays an essential role in illustrating the Dalit identity in society. The exertion for existence has remained a principal element. It consists of significant aspects such as respect, pride, dignity, rights, freedom, justice, equality, liberty, and honor for human beings. The uncomplicated existence of human beings without substantial essentials makes life worthless. Human beings struggle to attain noteworthy aspects of life to make them aware of their meaningful endurance. The history of human life is the history of struggle for substantial parts of human life, such as positive recognition.

### **Dalit Identity in a social context**

The structure of the identity is a historical expansion. The perception of identity is based on equal and communal recognition. It sets the establishment of a connection from one character to another and from one community to another community. In identity structure, the conviction system and cultural structure play an important role in articulating identity. Through communal acknowledgment and mutual substitutes, Dalits set their identity formation in society. In the identity theory, every characteristic constructs some structure of confidence, self-evaluation, self-worth, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. For that reason, the variation of identity theory is apprehensive with the essential elements like role-related skills, presentation, performance, and capability related to unique qualitative features. The additional important features are possessions and sincerity. The individual qualitative features of identity are essential for identity theory, like connection in groups and individual networks where identity occurs in one. It also consists of condition, self-verification, self-respect, self-esteem, self-worth, and self-efficiency.

The identity framework and social identity concept are more suitable for this study to analyze the Dalit identity. In order to achieve dignity, self-respect, self-esteem, access to government services, and representation in society, Dalits must first fight for meaningful survival. The theory of social identity introduced the impression of social identity as a means that enlightens intergroup behavior. In identity theory, the conceptualization of the self suppresses the assortment of identities. On the other hand, in social identity, the identities are more societal, like every social identity comprises the membership in a social group. The indispensable thought of

social identity is a social class and group in which one falls and to which one feels self-owned and defined in provisos of the distinctiveness of the class. Self-definition of social identity is a part of self-concept. Social identity stresses further self-improvement, which promotes self-respect and self-worth.

The preliminary concept in the structure of Dalit identity from the Bhakti Movement mainly laid the establishment for constructing a substitute identity on an equal foundation and questioned society's surviving inequalities. The well-known saints from the different parts of India were Ramanand, Kabirdas, and Ravidas on the northern side, Chokhamela, Thukaram, Eknath, and Narsinh Bhagat on the western side, Ramanujacharya, Basavanna, and Nimbarak in the southern side played an imperative role in arguing against the evil of societies. The saints from the eastern part, like Chaitanya and Chandidas, contributed their thoughts to establishing anti-hegemonic or anti-dominant values related to life philosophy. Besides, they raised their voice in opposition to the stiff caste formation and herd to attain equality before God. M.G Ranade describes "the character of the Bhakti Movement as unbrahmancial" (Omvedt, 1995). After that, Gandhi gave a new word to untouchables, Harijan (person of the god). On the opposite side, Ambedkar used the word 'Depressed cast'. "The Dalit community popularized the term 'Dalit' which became the class to address the social, political, and economic issues of Dalits in every region of India" (Shah 21). Dalit leaders consider that Dalit term provides a sense of self-assertion and self-pride. It is the expansion of Dalit and Bahujan political parties well, like the 'Dalit Identity' as a class. It is an entryway to reach the level of cultural identity, and there is no sensitivity of dishonor about being Dalit. In favor of Dalits, identity is a concept of relation and practice of oneself with others and a matter of affirmative communal recognition. It is an issue of self-respect, pride, and dignity like any other human being.

### **Cultural allegation and struggle**

Culture is an important characteristic of human existence. It plays an important role in inculcating the customs and ethics of society. The presented culture also provides a chance for change and resourcefulness. Cultural alteration is the renovation of the cultural perception of

society. There are sub-culture and counter-cultural group members who repeatedly discard a society's foremost cultural norms and values.

Furthermore, encourage their substitute norms and values against the foremost culture. Several people of that same group are related to social movements and divide up an everyday standard of living. It becomes the way of revolution within societies. Therefore, "the sub-culture and counter-culture allow them to act and express their beliefs, opinions and hopes" (Giddens, 2005).

Cultural identity is a component of group identity. It is a part of their self-conception and self-perception. It relates to social class, locality, nationality, ethnicity, traditions, customs, religion, generation, or any social group with a different culture. Cultural identity is mainly known within two aspects: "individual cultural identity which stands for an individual's identity. It consists of characteristics someone has brought up in their linguistic and literary environment, religious and ethical education and choices, and their communally acquired attitudes and manners. In this way, an individual cultural identity can be present with her or his exacting combination of cultural characteristics, foremost cultural identity. The second one is group cultural identity which stands for a group allotment of a culture, not just some cultural features" (Gilbert 2-3). There is a difference between anti-cultural and sub-cultural. "Anti-culture invalidates the development of some norms, values, and rules the bigger society makes. Sometimes anti-culture develops the communities which work outside of greater society. Sub-culture functions efficiently within the larger prevailing culture and society" (Little 24). The culture disproves and recreates the values, beliefs, and norms among Dalits. It has been changing the pattern from sub-culture to anti-culture. Dalits expand Shobha Yatra, and celebrating birth anniversaries of Gurus is a kind of visible confrontation. At the same time, the construction of their guru's temple in almost every residential area of the Dalit community remains ignored by the different communities. The generated phrase is not religious and spiritual but social in temperament, and social revolution occurs in the confrontation. Everyone in the Dalit community unites in their community. The name of their Gurus (Ravidass, Kabirdas, and Nabhadass) and the presence of their gurus become the symbol of unity, power, and strength. The primary purpose behind the significance of gurus is to achieve self-respect, pride, and dignity and to have political power.

### **Political Convocation**

Political convocation is the medium for moving violently to obtain self-esteem. This is the way to raise their voice for human rights. The Dalit association is conflicted with the domination of their rights. This is prospective to set up new fundamentals and communal expansion arrangements. The Dalit communities are set to increase their place in society as the vote worth of these Dalit people regards by the political parties due to consciousness propagation. The Political parties have altered their behavior toward the Dalit community. Political parties have been on track to thinking about Dalits as voting stock. This gives the Dalit community the liberty to follow a good deal on social, profitable, and following issues with no compromise on their self-esteem and pride. Political convocation makes the Dalit community appreciate as they are a similarly admirable person and hold the charge of the vote. Ambedkar and Gandhi have diverse viewpoints on the decorum of the Dalit community. Ambedkar wanted the resolution of humiliation in ethical conditions. He utilized communal dishonor and embarrassment as a strength in which he hoisted the little resistance for Dalits. On the other hand, Gandhi implicitly the decorum of the spirit stands on the responsibility to oneself and involving other people (Guru G, p. 225).

### **Method of Protest**

The concept of protest consists of the concept of resistance. This concept's unique and intransigent term combines negation, contradiction, refusal, social change, conflict, challenge, and sedition. Protest and objection can be seen as a social movement. It is categorized as a protest related to arguable political beliefs. It includes an intelligence of deed. Method of protest is not only a quality of any artist, but it involves some actions that can be dynamic, active, energetic cognitive, verbal, or physical. Deed, action, performance, and behavior dispute the subordination and confront the ideological foundation of authority. The protest is seen in several forms, such as explicit protest, in which the action and the performance are noticeable, clear, visible, and identifiable by targets and observers. The protest is cooperative in the form of rebellion, social movement, and objection. It can also be a personage act of negation.

In contrast, another action of protest is a secret protest. This act is deliberate, but it remains unobserved by the group of targets. The protest method of the Dalit community's self-respect can be seen in unconcealed and concealed aspects. A gathering of Dalit people in their Guru's name, like Shobha Yatra, is an unconcealed form of protest and deliberate action. It has been noticeable to the observers and target groups.

The Shobha Yatra, the festival of the Prakash Divas, Kabir Jayanti, Guru Divas, the birth anniversary of the Guru Nabhadass, Guru Ravidass Jayanti, and Ambedkar Jayanti, is the communal action to obtain observed by the people of other communities. It is a form of aggregation for their self-respect, pride, and dignity. On the other hand, the intended temple construction of communities of Gurus is unobserved and falls in secret protest. The Dalit community follows the policy of temple construction of the Hindu God and Goddess. They erected the Guru Nabhadass statue in that constructed temple. It is challenging to construct a shrine in the name of Guru Nabhadass in diverse inhabitant's place. This sort of deed reflects the secret and undisclosed type of protest. The Dalit community is more verbal and dominant in the Jammu district about the temple construction of Guru Ravidass. They have several temples and Sabhas in diverse population areas among other communities.

Dalits are a subordinate community, and other people force them to stay on the lowest level among the other community. This is the reason to feel humiliated. This creates the words disgrace and dishonor. "Some performance of a particular community like a local pageant or getting gifts on precise occasions and infraction of performance by the others community leads to the offense" (Palshikar 87). "Dalits were customarily obscure in dirty, grimy employment work like a hunter, hide, and misuse selection work. All types of work allot downbeat sense and dishonor by others with this labor. Furthermore, the misuse of selection labor created their limit fixed in society and positioned them at the foot of the hierarchical social group construction. All these downbeat performances are not countenance dalit to make a group appreciate equal decorum like the other community enjoys" (Kumar 10229).

## Conclusion

This paper is written with the complex issue of searching for the identity of the Dalit community. In India, the Dalits community has been pressured to protect their equality and place in society. There is a variation mode of an allegation, but the purpose of struggle is to attain pride, self-esteem, self-respect, honor, dignity, decorum, and constitutional rights. Dalits adopted the method to affirm their Dalit identity, cultural allegation, political convocation, method of objection, and uniqueness in a social context. In a quest for the Dalit identity, they created their community renaming by following their Guru's name. It initiated a new trend of cultural allegation and convocation of various Dalit communities. This paper aims to highlight the problems Dalits have with self-identification and self-recognition, as well as the struggles they have had to overcome to obtain their rights and a place in society.

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