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Author's :

1. Priyasi Anand

(Research Scholar), Department of English, Bhupendra Narayan Mandal University, Madhepura, Bihar.

2. Prof. Dr. Mithilesh

Kumar Arimardan

Supervisor, Department of English, T. P. College, Madhepura, Bhupendra Narayan Mandal University, Laloo Nagar, Madhepura, Bihar.

Corresponding Author :

Priyasi Anand

(Research Scholar), Department of English, Bhupendra Narayan Mandal University, Madhepura, Bihar.

Dalit Identity and Resistance :

A Comparative Study of Bama and Urmila Pawar

Abstract : Bama's *Karukku* and Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs* are important works of Dalit women's life writing that bring the experiences of caste, gender, poverty, identity, and resistance into the centre of literary discussion. Although the two writers come from different regional, social, and religious backgrounds, both use their personal experiences to reveal the realities of Dalit life and the continuing impact of caste-based discrimination. The present study offers a comparative analysis of the representation of Dalit identity and resistance in these two autobiographical narratives.

The study examines how Bama and Pawar describe caste discrimination in their childhood, education, family life, and wider social environment. It also explores the ways in which gender inequality and patriarchal practices add to the difficulties experienced by Dalit women. In *Karukku*, Bama's experiences of caste discrimination within society and religious institutions gradually lead her towards a stronger awareness of her Dalit identity. In *The Weave of My Life*, Pawar connects her personal memories with the experiences of several generations of Dalit women and presents caste, gender, labour, and social inequality as closely connected realities.

Education emerges as an important means of self-awareness and empowerment in both narratives. It enables the writers to question social practices and develop a stronger sense of identity. Writing itself becomes another form of resistance, allowing them to speak about experiences that have often remained unheard. Bama's resistance is closely connected with her decision to leave the convent and express her experiences through writing, while Pawar's resistance develops through education, social participation, activism, and literary expression.

The study argues that both memoirs transform personal suffering into collective testimony and challenge dominant representations of Dalit women. Through their life writing, Bama and Pawar reclaim identity, dignity, and voice. Their works therefore make a significant contribution to Dalit feminist literature by presenting resistance not only as opposition to caste oppression but

also as a struggle against gender inequality and social marginalization.

Keywords : Bama, Urmila Pawar, *Karukku*, *The Weave of My Life*, Dalit Identity, Caste, Gender, Resistance, Dalit Feminism, Life Writing.

Introduction : Dalit literature has emerged as an important literary tradition that gives voice to communities historically affected by caste-based discrimination, social exclusion, poverty, and inequality. Unlike many conventional literary representations of marginalized communities, Dalit writing often draws directly from lived experience. Life writing, particularly autobiography and memoir, has therefore become an important form of Dalit expression. It allows writers to narrate their own experiences, question social hierarchies, and challenge representations created by dominant groups. Dalit women's life writing is especially significant because it brings together the experiences of caste and gender and shows how these forms of inequality influence everyday life.

Bama and Urmila Pawar are two important voices in Dalit women's writing. Bama, a Tamil Dalit writer, presents her experiences of caste, poverty, religion, education, and social discrimination in her autobiographical work *Karukku*. The text describes her childhood and experiences within the Christian community and religious institutions and reflects her gradual development of Dalit consciousness. Her narrative challenges both caste discrimination and the restrictions placed on marginalized women.

Urmila Pawar, a prominent Marathi Dalit writer, presents her life experiences in *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs*, translated into English by Maya Pandit. The memoir traces Pawar's childhood, education, family life, work, and involvement in Dalit and feminist movements. Her personal memories are closely connected with the experiences of her mother, family, community, and other Dalit women. The metaphor of weaving is particularly meaningful because it connects individual memories with the collective experiences and histories of Dalit women.

Both *Karukku* and *The Weave of My Life* demonstrate that caste and gender cannot always be examined as separate forms of inequality. Dalit women experience discrimination because of their caste while also facing patriarchal expectations and socio-economic difficulties. Their experiences are therefore shaped by the intersection of several social identities and structures.

A comparative study of Bama and Pawar is significant because their narratives emerge from different regional, religious, and cultural contexts. Yet both writers use life writing to question caste-based oppression and assert their identity. Their journeys also show the importance of education, self-awareness, writing, and collective resistance. The present study therefore compares *Karukku* and *The Weave of My Life* to examine how Dalit identity is constructed and how resistance becomes a means of achieving dignity, voice, and self-empowerment.

Objectives of the Study

- **To examine** the representation of Dalit identity and caste discrimination in Bama's *Karukku* and Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life*.
- **To analyse** how caste, gender, and socio-economic conditions shape the lived experiences of Dalit women in both autobiographical narratives.
- **To compare** the ways in which Bama and Pawar use education, self-awareness, and social consciousness as means of empowerment.
- **To explore** how life writing becomes a form of resistance through which both writers challenge caste oppression, patriarchy, and social marginalization.

Need and Significance of the Study : The study of Bama's *Karukku* and Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs* is important for understanding the lived experiences of Dalit women in Indian society. Dalit literature has brought marginalized voices into literary discussion, but Dalit women's experiences require particular attention because they are shaped by both caste discrimination and gender inequality. Poverty, limited educational opportunities, social exclusion, and patriarchal expectations further influence their lives.

A comparative study of these two memoirs is significant because Bama and Pawar belong to different regional, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Bama's *Karukku* reflects the experiences of a Tamil Dalit woman within the Christian social and religious context, while Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* presents the experiences of a Marathi Dalit woman and connects personal memories with the wider history of Dalit women. Studying these texts together helps identify both their similarities and differences.

The study is also important from the perspective of Dalit feminist literary criticism. It examines how caste and gender operate together rather than treating them as separate issues. Both writers use education, self-awareness, writing, and social participation to challenge discrimination and establish their identities.

Thus, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of **Dalit identity, gender inequality, resistance, and self-empowerment**. It also highlights life writing as a powerful literary form through which marginalized women can reclaim their voices, preserve their experiences, and question oppressive social structures.

Research Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H₀) :-There is no significant difference in the representation of Dalit identity, caste discrimination, and resistance in Bama's *Karukku* and Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life*.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁) :-There is a significant difference in the representation of Dalit identity, caste discrimination, and resistance in Bama's *Karukku* and Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life*, influenced by their different social, cultural, religious, and regional experiences.

Research Questions

- How do Bama and Urmila Pawar represent Dalit identity and caste discrimination in *Karukku* and *The Weave of My Life*?
- How do caste, gender, and socio-economic conditions shape the experiences of Dalit women in both autobiographical narratives?
- In what ways do education, self-awareness, writing, and social participation become forms of resistance and self-empowerment in the works of Bama and Urmila Pawar?

Materials and Methodology : The present study adopts a **qualitative, comparative, textual, and thematic approach** to examine Dalit identity and resistance in Bama's *Karukku* and Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs*. Since the study is literary in nature, it does not use statistical methods. Instead, it focuses on a close reading of the selected texts and a critical interpretation of their major themes, experiences, and narrative strategies.

The **primary texts** of the study are Bama's *Karukku* and Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life*, translated into English by Lakshmi Holmström and Maya Pandit respectively. Both autobiographical narratives are examined comparatively to understand how the writers represent caste discrimination, Dalit identity, gender inequality, poverty, education, social exclusion, and resistance.

The **secondary sources** include books, research articles, scholarly essays, and other academic materials related to Dalit literature, Dalit feminism, caste studies, intersectionality, autobiography, and life writing. These sources provide the theoretical and critical framework necessary for interpreting the selected texts.

The study uses **textual analysis** to identify significant incidents, experiences, and narrative passages that reveal caste and gender-based discrimination. **Thematic analysis** is used to organize the discussion around major themes such as Dalit identity, caste oppression, gender inequality, education, self-awareness, resistance, and empowerment. A **comparative method** is applied to identify similarities and differences between Bama's and Pawar's experiences and literary representations.

The study also uses an **intersectional perspective** to understand how caste, gender, socio-economic conditions, and other social factors interact in shaping Dalit women's

experiences. This approach helps the study move beyond treating caste and gender as separate issues.

Thus, the methodology combines **qualitative textual reading, thematic interpretation, comparative analysis, and intersectional criticism** to examine how Bama and Pawar transform personal experiences into powerful narratives of identity, resistance, and social change.

Review of Literature : Dalit literature has received increasing attention in Indian literary studies because it brings the lived experiences of caste, exclusion, humiliation, identity, and resistance into literary discourse. In particular, Dalit women's life writing has expanded discussions of caste by showing how caste and gender operate together. Sharmila Rege's *Writing Caste/Writing Gender* is an important contribution in this area. Rege argues for taking Dalit women's testimonios seriously as forms of knowledge and resistance and emphasizes the need to understand caste and gender together. Uma Chakravarti's *Gendering Caste* similarly explains the close relationship between caste and patriarchy and provides an important framework for examining the position of women within caste society.

Sharankumar Limbale's *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature* provides a theoretical understanding of Dalit literature, its social concerns, and its relationship with lived experience. Eleanor Zelliot's *From Untouchable to Dalit* and Gail Omvedt's *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution* provide important historical and socio-political contexts for understanding Dalit consciousness and the anti-caste movement. Raj Kumar's *Dalit Personal Narratives* is particularly useful for understanding autobiography and personal narrative as significant forms of Dalit literary expression.

The concept of **intersectionality**, associated particularly with Kimberlé Crenshaw, provides another useful theoretical perspective for the present study. It helps explain how different forms of social disadvantage can overlap rather than functioning independently. This perspective is particularly relevant to Dalit women, whose experiences may be shaped simultaneously by caste, gender, class, and other social conditions.

Scholarship on Bama's *Karukku* has highlighted caste oppression, religious discrimination, gender inequality, education, and resistance. Recent research reads *Karukku* from a Dalit feminist perspective and emphasizes its challenge to caste hierarchy and religious institutional discrimination.

Similarly, scholarship on Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* has examined Dalit women's identity, memory, gender, patriarchy, and resistance. Das and Adhikary's 2024 study examines how gendered Dalit memory in Pawar's memoir helps reclaim female subjectivity and creates resistance to social exclusion. Other studies emphasize the specific nature of Dalit women's experiences and the importance of education, social awareness, and empowerment in Pawar's narrative.

Some comparative discussions have already brought *Karukku* and *The Weave of My Life* together, noting similarities in their autobiographical form, representation of Dalit identity, and use of writing as resistance. However, much of the available scholarship continues to examine the two writers separately or focuses on particular aspects such as memory, feminism, or caste. Therefore, there remains scope for a focused comparative study of how **Dalit identity and resistance** are shaped by caste, gender, education, religion, region, and socio-economic conditions in both texts. The present study seeks to address this gap by bringing Bama and Pawar together within a comparative and intersectional framework.

Research Gap :- Although several scholars have examined Bama's *Karukku* and Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* from the perspectives of caste, gender, identity, memory, feminism, and resistance, there is still scope for a focused comparative study of the two texts. Existing studies often discuss the writers separately or concentrate on individual themes. The present study addresses this gap by examining how caste, gender, education, socio-economic conditions, and regional and cultural contexts collectively shape Dalit identity and resistance in both autobiographical narratives.

Dalit Identity in *Karukku* : Bama's *Karukku* presents Dalit identity as something shaped by everyday experiences of caste discrimination, social exclusion, poverty, and the struggle for dignity. Rather than discussing caste only as a social system, Bama describes how it affects ordinary life and influences the way Dalit people see themselves and their place in society. Her childhood experiences make her gradually aware of the unequal treatment given to Dalits and the humiliation associated with caste.

Bama's identity is also influenced by her experience as a Dalit Christian woman. Although Christianity promises equality, she observes that caste distinctions continue to exist within the community and religious institutions. This contradiction makes her question the social and religious structures around her. Her experiences eventually lead her towards a stronger understanding of her Dalit identity.

Education plays an important role in this development. Through education, Bama gains confidence and becomes more aware of the injustice surrounding her. Her decision to question established practices represents an important step towards self-respect and independence.

The title *Karukku*, associated with the sharp-edged leaves of the palmyra tree, symbolically reflects the painful yet resilient nature of her experiences. Bama's writing transforms personal memories into a voice of protest and affirmation.

Thus, *Karukku* presents Dalit identity not simply as an identity imposed by caste society but as a **conscious assertion of dignity, self-respect, and resistance**. Bama reclaims her identity through education, awareness, writing, and the courage to challenge social and religious inequalities.

Dalit Identity in *The Weave of My Life* : Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs* presents Dalit identity through personal memories, family experiences, social discrimination, and the struggle for dignity. Pawar does not describe her identity as an individual experience alone; she connects her life with the experiences of her mother, family, community, and other Dalit women. In this way, her personal story becomes a representation of a wider Dalit social experience.

Pawar's childhood exposes her to caste-based discrimination and social inequality. Poverty and the traditional occupation of her family further shape her understanding of caste and class. These experiences gradually make her aware of the unequal social system in which Dalits are expected to occupy an inferior position. However, Pawar's identity develops not only through experiences of discrimination but also through her growing sense of self-respect and social consciousness.

Education plays an important role in this transformation. It provides Pawar with confidence and enables her to question social practices that limit Dalit women's opportunities. Her involvement in Dalit and feminist movements further strengthens her understanding of caste and gender inequality.

The metaphor of weaving is central to the memoir. Pawar weaves together personal memories, family history, community experiences, and the struggles of Dalit women. Her writing therefore becomes a way of preserving memory and reclaiming identity.

Thus, *The Weave of My Life* presents Dalit identity as a **dynamic process of awareness, self-respect, empowerment, and resistance**. Pawar transforms personal experience into a collective voice that challenges caste hierarchy and affirms the dignity of Dalit women.

Caste and Gender Discrimination: A Comparative Perspective : Bama's *Karukku* and Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* reveal that caste and gender discrimination are deeply connected in the lives of Dalit women. Both writers show that Dalit women face discrimination not only because they belong to a marginalized caste but also because they are women. Their experiences demonstrate how social inequality becomes more complex when caste and patriarchy operate together.

In *Karukku*, Bama describes the humiliation and exclusion faced by Dalit people in everyday life. As a Dalit woman, she also encounters gender-based restrictions within family,

community, and religious institutions. Her experiences expose the contradiction between the ideals of equality and the continued presence of caste distinctions in social and religious life. Education and personal awareness gradually help her question these inequalities.

Similarly, *The Weave of My Life* presents Pawar's experiences of caste discrimination alongside the difficulties faced by Dalit women within family and society. She draws attention to poverty, domestic responsibilities, unequal opportunities, and the social expectations placed upon women. Pawar also shows that Dalit women's labour often remains undervalued despite their important contribution to family and community life.

There are, however, differences in their experiences. Bama's narrative is strongly influenced by her Tamil Dalit-Christian background, while Pawar's experiences are rooted in the Marathi Dalit social and Ambedkarite context.

Thus, both texts demonstrate that **caste and gender cannot be understood as completely separate forms of oppression**. Through their life writing, Bama and Pawar challenge these inequalities and assert the importance of dignity, equality, education, and self-respect for Dalit women.

Education and Self-Empowerment : Education plays an important role in the lives of Bama and Urmila Pawar and becomes a significant means of self-empowerment in their autobiographical narratives. Both writers show that education is not limited to gaining academic knowledge; it also develops awareness, confidence, and the ability to question social inequality. For Dalit women, education becomes a way of challenging the restrictions created by caste, poverty, and patriarchy.

In Bama's *Karukku*, education helps her understand the caste discrimination that surrounds her. As she becomes more aware of social inequalities, she begins to question the practices that treat Dalits as inferior. Her educational journey gives her confidence to make independent decisions and to resist structures that restrict her identity and freedom. Writing also becomes an extension of this awareness.

Similarly, in *The Weave of My Life*, Urmila Pawar presents education as an important factor in her personal and social development. Coming from a poor Dalit background, her educational journey creates opportunities that were not easily available to women in her social environment. Education enables her to develop self-confidence, become economically more independent, and participate in social and political activities.

Both writers therefore connect education with **self-respect, awareness, and resistance**. Their experiences suggest that education can help marginalized women recognize injustice and challenge established social practices. It also provides them with a stronger voice in family and society.

Thus, *Karukku* and *The Weave of My Life* present education as a transformative force. Through education, Bama and Pawar move from experiences of marginalization towards greater **self-awareness, empowerment, and social resistance**.

Religion, Community and Social Identity : Religion and community play an important role in shaping social identity in Bama's *Karukku* and Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life*. Although both writers come from different social and regional backgrounds, their autobiographical narratives show that changing or belonging to a particular religious community does not automatically remove caste-based inequality. Their experiences reveal the complex relationship between caste, religion, community, and individual identity.

In *Karukku*, Bama's identity is closely connected with her experience as a **Dalit Christian woman** in Tamil Nadu. She observes that caste distinctions continue to influence social relationships even within the Christian community. Her experiences with religious institutions make her question the gap between the Christian ideals of equality and the actual treatment of Dalit people. The Church therefore becomes an important part of her personal struggle with identity and belonging. Her eventual rejection of certain institutional practices strengthens her desire to live with dignity and self-respect.

In contrast, Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* is rooted in the experiences of the **Mahar Dalit community in Maharashtra**. Her social identity is strongly influenced by the

ideas of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and the wider Dalit movement. Ambedkarite consciousness provides a framework through which Pawar and others in her community understand caste oppression and seek social equality. Her memoir also connects individual experiences with the collective history and struggles of Dalit women.

Thus, while Bama questions caste practices within a Christian institutional context, Pawar draws strength from **Ambedkarite thought and Dalit collective consciousness**. Both narratives demonstrate that community and religion influence the formation of identity, but they also show the importance of questioning oppressive practices. Ultimately, Bama and Pawar transform their social experiences into assertions of **dignity, identity, equality, and resistance**.

Writing as Resistance : Writing plays a central role in the lives and literary works of Bama and Urmila Pawar. In *Karukku* and *The Weave of My Life*, autobiography is not simply a record of personal memories; it becomes a powerful way of expressing experiences that have often been ignored or silenced by dominant social narratives. Both writers use their personal stories to question caste discrimination, social inequality, gender restrictions, and the treatment of Dalit communities.

In *Karukku*, Bama transforms her experiences of caste discrimination and religious inequality into a narrative of protest. By openly describing the humiliation faced by Dalit people, she challenges the social structures that consider them inferior. Her writing also becomes a way of understanding and asserting her own Dalit identity.

Similarly, Urmila Pawar uses *The Weave of My Life* to connect her personal experiences with the lives of her family, community, and other Dalit women. Her memoir gives visibility to experiences of poverty, caste discrimination, gender inequality, labour, and social exclusion. Through writing, Pawar preserves memories that might otherwise remain unnoticed and turns individual experiences into collective testimony.

Both writers therefore transform **personal pain into social awareness and resistance**. Their autobiographical narratives challenge dominant representations and create space for Dalit women to speak in their own voices. Writing provides them with a means to reclaim identity, dignity, and agency.

Thus, *Karukku* and *The Weave of My Life* demonstrate that life writing can function as a form of resistance. Through their narratives, Bama and Pawar not only tell their own stories but also question oppressive social structures and contribute to the wider struggle for equality and social justice.

Intersectionality and Dalit Feminist Consciousness : The experiences presented in Bama's *Karukku* and Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* show that the lives of Dalit women cannot be understood through caste or gender alone. Their social position is shaped by the combined influence of **caste, gender, class, religion, and community**. An intersectional approach therefore helps to understand how these different forms of inequality overlap and affect their everyday experiences.

In *Karukku*, Bama presents her experience as a Dalit woman within a Christian social and religious context. Although Christianity emphasizes equality, caste distinctions continue to influence social relationships and institutional practices. At the same time, poverty and gender expectations create additional difficulties. Bama gradually develops an awareness that enables her to question both caste discrimination and restrictions imposed on women.

Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* similarly demonstrates the interconnected nature of caste, gender, and class. Her experiences of poverty, social discrimination, family responsibilities, and unequal opportunities reveal the difficulties faced by Dalit women. Her narrative also connects personal experience with the collective struggles of Mahar women and the wider Dalit community. Ambedkarite thought and Dalit movements contribute significantly to the development of her social consciousness.

These experiences contribute to the emergence of **Dalit feminist consciousness**, in which caste and patriarchy are understood as interconnected forms of oppression. Both writers question the idea that all women experience oppression in the same way. They also

demonstrate that Dalit women require their own space to express their particular experiences and concerns.

Thus, intersectionality helps reveal the complexity of Dalit women's lives, while Dalit feminist consciousness provides a framework for understanding their **identity, dignity, agency, and resistance**. Through their writing, Bama and Pawar turn these experiences into powerful challenges to social inequality.

Comparative Analysis of Resistance : Bama's *Karukku* and Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* present resistance as an important response to caste discrimination, gender inequality, poverty, and social exclusion. Although both writers come from different regional, religious, and cultural backgrounds, their autobiographical narratives share a strong desire to question oppressive social structures and establish dignity and self-respect.

In *Karukku*, Bama's resistance develops through her growing awareness of caste discrimination and religious inequality. Her experiences as a Dalit Christian woman make her question the unequal treatment of Dalits within society and religious institutions. Education plays an important role in developing her confidence and critical awareness. Her decision to leave the convent and express her experiences through writing represents a significant act of personal and social resistance. Her writing challenges both caste hierarchy and institutional practices that deny equality.

In *The Weave of My Life*, Pawar's resistance is closely connected with education, economic independence, Ambedkarite consciousness, and participation in Dalit and feminist movements. She presents not only her own struggles but also the experiences of her mother, family, and other Dalit women. Her writing transforms individual memories into a broader collective history. Through this process, she challenges caste discrimination as well as patriarchal expectations placed on Dalit women.

The two writers therefore use different but related forms of resistance. **Bama emphasizes personal awakening, religious questioning, and literary expression, while Pawar gives greater emphasis to collective consciousness, social activism, and the experiences of Dalit women.** Despite these differences, both writers demonstrate that education, writing, self-awareness, and collective action can become powerful tools for challenging oppression.

Thus, their autobiographical works present resistance not simply as opposition to injustice but as a continuing struggle for **identity, dignity, equality, and self-empowerment**.

Findings of the Study

- **Caste discrimination as lived experience:** Both writers present caste discrimination through their everyday experiences rather than treating it only as a historical or theoretical issue. Their narratives reveal humiliation, exclusion, inequality, and the social practices that shape Dalit life.
- **Dalit identity and self-respect:** The study finds that Dalit identity in both narratives is closely connected with dignity, self-respect, and the desire for social recognition. Both Bama and Pawar gradually develop a stronger consciousness of their identity through their experiences.
- **Multiple marginalization of Dalit women:** Dalit women experience discrimination at more than one level. Caste oppression is combined with gender inequality, poverty, and social restrictions. Both memoirs demonstrate that the experiences of Dalit women cannot be fully understood by examining caste or gender separately.
- **Education as empowerment:** Education emerges as an important means of developing self-awareness and confidence. It enables both writers to question discriminatory practices, make independent choices, and participate more actively in social life.
- **Writing as resistance:** Autobiographical writing provides both authors with a space to express experiences that have often been ignored or silenced. Their personal narratives become forms of resistance through which they reclaim their voices and identities.
- **Context-specific forms of resistance:** Although Bama and Pawar share similar concerns, their forms of resistance differ according to their regional, religious, cultural, and socio-

political contexts. Bama's narrative is influenced by her Dalit-Christian experience, while Pawar's resistance is strongly connected with Mahar Dalit identity and Ambedkarite consciousness.

Conclusion : The comparative study of Bama's *Karukku* and Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs* establishes that both texts are much more than personal autobiographies. They are important documents of **Dalit identity, memory, dignity, and resistance**. Through their life experiences, both writers bring into view the everyday realities of caste discrimination, poverty, gender inequality, social exclusion, and the struggle for self-respect. Their narratives transform individual experiences of suffering into a broader reflection on the condition of Dalit communities and, particularly, Dalit women.

Although Bama and Pawar belong to different regional, religious, and socio-cultural contexts, their writings share a strong concern with the assertion of identity and dignity. Bama's *Karukku* reflects her experience as a Dalit Christian woman and her growing awareness of caste discrimination within society and religious institutions. Pawar's memoir, rooted in the experiences of the Mahar Dalit community and influenced by Ambedkarite consciousness, connects her personal journey with the experiences of three generations of Dalit women.

The study further shows that **education, self-awareness, writing, and collective action** become important forms of empowerment and resistance. Both writers refuse to remain silent about experiences that have traditionally been ignored or misrepresented. Their autobiographical writing becomes a means of reclaiming voice, preserving memory, and challenging dominant social narratives. Recent scholarship also emphasizes the role of these narratives in identity formation and Dalit feminist consciousness.

Thus, *Karukku* and *The Weave of My Life* demonstrate that life writing can become a powerful form of social and literary resistance. Bama and Pawar transform personal memories into **collective testimony**, asserting that Dalit women are not merely victims of oppression but active subjects capable of questioning, resisting, and transforming their social realities. Their works make a significant contribution to Dalit feminist literature and continue to highlight the importance of equality, dignity, identity, and social justice.

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