

399/15/09/16



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Title of the Thesis: WORKS OF BASUDEV SUNANI: ORIYA DALIT HISTORIOGRAPHY

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**ABSTRACT**

To begin with, the Introduction to the thesis titled **“Towards Dalit Historiography”** attempts to theorize Dalit cultural experience highlighted by Basudev Sunani. Here one finds a brief survey of various models of historiography prior to an argument about the viability of Dalit Historiography. The first chapter titled **“Dalit Discourse: History and Literature”** tries to present a brief survey of the growth and trajectory of Dalit Literature. It goes back to the *Manu Smriti* to trace the beginning of caste system in India and the history of anti-caste movement in the country. The second chapter is titled **“Odia Dalit Literature”** and is intended to work as a link between the Pan Indian tradition of Dalit writings and the individual genius of Basudev Sunani. This chapter argues that Odia Dalit Literature is of recent origin and is in its formative stage although its root can be traced back to what it calls the subaltern writings of the medieval age. The third chapter titled **“History and the Journey of the Ganda Caste”** is a critical study on the journey of the *Ganda* (to which Sunani belongs) caste through Colonial and Nationalist Narratives to present time. While putting Basudev Sunani’s *History of Dalit Culture* (2009) into scrutiny vis-a-vis the earlier narratives this chapter attempts to make a case for the cultural history of the Dalits and argues that Dalit groups like the *Gandas* can salvage

their identity and pride through the creative reconstruction of their past on the face of colonial and nationalist defacement. The fourth chapter titled “**Basudev Sunani’s Creative World**” consists of two sections- one on the selected poems of the poet and the other on his novel- which argue that Dalit literature can be a site of Dalit historiography. In the conclusion, the thesis sums up the ideological, historical and political agreements advanced in the intervening pages and hopes to present a preliminary model of Odia Dalit Historiography as reflected in the works of Basudev Sunani.