



**‘Dalit Aesthetics’ through Poetic Rendering of Experience: A Study on
Bengali Dalit Poetry**

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Abstract

Dalit literature is the articulation of protest and anger against the injustice and social exclusion the Dalits are subjected to in the caste-ridden, hierarchical society of India. The Dalit authors and critics argue that it is this protest and anger, a new literary strategy which can build the aesthetics of Dalit literature. Dalit literature, however, is yet to form a conceptual standard on which the Dalits can represent and universalise their experience of pain. Many Dalit poets have attempted to build a distinctive aesthetics through poetry. But poetry essentially related to emotion seems inadequate to build a conceptual framework which is essentially an intellectual phenomenon. Though Dalit writers resist the Sanskritised aesthetics of mainstream literature by using their own language, registers and idioms, they nonetheless partake of the mainstream aesthetics when they articulate themselves in poetry. Gopal Guru (2012) claims, “Poetry helps the Dalit in making connections through metaphors but not through concepts.” (p. 23) My paper, however, will argue that as Dalit experience is at the centre of a distinct Dalit aesthetics, Dalit poetry based on rich experience can contribute to build a new aesthetics for Dalit literature. My paper will refer to a number of Bengali Dalit poets whose poetry can serve to build a separate aesthetics through poetic rendering of their distinct Dalit experience, conforming at the same time to many principles of mainstream aesthetics.

Keywords- Dalit, Aesthetics, Experience, Bangla, Poetry.