



Industrial Engineering Journal

ISSN: 0970-2555

Volume : 52, Issue 7, July : 2023

## **Race and Racism in Dalit Literature - U.R.Anathamurthy**

**Mrs. S.HIMA BINDU**  
**Assistant Professor, Department of English,**  
**Ch.S.D.St.Theresa's College for Women, Eluru**  
**&**  
**Research Scholar,**  
**Kalinga University,**  
**Raipur**

**Dr.A.VIJAYANAND**  
**Professor, Department of English,**  
**Kalinga University,**  
**Raipur**

### **Abstract**

This paper will be followed by a description and analysis of the Dalit identity, its genesis and how it acquired its current shape in modern India and the evolution of the modern Dalit literature in India. Then the paper will present an account of the problems that have emerged regarding texts written on caste issues by non-Dalit writers. The main topic of analysis in this paper is the discussion on the criticism of caste and the portrayal of the Dalit experience in the novels *Samskara* and *Bharathipura* by U R Ananthamurthy. An Account of Caste as a Social Institution Caste is the most defining feature of Indian society, its social life and politics. It is an endogamous system which according to the Hindu scriptures divides the society into four distinct, hierarchical and hereditary social groups based on the occupation of each (Dumont 1970: 21). This grouping system known as the *varna* system comprises of: Brahmins (the priestly class), Kshatriyas (the warrior class), Vaishyas (the merchant class) and Shudras (the servant/agricultural class). Lying outside the framework of this four fold *varna* system are the hitherto untouchables, who, in post-independence India refer to themselves as Dalits. The untouchability of the Dalits is due to the supposedly „impure“ tasks that they perform which include burning the dead, washing clothes which are soaked with menstrual blood, etc. Some of the features of the caste system are hierarchy, division of labour, and the opposition of the „pure“ and „impure“ caste groups which entail their separation in terms of marriage, contact and food (Dumont 1970: 21).

**Key Words:** caste, dalit, division of labour, hereditary, knowledge, social groups, system

### **Introduction**

Theories perform a very important analytical and philosophical function. If one thinks of philosophy as a means by which one understands the world; then in the same manner one can think of theoretical formulations as parts of various corresponding philosophical traditions that help in making sense of the world around us. Theory helps in providing a universal explanation of things. It is under this universal explanation that all the particularities are subsumed and an abstract idea is generated which holds validity irrespective of time and space. Thus, philosophical and intellectual ideas such as Marxism, Liberalism, Modernism, Feminism, etc. are theoretical formulations which help us understand why things are as they



are and what should be done to change them.

In the last few decades there has been a growing interest in various disciplines of the humanities and the social sciences in the act of theorising itself. This interest makes a point of departure from analysing various theoretical formulations- the coherences and contradictions inherent within them, the agreements and disagreements among various thinkers who associate themselves with a certain theoretical formulation- to an analysis of the act of theorisation itself. This analysis has focussed on how theorisation takes place, whether there is an effect on the formulated theory based on who indulges in the act of theorisation, etc. A discussion of these recent studies on the act of theorisation will be presented here since an understanding of it is crucial to the aims and objectives of this paper.

Western philosophy has been largely influenced by the ancient Greek idea regarding knowledge as something that could be established through proof and certainty. According to this idea if something has to be classified as knowledge through which we could arrive at a universal truth, then this knowledge must have been acquired through the exercise of the rational capacities of the human mind. This then led to the distinction between rationalism and empiricism in western philosophical thought. The rationalist school argued that a human being acquires knowledge through thinking and use of critical faculties. Whereas, according to the empiricist school knowledge could be attained through experience and sensory emotions. This school put a greater emphasis on emotion instead of reason (Sarukkai 2012: 51 and 52). However, the development of western philosophy and its progress has been through the emphasis on reason as the bedrock for acquiring knowledge. The roots of this could be traced to the Enlightenment philosophy and the Renaissance which put the human being at the centre of existence and focussed on realising the complete potential of the human mind.

The root of modern scientific knowledge is located in this distinction between emotion and reason, and the emphasis on reason over emotion. Galileo argued that scientific knowledge must be concerned with the study of the primary qualities of the studied object and not the secondary qualities, which are the emotions that the studied object generates in the mind of the scientist (Sarukkai 2012: 50). So for instance if a scientist were to undertake a botanical study of a flower, he/she must be concerned only with its observable and demonstrable qualities and should not be concerned about the experience of studying the flower- which are the emotions that the flower would generate in the mind of the scientist.

This modernist understanding of knowledge creates a distinction between the knower and what is being known. According to this understanding, the particular details of the knower are independent of the object that is being known. This idea has also been extended to the Humanities and the Social Science disciplines wherein it is argued that the socio-cultural location of the author makes no difference to the object being studied by him/ her (Sarukkai 2012: 30, 129 and 130). This modernist distinction has also impacted the process of theorisation. It has led to the act of theorisation being a non-ethical and non-moral enterprise. This means that, theory has become a rational field of enquiry wherein issues of what is morally right or wrong is not considered. What is taken into account is only whether the knowledge gathered through a theoretical formulation is right or wrong.



There have been recent academic interventions against the paradigm of western knowledge system which demarcates these boundaries between emotion and reason. This has also opened up new ways of thinking about theorising- especially in terms of a departure in thinking about theorisation as a non-moral act. This has been possible due to an augmentation of anti-enlightenment philosophical traditions such as postmodernism and postcolonialism. Postcolonialism has further helped focus on non-western knowledge systems which have a different intellectual tradition. For instance, in the Indian philosophical thought the distinction between emotion and reason is not so clear as it is in western philosophy.

A recent development in Dalit studies pertains to agreements and disagreements regarding who has the right to theorise about Dalits and their issues such as caste-based discrimination, socio-political movements for their emancipation, etc. A majority of Dalit writers and thinkers have argued that the right to write about Dalit issues should rest primarily with Dalits only. According to them, since Dalits have a first-hand experience of caste discrimination therefore they are best suited to write and theorise about it.

This argument made by Dalit writers overturns the conventional understanding regarding the relationship between experience and theory. The conventional understanding in Western philosophy has been that experience must be subordinate to theory. What this means is that if a human being experiences something it must be understood and interpreted in the light of a pre-existing theoretical formulation and that experience should not be used to generate a theoretical formulation (Guru and Sarukkai 2012: 1).

A very important academic intervention regarding theorisation about Dalit issues has been made by the Dalit writer and thinker Gopal Guru. His major contribution to the question of theorisation is that he brings the issue of ethics in to the act of theorisation. His ideas regarding the process of theorisation changes it from being a non-moral activity to one which is endowed with the considerations of what is morally right or wrong. So for Guru a theory must not be judged merely on the question of whether a certain theoretical argument is correct or incorrect, but also whether the theorist has the moral right to theorise about something in the first place (Guru 2002).

Certain upper-caste writers such as U R Ananthamurthy, whose works will be analysed in this paper, have been sensitive towards the criticisms levelled at them by the Dalit critics, and have tried to address them in their later works. Moreover, an analysis of these texts written on issues of caste will enable us to map a genealogy of Dalit writing in India and the process of Dalit identity formation.

Ananthamurthy belongs to the *Navya* Literary Movement in Kannada literature. The authors who were a part of this literary tradition were well-known for experimenting with the form, style, and techniques in their writings. Apart from this they were also inspired by the European philosophical ideals of Existentialism and Realism, and hence dealt with themes like individual alienation and despair (Chakravarty 2010: XXIII). The two texts that will be analysed in this paper *Samskara* and *Bharathipura* are his first and second novels respectively. *Samskara* will be analysed as a critique of caste and Brahminism, whereas *Bharathipura* will be analysed in terms of its „dalit experience“. The concept of „dalit experience“ has been theorised by the Dalit critic and thinker Sharankumar Limbale. Limbale



(2004: 31 and 32) describes the concept as:

“They are the experiences of a particular community. Experiences conveyed in Dalit literature have several characteristics. They constitute an engagement in self-search to achieve self-respect; and the rejection of tradition and a religion that are opposed to such self-respect”.

### **Reading *Samskara* as a Critique of Caste and Brahminism**

The word „*samskara*“ has its roots in the Hindu religious philosophy. When translated into English it has several meanings such as: “a rite of passage, forming well, making perfect, the realizing of past perceptions, preparation, making ready, etc” The novel’s subtitle is „a rite for a dead man“ which is also one of the several connotations associated with the word *Samskara*. (Ramanujan 1976: 119).

The novel begins with the death of an anti-Brahmanical Brahmin called Naranappa. He did everything that a Brahmin is not supposed to do- he ate meat with his Muslim friends, drank alcohol, had sex with lower caste prostitutes, etc. Every time the orthodox Brahmins of his *agrahara*<sup>4</sup> threatened to excommunicate him he threatened them back saying that if they would excommunicate him he would become a Muslim. In the novel Naranappa mocks the Brahmins of his village by telling them:

“Your texts and rites don’t work anymore. The Congress party is coming to power, you’ll have to open up the temples to all outcastes” (Ananthamurthy 1976: 19).

Although Ananthamurthy has not specified the time during which the action of the novel takes place, it could be discerned from Naranappa’s statement quoted above, that the action takes place during a period that was very close to India’s independence from the British rule. India’s independence was followed by an ushering in of the Nehruvian ideals which were drawn from the ideals of European Enlightenment, freedom, democracy and citizenship based rights. Showing himself to be a believer in these Nehruvian ideals, Naranappa therefore thinks that the religious texts and its commands are relics of the past that will be done away with, and an equal society will be established where the hierarchies of the caste system will no longer exist once the Congress party comes to power in independent India.

In *Samskara* Ananthamurthy has created characters who represent the two contradictory binaries of tradition and modernity. These binaries are represented through Praneshcharya and Naranappa, and also through the supposedly pious Brahmin women and their binary opposites the lower caste „promiscuous“ women. By displaying a fantastic control over the narrative of the novel, Ananthamurthy even while presenting a stinging critique of tradition and the caste system, does not hegemonise modernity and shows that even modernity is riddled with its own set of problems (Chenni 2014: 36 and 37).

Praneshcharya is the embodiment of Brahmanism and its values in Durvasapura, the fictitious village which serves as the setting of the novel. He is a learned scholar who has learned the Vedas from Kashi and has been conferred with the coveted title of „the crest-jewel of Vedic learning“. He believes in his Brahminical ideals with conviction and practices them honestly and genuinely. For instance, he has deliberately married a sick and invalid woman called Bhagirathi with whom he is unable to consummate his sexual desires. He has dedicated his entire marital life taking care of her considering it a part of his noble duty as a learned Brahmin scholar. Therefore, he leads a life akin to that of a celibate exercising control over his marital and sexual needs.



Representing the other side of the binary is Naranappa, who is everything that Praneshcharya is not. When he dies at the beginning of the novel, the entire Brahmin *agrahara* of Durvasapura is put into an extremely difficult situation because none of the orthodox Brahmins are sure about performing the funeral rites of an unorthodox Brahmin who had openly flouted the Brahmanical values. They are afraid that if anyone of them performs the rites it would lead to his excommunication. Therefore, they leave the task of deciding who would cremate Naranappa to their esteemed scholar Praneshcharya. As Praneshcharya takes his time to find a solution to this imminent problem, Naranappa's dead body continues to rot in his house thereby emanating a foul stench that impacts the entire *agrahara*. It is during this period that the hypocrisy of the orthodox Brahmins of Durvasapura is brought out by the novelist.

While none of the orthodox Brahmins would openly volunteer themselves to perform the funeral rites of Praneshcharya, they would also ensure that others also do not do the same. They do this by individually complaining against other Brahmins to Praneshcharya about the other person's lack of abiding by the Brahmanical values sincerely. They do this so that Praneshcharya allows the person making a complaint against fellow Brahmins to perform the funeral rites. This manipulation done by these Brahmins is due to the fact that whoever gets to perform Naranappa's funeral rites will also get access to his property as well as the jewellery of Naranappa's lower-caste concubine called Chandri. Other Brahmin characters in the novel such as Dasappa who belong to a lower Brahmin sect are not really concerned about Naranappa's property. He wants the problem of Naranappa's funeral to be resolved as soon as possible so that he could break his fast<sup>5</sup> and have his food. Dasappa unable to bear his hunger anymore, eventually has his food in secret at the house of another Brahmin from his neighbouring village called Parijatapura, away from the sight of the Brahmins of his village.

Ananthamurthy also satirises the Brahmin women characters and their hypocrisy. Brahmin women are supposed to be pious and upholding great values; a perfect opposite to the lower-caste women who are referred to as being „promiscuous“. However, in the novel one finds that the Brahmin women characters are very much given in to greed. They egg on their husbands to manipulate Praneshcharya so that he would allow one of them to perform the funeral rites, so that the concerned person's wife can get all the jewellery of Chandri. Through these happenings that take place following Naranappa's death in the novel, Ananthamurthy shows these Brahmins to be afflicted with greed and gluttony which are follies that go against Brahmanical values. These Brahmins would envy Naranappa's forbidden pleasures and would very much like to indulge in those themselves.

Naranappa himself was aware of these follies of his fellow Brahmins and would often point it out to Praneshcharya every time Praneshcharya would advise him to mend his ways. On one such occasion Naranappa had told Praneshcharya:

“Let's see who wins in the end- you or me. I'll destroy brahminism. I certainly will. My only sorrow is that there's no brahminism really left to destroy in this place- except you”. (Ananthamurthy 1976: 22).

What Naranappa means here is that Brahminism has already been rendered weak and is on the verge of being destroyed because of the hypocrisy of the Brahmins in Durvasapura. The only person who is clinging on to those ideals is Praneshcharya, whose ideals Naranappa would



also destroy eventually. Ironically Praneshcharya is led to giving up his Brahminical values at the same time when he was looking for an answer regarding the cremation of Naranappa in the sacred texts. While he was engaged in this he had a sexual encounter with Chandri, Naranappa's concubine. It is through this encounter Praneshcharya commits his act of moral transgression and is led to doubting all his previously held values and ideals (Dev 2013: 4 and 5).

Upon committing this act of transgression Praneshcharya realises that he too is vulnerable to his own desires and the puritanical lifestyle that he was leading till now was owing to a certain kind of fear that had been manufactured in his mind through the religious scriptures. He thinks aloud in the novel:

“What manner of man am I? I am just like you- a soul driven by lust and hate. Is this my first lesson in humility? Come, Chandri, tell them, relieve me of the guru's burden” (Ananthamurthy 1976: 68).

As this realisation dawns on him, he decides that he would tell the Brahmins of his *agrahara* that he is not capable enough to decide about who should be given the responsibility of performing the funeral rites of Naranappa. The problem with which the novel had started; who would cremate Naranappa, is gradually relegated to the background as the novel progresses. In fact, the cremation takes place in the middle of the novel in a very nondescript manner when Chandri secretly, in the middle of the night takes out Naranappa's dead body and burns it in the middle of a faraway jungle with the help of some Muslim villagers. The novel makes an open-ended ending where Praneshcharya is seen to be heading out on a journey (*samskara*) to find out the truth of his existence based on his latest realisations.

### **Reading *Bharathipura* as a Conflict between Tradition and Modernity**

*Bharathipura* is the second novel written by U R Ananthamurthy and was published in 1973. While the previously analysed novel of this paper *Samskara* could be located in the period preceding immediately before India's independence, *Bharathipura* is located in the decades following independence. The setting of the novel is a fictional South Indian town known as *Bharathipura*.

The title of the novel serves as a metaphor for India and its society. The word *Bharat* is the Sanskrit equivalent of India and the word *pura* means village. By presenting the workings of caste and its clash with the forces of modernism such as new economic systems, socialism, liberal ideas and notions of equality- the author has used the micro-level site of a small South Indian town to comment upon the clash between tradition and modernity being experienced in the newly independent India (Ray and Selinger 2008: 6).

Caste-based discrimination has been a characteristic feature of Indian society for centuries and the colonial British government in India made the argument that it is due to the presence of caste India could never transform into a modern society and hence it should always remain under the domain of the British rule. This is because, due to the inherent inequalities of caste, Indians could never emerge as a united society which would be capable of self-rule. Therefore, significant efforts were made by Indian anti-colonialists to eradicate the caste system, rescue those who were subordinated by it and pave the possibility of modernising India.



The novel presents the contradictions and conflicts of a newly independent nation. As the euphoria of achieving independence from a foreign colonial power begins to recede, the problems of the post-colonial society begin to come to the fore. In the Indian context this problem is most pronounced in the form of inequalities brought about by caste. It is due to this reason that at a theoretical level Dalit scholars have shared a chequered relationship with postcolonial theory. Since postcolonial theory works by presenting a binary conflict between the coloniser and the colonised, it often does so by flattening out the contradictions, conflicts and complications inherent within the colonised/ post-colonial society (Chakravarthy 2010: XVII). Such a flattening out has not been very beneficial for the Dalits and members of other oppressed communities. This is because, it has often led towards an anti-colonial struggle that sidelines the concerns of these oppressed populations for the supposedly greater cause of national liberation. In this context Mukherjee (2010: 3) writes:

“Spivak<sup>6</sup> posed the question with reference to the colonizer- colonized framework within which much of the theorizing about postcoloniality and subalternity emanating from Indian and metropolitan intellectual circles took place. A work such as Limbale’s is a subversive move; it explodes this binary and exposes the inner contradictions that it conceals.”

In light of the discussion presented above, it could be argued that the novel *Bharathipura* by U R Ananthamurthy is another attempt at problematising and disturbing the neatly presented distinction between the coloniser and the colonised.

The central character of the novel is a young man called Jagannatha. The naming of the character is significant and aids to the overall purpose of the novel. The word Jagannath carries several associations with the Hindu religious pantheon. It is the name of the famous temple in Puri, Odisha in Eastern India which is thronged by thousands of Hindu devotees for their annual pilgrimage. Jagannath also happens to be the avatar of the Hindu god Vishnu who is known for his cunning mind and the ability to trick others. A derivative from Jagannath-the word „juggernaut“ has been used in European orientalist writings to explain the public spectacle of the *Rathyatra* Festival in which devotees would throw themselves in front of the chariots of Jagannath deity drawn by the pilgrims (Ray and Selinger 2008: 6). All these various associational connotations of the word Jagannath are portrayed in various ways in the novel. This paper will present a discussion of these portrayals shortly.

When the novel begins Jagannath has recently returned to his hometown of *Bharathipura* after having finished his studies in the United Kingdom. During his stay over there he was introduced to the thoughts of the liberal philosopher John Stuart Mill and the European philosophy of Existentialism. It was due to his exposure to Existentialist philosophy that Jagannath began to believe that life has no inherent purpose and meaning.

When Jagannath comes back to *Bharathipura* , he is saddened by the plight of his people whom he finds to be drowned in religious obscurantism and irrationality. He decides to engage in the task of empowering the Dalits of his village and eventually ensure that they gain entry to the Manjunatha temple. Their entry is prohibited to this temple since their touch is considered defiling to the temple deity called Manjunathaswamy. Engaging in this action enables Jagannatha to find a purpose and meaning in his life. Further, it also helps him to re-consummate his relationship with his British lover called Margaret to whom he regularly writes letters from Bharathipura giving out the details of his endeavours.



The term „Dalit“ has not been used in the novel both in the original text as well as its translation, to represent its lower-caste characters. Rather the Kannada term “*Holeyaru* “ has been used in its stead. This is a community of people whose caste mandated job is to clean the toilets. In this regard (Punitha 2010: XIV) writes regarding retaining the original term in the translation:

“The choice was more deliberate in retaining *Holeyaru* for its connotative value. Though „Dalit“ has a modern pan- Indian political content in referring to the depressed castes, the socio- cultural Kannada term „*Holeyaru*“ has been retained as it refers to the community that cleaned toilets, for the story is about them... In this context, human waste had to be translated as „shit“ in places where „faeces“ was too sanitized to carry the necessary revulsion”.

Although the term „shit“ is considered profane, the translation of the novel has not refrained from incorporating it instead of the more civil word „faeces“. This has been done to disorient the reader and make him/ her have a sense of the dehumanising work that Dalits have been forced to carry out for centuries. In the novel we can find Jagannatha’s indignation at the condition of the *Holeyaru* people and the apathy of others towards their state. This also forms one of the motivations of Jagannatha to embark upon his task of empowering them. In one place in the novel he states very angrily:

“These women live only to cook and serve delicious meals; those *Holeyaru* live only to carry away the shit that this food becomes; and between these are the men of Bharathipura, whiling away their time on their verandas, digesting the food they’ve eaten...” (Ananthamurthy 2010: 69).

In his mission of empowering the *Holeyaru* Jagannatha tries to convince many people of his town to be a part of his activities. They include politicians, members of the economically and socially elite class, his old friends and associates, etc. Among these people a man called Sripathi Rao becomes one of Jagannatha’s closest associates despite both of them having differences over many things. Rao is a Gandhian freedomfighter who is now disillusioned by the compromises made by his other Gandhian friends after India’s independence. Rao is forced to pay a heavy price for clinging on to his pre-independence ideals. In the novel he is shown to be living in abject poverty unable to fend for his family which leads to regular marital discord.

Equipped with the ideals of enlightenment and modernity, Jagannatha sets out to „modernise“ the people of Bharathipura. His zeal and enthusiasm is similar to that of a proselytiser who is eager to convert people to a new faith. Further, Jagannatha’s actions show an uncanny resemblance to the beginnings of the British colonialism in India. When the British imperialists came to India and other parts of the non- western world they came with a mission to „civilise“ these populations and Jagannatha seems to be doing something similar with the *Holeyaru* of his town (Thomas 2011: 270).

Jagannatha believes modernity to be the solution to all the problems facing the people of Bharathipura. To bring about this solution, he has to destroy all the relics of the past and the traditions that were revered by the people over there. He decides to teach the *Holeyaru* people the Kannada alphabets and gives them new clothes to wear. It must be remembered that in a caste-based society, Dalits are not permitted to receive education and if they wear new clothes it is considered a symbol of disrespect to the upper-caste people for which the Dalits were liable to be „punished“. By making the *Holeyaru* learn the alphabet and wear new





clothes, Jagannatha transgresses the traditional boundaries of the caste order and seeks to destroy whatever has been considered sacred by the people of Bharathipura. The defilement of the sacred reaches its peak when Jagannatha asks the *Holeyarus* to touch the sacred stone called *saligrama* which was present in his house. The touch of the *Holeyaru* would have polluted the sacred stone. Despite several pleadings and requests by Jagannatha the *Holeyarus* do not touch the sacred stone and eventually run away from his house out of fear. It was stated in the beginning of this section of the paper that Jagannatha is also the avatar of Vishnu and is known for a cunning mind and for performing tricks. In this context, the traits of the avatar of Vishnu is brought out through the character of Jagannatha for whom nothing is sacred and who plays tricks for destroying whatever is considered sacred by others.

However, as the novel progresses it becomes clear that even Jagannatha, despite all his good intentions, has a problematic way of relating himself to the *Holeyarus*. Jagannatha has a very subtle contempt for the *Holeyarus* and considers them to possess a herd-like mentality who are unable to stand up for themselves against their own oppression. This is further brought out in the manner in which he addresses them. In this regard Puneetha (2018: XV) argues:

And this is what Jagannatha thinks every time he sees the *Holeyaru* approaching him- „*avu bandhavu*<sup>8c</sup>“ - as if they were a herd, not people. He who is all set to initiate a social change and hopes to become a wholesome person through it, fails to transform his own attitude towards them...”

In the initial part of this paper Dalit Experience was defined as “... an engagement in self-search to achieve self-respect; and the rejection of traditions and a religion that are opposed to such self-respect (Limbale 2010: 31 and 32).

The portrayal of this Dalit experience has been extremely unfair in this novel. This is primarily because no „self“ of the *Holeyaru* people was presented who would then engage in the search for „self-respect“. They were infantilised and treated as a herd by a supposedly „enlightened“ upper-caste individual who thought he could initiate the *Holeyarus* of his village to modernity and „rescue“ them from caste-based discrimination.

The novel makes an ironic ending wherein the previous beliefs of the people of Bharathipura are further strengthened instead of being destroyed. This also serves as an indictment of Jagannatha and his failure to look at the *Holeyarus* as individual human beings instead of being objects of pity. Jagannatha had made prior announcements that he would enter the temple of Manjunatha with the *Holeyarus* on the day of the Chariot festival (*Rathyatra*). However, on the night prior to the festival the deity of the temple disappeared after it was taken away and thrown into a river by the son of the priest of the temple. He did this act to avenge his abusive father. On the next day the pilgrims of the temple who although were distressed by the news of the disappearance of the deity were relieved because they were saved from a greater defilement and blasphemy if Jagannatha were to enter the temple with the *Holeyarus*. Since the deity was stolen the festival was not held and hence Jagannatha could not enter the temple with his *Holeyaru* followers. The deities of the temple interpreted this incident as a form of divine intervention which protected their faith and they decided to make efforts to strengthen it further. Thus, by the end of the novel Jagannatha’s attempt to modernise Bharathipura is rendered a failure. He failed not only in taking the *Holeyarus* inside the Manjunatha temple, but also in breaking the age-old traditions, beliefs and biases



of the upper- caste people of Bharathipura.

### Conclusion

This paper has elucidated the central elements key to this thesis by presenting a discussion of caste, problems of deciding who gets to theorise and write about Dalits, etc. The main focus of this paper has been to look into the portrayal of Dalits and their experience of caste- based discrimination. by analysing two novels called *Samskara* and *Bharathipura* by U R Ananthamurthy; an upper- caste writer. *Samskara* was analysed as a trenchant critique by the author of Brahmanism, its fallacies and the hypocrisies of its practitioners. Whereas, *Bharathipura* was read as a conflict between caste and other traditional values with modernity and modernising forces such as democracy, socialism, liberalism, free market economy, etc. It is important to note here that in both the novels the Dalit characters are either absent or do not have an agency of their own. It could be read as an upper-caste writer's failure to portray the Dalit characters with greater autonomy. The writer can be criticised for focussing solely on „enlightened“ upper-caste individuals who ridicule Brahmanism or make efforts towards empowering the Dalits.

### References

1. Ananthamurthy, U. R., 1965 [1976]. *Samskara: A Rite for a Dead Man*. Oxford University Press. -1973 [2010]. *Bharathipura*. Oxford University Press.
2. Brucek, L. R. 2006. Dalit chetna in Dalit Literary Criticism. *Seminar*. Chatterjee, P., 1993. *The Nation and its Fragments*. Princeton University Press.
3. Chakravarthy, N. M., 2010. Introduction. In: Ananthamurthy, U. R., *Bharathipura*. Oxford University Press.
4. Chenni, R., 2014. U R Ananthamurthy. *Indian Literature*, 58 (5), pp. 35- 40.
5. Dangle, A., 2009. Dalit Literature: Past, Present and Future. In: Dangle, A., (ed.) *Poisoned Bread: translations from Modern Marathi Dalit Literature*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan Private Limited.
6. Dev, A., 2013. Individual versus Communal Morality in U R Anantmoorthy's *Samskara*. *The Criterion*, 4 (4).
7. Dirks, N., 2001. *Castes of Mind*. Princeton University Press.
8. Dumont, L., 1966. *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications*. University of Chicago Press.
9. Gajarawala, T. J., 2012. *Untouchable Fictions: Literary Realism and the Crisis of Caste*. Fordham University Press.
10. Guru, G., 2002. How Egalitarian are the Social Sciences in India? *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37 (50), pp. 5003- 5009.
11. Guru, G., Sarukkai, S., 2012. Introduction. In: Guru, G., and Sarukkai, S., (2012). *The Cracked Mirror- An Indian Debate on Experience and Theory*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
12. Kaviraj, S., 1999., Democracy and Social Inequality. In: Frankel, F. R., et.al. (eds). *Transforming India: Social and Political Dynamics of Democracy*. Oxford University Press.
13. Kumar, R., 2019. *Dalit Literature and Criticism*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan Private Limited.
14. Kumar, S., Alam, M.S., Joshi, D., 2008. *Caste Dynamics and Political Process in Bihar*.



- Journal of Indian School of Political Economy*, 20 (1 and 2).
15. Limbale, S., 1996[2004]. *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan Private Limited.
  16. Mukherjee, A. K., 2004. Reading Sharankumar Limbale's *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature: From Erasure to Assertion*. In: Limbale, S., 1996 [2004]. *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan Private Limited.
  17. Punitha, S., 2010. Translator's Note. In: Ananthamurthy, U. R., *Bharathipura*. Oxford University Press.
  18. Ray, A., Selinger, E., 2008. Jagannath's Saligram: On Bruno Latour and Literary Critique after Postcoloniality. *Postmodern Culture*.
  19. Ramanujan, A. K., 1976. Translator's Note. In: Ananthamurthy, U. R., 1965 [1976]
  20. *Samskara: A Rite for a Dead Man*. Oxford University Press
  21. Sarukkai, S., 2007. Dalit Experience and Theory. *Economic and Political Weekly*. 42 (40), pp. 4043- 4048.
  22. Tharu, S., Satyanarayana, K., 2013. Introduction. In: Tharu S., Satyanarayana, K., (eds.) *From those stubs, steel nibs are sprouting*. Harper Collins Publishers.
  23. Thomas, A. J., 2011. Bharathipura- Review. *Indian Literature*, 55 (6), pp. 270- 275.
  24. Witsoe, J., 2013. *Democracy against Development: Lower Caste Politics and Political Modernity in Postcolonial India*. University of Chicago Press.