

'A FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND COMPILATION'

Mahisagar prof releases book on Hindi translations of Gujarati Dalit poems

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A WOMAN professor from the Mahisagar district of Gujarat has come up with a compilation of Hindi translations of 105 contemporary poems by 13 noted Gujarati Dalit poets. The Sahitya Akademi in New Delhi recently published the compilation of poems selected, edited and translated by Malini Gautam, who teaches English Literature at Adivasi Arts and Commerce College in Mahisagar district. She also does creative writing in Hindi.

Perhaps a first-of-its-kind compilation in Hindi, the book, titled 'Gujarati Dalit Kavita', carries seven selected poems from each of the 13 poets, including



Prof Malini Gautam

Babal Das Chavda and Jayesh Jiviben Solanki—one of the youngest Dalit Gujarati poets—who died in 2020. Other Gujarati Dalit poets whose poems have been translated include Kisan Sosa, Dalpat Chauhan, B N Vankar, Madhukant Kalpit, Arvind Vegda, Nirav Patel, Pravin Gadhvi, Harish Mangalam, Pathik Parmar, Sahil Parmar and

Nilesh Kathad. The book also carries the introduction of each of the 13 poets whose poems were selected and translated.

Gautam said she came to know about Gujarati Dalit poetry from close quarters while doing translation of some Gujarati poems commissioned by a magazine on world poetry. "I knew Nirav Patel well. Sol called for his poems for the translation. And during that time, I realised that all of Niravbhai's poems were full of Dalit Chetana. It stunned me... I knew about Marathi Dalit poetry, but not much of Gujarati Dalit poetry. So, I thought that I should read more Gujarati Dalit poems. Accordingly, I started reading and translating Gujarati Dalit poems into Hindi... Eventually, I decided that I should do the work in totality,"

Gautam said.

According to her, all the poems selected in the compilation are free-verse poems. She said she could do more justice in translating free-verse poems into Hindi than to geet or ghazals. "Maybe, I will try translating geet or ghazals (by Gujarati Dalit poets) in the future," she added.

Noted Gujarati Dalit poet Raju Solanki said, "This compilation of Gujarati Dalit poems' Hindi translation is a welcome development. Most probably it is the first such work. It will increase the reach of Gujarati Dalit poetry at national level. Gujarati Dalit poetry is rich and powerful in content as Marathi Dalit poetry. However, owing to the lack of its translation into Hindi language, it has not got its due recognition."

