

**Envisioning an Empowered Dalit Future:
Resistance, Acceptance, and Liberation through
Selected Works of Bengali Dalit Writers**

Mohana Das¹ & Madhurima Mukhopadhyay²

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Abstract

Dalit literature means literature written by the Dalit and normally presents Dalits' oppression, hope, and agency. This paper explores the narratives of liberation and resistance in Mahasweta Devi's *Mother of 1084* and Manoranjan Byapari's *Interrogating My Chandal Life: An Autobiography of a Dalit*. Dalit literature has therefore become one of the best ways through which people at the peripheries of Indian society can express their plight. Two compelling works provide a candid view of the abuses suffered by the Dalits and give the reader a glimpse of the author's upward mobility from the state of pauperism to being a well-known writer and Dalit rights activist. Both together present a rich analysis of the themes of survival, survival, and the search for dignity. Looking through these works, it is possible to recognize the function of Dalit art as a means to protest against the conventional caste system and raise visions for the society that is completely just known as 'Dalit-Futurism'.

Keywords: *Dalit-futurism, autobiography, subjectivity, objectivity, memoir, resistance, liberation, acceptance, activism, education.*

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

Dalit literature has invariably evolved as a potent tool in rendering the experiences of the oppressed Indian society. Among them are two types of texts, the first one is *Mother of 1084* (1974) by Mahasweta Devi (1926-2016) and the second one is *Interrogating My Chandal Life* (2008) by Manoranjan Byapari (1965-present), which depicts the harsh realities of Dalits while allowing them to elevate to a state of freedom. The political crisis of the Naxalite revolt through the figure of a mother who has lost her revolutionary son, and thereby suffers from structural violence is artistically presented by Devi. Conversely, Byapari's autobiographical work offers a stark depiction of Dalits' conditions; the story of his life transforming from illiteracy and extreme poverty to a recognized writer and social activist. Taken together, the stories presented in the work enable the viewers to experience the themes of rebellion, survival, and the search for respect. Analyzing the following works, it is possible to define how the representation of Dalit identities subverts the seemingly fixed caste system and aims at picturing a future where caste oppression will not exist.

“Was there anything in the way she had brought up Brati that had made him into number 1084 in the decade that headed towards liberation?

(Devi, 2008, p. 14)

Mother of 1084 (translated by Samik Bandyopadhyay) revolves around Sujata after the death of her son, Brati; and adjusted substantially to the socio-political ethos of caste supremacy (Banerjee, 2024). This transition from mourning to advocating against oppression is one of the movie's major themes of resilience. *Interrogating My Chandal Life* (translated by Sipra Mukherjee, 2018) describes the author's journey from a life of extreme poverty to the beginning of his writing career as well as his powerful struggle against caste oppression.

Due to the oppressive establishment of such cultures in different societies, Dalit literature offers a voice to the oppressed group of people. Whereas Devi's novel gives an account of the socio-political changes in the form of a mother's struggle with her son who is actively fighting against injustice; Byapari's autobiography gives the reader a first-hand and personal experience of the change from being oppressed to becoming active in fights against oppression. These stories not only give testimony to the present-day caste discrimination system but also hold the possibility of change, in a non-segregated India. Listening to the testimonies of the women and men of the Dalit folks, it is possible to comprehend their ability to fight and struggle.

This study aims at analyzing how personal and social story telling offer possibilities of imagining altered social reality. In positioning these works within the context of Dalit Futurism, and by engaging the thinking of subaltern studies as well as trauma theory, the paper's aim underscores the tension between imperialism, disenfranchisement, and emancipation. This approach also highlights the socio-political significance of these texts and positioned them as some of the most important contribution to international discourses on marginalization and Empowerment.

1.2 Research question

How do Mahasweta Devi and Manoranjan Byapari deconstruct caste oppression through the distinct narratives and what strategies do they employ to envision empowered futures of Dalits?

1.3 Rationale

Critically analyzing the works of Mahasweta Devi and Manoranjan Byapari can be useful for getting a better comprehension of the discriminated societies in India, focusing on Dalits. Analyzing their narratives, it becomes possible to analyze how literature can also represent a powerful agent of change within societies. Regarding the methodology, since this research will focus on analyzing primary texts by Mahasweta Devi and Manoranjan Byapari, this piece of work will take a qualitative approach with a focus on textual analysis. It will apply thematic analysis to determine the various and multiple strategies employed by Devi and Byapari in depicting an empowered future for Dalit's foresight, stories' narration, character development, and the most essential part of the text, the themes of resistance and resilience.

1.4 Scope and Relevance

Concerning the significance of this study, it is about the possible outcomes of this work – this research can contribute to the contemporary discourses of caste and social justice. Thus, by analyzing the stories of Devi and Byapari the research will reveal the possibilities of using literature as the mirror of the society that at the same time can empower and reconsider the conventional power structures. This paper aims to enrich the existing knowledge of Dalit literature and how it may be utilized in the desire and fight for change both in theory and practice. Thus, the findings will be useful to scholars investigating postcolonial and caste issues and activists and policymakers striving for the promotion of social justice and equality.

2. Liberating narratives: Subjective and objective experience

The chosen notion of liberation in literature inter relates the subjective and the objective perspectives to provide an all-encompassing picture of the characters' path to becoming anew, to emancipation from oppression. Mahasweta Devi's *Mother of 1084* and Manoranjan Byapari's *Interrogating My Chandal Life* are excellent examples where the subjective rendering of individual life cooperates with the objective knowledge of people's misery. *Mother of 1084* focuses on the individual tragedy of a mother, Sujata who suffers the loss of her son Brati to state terrorism. She remains a grieving, confused, and gradually politically enlightened mother schooled by socio-political processes that cost her son (Philip, 2018). *Interrogating My Chandal Life*, a personal memoir integration narrates his experiences of fighting caste prejudice and poverty in his own life. He is fighting for dignity and to survive as a subjective sphere (Das, 2023). Thus, the main characters' dilemmas and extramural realities presented by the two authors raise the question of the possibility of education and activism to fetch justice. One cannot help but remember the meaning of their works as calls to resist the oppressive systems and fight for justice.

Comparing the two texts is rather valuable for understanding how the phenomenon of subjectivity contributes to movements against oppression. Thus, combining Sujata's personal tragedy in *Mother of 1084* with the firsthand experience of caste persecution in *Interrogating My Chandal Life* these stories build a complex view at systemic subjugation. Both the novels don't depict the resistance as the confrontation to power structure, but as a process towards possibility of imaging a world that is fair and just. Their interlinkages offer a unique experience of individual and group resilience thus depicting the kind of change embodied in Dalit narratives.

2.1 Subjective experience

Social justice and equality are a major theme in literature published in today's world. Be it poetry, play, comedy, or short story, an important role in portraying resistance and resilience, which are the possible topics for studying the opportunities of the oppressed communities (Sreelekshmi, 2021). These texts provide an excellent look into the marginalized subjugated people in society who continue to fight for their freedom as they imagine a life different from the one they are living.

“...Or was there something that she could have done, or not done, to make him number 1084?”

(Devi, 2010, p. 15)

The lines assert in the context of the Naxalite Rebellion in India by relating the subject of a woman whose son becomes a victim of political violence. Where Devi's narrative advocates for the search for justice, it also shows how the socio-political circumstances that breed such tragedies influence the nature of resistance movements and their effects on the victims (Chakraborty, 2019). Also, in *Interrogating My Chandal Life*, Byapari fills the gap in life writing by presenting the Dalit's life's realities and the problems of caste dominance, identity, and survival. The novel also provides a personal perspective of the hardship that people belonging to the Dalit caste go through but at the same time, they are depicted as struggling warriors (Das, 2023).

“I was born into an impoverished Dalit family in a place called Turuk-Khali near the village of Pirichpur which used to be a part of...”

(Byapari, 2018, p.1)

Thus, *Interrogating my Chandal Life* like Byapari's *There's Gunpowder in Air* also raises the general theme of the Dalit people as another socially oppressed population that continues to endure and uphold its integrity amid adversity. Similarly, the *Mother of 1084* vividly depicts such oppressed groups as the Naxalites who continue to fight despite their being suppressed and losing their dear ones (Philip, 2018). Thus, the caste-based resistance from Devi's narration emerges that the Dalits are in the process of demanding justice and transformation against the hegemonic caste oppression, wherein they struggle to subvert numerous cultural eye patches and orthodoxies. Also, it successfully highlights cultural resistance touched upon when addressing the issues of the cultural and social identity of Dalits whose rights, beliefs, and values are violated by the upper castes (Meghwal, 2018). It holds, political resistance. Thus, the Naxalite movement is at the core of the novel representing rebellion against the repressive state power and social injustice. Nevertheless, there is one more aspect manifested in the person of the protagonist – the personal fight against the political and social injustice that has claimed her son's life. Despite her process of grieving and her longing for justice in the film, the audience can identify and appreciate the mother's emotional strength of women who struggle with systemic injustice. While *Mother of 1084* presents political and personal resistance, *Interrogating My Chandal Life* emphasizes the resistance based on caste and cultural fields. Analyzing the presence of the scope of this work, resilience allows us to understand how the people or the communities can adapt and develop based on the negative experiences.

2.2 Collective experience

By looking at the emotional and social resilience profiled in *Mother of 1084* with the personal and collective resilience in *Interrogating My Chandal Life*, the different ways in which marginalized populations manage everyday and extraordinary adversities will emerge (Byapari, 2023). For example, how and in what way do Devi and Byapari employ their accounts to raise awareness about

and challenge all manners of institutional oppression while at the same time not detracting from stories of ambition and resilience of the oppressed?

To answer this, in *Mother of 1084* one witnesses resistance to colonial legacy. The Naxalite movement in the novel can be viewed as a struggle against colonialism and its postcolonial prolongation, the state failure. The represented mother and her son's participation is significant as they represent social rebellion against the state repression and colonialism's impact (Chakraborty, 2019). Moreover, the depiction of the Naxalites' rebellion against the violent suppression of the state corresponds to the struggle against historical and modern imperialism and oppression. While analyzing the autobiography written by Byapari, it is possible to trace the postcolonial approach by focusing on the problem of the caste system descended from colonialism and the ways Dalits fight it. It is, therefore, about Byapari's exclusion and his struggle to gain acceptance, where the uncared social structure that colonialism imposed continuous prejudice castes.

Thus, it is hoped that from this undertaking, the 'subaltern idea' may give a clear perspective of how resistance and resilience are constructed in these literary texts, and how they inform the conception of Dalit Futurism that disrupts the existing paradigm for the subjugated groups. For example, post-colonialism which has been enunciated by scholars like Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is based on subaltern studies that deal with the discursive histories of the subaltern who are mentally and socially dominated by the elite. It explores how all these categories of people fight social oppression and self-ownership (Bhagwat and Arekar, 2018). Also, Dalit-futurism directly addresses the future from the viewpoint of the Dalit social category, and sometimes even from the perspective of its dreams, thus redefining or at least complicating the hegemonic historical timeline (Jamdhade, 2014): '*Yet, there being no dearth of tenderness in their hearts, they would set aside a handful of rice from their meals for my mother*' (Byapari, 2018, p.1). Subaltern Studies helps to understand how the Dalits challenge oppression and how their story elaborates on a different future. For example, Devi places the Naxalite movement and the mother's resistance under the category of subalternism against the state power. This complements Dalit Futurism in that it points out how subjugated persons struggle and create a hopeful future in the face of oppression. In this manner, Byapari's textual account offers an important subaltern voice on caste suppression. This could be explained to an extent by how he illustrates and breaks away from dominant caste thinking and presents a Dalit perspective on the future.

3. Interrogating Self: Vision of Empowerment and Liberation

In a literary sense, the character of the mother evolves from *Mother of 1084* as a woman who is born into a wealthy family and therefore, does not understand certain sociopolitical structures and injustices that exist around her. Finally, Brati dies and she starts to realize her suffering and her condition as an oppressed woman in the existing society (Meghwal, 2018). The very idea of being a non-Dalit is a way of critically reflecting, learning, speaking in support of, and being responsible for, conducting self-interrogation. While analyzing the genres as a Non-Dalit I can actively engage in the fight for social justice. This journey, in the given narratives of *Mother of 1084* and *Interrogating My Chandal Life*,

brings out the process of awareness and action to strive for emancipation on the part of both men and women. Thus, Subaltern Studies become instrumental in the cognition of Dalits' agency and defiance against marginalization, therefore supporting a notion of the future that is centered around Dalits (Dash, 2023). It allows me to think about one's attitudes and possible actions that might contribute to the maintenance of the caste system. This refers to prejudice, assumptions, and other practices that subordinate Dalits in their day-to-day encounters.

3.1 Vision of Empowerment

To hold a future that seeks Dalit's fortune on equality, acceptance, and better opportunities, *Interrogating My Chandal Life* by Manoranjan Byapari and *Mother of 1084* by Mahasweta Devi act as visions of empowerment. The works act as a sign of resistance against the structured oppression and their longing for the casteless and politically enlightened future: "*I have been a witness to those dark days in the decade of the seventies when people rose in revolt against them and helped establish a new rule*" (Byapari, 2018, p.80). The two narratives set out essentially different methods of attaining equality and it would be interesting to ponder inherently from a liberal perspective of the writing.

Thus, Byapari's memoir reveals the qualities, pains, and bleedings of a Dalit's narration, which focuses on the personal and collective fight against the organization of casteism. A vision of freedom in Byapari's text is based on the assertion of Dalit identity and, consequently, search for social-economic emancipation. For example, a dignified right to an educated and socio-economically empowered self. The relation of education is portrayed not only in the context of individual advancement but as a process antithetical to the doctrine of untouchability. The main character Byapari himself comes out of the oppression of caste hegemony through education, depicting an emancipation approach. Therefore, Byapari strongly favors the cultural transformation in terms of Dalits' perception by the upper caste. In his narrative, therefore, the key messages call for structural transformation of the social-mental environment and making space for Dalits to socially ascend from the socio-economic status that they are confined to because of their caste: '*It had made me see my pain about that of the entire community*' (Byapari, 2018, p. 95). Thus, the memoir fosters the notion of collective pragmatic and exerted effort on the part of the population and the society in particular as well as policy changes.

On the other hand, while Sujata shows physical freedom which is an aspiration of Western women, Mahasweta Devi's novel illustrates a kind of freedom in a different political context of the Naxalite movement. The problem of the novel about its vision is even more closely related to politics political activism and the struggle against state violence. Digesting Devi's account of the events and actions of the characters as well as her reflections on her own story, provides the audience with an idea of how political activism and rebellion can bring about change (Vats and Bakhshi, 2016). The empowerment that is depicted in the novel is very much correlated with collective political action and the fight against state terrorism. The mother's agency can therefore be understood as originating in her participation in the struggle for justice for her son and other individuals who have been subjugated by the regime (Nigam, and Roy, 2014):

‘Why did it never strike her that when a son became a stranger to his mother, and they lost touch with each other even while they lived under the same roof, there could be a threat growing from it?’

(Devi, 2008, pp. 16)

The main struggle the mother performs is an attempt to achieve justice, which is translated into the theme of the possibility of collective action. The aspect of her empowerment can be seen in a woman’s capacity to challenge an oppressive state even after the loss of their son (Vats and Bakhshi, 2016). Thus, in Devi’s novel, change and the fight for social justice are portrayed as a product of political movements and activism. Thus, the tactic used by Naxalites is the fight against the state’s repressive institutions and the representation of the rights of the victims: ‘*All that Brati could have been charged with was that he had lost faith in the social system itself*’ (Devi, 2008, p.17). Calling for transformation on the structural level, the novel points to the need for people’s actions and individual and collective actions against oppression perpetuated by the political and social systems. Through the mother’s fight, the theme of political struggle for the abolishment of oppression is established in the novel. The attempts to call for justice by the repeated story of her son and other activists are indeed a critique of state violence on oppressed groups, as narrated in the novel.

Thus, both texts depict hope for a world of no suppression, but with various means of getting there. Byapari’s goal is grounded in the idea of individual and communal socio-economic emancipation through the process of education as well as bringing about a structural alteration in the perception of Dalit subjectivity. On the same note, political activism and the fight against State repression as depicted in Devi’s narrative are core components of procuring social justice. Therefore, *Interrogating My Chandal Life* has shown a hopeful future in socio-economic transformation and education, whereas, *Mother of 1084* focused on the fight for political power which will triumph over state tyranny. Both works help promote further discussions on social justice, as they depict different views towards deliverance from caste-related and political oppression.

3.2 Vision of Liberation

Mahasweta Devi’s novel *Mother of 1084* and Manoranjan Byapari’s autobiography *Interrogating My Chandal Life* are two aesthetic texts that depict how the mechanism of contestation and survival coexists in the context of the subordinate group. Devi’s novel depicts the turmoil and the political-social intervention prevalent in Naxalite times to portray the pain expressed by a mother’s killing of her son turned into political violence (Dahiya, 2017). The autobiography can be perceived as a political novel of the postcolonial context set in the background of the Indian liberalization process. Byapari’s autobiography can be viewed as an ethnographic representation of one Dalit’s life full of poverty and caste discrimination. The events in both prove the significance of systemic oppression while at the same time showing an audience how protagonists struggle and cope with such adversity (Crenshaw, 2013). Similarly, known as Intersectionality, it was named by Kimberlé Crenshaw when she looked at how different types of oppression fold together like race, class, and gender. It underlines the fact that othering processes are a result of an individual’s combined social categorizations (Cho et al., 2013).

The concept of freedom described in these texts is not merely a politics of becoming for the self, but a politics of becoming for all. In the story, through Sujata's transformation Mahasweta Devi was able to show how individual suffering can be used as a lever for national politics. Likewise, Byapari's narrative also reveals the matrix of casting class, poverty and literate and unravel educated consciousness to bring change. As such, Dalit Futurism could be used to think of futures that are free of caste, gender, and class oppressions. Intersectionality gives a lens on how these multiple identities are formed and how they influence experiences and resistances. For example, one can decode how the gender and the political situation influenced the mother's grieving and resisting processes. This is to how political struggles affect Dalit and marginalized women's lives at the grassroots level: 'She had heard that Brati and his friends wrote their slogans on paper first, before writing them on the walls' (Devi, 2008, p. 18). In *Interrogating My Chandal Life*, Byapari aptly describes the intersections of caste with poverty and gender that she has gone through. These intersections assist in pointing out how the Dalit people's resilience and resistance are influenced by several forms of prejudice: '*Great souls have endeavored tirelessly to bring man to this realization and liberation for thousands of years*' (Byapari, 2018, p.60). To break the prejudice and stereotypes of the time comes a recall of trauma and a break from internal fear.

Also, trauma is an integral aspect of the narratives. Trauma Theory aims to investigate trauma effects at the psychological and social level and the processes of traumatized individuals and communities including their resistance. It explores how trauma is manifested in terms of identity, behavior, and ways of operating resistance (Quiros, et al., 2020). In this case, Dalit Futurism is mostly about speaking about and dealing with the impacts of caste cruelty but also about creating new and better worlds beyond these ordeals. Trauma Theory offers an understanding of the mechanisms and experiences of minority populations in dealing with and fighting back against their past and current oppression. For example, *Mother of 1084* can be analyzed using the concepts of Trauma Theory since it presents the mother as a traumatized character who resists: '*The question that followed his death was whether by killing him the authorities had been able to destroy the burning faith in faithlessness that Brati and his compatriots had stood for*' (Devi, 2008, p.20). It gives an insight into the correlation between an individual's traumatic experiences and political activism and firmness. In *Interrogating My Chandal Life* Byapari's mentioned experience of affective events like caste-violence and poverty exemplifies the generality of trauma on Dalit subjectivity as well as its organizational fight. Thus, his narrative demonstrates that resilience is constructed through adversities and the process of coping with and recovering from a traumatized state: '*I have got over that. And no sense in grieving over it because nobody is going to hand you a plateful of rice because you're going hungry*' (Byapari, 2018, p. 59).

Therefore, Dalit futurism envisions the future as something that goes beyond the trend of oppression that has been punishable to the Dalit people. They help explain how Dalit subjects challenge oppression, adapt to it, and imagine change from situations that are unfavorable to them. Intersectionality contributes to understanding how Muslim Dalits operate for a better world and comprehending how diverse sources of injustice work together to form the experience of Dalit people. Trauma Theory taken within the context of Dalit social realities describes how trauma affects Dalit

people and how hope and visions for the future are built in its wake. Through the application of these theories, subjected to the analysis of *Mother of 1084* and *Interrogating My Chandal Life*, one can further one's understanding of how resistance and resilience are constructed from a Dalit context and the role of these narratives in the interpretation of Dalit Futurism.

4. Autobiography and Memoir: A pathway towards education and activism

Autobiographies or memoirs are a fascinating means of education and advocacy in presenting the first-person narrative of the life of people of color. Similarly, in *Interrogating My Chandal Life*, Manoranjan Byapari has underlined the apartheid-like scenario for Dalits and the ability of education to bring a positive change. Being a Dalit boy from a village, he rose to the level of a writer and activist, which proves the role of narratives in mobilization (Byapari and Bala, 2021). Likewise, Mahasweta Devi's *Mother of 1084* creates intense emotions out of the mother's plight to also express socio-political aspects of the Naxalite movement (Dahiya, 2017). Both the analyzed texts seek to make the reader learn about systematic injustices as they encourage people to take action against injustice, demonstrating how individuals' narratives are powerful tools of social action as they change society by changing hearts.

4.1 A purging of self-interrogation through education

In *Interrogating My Chandal Life*, Byapari reveals education as the light and the condition that can help people free themselves. Born in severe poverty and suffering from caste oppression, Byapari's right to education is restricted, yet education itself becomes his only medium through which he is pulled out of suffering and oppression: "I was, in those days, the 'victim of an incomplete education'" (Byapari, 2018, p. 172). His story demonstrates a clear comprehension of how schooling can act as a tool to end the issues of poverty and caste suppression. Consequently, in the *Mother of 1084*, while education is not the focus of the work, it is still present in a rather crucial manner. Brati, a Naxalite revolutionary, is the son of Sujata an educated woman who slowly emerges out of her political abyss thanks to the death of her son, Brati. This is due to her practical education that allows her to analyze and comprehend the socio-political factors that preceded the involvement of her son in the movement. Education is another important theme portrayed in the novel about Sujata's reflective and analytical disposition: He had all his children educated. You can't do without education nowadays, do you.' (Devi, 2008, p.54). This belief is evident when she learns about her son's fights against the injustice system through his comrades. This journey of understanding provides revelation about the significance of education in increasing awareness and tolerance. This transforms readers' knowledge about the historical and present-day prejudices that these groups endure and mobilizes readers to fight such oppression.

Though the preceding discussion suggests that socio-political aspects of Bengal during the 1970s are handled by Devi in her other creations like *Hajar Churashir Maa* (*Mother of 1084*), yet, the novel primarily sensitizes the readers about the Naxalite movement. She bends the conventional historical perspective by portraying the revolutionaries and their families as people like you and I; hence making the readers appreciate their radical movements. Therefore, Byapari's autobiography can be

appreciated as the author's experience of life and as a pedagogical device simultaneously (Biswas and Chakraborty, 2024). He enlightens the readers about the ordeals of the Dalit class struggle and the power of education through his life's narration. He wants people occupying the lower strata of society to strive for change by educating themselves: '*meanwhile, my education continued and I read on, stumbling over the difficult words*' (Byapari, 2018, p.212). The main character of the novel Byapari who overcomes illiteracy and rises to the level of a writer as well as an intellectual person capable of writing meaningful literature is the best example of how education can change one's life.

4. 2. Denial or Acceptance: Importance of Activism

Activism has become part and parcel of being a writer, especially for someone like Devi. Her entire existence focused on advocating for the oppressed societal groups as she used her writing as a tool of activism. The role of activism is closely interconnected with the *Mother of 1084's* storyline. For example, Brati as a character engaged in the Naxalite movement can be seen as the resistance to the oppression of the state and the violence committed by it. The passionate activist, and above all, the martyr, becomes a model for Sujata's change from a subservient little woman into a vengeful huntress of justice: '*I set an apolitical mother's quest to know her martyred Naxalite sin, to know what he stood for; for she had not known the true Brati ever...*' (Devi, 2008, p. xii). Also, Sujata is a great example of how activism can be life-changing. While discovering the truth about her son's life and his death, the woman actively engages in the political process that he advocates for. This participation is the transition between mourning the death of a son to taking a stand for the death of many, thus showing how activism helps people to stand up for themselves.

In *Interrogating My Chandal Life*, social activism is evident in Byapari's works as he does not relent in fighting for social issues, especially through writing and politics. This account records his participation in several social struggles and his passion for Dalit liberation (Singh, 2021). For example, the transformation of Byapari from a manual worker to a writer reflecting the catastrophe of oppression points to the libido of an activist. Literary activism such as the Naxalite uprising, the latter part of his engagement shows his fight against caste oppression: '*But for any man leaving the freedom of the world to enter imprisonment without his tears is rare*' (Byapari, 2018, p. 195). The activism rising through his narrative is thoroughly interwoven with Byapari's text. Besides, his works are not only a testimony to his psychological issues but also an appeal to protest against injustice. Issues of caste remembrance and oppression are crucial to Byapari's literary and activism career in general, especially given that he is an ardent Dalit rights supporter. This is especially so since Byapari's interaction with Dalit literature and his attempts to mainstream this subaltern literature can be said to be an activist venture (Biswas and Chakraborty, 2024). The texts dispute the dominant discourses and propose the social justice values organization of communities.

These books present more than mere life histories; they are education and advocacy in *Interrogating My Chandal Life* by Byapari. In Byapari's life narrative, education turn into a cultural rallying call for liberty from the shackles of caste oppression even when education is attained in antagonistic circumstances. In like manner, a story of loss and survival comparable to that depicted in Mahasweta

Devi's *Mother of 1084* can mobilise people. Such texts recall readers' attention to the fact that social activism and education as processes are far from being mere individual projects; they are, in fact, an inherent part of the process of social change. It is for this reason that in the two novels under study; *Mother of 1084* and *Interrogating My Chandal Life*; education and activism are depicted as the main driving forces toward transformation and liberation. They employ the technique of raising awareness about the systematic oppression of specific groups and mobilizing the reader towards activism. They use their characters' transformations and also their participation as activist writers to convey the message of change brought by education and activism in the field of social justice. Their creative production remains a painful appeal for change and struggle against oppression and for a better world: 'Get rid of useless thoughts. Try to think of how you can have a more or less decent life here' (Byapari, 2018, p.197).

5. Conclusion

The objective facet of these narratives is thereby uncovered when juxtaposing *Mother of 1084* by Mahasweta Devi and *Interrogating My Chandal Life* by Manoranjan Byapari to reveal the process of positive transformation due to education and activism. Additionally, the research methodology included a qualitative analysis that provided the grounds for the closest attention to the themes, narrative patterns, and socio-political realities depicted in each of the works. Secondary source materials such as scholarly articles and critiques were also used to supplement the information gathered from the authors' works to present a detailed analysis of the authors' works and contribution to the Dalit literature and activism. Thus, by conducting textual analysis, the research aims to define some elements that show how both Devi and Byapari respond to caste oppression and imagine the possibilities of Dalit liberation. Thus, such a methodology allowed for obtaining a detailed understanding of the presented narratives and the strategies chosen by the authors, as well as underlining their relevance to the scope of social justice and literary activism.

While both texts depict the importance of life's odyssey that aims at achieving personal identity and power, the main characters' endeavors for collective emancipation demonstrate how mourning, prejudice, and fighting for one's rights can be translated into fighting for society's rights. In the above narratives, the writer seeks to address what the society and the regime denied them by joining socio-political movements and fighting for their rights. Thus, the knowledge of the targeted communities' historical and present situation shared by Devi and Byapari is complemented by motivating readers to change the existing oppressive paradigm and encouraging them to engage in social justice work. By narrating their individual experiences and struggles, both authors express their desire for a fairer society thereby illustrating that individual freedom can only be achieved if social injustice is counteracted.

Mother of 1084 successfully shows how Devi breaks down the caste system through the juxtaposition of the loss of her child and a fight against social injustice. Thus, Sujata unmasks state power and the subjugation of the weak all these are depicted in the novel through Sujata's transformation. Thus, Devi uses her protagonist and her struggle which has its political reflection, and this underlines that personal suffering is linked to political suffering. On the other hand, Byapari's *Interrogating My Chandal Life*

stands out as an autobiographical account. Byapari's own victim's account of discrimination, poor livelihood, and hard work brings into perspective the trends of marginalization affecting Dalits. His narrative mechanism is underlined by a sort of realist representation of life that depends on both education as well as self-education. The story of Byapari – a boy from a downtrodden Dalit family, becoming a writer and activist is a testimony that education and activism can change the status quo. Speaking autobiographically his simple but powerful true-life narrative of how he struggled and fought against the oppressive caste system needs to be told.

Both the texts from India – *Mother of 1084* by Mahasweta Devi and *Interrogating My Chandal Life* by Manoranjan Byapari speak for the importance of literature to help reflect on society and contribute to social change. In so doing these works enlighten us on the enduring evils of caste and state which the two works and authors explain through political activism and personal ordeal. Through the character of Sujata, Devi shows how personal loss could inspire political awakening. In the same way, Byapari's memoir path of knowledge and self-awakening is a potent tool to break the circles of structures of oppression. Together, these texts help envision a future free of the shackles of caste discrimination which is briefly summed up by the idea of 'Dalit Futurism.' By presenting the concept of personal strength alongside the idea of collective action, they offer a plan of liberation that shakes the existing order and provides a new, more just, world. Finally, this research reaffirms the timeliness of Dalit literary works to wage advocacy and to make the readers feel and act against injustice. Thus, Mahasweta Devi and Manoranjan Byapari present Dalits' oppression at the hands of the upper castes and empower them through the voices dominating the majority of the narratives, education, activism, and inspirational storytelling employed by the two authors.

By anchoring personal pain and social dreams, *Mother of 1084* and *Interrogating My Chandal Life* demonstrate how Dalit literature can change people's lives. The stories of oppression already present are also stories of a future defined by the struggle for change, learning, and action. These texts push readers an important task of engaging with systematized injustice and envisioning justice and thus confirm the status of said volumes as these interventions belong to Dalit Futurism. Thus, both works indicate that the message and role of literature when as social vision and empowering mechanism are timeless.

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