

Environmental Thinking in Dalit literature

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Received: 24 Oct 2024

Accepted & Reviewed: 25 Oct 2024,

Published : 31 Oct 2024

Abstract

To make happy and healthy life, we must consider the environment. The environment is connected with every living being and is always around us. When we talk about environmental improvement, we see that the government is getting the work of planting millions of trees every year and works on digging ponds for collection rainy water, the government also getting the work of controlling pollution but despite this, the environment where we live is degrading every day. Today, for the needs of people and their comfortable lives, trees are being cut, and roads are being constructed from various places. People of the Dalit community have made a huge contribution to keeping the environment safe and clean because their livelihood was completely dependent on the environment. When they did not get food, they used to earn their living by plucking fruits and flowers from trees. There is a caste in the Dalit community, which is known as Mali, its job is to guard, and serve the trees, that is why people of this caste are known as Mali caste. Similarly, people of other castes also come from the Dalit community, who are known as the real “son of Nature”

Keywords: Environment, Dalit community, controlling pollution, Mali caste, son of Nature”

Introduction

The resources of environment are very closely related to Dalit literature. The Environment means everything that is around us, which includes both living and non-living things. In contrast, Dalit literature means a society that has been deprived of all rights and has been mentally enslaved, that class is called the marginalized class or Dalit class.

Methodology and Approach: The study is based on the book of Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Mahatma Jotiratirao Phule, Tathagat Gautam Budh, and many other so writers. The method of study has been applied descriptive and analytical approach.

Outcome: All the prominent personalities in the world have been connected to the objects of nature, be it Tathagat Buddha, Rousseau, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Jotirao Phule, Osho, A. P. G. Abdul Kalam’ and many others, all these great men took education from the resources of the environment and tried to understand its power, as they know that everything is hidden behind it.

Conclusion and Suggestion: If you want to see a happy and healthy life for all the living beings in the world, then it is very important to keep the environment safe, whether it is air pollution, water pollution, soil pollution, or noise pollution, we have to pay special attention to all these types of pollution.

Today humans are destroying the resources of the environment to fulfil their needs and desires. To save the environment, the government should run awareness campaigns in every village so that people can understand the importance of the environment and try to protect the environment. If the environment is safe then only human life is safe.

The marginalized class was kept away from the comforts and luxuries of life, and then only the environment became the support of their life. That is why we see the great men, writers, poets, and social reformers who were born in the Dalit community had had special interest in the objects nature, like Tathagat Buddha, Jotirao

Phule, Dr. Ambedkar, Sharankumar Limbale, Omprakesh Valmillki, Bama, and many others but Tathagat Buddha was differ from others because he wanted to know the mystery of life through the help of nature, therefore he left his palace and went into the lap of nature for attaining knowledge.

Father of the Nation Jotirao Phule, born in the Mali caste, about whom Dhananjay Keer writes in the book "Biography of Jotirao Phule" that Phule's family was dependent on gardening and agriculture, due to which Jotirao Phule was fond of working in the garden with his father in his childhood.

When we study the biography of Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, he was very fond of tree planting in his childhood, and he did a lot of work to preserve the substance of the environment, he struggled for water the whole life and told the importance of it. When we read the biography of Narayan Guru, he also left his materialistic life and went to attain knowledge in Nay Dham Cave for a long time by meditating in solitude.

When we throw light on the life of social reformer Baba Gadge in Dalit literature, we see that he used to go on foot to village-to-village-in Dalit community to clean the locality himself. Swami Achhutanand Harihar, Ramswaroop Verma, and Jagdev Babu, known as Lenin of Bihar. In Dalit literature, these great men and writers have had some internal connection with the resources of the environment.

Om Prakash Valmiki's autobiography "Joothan" Daya Pawar's autobiography "Baluta" Baby Kemble's autobiography "The Prisons We Broke" Sharan Kumar Limbale's autobiography "Akkarmashi" The Out Cast, Dr. Ramnath's Autobiography "Aapbeeti" in these biographies, all the writers have exposed very deep connection with the objects of nature, and it is also confirmed that just as we have to maintain control and balance on all the elements of the environment, in the same way the great men and writers of the Bahujan community strive for equality, fairness and humane life in the society.

Tathagat Buddha's Inclination toward Nature: When we look at Tathagat Buddha from the perspective of nature, what kind and to what extent did he have a connection with nature? He was born in Lumbini forest on the day of Buddha Purnima in 563 BCE. His mother Mahamaya gave birth while standing on her toes, holding a branch of a tree, but his mother died just seven days after his birth

. It is proved that Siddhartha Gautam was born in the lap of nature; therefore, we can also call him the son of Nature. Siddhartha was affected by the elements of nature since his childhood. That is why when Siddhartha Gautam used to go to the fields with his father in his childhood; he used to spend most of his time sitting under a tree for meditation.

When we hear a story of Siddhartha Gautama's childhood in which his stepbrother Devadatta killed a swan with an arrow, Siddhartha Gautama saved and protected the injured swan. This story proves that Siddhartha's heart was full of compassion for all creatures, and a real protector of all elements of nature. He was fascinated by the objects of nature since childhood and found more tranquillity in the lap of nature than in his palace, but his father did not like all this, which is why he built three palaces for Siddhartha Gautam, which had special facilities so that Siddhartha Gautam could be enchanted in materialist life. However, no one could make him stop from going into the lap of nature.

A very big incident happened in the life of Siddhartha Gautam due to which he left his palace and went into the lap of nature. That was Rohini River. This incident also marks him as a naturalist. There was a river in the state of Kapilavastu, which was known as the Rohini River. On both sides of it lived people of two dynasties, on one side the Koliya dynasty and the other side the Sakya, due to the water of Rohini River was frequent quarreling between the two communities. When this fight was about to turn into a war, Siddhartha Gautam tried hard to stop it, but the Prime Ministers of both communities considered war as the right way to solve the problem. Siddhartha Gautam did not like it at all, he thought it appropriate to leave his state to calm the war

because he did not like any dispute among people related to nature. This proves that Siddhartha Gautam was indeed a great man and, naturalist who wanted to bring peace to save the whole of nature.

To attain knowledge, he sat under a Peepal tree in Budh Gaya, meditated deeply for 49 days, and attained knowledge. He was the only one person in the world who understood the power of nature because it was nature that transformed him from Siddhartha Gautam to Tathagata Buddha.

William Wordsworth says about the nature “Nature as great teacher, best mother, guardian, and nurse of man.”(Albert)

John Keats believes in nature that “nature never never betrays and never lies.”(Sen).

P. B. Shelley also tells the importance of nature in his poem “Ode to the West Wind”

“O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn’s being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing.”(Tilak P 79)

A. P. J. Abdul Kalam wrote in his book “My Journey”

He, too, was an early riser who in first few hour of the day
Would be spend with nature examining his coconut trees,
Walking the roads of the town we lived in.”(Kalam)

Today Tathagat Buddha is known not only in India but also throughout the world, and many countries follow his principles and getting a higher rank than other countries. His theories are based on naturalistic principles. Tathagat Buddha has been called a naturalist because he was not only a devotee of nature but he worked hard day and night to understand the power of nature well, and whenever he tried to explain something to a person, he made understand through the example of nature. He made explain to his followers about the importance of quietness “There is absolute coolness, it is like the ocean: on the surface the waves of the ocean are very boisterous and noisy. But the deeper we go into the ocean, the quieter the flow.”(Pranay P 24) He used to make understand his followers by giving the example of nature. To make understand Angulimala, he gave a good example of a tree leaf. When Tathagat Buddha made to understand his followers, he used to give examples of natural things, he used to say about the Sanga, the Sanga is like the ocean and the monks are like the rivers that fall into the ocean and become the sea.

Similarly, the Tathagata used to pay special attention to nature. He ate neither meat nor did advise anyone to eat the flesh of animals. In the very first sermon of Panchsheel, he talks about the protection of nature, and being kind to living beings,

पानातिपाता वेरमणी सिक्खा पदं समादियामि

Tathagat Buddha has given the principle of Panchsheel to his followers in which the first is the concept, which is to learn to protect all living beings and not to do violence to any living being. His principles have been written in Pail language.

It proves that he is a great man in the world who is a humanist and naturalist.

Jotirao Phule’s Impact on the Environment :

Jotirao Phule, born in the 19th century, is known for being a great thinker, great teacher, great philosopher, great orator, and a great social reformer in the world. His special contribution has been to social reform, women's education, hypocrisy, superstition, and environmental issues, in which water control, cleanliness, land security, and other such works have been done. During the time of Jotirao Phule, the condition of the untouchables, and backward community was quite pathetic.

“Every untouchable was required to walk through the streets of Poona with a branch of leaves tied to his waist and a pot hanging from his neck in which to spit if he wanted to;”(Keer P 18).The upper caste people were also exploiting farmers That is why, On September 24, 187, he held a meeting in Pune and established the committee “Satyashodhak Samaj” in which only 60 people was present at that time. The main objective of creating this institution was to remove untouchability, discrimination, and casteism, to make people aware of human rights, and to free the marginalized society from their mental slavery, one of the main objectives of which was for the farmers’ exploitation. In what way did the Upper caste Hindus impose higher taxes on poor farmers and grab their land? Jotirao Phule had been protesting on all these issues for about 15 years. His writing work and his revolutionary speeches had an impact on the British government.

“Jyotirao prayed that peasants should not be left to the mercy of rains which Are irregular and undependable. What was wrong with Indian Agriculture? Is seen in his book. Dams and barrage across the valleys, and river which were

Ideals of Jotirao dreams are realised today by a Free India,

But the methods of implements of agriculture are much the same.”(Keer P 193)

To spread the ideas of Satyashodhak Samaj, Krishnarao Balkan started a weekly magazine in January 1877, which was published in the name of ‘Din Bandhu’ ‘Brother of the Poor’ Jotirao Phule continued to work for the poor farmer’s exploitation, that is why in 1883, he wrote a book related to the problem of the peasant that name was “Kisan Ka Koda”. Through this book, he raised his voice against the exploitation of poor peasants and marginalized communities.. Farmers were so exploited that they could not send either their children to school, nor eat proper food, nor wear proper clothes, whereas farmers were the only class that fed everyone and protected the environment

Jotirao Phule worked to convey many such issues regarding the assistance of poor people through his revolutionary speech, agitated works, and his writing against the British government. The British Government was Influenced by such efforts just took up the task of building dams around valley for the benefit of the farmers so that rainwater could be collected and used for crop irrigation. In addition, water started flowing through rivers. Manure started being made from dry leaves and bones and by using it, farmers started producing good crops. Rivers and lakes were properly equipped for the farmers so that they could use them for their fields. The land meant for farmers to graze animals was returned to them by the government. In addition, the cutting of green trees was banned. Poor farmers were given sheep and cattle to rise so that they could earn their living. Many such changes were possible due to the efforts of Jotirao Phule during his time.

Dr. Ambedkar’s Impact on the Environment:

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's special contribution is mainly seen in political justice, social reform, and the drafting of the Indian constitution. Similarly, he has also worked especially on environmental protection. When we talk about environmental protection, we see that just as different types of elements are related to the environment, in the same way, human beings is also a part of the environment. When we read about the history of Dalits, the Dalit community was kept from water away, as well as Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar also became its victim. If human beings had been deprived of water, they would have died on their own that is why Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar first paid attention to the issue of water.

Today we see written on the walls that "Water is life". Somewhere Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was the first person in the world to say that water is a fundamental right and it is necessary for survival and human development.

“Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar who envisaged water power as ‘national power’

he stressed the utilisation of water for the development of the nation.”(Ilaiyaraaja P 27)

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar started a Dalit movement on 20 March 1927 to get the right to water from the Chavdar Tank, but he could not get success therefore he fought for about 10 years in the Mumbai High Court to get the right to water for the Dalits community and finally on 17 December 1936, the untouchables were given the right to drink water from the Chavdar pond.

When Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar got the opportunity to draft the Constitution of India in 1947. He first wrote about environmental protection at the Act 16 C in the fundamental duty to the creature

“To protect and improve the natural environment including forest, lakes, rivers, and wild life and to have compassion for living creatures.”(Sarkar)

That is the responsibility of all to protect the natural environment. Do not cut trees or kill living beings many such basic duties have been applied. Today, the environment is the only force that maintains balance on this continent; otherwise, the rich people would deprive the poor of air, water, sunlight, and other resources of nature.

Although Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar has paid special attention to the environmental elements since childhood and used to plant various types of trees and plants at his house, when he was appointed to the Executive Council of the Governor General of India as a Labour member on 20 July 1942, he started focusing on the environmental protection, especially planned various innovative schemes on the environmental protection, which included flood control, irrigation water transportation, water supply for domestic use, floodwater, power generation, and much other work as he planned to built the Dams, The Damodar Valley Project is a multipurpose river valley project in India that aims to control flooding, generate power, and provide irrigation water supply, and Hirakund dam regulates the flow of the Mahanadi River and produced electricity through several hydroelectric plants. Today, the green earth that we see around us the farmers who irrigate their crops from canals or rivers, the lights that we see all around, and the work that is done in factories through electricity, the contribution of Dr. Ambedkar is behind all this. It has special significance in the construction of all; the country will never be able to repay his debt of contribution but will always be indebted to him.

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