



REWEAVING MARGINALITY: CASTE, PATRIARCHY, AND THE INTERSECTIONAL POLITICS OF DALIT WOMEN'S LIFE-WRITING

Narra Jaya Prakash Narayana

Research Scholar, Dept of English, Other Indian and Foreign Languages, School of Applied Sciences and Humanities, VFSTR Deemed to be university, Vadlamudi – A.P.

jayaprakashnarayana56@gmail.com

Dr. Sravana Jyothi Doddapaneni

Assistant Professor of English, Dept of English, Other Indian and Foreign Languages, School of Applied Sciences and Humanities, VFSTR Deemed to be university, Vadlamudi – A.P.

Abstract

Dalit women's personal narratives provide an important literary space for examining the complex relationship between caste and gender in Indian society. This paper explores how Dalit women writers represent their experiences of discrimination, marginalisation, and resistance within social structures shaped by both caste hierarchy and patriarchy. Focusing on the personal narratives of Pawar, P. Sivakami, and Yashica Dutt Gidla, the study examines how their writings bring to the surface forms of oppression that cannot be understood through caste or gender alone. Their narratives reveal the everyday realities of social exclusion, unequal labour, domestic restrictions, humiliation, and the struggle for dignity and self-respect. At the same time, these writers do not portray Dalit women merely as victims of social oppression. Through memory, testimony, and self-narration, they question established social values and assert their individual and collective identities. The paper adopts an intersectional approach to understand how caste, gender, class, family, and social status intersect in shaping the lives of Dalit women. A comparative reading of the selected narratives demonstrates that Dalit women's experiences often remain inadequately represented within both mainstream feminist discourse and Dalit social narratives. Their personal accounts therefore function as counter-narratives that challenge dominant representations of history, society, and womanhood. The study argues that Dalit women's life-writing is not only a record of suffering but also an expression of agency, resistance, self-assertion, and the continuing struggle for equality and dignity.

Keywords: Caste, Feminism, Gender-caste, Intersectionality, Patriarchy, Resistance.

Introduction

Indian literature has increasingly become a significant site for examining social inequalities that have historically remained marginalised within dominant literary and cultural traditions. Among the most powerful developments in this field is the emergence of Dalit literature, which challenges established representations of caste, identity, social hierarchy, and human dignity. Dalit writing does not merely describe caste-based discrimination; it questions the social structures, cultural practices, and ideological assumptions that sustain caste inequality. Within this literary movement, the writings of Dalit women occupy a particularly important

position because they bring together experiences of caste oppression and gender discrimination. Their narratives reveal that the social position of a Dalit woman cannot be adequately understood by examining caste and gender as separate categories. Her experiences are produced through the interaction of several forms of social power, including caste, patriarchy, class, family, labour, and community. It is this complex relationship between caste and gender that forms the central concern of the present study.

The concept of intersectionality provides a useful theoretical framework for understanding such experiences. Kimberlé Crenshaw, who



developed the term within Black feminist legal scholarship, argues that systems of discrimination cannot always be understood through a single category such as race or gender. A single-axis approach may obscure the experiences of women whose lives are shaped simultaneously by more than one form of discrimination (Crenshaw). Although Crenshaw developed the concept in the context of race and gender in the United States, the framework has considerable relevance to the study of Dalit women's experiences in India. Dalit women occupy a social location in which caste-based discrimination and patriarchal structures intersect. Consequently, their experiences cannot be fully represented either through mainstream feminist perspectives that sometimes universalise women's experiences or through caste-based approaches that may foreground Dalit identity without sufficiently addressing gender.

The importance of placing Dalit women's voices at the centre of analysis has been emphasised by scholars of Dalit feminism. Sharmila Rege's *Writing Caste/Writing Gender* is particularly significant in this context because it examines the testimonios and autobiographical writings of Dalit women and demonstrates how these narratives challenge conventional ways of understanding both caste and gender (Rege). Rege's approach is important because it treats Dalit women's life-writing not simply as personal accounts but as forms of knowledge generated from lived experience. The autobiographical voice becomes a means through which women interpret their social world, question established structures of authority, and document histories that have frequently been excluded from mainstream accounts of Indian society.

Personal narrative therefore assumes a special significance in Dalit women's writing. Autobiography and memoir enable writers to connect individual experience with wider social structures. The personal is not isolated from the political; rather, individual memories of discrimination, humiliation, poverty, labour,

education, family relationships, and social exclusion become evidence of larger systems of inequality. Dalit women's narratives consequently move beyond the conventional boundaries of autobiography. They combine memory, testimony, social criticism, cultural history, and political consciousness. In this sense, life-writing becomes an important form of resistance because the act of narrating one's own experience challenges the authority of those who have historically spoken about Dalits and women from positions of social privilege. Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs* offers an important example of this relationship between personal memory and collective history. Originally written in Marathi and translated into English by Maya Pandit, Pawar's memoir traces her experiences across family, education, work, caste, gender, and political consciousness. The memoir also extends beyond the individual self by presenting the experiences of several generations of Dalit women and their struggles against caste oppression. The very metaphor of weaving is significant because Pawar connects individual memories with family histories, community experiences, and wider social transformations. Her narrative demonstrates that the life of a Dalit woman is shaped not by a single experience of discrimination but by a series of interconnected social relationships (Pawar).

Pawar's narrative is particularly valuable for examining the relationship between caste and patriarchy because the domestic and social spheres are closely connected. The Dalit woman experiences caste discrimination outside the home, but patriarchal expectations may also regulate her life within the family and community. Her labour, responsibilities, sexuality, education, marriage, and mobility can become sites through which gendered power operates. At the same time, caste determines the social value assigned to her labour and body. The intersection of these forces produces a distinctive form of marginalisation. Pawar's memoir therefore complicates any understanding of Dalit identity



that treats the Dalit community as a homogeneous category. Her narrative makes visible the internal gender relations of the community while simultaneously documenting the external pressures imposed by the caste system.

P. Sivakami's *The Grip of Change and Author's Notes* provides another important perspective on the gender–caste relationship. First published in Tamil and subsequently translated into English, the work examines caste conflict, power relations, gender, and social change within a Dalit context. The novel's engagement with the position of Dalit women is particularly important because it raises questions about whether liberation from caste oppression automatically results in gender equality. Sivakami's representation of women challenges the assumption that Dalit communities can be understood exclusively through their resistance to upper-caste domination. The narrative also draws attention to the patriarchal structures that may exist within oppressed communities themselves (Sivakami).

This aspect is central to an intersectional reading. Dalit women may participate in struggles against caste oppression while simultaneously confronting gendered restrictions within their own communities. Their position is therefore complex rather than simply oppositional. They may experience solidarity with Dalit men in challenging caste hierarchy, yet they may also question male authority, domestic inequality, or the control of women's bodies and choices. Sivakami's writing is significant because it does not simplify this tension. Instead, it brings the contradictions within social and political movements into literary discussion. The question of women's agency becomes inseparable from the larger question of social transformation.

Yashica Dutt's *Coming Out as Dalit: A Memoir of Surviving India's Caste System* introduces a somewhat different dimension to Dalit personal narrative. Published in India by Aleph Book Company in 2019, Dutt's memoir explores the psychological and social consequences of

concealing one's caste identity. Her narrative demonstrates that caste discrimination is not confined to rural spaces or to traditional occupations; it can continue to influence education, professional life, social relationships, language, appearance, and individual self-perception (Dutt). Her experience of hiding her Dalit identity illustrates how caste operates through both visible and invisible mechanisms. Passing as belonging to a socially privileged caste may provide temporary protection from discrimination, but it also produces an internal conflict concerning identity, memory, family, and belonging.

Dutt's narrative is especially relevant to the study of gender because the social expectations surrounding caste are often connected with ideas of respectability, appearance, family honour, marriage, and femininity. For Dalit women, the pressure to conform to dominant social standards can therefore have both caste and gender dimensions. Her memoir also demonstrates the importance of naming and claiming identity. The movement from concealment to open identification becomes an important part of the narrative's structure. By publicly acknowledging her Dalit identity, Dutt transforms an experience of social stigma into an assertion of selfhood and political consciousness. Her memoir thus illustrates how personal narrative can become an act of resistance.

The three writers considered in this study represent different linguistic, regional, generational, and social contexts. Pawar writes from the context of Maharashtra and the Ambedkarite Dalit movement; Sivakami engages with caste and gender relations in Tamil society; and Dutt writes from a contemporary, urban, English-language context in which caste identity intersects with education, professional mobility, and modern aspirations. These differences make a comparative study particularly productive. Their narratives cannot be treated as identical representations of Dalit womanhood. Instead, their differences demonstrate that Dalit



women's experiences are diverse and shaped by particular historical and social circumstances. Yet their writings share a concern with the consequences of caste hierarchy and the struggle to establish dignity, agency, and self-definition.

The intersectional framework also helps to avoid treating Dalit women exclusively as victims. While oppression is an important element of their narratives, their writings are equally concerned with agency and resistance. The act of writing itself challenges silence. When Pawar reconstructs family and community memories, when Sivakami questions gender relations within caste politics, and when Dutt confronts the burden of concealed caste identity, each writer transforms personal experience into a public discourse. Their narratives therefore challenge the traditional separation between private experience and public history. Experiences that may have previously been regarded as personal or domestic become subjects of literary and political significance.

The relationship between memory and resistance is particularly important in Dalit women's life-writing. Mainstream historical narratives have often privileged the experiences of socially dominant groups, leaving the everyday experiences of marginalised communities inadequately documented. Dalit women's autobiographical writing contributes to an alternative archive of social experience. Rege's emphasis on Dalit women's testimonios is useful here because testimony can be understood as both an expression of individual suffering and a challenge to dominant systems of knowledge (Rege). The personal narrative becomes a means of recovering experiences that have been suppressed, ignored, or represented by others.

Moreover, these narratives challenge the idea of a universal category of "woman." Mainstream feminist discourse has historically been criticised for treating women's experiences as though they were uniform. Such an approach can overlook the significance of caste, class, race, ethnicity, and other social locations.

Crenshaw's critique of single-axis analysis is relevant because a framework that examines gender without caste may fail to explain the specific experiences of Dalit women (Crenshaw). Similarly, an exclusive focus on caste may conceal the gendered dimensions of Dalit women's oppression. An intersectional reading brings these dimensions together and recognises that social identities do not operate independently.

The present study therefore examines Pawar, Sivakami, and Dutt as writers who use personal narrative to expose the complex relationship between caste and patriarchy. It argues that their writings reveal a form of oppression that is simultaneously social, cultural, economic, familial, and psychological. At the same time, these narratives demonstrate that Dalit women are active subjects who interpret, negotiate, challenge, and resist the structures surrounding them. Their life-writing becomes a space where memory is converted into testimony and testimony into resistance.

By bringing these three writers into comparative conversation, the study seeks to contribute to the growing scholarship on Dalit feminism, Indian life-writing, and intersectional literary studies. The analysis particularly focuses on the representation of caste discrimination, patriarchal authority, labour, education, identity, family, memory, and resistance. It contends that Dalit women's personal narratives should not be read merely as records of suffering. They are also texts of intellectual intervention that question dominant forms of knowledge and create alternative understandings of identity and social justice. Ultimately, the gender–caste nexus revealed in these narratives demonstrates the necessity of reading Dalit women's experiences through an intersectional framework, one that recognises both the specific forms of their marginalisation and their continuing capacity for agency, self-expression, and resistance.

Gender–Caste Nexus and the Intersectional Experience of Dalit Women

The personal narratives of Urmila Pawar, P. Sivakami, and Yashica Dutt demonstrate that



caste and gender cannot be treated as independent categories when examining the experiences of Dalit women. Their writings reveal a social reality in which caste determines one's position within the larger social hierarchy while patriarchy regulates women's bodies, labour, sexuality, mobility, and access to decision-making. The significance of these narratives lies precisely in their ability to expose the interaction between these structures. Rather than presenting Dalit women simply as victims of caste discrimination, the writers represent them as subjects who negotiate, question, and resist multiple forms of authority. Their narratives therefore provide a particularly productive field for an intersectional analysis. Sharmila Rege argues that Dalit women's testimonios constitute an important alternative source of knowledge because they challenge both the invisibility of Dalit experiences in mainstream history and the tendency of dominant feminist discourse to universalise women's experiences (Rege). This argument is particularly relevant to Pawar, Sivakami, and Dutt. Each writer begins with an individual experience, but the individual experience gradually acquires a collective significance. The personal "I" becomes a means of speaking about a larger community. In this process, autobiography and memoir become forms of social criticism.

Urmila Pawar: Memory, Labour, and the Gendered Experience of Caste

Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs* provides one of the clearest examples of how personal memory can become a record of collective Dalit women's experience. The title itself establishes the central metaphor of the narrative. Pawar connects her mother's traditional work of weaving bamboo objects with her own act of writing. She states, "My mother used to weave aaydans," and subsequently explains that her mother's weaving and her own writing are "organically linked" through "pain, suffering, and agony" (Pawar x).

This metaphor is more than an autobiographical device. It establishes an argument about

women's labour and representation. The mother produces objects necessary for the survival of the household, while the daughter produces a narrative that records the experience of that labour. In other words, Pawar transforms an activity historically associated with Dalit women's economic and social marginalisation into the foundation of literary expression. The bamboo weave becomes analogous to the narrative weave: individual memories, family experiences, caste discrimination, women's labour, and political awakening are brought together into a larger structure.

The significance of the metaphor becomes clearer when caste and gender are considered together. Pawar's mother is not simply a woman engaged in domestic and economic labour; she is a Dalit woman whose labour is historically associated with a caste-based occupation. The social value of her work is therefore determined by both her gender and her caste. Her labour is necessary, yet the person performing it remains socially subordinated. Pawar consequently exposes a contradiction at the heart of caste society: work performed by Dalit communities is indispensable to the functioning of society, but the people who perform that work are treated as inferior.

The narrative therefore challenges the assumption that caste oppression operates only through spectacular acts of violence or exclusion. It also functions through the organisation of labour. Dalit women frequently occupy the most insecure forms of work while simultaneously carrying domestic responsibilities. The intersection of caste and patriarchy makes their labour particularly invisible. Pawar's memoir recovers this invisible labour by placing women such as her mother at the centre of the narrative rather than at its margins. Recent scholarship similarly observes that Pawar's memoir reconstructs Dalit women's memories as a means of reclaiming female subjectivity and challenging social exclusion.

The autobiographical structure is consequently political. Pawar does not merely remember the past; she interprets it from the standpoint of an



adult writer who has developed political and feminist consciousness. Her childhood memories acquire new meaning through this retrospective perspective. What may have appeared to the child as ordinary hardship becomes, in the mature narrative, evidence of caste and gender inequality. This movement from memory to interpretation is one of the principal strengths of Dalit women's life-writing.

Pawar's narrative also complicates the idea of a unified Dalit community. Dalit political movements have historically been crucial to challenging caste hierarchy, but Pawar's account suggests that Dalit women's experiences cannot always be subsumed under the larger category of Dalit oppression. Women may share the experience of caste discrimination with Dalit men while simultaneously experiencing gender-based restrictions within their own communities. Thus, caste solidarity does not automatically eliminate patriarchy.

This distinction is essential to an intersectional reading. If caste alone becomes the analytical category, the gendered nature of Dalit women's experience may disappear. Conversely, if gender becomes the only category, the specific historical experience of caste oppression becomes invisible. Pawar's narrative refuses both simplifications. Her life is shaped by caste, but it is also shaped by being a woman within a caste-oppressed community.

P. Sivakami: Patriarchy within Dalit Politics

P. Sivakami's *The Grip of Change* takes the gender-caste nexus into a more explicitly political sphere. The novel centres on Thangam, a Dalit woman who suffers sexual and physical violence associated with dominant-caste power. Her attempt to seek justice brings her into contact with Kathamuthu, a Dalit political leader who claims to defend the interests of his community. The narrative, however, refuses to equate Dalit political leadership with women's liberation.

This is where Sivakami's argument becomes particularly powerful. Thangam is oppressed by dominant-caste men, but her vulnerability does

not disappear when she enters the space of Dalit political protection. Kathamuthu's intervention initially appears to offer resistance to caste oppression, yet he gradually appropriates Thangam's experience for his own political purposes. He reframes her story according to his understanding of caste politics. Consequently, Thangam's experience becomes a political instrument rather than a story over which she retains complete control.

The problem is therefore not simply that Thangam suffers violence; it is that she is repeatedly deprived of narrative authority. Her experience is interpreted by men who claim to speak on her behalf. This becomes an important dimension of the gender-caste nexus. Dalit women can be silenced not only by dominant-caste power but also by patriarchal structures within anti-caste politics.

Sivakami thus presents a significant distinction between **representation** and **agency**. Kathamuthu represents Thangam before the political and legal institutions, but he does not necessarily respect her agency. His intervention is shaped by his own political interests and masculine authority. Scholarship on the novel similarly identifies the tension between caste politics and the patriarchal treatment of Dalit women, particularly through the contrasting positions of Thangam and Gowri.

The character of Gowri is especially important in this context. As an educated young Dalit woman, she observes the behaviour of the men around her and begins to question the patriarchal assumptions embedded within the community. Her education gives her access to a critical vocabulary through which she can interpret the contradictions around her. She therefore represents an emerging form of Dalit female consciousness.

Gowri's position suggests that education alone does not liberate Dalit women, but it can create the conditions for questioning inherited structures of authority. She does not simply reject caste identity; instead, she interrogates the manner in which caste politics itself can reproduce patriarchal relations. Sivakami thereby complicates the conventional



opposition between oppressed and oppressor. A person may be oppressed in relation to caste while possessing power over another person through gender.

This is perhaps the most important argumentative contribution of *The Grip of Change*. The novel refuses a simple hierarchy of oppression. Thangam can be oppressed by an upper-caste man and simultaneously be subordinated by a Dalit man. These are not identical forms of oppression, but they can intersect in the life of a single woman. Intersectionality therefore allows us to understand why Thangam's experience cannot be adequately represented either as a caste story or as a gender story alone.

Yashica Dutt: Caste, Appearance, Shame, and the Politics of Passing

Yashica Dutt's *Coming Out as Dalit* shifts the discussion from rural caste relations and community politics to the psychological and social experience of caste identity in modern, urban India. Dutt's memoir is particularly significant because it demonstrates that caste does not disappear with education, urbanisation, professional mobility, or modernity. Instead, caste may operate through more subtle forms of social recognition, appearance, language, cultural behaviour, and self-presentation.

One of the most revealing dimensions of Dutt's narrative is the pressure to avoid appearing "Dalit looking." The publisher's description of the memoir confirms that Dutt was taught from childhood not to appear "Dalit looking," while the memoir traces her efforts to conceal her caste identity.

This seemingly simple phrase reveals the intersection between caste and gender. Caste is not represented merely as a social classification; it becomes associated with the body. Skin colour, facial appearance, accent, dress, manners, and cultural behaviour can become markers through which social identity is interpreted. For a woman, these expectations are intensified by gendered standards of beauty and respectability.

Dutt's discussion of fairness is particularly revealing. She recalls the pressure placed upon her mother to conform to ideals of fair skin and subsequently explains how this expectation affected her own understanding of herself. The statement, "I understood that I needed to be fair to be accepted, and not 'Dalit-looking,'" brings caste and gender into a single experience (Dutt 30).

The importance of this passage lies in the fact that caste discrimination is internalised through everyday practices. The body becomes a site on which social hierarchy is reproduced. The desire to appear "acceptable" is therefore not simply an individual concern about beauty; it is connected with the desire to escape the stigma attached to Dalit identity.

Dutt's narrative consequently extends the discussion of caste beyond the conventional images of untouchability, segregated settlements, and hereditary occupations. Her experience demonstrates that caste can survive through aspiration itself. The desire for education, professional advancement, urban mobility, and social acceptance may coexist with the pressure to conceal one's caste identity. Modernity therefore does not necessarily abolish caste; it can transform the manner in which caste is experienced.

The psychological dimension of Dutt's memoir becomes particularly important here. In the prologue, she describes the consequences of concealing an aspect of one's identity as a form of living a "double life." The metaphor of masks captures the psychological cost of caste passing. The person who conceals her identity must constantly negotiate between the self she knows and the identity she presents to society. This concealment also has a gendered dimension. Women are often expected to embody family honour and social respectability, and consequently the management of appearance and identity becomes particularly significant. Dutt's memoir shows how caste hierarchy enters the intimate sphere of self-perception. The caste system therefore operates not only through external



discrimination but also through the internal regulation of the self.

From Victimhood to Agency: Reclaiming the Dalit Woman's Voice

Although Pawar, Sivakami, and Dutt document humiliation and discrimination, it would be reductive to read their narratives solely as literature of victimhood. Their more significant contribution lies in the transformation of suffering into agency. The act of narration itself becomes a form of resistance.

Pawar transforms her mother's bamboo weaving into the metaphor of literary creation. The woman whose labour was socially undervalued becomes part of a literary history through her daughter's writing. Sivakami questions the authority of male Dalit political leadership by allowing female characters to expose its contradictions. Dutt transforms concealed caste identity into an openly acknowledged political identity. These are different forms of resistance, but all three challenge the power to define Dalit women from outside.

The movement from silence to speech is therefore central to these texts. Dalit women have historically been represented by others—by upper-caste writers, male political leaders, social reformers, administrators, and dominant cultural institutions. Personal narrative reverses this relationship. The Dalit woman becomes not merely the subject of representation but the producer of representation.

This is why Rege's concept of *testimonio* is useful for reading these narratives. Dalit women's life-writing does not isolate the individual from the collective. The autobiographical “I” carries the experiences of other women, families, and communities. Pawar's memories of her mother and earlier generations, Sivakami's representation of Thangam and Gowri, and Dutt's recollection of her family history all demonstrate that individual identity is embedded within collective histories of caste.

The political significance of such narration is therefore considerable. Personal experience becomes evidence against the claim that caste

has disappeared from contemporary Indian society. Dutt's memoir, for example, demonstrates that caste continues to shape identity even in urban and professional contexts; scholarship on the memoir likewise emphasises the persistence of caste through modern social structures.

Comparative Argument: Three Forms of Intersectionality

A comparative reading of the three writers reveals three interconnected but distinct manifestations of the gender–caste nexus. Pawar foregrounds labour, memory, and community; Sivakami emphasises political authority, sexuality, and patriarchal power; and Dutt foregrounds identity, appearance, concealment, and psychological experience.

These differences are important because they prevent the category “Dalit woman” from becoming another homogenising label. There is no single Dalit female experience. Caste and gender intersect differently according to historical period, region, class, education, occupation, family structure, and political consciousness. Pawar's rural childhood and later activism, Sivakami's representation of village politics and Dalit leadership, and Dutt's urban professional experience belong to different social contexts. Yet all three demonstrate that caste enters the intimate sphere of women's lives.

Their narratives therefore support an expanded understanding of intersectionality. Caste is not simply an additional identity attached to gender. It changes the meaning of gender itself. Being a woman under a caste hierarchy is different from occupying the category “woman” in an abstract or universal sense. Similarly, being Dalit is experienced differently by men and women because gender shapes access to labour, education, sexuality, family authority, and public space.

The narratives also demonstrate that resistance must be understood intersectionally. A struggle against caste hierarchy is incomplete if it leaves patriarchal authority unquestioned. Likewise, a feminist politics that does not address caste cannot adequately represent Dalit women. The



central demand emerging from these texts is therefore not merely inclusion but a restructuring of the frameworks through which oppression and resistance are understood.

Concluding Analytical Observation

The personal narratives of Pawar, Sivakami, and Dutt establish that Dalit women's life-writing is simultaneously autobiographical, social, political, and feminist. Their narratives expose the limitations of single-axis approaches to oppression by showing that caste and patriarchy operate together, although not always in identical ways. Pawar's representation of women's labour and memory, Sivakami's critique of patriarchal Dalit politics, and Dutt's account of concealed caste identity collectively demonstrate the multiple locations in which caste and gender intersect.

Most importantly, these writers transform the position of the Dalit woman from an object of social discourse into a speaking subject. Their narratives claim the authority to remember, interpret, question, and represent. The significance of their writing therefore lies not simply in documenting oppression but in changing who has the right to narrate social experience. In this sense, Dalit women's personal narratives function as counter-narratives: they challenge dominant histories, expose the internal contradictions of social reform, and construct alternative forms of identity and agency.

The gender-caste nexus revealed through these texts ultimately suggests that the liberation of Dalit women cannot be achieved by addressing caste or patriarchy in isolation. The two structures must be examined in their interaction with one another. Pawar, Sivakami, and Dutt make this interaction visible through different forms of life-writing, demonstrating that memory, testimony, political critique, and self-narration can become powerful instruments of resistance. Their works consequently occupy an important place in contemporary Indian literature because they do not merely ask to be heard; they challenge the structures that historically determined who was permitted to speak.

References:

1. Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, vol. 1989, no. 1, 1989, pp. 139–67.
2. Rege, Sharmila. *Writing Caste/Writing Gender: Narrating Dalit Women's Testimonios*. Zubaan, 2006.
3. Sivakami, P. *The Grip of Change and Author's Notes*. Translated by the author, Orient Longman, 2006.
4. Pawar, Urmila. *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs*. Translated by Maya Pandit, foreword by Wandana Sonalkar, Columbia UP, 2009.
5. Sen, Shoma. "The Village and the City: Dalit Feminism in the Autobiographies of Baby Kamble and Urmila Pawar." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, vol. 54, no. 1, 2019, pp. 19–33.
6. Dutt, Yashica. *Coming Out as Dalit: A Memoir of Surviving India's Caste System*. Aleph Book Company, 2019.
7. Arya, Sunaina, and Aakash Singh Rathore, editors. *Dalit Feminist Theory: A Reader*. Routledge, 2020.
8. Guru, Gopal. "Dalit Women Talk Differently." *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 30, no. 41/42, 1995, pp. 2548–50.
9. Kumar, Raj. *Dalit Personal Narratives: Reading Caste, Nation and Identity*. Orient BlackSwan, 2010.
10. Paik, Shailaja. *Dalit Women's Education in Modern India: Double Discrimination*. Routledge, 2014.
11. Paik, Shailaja. *The Vulgarly of Caste: Dalits, Sexuality, and Humanity in Modern India*. Stanford UP, 2022.
12. Omvedt, Gail. *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*. Sage Publications, 1994.



13. Tharu, Susie, and K. Lalita, editors. *Women Writing in India: 600 B.C. to the Present*. Vol. 2, Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1993.
14. Kamble, Baby. *The Prisons We Broke*. Translated by Maya Pandit, Orient Longman, 2008.
15. Bama. *Karukku*. Translated by Lakshmi Holmström, Oxford UP, 2000.
16. Alam, Md Moshabbir. “Creative Writing on Gender and Caste in Dalit Autobiographies and Biographies: A View from Within.” *Creativity Studies*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2025, pp. 420–32.