

mourn in droves/..."(74).

In the Punjabi context, ideology does make its atavistic presence to inspire hope among the oppressed. In a poem entitled "Red Speech", Madhopuri continues to harbour the dream of a red revolution: "The flood waters can't be dammed/ however hard they try/ One day it will explode like a volcano/ the fire that smoulders underneath the straw" (96). In the poem "The Song of the Land", Patwari, the local land measurement officer, receives critical flak: "Stop these dubious measurements/ O Patwari/ Sons of the soil have only one village" (47). The idiom of Madhopuri is thus inseminated by different impulses—cultural, natural and ideological which lend necessary artistic thickness to his poems. In the process Dalit anger is transmuted into Dalit agony which makes his poetry distinct from the virulent poetry of Marathi Dalit panthers. The addition of a chapter from Madhopuri's acclaimed autobiography towards the end adds to the richness of the book, but it threatens to overshadow the poems included in the anthology.

Akshaya Kumar is a Professor in the Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh. He has published two books: Poetry, Politics and Culture (Routledge, 2009) and A.K. Ramanujan: In Profile and Fragment (Rawat, 2004).

akshyakumar@gmail.com

Anandita Pan, *Mapping Dalit Feminism: Towards an Intersectional Standpoint*. New Delhi: Sage, 2021, ISBN 9789381345559, Rs. 1150

Reviewed by Bincy Mariya N

Dalit feminism, as an ideology and movement revisit and revitalizes the cause of Dalit women. It emerges as a major movement to challenge the structural oppression and inequalities perpetrated on Dalit women. Being hailed as a movement with emancipatory potentials, Dalit feminism exposes and examines the intertwining nature of caste and gender and reiterates the plurality or differences of Dalit women's experiences. Dalit feminism demands that the systematic erasure of their multifaceted issues should be unearthed. The ideological underpinnings of Dalit feminism affirms the need for Intersectional Standpoint as it has an instrumental role in liberating Dalit women from the conceptualization

of mainstream Indian feminism and Dalit politics. It asserts the need for acknowledging Dalit women as a distinct category.

Mapping Dalit Feminism: Towards an Intersectional Standpoint by Anandita Pan is an exemplary contribution to the field of Dalit feminism. The finely crafted book provides you with eclectic and comprehensive views about the Dalit feminist intersectional standpoint and its potential to subvert the popular conceptualization of Dalit womanhood by mainstream Indian feminism and Dalit politics. The book acknowledges the emergence of Dalit feminism as a distinct, independent movement amidst the unabated and unquestionable casteist patriarchal hegemony. Pan defines Dalit feminism as a methodological praxis to identify and analyse how various modes of caste and gender-based oppression intersect with each other to oppress Dalit women (6). Deciphering Dalit women as an intersectional category concomitantly infected by caste and gender, Pan encourages readers to understand how multiple forms of discrimination and disparities entwine and overlap. Besides bringing in-depth analyses of the axioms of mainstream Indian feminism and Dalit politics that attribute homogeneity to Dalit women, Pan dissects and scrutinizes the fundamental questions of identity, selfhood, representation, and epistemology.

By taking the 1990s as a focal point to embark on the discursive mapping of Dalit feminism, the book serves a dual purpose of construct and contest. On the one hand, it provides a platform for contesting the structural hierarchy, and on the other hand, it constructs an arena for counter-narratives. The well-substantiated work that comprises six chapters and an appendix, unpacks an impressive array of arguments. It also raises certain imperative questions and makes the reader think about his/her standpoint in a societal structure plagued by casteism and patriarchal ideology. By contextualizing different Dalit agitations and movements of the present century, Pan tries to unveil the tendency of obscuring Dalit women's presence in minor/major resistances. Through the fine-grained analysis of mainstream Indian feminism and Dalit politics, the book explores the marked invisibility of Dalit women as well as their relentless struggle to raise the voice.

Chapter one focuses on theorizing 'Intersectional Standpoint' and it also elaborates the constituency of Dalit feminism by placing it against the dual patriarchal structure. The book defies the conceptualization of

Dalit women as monolithic entities and it posits them as the primary constituency of Dalit feminism which is situated at the intersection of caste and gender (23). By asserting plurality, it challenges the predominance of the single-axis where caste and gender collide and the universalization of women is validated. Moreover, the book finds a close parallel between Black feminism and Dalit feminism as both movements are invariably highlighting the importance of identifying the undercurrents of multiple structures of power. To debilitate the complexities and intricacies of the oppressive formula of caste and gender, the book consistently emphasizes the irrefragable role of Dalit feminism. Most importantly, the book defines Dalit feminism as a transformative interpretative framework and Pan terms it as Dalit feminist intersectional standpoint (7).

Being a transformative theoretical framework, Dalit feminism is embrasive. The book affirms that with the lens of intersectionality, Dalit feminism reinterprets any text/event from a caste-gender angle (7). It is also instrumental in changing our perceptions about mainstream Indian feminism and Dalit politics. Moreover, the transformative potentials of Dalit feminism provide a comprehensive view of casteism. It penetrates the intricate layers of caste and makes us think of casteism as casteist sexism and sexism as sexist casteism.

Mapping Dalit Feminism: Towards an Intersectional Standpoint defines Dalit literature as an inevitable component of Dalit resistance. Dalit autobiographies are indispensable to subvert the unquestionable authority of the upper caste in producing and disseminating the knowledge. Through a comparative analysis of different sets of autobiographies by Dalit women and men, the book makes us think how the autobiographies of Dalit men are unfolding the experiences and struggle only on the single axis of caste. According to Pan, self-construction through autobiographical narratives becomes a way to challenge prescribed normative identities. For Dalit women, it is the most effective tool to record their burns and scars of multiple oppressions and it also helps them to question their alienation, otherization, and invisibilization in mainstream Indian feminism and Dalit politics. By critically examining three autobiographies of Dalit women, the book substantiates that the intersectional identity of Dalit women enables them to defy the single-axis formulation of 'woman' and 'Dalit'.

It also delves deep into different cultural productions to prove the political interventions of Dalit feminism. The book interrogates specific questions about the representation of Dalit women. It problematizes the representation of Dalit women by mainstream Indian feminism and the Dalit representation of Dalit women. By highlighting the inefficiency of mainstream Indian feminism and Dalit politics in representing Dalit women, the book reaffirms the need for an intersectional and inter-categorical approach. The book extensively discusses the different dimensions of the agency of Dalit women. Unlike mainstream Indian feminism and Dalit politics, Dalit feminism develops a distinct way of looking at the agency of Dalit women. Instead of inflicting the victimized self to Dalit women, it explores the novel method of procuring agency through negotiation and solidarity. As an epistemological project and a transformative, interventionist theoretical framework, the Dalit feminist standpoint revisits history and reconstructs historiography.

This well-knit text neatly dissects Dalit feminism and explores how it produces knowledge about Dalit women. It also instils a novel enthusiasm for an insightful examination on the question of who can be/become a Dalit feminist. From the beginning to the end, the book keeps inspiring its readers to ask themselves questions about their positionality and their standpoint. Undoubtedly, this thoughtful study will open up an arena for critical insights and discussions.

Bincy Mariya N is a Doctoral Research Scholar at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IISER, Bhopal.

bincy19@iiserb.ac.in

G.J.V. Prasad (Ed.), *Reading Dalit: Essays on Literary Representations*. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2021 ISBN 9789382178040, Rs. 600

Reviewed by Provakar Palaka

Reading Dalit: Essays on Literary Representations, edited by G.J.V. Prasad, is a compilation of fifteen well researched papers. Though most of the chapters have already been published in various journals in the first