

Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Dalit Women's Life Narratives

Bhushan Sharma, Anurag Kumar

Abstract:

Dalit women have long occupied marginal positions and been excluded from two major Indian social movements: the Feminist Movement and the Dalit Movement. The researcher explores that how dalit women have made creative use of their marginality - their 'outsider-within' status and represented their lived experience. The study consists of the scrutiny of select life narratives of dalit women writers: Bama's *Sangati-Events* (2005), Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* (2015), Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke* (2008) to discuss and explore the sociological significance of three characteristic themes in these narratives (1) the interlocking nature of dalit women's oppression, (2) endurance and resilience, (3) role in transformation of community.

Thus the perspectives of dalit women writers create new knowledge about their life, family and community. Their perspectives may well provide a preparatory point for the development of the Dalit Feminist Standpoint. This study may help other marginalized sections or sociologists by putting greater trust in the creative potential of their own narratives and cultural biographies.

Keywords: Caste, gender, intersectional oppressions, outsider-within status, substituted knowledge, standpoint.