



MODERN TELUGU LITERATURE: PORTRAYAL OF DALIT IDENTITY, ASSERTION, AND AUTONOMY

B. Venkat Raoⁱ

The EFL University,
Hyderabad, India

Abstract:

This paper is an attempt to study and analyze the phenomenon of Dalits' identity, religion and autonomy represented in Modern Telugu Literature. It examines some key historical writings in Telugu literature as well as more recent texts from the twentieth century onwards to argue that Dalit issues were systematically set aside. Nannaya during the eleventh century, for instance, defended caste hierarchies, while upper-caste nationalist reformers such as Gurajada Appa Rao and Kandakuri Veeresalingam in the nineteenth century did attempt to raise some issues and bring in social reforms. Unnava Lakshminarayan was one such upper-caste reformer who wrote a novel *Malapalli* (1922), about the Mala community's socio-political and cultural assertion and aspirations. This paper examines the political and the historical issues depicted in the novel to read Unnava's objective of writing a Dalit subjectivity within reformist and Gandhian frameworks.

Keywords: caste, religion, reform, conversion, assertion, identity and nation

1. Introduction

During the 11th century, Nannaya, who is known as the first poet of Telugu and his followers Tikkana and Errapragada together translated the Mahabharata into Telugu. They further consolidated the Chaturvarna system through their writings and defended caste hierarchies and the practice of untouchability. In the context of colonial Andhra, the problems of Dalits' lives were represented by a few notable reformists, nationalists, and liberal scholars from upper caste communities. These liberal tendencies can be traced back to their Western education during the colonial period. Social reformers such as Gurajada Appa Rao and Kandakuri Veeresalingam attempted to transform the conventional characteristics of Telugu literature into a modern tool of reformation (A. Satyanarayana, p. 81). However, their writings focused primarily on issues related to upper-caste problems such as bride price and widow remarriage, and modern education, with some attention to the inclusion of untouchables. It was due to newer understandings fostered under ideas during colonial modernity that some prominent Dalit

ⁱ Correspondence: email venkatroaboddu@gmail.com

leaders also raised their voice and could get the visible solidarity of the upper-caste reformers by the end of British colonialism. Unnava Lakshminarayan was one of the upper-caste reformers who wrote a novel *Malapalli* (1922), about the Mala community's socio-political and cultural assertion and aspirations. This paper is also an attempt to critically understand and analyze his text and framework in light of contemporary Dalit perspectives (1922). Taking the political and the historical issues depicted in the novel together, a concerted effort is made to comprehend Unnava's objective of writing Dalit subjectivity within the reformist and Gandhian framework.

Interestingly, this is also the case at the national level: the literary sphere is influenced by the image and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. Mulk Raj Anand, for example, neglected and, in fact, consciously undermined the political significance of Ambedkar and of Dalit assertion during the 1930s in his popular novel *Untouchable* (1935), which came out in the period in which the untouchables had emerged as a potent political force, and Gandhi was trying to win them over. (Shaileswar Sati Prasad, p. 28). It is therefore not surprising that regional literatures during this period of India show a marked impress of Gandhi's views and personality and reverberate with the glorification of 'truth,' 'non-violence,' 'non-cooperation,' 'village-upliftment,' 'chakra,' 'prohibition,' 'Hindu-Muslim unity' and the 'abolition of Untouchability.' The political milieu is the dominant setting of Indian literature in this period, and Gandhi's ideologies play a major role in it (Harish Chandra Raizada p. 137). Mulk Raj Anand, Dhan Gopal Mukherjee, Frieda H. Das, K.S. Venkataramani, Raja Rao, K. Nagarajan, D.F. Karaka and C.N. Zutshi are among the writers who came under the Gandhian influence earlier and whose works were published before independence. Mahatma Gandhi's influence extended to the writings of Amir Ali, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Venu Chitala, Zeenath Futehally, Kamala Markandaya, Anand Lall, Nayantara Sahgal, S. Menon Marath, Umrao Bahadur, B. Rajan and Manohar Malgaonkar, who more or less portrayed myriad facets of Gandhian political and philosophical views. Unnava is no exception to this process.

Unnava's *Malapalle* is a socially significant literary work in modern Telugu Literature. It deals with the caste, class and religious identities of Dalits. In fact, Unnava stands out as one who tried to fictionally represent Dalit life in Telugu literary space in the early twentieth century, at a time when the Brahmin landlord and his household was the principal setting for literature. Nonetheless, this paper argues that Unnava overlooked, if not undermined, the significance of Dalit assertions taking place in the form of Christian conversions and through the separate *Adi-Andhra* identity during the early 1920s. Instead, he represented Dalits as accepting Hindu religious identities. He depicts characters from nationalist, Gandhian and even Marxist backgrounds and frameworks, yet he completely sets aside the Dalit position as articulated in their embracing of conversion and in the *Adi-Andhra* movement. According to Unnava, he did not actually try to write a socio-political novel dealing with the life of Malas. His principal concern was the creation of a Telugu language, caught as it was in the fray between the modernists and traditionalists, with the former trying to standardize and the latter to democratize the Telugu language. Unnava felt that both the modernists and traditionalists faced serious problems in setting up a standard Telugu language. This is why he wanted to bring back the *palle basha* (village language) into literary writing through the village Dalits' language. The irony is that despite this (laudatory) effort, nowhere in the entire text can one trace any Dalit dialects. In other words, Dalit language is completely brahmanised in his literary project, and

their lives and life-worlds are similarly viewed from a brahminical perspective. Unnava's own claims aside, the novel has been widely read, received, and understood from socio-religious perspectives rather than one.

In the section that follows, the paper critically analyzes *Malapalle*, keeping in mind the historical context and its social relevance in the period. A striking fact is that just as Mulk Raj Anand could produce his piece in 1935 without mentioning Ambedkar, the major battles over separate representation, the historically significant event of the Round Table Conference of 1932, Gandhi's first satyagraha march and Ambedkar's being forced into agreeing to the Poona Pact, Unnava is able to write about the life of Dalits in the Andhra region without mentioning the major impact of autonomous conversion and Adi-Andhra movements.

A brief biographical sketch of Unnava would be in order here. He was born on 4 December 1877 in Vemulurpadu village in Guntur district to Sriramulu and Seshamma, a Niyogi Brahmin couple. Educated in Ameenabad and Guntur, he later went to England in 1913 to study law and came back to Andhra as a barrister in 1916 to practice law in Guntur and Chennai (then Madras). Unnava was involved in social reform movements from his college days. It was a time when young girls were often married off to very old men due to caste restrictions on marriage; these old bridegrooms later died, leaving behind very young widows. Widow remarriage was not acceptable among many Hindu castes in those days and became a major concern for the social reformers of the time. Unnava attended the first-ever widow marriage in Guntur in 1902 and was greatly influenced by Kandukuri Veeresalingam. Later, he arranged several such widow marriages in Guntur and Krishna districts.

Malapalle (1922) came out during a phase of intense political awareness among Dalits, which was being manifested in different parts of Andhra Pradesh. Gandhi came twice to Vijayawada, in the years 1919 and 1920. The problems of the Harijans and untouchability became major issues for the Congress Party; the entry of the "lower castes" (whom Gandhi called the Harijans) into temples and inter-caste dining had become programmes of the party during this period. Unnava deals with all of these issues in his novel. He also presents accounts of the meetings held in Bezawada by the Adi-Andhra movement, the nationalist movement, peasant-labour movements and the Christian missionaries' initiative in converting Dalits to the Christian fold.

Most critics have critically analyzed and appreciated the text either from a class orientation or from a Gandhian-Nationalist framework. These are both convenient ways of avoiding the question of caste, despite the fact that the protagonist is a "lower caste" Mala person. Gail Omvedt points out that,

"Malapalle (Mala's Colony), by the famous reformer Unnava Lakshminarayana, describes the social and economic effects of the commercialization in the delta and the responses of Dalits to this. Agricultural labourers are depicted as realizing the manipulative potential of the new wage system in eroding real wages; the use of coercion, preventing cattle from grazing on private lands, beating of Dalits and the eviction of poor peasants from their lands are shown, along with a major crisis of traditional cultural values." (p. 116)

V. Ramakrishna, a popular historian, observes that the establishment of a socialist state in Soviet Russia in the 1920s had a significant impact on the field of Telugu literature. Unnava Lakshminarayana's *Malapalle* also reflected the influence of Bolshevism. *Malapalle* is the first Telugu novel to expound, through one of the characters, the socialist principles of economic and social equality and elimination of exploitation. A Gandhian by faith and an active political agitator, Unnava, for the first time, depicted an alternative path of economic development and even indicated that failure to ensure economic justice to the large number of the exploited in society would lead to violent revolution (p. 72). He juxtaposed Gandhism and socialism and finally resolved matters in favour of the former.

Atluri Murali, another historian, observes that "*the nationalists in Andhra closely followed Gandhi and evolved and propagated a model of changing the social degradation of 'Harijans' sustained by their economically subordinate position. But the Gandhians only touched the cultural aspect and conveniently negated the derivation of the problem, i.e., their relation to the land.*" (p. 4) Murali further argues that Unnava Lakshminarayana's Telugu novel *Malapalle* was the best example of Gandhian intellectuals' attempts to solve the problem of untouchability. He points out that this was the first novel in Telugu where a prominent social reformer and nationalist leader tried to address the question of untouchability, not simply as a moral question but as a political and social problem integrated into rural life in Andhra. While Murali explains that Unnava introduces the problems of *Panchamas*—or *Malas* and *Madigas*—as linked to land relations in Andhra villages and the main story of *Malapalle* centers around the fundamental social contradiction between the landless agricultural labourers, i.e., *Malas* and *Madigas*, and landlords of the *Kamma* caste, Ragunada Rao, another modern Andhra historian, says that Unnava's *Malapalle* dealt with problems of the *Harijans* and also labor. It was the first novel in Telugu with political overtones highlighting the conflict between the *haves* and *have-nots*. It is a text that continues to inspire both Congressmen and Communists (p. 166)

G. Hargopal, V. Ramakrishna, Atluri Murali and P. Ragunada Rao, despite their critical observations, which are by and large from a Marxist point of view, fail to connect the historical issue of Dalits with Hinduism and its social structures. These well-known critics also do not see any correlation between the political awareness of Dalit movements of the time and its impact on Christian conversion. The analyses focus entirely on a class perspective, avoiding the symmetrical relations of caste and religion from the Dalit experience of politics and socio-religious perspectives. In the section that follows, I present my analysis of the novel.

2. *Malapalle*: An analytical study

Malapalle literally means the Mala locality in the village and may be read as a depiction of the complete lifestyle of the *Malas* in their colony. Let us go through the text critically and ask whether the novel lives up to the promise of the title.

The novel was published in two volumes. In the first volume, Unnava presents a rosy picture of Dalit lives in the village. Ramadasu, the protagonist, is the father of four children and a highly respected priest of the Mala community. From start to end, he is depicted as an exemplary priest in terms of interpreting all Hindu texts and myths and always remaining a humble servant of the god Rama. His first son, Venkatdasu, looks after the fields and the family.

The second son, Sangadasu, works as a servant-cum-student in the house of Chowdary, a Kamma landlord whose elder son, Ramanaidu, befriends him. Sangadasu organizes the workers of the village with the help of Ramanaidu, who is characterized as a progressive, sensitive, upper-caste person working for the welfare of the Dalits. This act angers Ramanaidu's father Chowdary, because he thinks that Sangadasu is a bad influence on his son Ramanaidu. Sangadasu and Ramanaidu run the workers' movement in their village Mangalapuram and also attend the historic Adi-Andhra meeting held at Bezawada. Chowdary, whose jealousy and antagonism are further aroused by these events, brutally kills Sangadasu by hitting him on the head as he is returning from the Panchama meeting. In fact, this meeting was of great significance in the history of the Dalit movement. It was held in Vijayawada, with a mammoth gathering to represent their demands in terms of socio-religious and political rights. The novelist seems to have undermined the significance of such a movement completely by simply setting it as a temporal marker of another event that is of seemingly greater narrative significance in the novel.

It may be appropriate to point out here that literary and historical critics like Haragopal, Ramakrishna and Atluri Murali also do not mention the historical role of the Adi-Andhra movement, which was well organised and represented autonomously various issues centered on the Dalits. In fact, for the Dalit movement in coastal Andhra, 1917 was a decisive year. At this time, the reformer Guduru Ramachandra Rao organized a conference in Vijayawada, which was called the "First Provincial Panchama Mahajana Sabha," with his protégé Sundru Venkaiah as chairman of the reception committee. On the evening of the first day, its president, Bhagya Reddy Verma, who is called "*a Dalit from Hyderabad*," argued that the term "Panchama" was nowhere to be found in the Puranas or other Hindu scriptures and that "*the so-called Panchamas were the original sons of the soil and they were the rulers of the country.*" Several meetings were regularly held at Gudivada in 1921 with Bhagya Reddy Verma and Sundru Venkaiah presiding again; at Eluru in 1922 with Bhagya Reddy Verma and Devendrudu; at Guntur in 1924 with Kusuma Venkat Ramaiah and Nutakki Venkateswarlu; at Anantapur in 1925 with Bhagya Reddy Verma; at Venkatagiri, Nellore district, in 1926 with Devendrudu and Kamatam Shanmugan; at Narasapuram, West Godavari, with Bhagya Reddy and Gottimukkala Venkanna; once more at Vijawada in 1929 with Prattipati Audinarayana and Vemula Kurmayya; and at Anantapur again in early 1930 presided over by Devendrudu (Gail Omvedt). The delegates then rejected the term Panchama and constituted themselves as the "First Adi-Andhra Mahajan Sabha." After this, Adi-Andhra conferences were held regularly every year. The very spread of these conferences throughout the districts indicates a broad rural base to the movement. It seems that the novelist and the critics were unable to capture these momentous meetings and activities of the Dalits.

Coming back to the main story of *Malapalle*, the central problem with this plot is how the protagonist Ramadasu is depicted, even after his son's death, as a staunch believer in God and in fate. He shows no inclination for revenge, nor any reaction to Chowdary's cruelty, but continues to sing songs of Rama and believes that whatever happened to his son was simply God's decision that was preordained, an act of the will of God. All he wants from the Chowdary is just fifty yards of land on which to construct his son's memorial temple, which will later be known as the Sanga Mandiram. The narrative frames the event and a Dalit father's grief within a Gandhian perspective of non-violence and Ramrajya. Another outlandish event that concludes the First Volume is when Ramanaidu, who is shown as a socially committed reformer and a close

friend of the brutally murdered Sangadasu, consoles and congratulates his father for escaping punishment from the police.

Volume II of *Malapalle* tracks and raises questions of nationalism, religious identities, conversion movements, Panchama movements, caste and class exploitation. Chowdary, who kills Sangadasu, also grabs Ramadasu's land through force and with the support of the Court. Suddenly, Ramadasu's family becomes very poor. Even during this series of events, the so-called progressive Ramanaidu does not make any effort to oppose his father's criminal actions. Moreover, the narrative shows Ramadasu and his elder son Venkatdasu, as well as his nephew Appadasu, as staunchly loyal to Ramanaidu throughout all of this. In a dramatic twist, in the context of the peasants' struggle against the British, Ramadasu, his wife Maalakshmi, their beloved daughter Jyothi, and their small child, Rangadu, are arrested and taken to the Settlement area. Here they meet Paul, an orphan from the Mala caste, who has been brought up by a Christian missionary. Ramadasu questions the intention behind the everyday prayer in Christianity when most of the people at the settlement are Hindus. Interestingly, Paul, who works as a translator to a missionary at the settlement, is shown as a malicious person who schemes against the Ramadasu family.

Ramadasu is again falsely accused of trying to escape from the settlement. Subsequently, he and his wife are imprisoned, and Jyothi and her younger brother, Rangadu, are left alone at the settlement. Paul, taking advantage of Jyothi's being alone, tries to molest her one morning when she is going to take a bath at the riverside. Adimma, an old woman, again Mala by caste, helps him in this conspiracy. When Paul and Adimma are trying to catch Jyothi, she jumps into the river and drowns herself. Appadasu, Ramadasu's nephew, and Jyothi love each other. Subsequently, when Ramadasu's family is brought to the settlement, he becomes mentally deranged. Appadasu, who has stayed near the settlement area after Ramadasu was sent to prison, finds Jyothi's dead body on the riverside. He decorates her dead body with different flowers and suddenly picks it up and jumps into the river with it.

The story of Venkatdasu, the elder son, takes a different turn. He becomes a leader of robbers using the pseudonym Jaggadu. He robs the zamindar-landlords and organizes a powerful secret army against the British rulers. His army kills hundreds of British soldiers. In a major war, Venkatdasu loses one leg and is seriously injured; consequently, he is caught and brought under high security to the same prison as his father and mother. Ramadasu had heard many stories about Jaggadu in the prison. Jaggadu asks to talk to Ramadasu and Maalakshmi, and arrangements are made in the prison for this. When Ramadasu and Maalakshmi look at Jaggadu, Maalakshmi immediately realizes that Jaggadu is her own son, Venkatdasu. She cannot control her emotions when she sees Venkatdasu's serious injuries; she weeps and dies on the spot. Venkatdasu also dies in prison, while Ramadasu, who is shown as a Vedic-stoic, is released.

At the end of the novel, Ramanaidu and his elder brother Venkatiah donate all their money and open a college called Vijaya College at Mangalapuram. Ramanaidu, on the day of the inauguration of the college, invites Ramadasu to preside over the occasion. Moreover, Ramadasu is made Correspondent of the college. Ramadasu, who loses his two sons, his nephew, his daughter and his wife, accepts the work as correspondent in order to inspire a nationalist zeal among the students.

3. Religion, Reform and Assertion

There are, as we have seen, several historical events depicted in this novel. However, since the author is obsessed with the agenda of reformation within the Hindu fold, his understanding of the caste and conversion question in Dalits' experience is slanted accordingly. The whole Dalit question is embedded within issues of religion, conversion, and autonomous identity, but he is unable to bring an analytical lens to bear on those issues. His framework does not allow him to envisage the possibility of a structural change in his caste-ridden system. Dalits are always depicted in situations where they end up compromising with the upper castes and live within Hinduism. He presents all the Dalit characters as humble, in other words, as very weak and thus exhibiting a sort of inability or dependency syndrome. Ramadasu, who believes Settlements are places for forceful conversions to Christianity, seriously fights against the initiation of conversion. The question that strikes us is why he does not show even a tinge of this anger or resentment when Chowdary kills his own son Sangadasu? The only reason for Chowdary to kill his son was that he believes in caste hierarchy, and the norm that a Mala should always take an inferior or "slave" position with respect to the Kamma caste. Since Sangadasu ignored these hierarchies and showed a possibility of subverting the established institutions of caste and religion, he is murdered. The narrative does not show Ramadasu worried about his own son's murder; however, he is shown as furious at the conversions of Malas into Christianity at the allegedly criminal settlement places.

As mentioned earlier, Chowdary does not stop with killing Ramadasu's son; he goes on to forcibly occupy Ramadasu's land and property. Subsequently, Ramadasu's family is sent to prison. In this whole process, Chowdary is clearly shown as a villain, while his sons Ramanaidu and Venkatiah are shown as well-wishers of Ramadasu's family. It is fitting that both the heroes and villains are from the same family—the family of caste, the family of religion, and the family of the nation. Dalits are only the audience; they constitute the grounds on which these superior beings will enact "higher" destinies. The message seems to be that as long as Dalits live under these families of established caste, religion, and nation status, they will be regarded benevolently, even if they continue to be regarded as inferior human beings. If Dalits violate any of these hierarchical norms or institutions, they will face dire consequences. The novel appears to conclude with the suggestion that every Dalit should be like Ramadasu, who does not express any anger or desire for retribution or justice even when his own sons and daughter are being exploited, molested and killed.

On the other hand, the narrative appears to regard any questioning of Hinduism as a serious matter. Paul, a Mala convert to Christianity, is shown right from the beginning as a cunning, cruel, and a fraud. This is not to argue that Dalit characters may not be depicted negatively; instead, the question we must ask is why the narrative insistently, consistently, delineates the enemy or abuser of the Dalits as another Dalit while progressive reformers and well-wishers are the sons of upper-caste landlords. How does one understand the conceptual grounds on which such meanings are offered? One can easily infer that the solution Unnava posits for the emancipation of Dalits is to adhere to the Hindu faith, to nationalism, as well as to Gandhian values; each is intricately bound to, if not merged into, the other. At the end of the novel, the principal conclusion the author wants readers to draw is that of Christianity as a

foreign religion, where missionaries use false and fraudulent methods to allure and proselytize Dalits. It is an argument that Gandhi had also made, and quotations that relate to this can be found in many of his writings.

The author, who is, as pointed out already, a Hindu-reformist Gandhian, hails from Guntur District. This is a district in which a majority of Malas and Madigas had, by the 1910s, already converted to Christianity of their own choice for social respect, social mobility and social equality. For instance, prominent Dalit novelist G. Kalyanrao's *Untouchable Spring* (2000) and memoir Sujatha Gidla's *Ants among the Elephants: An Untouchable Family and the Making of Modern India* (2017) would provide the historical initiatives of Dalits into conversion. The following statistical report from the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Mission, which had worked among Dalits, particularly among the Malas, presents a picture of this (AELC Annual report, p. 1).

Table 1: Evangelical work – 1910

Charge	Villages	Congregations	Christians	Sunday School Scholars	Evangelistic Workers
Baptla	96	71	4605	2452	33
Guntur town	1	1	887	750	3
Guntur	101	69	5569	1825	31
Narasaravupet & Kambum	236	142	7639	1071	88
Palnad	102	71	8072	2353	48
Sattenapalli	103	73	5239	1507	38
Tenali	136	99	8187	5660	43
Total	777	526	40198	15618	284

Chinna Rao Yagati, a Dalit historian, tabulated data from the Census Reports of 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1921 and 1931 in the following table (p. 68).

Table 2: Growth of Christian Population in Madras Presidency: 1871-1931

District	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
Ganjam	679	1,551	2,292	2,426	2,367	1,969	8,584
Vishakapatnam	2,185	3,410	3,014	4,191	1,934	5,656	34,124
Godavari	1,483	3,687	8,622	16,066	8,240	14,237	-----
West Godavari	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	29,577
East Godavari	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	62,661
Krishna	7,670	36,194	68,524	1,01,414	49,863	91,087	1,01,289
Guntur	-----	-----	-----	-----	1,23,707	1,53,510	2,37,727
Nellore	3,012	20,794	47,176	53,948	44,298	52,496	65,593
Cuddaph	4,973	6,067	9,725	18,923	22,408	25,739	36,667
Kurnool	3,855	11,455	22,735	34,043	42,068	53,656	74,255
Ballari	5,545	4,129	5,283	5,066	4,481	3,532	7,113
Anantapuram	-----	857	1,783	2,675	3,636	4,923	6,546
Chittor	-----	-----	2,535	3,864	4,558	6,916	10,645
Total	29,402	88,144	1,71,689	2,42,609	3,10,609	4,13,721	6,74,826

It is unlikely that Unnava was unaware of the development that had already taken place among the Dalits in relation to the questions of conversion at this high point of nationalism and earlier

during the period of reform. It was clearly implied, by undermining the historical truth of Dalit conversion, that Dalits should emulate Ramadasu, who is a staunch follower of Vedic-Hindu beliefs and values and who is completely unable to fight for himself. Sisir Kumar Das rightly makes a point that despite the fact that Hinduism did not treat the Dalits with dignity, many leaders, including many writers, did not favour Dalits' conversion to Christianity. So, the Gandhian Unnava's Dalit hero, Ramdas of *Malapalle*, is not "allured" by "the temptations and glammers" of Christianity (p. 153)

It is clear that this literary project preserves Hindu values while using the pretext of reformist and Gandhian-nationalist movements. In order to do this effectively, Unnava undercuts both conversion and the politically significant Adi-Andhra movements of the time. A majority of Dalits opted to convert to Christianity through the mass movements and, politically, it is clear from the census figures cited earlier that they identified with the Adi-Andhra movement. Unnava's narrative provides no significant note on either of these historical movements in which Dalits were active. The Dalit critique is that the social reformers of modern Andhra did not inherit, let alone continue, the medieval Bhakti tradition. As Gail Omvedt points out, unlike the saint-poets, the upper caste reformers did not revolt against all kinds of social evils; they were selective in their philosophical and ideological standpoint. Rather, the Andhra social reformers compromised with the existing dominant Brahminical social order by writing out Dalit forms of assertions. Also, given their social background, intellectual and cultural traditions, they could not profess anti-feudal and anti-caste ideology and consciousness. In this sense, modern social reformers, including Unnava, failed to generate and build a popular cultural and ideological movement against the caste system.

Creative Commons License Statement

This research work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>. To view the complete legal code, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode.en>. Under the terms of this license, members of the community may copy, distribute, and transmit the article, provided that proper, prominent, and unambiguous attribution is given to the authors, and the material is not used for commercial purposes or modified in any way. Reuse is only allowed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author(s)

Dr. B. Venkat Rao teaches in the Department of English Literature at The EFL University, Hyderabad, India. His teaching and research interests center primarily on Indian writing in English, Postcolonial Studies, 19th Century British Novel and Dalit Studies.

References

- Annual Report of the American Evangelical Lutheran Mission for the year 1910*. Guntur: A.E.L.M Press. Retrieved from https://pdf.sub.uni-hamburg.de/kitodo/PPN1028634528_1911.pdf
- Chinna Rao, Y. *Dalit Movement in Andhra Pradesh: A Historical Outline of a Hundred Years*. Indian Historical Review 42.1 (2015): 113-139. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0376983615569842>
- Chinnarao Jangam. *Dalits and the Making of Modern India*, OUP, 2017. Retrieved from <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/dalits-and-the-making-of-modern-india-9780199477777?cc=ro&lang=en&>
- Das, Sisir Kumar. "The narratives of suffering: Caste and the underprivileged." In Tapan Basu (Ed.), *Translating Caste*. New Delhi: Katha. 2002.
- Kalyanrao.G. Antaraani Vasantham (*Untouchable Spring*) 2000. Virasam Publications, A.P
- Lakshminarayana, Unnava. *Mala Palle*. Vijayawada: Jayanthi Publications, 1922.
- Limbale, Sharankumar. *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature: History, Controversies and Considerations*. New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2004
- Murali, Atlury. "Changing Perceptions and Radicalization of the National Movement in Andhra, 1922-34." *Social Scientist*, 16(8), pp. 3-29. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3517505>
- Omvedt, Gail. *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications. 1994. Retrieved from https://books.google.fr/books/about/Dalits_and_the_Democratic_Revolution.html?id=leuICwAAQBAJ&redir_esc=y
- Prasad, Shaileswar Sati. *The Insulted and The Injured: Untouchables, Coolies and Peasants in the Novels of Mulk Raj Anand*. Patna: Janaki Prakashan, 1997.
- Rao, P. Raghunadha. *Modern History of Andhra Pradesh*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1978. Retrieved from https://books.google.ro/books/about/History_of_Modern_Andhra_Pradesh.html?id=ncxAAAAAMAAJ&redir_esc=y
- Omvedt, Gail. *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*.
- Rawat, Ramnaryan and K. Satyanarayana, eds. *Dalit Studies: New Perspectives on Indian History and Society*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822374312-001>
- Raizada, Harish Chandra. *Impact of Mahatma Gandhi on Indian English Fiction*. In A.K. Srivastava (Ed.), *Alien Voice: Perspectives on Commonwealth Literature*. Lucknow: Print House, 1981.
- Ramakrishna, V. "Literary and Theatre Movements in Colonial Andhra: Struggle for Left Ideological Legitimacy." *Social Scientist*, 21(1-2), pp. 69-85. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3517839>
- Sah, Ghanshyam, ed. *Dalit Identity and Politics: Cultural Subordination and the Dalit Challenge*. Volume 2. New Delhi: Sage, 2001. Retrieved from <https://www.abebooks.com/9780761995081/Dalit-Identity-Politics-Cultural-Subordination-0761995080/plp>

- Satyanarayana, A. *Dalits and Upper Castes: Essays in Social History*. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 2005. <https://search.worldcat.org/title/Dalits-and-upper-castes-:-essays-in-social-history/oclc/59140221>
- Simon. R. Charsely. *Evaluating Dalit Leadership: P. R. Venkatswamy and the Hyderabad Example*. EPW 37.52, 2002. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4413021>
- Sujatha Gidla. *Ants among the Elephants: An Untouchable Family and the Making of Modern India*. HarperCollins Publishers, India. Retrieved from https://archive.org/details/antsamongelephan0000gidl_w5s1
- Venkat Swamy, P.R. *Our Struggle for Emancipation: The Dalit Movement in Hyderabad State 1905-1953*. Hyderabad: Ambedkar People Trust, 1953
- Yagati, Chinna Rao. *Dalits' Struggle for Identity: Andhra and Hyderabad 1900-1950*. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers. 2003. Retrieved from <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/003890552>