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Register Number:

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ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BENGALURU-27

MA ENGLISH – III SEMESTER

SEMESTER EXAMINATION: OCTOBER 2021

(Examination conducted in March 2022)

**EN 9218 Indian Literatures – Iii (Dalit and Bahujan Literature)**

**Time 2.5 HOURS MAX. MARKS 70**

**This Question Paper Contains TWO Printed Pages and THREE Parts**

**SECTION A**

1. **Read the following excerpt from an interview with Dr. Siddalingaiah and answer the questions below.**

**Question:** Dalithood, as Ambedkar defines, is a kind of life condition that characterises the exploitation, suppression and marginalization of a people by the dominant classes. Most Dalit autobiographies speak of pain, suffering, oppression… in a manner that’s pitiful. For instance, Uchalya, Baluta etc. While the pain is a fact, your autobiography defies this model. You couch all the suffering in laughter and irony.

**Answer:** There is a lot of pain in the life of a Dalit, true. But there is also so much laughter. There is an abundance of jokes about landlords, middle men, exploiters etc. There is this term called Black Laughter. Just as the white men laugh with condescension, the oppressed have their black laughter too. Similarly, there is something called the Dalit laughter. I’ll tell you a story. During the Peshwas rule, the lower castes went around with brooms tucked into their backsides, and a pot for spittle hung around their necks. When this wretched system refused to look at them as fellow human beings, you know what they said? “When we spit, it rains pearls. And when we walk lotuses bloom. So we spit into our own pots, so that others do not make away with the pearls, and we sweep clear our footsteps so that others do not trample upon the lotuses!” Look how they created counter myths. If it was not their sense of humour, what was it? My mother used to crack a lot of jokes, and I have got her sense of humour. That is what has saved me. We laugh and it helps us endure pain. Some Dalit scholars didn’t think my method was right, but I felt this was the only way to rejuvenate ourselves. We have to grow over and above of all those who humiliated us.

I will narrate one incident, it happened in Doddaballapur some years ago. I was the chief guest for this meet of coolies. Someone asked why we were called AKs (Adi Karnatakas)? A young woman stood up and said: “We Dalits are always in the habit of asking a hundred questions – adeke, ideke, heegyaake, haagyaake…, that’s why we are called AKs (ekes)!!” Everyone burst into laughter. This may not be the best answer, but look at her presence of mind, I really appreciated it.

1. **Answer ANY TWO of the following questions in about 150-200 words. (2x15=30)**
2. Ambedkar first used the word Dalit in his fortnightly *Bahishkrut Bharat*. He defined the word as such: ‘Dalithood is a kind of life condition which characterizes the exploitation, suppression and marginalization of Dalits by the social, economic, cultural and political domination of the upper caste Brahmanical order.’ Examine what has changed between Ambedkar’s original text and the question in the passage. Why do you think the change was made?
3. Pick any one instance from *Ooru Keri* (*A Word with You, World*) as a way of examining counter myths. In what ways did this determine your understanding of Dalit Aesthetics?
4. Dr. Siddalingaiah points out that some Dalit scholars didn’t think his method was right. Why do you suppose that might be? What argument from the book and your classes from this semester would you use to persuade them?

**SECTION B**

1. **Answer ANY ONE of the following questions in about 200-250 words each. (1x20=20)**
2. Write about one speaker at the J.C Anthony Colloquium whose idea of Dalit Aesthetics you found most engaging. Explain how it shaped/changed your perspective of caste and art.
3. Explain how Perumal Murugan’s short story *Shit* and Divya Bharathi’s documentary film *Kakkoos* are useful in understanding caste and the idea of a modern, developed country.

**SECTION C**

1. **Write short notes on ANY TWO of the following in about 100-150 words each. (2x10=20)**

6. Auto ethnography as research

1. The Casteless Collective as a powerful response to mainstream Indian music
2. The women in Gogu Shyamala’s stories (Father May Be an Elephant and Mother Only a Small Basket, But…)