

## **Dr B. R. Ambedkar:**

### **Towards a Feminist Reclamation**

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This paper begins with an outline of the ways in which the intersectionality of caste, class and gender has become – a sciolism - a mantra and argues that moving beyond slogans and mantras and the obvious bleeding in of canonical disciplinary perspectives of caste into women's studies, a programmatic intervention, to engender caste and encaste gender requires concerted efforts - a reading of the classics to begin with. I suggest that such a programmatic intervention needs to begin with reclamation of some of Dr. Ambedkar's writings as feminist classics, and a turn to new sources and methods of interpretation for understanding Ambedkar in his times and ours.

A feminist reading of Ambedkar that this paper seeks to undertake necessitates a brief exploration into 'Dr. Ambedkar: the personal and the political' as also an encounter with confusing, diverse and heterogeneous sources of knowledge. In this case, I argue that listening to the compositions and reading the booklets that circulate within the heterotopic spaces constituted by the Ambedkarite calendar events reveals that outside the academia there is a long history of reclamations of a feminist Ambedkar. I outline the contours of this rich discourse - of booklets and songs on Ambedkar on the woman's question before turning to the selections from Dr. Ambedkar's writings as feminist classics that have suggestions for reformulations that can meet new trials and problems.

I suggest an intersectional reading of – Castes in India (vol. 1), Riddle No 18 -Manu's Madness or Brahmanical Explanation of the Origin of the Mixed Caste (vol. 4) , Riddle no 19 -The Change from Paternity to Maternity -What did the Brahmans wish to gain by it? , The Woman and the Counter Revolution (vol.3), Rise and Fall of Hindu Woman (vol.4) and Hindu Code Bill and the statement in Explanation of resignation (vol. 14). Drawing upon the main tenets of these writings, the paper shall map the implications of an intersectional reading for our understanding of Brahmanical patriarchy in India,