Dalit Feminism: A Weapon Against the Two–Edged Sword of Caste and Patriarchy: Dr. Ambedkar's Enduring Legacy

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ABSTRACT:

This article explores the foundational role of Dalit feminism as a radical, intersectional response to the two–edged sword of caste and patriarchy, grounded in the enduring legacy of Dr B. R. Ambedkar. Tracing both historical context and contemporary manifestations, it examines how Dalit women's oppression is structured by a fusion of caste, gender, and class–based hierarchies. It engages deeply with Ambedkar's feminist praxis—his advocacy for women's education, his challenge to caste–coded embodiment during the Mahad Satyagraha, his critique of Brahmanical patriarchy in The Rise and Fall of Hindu Women, and his transformative vision for self–liberation through Buddhism.

The article then shifts focus to present–day Dalit women's activism, showcasing their leadership in anti–caste and feminist movements, both through grassroots organising and global advocacy platforms. It argues that Dalit feminism is not just a theoretical framework, but a living, breathing resistance led by women who continue to challenge systemic violence while reimagining justice itself. In doing so, the article contributes to a growing body of work that centres Dalit women not as marginal subjects, but as central architects of India's most vital social transformations.

KEYWORDS:

Dalit Feminism, Ambedkarite Thought, Caste and Patriarchy, Intersectionality, Dalit Women's Leadership, Buddhism and Emancipation.

"I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved."

–Dr B. R. Ambedkar

Dalit feminism is the battle cry of those who have long been silenced by both caste and patriarchy—a fierce, unyielding resistance against the two-edged sword that cuts from both directions: first through caste-based degradation, and then through patriarchal subjugation. This dual oppression has kept Dalit women at the very bottom of Indian society for centuries. Yet resistance is not new. This war has been waged across generations, fought with tools forged through struggle—education, Ambedkarite philosophy, political organising, and most powerfully, feminism. Dalit feminism does not mirror mainstream feminist thought; it arises from the lived realities of those who exist at the intersection of multiple marginalisations. It does not simply call for gender justice—it calls for the dismantling of the very structures that bind caste and patriarchy together. It recognises that Brahmanical patriarchy uses religion, family, and tradition to hold Dalit women in perpetual subjugation. Feminism, then, is not just a call for equality—it becomes a weapon for the annihilation of caste itself. Dr B. R. Ambedkar, throughout his life, recognised this intersection and urged Dalit women to rise—not merely as victims, but as architects of their own liberation.

The subjugation of women in India has long been woven into the social fabric, legitimised by scripture and enforced by custom. Ancient texts such as the Manusmriti entrenched women within rigid hierarchies of caste and gender, while exploitative institutions like the Devadasi system normalised the sexual exploitation of lower-caste women. Patriarchy in India has always been caste-inflected. While upper-caste women were locked within frameworks of honour, purity, and obedience, Dalit women were denied even these restrictive protections—subjected instead to objectification, violence, and disposability, both within and outside their own communities. The colonial state failed to disrupt these hierarchies; on the contrary, it empowered the Brahmanical elite while disregarding Dalit concerns. Reformist and nationalist movements spoke of women's rights, yet rarely acknowledged the specific struggles of Dalit women. As a result, Dalit women were doubly excluded—first by caste, then by gender—and rendered almost entirely invisible in the discourse of liberation.

Today, although the landscape has changed, the war has simply shifted terrain. Legal safeguards, constitutional protections, and affirmative action policies have certainly expanded opportunities for Dalit women, but oppression has become increasingly insidious. It is now embedded within bureaucracies, hidden behind institutional neglect, and masked by token gestures of inclusion. Caste-based violence endures, albeit under new disguises: selective silence, denial of leadership, and the erasure of voices in progressive spaces. Dalit women continue to be under-represented, underpaid, and undervalued—trapped within a matrix of caste, gender, and class. From landlessness and manual scavenging to sexual violence and online abuse, the methods of domination have grown more sophisticated, more nuanced, and no less brutal. This article seeks to examine that ongoing struggle—charting how Dalit women resist, reimagine, and reclaim their place in the world, armed with the legacy of Ambedkar and the indomitable will to rise.

Locating the Voice: Why This Article Matters

This article arises from the urgent need to centre the voices of Dalit women within both feminist and anti-caste discourses—voices that have too often been spoken for, overlooked, or entirely silenced. It takes Dalit feminism not as an adjunct to mainstream theory, but as a powerful framework in its own right: one that challenges the very foundations of Brahmanical patriarchy and casteist hegemony. The approach is rooted in intersectional analysis and guided by the radical thought of Dr B. R. Ambedkar, who insisted on seeing caste and gender not as isolated categories but as mutually reinforcing systems of oppression. Rather than separating gender from caste, or theory from practice, this article weaves the two together—examining how Dalit women have resisted structural violence, reclaimed agency, and reframed what liberation looks like.

This intervention matters because the exclusion of Dalit women from mainstream conversations—whether in academia, policy, or activism—is not accidental. It is structural. Even within feminist movements, their narratives are often treated as secondary, their labour invisibilised, and their leadership resisted. Similarly, anti-caste discourse has tended to focus disproportionately on male Dalit subjectivities, sidelining how caste violence is gendered. This article attempts to make space where space has long been denied—to shift the lens, and in doing so, shift the questions we ask. In a time where caste and patriarchy manifest in increasingly subtle,

insidious ways—from digital gatekeeping to workplace tokenism—reclaiming the voice of the Dalit woman becomes not just important, but imperative.

That said, this article is not without its limitations. It does not present new ethnographic data, nor does it claim to represent the full range of Dalit women's experiences across India's complex social and regional terrains. What it offers is a critical synthesis—drawing from existing literature, political thought, and recent events—to highlight patterns, contradictions, and gaps. It is a contribution to an ongoing conversation, not a conclusive statement. Its intent is not to speak for, but to amplify and provoke further dialogue. In doing so, it seeks to address a notable research gap: the continued invisibility of Dalit women within both feminist and caste-critical scholarship. By insisting that caste and patriarchy cannot be analysed in isolation, and that resistance must be mapped at their intersection, this article hopes to disrupt both academic inertia and activist amnesia.

Key Contributions to Dalit Feminist Discourse: A Brief Literature Review

To speak of Dalit feminism is to draw from a long lineage of intellectual, political, and literary works that have excavated the complex realities of caste and gender from within lived experience. The scholarship in this direction is vast, diverse, and continues to evolve. What follows is not an exhaustive survey but a focused reflection on a selection of key texts—academic and literary—that have meaningfully shaped our understanding of Dalit women's lives, their oppression, and their resistance. These works vary in form and approach, but each has contributed uniquely to the ongoing task of locating the Dalit woman as a subject of history and agent of change.

At the core of this intellectual tradition is the iconic We Also Made History: Women in the Ambedkarite Movement by Meenakshi Moon and Urmila Pawar. This pathbreaking work reclaims the central role played by Dalit women in the Ambedkarite movement, challenging both the invisibilisation of women in political historiography and the narrow confines of mainstream feminism. Through oral histories and movement accounts, it situates Dalit women as both participants in and chroniclers of a revolutionary tradition. Equally influential is Dalit Women: Vanguard

of an Alternative Politics in India by Karin Kapadia and S. Anandhi, which theorises Dalit women's politics as fundamentally disruptive of dominant political narratives. It foregrounds agency, not just oppression, presenting Dalit women as creators of new political languages and practices.

No review would be complete without acknowledging Dr B. R. Ambedkar's own writings, particularly Castes in India and Against the Madness of Manu. The former laid the foundation for understanding caste as a structural and reproductive system, while the latter, a fierce critique of Brahmanical patriarchy, continues to serve as a radical framework for understanding how gender oppression is caste-inflected. These ideas are further expanded in the compilation B.R. Ambedkar and Social Transformation: Revisiting the Philosophy and Reclaiming Social Justice, which revisits Ambedkar's philosophy in the context of contemporary social justice movements. In the same vein, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Contribution to Women Empowerment by Dr Sunil Baliram Gaikwad offers an important thematic synthesis of Ambedkar's interventions on gender, caste, and education—reminding us of his pioneering role in drafting gender-sensitive legal frameworks and calling for women's political participation.

The theoretical scaffolding of Dalit feminism is further enriched by Gender and Caste by Anupama Rao, a deeply influential work that unpacks how caste and gender are mutually constitutive, rather than parallel systems of power. Uma Chakravarti's Conceptualising Brahmanical Patriarchy in Early India adds vital historical depth to this discussion, tracing how patriarchy in India has always been caste-coded and legitimised through scriptural authority. Pratima Pardeshi's article Ambedkar's Critique of Patriarchy, within the volume Classical Buddhism, Neo-Buddhism and the Question of Caste, engages directly with Ambedkar's writings to show how his vision of Buddhism was also a vision for gender emancipation.

In terms of narrative and testimonial literature, The Prisons We Broke by Baby Kamble and Writing Caste/Writing Gender by Sharmila Rege stand out for their bold reconfiguration of autobiographical writing. Kamble's voice is raw, political, and unapologetic, disrupting the respectability politics of upper-caste womanhood. Rege's anthology and analysis of Dalit women's testimonies lays bare how the genre of

autobiography can itself be a site of caste struggle and resistance. Spotted Goddesses by Roja Singh similarly documents Dalit women's agency in the face of caste and gender violence, using ethnographic and narrative methods to centre lived experience as theory.

Gail Omvedt's Reinventing Revolution and The Legacy of Dr Ambedkar by D. C. Ahir provide broader sociopolitical contexts for understanding Dalit women's activism. Omvedt's work places Dalit feminism within the spectrum of new social movements, while Ahir's volume historicises Ambedkar's broader contribution to marginalised communities, including women. Dalit Feminist Theory: A Reader, edited by Aakash Singh Rathore and Sunaina Arya, is one of the more recent interventions, collating foundational and emerging scholarship in a way that foregrounds internal diversity within Dalit feminist thought and calls for decolonising both feminism and caste discourse.

Together, these works represent a small but powerful fraction of the rich intellectual and activist traditions surrounding Dalit women's lives. They highlight the necessity of centring caste in feminist analysis and demonstrate that Dalit feminism is not a peripheral discourse but a transformative one. This article builds on that foundation—not to restate what has been said, but to extend the conversation to the shifting contemporary landscape, where oppression adapts and resistance evolves in response. By acknowledging the groundwork laid by these scholars and writers, this article positions itself within a growing collective that insists: the Dalit woman is not merely a subject of study—she is a maker of history.

The Double-Edged Sword of Caste and Patriarchy

To be a Dalit woman in India is to live under the weight of a system designed to devalue, exploit, and erase. Caste and patriarchy do not operate in isolation—they are conjoined blades of the same oppressive weapon. If caste marks the body as pollutable and expendable, patriarchy marks it as subordinate and violable. Together, they constitute a double-edged sword, slicing into Dalit women's lives from both ends. Yet this is no mere metaphor—it is a lived, structural reality that permeates every domain of life: social, political, religious, and economic. When class is added to the equation, the blade becomes even sharper. Poverty and economic marginalisation are not incidental but are direct consequences

of these systems working in tandem, creating a triple burden that Dalit women must invisibly bear.

This interlocking oppression is not simply about overlapping disadvantages; it is an integrated mechanism of subjugation that defines who is allowed safety, leadership, and agency. Dalit women face violence and exploitation from both upper-caste aggressors and the patriarchal norms that circulate within their own communities. Whether it is through overt sexual and physical violence, or through subtler forms of economic and social exclusion, the wounds inflicted by this double-edged sword are deep and systemic. Ultimately, the resistance of Dalit women—manifested in social movements, legal battles, and community organising—is a direct challenge to both caste hierarchies and patriarchal norms.

Caste as a Gendered System

At its core, caste is much more than a stratification of birth or socioeconomic status; it is a gendered system designed to regulate every aspect of social interaction, and in doing so, to enforce specific roles and restrictions on women. Brahmanical patriarchy is sustained by a set of ideals that demand purity and control. Upper-caste women are expected to embody honour and virtue, yet for Dalit women, caste operates differently: it renders them hyper-visible, available, and vulnerable. Historical texts such as the Manusmriti not only codify caste hierarchies but also prescribe distinct and unequal gender roles that are enforced through social stigma and violence.

In this context, the gendering of caste is not merely incidental but systematic. It controls who is permitted to interact, speak out, or possess power. Dalit women, consequently, are caught in a nexus where their gender directly intersects with their caste status, transforming social and sexual control into tools of subjugation. This gendered construction of caste ensures that the very logic of Brahmanical authority is maintained: a logic that prizes upper-caste purity while designating Dalit women as inherently 'other'—objects to be controlled, regulated, and punished. With the additional burden of class-based exploitation, caste as a gendered system reveals itself as a comprehensive matrix of oppression, where economic subjugation is part and parcel of the cultural and social mechanisms that keep Dalit women in perpetual disadvantage.

Understanding this interwoven structure of caste and gender is not

an academic indulgence; it is a political necessity. It allows us to recognise that Dalit women's struggle is not simply about fighting gender discrimination, nor is it solely a campaign against caste hierarchies—it is the fight to dismantle an entire system of dehumanisation that operates on multiple levels. By highlighting caste as a gendered system, we are also affirming the unique challenges faced by Dalit women and underlining the urgency of developing a politics of liberation that addresses all axes of their oppression.

More Than Inclusion: Dalit Women and the Foundations of Ambedkar's Social Justice Framework

Dr B. R. Ambedkar's contribution to the empowerment of women—particularly Dalit women—remains both radical and enduring, not only for its visionary content but also for the structural clarity with which it was articulated. In an era when women's issues were often side-lined or diluted within larger nationalist or social reform agendas, Ambedkar recognised that the struggle against caste could not be separated from the struggle against patriarchy. He did not treat gender as a secondary concern, nor did he invoke women's issues solely as moral or emotional appeals. For him, gender justice was a non-negotiable pillar of his broader vision of social justice.

Ambedkar understood that Dalit women occupied a unique and painful position within the social hierarchy—triply marginalised by caste, gender, and class. His feminism was not an abstract ideal, but a deliberate and material politics aimed at dismantling systems that operated in unison to dehumanise. He argued that without the liberation of Dalit women, neither caste annihilation nor social democracy could be realised in any true sense. His speeches and writings consistently reflect this understanding, wherein Dalit women are not passive recipients of reform, but central agents of revolutionary change.

What sets Ambedkar apart is his commitment to building spaces—legal, educational, social, and symbolic—where Dalit women could rise not just in status, but in consciousness, leadership, and self-definition. He did not advocate for the mere presence of women in the struggle; he demanded that they occupy its frontlines. In public meetings, he addressed women directly, challenging them to unlearn the roles that tradition had imposed upon them, to educate themselves, to lead movements, and to be

unapologetically assertive in their demands.

By positioning Dalit women as integral to the architecture of liberation, Ambedkar laid the groundwork for a distinctively intersectional feminist framework—long before the language of intersectionality had entered academic or activist discourse. His vision was not one of token inclusion or symbolic representation, but of transformative justice—where the most oppressed are not merely uplifted, but empowered to lead the reshaping of society itself.

Ambedkar's Multi-Dimensional Feminist Praxis: Education, Embodiment, and Emancipation for Dalit Women

Dr B. R. Ambedkar's feminist vision was not a separate strand within his social philosophy—it was a deeply integrated, multi-dimensional praxis aimed at transforming the lives of Dalit women across intellectual, cultural, political, and material spheres. He saw the condition of Dalit women not as an incidental outcome of caste society, but as its most violent manifestation. His interventions were therefore not symbolic or isolated gestures—they were carefully structured acts meant to restore dignity, agency, and visibility to those long erased from the landscape of both caste and gender justice.

Education was the cornerstone of this transformative agenda. Ambedkar regarded education not merely as a ladder of social mobility but as a weapon of resistance. He believed that for Dalit women—excluded for centuries from knowledge systems—education was the path to self-respect and societal participation. His call for the "cultivation of the mind" was, for Dalit women, an urgent political directive to break through the intellectual and psychological ceilings imposed by Brahmanical patriarchy. As early as the 1920s, Ambedkar was actively advocating for women's access to schooling and higher education. His efforts bore constitutional fruit decades later, as he ensured legal and institutional protections for gender and caste equity within the framework of independent India.

Yet Ambedkar's vision of emancipation went far beyond formal education. He understood that embodiment—the way Dalit women inhabited their bodies, how they were seen, clothed, treated, and restricted—was another critical site of casteist and patriarchal control. This was made starkly visible during the Mahad Satyagraha of 1927, a pivotal movement asserting the right of Dalits to access public water. On the day before the

actual protest, Ambedkar addressed a gathering of Dalit women at a specially held conference. There, he urged them to abandon the caste-prescribed modes of dress—specifically, the practice of wearing the sari above the knee, which had long been enforced to visibly mark their 'untouchable' status. Instead, he encouraged them to drape the sari in the manner of upper-caste women, as a rejection of humiliation and a reclamation of dignity. This reconfiguration of dress, assisted by liberal Brahmin women who participated in the event, was not a matter of aesthetics—it was a symbolic, embodied assertion of equality. Through this act, Ambedkar called for the erasure of caste-coded bodily markers and for the assertion of the Dalit woman as a full and dignified citizen.

In his powerful 1951 speech, "The Rise and Fall of Hindu Women," Ambedkar expanded the struggle for dignity into the terrain of historiography. He challenged dominant narratives that positioned patriarchy as timeless or natural, arguing instead that gender inequality was a historically constructed outcome of Brahmanical revivalism. According to Ambedkar, under early Buddhist influence, women had enjoyed relative autonomy—access to education, spiritual life, and community leadership. It was with the reassertion of Brahmanism, codified in texts like the Manusmriti, that women's status deteriorated. His feminist historical lens exposed how religion and law had colluded to reduce women—especially Dalit women—to instruments of social reproduction and caste control. This critique was not academic alone; it was a call to reject the cultural foundations of caste patriarchy and to imagine new historical trajectories grounded in equality and justice.

Central to all these interventions—intellectual, embodied, historical—was Ambedkar's insistence on self-emancipation. He never saw Dalit women as mere dependents in the fight for justice. Rather, he viewed them as critical agents of change, capable of reshaping the very structures that oppressed them. At various women's conferences, including the All India Depressed Classes Women's Conference in Nagpur in 1942, he urged women to educate themselves, carry themselves with dignity, challenge patriarchal norms, and assume leadership within the broader anti-caste movement. Though many words spoken at these conferences are paraphrased in secondary texts, Ambedkar's stance is consistently clear: Dalit women must not wait for salvation from men or institutions—they must be the authors of their own liberation.

Ambedkar's feminist praxis, therefore, did not isolate education, dress, history, or political voice as separate issues. He saw them as interconnected fronts in the same war for dignity. His vision for Dalit women was neither limited to access nor assimilation—it was about transformation. A transformation of consciousness, of space, of embodiment, and of the historical narrative itself. It is this comprehensive approach that places Ambedkar not only as an anti-caste icon but as one of the most radical feminist thinkers of modern India—whose legacy still resonates in every fight waged by Dalit women today.

From Margins to Movements: Dalit Women's Political Emergence

Dr B. R. Ambedkar's call for Dalit women to become the agents of their own emancipation has matured into a powerful political reality. No longer confined to the margins of social reform or political discourse, Dalit women today are leading movements, forming collectives, shaping legislation, and rewriting public narratives. This emergence is not spontaneous—it is the result of decades of Ambedkarite influence encouraging self-respect, self-education, and community organisation.

Dalit women have historically participated in anti-caste struggles, from the temple entry movements to land rights campaigns. But in recent decades, their visibility has grown with the institutionalisation of their activism through organisations such as the National Federation of Dalit Women (NFDW), the All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM), and the Dalit Mahila Federation (DMF). These platforms provide a political and organisational base for Dalit women to campaign not just on caste and gender, but on issues like labour rights, health care, access to justice, and electoral participation.

Through these movements, Dalit women are shifting from being seen as "beneficiaries" of reform to being architects of change—challenging not only Savarna patriarchy but also the male-dominated narratives within Dalit and Left movements. Their leadership marks the rise of a new political subject: the Dalit feminist organiser, rooted in Ambedkarite ethics and driven by the lived realities of triple oppression.

The Contemporary Landscape of Dalit Feminist Resistance: New Voices, Old Struggles

The core issues facing Dalit women—sexual violence, economic marginalisation, institutional neglect—remain as urgent as ever, but the

strategies and platforms have evolved. widely reported sexual violence case in 2020, where a young Dalit woman was brutally assaulted and cremated without her family's consent, was not only a human rights crisis but a grim reminder of the caste–gender nexus that still governs Indian society. What was different this time was the widespread, visible resistance led by Dalit women's collectives, student groups, and online activists who refused to let the story fade into silence.

Dalit feminist resistance today spans both grassroots mobilisation and digital advocacy. It is vocal, visual, and intersectional. Writers and thinkers such as Thenmozhi Soundararajan, Sujatha Gidla, K. Kiruba Munusamy, and Asha Kowtal have become prominent public intellectuals, bringing caste into conversations about feminism, tech, labour, and global justice. They remind us that while the struggle is rooted in old injustices, the voices leading it are reshaping the terrain.

Importantly, this contemporary wave does not seek validation from mainstream feminism. It critiques its savarna silences, its academic elitism, and its reluctance to acknowledge caste as central to the question of womanhood in India. Dalit feminism today demands to be heard on its own terms, in its own languages, shaped by its own epistemologies. It is not seeking access—it is claiming space.

The Sangha of the Marginalised: Dalit Women and Spiritual Liberation

For many Dalit women, emancipation has not only been a political act but a spiritual reclamation. Dr Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism in 1956 was not just a personal turning point—it was a collective rebirth for the Dalit community. By embracing Buddhism, Ambedkar offered an alternative cosmology: a moral universe where dignity, equality, and rationality replaced karma, pollution, and hierarchy.

This spiritual path, known as Navayana Buddhism, offered Dalit women a framework in which they were not "untouchable," but inherently equal beings, free from the stigma of caste and the gendered violence of Brahmanical patriarchy. Unlike orthodox Hinduism, which had historically excluded them from temples, scriptures, and rituals, Buddhism placed no barriers between the individual and the divine. It presented a sacred space for self-worth—one that rejected inherited sin and affirmed agency.

Even today, conversion to Buddhism remains a radical act for

many Dalit women. It is a rejection of not just a religion, but an entire social order. The image of Ambedkar seated beside the Buddha in thousands of Dalit homes across India is not merely devotional—it is political. It represents a sangha of the marginalised, where resistance is spiritual and healing is collective. In this way, Buddhism continues to serve as a deeply empowering tool for Dalit women to reimagine identity, community, and liberation beyond the trauma of caste.

Towards Inclusive Justice: Policy, Praxis, and the Dalit Feminist Future

To realise the full promise of Ambedkarite feminism, the struggle must move from the margins to the centre of public policy, institutional reform, and collective imagination. Dalit women's realities are shaped not only by social attitudes but also by structural exclusions built into law, governance, media, and academia. Addressing this requires more than representation—it demands redistribution of power.

There is an urgent need for:

- Stronger legal safeguards against caste- and gender-based violence, implemented with accountability and sensitivity.
- Affirmative action not just in numbers but in meaningful participation across education, employment, politics, and culture.
- Funding and support for Dalit feminist research, leadership development, and local women's organisations.
- International solidarity, linking Dalit women's movements to global struggles against racism, colonialism, and patriarchy.

Inclusive justice, as imagined by Dalit feminists, is not about assimilation into broken systems. It is about transforming those systems from the ground up—starting with those who have been most excluded. It is about recognising that the fight for gender justice in India can no longer afford to ignore caste, and that the fight against caste is incomplete without centring the voices and experiences of Dalit women.

This is the political and moral horizon that Ambedkar laid out. And it is Dalit women—organising, writing, resisting, and dreaming—who are carrying that vision forward into the future.

Conclusion: Not the End, But the Beginning

Dr B. R. Ambedkar did not envision freedom as a gift to be handed

down to the oppressed. He saw it as something forged through consciousness, struggle, and radical imagination—especially by those most violently excluded from the promises of democracy and dignity. For Ambedkar, Dalit women were not merely victims of caste and patriarchy; they were potential revolutionaries—capable of leading movements that could transform not only their own lives but the very foundations of Indian society.

Today, that vision lives on in the voices and leadership of Dalit women who are organising, theorising, resisting, and rebuilding with fierce determination. They are not waiting to be included—they are reshaping the very meaning of justice. Their politics is grounded in lived experience and guided by the principles of Ambedkarite feminism: dignity, education, equality, and spiritual self-determination. These are not abstract ideals, but urgent tools for survival, healing, and transformation.

As this article has argued, Dalit feminism is not a supplement to Ambedkarite politics—it is its most vital and transformative expression. To honour Ambedkar's legacy is not merely to recall his words or commemorate his life, but to join the struggles that continue in his name. It is to listen to Dalit women, learn from them, and act beside them—not later, not eventually, but now. Because this is not the end, but the beginning—of a politics that centres the margins, and of a future still being written by those who refuse to be erased.

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