



## Influence of Education on the Life of Dalit Woman in Shantabai Kamble's

### *Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha*



**Dr. Indira C. Rathod**

Guest faculty  
Govt First Grade College, Shiggaon.  
Dist: Haveri, State: Karnataka.  
Email: [drindirarathod@gmail.com](mailto:drindirarathod@gmail.com)

#### **Abstract**

Women education refers to every form of education that aims at improving the knowledge, empowerment, awareness, dignity and honor, justice, identity, and skill of women and girls. Educated women are capable of bringing socio - economic changes in the patriarchal society. Dalit women are not simply due to their poverty, economical status, or lack of education, but are a direct result of the severe exploitation and suppression by the upper classes, which based on Varna or Caste system in India. For the purpose the present article takes up impact of education on the life of Dalit Woman in Shantabai Kamble's *Majya*

*Jalmachi Chittarkatha (The Kaleidoscopic Story of My Life)*. The study analyses that, Shantabai Kamble, one of the first Marathi women Dalit writers, through her autobiography *Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha*, an impact of education and self emancipation. Shantabai Kamble comes out from caste discrimination, exploitation and suppression, through her education. Naturally she being a Dalit girl was deprived of several opportunities including getting an education.

**Key Words:** patriarchal society, caste discrimination, Dalit woman, exploitation, freedom, poverty, marginalization.

## RESEARCH PAPER

In India, there is a huge campus of religion situated in the society. There are four major caste divisions in India, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. The lowest caste people came under Shudra's. They are considered as Dalits. These people are suppressed, humiliated, exploited, discriminated and marginalized in every field of life. Dalits are also considered as untouchables or Harijan. In Indian society, some communities are at the lowest step like; Dalits, females, poor etc. If the woman belongs to Dalit community, they suffered of two types; being a woman second belongs to the lowest community. The present study takes up Effect of education on the life of a Dalit Woman in Shantabai Kamble's *Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha*. Therefore it could be said they we "doubly oppressed", especially the tragic condition of Dalit women in Indian society. Educated Dalit women protest against all forms of oppression and relying on the strength and resilience of Dalit women, also an appeal fine change and self-empowerment through education and self-awareness.

Dalit women's writing, which has emerged from the womb of anger, pain, and inequality, gives a detailed description of Dalit society, exploitation of Dalit women by their husbands at home and by their landlords at working place. Dalit women writing protests the established social system which is based on injustice. Dalit women writers express their sufferings in different voices and these voices are explosive and violent, which is the only way of resisting extreme physical violence, frustration and sexual dominance. Poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, question of livelihood all have pushed them to the state of anguish, and make their voice explosive. Therefore, one should not think that by mere shifting from home to public life and going to work place does not mean that they are liberated from the matrix of patriarchy. Dalit woman's pain is more compared to Dalit men's. It is clearly visible in the autobiography of Shantabai Kamble.

Shantabai Kamble is a Marathi writer and Dalit activist. *Shantabai Krushnaji Kamble* born in a Mahar Dalit family on March 1, 1923. Her birthplace was Mahud which is located in Solapur. She wrote first Dalit women autobiography entitled *Majya Jalmachi Chitarkatha*, translated as, The Kaleidoscopic Story of my Life in 1988. It is the book deals with the two major problems of

the society. Firstly the oppression and exploitation of the Dalit by the upper classes, secondly the discrimination towards women in a patriarchal society. It elaborates struggle for identity and growth against rural background. The word *Chittarkaha* literary means, a picture story but also indicate a sense of pieces of pictures being put together like a jigsaw puzzle. In this autobiography she talks about how Dalit women are marginalized by both upper class families as well as by Dalit families. Her work focuses on her growing up as women, poor and Dalit. She was the first Dalit women teacher in Sholapur district. The protagonist of the Story, Najabai Sakharam Babar, bears the burden of class, caste and gender. She is from the Mahar caste, one of the biggest Dalit communities in Maharashtra. Shantabai Kamble completely believed that education is only medium which can protect rights of Dalits. She is the ardent follower of Ambedkar's views and opinions.

Shantabai Kamble draws a picture of the practice of untouchability in the sacred temple of education where Dalit children were forced to sit outside the class-room and the teacher strictly keeping himself away from their touch. At this very early age shantabai was very upset of practice of untouchability .She writes, "Patil Master was the teacher of Standard III. He forced us to sit outside the classroom. He did not let us touch either to him or the other upper caste students. He used to punish us from a safe distance with a cane. While checking our homework he used to make us put our slates on the floor and after checking he put them down. Only then we were allowed to take them back. He did not like to be touched by us." ( 03, Kamble).

Shantabai Kamble outpoured her life experiences in her autobiography. She writes seriously about the Dalit social life, status of Dalit women in general and her own plights and sufferings in particular. Dalit women suffer from a triple suppression of caste, class and gender. Marriage is also a double enslavement for them. The plight of women is attributed to their unquestioning adherence to the conventional attitude, practices and superstitious custom. Education and self- empowerment are the panacea for all these evils.

In the course of her narrative we come to know that she was the fourth daughter of her parents. Her father was desperate to have a male child after having three daughters successfully. So the moment Shantabai's father, Sakharam, heard that another girl was born, he immediately wanted to kill her. Sakharam was desperate to get a son and therefore in a rage he said so. She was

his desperation. As time went by, the girl grew up and later went to school amidst poverty. She did very well in her studies. She got a stipend of three rupees per month in standard sixth to buy paper, ink, notebooks, etc.

Shantabai Kamble successfully passed the fourth and the fifth standard. At school, she passed sixth standard entire the class. She was the only girl to go into the seventh standard. But seventh standard syllabus very difficult to read without attends the class. Shantabai Kamble was from poor family. The social and economical status of her family's background was very low. But her parents decided to send her school because of her extraordinary talent. She prepared and attended seventh standard. Seventh standard results were declared in the newspaper. Patil Master first looked for Shantabai's result and was happy to know that she has passed. Her father's eye brimmed with tears as he heard the results. He was proud of her for she was the Mahar girl in the entire Sangli taluka, to clear the seventh standard exam.

After shantabai had cleared the seventh standard, people in the community began to suggest that her father should get married. Since she was educated. shantabai's brother and father wanted to find a schoolmaster as a groom for her. She got married with Kamble master from the village. Her married life is not good yet all in the beginning. After some days, she starts to join school for teach. Education could have made her self – sufficient in knowledge as well as economy. After Shantabai started work as a teacher, she tried to provide food for the family. She bought fruit for her ailing father and milk for her children. She was herself to busy managing home and school and doing community work that she often went without food even during the better days of her life.

Shantabai values the difference that education had made to the entire community and reminiscence the changes that come about in her own extended family. Education plays an important role in Shantabai's life. Amidst in poor family she passed seventh class and she became teacher. Shanatbai is role model, who is down-trodden from poverty and deprived from upper caste in patriarchal society. She writes. "I received education up to the seventh standard while I was still at my mother's house. Then I become teacher None of my brothers, however, wanted to go to school. They learned the work of construction labourers though. But then work was infrequent, they sometimes used to get work and sometimes went without any. When they got work, they earned enough to eat well and enjoyed themselves. In the rainy season, it was difficult to get work. Construction work would stop. Then my elder brother used to come and stay

with me a couple of weeks. When he left, he had to borrow money from me for the bus fare".  
(Translation by Maya Pandit: pp. 133-36)

Thus, the exploitation of women in the universal factor but the tools of exploitation are not the same all over the world. Caste becomes the major exploitation tool in the oppression of women in India. A Dalit woman's experience is very different from upper caste woman's experiences. A Dalit woman is doubly cursed as a woman and as a Dalit. Dalit women are penalized and brutalized not only by upper caste men but also by men from their own community. Dalit women not only questioned their victimization but also spoke for the upper and middle class women who met the same fate at home and society.

Dalit women's autobiographies are very candid about all kinds of exploitation and oppression that these women had to endure both within and outside their society. They also give lucid accounts to the larger cause of the Dalit community. Shantabai Kamble's autobiography not only talked about the life of an individual but also represented the past and at times even the present of their own communities and their lived experiences, both individual and collective. She talks about her family and the other people living around her, which give a clear picture of Dalit community. The focus is on the way they live, their culture and prevent social practices.

The word 'Education' changes the life of Shantabai Kamble. Education improves knowledge and awareness. It is not only an instrument of enhancing efficiency but it also an effective tool of widening and augmenting democratic participation and upgrading the overall quality of individual and societal life. The role of education in facilitating social and economic progress in Shantabai Kamble's life.

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