

# The proposed study attempts to explore the struggles

[Philosophy](#)



The proposed study attempts to explore the struggles of Dalit-Bahujan students in Indian Universities, with specific study of Hyderabad Central University in the state of Telangana.

In recent years, Indian universities made headlines that sparked widespread debate over nationalism, cultural conflict, and discrimination of Dalits in the higher educational institution. However, the exclusion, discrimination, and inequality of opportunity for the Dalit(s) not new in Indian discourse. After a Dalit research scholar and student activist's 'Rohith Vemula' suicide in University of Hyderabad on January 17, 2016, it has changed its approach to viewing Dalit operation from a reformist perspective to a radical perspective.

This date has divided the Dalit assertion discourse into Post-Rohith Vemula terminology in Indian academia. Scholars have studied the Dalit assertion in various regions of India. Jefferlot (2003) termed as 'India's Silent Revolution'. The author argued that there is 'uneven emancipation among the lower caste in comparison of Southern and Northern India'. It was the ideological empowerment that created the uneven emancipation. In Southern India, there was much social reform movement took place that established the idea of emancipation among the Dalits and other lower castes. However, the youth in contemporary India especially Dalits in university campuses are very assertive about their own identity. The identity is not the caste but the category i.

e. Scheduled Caste or Dalit. In every university, there are groups that are formed on the collective identity, whether the universities conduct student elections or not. The identity formation is very crucial in order to form a

group for protest and collective mobilization to gain self-respect, status and honor Jefferlot (2003).

Gorringer (2005) studied the dimension of ' Identity, Space, and Power' in the context of Dalit struggle in Tamil Nadu. It has also explored the power relation on both social and political level. Dalits struggle for land and water have been studied in the similar way the equal opportunity and representation in the university campuses can be an emerging field of study in the context of identity, space, and power. The author also argues that ' the concept of ' meritocracy' has denied due recognition in the academic and employment achievements of the Dalit youth'. Thus, it becomes very important that how the Dalits are struggling with the denial and raising their voice against injustice in the university spaces. There is no doubt that ' Dalit movements are increasingly questioning their marginality and demanding equal rights and recognition as a citizen'. The author also notes that the ' Dalit movements are engaged in a negotiation of both their own identity and the limits and possibilities of civil society in India'. " It is only public space that specific movement and identities can encounter one another and negotiate with them'.

Zene (ed. 2013) in his scholarly attempt to understand the ' Political Philosophies of Antonio Gramsci and B. R. Ambedkar' has made a great contribution to the literature. The attempt to understand Indian Dalit assertion with the theoretical understanding of Gramsci in Indian context is not new there is a number of scholars who have attempted to see Indian society from Gramscian perspective Kaviraj (2010) Chatterjee (1986) and

Guha (1999) are some of the contributors to the understanding of the concept of 'hegemony' in Indian context. However, Zene made serious attempt to understand the Indian social realities with the philosophical lens of Ambedkar. Omvedt (2014) has studied the 'Dalit' revolution with the reference to Ambedkar's philosophy. The contribution of the author is that she has traced the trajectory of Dalit identity in the Southern part of India i. e. Nagpur, Hyderabad, Andhra, and Mysore region of British India. The formation of identity in the colonial period as 'Adi', 'Panchma', 'Adi-Hindu' to 'Adi-Dravidian' has been explained in a very systematic manner. That also explains how Ambedkar became an unchallenged leader of Indian Dalits. This scholarly work also provides us with the theoretical base to understand the assertion over the period of time since 1920 to contemporary times. To understand the formation of identity and to have a theoretical understanding of the Dalit Identity Ambedkar and Phule must be read together. Rege (2008) argues that Phule and Ambedkar ideas are reclaiming the public sphere.

Earlier the caste was considered as a sociological subject. The studies were limited with the perception that it is a subject to village or rural area rituals or jajmani relations based on cultural practices but over the period of time the literature has emerged and it has explored the urban pockets to understand the caste and social realities in India. In the Indian context, the research will attempt to make a theoretical understanding of the idea of 'Ambedkar' and 'Phule' who emphasized the importance of education.

Sukumar (2016) argues that Ambedkar's slogan to "educate, organize and agitate" is extremely relevant as it is an important means for marginalized

groups to overthrow their slavery. Ambedkar (1943) said that “ Higher education in India is the monopoly of Hindus and particularly of high Caste Hindus. By reason of Untouchability, the Untouchables are denied the opportunity for Education.

By reason of their poverty higher education necessary for higher posts in the public service- and higher posts in the public service are the only things that matter because they have a strategic value- is not within their reach”. After more than 75 years, the situation is still the same. There is still Brahmanical hegemony is existing in the education sector and this is being challenged by the students of Dalit community. When we use the term ‘ hegemony’ it needs to be understood with the reference of Gramsci. Although Gramsci has given his theory of ‘ cultural hegemony’ in the context of Italy at the same time the idea can help to understand the Indian context with an in-depth philosophical understanding of Ambedkar as Zene (2013) attempted and it needs to add the education and power relation in context of Phule’s writing.