

Conclusion

The focus of the research work is on the depiction and the treatment of the characters which can be categorized as the subaltern people, in the novels *A Passage to India* and *Godan*. In any society, people who are deprived of their share in the political, social, cultural and economic fields in any society, on the basis of their race, caste, sex, religion etc., are called the subaltern people. These people have no political, social or cultural life of their own, as their role and the position in the society are fixed by the powerful and the dominant groups of the society. The subaltern classes are common to all the societies of any given time or at any given place in the world. These novels depict the sorrowful picture of the life which these subaltern people lead under the exploitation and the domination of the powerful of the society. These novels present the two distinct circumstances and settings.

In *A Passage to India*, the story is set in an urban locale, named Chandrapore where the Indians and the English, and the Hindus and the Muslims live together. While the novel *Godan* is set in a small village called Belari whose population consists of the peasants, who do the tilling of the land of the Zamindar and pay rent to the Zamindar and the government also. *A Passage to India* is about the racial discriminated behaviour of the English people against the Indians. The English think Indians as repulsive and degraded creatures with whom they do not want to get involved with. In *Godan*, the peasants are the victims of the exploitation of the greedy money-lenders and the Pandits, and the hypocrite Zamindar who are interested in accumulating money only.

These two novels have nothing in common except the theme of the exploitation and the ill-treatment of the lower sections of the society which have no other choice than to bear their exploitation passively—as they have no mean to raise their voice against the exploitation of theirs. Both the novels depict beautiful pictures of the Indian landscape and Indian culture. The protagonists of both the novels are from the "the bottom layers of society constituted by specific modes of exclusion from markets, political-legal representation, and the possibility of full membership in dominant social strata." (Spivak XX)

E.M Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924) and Premchand's *Godan: A Novel of Peasant India* (a translated work) narrate the difficulties of the life of the subaltern characters. Both the novels are the last ones of the writers. Both the novelists have depicted the Indian landscape of the pre-independence era, but with the difference that E. M. Forster was a Britisher who was writing about India, while Premchand was an Indian writer, writing about his native place. So, we can easily see a difference between the attitudes of both the novelists towards the Indian landscape and Indian social conditions. Both the novelists have dealt with the kind of life which the Indians were leading under the British Raj. Both the novels depict different kinds of relationship which the ruling class and the subjects, and the colonizer and the colonized share with each other. Both the novels portray the life of the people of the deprived and the marginalized sections of the Indian society.

Aziz is an Indian, and belongs to the colonized class, who works for his colonial masters i.e., the English people, and gets ill-treatment in return. In the colonized India, the Indians were not treated at par with the English people. They were considered at a level below than their English counterparts. The Indian judges were not allowed to take the case of the English people, and the Indian doctors could not treat the English patients. Though the Indian people were given the jobs in the government sectors, they were not treated as equals. They were always considered the weak, inferior and the degraded people by the English.

Hori, the protagonist of the novel *Godan*, is a slave of the exploitative system of feudalism. He is a tenant on the land of the Zamindar, and also does the forced labour for the Zamindar who masters the fate of the villagers. The villagers are the slaves of the will of the Zamindar and the money-lenders. These peasants live a miserable life under the suffocating burden of debt. Their life is full of hardships and miseries. There is religious and social hypocrisy prevalent in this small and orthodox village. People believe in the ages old social and religious convention which makes their life unbearable.

Godan presents a vivid picture of the Indian society. This novel deals with the people from almost every class of the society. There are characters belonging to the high class, middle class, and the lower classe also. Hori lives in a small village, named Belari, and in this village, the Zamindar is considered a kind of half-god. He has the power to control the fate of the innocent people. Hori is a poor peasant who does not have the land of his own to grow crop on. Hori is a small tenant on the land of the Zamindar. His only desire in life is to have a

cow for his family, and one day he suddenly gets the cow on credit from Bhola. He is happy to have a cow standing at his door, but this moment of joy is short, as his cow is killed by his brother, Heera.

Hori has to face a lot of difficulties and problems due to the death of the cow. He also has to pay a heavy fine for the wrong-doings of his son, Gobar who runs away from the village, when Jhunia gets pregnant as a result of their love affair. He has to pawn his house to pay the fine, and all his crop is also confiscated by the Panchayat. He is left with nothing in his house to feed his family. His pair of bullocks is also taken by Bhola, as Hori is not able to pay the price of the cow. He has to work as a labourer at a road-construction site, and at night spins yarn for livelihood. He struggles hard throughout his life, but when he dies; his family is not able to perform his last rituals due to the lack of money.

Hori is not the only peasant who suffers such problems in life, but all the peasants have the similar fate. His life symbolizes the sufferings of all the peasants who live under the similar circumstances. Hori's story is not an individual's story, but of all those landless peasants who live in the rural Indian villages under the terror of the Zamindar and the money-lenders. Debt has become an inseparable part of the life of the peasants. Debt keeps on sucking the blood of these peasants gradually like a leech. Hori represents the sufferings of the starving millions of India.

Hori is a tragic character who keeps on suffering on the account of his poverty and his submissiveness towards the social and religious conventions. His sufferings are caused by the sudden death of the cow, and the revelation of the pregnancy of Jhunia. The influential people of the village take these occasions as an opportunity to extract money from Hori. The money-lenders, the police officer and the Pandits of the village try to make Hori to pay money to them. His only son Gobar, on whom he has put so many hopes, also deserts him. Gobar falls for the charms of Jhunia and she gets pregnant. Gobar runs away from the village to Lucknow in the hope of a better earning and a better livelihood. But Gobar, in the city which appears to him a place of promises, fails to materialize his dreams. Hori has to make a lot of efforts to make up for his son's mistake. Hori believes in the ages old social conventions, and believes from the core of his heart that one should never break-up with the society. He is willing to pay the unreasonable fine imposed on him as a penance for his son's wrong doings. He loses his son as well as all that he has.

He struggles up to the last breath of his life. He never loses the hope in future, even when he does not have money to pay the rent of the land, and has to work as a labourer at a road-construction site. He has to marry off his younger daughter to an elderly man for money, to pay his debts and the tax of the land, but, he is still hopeful about the future. He still has the hope to re-pay the money taken from Ram Sewak by working as a labourer and by spinning yarn at night. He still cherishes the desire to buy a cow. He proves himself a man of extra ordinary courage. He never loses his courage and the will to fight until the last breath of his life. He dies, while working at the site, due to excessive fatigue and the sun heat. The tragedy of Hori shows the difficulties of the peasants who are entangled in the claws of the money-lenders. These people have no hope to change their fate or to improve their condition.

In this novel, the menace of industrialization has also been depicted in detail. Gobar works in a sugar factory for livelihood in the city. He is not happy working as factory worker as he has to work under unhealthy conditions in a small room, amid the machines emitting smoke. Moreover, the wages he gets for this work are also not very high. Here, he witnesses the exploitation of the workers. The workers strike but it fails. The plight of the factory workers is explicit in the following lines "...the speed and deafening roar of the machines made him [Gobar] high strung. In addition was the constant fear of being pulled up for laxity or mistake in performance of duty. This state of mind was not peculiar to Gobar alone; it affected all the workers. They drowned their bodily fatigue and mental trauma in toddy" (GD 263). The workers are made to work in unhealthy conditions, and are facing difficulties in making the both ends meet.

In the novel *A passage to India*, the Indians belong to the lower strata of the society, and they are considered lower in their own native place because they are ruled by the English people. The English consider all the Indians as inferior, weak and degraded creatures. For English people, there is no difference between the Indian Judges and the Indian man who works the fan in the court. The English take the both as their subjects only. They both have the same existence for the English people, as they both belong to one and the same race i.e., the subject race. They both do not want to have any kind of interaction with the Indians whom they think inferior to themselves. The English never try to know the true spirit of India, and as a result it always remains a "muddle" (API 58) for them which they can never solve. "Generations of invaders have tried" (API 120) to understand this country, but they all remained unfamiliar.

The English have a very low opinion of the Indians. Aziz is a government employee, and works under an English doctor, the Civil Surgeon of the city, Major Callendar. The Major is not very helpful towards Aziz, and always finds faults with him. Aziz is not allowed to see the English patients as he is an Indian, and Indians cannot see the English patients. And, in the same way, the Indian judges are also not allowed to take the cases of the English people. The Indian are not considered equals to their English counterparts, but inferior and not treated at the same level. The Indian people are socially and politically inferior to the English people.

There is cultural misunderstanding between both the races, which also causes the lack of confidence between the two races. Aziz feels himself caught in the net of Great Britain. "The roads, named after victorious generals and intersecting at right angles, were symbolic of the net Great Britain had thrown over India. He felt caught in their meshes" (API 11). This net which is symbolic of the British rule, is thrown over the whole India. Every Indian is ill-treated and exploited by the English people.

Mohammed Latif is a minor character in the novel, who is ill-treated by both the sides. The English also have derogatory idea about him, and also the Indian side ill-treats him. They think him a good-for-nothing fellow. They keep on playing cruel jokes on him. He is made to make the odd jobs of the house. He is unemployed, and that's why he is not treated properly by his family. He is dependent on his family members for living. He cannot have a life of self-respect as he has no means of livelihood than to tolerate the ill-treatment of his family members.

The condition of Indian women in both the novels is no better than the slaves. They are frequently ill-treated by their husbands and the family members. They are devoid of any right. They are not treated as equals with the male. In the novel, *Godan*, the concept of the traditional Indian women is pleaded, but in the novel *A Passage to India*, the plight of the Indian ladies is depicted. In *A Passage to India*, there is no strong Indian woman character. But in *Godan*, there are so many women characters who are as strong as the male characters. Dhaniam is a strong lady who is always ready to fight for her husband and children. She is a tough lady to deal with on the outside, but has a very soft heart. Sona is a girl of high and progressive ideas. She does not want her parents to give a dowry to her in-laws, so she takes the initial step and sends Selia with the message to her would-be-husband. She also rebukes

Selia for not beating her husband when he tries to get intimate with Selia. Rupa, on the other hand accepts her lot resignedly. She is very young when she is married, but she becomes a traditional house-wife who is busy with her household chores. Selia remains loyal to Matadin through all the ups and downs of the life, while he is a man of loose character who is always looking for a chance to flirt with the girls in the village.

In *A Passage to India*, there are women characters from both the races, Indian as well as the English. The Indian women live a very difficult and a miserable life. They are subjugated by their husbands. They do not have any kind of freedom. They do not have any social or political life. While the English ladies are free to take their own decisions. The Indian ladies cannot have a free intercourse with the men, even if they are their relatives. But, Adela comes to India just to meet Ronny, so that she can decide whether she should marry him or not. On the other hand, the Indian ladies have no right to choose their bridegrooms themselves. There are so many evil practices prevalent against women in Indian society such as, child marriage, the system of purdah etc. A man can marry again after the death of his wife but a woman cannot re-marry. The decision of their marriage is taken by their male family members, and not by themselves.

In Premchand's novel *Godan*, the Zamindar, the religious leaders and the money lenders constitute the ruling class, and it is they who control others' actions. They are the authorities in the village and make rules for others. Everyone in the village is bound to obey them. No one can dare to defy them or to go against their will. In the novel *A Passage to India*, the Britishers constitute the ruling class, but they are not as bad as the Zamindar or the money lenders in *Godan*. The villagers in the *Godan* can never dream of having any kind of relationship except that of the exploited and the exploiter, with the people from the ruling class, but Dr. Aziz, the protagonist of *A Passage to India*, dares to have British friends. He is a good friend of Fielding and also shares an intellectual relationship with Mrs. Moore. Though, he has to pay a very heavy price for his friendship with the English. The poor villagers in the novel *Godan* can never dare to challenge the authority of the Zamindars and the Pandits, but in the novel *A Passage to India*, people are enraged and arrayed against the English people when Dr. Aziz is falsely charged of molesting Miss Quested.

The protagonist of one novel, Hori is a poor peasant, and that of the second novel, Dr. Aziz is a well qualified doctor and a government servant also. Hori lives in a village Belari in

the district of Oudh, while Aziz lives in the City of Chandrapore. Both live in very different conditions. There is no similarity between the two except that both are the victims of the oppression of the upper class or the ruling class of the society. Both have to face many difficulties and problems because of the fact of their belonging to the lower strata of the society. Aziz is insulted and mistreated by his superiors and British people in the novel, from the beginning to the end. The English people look at him with suspicion because he is an Indian. Hori is a penniless peasant who ploughs the land allotted to him by the Zamindar, and earns his livelihood. But, he is hardly able to make the both ends meet. He lives in dire paucity of even the basic needs of life. He has to give heavy taxes on the land to the Zamindar, and also has to work for Zamindar for free. He is under a heavy debt also. He lives a very miserable life because of his poverty and the exploitation by the powerful of the society.

These two novels depict the difference between the ruler and the ruled. Both the novels present two distinct circumstances. In *A Passage to India*, the Indians are at the lower level in the society. They are the subaltern people, as they are the people who are ruled by the English people. The other novel *Godan* deals with the life of the poor peasants who live in the rural areas. These peasants are from the lower strata of the society. These peasants live under the burden of the debt. These people are the slaves of the money-lenders and the Pandits of the village. Both the novels are set in the pre-independence India.

All the Indian characters in *A Passage to India* are the subaltern people as they belong to the subject race, and in the novel *Godan*, all the peasants are subaltern people as they are exploited by the money-lenders. But, characters in *Godan* are also the subject of the English people. In the novel, the novelist has also hinted at the English rule. These two novels depict the plight of the subaltern classes. These novels show how badly the people from the lower classes are treated by the powerful of the society. The low classes of the society have absolutely no right over their own life. They cannot take the decisions of their own life. These people have to spend their life as slaves of the powerful people.

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