



Joothan and The Prisons We Broke: A Comparative Reading

• Annapriya • Shivangi • FarhanaYunus

Received : January 2021

Accepted : February 2021

Corresponding Author : DeepikaTiwari

Abstract: *The paper focuses on the comparative analysis of two autobiographies, Omprakash Valmiki's 'Joothan' and Baby Kamble's 'The Prison We Broke'. Both the works portray the socio-economic, cultural and political condition of a Dalit community. It includes a critical study of both the texts on the three levels of class, gender and time. 'Joothan' portrays a Dalit life from a male Dalit perspective, whereas 'The Prisons We Broke' accounts the community-experience of belonging to a Dalit community from a gynocentric perspective.*

Key Words: *Dalit, Hierarchy, Caste, class, gender, time*

Annapriya

M.A.–IV Semester, English, Session: 2019-2021,
Patna Women's College, Patna University, Patna,
Bihar, India

Shivangi

M.A.–IV Semester, English, Session: 2019-2021,
Patna Women's College, Patna University, Patna,
Bihar, India

FarhanaYunus

M.A.–IV Semester, English, Session: 2019-2021,
Patna Women's College, Patna University, Patna,
Bihar, India

DeepikaTiwari

Assistant Professor, Department of English,
Patna Women's College, Bailey Road,
Patna - 800001, Bihar, India
E mail - deepika.eng@patnawomenscollege.in

Introduction:

India's caste system is among one of the world's oldest forms of surviving social stratification. The ancient Hindu religious scripture *Manusmriti*, divides Hindus into hierarchical groups based on their *karma*. And, in this social hierarchy 'Dalit' formed the lowest position in the social stratification. This led to the suppression and discrimination of lower groups by the upper caste people. The select autobiographies, depict the chronicles of the trials and tribulations of Dalit community. *Joothan* by Omprakash Valmiki and *The Prisons We Broke* by Baby Kamble are narratives of lived experiences of oppression, anger, struggle, sorrow, humiliation, and starvation. They are underprivileged who have survived the dehumanization process. They have deliberately and sensitively critiqued upon the hypocritic ideologies of Indian morality and order.

"Dalit Literature" as a term came into the realm of the Dalit discourse in 1958, after the first ever conference held by Maharashtra Dalit Sahitya Sangh (Maharashtra Dalit Literature Society). Dalit writers and activists in 1972 corroborated and started the 'Dalit Panther Movement', which was directly inspired by the 'Black Panther Party' led by the African-Americans to combat racialism. By calling themselves 'Dalits', they endeavoured to develop an identity and resist the title like 'Untouchables'. It was led by J. V. Pawar, Namdeo Dhasal, Arjun Dangle, and Raja Dhale. This emerging field in literature has travelled a long way from