

Indira Gandhi National Open University
School of Interdisciplinary and
Trans-disciplinary Studies

MPYE – 006

Dalit Philosophy

Block 3

**PHILOSOPHY AS WORLD-VIEW AND
OUTLOOK**

UNIT 1

Dalit World-View and Philosophy of Life

UNIT 2

Human Values and Moral Outlook of the Dalits

UNIT 3

Dalit Aesthetic Outlook

UNIT 4

Dalit Political and Economic Outlook

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BLOCK INTRODUCTION

Dalit philosophy is a theoretical discourse of constructing a Dalit world-view. The act of constructing their own symbolic world-view in the face of severe domination becomes the basis of hope, not just for their resistance but, more importantly, for the working out of their own assertive power. The indigenous people, Dalits have different approach and outlook to reality. The world they encounter is quite different from Vedic Brahmanical categories of thinking. As people at the foundational ground of civil society, they have a unique philosophy, culture and knowledge system. For the Dalits a philosophy or way of life that promotes respect for human dignity and enhances over all liberation is worth pursuing. It seeks to instil a sense of pride in their identity. It also asserts that every social structure, including religion, can have a liberative or enslaving effects on us. It is up to us to discover the liberative potential and to reject the dehumanizing effects of social structures.

The Indigenous wisdom is for integral liberation which does not merely attempt at mobilization for acquisition of resources and power. It predominantly addresses the question of basic identity as dignified co-humans with others both as individuals and a people. Dalit thinking from ancient times onwards seeks to project an inclusive ideology upholding human dignity and optimistically building a new human family in which there would be no trace of discriminatory hierarchical consciousness.

Unit 1 introduces the complex nature of the Dalit life-world or world-view and the process of philosophizing from Dalit perspectives. Even with limited socio-cultural space, their meaning-generating activities through various methods and dialogical efforts seek to create a new humanity built upon the foundation of egalitarianism. Dalit roots and resources are attuned move towards the dignified inclusion of all humans as co-humans.

Unit 2 tries to understand the Human Values and moral outlook of Dalits which are very much buried and unknown. Every community has its own values and moral outlook. Every member of the community is expected to bear these values and moral outlook and abide by them. The values and outlook are also used to distinguish one community from the other. Human values and moral out look of dalits is liberating in nature. It gives importance for human freedom, equality and community.

Unit 3 gives aesthetic outlook of the Dalit portraying the concept of beauty lies not just in art-appreciation and enjoyment, but deep down in art-creation and communitarian happiness. Dalit aesthetics unearths the hidden meaning of beauty as merging from the skills of productive community, as an antithesis to Brahmanical aesthetics of 'leisurely and non-productive class.'

Unit 4 gives a condensed version and a symbol of the Dalit political and economic philosophy. Apart from theorizing on political and economic outlook of the Dalits, the aim of the unit is to picture the concrete ideas and activities of Dalit intellectuals and activists from the ancient time to the contemporary period. It would serve as also a preamble for the fourth block of this course namely Dalit thinkers in India.