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CONTROVERSIAL CONCEPTS OF
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Dr. Adi Ramesh Babu



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KAUSALYA BAI SANTRI'S *DOHRA ABHISHAP*: A NARRATIVE OF DOUBLE MARGINALIZATION OF DALIT WOMEN

Manpreet Kaur*

The feminist literature underwent a sweeping move especially Dalit feminist literature during 1990's. The feminist voice articulated caste and patriarchal connotations in their argument and dirge over oppressive voice. The marginalisation is at zenith in Dalit feminist literature especially in the autobiographical writings. The issues of identity crisis of Dalit women are diverse from that of upper caste women. So like Black Feminism, Dalit Feminism has to be a separate identity. According to Dalit women, "caste identity can be transcended by the larger identity of sisterhood among all women. This kind of theorization of experiences is problematic because the actual experiences of different sections of women in a society are very different. A Dalit woman is doubly cursed as a woman and as a Dalit" (Singh 40).

Kausalya Baisantri's autobiography *Dohra Abhishap* (1999) is written in Hindi though she is herself a Marathi. She further says: "I am a Marathi but I have written my autobiography in Hindi as the script of both languages is devnagri. So I had no difficulty in writing in Hindi. But there can be mistakes. Why I chose Hindi over Marathi for my writing? Because in Hindi Dalit women writing their autobiographies are deficient and I want to begin with the process (2). This writing had a massive impact on readers as it was written by a Dalit woman who was not embarrassed of her writing. She disclosed the very agony of hers at the hands of her educated

spouse and caste people who observed prejudice due to age long ideas and customs through her memoir. The name of the book is very fitting as it signifies the status of doubly marginalised Dalit women who, though are educated but live in rural set ups and have to face discrimination at every step. Sharmila Rege rightly writes: "Dalit feminism is limited to educated Dalit women working in universities and white collared jobs and it questions their knowledge and concern about the material realities of the lives of rural Dalit women" (494).

Kausalya Baisantri, though highly educated is regarded with disdain or ill-treated by her life partner on one hand and shown repugnance by her own community people on the another hand. The endeavour to shun the silhouette or tag of untouchability of her family is intensely recounted by the author. The age old ignominy of birth of female child and paucity was cause of melancholy as well as anxiety for Baisantri's mother. Kausalya's mother was always in sulky mood for having given birth to five daughters. The son being born after the first daughter could not survive more than one and half year. Later two more daughters were born but could not live beyond the age of ten or eleven months. So, mother of the daughters would always be grumpy while washing hair of them.

Baisantri has indeed exposed the core problems prevalent in Dalit community in India while on the one hand they assert for self-respect in the society and simultaneously practice patriarchal system but on the other hand women are not only suppressed and prevented from attaining emancipation through education and self-assertion but are treated as slaves or personal property.

My highly educated husband was posted at a gazetted post in Indian government. He had got medal and was a freedom fighter getting pension from government. But my husband never respected me and after everyday conflicts and abuses