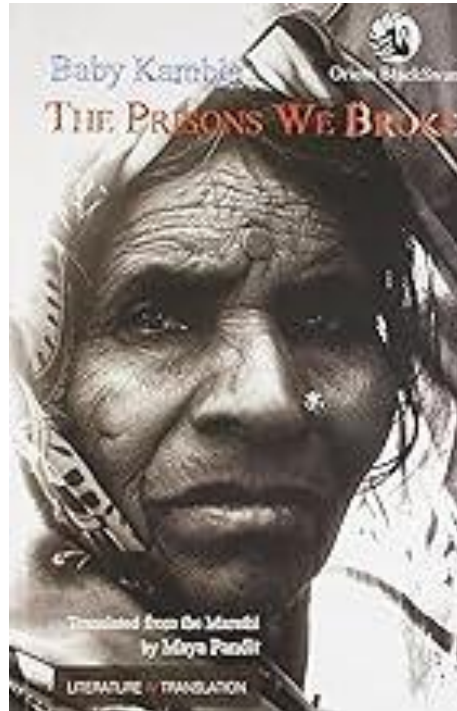


Voices of Resilience and Resistance in Babytai Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke*

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Abstract

This study investigates the interplay of caste, gender, and class, as well as resilience and resistance within Babytai Kamble's influential work, "The Prisons We Broke." Through an in-depth analysis of the protagonist's journey and the shared experiences of the Mahar community in India, the research aims to uncover how the text portrays and interprets the intersectionality of caste, gender, and class alongside resilience and resistance. Utilizing literary analysis and historical

context, the study explores both individual and collective resilience depicted in the narrative, as well as the various forms of resistance employed by the marginalized community. By examining how gender, caste, and socio-economic factors intersect with resistance, the research seeks to illuminate the complexities of navigating oppression and the importance of solidarity in addressing systemic injustices. Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper comprehension of resilience and resistance themes in literature and their broader implications for social justice movements.

Keywords: Resilience, resistance, Babytai Kamble, *The Prisons We Broke*, Mahar community, Historical context, intersectionality, marginalized community, systemic injustices.

Introduction

Dalit women, for a long time, were relegated to the lowest rungs of social hierarchies, enduring various forms of social, political, cultural, and religious prohibitions and oppressions. Often, they were treated as sub-human due to patriarchal dominance, forcing them into lives marked by extreme poverty, misery, and deprivation. Traditional Indian social and cultural norms, developed over centuries, severely limited women's autonomy and independence, especially for Dalit women who had minimal access to education, property, and even basic human dignity.

Additionally, customs like devadasi, murali, jogini, nagarvadhu, and chira facilitated the sexual exploitation of Dalit women under the guise of tradition. Consequently, Dalit women faced frequent violations of their human rights. Indian society's deep-rooted gender bias has historically hindered women from asserting their autonomy, with Dalit women facing additional discrimination within their own communities due to caste and class dynamics. This patriarchal oppression not only harmed their personal and emotional well-being but also impeded their social, political, and economic progress, relegating them to the margins of both private and public spheres. This sustained subjugation and isolation silenced Dalit women for centuries, enforced by hostile socio-cultural structures, until recently when their voices began to emerge and gain recognition.

Baby Kamble is renowned both as an Indian activist and a writer in Marathi, hailing from one of Maharashtra's largest untouchable castes. Inspired by B.R. Ambedkar, Kamble's upbringing mirrored that of many Mahars who converted to Buddhism during this era. Within the Mahar community, she earned recognition as a writer, affectionately referred to as 'Tai,' meaning sister. Her extensive body of work looks into the struggles and oppressions faced by the Dalit community,

drawing heavily from her own experiences. Notable for its powerful literary and activist elements, her work sheds light on the lives of Dalits, offering insights into their daily struggles and resilience.

"The Prisons We Broke," Kamble's autobiographical account, which was originally written in Marathi Jina Amucha, provides a chronological narrative of the Dalit community's struggles, particularly highlighting the plight of women facing multiple forms of discrimination. Through this work, Kamble aims to capture the essence of her community's resilience and resistance against societal injustices. She dedicates the book to her comrades, emphasizing her commitment to effecting change alongside the downtrodden. Kamble's narrative vividly portrays the harsh realities endured by Dalits, with descriptions of poverty, hunger, and societal discrimination. Despite her privileged background, she exposes the dire conditions faced by her people, including child marriages, malnutrition, and physical abuse.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of intersectionality is employed to analyze how multiple axes of identity intersect and influence experiences of resilience and resistance among Dalit women. Drawing upon Kimberlé Crenshaw's and Patricia Hill Collins's works, the research explores how intersecting forms of oppression, including gender, caste, class, and religion, shape individual and collective narratives of resilience and resistance. Intersectionality allows for a nuanced understanding of the complexities of Dalit women's experiences, highlighting the interconnectedness of various forms of oppression and the ways in which they intersect to shape social realities.

By integrating these theoretical frameworks, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of the voices of resilience and resistance depicted in Babytai Kamble's memoir, contextualizing them within the broader discourses of Dalit literature and intersectionality. This approach enables a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by Dalit women and the strategies they employ to navigate and resist systemic oppression.

Literature Review

Despite the initial lack of attention given to theoretical writing by Dalit women, there has been a notable increase in available literature for critical examination. This body of work,

alongside Dalit writings in general, plays a seminal role in understanding the nature, form, concerns, purposes, and styles of Dalit women's literature. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar's "The Annihilation of Caste" holds foundational relevance to the Dalit movement, providing insight into caste theory, its origins, and its growth in India. Additionally, the text analyzes Ambedkar's perspectives on caste annihilation, shedding light not only on his ascent as a leader of Dalit masses but also on his mobilization strategies aimed at eradicating caste and liberating Dalits. "The Annihilation of Caste" also highlights the significant conflict between Ambedkar and Gandhi regarding Dalits, caste, and religion, which has had enduring repercussions on independent India's polity.

Dalit feminist theory draws heavily from the works and writings of Sharmila, Susie Tharu and K. Lalita, exemplified by their significant book. This work illuminates the historical neglect of women's writings in Indian literary studies, providing a comprehensive history of women's writing in India from the sixth century onward. Furthermore, it incorporates the contributions of several Dalit women, including Uma Chakravarti's groundbreaking text, "Gendering Caste through a Feminist Lens." Chakravarti's work delves into the axis of gender stratification in India, tracing its historical roots and examining the intersections of caste, class, and gender. She posits that the suppression of women and the regulation of female sexual expression are essential components for upholding both the caste hierarchy and patriarchal structures. Likewise, "Life as a Dalit: Views from the Bottom on Caste in India," edited by Subhadra Mitra Channa and Joan P. Mencher, offers a collection of essays on Dalit issues, tracing the origins of the Dalit movement and its responses to caste, class, and gender discrimination. The book provides a profound study of contemporary Dalit feminism, highlighting Dalit women's efforts to internationalize their issues and attain equality of opportunity and access to social and economic justice.

Mukta Mittal's work, "Dalit Women in India: Survival and Current Dilemma," look deeply into the realm of Dalit feminism, exploring its socio-political and literary dimensions with meticulous analysis. Within the pages of Mittal's book, the causes behind the plight of Dalit women in Indian society are vividly portrayed, highlighting their struggles against pervasive social injustices such as dowry, child marriage, poverty, illiteracy, rape, trafficking, murder, and acid attacks. Additionally, Mittal critically assesses the contemporary landscape of Dalit feminism,

scrutinizing its various diversions and shortcomings, which she contends lack a cohesive and unified agenda.

In another significant contribution to the discourse, Indu Baghel's "Dalit Women's Movement in Modern India" offers a comprehensive examination of Indian feminism, specifically focusing on its inception, evolution, and activism, with a special emphasis on the role and experiences of Dalit women in contemporary India. Through meticulous analysis, Baghel's book delves into the strategies, leadership dynamics, approaches, agendas, directions, and achievements of Dalit feminism, providing invaluable insights into its multifaceted nature.

Sharmila Rege, a prominent figure in the realm of Dalit studies, offers a seminal exploration of the Dalit feminist movement in her work "Writing Caste/Writing Gender: Reading Dalit Women's Testimonios." Rege meticulously traces the origins and development of this movement in India, underscoring the contributions of educated Dalit male pioneers such as Jyotirao Phule, Bhimrao Ramaji Ambedkar, and Dadasahib Gaikwad, while also shedding light on the leadership roles assumed by Dalit women and their organizational efforts within the movement.

Urmila Pawar and Meenakshi Moon, in their book "We Also Made History: Women in the Ambedkarite Movement," offer a comprehensive exploration of the pivotal role played by Dalit women in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's quest for social equality. By examining historical events like the Mahad Satyagraha of 1927, they vividly illustrate the galvanization and participation of Dalit women in various Dalit movements, shedding light on their struggles against religious prostitution, the emergence of Dalit women's literature, their fight for education, and their demand for equality and representation.

Furthermore, texts such as Anupama Rao's "The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India," P. G. Jogdand's edited volume "Dalit Women: Issues and Perspectives," Ghanshyam Shah's edited collection "Dalit Identity and Politics," and Raj Kumar's "Dalit Personal Narratives: Reading Caste, Nation, and Identity" provide additional layers of understanding regarding the history, socio-political context, and personal narratives of Dalit women. Together, these works form a rich tapestry of literature that fuels scholarly inquiry into the experiences and voices of Dalit women in India.

Intersectionality: Caste, Gender, and Class

Dalit women face a dual form of patriarchal oppression due to their marginalized social, political, and economic status. The first type of oppression, known as Dalit patriarchy, occurs when men within the Dalit community oppress women. The second type occurs when men from upper castes exploit and oppress Dalit women. Before delving into an analysis of the intersectional experiences discussed in this text, it is crucial to understand the significance of intersectionality, a concept initially developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw, an African American feminist thinker in the early twentieth century. Intersectionality is not a static concept but rather an evolving theory that integrates critical analysis across various disciplines such as sociology, feminism, black studies, and sexuality.

The central focus of "The Prisons We Broke" revolves around the intersectional issues faced by Dalit women. Maya Pandit astutely highlights in the introduction of the book:

“If the Mahar community is the ‘other’ for the Brahmins, Mahar women become the ‘other’ for the Mahar men. Baby Kamble demonstrates how caste and patriarchy converge to perpetuate exploitative practices against women. It is here that the urge to define the self becomes most evident in women. Baby Kamble shows the remarkable dignity and resilience of the Mahar women in their struggle through which they have emerged as the agents of transformation in their community.” (Kamble 2008)

Throughout the narrative, Kamble consistently asserts that Dalit men view women in their homes and communities as "others," much like higher caste Hindus regard Dalits as "others." Similar to the disparities within the caste system, women, particularly marginalized groups like Dalit women, face numerous social inequities. These women are relegated to the lowest stratum of society due to gender and social norms prevalent within their respective caste communities. Thus, it is inadequate to view women's oppression in Indian society as a singular phenomenon, as the suffering of upper caste women differs from that of lower caste women, necessitating distinct strategies for addressing these issues. Dalit women face oppression stemming from caste, class, and gender, all of which are interconnected.

In her autobiography, Baby Kamble reveals the entrenched nature of the caste system and explores the interconnectedness of caste and class. She investigates how caste and class dynamics influence each other, compounded by the additional disadvantage of gender, resulting in the marginalization and exclusion of women. According to Kamble, the caste system draws legitimacy

from discriminatory religious and cultural practices, exacerbating the plight of Dalits and systematically dehumanizing them. She specifically highlights the principles that devalue the humanity of Dalits. Dalits endure various forms of humiliation based on caste, perpetuated by upper-caste individuals who assert their caste superiority. Kamble critically examines how Dalits are segregated from upper-caste communities to maintain the purity of the higher castes. This enforced superiority of the upper castes confines Dalits to impoverished and unsanitary living conditions. Kamble vividly depicts the dire circumstances faced by Dalits due to the burden of caste during the period when she penned her autobiography:

“Our place was in garbage pits outside the village, where everyone threw away their waste. That was where we lived, in our poor huts, amidst all the filth! We were masters only of dead animals thrown into those pits by the high castes. We had to fight with cats and dogs and kites and vultures to establish our right over the carcasses, to tear off the flesh from the dead bodies.” (49)

Kamble vividly portrays and explains how Dalits are deprived of basic human dignity, often treated as subhuman or worse. She contends that caste bias perpetuates ignorance, poverty, and a sense of powerlessness among Dalits. Dalits are relegated to servitude under higher castes and are assigned menial and degrading tasks such as scavenging and skinning animals. In the village, members of the Mahar caste are exclusively tasked with handling all deemed inauspicious or polluting duties. Among these responsibilities are delivering news of death in the community and preparing firewood for funerals. Upon arrival of a deceased individual at the cremation site, the cloth covering the body, typically a white sheet, is handed over to the Mahar community to be repurposed for clothing (79). It is truly ironic that despite their diligent efforts and persistent toil, the Mahars are relegated to consuming the scraps of the upper castes, donning garments discarded by them, and residing in dilapidated and fragile huts or mud dwellings. This description illustrates the deplorable state of the Mahars during the early years of the twentieth century. Kamble evocatively writes that the houses of mahars in *maharvada* are 'plastered with mud and decorated with severe poverty.' They utilize clay pots, and hanging from each Mahar's hearth is a *valani*, a rope used to dry the skin of deceased animals. Interestingly, Kamble labels this *valani* as the sacred thread for the Mahars, likening it to the sacred thread worn by upper castes to signify their twice-born status (7-8). Kamble's insightful comparison highlights the stark reality of the dire and

unsanitary living conditions imposed on Dalits by the caste system. Additionally, she illustrates how the social class of Dalits is dictated by their caste, as they are typically denied opportunities to own property or engage in business ventures. For example, members of higher castes hypocritically refuse to purchase even dry sticks from Mahar women if there is any visible indication that they have handled them. A mere thread, strand of hair, or bead of sweat is sufficient to render the wood impure in their eyes. Kamble examines the reprehensible caste-based attitude of Brahmin women engaged in bargaining: "Listen carefully, you dumb mahar women, check the sticks well, if you overlook any of the thread sticking to the wood, there will be a lot of trouble. But what's that to you? Your carelessness will cost us heavily. Our houses will get polluted"(55). Caste discrimination severely limits the ability of Dalit women to secure a stable income and improve their socioeconomic standing. Kamble illustrates the consequences of the caste system on the Mahar community, noting that historically, Dalits were denied land ownership and instead were incorporated into the *balutedar* system. Under this system, Dalits were assigned plots of largely unproductive land known as *Mahar watan* for cultivation. However, this land was distributed collectively among the community rather than individually. Not only was the land infertile, but it also failed to provide Dalits with sufficient means to support themselves financially. (74-75).

Kamble contends that, beyond caste and class disparities, Dalit women confront both external and internal patriarchal oppression, illustrating the multi-faceted nature of their marginalized status. She argues that Dalit and non-Dalit men display comparable levels of oppression, discrimination, and violence towards women, suggesting a broader societal pattern of gender-based marginalization. According to Kamble, Dalit men do not support the rights, personhood, or autonomy of Dalit women, rendering them doubly vulnerable within their households and in society at large. For example, Dalit women often endure sexual violence and exploitation at the hands of higher-caste men while working in their fields. Autobiographies of Dalit men frequently cite such incidents to illustrate the oppressive nature of the caste system.

Limbale provides an example of his mother, Masamai, who was raped and impregnated without consequences by a high-caste landlord named Hanmanta (Limbale 35). However, it is rare for a man to tolerate the same act if it were perpetrated by a Dalit. In her autobiography, "The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs," Urmila Pawar depicts the sexual exploitation of

Dalit women by high-caste men as a common occurrence. Pawar recounts the story of a Mahar woman who sells grass to an elderly high-caste man. “The bastard just pushed his dhoti aside and showed me his cobra” (Pawar 10). In Dalit autobiographies, whether authored by men or women, high-caste men consistently emerge as oppressors and exploiters.

Kamble contends that while high caste patriarchy is often recognized for its exploitation and repression of Dalit women, she emphasizes that Dalit patriarchy is similarly entrenched and discriminatory towards Dalit women. She asserts that Dalit men lack an understanding of how their own cultural norms, traditions, and social codes detrimentally affect the lives of Dalit women. Kamble argues that Dalit men fail to recognize that the pursuit of equality and emancipation for Dalit women is distinct from that of Dalit men. Consequently, they remain indifferent to the internal patriarchy within their own community, thereby suppressing the agency of Dalit women and treating them as possessions rather than individuals. Kamble presents a vivid and critical portrayal of the plight of Mahar women and condemns Dalit patriarchy for its role in perpetuating their subjugation. Within Dalit patriarchal structures, Dalit women are denied autonomy and subjected to pervasive male surveillance and control throughout history: “In those days, it was the custom to keep women at home, behind the threshold. The honour enjoyed by the family was in proportion to the restrictions imposed on the women of the house”(Kamble 5). Kamble expresses her disagreement with the patriarchal standards within the Dalit community, as well as the dominance of men, by highlighting her father's failure to fulfill his responsibilities towards his wife and family, particularly by confining his wife to certain roles or spaces, 'like a bird in a cage' (Kamble 5). Kamble illustrates the situation where her father prevented her mother from seeking employment and earning income. Rather than providing support, he chose to donate his money as charity to her mother. In Kamble's portrayal, Dalit women are portrayed as suffering from neglect, domestic violence, and physical abuse. Young brides in Dalit households endure various forms of torture, resembling the treatment of animals, as they are deprived of food, subjected to physical abuse, and ultimately coerced into submitting to patriarchal control. They are forced to work relentlessly without regard for their physical abilities, age, or other constraints, and are deprived of the opportunity to share meals with other family members, even when they are desperately hungry. Kamble describes their distressing situation as they observe the rest of the family eagerly consuming food: "However, without saying a single word and with their eyes glued to the food,

the poor hungry daughters-in-law would helplessly wait for their turn to eat. Just in case a sasur noticed this, she would contemptuously throw a morsel at daughter-in-law, saying, 'Push that down your throat, you shameless hussy!'" (30). Kamble asserts that newly wedded Dalit brides are prohibited from having an integrated conjugal life because their mothers-in-law harbor jealousy towards them, fearing that they might alienate their sons from them. The apprehension felt by older women stems from patriarchal influences, leading to deep-seated fears. This anxiety can be so intense that they persistently try to obstruct the developing intimacy and companionship between the newlywed couple: "Immediately after they went to bed, she would wake up her daughter-in-law to grind the grain. Other women would add fat to fire, 'you are stupid! How can you allow them coming together? Don't you let her sleep with your son! Beware, the delicate bud will break! Beware her!'" (96). Additionally, to maintain favor with their sons, mothers-in-law purposefully attempt to sow discord between the husband and wife by questioning the integrity of the recently wedded wife.

Kamble thus emphasizes that traditional Dalit patriarchal norms foster discrimination against Dalit women and justify their subjugation. Dalit women conform to these norms, expressing their suffering only quietly, as any dissent against these oppressive standards is brutally silenced.

Kamble's narrative underscores the importance of understanding oppression through an intersectional lens, recognizing that individuals experience multiple forms of marginalization simultaneously. By highlighting the interconnectedness of caste, gender, and economic oppression, Kamble emphasizes the need for collective action to dismantle these intersecting systems of injustice and empower marginalized communities, particularly Dalit women, to assert their rights and reclaim their dignity.

Resistance in "The Prisons We Broke"

The preceding description illuminates the multifaceted forms of suffering experienced by Dalit women, which hinder their ability to assert themselves. These various forms of suffering give rise to the diverse voices expressed by Dalit women in the autobiography. The majority of the Dalit women depicted in this autobiography are depicted as impoverished, uneducated, disenfranchised, and silenced. They are heavily oppressed by patriarchal norms and male authority. Kamble meticulously portrays the plight of these women, shedding light on their struggle for

survival and their subjugation to caste biases, socioeconomic disparities, and gender inequalities. The primary voice heard in *The Prisons We Broke* is thus the anguish of Dalit women, as Kamble depicts them as the most marginalized group within the dominant Indian social structure. She recounts their stories of suffering and hardship due to their caste, socioeconomic status, and gender. Kamble documents the anguish and marginalization experienced by Dalit women, giving voice to their longing for understanding, empathy, and liberation.

The autobiography as a comprehensive narrative delves into the resistance and protest of Dalit women, offering various strategies, actions, and forms of expression to challenge caste, class, and gender inequalities. Baby Kamble identifies religion as the roots of dalit women's sufferings and she challenges it openly. She venerates Ambedkar as the "shining jewel of sheel satwa" (56) and she contends that to achieve the emancipation of Dalits and women, and to eradicate caste discrimination, discriminatory religious doctrines must be entirely abolished. She rejects rituals by disregarding them and urges Dalits not to blindly adhere to religion, as unquestioning obedience perpetuates their oppression. Kamble denounces religious practices as prejudiced and lacking in compassion toward Dalits, leading her to critically examine orthodox and hypocritical religious beliefs in her autobiography.: "But now we have learnt how utterly worthless your religion is"(56). Baby Kamble also questions gods for being biased and unkind to dalits: "Barama and Satwai, you ruined the lives of generation after generation of the Mahars! You wrote our fates, didn't you? Religion must have bribed you quite well to do this. Otherwise why should you have done this?" (62). Kamble adopts a defiant stance regarding the manipulation of gods and religion by upper castes to assert dominance over Dalits. She recognizes that the structure of religion is constructed by privileged individuals, leading to injustices being perpetrated under the guise of divine authority.

The Prisons We Broke vividly captures the voice of distress and the voice of resistance expressed by a collective of Dalit women. It fearlessly investigates the internal and external factors contributing to the plight of Dalit women and passionately advocates for their equality and justice. The book challenges and opposes divisions based on caste, class, gender, religion, and culture, and meticulously constructs a manifesto for the advancement of Dalit women rooted in the principles of Ambedkar.

Resilience in "The Prisons We Broke"

In "The Prisons We Broke" by Babytai Kamble, resilience emerges as a central theme, illuminating the indomitable spirit of the Dalit community in the face of systemic oppression and marginalization. Kamble's narrative intricately weaves together personal accounts, historical context, and cultural insights to provide a nuanced portrayal of resilience that transcends mere survival and embodies a profound sense of agency and defiance.

One aspect of resilience depicted in "The Prisons We Broke" is the significance of familial bonds in providing support and strength. Kamble portrays the resilience of her grandmother, aaji, who refuses to accept the fate of losing her granddaughter. Despite facing societal norms and challenges, aaji's determination to hold onto Babytai symbolizes the strength derived from familial bonds in times of crisis. The excerpt reads: "But she clung to me fiercely and would not let go... Then, with tears pouring down her eyes, she begged people around to let her hold her child in her lap... 'You buried all my daughters in the night. Now let me at least hold this girl in my arms till the break of the day (16).'"

Another aspect of resilience highlighted in the text is the defiance against societal norms and pursuit of economic empowerment. Through the character of Pandharinath, Kamble illustrates resilience in challenging traditional gender roles and expectations. Despite facing hardships, Pandharinath's determination to succeed as a contractor demonstrates resilience and commitment to providing for his family. The excerpt reads: "He developed a liking for this profession... When the labourers saw him coming in a tonga with his treasure, followed by the police escort, their eyes filled with tears of joy (17)."

The narrative also portrays resilience through spiritual beliefs and practices. Despite their marginalized status, community members find strength and solace in their faith, demonstrating a belief in the possibility of a better future. Kamble describes the community's devotion to their deities and the transformative power of religious rituals, stating: "The tiny sapling of hope was reared in their hearts too. It grew tall, drawing strength from the iron in their souls (24)."

Lastly, the text portrays resilience through community solidarity and support. Despite facing systemic oppression, the community members come together to support each other in times of need, demonstrating resilience through collective action: "They were poor, of course, but they were very affectionate and simple, ready to even lay down their lives for someone they loved (1)."

"The Prisons We Broke" by Babytai Kamble offers a profound exploration of resilience within the Mahar community. Through various excerpts from the text, Kamble portrays resilience as a multifaceted concept, encompassing familial bonds, economic empowerment, spiritual beliefs, and community solidarity. By analyzing quotes from the text, this scholarly analysis provides insights into the ways in which individuals and the community as a whole navigate and resist adversity, shedding light on the socio-cultural dynamics at play in their struggle for social justice and empowerment.

"Translating 'The Prisons We Broke'"

The translation of 'The Prisons We Broke', originally from Marathi "Jina Amucha" translated by Maya Pandit, presents a complex interplay of linguistic, cultural, and socio-political dynamics. At the linguistic level, the translator faces the challenge of conveying the rich nuances and idiomatic expressions of Marathi into English without losing their essence. Moreover, the cultural context embedded within Kamble's narrative poses a dilemma for the translator, as certain concepts and references may not have direct equivalents in English or may require contextual explanation for non-Indian readers.

Furthermore, the translator grapples with the ethical responsibility of representing Dalit women's experiences authentically while making the text accessible to a global audience. This involves navigating issues of caste sensitivity, gender dynamics, and power relations inherent in Kamble's narrative. By employing strategies such as footnotes, glossaries, and explanatory notes, the translator seeks to bridge the cultural gap and facilitate cross-cultural understanding without erasing the specificity of Dalit lived experiences.

Conclusion

The exploration of the voices of resilience and resistance within Babytai Kamble's "The Prisons We Broke" offers profound insights into the intersectionality of caste, gender, and class within Dalit communities. Through a meticulous analysis of Kamble's narrative, it becomes evident that Dalit women face a unique form of patriarchal oppression, both within their own community and at the hands of upper-caste individuals. This oppression is deeply rooted in the intersection of caste, gender, and class dynamics, perpetuating systemic inequalities and marginalization.

Kamble's portrayal of Dalit women as the "other" within their own community mirrors their marginalized status within broader Indian society. Their experiences of oppression, whether through caste-based discrimination, gender-based violence, or economic exploitation, are intertwined and compounded by their intersecting identities. This intersectionality underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of the complexities of Dalit women's lived experiences and the various forms of resistance they employ to navigate and challenge systemic injustices.

Central to Kamble's narrative is the concept of resilience, which emerges as a powerful force in the face of adversity. Through personal accounts and historical context, Kamble illustrates the indomitable spirit of Dalit communities, who persist in the face of entrenched social hierarchies and discriminatory practices. The narratives of familial bonds, economic empowerment, spiritual beliefs, and community solidarity underscore the multifaceted nature of resilience and its role in sustaining Dalit communities in their struggle for social justice and empowerment.

Moreover, Kamble's critique of religious and cultural practices highlights the need for collective action to dismantle oppressive systems and foster solidarity among marginalized communities. By challenging the norms and traditions that perpetuate caste-based discrimination and gender-based violence, Kamble's narrative serves as a call to action for social change and transformation.

"The Prisons We Broke" offers a compelling exploration of the voices of resilience and resistance within Dalit communities, shedding light on the intersecting forms of oppression faced by Dalit women and the strategies they employ to assert their agency and reclaim their dignity. Through Kamble's narrative, we gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of caste, gender, and class dynamics and the urgent need for solidarity and collective action to confront systemic injustices and pave the way for a more equitable and just society.

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