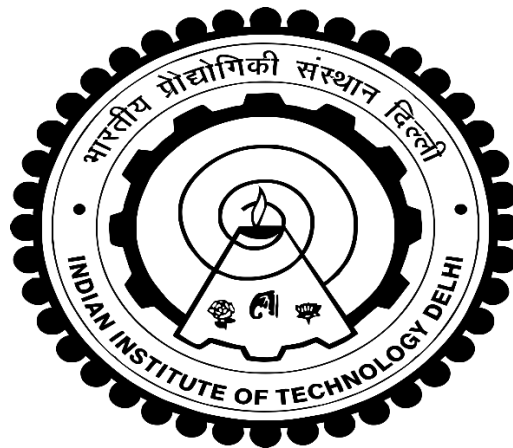


**UN/RELIABILITY AND IM/PROBABILITY IN DALIT NARRATIVES: TOWARD A
DALIT NARRATOLOGY**

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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, DELHI

July 2025

Un/reliability and Im/probability in Dalit Narratives: Toward A Dalit Narratology

By

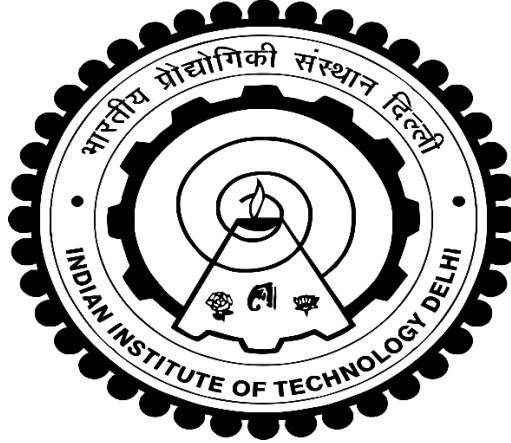
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Submitted

In fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

To the



Indian Institute of Technology – Delhi

July 2025

**Dedicated to
My Father
Who finished his thesis before his passing.**

Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Unreliability and Improbability in Dalit Narratives: Towards A Dalit Narratology**” being submitted by **Kunwar Nitin Pratap Gurjar** to the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is a bona fide record of the research work done by him under my supervision. In my opinion, the thesis has fulfilled the requirements and has reached the requisite standard for the submission relating to the degree. The contexts of this thesis, in full or in parts, have not been submitted to any other institute or university for the award of any degree or Diploma.

Supervisor

Prof. Angelie Multani

Date

25-07-2025

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Abstract

The thesis titled “Improbability and Unreliability in Dalit Narratives: Towards A Dalit Narratology” is a work that combines studies in the areas of narratology and Dalit literary studies. This work was conceived as a move toward postclassical narratology to develop contextual narratological expertise on Dalit narratives. The necessity of such a project was implied in the critique of classical narratology as an insufficient discourse to contain and explain contextual features of the narratives emerging from various identitarian standpoints. The focus of classical narratology on the universal structures of narratives could not provide space to understand how structures related to gender, race, and caste crystallized and functioned in the narratives. Susan Lanser’s work “Towards a Feminist Narratology” sought to overcome this problem within classical narratology and its preoccupation with the universality of concepts. Much like Lanser’s “Feminist Narratology”, this work proposes narratological concepts that could be understood as crucial for Dalit narratology- a field of formal narratological study of Dalit narratives. This study set out to discover narratological features and concepts that form specifically in the literature written by Dalits. Since Dalit narratives frequently came under attack on questions of their authenticity, the project chose unreliability and improbability as two narratological categories through which a possible narratological framework could be built to understand these questions in Dalit narratives. The present study was conducted mainly to achieve three very distinct aims. The first of them was to discover narratological features and concepts that form specifically in the literature written by Dalits. Secondly, it was carried out as an exercise of applied narratology in which existing narratological concepts were applied in the study of Dalit literature. The second aim was to demonstrate that the examination of Dalit literary narrative could be qualitatively improved by using narratological concepts. Such an exercise could also enrich the critical pedagogy of Dalit

literature. The third aim of the thesis was to ensure that the formal and cultural aspects of Dalit narratives can be incorporated into this study.

सार

“दलित कथाओं में असंभवता और अविश्वसनीयता: दलित नैरेटोलॉजी की ओर” शीर्षक वाली थीसिस “नैरेटोलॉजी” और “दलित साहित्य अध्ययन” के क्षेत्रों में अध्ययनों को जोड़ती है। इस कार्य की कल्पना दलित कथाओं पर प्रासंगिक कथा-विज्ञान विशेषज्ञता विकसित करने के लिए उत्तर-शास्त्रीय कथा-विज्ञान की ओर एक कदम के रूप में की गई थी। शास्त्रीय नैरेटोलॉजी की आलोचना में इस तरह की परियोजना की आवश्यकता को इस रूप में रेखांकित किया गया था कि यह विभिन्न पहचानवादी दृष्टिकोणों से उभरने वाले आख्यानो की प्रासंगिक विशेषताओं को समाहित करने और समझाने के लिए अपर्याप्त विमर्श है। कथाओं की सार्वभौमिक संरचनाओं पर शास्त्रीय कथा-विज्ञान का ध्यान यह समझने के लिए जगह नहीं दे सका कि लिंग, नस्ल, और जाति से संबंधित संरचनाएं कथाओं में कैसे क्रिस्टलीकृत और कार्य करती हैं। सुसान लैंसर की कृति “टुवर्ड्स ए फेमिनिस्ट नैरेटोलॉजी” ने शास्त्रीय नैरेटोलॉजी के भीतर इस समस्या और अवधारणाओं की सार्वभौमिकता के साथ इसकी व्यस्तता को दूर करने की कोशिश की। लैंसर के नारीवादी आख्यानशास्त्र की तरह ही, यह कार्य दलित नैरेटोलॉजी के रूप में समझे जाने वाले विषय के लिए महत्वपूर्ण बनने की आकांक्षा रखता था- दलित आख्यानो के औपचारिक आख्यानशास्त्रीय अध्ययन का एक क्षेत्र। यह अध्ययन दलितों द्वारा लिखे गए साहित्य में विशेष रूप से बनने वाली आख्यानशास्त्रीय विशेषताओं और अवधारणाओं की खोज करना चाहता था। चूँकि दलित आख्यानो पर उनकी प्रामाणिकता के सवालों पर हमला किया गया था, इसलिए परियोजना ने अविश्वसनीयता और असंभावना को दो आख्यानशास्त्रीय श्रेणियों के रूप में चुना, जिसके माध्यम से दलित आख्यानो में इन सवालों को समझने के लिए एक संभावित आख्यानशास्त्रीय ढाँचा बनाया जा सकता था। वर्तमान अध्ययन मुख्य रूप से तीन बहुत ही अलग-अलग उद्देश्यों को प्राप्त करने के लिए किया गया था। उनमें से पहला दलितों द्वारा लिखे गए साहित्य में विशेष रूप से बनने वाली आख्यानशास्त्रीय विशेषताओं और अवधारणाओं की खोज करना था।

दूसरे, इसे अनुप्रयुक्त आख्यानशास्त्र के अभ्यास के रूप में किया गया था जिसमें दलित साहित्य के अध्ययन में मौजूदा आख्यानशास्त्रीय अवधारणाओं को लागू किया जाना था। दूसरा उद्देश्य यह प्रदर्शित करना था कि आख्यानशास्त्रीय अवधारणाओं का उपयोग करके दलित साहित्यिक आख्यान की जांच को गुणात्मक रूप से बेहतर बनाया जा सकता है। ऐसा अभ्यास दलित साहित्य के आलोचनात्मक शिक्षण को भी समृद्ध कर सकता है। थीसिस का तीसरा उद्देश्य यह सुनिश्चित करना था कि दलित कथाओं के औपचारिक और सांस्कृतिक पहलुओं को इस अध्ययन में शामिल किया जा सके।

Abbreviations used

| | |
|-------|--|
| ARP | Author Rationalising Principles |
| CCP | Character Consistency Principle |
| CIMPs | Caste Inducing Moments in Plots |
| CNMCI | Controlled Non-Mimetic Character Inconsistency |
| IMDT | Ideologically Motivated Deceptive Translation |
| ND | Narrative Decontextualisation |
| NNP | Narrative Necessity Principle |
| NMCI | Non-Mimetic Character Inconsistency |
| NMDT | Narratologically Motivated Deceptive Translation |
| TRP | Text Rationalizing Principles |
| UNMCI | Uncontrolled Non-Mimetic Character Inconsistency |

Table of Contents

| | | |
|-------------|--|---------|
| I. | Dedication..... | i |
| II. | Certificate..... | ii |
| III. | Acknowledgement | iii- iv |
| IV. | Abstract..... | v-viii |
| V. | Abbreviations used..... | ix |
| VI. | Abbreviations used..... | x-xi |
| | | |
| 1. | Introduction..... | 1-32 |
| | | |
| 2. | Atrophy in Dalit Literary Criticism: Essential Conditions for Dalit Literary Theory | 33-57 |
| | | |
| 3. | Narrative Decontextualisation: Understanding Non-Dalit Narrative Rhetoricity through Limbale..... | 58- 94 |
| | | |
| 4. | Transposed I: Towards the Narratology of Translator’s voice in Dalit Autobiographical Narratives..... | 95-129 |
| | | |
| 5. | Character Consistency Principle: Narrative and Aesthetic Functions..... | 130-160 |

| | |
|---|---------|
| 6. Narrating Gaps: Towards an understanding of Im/probability in Dalit Narratives..... | 161-186 |
| 7. Conclusion..... | 187-197 |
| 8. References..... | 198-204 |
| 9. Bio Data..... | 205-208 |