

Charu Arya and Nabanita Deka (Eds.), *Dalit Feminist Discourse: Voices in Dalit Narratives*. Aakar Books, 2024, 230 pp., Rs. 695, ISBN 978-93-5002-847-6

Reviewed by Anchala Paliwal

It is now firmly established that caste and gender are two indispensable aspects to undertake any critical and nuanced study of Indian social and political realms. The advent and popularity of Dalit literature has ensured that the category of Indian literature has been interrogated and suitably reimaged. Dalit literature is not merely an addition to the already existing and flourishing category of Indian literature; its contours have been reshaped by the questions raised by Dalit writers. A similar pattern is visible in what was previously (rather erroneously) labelled as Indian feminism. The provocative voices of Dalit feminists have safeguarded that a feminist standpoint is impossible without recognizing the impingement of caste privileges and biases. Dalit thinkers have identified education of Dalit women as the single most important tool for dismantling both caste hierarchies and patriarchy. A proliferation of analytical studies on Dalit feminist texts and theory will further enhance and enrich these academic and social justice pursuits.

Dalit Feminist Discourse is a timely and significant extension into the raging debate on making space for Dalit women writers in the arena of Dalit literature, Indian literature and importantly world literature with its underlying emphasis on human rights. The present book weaves together an array of essays examining lived experiences of Dalit women expressed through their narratorial voices. The Foreword by Prof. Raj Kumar sets the tone for this volume by situating the position of Dalit women and highlighting that it must not be misunderstood as a homogenizing category.

In their Introduction to this volume, the editors engage with the crucial concern of self-reflective subjectivity of Dalit writers in composing Dalit literature. The most insightful analysis is of the emergence of the 'neo-Dalit' identity, a confident rejection of oppression-based markers and equipped with education and empowerment. The editors also trace the robust development of Dalit feminism from Phule and Ambedkar to present writers who have successfully endeavoured to create an alternative historiography of diverse concerns of Dalit women from their own perspective.

The book under review is divided into three sections. The first section delineates the rubric of Dalit studies with Dalit theory and feminism, it includes six essays. The first essay by Anne Placid and Binu K.D. underlines the impact of Dalit feminism in shaping divergent discourses of subjectivity and aesthetics. Ashutosh K. Prabhakar investigates the experiences of the body, untouchability and encoding in language. Deepthi Menon extends the theoretical underpinnings of 'minor literature' and resistance to hegemony by Dalit feminist writings. Pratibha Singh points out the act of writing as a form of protest to disintegrate patriarchal and caste biases. Shibangi Dash compellingly argues about Dalit women's contribution to anti-caste movements. Animesh Manna indicates the formation of national identity with the reformist vision of Ambedkar and the resulting consequences in the anti-colonial struggle.

The second section delves into the poetics and politics of Dalit women's poetry. Life writings or autobiographies have been commonly understood as the most prominent literary genre in Dalit literature, a separate section on Dalit poetry is a welcome addition in recognizing the influence and popularity of poetry as a noteworthy genre in Dalit literature. Shipra Gorai explores the poetry anthologies of Bengali Dalit poetry by Kalyani Thakur Charal. Aruna Gogulamanda's poem is analyzed by Pallavi Dutta, positioning it in the illustrious creative outputs of Dalit women writers. Shuvani Sengupta presents a survey of Dalit women's poetry from various Indian languages united in their shared aim of eradicating caste and patriarchal discriminations. An interesting study of a Dalit poet in Malayalam—S. Joseph is presented by Neelima B., whose poetry liberates women from the dominant patriarchal stereotypes.

The third section is an attempt to theorize Dalit women's aesthetics through analysis of various literary genres encompassing different Indian languages. Jatin Bala's rebellious women characters are analyzed by Brati Biswas, demolishing the myth of Dalit women as simply passive victims. Debdatta Chakraborty stresses the voice and efforts of 'she-Dalits' who have successfully surmounted hurdles of several marginalizations. Yashica Dutt's memoir in English is examined by Leksmi R. Nair for her contemplations on concealing caste and her later affirmation of dalit identity with distinct dignity. Bama's acclaimed literary works are discussed by Arunabha Bose highlighting the intersections of caste, gender and conversion within a theoretical apparatus. Another essay by Yanpolumi M. Sangma reviews Bama's celebrated autobiography

Karukku as a tool of resistance despite including recollections of unjust discriminations.

The present volume of essays compiles together diverse scholarly musings on a contemporary area of academic research encompassing texts in various literary genres in different Indian languages. This work can be of special interest to researchers working in the field of Dalit studies, Dalit literature and Dalit women's writings.

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Nikhilesh Dham and Bain Malik (Eds.), *Posthumanism and Literary Insights: A Critical Introduction*. Aakar Books, 2025, 320 pp., Rs. 995, ISBN: 978-93-5002-876-6.

Reviewed by Indrani Das Gupta

Nikhilesh Dhar and Bapin Mallick's edited volume, *Posthumanism and Literary Insights* (2025) is a recent addition to the expanding body of works in the field of posthumanism. Dhar and Mallick's critical volume engages with the materialist and philosophical underpinnings of posthumanist discourse, and outlines how this framework intersects with caste, gender, cityscapes, genres like science fiction, speculative, and cybernetic narratives. Like many other books in this evolving field, such as Cary Wolfe's *Critical Environments: Postmodern Theory and the Pragmatics of the "Outside"* (1998) and *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (2003), Rosi Braidotti's *The Posthuman* (2013), Christine Daigle and Matt Hayler's edited volume *Posthumanism in Practice* (2023), among others, this volume does not attempt to rigidly define the structural and conceptual terrain of posthumanism. Instead, acknowledging its slippery and dynamic character, Dhar and Mallick's volume posits posthumanism as a critical intervention tool in the long debate between humanism, anthropocentrism, and anti-humanism.