
Empowering the Roles and Skills of Dalits: Exploring Gogu Shyamala's *Father May Be an Elephant and Mother Only a Small Basket, But...*

Dr. Malavi Jeripotula, Asst. Professor, Dept. of English, Palamuru University, Mahabubnagar, TS

Paper Received on 26-11-2023, Accepted on 29-12-2023, Published on 31-12-23

DOI:10.36993/RJOE.2023.8.4.314

Abstract

Dalits in spite of being the 'untouchables' - *asprushya*, 'unheard' - *avaachyav* and 'invisible' - *adrushya* are an integral part of Indian System. They had definite roles to play in their respective villages, and used to make handmade shoes and other leather products related to agriculture. Scavenging, cleaning the villages, making public announcements with the traditional drum 'Dappu', attending the deaths of animals and social animals was their routine. Working in the fields and houses of landlords as bonded labour in exchange of meagre grain was another obligation. Performing the skills and fine arts during traditional rituals and special occasions helped them to evolve as artisans and soothsayers, upholding the traditions of oral literary folk forms. This paper studies the self-assured roles and skills of dalits in the villages by analysing the anthology of short stories, *Father may be an elephant and mother only a small basket but...* by Gogu Shamala.

Key words: Dalits, Dalit Literature, Woman Writings, Roles and Skill of Dalits, and Social Identity.

The term "Dalit" refers to the lower strata of people in the Indian Subcontinent and is relatively young, being just about one and half centuries old. However, it has generated numerous debates regarding its usage in modern times. Linguistically, the term "Dalit" has roots in both Indian and Hebrew languages. Etymologically, it is derived from the Sanskrit root word "dal," which signifies being cracked, broken, downtrodden, scattered, destroyed, oppressed and subjugated. The word Dalit was used to address the untouchables or outcastes, as depicted in Vedic Literature, where they were referred as Desas, Dasyas, Asuras, Antyajas, Avarnas, Nisadas, Mlechas, Chandalas and Panchamas. These names echo a derogatory perception of Dalits as unholy, untouchable, enemies and outcastes, representing the pejorative attitude of the upper castes towards them.

The term "outcaste" refers to people who were not included in the graded fourfold caste structure of Indian society known as Chaturvarna. As James Massey aptly stated, that there is a lack of substantial material, but certain archaeological and literary sources suggest possible historical roots of Dalits. These sources indicate that Dalits' origins go far back in history, similar

to the genesis of other human beings on earth. The British used the term "depressed classes" to refer these downtrodden people, but Gandhi, a national figure, was not comfortable using the term 'depressed classes' (Ramanathan par. 5). Mahatma Gandhi referred Dalits as Harijans, 'Hari' means 'God' and 'jans' means 'people'. Thus, the term Harijans implied that Dalits are the 'people of God'. The term 'Harijans' failed to instil a positive attitude in Dalits, as it implied that they were the children born to Devadasis. Devadasi is a woman from outcaste community, offered to God as a wife and exploited by upper-caste men with social and religious approval, and the dalits refused to accept these labels.

Dalits are officially referred as "Scheduled Castes" by the Government of India under the Presidential Order of 1950. According to James Massey, a Dalit Social History Scholar, the term "Dalit" was traced back in 19th century and was first used by Mahatma Jotirao Phule, a Marathi social reformer and revolutionary, to designate the outcastes and untouchables as the exploited, broken and victims of Indian caste-based society. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar used the words, "Scheduled Castes", "Untouchables" and "Downtrodden" to refer the outcaste people in his *Speeches and Writings*. Dalit Panther Movement in Maharashtra was founded with the influence of Black Panther Movement, Afro-America, and the Mahars used this term assertively for political momentum in 1970s. Historian, Women Studies expert and academician, Shailaja Paik observes that the term "Dalit" is mostly used by members of the Mahar community, while other communities prefer to use their own caste names.

The Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment requested all ministries, departments, states, and union territories not to use the terms "Dalit" and "Harijan" when referring to members of the Scheduled Caste Communities, as per the order of Justices RK Agrawal and Ashok Bhushan bench in 2018. Instead, they suggested to "Scheduled Caste" in official communications (SC Rejects Plea par 6). Therefore, the term "Dalit" is not just a title but the identity of community that asserts their rights, dignity, and self-worth. It's a reminder of social oppression, and reaffirms their identity, affirming dalits as people of the nation. According to K.S. Sharma's book *The Scheduled Castes, People of India, National Series Volume II*, there are 450 Dalit communities out of 751. As per the 1981 Census, Dalits constitute 15.75% of India's population. The official estimated number of Dalits in India is 170 million, excluding Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims. Dalits make up about 17% of the total Indian population, with 62.59% being illiterate, and approximately 50% living below the poverty line in both rural and urban areas. According to the 1991 Census Data, the Dalit women constitute 16.3% of the total female population in India. The number of Scheduled Castes (SCs) in India increased by 35 million by 2011, resulting in a total of 201.4 million Hindu, Sikh, and Buddhist Dalits in the country. As per the 2011 census, Scheduled Castes comprise about 16.6% of India's population.

Dalit Manifesto published in 1995 defines Dalit Literature as written literature of Dalits, and written with Dalit consciousness could only be considered as Dalit literature (Kumar 9).

Surprisingly, few dalit poets contributed during medieval period and paved 'written literature' in Indian Sub Continent. Madara Chennaiah of 11th century was a Kannada vachana poet, saint and cobbler by profession, known as first poet of dalit community. Dohara Kakkayya of 12th century, Leather Tanner by profession, contributed good number of Vachanas. Both these poets had written under the influence of Lingayatism. It was a social reformation movement started in Northern Karnataka and the surrounding districts of South India, rejecting all forms of social discrimination, including the caste system and pressure of Vedas and Puranas during 11&12th centuries. Chokhamela, saint and poet lived in 14th century from Mahar caste, contributed three hundred *Abhangs* to the Bhakti Movement. Shri Ravidas, a mystic poet and saint belonged to 15th century Chamar community, North India, was a contemporary to popular poet Kabirdas and guru of Saint Mirabai. *Guru Granth Sahib*, a holy religious scripture of Sikhism contains some of the Ravidas' hymns. The critiques say, "The bhakti radical Ravidas (c 1450-1520), called himself a 'tanner now set free', and was the first one to envision an Indian utopia in his song "Begumpura" a modern casteless, classless, tax-free city without sorrow. This was in contrast to the dystopia of the Brahmanic Kaliyuga" (Omvedt).

Some non-born dalit writers are traced to be sympathetic towards dalits in their writings from Telugu speaking regions of south India, during medieval period. Tallapaka Annamacharya, a Hindu Saint and Poet, dealt with morality, dharma and righteousness in his later Keerthanas and opposed the social stigma against the untouchables in 15th century. Yogi Vemana and Potuluri Veerabrahmam, both Shudra voices opposed the atrocities against dalits and further advocated equality among the castes in 16th century. The history of dalit literature in Telugu language has its roots in early twentieth century as many dalit movements gained mobility in early 19th century across India. Purusthotam remarks, apart from refusing to perform the traditional Hindu caste duties imposed on them, Dalits worked towards education and employment, leading to shift from the village to modern industrial and service employment (xiv). Gurram Jashuva is one of them and contributed for telugu dalit literature in early twentieth century. He is considered to be the father of Telugu dalit literature by many scholars. He was raised as a Christian by his parents and was educated and taught at Missionaries Institutions in pre- independent India. His most famous work *Gabbilam* published in 1942 reflects dalit consciousness. He depicts the agony of Cobbler. The protagonist of *Gabbilam* makes chappal for everyone being the cobbler, and gets nothing to eat in return. This starving untouchable chooses a bat to share his agony with Lord Shiva in the temple, as the Bat is considered to be a bad omen by Hindu religion, and he wants the Bat to be his messenger, then the dalits were not allowed to enter into the temples.

Telugu dalit literature has flourished in all genres such as songs, poetry, plays, essays and novels. Some of the popular figures of Telugu dalit literature, that include both male and female are Boyi Bhimanna, Chiluri Devaputra, Bhagya Reddy Varma, T.N. Sadalakshmi G. Kalyana Rao, Joopaka Subhadra, Vemula Yellaiah, Gogushayamala, Bangaru Sridevi, Jilukara Sinivas, Jajula Gowri, Pasunuri Ravinder, M.M Vinodini and the others. Telugu Dalit literature has an

authentic female voice. When the main stream feminism in India, focused on fair treatment of women at home, work place and at political domain during post-independence third phase. It focused much on privileged women and neglected the needs and representation of poorer or lower caste women. This criticism led to the formation of caste-specific feminist organisations and movements. As per the literature review, it is said that Telugu speaking states' (then undivided Andhra) feminist writers formed a social forum called Manalo Manam Rachayitru Vedula in late 20th century. It failed to accommodate the interests of dalit bahun women and sought for a separate association, and came out with *Mattipoolu* (SC, ST, BC and Minority) *Women Writers' Forum*, one of the strong voices. "There was a need for Dalit women writers to be different, thus in retrospect, it is clear that while the left party-based women's organisations collapsed caste into class, the autonomous women's groups collapsed caste into sisterhood both leaving Brahmanism unchallenged" (Rege 43). This gave rise to Telugu Dalit Women Writers; one of them is Gogu Shyamala, a prominent Telugu *dalit* woman writer. A huge range of literature is spurting out under the blanket term 'Dalit Literature' from all parts of India, both in English and Regional Languages, despite of the Supreme Court's judgement to exclude the word "Dalit". These authors are playing a crucial role in shaping and expanding the realm of Dalit Literature, offering unique insights into the experiences and aspirations of Dalit communities across India.

Gogu Shyamala was born in 1969 in Peddamul, Rangareddy district, Telangana state, and making significant contribution as a writer. She initially did not face discrimination, as her residence, a Madiga York (hamlet) was located away from the upper castes of her village and later realised the trauma of discrimination. She was the only child, obtained higher education in her family. Shyamala's actively protested against injustices, advocating for the quality of food and facilities in her hostel, this social activism laid the foundation for her future work as a writer and activist. Shyamala a senior fellow at Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies in Hyderabad identified herself as a "Dalit feminist". Her focus is on creating biographies of influential Dalit female political leaders, commemorating their achievements and struggles. Shyamala authored several books, including a biography of the dynamic Dalit political leader from Telangana, titled *Nene Balaanni: T.N. Sadalakshmi Bathuku Katha* (2011). She has written a book on gender consciousness in Dalit women's literature called *Gender Pratiphalaanaalu* (2005). In addition to her own writings, she has edited and co-edited three volumes of Dalit Telugu literature: *Nallapoddu: Dalithasthreeela Sahithyam*, *Nallaregatisallu: Maadiga, Maadiga Upakulala Adolla Kathalu*, and *The Oxford India Anthology of Telugu Dalit Writing*. Gogu Shyamala's journey as a writer and activist reflects her commitment in advocating the social change, and giving voice to marginalized communities, particularly Dalit women.

Shyamala addresses social issues, caste discrimination, and gender inequality, providing a unique perspective from her own lived experiences. Her writings have become added on value to the rich tapestry of Dalit Literature by bringing forth the voices and narratives of marginalized communities. The anthology of short stories titled *Father May Be an Elephant*

and Mother Only a Small Basket, But... sheds light on the experiences, struggles, and resilience to Dalit communities, particularly making lives of Dalit women as focal point through her stories. The first half of the anthology highlights the hardships endured by Dalits, including financial crises, low wages, bonded labor, discrimination, and oppression. A stark contrast can be observed between the first and second halves of the anthology, as Dalits transit from being marginalized to becoming central figures in their own narratives. Gogu Shyamala showcases the inherent arts and skills that Dalits have inherited from their community and mastered them in each story. These skills are integral to their identity and play a significant role in their lives. The anthology portrays various arts and skills practiced by Dalits, including *Dappu*, Chindu Bogotham (a traditional folk dance), leather tanning, handmade shoe making, farming, water supply management, active participation in village festivals and animal husbandry. Moreover, the stories highlight the deep connection between Dalits and the nature, emphasizing their role in maintaining ecological balance. The protagonists demonstrate their expertise in swimming, medicinal herbs and edible plants, showcasing their profound understanding of their world and elements of nature. Shyamala explores the stories of lineage, tradition, strength, solidarity, and the survival skills of the Dalit community through her narratives. These aspects are presented in an assertive manner, confronting the caste-based exploitation and the agonies experienced by Dalits in rural settings. The study of Dalit writings reveals the presence of two dominant voices: one that appeals to the conscience of society and the other that asserts the rights and dignity of the Dalit community. Shyamala's writings exhibit these two voices, as she navigates the exploration of Dalit experiences and aspirations.

"Father May Be an Elephant and Mother Only a Small Basket, But..." depicts the life of a Dalit woman who finds herself in a challenging situation when her husband was put in a jail on a false accusation. The woman had to take care of her children and her mother-in-law, working as an agricultural labourer with resilience and determination, protecting her family. The woman receives support from her mother-in-law, who goes to the houses of upper-caste and gets leftover rice for her children. The woman's elder son engages himself in cattle rearing. The story highlights the woman's resourcefulness and ability to protect her family despite the challenges that she faces, and exposes the vulnerability of the woman, when her husband beats her severely for not giving him money for the toddy. Gogu Shyamala portrays the harsh realities and hardships faced by Dalit women, emphasizing their strength and resilience while facing adversity.

"Trace it" exhibits how artistically dalits have been evolved in drum playing. This story talks about a sect of dalit community called 'drummers' who have become experts in tracing even the missing drum with its resonance. Usually, the dalit community must attend all the weddings and the funerals of the village as their prime duty, at least one member from each dalit family must attend. If it is drummers' family, they have to beat drums for all weddings and funerals for just in exchange of toddy for elders and small amount for children. Shyamala exposes the oppression and exploitation faced by Dalits, who are forced to fulfil these

obligations in the name of village traditions. The story demonstrates the unequal power dynamics at play. The Dalit community is expected to provide their services without receiving fair compensation or recognition for their artistic skills. Shyamala challenges the oppressive customs and traditions that perpetuate dalit's exploitation.

"Brave heart Badeyya" story narrates the tale of Badeyya, the first boy to attend school in spite of the discrimination. His teacher made him sit in on a cornered floor. Badeyya, the intelligent and industrious child used to help his parents and participated in the community cultivation by Dalit children near the drinking water well. The story portrays Badeyya's resourcefulness and his ability to learn from observing his parents. When his father had to dispose a dead animal in the village, Badeyya would make a bone cart out of the dead animal's skull and play with it. When Badeyya's mother lost her slippers and injured herself with thorns in the forest, Badeyya skilfully crafted a pair of leather slippers for his mother overnight. The proud mother exclaimed, "Look, my youngest son has made these new slippers for me. Look, he simply watches and learns! Look!"(36). Through this story, Shyamala highlights how Dalit children acquire various skills by simply observing and learning from their parents. Furthermore, the story emphasizes on the significance of education in the Dalit community, symbolizing the beginning of a new journey for the marginalized group. It suggests that education can serve as a catalyst for empowerment and upliftment of the Dalit community.

Gogu Shyamala portrays a sect within the Madiga community known as "Chindu, in "Jambava's Lineage" . This community has a rich heritage of an oral art form called *Chindu Bagotam*, which involves narrating ancestral and mythological stories (kula puranas) of every community within a village. The Chindu tradition is passed down orally from one generation to another within the sect. The Chindu community is generally nomadic, and Shyamala highlights the respect they earn from the *sabbanda* communities in the village. a head of one such community, comments in the story, "Because the stories they tell are our stories. They are our Chindu." (56). The Chindu performers present legends and stories that resonate with various communities in the village. They perform stories of shepherds like Mandayechhu and Beerappa, tales of the Mudiraju community such as the story of Pandavas, and narratives like Gangakalyanam, Pramilarjuneeyam, and Balanagamma for the fisher folk. These performances create a sense of connection and appreciation among different communities. The protagonist, Ellamma, a member of the Chindu community, had command over Chindu Bagotam ragas and challenges people with her singing talent. When she sings in the *bhupalaragam*, her veins would swell out, and the earth beneath her feet vibrates. Shyamala showcases the cultural richness, expertise of the community's oral folklore and artistic capabilities through Chindu Bagotam. However, the author also exposes the contempt and discrimination faced by the Chindu sect from upper-caste individuals. It endures the insults and humiliation and perseveres their family traditions and the lineage of Jambava that has been bestowed upon them.

"Tataki Wins Again," portrays the character of Bamma, a 12-year-old girl who comes from a hardworking Dalit family. Bamma's parents work tirelessly to provide for their children, and Bamma herself supports the family by watering their fields even before the sunrise. However, one of the upper-caste men in the village notices Bamma's abilities and attempts to demean her by plotting a sexual assault. Bamma shows incredible strength and courage in a powerful act of self-defense, she hits the man in his groin and manages to escape from the situation. The story showcases Bamma's physical prowess and fearlessness when she jumps into water and saves her pet, rabbit, while the boys who accompanied her were afraid to swim. The story challenges the notion of Dalits being passive victims and instead portrays them as strong individuals, capable of overcoming adversity.

"The Village Tank's Lament," personifies the village water body, giving it a voice to express its grievances. The water tank laments about the lack of care and attention it receives in modern times, particularly in terms of desiltation. It nostalgically recalls a time when all the laboring classes would come together every 5-10 years to desilt the tank, emphasizing the unity and collective effort of the community. The story highlights the role of the Madiga community, known as neeradollu, in efficiently maintaining the water levels of the tank during heavy rains. These interdependent laboring classes played a crucial role in protecting the entire village from potential flooding or water-related issues. However, in the present day, the water tank feels neglected and calls for help.

Through this personification, Shyamala showcases the close association of laboring classes with the village tank and the village ecosystem. The story draws attention to the bygone unity and shared responsibility of different communities in maintaining and preserving natural resources. By giving a voice to the village tank, Shyamala not only highlights the neglect faced by such vital water bodies but also raises awareness on the importance of community participation and unity in environmental conservation.

The story "Obstacle Race" about the struggles faced by first-generation Dalit boys in their pursuit of education. The protagonist, Adavi, initially felt discrimination as he and another boy from his community are made to sit on the floor in the classroom until the District Education Officer inspected their school. Later, Adavi was allowed to sit on a bench but the untouchability and caste-based discrimination was continued. Adavi experiences mixed feelings at school throughout the story. While he receives praise from his teachers for his academic abilities, his caste becomes a significant obstacle to gaining respect and happiness. The story highlights the humiliations that Dalit students, especially those from the first generation, often face in the education system. They lack access to basic amenities such as sitting benches, clean water, and proper food in a dignified manner. The narrative also exposes the prejudices and stereotypes held by some upper caste individuals. An elderly figure in the story expresses fear and discrimination towards Adavi, associating his caste with negativity,

including witchcraft. The comment reflects the deep-rooted biases and the resistance faced by Dalits in their pursuit of education and social mobility. By portraying Adavi's struggles and the discriminatory treatment, the author highlights the challenges that Dalit students encounter while pursuing education. The story aims to create awareness about the need for equal opportunities and a caste-free environment in educational institutions, emphasizing the importance of dismantling discrimination and creating inclusive spaces for all students.

"Raw Wound" writer shyamala strongly condemns the Jogini system prevalent in villages. Jogini refers to a girl who is married to a deity and can be sexually exploited by all the communities. The village head Patel, representing the upper caste, tries to persuade the girl's father, Balappa, to make his daughter a Jogini, using arguments of duty, tradition, and the supposed welfare of the village. They claim that the Jogini system is for the greater good of the community, cautioning the misfortune such as death, disease, drought, or famine to the village, if failed to follow the traditions. The family was banished from the village, losing their land, house, and everything they possessed. The story exposes the ruthless oppression faced by Dalit families who challenge the oppressive practices of the upper caste. The reference to Jangadu, an innocent man burned to death due to false accusation of practicing black magic, further underscores the brutality and injustice faced by marginalized communities. Shyamala highlights the unjust and exploitative nature of the jogini system and raises awareness and the need to abolish such practices. The story is a critique about the deeply entrenched caste-based discrimination and the struggle for dignity, freedom and equality of Dalit communities.

The story "Ellamma is Distressed" portrays the life of an assertive old Dalit woman named Ellamma. She successfully raised thirteen children, all of whom achieved prosperity and settled well in life. Ellamma, through her hard work, as a daily wage laborer, managed to purchase 20 acres of land using her own earnings.

Despite facing pressure from Andhra people who offered respect and tempting offers to buy their lands, Ellamma resisted the temptation to sell her land. The narrative highlights her fearless attitude and determination. She defied societal expectations and judgments, focusing on cultivating the land and raising her children while her husband worked as a rickshaw puller in Chennai. Ellamma stands out as an iconic figure who took advantage of changing social landscape and seized the opportunities like land ownership and education for her children. However, it is important to note that the scheduled castes still face disadvantages in terms of land acquisition. Studies indicate that landlessness is more prevalent among these groups, many of them working as agricultural laborers with small holdings. Majority of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe landholders fall into the category of small and marginal farmers. Ellamma, understanding the ancestral pain of not owning land, makes a conscious decision to safeguard her land and her children's future. She realises that selling the land would lead her children becoming wage laborers in their own fields, perpetuating the cycle of disadvantage.

Ellamma becomes a symbol of strength, resilience by refusing to sell her land, and fights for dignity and self-sufficiency within the Dalit community.

"The Bottom of the Well," is a story about teachers visiting a village for a wedding ceremony and amazed by the skills of Dalit boys who were good at swimming and various other water games played in the village. The teachers compare these boys with the children of upper castes and urban backgrounds, appreciating the richness experience and proficiency they possess. During their visit, the teachers accidentally drop a bar of soap into the well, while refreshing themselves. Sangayyao, one of the Dalit boys, quickly estimates the time it will take for the soap to sink and dives into the well without hesitation. He skilfully retrieves the soap in a remarkably short span of time. This incident showcases the extraordinary abilities and familiarity the Dalit boys have with their surroundings, honed their skills and made them adept at navigating the water. The contrasting perspectives of the teachers, highlight the unique talents and capabilities of the Dalit community, challenging stereotypes and preconceived notions about their abilities. The story emphasizes the importance of recognizing and appreciating the diverse skills and talents that exist within different communities, breaking down biases and promoting a more inclusive understanding of abilities and experiences.

"A Beauteous Light," the protagonist is Ellamma, a young Dalit girl, has a deep connection with nature and animals. She names and interacts closely with each buffalo, cow, and calf in her herd, using specific calls and gestures to direct them. Her bond with her animals is strong and affectionate. One day, a brahman boy falls into a tank and begins to drown. Ellamma acts quickly, riding on, one of her buffalos into the water and saves him. Her act of bravery and compassion showcases the contrast parenting values between the Dalit and brahman communities. While Ellamma's parents are proud of her for saving the boy's life, the boy's parents refuse to accept him until a purification ritual known as "Shuddi Karma" is performed. This ritual, described as a long and painful that would burn the boy's tongue with a hot iron rod. The boy's parents hold onto their rigid beliefs about purity and untouchability, even though the boy was weak and needed immediate medical attention.

At the end of the story, the brahman boy defies his own community and chooses to join the Dalit community, forsaking his privileged status. This decision reflects the themes of civilization, compassion, and liveliness within the Dalit community, contrasting the rigid social norms and prejudice upheld by the brahman community. The story sheds light on the resilience, humanity, and empathy displayed by the Dalit community and disapproves the discriminatory practices and beliefs of the brahman community. It emphasizes the importance of compassion and understanding, and challenges social hierarchies based on caste.

Gogu Shyamala's short stories are primarily set in the madiga quarters of Telangana villages. Through her storytelling, she portrays rich settings, events, and experiences that

reflect the larger contexts of the stories. The use of language in her writing is notable, as she “deliberately departs from the standard version of the language” (Eisen par. 8).. She incorporates vocabulary and expressions specific not only to the Tandur region but also to the Dalits who reside there” However, it is important to note that there has been criticism regarding the limited representation of Dalit Muslims and Christians in Shyamala's work. Some scholars argue that these marginalized groups have not received sufficient attention from the writer-scholar, despite her conscious effort to set an exemplary for Dalits through her writings. It is essential to encourage diverse voices within Dalit literature and ensure the inclusion of various sub-sects and communities within the Dalit experience. A more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the challenges and aspirations of marginalized groups within the larger Dalit narratives should be the urge of Dalit literature.

References:

- Eisen, Erica X. "Gogu Shyamala's New Book Brings to Life Stories from Margins, Explores Caste, Exploitation." *The Wire*, 11 June 2022, thewire.in/books/gogu-shyamalas-new-book-brings-to-life-stories-from-margins-explores-caste-exploitation. Accessed 2 July 2022.
- "Half of India's dalit population lives in 4 states". *The Times of India*. 2 May 2013. Archived from the original on 11 November 2020.
- Maren Bellwinkel-Schempp. "From Bhakti to Buddhism: Ravidas and Ambedkar." *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 42, no. 23, 2007, pp. 2177–83. *JSTOR*.
- Nitin, B. "For Gogu Shyamala, Being Dalit and Woman is Survival, Beyond Victimhood and Outside of It." *The News Minute*, 16 April 2016.
- Omvedt, Gail. "Neither Ram Rajya nor golden Vedic age: Gail Omvedt (1941-2021) on the history of a casteless future." *scroll.in*, 27 Aug. 2021, scroll.in/article/1003813/Neither-ram-rajya-nor-golden-vedic-age-gail-omvedt-1941-2021-on-the-history-of-a-casteless-future. Accessed 27 June 2022.
- Paik, Shailaja (September 2011). "Mahar–Dalit–Buddhist: The history and politics of naming in Maharashtra". *Contributions to Indian Sociology*. **45** (2): 217–241. doi:10.1177/006996671104500203. S2CID 144346975.
- Purushotham, K. "Evolution of Telugu Dalit Literature :." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 29 May 2010, www.epw.in/journal/2010/22/special-articles/evolution-telugu-dalit-literature.html. Accessed 4 May 2022.
- Ramanathan, S. "Stop calling Dalits ‘Harijan’: SC calls the term abusive, as we remain ignorant and insensitive." *The news minute*, 27 Mar. 2017.
- "SC Rejects Plea Challenging the Centre’s Order Against the Use of the Word ‘Dalit’ by Media." *Scroll.in*, 18 Feb. 2019, scroll.in/latest/913720/sc-rejects-plea-challenging-the-centres-order-against-the-use-of-the-word-dalit-by-media. Accessed 18 June 2022.

Sharmila Rege. "Dalit Women Talk Differently: A Critique of 'Difference' and Towards a Dalit Feminist Standpoint Position." *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 33, no. 44, 1998, pp.

Shyamala, Gogu. *Father May Be an Elephant and Mother Only a Small Basket, But...*

Translated by Diia Rajan and Gita Ramaswamy Duggirala Vasanta, Tilted Axis Press, 2021.

How to cite this article?

Dr. Malavi Jeripotula "Empowering the Roles and Skills of Dalits: Exploring Gogu Shyamala's *Father May Be an Elephant and Mother Only a Small Basket, But...*" *Research Journal Of English (RJOE)*8(4), PP:304-314,2023 DOI:10.36993/RJOE.2023.8.4.314