

Demystifying the Nexus of Land and Caste in *Seasons of the Palm*

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Abstract

Although Indian society is constitutionally democratic, it remains vulnerable to the caste system. As an everlasting social element, caste particles have been remarkably amalgamated with every constituent of society in villages, where land and agriculture occupy the cardinal position. The landlordism or semi-feudal system in Indian rural society stands as a relic of ancient hierarchal social order which impairs the progression and emancipation of Dalits, even after political independence through the constitution has made them a path to march forward. This research article scrutinises the social and economic coalescence between landlordism and the caste system in India by analysing the novel *Seasons of the Palm*. The study adheres to the evident existence of Dalits in India as they are not only socially excluded but also economically deprived which has been represented in the novel with profound instances. The research posits that Dalits are passive, submissive, detached from retaliation, and protest against exploitation due to their position as landless in rural society who strive to secure the basic necessities from landlords. In addition, the study incorporates Ambedkar's ideologies and insights to locate the problems of Dalits in a right trajectory in order to annihilate the disparities.

Keywords: Ambedkar, Castes, Class, Dalits, Landlordism, Village.

Introduction

Indian society is primarily a rural society where the majority of people reside in villages. According to the 2011 census, there are nearly 60 lakhs of villages in India where agriculture is the soul of production (1). It is reported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in India that the share of agriculture in total Gross Value Added (GVA) of economy is 15% in the year 2022-23 (2). Land occupies a central position in India, acting not only as a source of livelihood and employment, but also as a power and hegemony. Land is the constituent of earth which is created and existed naturally for all individuals in society. Individual or private ownership is entirely against the laws of nature which has resulted in the exploitation of human labour, oppressive ideologies, communal beliefs, traditions, and violence which ultimately leads to a hierarchal and discriminative feudal system. Although the feudal system is general in both Eastern and Western societies, Western societies have undergone rapid change after urbanisation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when feudal ideologies, class relations,

socio-economic systems, inter and intrapersonal relationships have been transformed. However, in India, feudal ideologies and landlordism remain teeming among the people even after independence because of their deep-rooted culture and tradition embedded in the caste system. Lannoy observes that caste acts as an oppressive system that has been enrooted for three thousand years, as it epitomises the everlasting powerhouse in Indian Society (3). Ranadive exposes the hypocrisy of Indian democracy that "Pariahs" (a powerful Dalit community in Tamil Nadu and southern states of India in terms of both population and ideology) are threatened to possess land, prohibited from taking water from public wells and entering public places, tormented by upper caste people, and encountering barriers to getting education in government schools even after two decades of independence where feudalism and untouchability are abolished legally but still persist in their practical lives (4). Ranadive's criticism is still relevant today that Indian society has been

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besmirched due to the existence of the caste system which perpetuates severe violence against Dalits. The contemporary scenario of violence against Dalits in India supplements the fact that The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has documented that 1, 89,945 criminal cases against the Dalit community have been registered in India since 2018 (5). It also reports that caste atrocities against Dalits have increased by 13.1 percent in 2022, as 57,582 cases have been filed for perpetrating crimes and violence against them in which numerous incidents have happened in villages notably (6, 7). It is essential to recognise that most inhumane and unlawful practices against Dalits are perpetuated through the caste system and landlordism in villages. Dalits are landless and secure minimal land, whereas the so-called upper caste people possess vast acres of land in villages due to the segregating social system where caste is the soul. The realistic scenario of agricultural land and Indian villages has rightly been identified by Ambedkar, who discards the idea proposed by Gandhi that strengthening village republic and economy. There has been a dispute between contemporary reformers Ambedkar and Gandhi over delegating power to Indian villages, in which the former condemns the Indian village as a ghetto of Hindu social order, while the latter romanticises it as a soul of Indian values and civilisation. One persuades to abandon the village as it is the centre of untouchability, while the latter reiterates to uplift it as the Indian economy predominantly relies on agrarianism (8). Ambedkar's staunch criticism on Indian villages is particularly intended to the social communion of castes and landlordism, in which he opines that an Indian village is not a single social unit but composed of several castes. It is segregated into two habitations as, "Touchables" and "Untouchables", where the former occupies a powerful and superior position due to the accumulation of land and cattle they own, while the latter occupies a powerless and inferior position due to their demand of servitude as hereditary bondsmen in the farms of upper caste people (9). Thus, the agricultural land and villages where they accumulate are subjected to scrutinize the mechanism of castes in Indian society.

Background of the Study

Béteille acknowledges that village "was not merely a place where people lived; it had a design in which were reflected the basic values of Indian

civilization" (10). Inden has illustrated that the land of villages is the elementary form of Indian society, which ingates an inner world of self-sufficiency, patriarchy, and despotic governance (11). Andrew Beteille discerns that Indian Society is a telltale of hierarchy and holism due to the caste system which exists as both a social fact and an institution, whose roots are embedded in the Hindu religion, and its branches are outstretched in all spheres of society (12). The discussed illuminations substantiate the practicality that agricultural land in Indian villages is the fundamental socio-economic, political, and cultural unit of Indian Society which complies with the pernicious caste system.

Jessy and Philip remark on the reciprocity between landlordism and caste in villages where Dalits are dependent and debtors to the upper caste landlords whose material and social power are constant threats of liberty and dignity of Dalits. They observe that caste still conspires to subdue Dalits to be socially and economically dormant through the retention of landlordism (13). Dalits are alienated from various social, cultural, economic, and political spheres because of the harshness of the caste system which impels them to sustain themselves as landless in India. They comment that the repulsion of Dalits from owning land assails not only economic standards but also social harmony. Moreover, they urge Dalits to consolidate and protest to attain land rights and social justice by highlighting the efforts of a rebellious group in Bihar called the Lok Sangharsh Samiti (LSS) (14). Besides land distribution, Trivedi foregrounds the necessity of annihilating the castes and patriarchal arrogance which are superimposed with landlordism in India. Land reforms have not been executed ideally as they favour fencing the existing land structure and landlords in India, where the state policies are in deception of dethroning the land monopoly. Instead of bridging the socio-political gap between marginalised sections like Dalits and upper caste landlords, the reformation of land operates as just a theoretical program addressing economic benefits. The progress of land reforms must be measured with respect to the empowerment of Dalits and women in society (15). Notable authors examine the relation among agricultural production, access to the resources, profit, and influence of castes in India in which they

underscore the upper caste farmers yield high income due to better access to the resources and considerable investment in copious acres of land with high value crops, while socially marginalised groups like Scheduled Castes (Dalits) get lower income from agricultural related occupations due to inaccessibility of resources, inadequate irrigation, lack of crop diversity, and minimal landholdings with low value crops (16). Caste is the core of utilising resources and land ownership as it affects the social and economic disparity in India, as they comment.

Gupta argues that castes in India have been performing not only ideologically that related to purity and pollution concepts but also in materialistic means, as the progression of Dalits is thwarted by land monopoly (17). He also examines the link between capital relations and the caste system in India, highlighting that the Jati system depends on a closed, localized natural economy. Besides, he claims that a social structure akin to feudalism is necessary for castes to operate as a system as they gain authority through land ownership and control, which grants them not only economic power but also political influence, thus sustaining societal inequality and exploitation (17). Moreover, Gupta contends that the monopoly of land ownership is vital for establishing political power, noting that historically, it is the caste with economic power and a land monopoly that wielded political influence. In contrast, a caste with economic power but lacking the right to own or control land might lose both political power and social status under certain conditions (17).

Perumal Murugan's novels are unequivocally acknowledged for evoking the perennial complexities and hierarchies that existed in rural agrarian societies, caste brutalities, herculean impingement of discriminating social order to ordain the master-slave relationships through the source of land, and gothic realities encountered by the inter-caste marriage couple in the village (18). Perumal Murugan's novels explore the rituals, traditions, and customs of rural society prodigiously while demystifying the cultural, social, economic, and ecological interdependence of the villagers, whose lives are inextricably linked with land and agrarian practices (19). Thiagarajan comments that Perumal Murugan novels vindicate the underlying reality of casteism in Indian Society that it is tangible not just through

conspicuous conflicts, prejudiced laws, and blatant violence; rather, it is amalgamated with everyday habitual actions of people such as subjugation of women, disparity in labour, and endogamy (20). Perumal Murugan evinces the existence of caste in Indian rural society as "Caste is remembered in the everyday" (21). The psychological and social threats associated with inter-caste marriage in Perumal Murugan's novel *Pyre* are scrutinised by delineating the transference of cultural beliefs through castes which obstructs the fulfilment of human desires and wishes (22, 23). All these disquisitions of Perumal Murugan's novels discern the fact that he discloses the microcosm of the Indian village and its attributes, such as caste, agriculture, orthodox beliefs, and folklore.

Significance of Ambedkar in Dalit Literature

Ambedkar is treasured as the modern sculptor of India, whose status has been elevated as a social engineer for his daring attempt to reconfigure the social order by subverting the long-standing social practices and customs based on the castes. He challenges the established social conventions which cement the hierarchy, discrimination, and untouchability among the people. He has been a repository and a connoisseur whose fundamental principles like liberating, emancipating, invigorating, and politicising Dalits to secure power in society are recognised as oracles to not only the Dalit activists and writers but also the lay people devoted to him. He has refashioned the history of Dalits and India by subverting established conventions, mythical dogmas, unethical shashtras, and inauspicious philosophies based on caste and religion to create a powerful Dalit consciousness to rise against injustices with self-respect and dignity. Indeed, his influence accelerated many Dalit movements in India. As a result, a group of Dalit activists and writers, notably J. V. Pawar, Namdeo Dasal, Raja Dhale from Maharashtra organized a movement called Dalit Panthers in 1972. The term Dalit has been transformed as a political term and reflected in all spheres of Indian society with specific attitudes like protest, rejection, rebellion, and retaliation through this movement. It has also revamped the path of Dalit literature with new Dalit consciousness and identity which have been socially and politically disseminated after the emergence of Ambedkar whose importance in

literature has been rightly observed by Limbale as he argues, "Dalit consciousness is an important seed for Dalit literature; it is separate and distinct from the consciousness of other writers. Dalit literature is unique because of this consciousness" (24). Arjun Dangle, a legendary icon of Marathi writings and social activist, also agrees the spark instigated by Ambedkar and Dalit Panther movement for Dalit literature as he says "... history shows that it was Dr. Ambedkar, who was the pioneer of Dalit literature" and he also adds as, "Between 1972 and 2000, under the influence of the Dalit Panthers movement, writers have drawn from the Dalit communities of Gujrat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Tamil Nadu began to write about caste and caste-related themes. As some Dalit autobiographies have been translated into English and French, Dalit literature in India got momentum" (25). Patchala discusses the necessity of Ambedkar's ideologies and philosophies in literature by highlighting the comments of prominent Dalit writers and activists like Bama, Babytai Kamble, Nimbalker, Anna Bahu Sathe that they serve as a source of inspiration for literature like the cry for freedom, human liberation, protest culture, redemption of lost humanity, social justice, liberty, equality and fraternity as Nimbalker stating, " His thoughts contained a graph of the progress of the people at the grass roots of the society. For this Doctor Ambedkar's life itself has become a revolution. This revolution had changed the consciousness of the Dalits. That is why Ambedkar and his philosophy is the source of Dalit literature" (26). Nimbālākara, Pathak, and Nimsarkar corroborate that Ambedkar's philosophies are not confined to any particular individual or state but also the entire humanity whose life itself is a revolution which has awakened the Dalit consciousness in India as it ultimately leads to the reservoir of literature (27). Eleanor Zelliot also indicates the propulsion of Ambedkarism not only in Marathi school but also all language schools of literature by quoting the statement of G. Lakshmi Narasaiah as, "Ambedkarism is the philosophic soul of Dalit literature" (28). All these insights corroborate the fact that Ambedkar is the source of inspiration for Dalit literature, but Dalit literary works have rarely been critically evaluated through his theoretical conceptions of the caste system, law, and social justice.

This research article aims to scrutinise the portrayal of land in the novel *Seasons of the Palm* by Perumal Murugan. The primary objective of this article is to demystify the intricate concomitance of landlordism and the caste system in Indian society. The study contemplates a problem in that castes are mechanised by the system of landlordism over the years in Indian society which fuels Dalits to be powerless, marginalised, poor, downtrodden, and menial labourers which have been reflected in the novels of Perumal Murugan, but they are not examined through the lens of Ambedkar. Though Ambedkar is detached with a direct contribution to literary works, his ideologies and social and economic theories related to the mechanism of the caste system have induced many Dalit writers to produce literary works in mainstream literature. An association of writers belonging to the Dalit Panthers Movement in Maharashtra and several other Dalit writers from vernacular languages have admitted that Ambedkar is the ideological canon of their writings. As Marxism is the paradigm of evaluating the text and class relations existing in Western society, Ambedkar is the appropriate icon to deconstruct the text pertaining to the caste system with society in the Indian context. His seminal works like "Annihilation of castes" and "Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development" serve as the cardinal specimens to discern the salient features of caste system and how it mechanises in the society. However, very few literary works concerned with the perniciousness of the caste system are critically and ideologically evaluated in the social as well as political lens of Ambedkar. The study delves into locating the literary text in the social and political context of Ambedkar by discerning the role of power and privileges annexed to the caste system. Hence, the following study addresses a research gap by criticising the Dalit-centric novel *Seasons of the Palm* through the lens of Ambedkar by proposing questions as to how the Dalit characters are pictured in the novel and how their material dependency on agricultural land bridle their rights, protests, dignity, liberty, equality, and empowerment.

Methodology

The respective study adopts a qualitative approach to critically evaluate the novel corresponding to social, cultural, and political factors existing in

society. The undertaking study observes a literary text as a cultural and ideological product which reflects the prevailing social norms, beliefs, customs, and ideologies of society to illustrate the coherence of power and societal dynamics. This research employs ideological analysis to reveal the subtleties and intrinsic characteristics of the text, highlighting the dominant class and power politics by approaching caste as a pervasive ideology integrated into every aspect of society. The current study incorporates key aspects of ideological analysis to explore various issues, such as the way a belief system like caste shapes discriminatory interactions among people, how it facilitates the accumulation of material power through the exploitation of a specific group known as Dalits, the manner in which Dalits are portrayed in terms of resistance and oppression, and the significance of connecting the text to cultural and political contexts. The central theme of this attempt lies in the parallel study of Ambedkar's ideologies and the novel to illuminate the manoeuvre of castes in Indian society by relying on the general view of literature, as it is not a stand-alone entity but an institution integrated with social, religious, political, economic, and cultural factors which not only picturizes reality but also adds to it. Hereby, it intends to scrutinise society through literature and Ambedkar, in which the former acts as a lighthouse of cultural and social practices, whereas the latter acts as a social indagator of Indian society. The respective study takes Perumal Murugan's novel *Seasons of the Palm* as a primary source, while the writings and speeches of Ambedkar as secondary sources for discussion. Along with Ambedkar, the study also adopts the impact of social and political movements of India like Dalit Panthers, preferential ideologies, criticism, and theories of Western sociologists and Marxists for disclosing the subtle mechanism of castes and agricultural land in the novel.

Significance of the Study

The importance of this study rests on identifying Dalits as both socially excluded and economically deprived. A rationale behind choosing the novel *Seasons of the Palm* for this research is that it intensely captures the doubly marginalised position of Dalits in villages, as they are not only treated as socially despicable but also tyrannised as economically feeble, whose material growth has constantly been diminished by the congenial nexus

between the caste system and feudalism. Despite the emergence of democratic and modern values, ancient feudal relations still exist in Indian society which are synchronised with the oppressive caste system by making Dalits landless and meagre workers while favouring the upper caste people to be landlords. The power is established by caste identity and land in the village where Dalits are powerless and landless, whose economic reliance demands them to obey the subjugation without questioning or rebelling against the hegemony. These fundamental yet profound nuances are demonstrated precisely in the novel *Seasons of the Palm*, as it opens the discussion for decentralisation of land along with the anti-caste movement in India. Moreover, the study insists on extirpating the castes not only in the Indian context, but also with a universal concern by portending the impending danger that it will become a world problem if Indians migrate to other regions on Earth, as Ketkar believes (29). In addition, this study attempts to integrate the revolution and tribulation of Dalits with proletarians all over the country, as isolating them from the world context seems impuissant.

Results and Discussion

Depiction of Dalits

Experiences of suffering, social constraints, victimisation, and marginalisation are intrinsic elements of Dalit literary works, as depicted in much of the vernacular literature. These works frequently address the themes of helplessness, servitude, landlessness, institutional harm, psychological trauma, and the series of violent acts perpetrated by the upper castes which are illustrated in previous studies by criticising the malignancy of the caste system (30-32). Parallel to this context, Dalits are portrayed as landless, slaves, and bonded labourers in the novel *Seasons of the Palm*, whose lives are interblended with caste consciousness as they operate according to the established social order. The novel revolves around the lives of Dalit children who have been trapped in the farms of upper caste landlords as bonded labourers by deserting their education, innocence, liberty, playfulness, and adolescent desires. They are impelled to be incessantly involved in agrarian work without rest which is narrated as, "Bone-breaking work. No time to look, wander, or even piss or shit" (33). They have been

forced to be a serf in the farms of upper caste landlords by convincing themselves that it is their professional calling which described as, "Vettu Kaattu master owns the largest farm in these parts. He is the local 'big' man. Several untouchable work for him" (33). Their routine life is conditioned as waking up before the sun rises and heading towards the farm and cowshed to cleanse in which the narrator describes the habitual activities of Belly, who gets up early and walks a long distance to reach her master's house and returns her home after sun set every day; serving household duties for their mistresses without enough slumber who are often whipped on the sole of feet which forces them to hurry up for their work with tears; taking care of their babies and old masters as they are forced to carry the shit pan and helping to clean arse which mentioned as, "Tallfellow takes the pan of shit to a corner of the shed...pours water over his buttocks slowly" (33); grazing the goats in the field until dusk, collecting firewood while feeding the goats, and taking the role of custodian of their crops at night. Besides, they are prohibited from entering their masters' house through the front door and they are offered food in the coconut bowl; landlords dictate gruel menial work to the children without empathising them; they assault Dalit children by using their caste identity as a weapon as the narrator explains the painful incident of Shorty who has been smacked by his master which causes bleeding in his mouth; they demand Dalit families to send their children as servitors by reiterating the hereditary custom of the village which they are supposed to ensue in which the narrator highlights that Belly will go to work in Vettu Kaattu master's house if he insists that she has no other option to escape ; and they are frequently reiterated to follow their customary duty as their master "loves to remind Belly's father – and indeed everyone else – of their duties. Her father is a leather worker" (33). They do not wear proper dresses as they are in loincloth habitually. They do not even have a dignified name, as they are addressed by demeaning names referring to the structure of their body parts, such as Shorty, Belly, Tallfellow, Stonedeaf, and Stumpleg.

The Powerhouse behind the Plight of Dalits

Dalits are relegated to being landless due to the strictures of the caste system, as it is the age-old system in society whose agricultural labour is

capitalised by upper castes and landlords to increase their material power as it widens the economic and social gap between them (34). The dispossession of land and caste-based agrarian inequalities has an adverse effect on Dalits, who have been exploited by upper caste landlords in villages and economic projects in cities (35). These findings promulgate the fact that the landless plight of Dalits is the causative agent of their economic deprivation. The depiction of Dalits in the novel substantiates the underlying reality that their servitude, ignorance, and inability to raise their voice against injustices have stagnated in their minds because of their position in the village as landless. They are mentally framed by the notion as being slaves in their masters' land is the fate due to their caste. Indeed, caste is the central ideological source behind all these irrational and inhumane things which have still been invigorated by agricultural land, particularly in Indian villages. Dalits are habituated to live outside the village fold as landless, whereas the upper caste people occupy the prodigious portion of the village as landlords. They are illiterate and forced to serve as labourers whose material needs rely on farming land owned by upper-caste people. They are vulnerable to both social and economic insecurity, in which the former is based on caste and the latter on land. The Dalit Panthers movement has rightly observed the deplorable circumstances of Dalits in the Indian context who have been excruciated with dual-oppression by being both untouchables and landless, as they define the term Dalit in their manifesto which encompasses not only the sections of Scheduled Castes and Tribes but also the landless and poor peasants who are swindled politically, economically, and in the matter of religion (36). The movement clearly highlights that Hindu feudal rule subjugates Dalits even after the independence by stating as, "The Hindu feudal rule can be a hundred times more ruthless today in oppressing the Dalits than it was in the Muslim period or the British period. Because the Hindu feudal rule has in its hand all the arteries of production, bureaucracy, judiciary, army and police forces, in the shape of feudal landlords, capitalists, and religious leaders who stand behind and enable these instruments to strive. Hence, the problem of untouchability of the Dalits is no more of mental slavery. Truly speaking, the problem of the Dalits or Scheduled Castes and Tribes, have

become a broad problem; the Dalit is no longer merely an untouchable outside the village walls and the scripture. He is untouchable and he is a Dalit, but he is also a worker, a landless laborer, a proletarian" (36).

Ostracized Existence of Dalits in Village

As a matter of fact, the observation of Dalit Panthers about the awful existence of Dalits in Indian society, especially in villages as both untouchables and landless, has previously been diagnosed by Ambedkar that the cruelties of Dalits in the villages are perpetrated by land which has a close affinity with the caste system. He states that the Indian village is a working plant of untouchability and a ghetto of the social order which comprises several castes. He also opines that becoming a 'touchable' from the state of 'untouchable' is beyond the mettle for Dalits in the village where the land occupies a central position, as it is based on an inexorable law of karma or destiny which has been ordained by the caste system in which villagers have been synthesised for thousands of years. He states, "Such is the picture of the inside life in an Indian village. In this Republic, there is no place for democracy. There is no room for equality. There is no room for liberty and there is no room for fraternity. The Indian village is the very negation of a republic. If it is a republic, it is a republic of the Touchables, by the Touchables and for the Touchables... The untouchables have no rights. They are there only to wait, serve and submit. They are there to do or to die. They have no rights because they are outside the village republic and because they are outside the Hindu fold. This is a vicious circle. But this is a fact which cannot be gainsaid" (9). Thereby, it is cognisable that the Indian societal system has still been manoeuvred by the caste system, although the political and legal systems have been administering according to the constitution of India. Ambedkar explicitly states that Indian society upholds and philosophises the prejudicial caste system to maintain the hierarchal social order that is still prevalent in India (29). Corresponding to Ambedkar's views on caste and his observation of Indian villages, it is clear that the Indian feudal system has a close affinity with the caste system to protect the social order which prevents the upper castes from devoting their physical labour to agricultural land by enjoying caste privileges. On the contrary, Dalits and

Shudras are constrained to involve menial and manual labour due to their degrading social identity constructed by the caste system. Being outcasts, the proviso of Dalits is more strenuous than Shudras, as they are treated as untouchables who have been fiercely inflicted by their identity in villages where the land occupies a central position. They are socially and politically threatened to own the land in the village, where agriculture is the main source of livelihood. Although they own minimal land with the help of constitution and state policy, several factors are in odds with their empowerment, such as lack of access to natural resources, irrigation, crop cultivation, illiteracy, and conspiracy of upper caste people to confiscate the land by offering debt. To avoid starvation, individuals from marginalised communities are compelled to work on the farms of those belonging to higher castes. Upper caste individuals exploit the poverty of these marginalised groups to assert their power and authority, thereby extracting labour to enhance their own social and economic status. Consequently, it is evident that Dalits are constrained by both caste and feudal systems, which impede their emancipation and empowerment.

Land Metamorphoses as Lord by Castes

According to Marx, the concept of land is concomitant with natural resources like water, trees, and minerals which exist solitarily of humans and operate as a source of both natural resources for production as well as non-economic qualities such as identity, mental health, spirituality, and aesthetics. Land has no individual proprietors, as it is the collective property of all members of society (37). Marx approaches land as natural property, where all individuals in society have equal rights for consumption. Following Marx's conception of land, it is clear that exploitation and disparity among people originated in society after the conflict over the ownership of land by transgressing natural law. Indeed, conflict will arise when an individual or a group of individuals exhibits supremacy over the land which they possess by any means like violence, hard labour, skill, ideology, and individual and social efficiency, as it is not natural or organic. The private ownership of land demolishes the democratic mode of production and distribution of natural resources to every section of society. Thus, the posture of land shifts

from natural resource to power and authority, whereas the status of a person who accumulates abundant land will be elevated as 'Lord' to the landless. Consequently, the landless and labourers will fall upon the prey of land hegemony as the landlords exert their influence over them to establish the hierarchical social order. The division of labour based on land is ubiquitous in all civilised societies which are subjected to change, as proletarians can subsequently become bourgeois and capitalist under the influence of politico-economic factors. Unlike Western societies, the division of labour is intermingled with the idiosyncratic division of labourers as water-tight compartments in India, where they are stratified one above the other by the caste system. The division of labour has not stemmed from an individual's efficiency and choice; rather, it has sprung from the social status of the parents which is already predestined by the dogma of castes. Hence, the professional callings through hereditary customs standardise the economic positions of people in India as it remains static.

Perceptions of Caste and Occupation by Ambedkar

Ambedkar states that while discoursing the theories of caste as it segregates labourers, it disembodies work from interest and disengages intelligence from manual labour. The status of individuals in Indian society are restrained to choose his/her own occupation as they are commanded by theories of caste and varna system whose fundamental principles of dividing the labours have been disregarded by Ambedkar as it is 'neither fool-proof nor knave-proof.' The theory has ordained the duty of four varnas or classes that Brahmins should acquire knowledge, Kshatriyas should protect people with arms, Vaishyas should be involved in trade, and Shudras should serve the rest of the varnas. Ambedkar criticises the segregating occupations of the caste system by claiming that the mutual dependence of one class on another is inexorable, but depending on others even for necessities like education, wealth, and means of defense is unacquittable which makes the whole theory irrational. The central conception of this theory, Ward-Guardian, materialises as a master-servant relationship in practice. Ambedkar contends that despite numerous inconsistencies in the interdependence among the Brahmin, Kshatriya, and Vaishya varnas, they remain

resolute in their subjugation of the Shudras. He concludes by arguing Dalits are forbidden from enjoying the privileges which the rest of the three have been retaining for a lengthy period, as caste is a contagious social organisation which paralyses the progression of Shudras (29). The exposition of Ambedkar corroborates the fact that being outsiders of the caste structure, the oppression of Dalits is rigorous, who are treated inferior to Shudras, and their contemptible social identity as untouchables acts antagonistic to their liberty, equality, and fraternity, whose labour is also exploited by upper castes and landlords enormously. Moreover, they are conditioned to accept their slavery, injustices, and humiliations, as they believe it is their fate which is inextricable with the dogma of caste. It is reflected evidently during the intense argument between Shorty and Belly in the novel *Seasons of the Palm* when Shorty appreciates his master's generosity to share a minimal work on the farm where Belly reacts to Shorty that he should not let his master work on the farm, as it is the responsibility reserved only for them and not for their master. She states, 'You mustn't let him. That's what we're there for. He doesn't need to do it, you know' (33). Belly's statement reflects the idea that they have been inculcated as they are born to serve their masters according to the caste dharma. In addition, Belly becomes angry when condemned by her mistress, even though she has completed her work in the cowshed. Nevertheless, her awareness of the caste system prevents her from showing anger towards her mistress, as the narrator mentions that Belly should refrain from retaliating against her mistress in accordance with social norms. These instances substantiate the reality that Dalits should perform duties according to the caste system without resistance. They are indoctrinated to adore their upper caste masters, as they are the suppliers of material needs and saviours of livelihood. The laws of caste are constructed to forbid Dalits from entering the social and economic domain, as they are expected to be dependent on the upper castes forever. The monopoly of land contributes to them being lords or autocrats in a society where Dalits are bondslaves and passive because of the constraints of the caste system which makes them landless.

Land Throttles Dalits

Due to the detrimental constraints of social order based on the caste system, Dalits are evicted into the lower position whose exiguous socio-economic conditions act as a catalyst to endure the subjugation with tolerance, as they are impelled to be involved in menial and pejorative labour like manual scavenging which ultimately dwindles their resistance and rebellious spirit (38). The passivity of Dalits against atrocities is infused through religious scriptures and the vested social consciousness constructed by the caste system as they are psychologically driven to accept their oppression (39). In consonance with the existing literature, Dalit characters have never protested against oppression, abasement, and exploitation, although they are tormented by landlords throughout the novel. They tolerate brutal atrocities without any retaliation. Certain instances of the novel vindicate their passive attitude which reflects their acceptance of subalternity. Tallfellow narrates the incident to Shorty and Belly about how he has taken flight after his master's goats are dead by eating corn stalks, as he proclaims that his grandmother would never rescue him from the master; instead, she would fall down to his feet. He says, 'But what can that poor thing do? She'd go straight back to the master and fall at his feet. And then I would have to go back and still get beaten!' (33). Another noteworthy instance of the novel involves when Shorty is being swathed with a tangle of rope in the well for the whole night after getting merciless beatings from his master as a punishment for stealing coconuts from his adversary's farm. He is rendered mentally unstable due to fear, and his parents have never expressed anger towards their master; instead, they implore to take Shorty to their home by adhering to the master's decision.

Economic Reliance Evades Protest

The most remarkable incidents involved in the third chapter of the novel when Belly describes the dreadfulness of working in Vettu Kaattu master's farm, where the labourers are tormented with onerous workloads. He owns copious acres of land and tortures Dalits to work in the fields relentlessly without offering proper wages, grains, and rest. Furthermore, he expects labourers to not demand wages and grains despite the fact that they are working diligently in the field for the whole day and night in harvest seasons. He believes that the

duty of Dalits has to end on the working farm itself, and distributing grains appertains to the masters' concerns, which he accuses as, "Whoever heard of an untouchable farmhand staying at home? You're all so eager when it comes to getting your measure of grain. You don't even wait for the harvest to be brought home! You stand on the threshing floor and demand your share. But mention work and you scratch your head!" (33). Thereby, Belly is frightened by the probability that her parents will send her to work on the Vettu Kaattu master's farm if he demands. She presupposes that they will not refuse or protest against their master's words, which are the holy mantras to them, because he is in the stature of affording money and grains for their livelihood. In addition, Belly's mother advises her elder son Sorakayan, who refuses to work on Vettu Kattu master's farm, that hundreds of people have eagerly been waiting to work on the farm and they will make use of the opportunity if he gives up. Her outcries as, 'There are a hundred devils here, waiting for you to leave' (33). From all these instances, it is clear that all the sufferings and humiliations of Dalits in the villages are chiefly based on land, where caste stipulates who should own land and who should not. Dalits are forbidden to possess land, and they are exploited without getting ample resources, though they invest plenty of physical labour in the fields. Undoubtedly, the statement of Belly's mother 'hundred devils here, waiting for you to leave' demystifies the fact that Dalits have been protesting with each other to be labourers or slaves for their material gains instead of battling with their masters and landlords who squander them by swilling their labour. These instances of the novel stabilise the underlying reality that Dalits' material dependency dilutes protest culture against their oppressors because of their landless plight in the caste system. They rely on their upper caste landlords for their livelihood which compels them to be tolerant and inactive.

Concomitance between the Caste and Feudal System

Conflict is an instinctual and functional part of human life that arises not only in a tremendous way like war, but also in daily lives and relationships when there is an unjust distribution of resources and power (40). However, there are no significant conflicts, and an agrarian revolution has manifested in India. Vanaik unveils that no peasant revolts have emerged between the two

prominent classes in India called the agrarian bourgeoisie and proletarians which has frozen the structural change in society (41). The remarkable reason behind the absence of a great revolution is the close affinity between caste and class in India, which Ambedkar exemplifies that they are the next-door neighbours, where caste acts as an enclosed class (29). Similarly, Marx exposes that all the wars, invasions, and revolutions of India before independence have materialised only in the surface layer which has never touched upon the deeper layer, as the Indian social order based on the customary caste system retains society to be rigid (4). Ranadive addresses certain social evils such as untouchability, brutality, and swindling the peasants existing in the villages even after independence due to the feudal and semi-feudal ideologies deeply sedimented on the caste system where the landlordism has been legislatively perished but the fundamental structure remains static. He has even lambasted on the hypocrisy of the double-faced intelligentsia and social reformers who have not questioned the retention of the caste system through landlordism by accepting the old feudal order in which they are imprudent of advocating the agrarian revolution in Indian society. Being entangled and fragmented with caste prejudices, the victimised Dalits and all the lower-class peasants are feeble to form a separate class to rise against the landlordism by sharing a common bond as their consciousness of castes obstacles revolutionary unity (4). As characters in the novel, Dalits tolerate all the slaveries and injustices without opposition due to their material gains relying on the land owned by landlords in the village whose 'Social Status' germinated in the soil of patrimonial and feudal system in which they capture the 'Social Honour' based on castes (42).

Role of Social Status in Power Dynamics

Guha argues that the power of oppressors over the oppressed has been determined not only by the material basis but also by their social identity which exclusively offers them a prestige. He proclaims that marginalised people in society are governed to act as guards for securing the social prestige of upper-caste people by not defacing their honour. He also states, 'While those in control of the instruments of punishment tend thus to act upon a definition of crime broad enough to permit a defence not only of the material basis of their

power but also of their prestige, the more audacious of the outlaws in India and elsewhere have been known, conversely, to add insult to injury in their defiance of authority' (43). In his observation, Guha contemplates the power dynamics between the oppressors and oppressed, in which he underscores that the dominant people in society leverage their influence to reattribute marginalised people by manipulating the crime for their own means. Further, the subjugators believe that they are the centre of the power circle where the powerless are marginalised by being under sway and surveillance, and it would be reckoned as the breaching of authority by mortifying their social prestige if they are involved in any crime. Corresponding to Guha's notion, the power dynamics is reflected in the novel when Shorty is caught by Vaya Kaattu master for plucking coconuts in his tree in the field. Shorty's act is considered a crime for plucking coconuts from another's field without permission. Vaya Kattu master manipulates this act as a tool to scandalize and avenge his adversary Maccharu master by misrepresenting the fact as Maccharu master sends his servant Shorty to steal the coconuts from his farm and humiliates Maccharu master with slanguage. As a result, Maccharu master is infuriated, and he beastly assaults Shorty as he believes his reputation and social prestige have been dishonoured by the act of Shorty. He expresses, "He's humiliated me! Me, a man who to this day has not put his hand out to anyone for anything!" (33). His assertions manifest a glimpse of Guha that the social power of masters or oppressors primarily depends on the subservience of servants or the oppressed, who are not supposed to violate authority (43). Therefore, Dalits are used as scapegoats by upper-caste people to establish power in society by earning recognition and protecting their prestige. The landlords are the defenders of the caste system, and it is vice-versa whose power and oppression over Dalits entail the social roles which they grip on with society, while their roles are cultivated by the caste system. Conclusively, the caste system and landlordism perform together as the Big Brothers in Indian society, especially in villages which exert supremacy over Dalits by restraining their liberty, economy, and dignity.

Caste as an Ideology

Philip Goldstein has stated the definition of ideology by Louis Althusser as, "Ideology is a system (possessing its logic and proper rigour) of representations (images, myths, ideas or concepts, according to the case) endowed with an existence and an historical role at the heart of a given society" (44). Caste operates as an ideology whose particles are lodged in every constituent by making it the heart of Indian society. Certainly, earlier studies also point out that caste continues to be a distinct ideology deeply sedimented in socio-cultural and political practices, where longstanding traditions and cultural norms uphold its ontological status by philosophising the system as it trammels the freedom, respect, and dignity of Dalits in India (45). Caste has been reconfigured in modern India, functioning as a relentless hierarchal ideology, which denies the rights and benefits provided by the constitution, as the ideology of caste has been rejuvenated by the ideals of nationalism by normalising it as common societal consensus (46). Althusser distinguishes the 'state power' and 'state apparatus', arguing that the state is absurd without the operation of power. He clarifies that the entire political class revolution is a dynamic process, as an individual class or group of classes are allied together with the motive to capture and protect the power (state) in a state (apparatus). State power is controlled by 'repressive structures' as Althusser points out them as governing or regulatory bodies like courts, prisons, the police force, and the army which 'functions by violence'. In addition, state power is also maintained by Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) which actionize as standalone and specialised institutions such as political parties, schools, the media, churches, the family, and art. The homogeneous repressive state apparatus is vested on 'public domain' whereas the heterogeneous ideological state apparatuses are owned by 'private domain' in which he underlines the statement of Antonio Gramsci as, 'the State, which is the State of the ruling class, is neither public nor private; on the contrary, it is the precondition for any distinction between public and private'. By acknowledging Gramsci's proposition, he asserts that the functioning of power in society is significant irrespective of the domain of institutions, whether it is public or private. Private institutions can effectively serve in

the power dynamics as Ideological State Apparatuses, where Althusser differentiates them from the Repressive State Apparatus, as the former functions by ideology and the latter by violence (47). In the Indian context, the accumulation or monopoly of land represents the 'private domain' as it falls under the category of Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) which functions by ideology that is undoubtedly the caste system which exercises hegemony over the people by channelling state power.

Parallel to Althusser's views, the concept of 'hegemony' by Gramsci is a mandate to delineate the power of caste as an ideology. Raymond Williams defines the concept of Gramsci's hegemony as, 'the whole lived social process as practically organized by specific and dominant meanings, values and beliefs of a kind which can be abstracted as a "world-view" or "class outlook"' (48). Williams addresses hegemony as a manifested attempt of social control by deceiving people to recognize several things as common and nature who identifies it to culture as general while ideology in particular. Gramsci observes the mechanism of power in the society as the two primary components called 'Dominio (or coercion) and Direzione (or consensus)' constitute the 'state of balance' by integrating the different social classes to form a 'organic totality' where the consensus grounded on civil society and the coercion laid on political society. He explains that the rule of hegemony is construed by the prominence of consensus over coercion, signifying the equilibrium between civil and political society. Thus, state power is relied on the 'hegemonic equilibrium' by striking a balance between both public and private organisations like state, bureaucracy, police, church, trade union and school with varying instants of force and consensus. Gramsci delineates hegemony, as he mentions 'predominance by consent', is an imposition of specific class which exerts its influence over the other classes of the society through political, moral and intellectual agents with general world-view and 'organic ideology' synthesised in the system by reconstructing and reconfiguring the previous ideologies (49).

Corresponding to Gramsci's discourse, castes have been the everlasting hegemony in Indian society for more than two thousand years which operate as 'organic ideology' by exercising its supremacy

through all the political, economic, intellectual, and moral agents by conditioning the people to accept it is natural and common. Gramsci urges proletarians to consolidate with class consciousness in terms of the struggle to attain state power, but it seems an arduous attempt in Indian society where other working classes are consciously isolated from Dalits due to the caste system which prevents comingling with other groups by preaching the purity-pollution concept. Therefore, capturing state power and being liberated from social and political constraints is not feasible without annihilating the castes which are prevalent as an ideology in society and a notion in the mind.

Tracing the Historical and Political Significance of Land Reclamation

As the novel *Seasons of the Palm* takes place in the southern state of India, called Tamil Nadu, in the post-independence period, it becomes necessary to underscore the socio-economic position of Dalits, the land system, and political reform movements that emerged in that specific region. According to the census of 2011, Dalits occupied 19.18 % of the total population, where 80 % of the people resided in rural areas as agricultural labourers throughout the years. Most of the conflicts have been springing due to their landless or meager land conditions in Tamil Nadu, as Dalits occupy only 7.1% of the total area of the land and only 1.5% of Dalits hold ten and above acres of land (50). The condition of Dalits has been miserable from pre-colonial period to post-colonial period in Tamil Nadu who have been identified as 'Panchamars' in social context as they are outcastes (people from four varnas are called Savarnas) and Depressed Class in colonial context. Although several sub-castes are involved in the Dalit community, three major castes, namely Parayars, Pallars, and Arundhathiyars, are predominant in Tamil Nadu, where Parayars are identified themselves in the name of Adi-Dravidas under the ideological influence of social and political reformers called Pandit Iyothee Thass and Rettamalai Srinivasan by referring they are the original inhabitants of the land. The Parayars are lodged in higher numbers in the North and South Arcot districts under the administration of Madras Presidency in the colonial period. Research has reported that panchamars have been persecuted by upper castes who exploit their labour to convert

dry or waste land into cultivable lands but prevent them from land ownership. Panchamars are expected to be subservient landless labourers forever who are treated inferior to animals by upper castes. It is also documented that the new wave of western philanthropism, abolition of the slavery act in 1843, and gracious social activities of Christian missionaries from the Madras Presidency like Rev. Andrew of the Free Church of Scotland have examined the plight of Pariahs (called Parayars) from the Chingleput district in 1889, Rev. W. Goudie has presented the research paper on 'The Disabilities of the Pariah' at Madras Missionary Conference in 1891 which gains attention on Panchamars' hardships and voluntary political measures of colonial administrators like Tremenhare, the collector of Chingleput district who documented the distressed conditions of Pariahs in his report as, 'always badly nourished, clad, if at all, in the vilest of rags, eaten up with leprosy or other horrible diseases, hunted like pigs, untaught, uncared for and unpitied' have contributed to uplift the economic and social conditions of Panchamars by exposing the root cause of their subjugation that they are landless (51).

The study of Samraj elaborates that "The Kaniyatchi" system of land control had been followed in Tamil Nadu before colonial rule which was not only confined to property rights but also control over other natural resources like dry or waste land, irrigation, public wells, mortgage, and labour trade. "Kaniyatchikars" were the sole proprietors of the land who occupied the top of the order in the agrarian hierarchy as they belonged to upper castes, the cultivators (referred to as "Payirkars") held the secondary position as they belonged to touchable lower castes, and the labourers were at the bottom of the position as "Pannaiyal" (permanent labourers or slaves) and "Padiyal" (daily wages). "Panchamars" had been the category of "Pannaiyal", who were demanded to be indentured servants. "The Mirasidars" had been enjoying all the economic and social privileges with the help of the Kaniyatchi system by paying land tax to the colonial government. However, after the expansion of the colonial revenue system, the Ryotwari system was introduced in Madras Presidency as it reckoned land was the state property and cultivators were considered as Ryots by offering Patta to pay the

tax. Consequently, "Mirasidars" are compelled to pay the tax for wasteland which forces them to give the land to non-Mirasidars to cultivate, but they belong to touchable lower castes who gain direct control of land like upper castes by excluding "Panchamars" (52). Thus, the agrarian community operates according to the caste order and privileges by mischievously suppressing Dalits. Basu revealed the report submitted by J.A. Tremmenheere on the slavery and "Man Mortgage" custom of Dalits titled "Note on the Pariahs of Chengalpet" impacted a desirable effect on Dalits' economic and social emancipation that availing lands to Dalits would be liberated from the torpidity of slavery and poverty by pointing out the futile result of Ryotwari system to ameliorate the conditions of farming labourers and Dalits due to the interference of "mirasis" as they prohibited "Panchamars" to acquire wastelands on the basis of "darkhast" applications by favouring the local cultivators referred to as "ulkudi". It was initially denied by the higher officials of the colonial revenue board, although he emphasised and detailed the subalternity of "Panchamars" in his report (53).

Geetha underscores that due to the incessant inclination of missionaries and the effect of the Depressed Class Land Act in 1892, the colonial administration of Madras Presidency granted nearly twelve lakh acres of land to "Panchamars" from the North Arcot district of Tamil Nadu which came to be known as "Panchami Land", with regulations under G.O. 1010 and 1010A dated 30 September 1892 that they were forbidden to sell or lease for the first ten years and that they could transfer the land after the due years but only to the persons belonging to the "Panchamars" (54). She also unveils the practicality of this act that it did not promote to upgrade the status of "Panchamars" as most of them were financially deprived to cultivate and irrigating the agricultural land which compelled them to sell their land to upper castes for meagre amount without knowing the political and legal awareness as they were not supposed to sell (54). Thereas, numerous acres of Panchami lands were expropriated by upper castes due to their poverty and economic insecurity which made them languish.

Anandhi discovered in her study that due to the political rise of Dalit movements in Tamil Nadu in the 1900s, notably the perky activism of the

Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Party headed by Dr. Thol. Thirumavalavan in the northern part of the state as it comprises the majority of Panchamars or Pariahs, the spirit of Dalit consciousness with social and political awareness had mobilised among the youths which resulted in the demand for revenue share from fish bidding in village ponds from Chengalpet district. The growing rivalry with non-Dalits induced Dalits to occupy 'Poramboke' (wasteland) by instating the Ambedkar statue and claiming ownership of land from the government. The conflict reached its zenith when Ambedkar's statue was violently dislocated and damaged by state officials and upper castes in Karanai village from Chengalpet district in 1994 which provoked Dalits to protest in the sub-collector's office by demanding the restoration of Ambedkar's statue and the reclamation of Panchami land. To restrain the rebellion, the bureaucracy fired in the mob which resulted in the assassination of two Dalits, John Thomas and Ezhumalai. The brutality of the bureaucracy triggered Dalits from all parts of Tamil Nadu to fight for the rights of reclamation of Panchami land. Consequently, the committees were formed by the state government to investigate the distribution of Panchami land, but they failed to redistribute the land to Panchamars. Dalits managed to reclaim only 250 acres of land in Chengalpet district from the total of 12 acres by installing the Ambedkar statue under the leadership of Fr. L. Yesumaran (55). Thangaraj underscores the land distribution and castes in Tamil Nadu as he highlights the statement of Karuppan, a leader of the 'Redemption of Panchama Land' and a former civil servant, that approximately 250,000 acres of Panchami land are appropriated by upper castes illegally in Tamil Nadu and retrieval of data on Panchama Lands is a tedious task as the documents are not available (56). Thus, the attainment of land ownership has been an endless struggle for Dalits, whose attempts are constantly shattered by the scheming of upper caste people and bureaucrats as several effective measures and development policies taken by the government fail, which proves that the caste system and bureaucracy are allied together.

Socio-Political Implications of the Study

This study alters the dominant perspective persists in mainstream society that caste is eroded

in the digital and economic progression of Indian society by divulging the tangibility of the caste system in villages which often results in caste atrocities and detrimental violence against Dalits. The findings of the study illuminate the practicality that the caste system has long been a persistent social stigma that impedes Dalits from acquiring social influence and economic power in rural areas, as it shapes social consciousness, manifesting not only in large-scale events such as communal violence and massacres but also in everyday behaviours and interactions, as vividly depicted in the novel *Seasons of the Palm*. The study also implies that Dalits are not only marginalised in social space by tyrannies of caste system but also economically excluded by feudalism as the major obstacle for Dalits' empowerment, liberty, and rights in village is the accumulation of land to the upper and intermediate caste people. In addition, the study enunciates the psychological and social conditioning of the caste system which influences mutual reciprocity between the oppressor and oppressed, such as obeying and commanding each other according to ordained social rule by inculcating caste consciousness. Moreover, the study imparts the mechanism of capitalism and the superimposition of power on land by discerning the fact that Dalits' labour is swindled by upper caste landlords to strengthen their economy, while Dalits are alienated from the rights and ownership of land in the village. The study also makes a sceptical stance on political and social reformers for not carrying out the anti-feudalist movement along with the anti-caste revolution, who discard the essential strategy of decentralising the lands to diminish the disparity between Dalits and non-Dalits. Furthermore, the discussion and findings of the respective study expose the stagnant rigidity of the caste system in Indian villages, as it alarms the government to pay special attention to preventing Dalits from subjugation and developing their economy by decentralising agricultural farms. In addition, the discussed history and political activities of restoration of Panchama land substantiate the practical complications prevailing in society, such as inadequate data, apathetic attitude of bureaucracy, subterfuge of upper castes, and disunity among Dalit political movements. In addition, the study induces future researchers to analyse Dalit literary works corresponding to social and political contexts by

unveiling the inherent layers of the caste and feudal system in India. Finally, the respective study paves the way for government and social activists to take effective measures for identifying the Panchama land in order to distribute Dalits for their emancipation, and it also further implicates Dalit literary writers and political activists to make an awareness in their works that the reclamation of land is not only an economic right but also a redemption of their social justice by following the ideals of Ambedkar.

Conclusion

This research article has enquired about the impingement of the caste system in Indian society by investigating the novel *Seasons of the Palms*. It has clearly demonstrated the inextricable compliance between landlordism and the caste system in Indian society, where the monopoly of land reinforces the established social hierarchy detailed in the novel. The study has also expounded the double marginalisation of Dalits in villages where they are socially secluded as well as economically exploited, whose landless position conditions them to submit their own will to the caste system and upper caste landlords. Besides, the article has illustrated the operation of the caste system in society by incorporating the ideologies and observations of Ambedkar which are parallel to the portrayal of Dalits and definite subtleties of caste in the novel. The article also approached caste as a social consciousness and dominant ideology to exemplify its contamination in all spheres of society. It has provided a vivid discussion of the prevailing discrimination and hierarchal relationships between Dalits and upper castes which are stabilised not only by birth but also by socioeconomic conditions where land is the determiner of one's economy in society, especially in villages. The present study has also provided a sharp contrast between Western and Indian societies, as individuals are located in different classes by material production and occupation in the former, while material production and occupation are materialised by the caste system in the latter. This study has also contributed to creating awareness among Dalits regarding their landless condition by necessitating the consolidation of Dalits, poor peasants from intermediate castes, and economically weaker sections to form a unified class to agitate against

oppression and achieve social as well as economic democracy. Apart from that, the present study has highlighted the need for decentralising the land to extirpate the agony of Dalits and proletarians in India by insisting that activists and academicians constitute both anti-caste and anti-feudal movements simultaneously for bridging the social and economic gaps among different sections of society. Finally, the article has opened the gate for future researchers to approach Dalit literary works in relation to social and political aspects by incorporating the ideologies of Ambedkar.

Abbreviations

GVA: Gross Value Added, ISA: Ideological State Apparatuses, NCRB: National Crime Records Bureau, LSS: Lok Sangharsh Samiti.

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Author Contributions

Vasanth Devan: Research Design, Conceptualization, Draft Preparation, Prajeesh Tomy: Supervision, Review, Modification of paper both technically and thematically.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the study of this article.

Ethics Approval

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