

Refugees, Identity Crisis, and Rehabilitation in Select Post-Partition Bengali Dalit Short Fiction

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BY

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
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CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Refugees, Identity Crisis, and Rehabilitation in Select Post- Partition Bengali Dalit Short Fiction**” submitted by **ASIMA BARAL** bearing Reg. No. **16HEPH04** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of **Doctor of Philosophy** in **ENGLISH** from the University of Hyderabad is a bona fide research work carried out by her under my supervision and guidance.

This thesis is free from plagiarism and has not been submitted previously, either in part or in full, for the award of any degree or diploma to this or any other university or institution.

The student has the following publication(s) before submission of the thesis for adjudication and has produced evidence for the same in the form of acceptance letter or the reprint in the relevant area of research:

1. Baral, Asima. “Questioning the Identities of Dalit Refugees of Bengal through Selected Short Stories”. *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*. Volume 9, Issue 1, 2022. pp 527-538

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Further, the student has passed the following courses towards the fulfillment of the coursework requirements for PhD in 2016.

Course Code	Name	Credits	Pass/Fail
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4. EN825	Introduction to Bengali Dalit Short Fiction II	4	Pass

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DECLARATION**

I, Asima Baral, hereby declare that this thesis entitled “**Refugees, Identity Crisis, and Rehabilitation in Select Post- Partition Bengali Dalit Short Fiction**” submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of Professor D Murali Manohar is a bonafide research work. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

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To

All the broken ones

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Introduction

This chapter, Introduction, provides an overview of Dalit literature in Bengal- definition of Dalit, Dalit literary movements and practices. This is followed by the review of literature, methodology and organisation of chapters.

The emergence of Dalit literature, especially the rise of Bengali Dalit literature, is the new and noteworthy phenomena. The Dalits have been the most oppressed and neglected part of India. They have been marginalised from all the perspectives like economically politically and most importantly physically. Caste discrimination has been the most inhuman practice in Indian civilisation. The most important feature of Indian caste system is that it is stimulated by Indian Hindu scriptures. The blacks of America and Africa are often compared to the Indian Dalits. The main contrast in between this two is that one could be liberated, while the former is the social identity given by the caste and class. A dalit will always remain a dalit in India even if that person holds a prime position in the society.

Meaning of Dalit

The etymology of the word “Dalit” is the Sanskrit word “*dal*” which means to crack, split, be broken, trodden down, crushed, scattered, and destroyed. This is understood in all Indian regional languages. ((Kumar, “Criticism” 3). Marathi Dictionary defines the term ‘Dalit’ as ‘grounded’, ‘broken’ or ‘reduced to pieces’. According to Samsad Bengali dictionary it means ‘repression’, ‘control’, ‘defeat’, ‘trampling’. To exactly quote Raj Kumar, “Indian caste society, over the years , has used several names to describe the people of untouchable communities, such as ati-shudra, Exterior Castes,

outcaste, Depressed Classes, harijan, Scheduled Castes, ex-untouchables and so on” (Kumar, “ Criticism” 7).

According to Nandu Ram the term Dalit is now widely used by all the untouchable community throughout the country. Even the terms like Dalits, untouchables, scheduled castes are interchangeable by the social scientists. Dalits are trying hard to maintain their self-respect. That is why the Dalits are providing evidence of their life-struggle full of miseries, agony, and distress to present a counter-narrative in their own way. These “authentic” tales penned down by these people are called dalit literature in general. The definition of Dalit literature by Sharankumar Limbale as mentioned in his path-breaking book “*Towards an Aesthetics of Dalit Literature: History, Controversies and Considerations*” has precisely defined Dalit literature as, “Dalit literature is precisely that literature which artistically portrays the sorrows, tribulations, slavery, degradation, ridicule and poverty endured by Dalits. This literature is but a lofty image of grief”.

Dalit writers are motivated by people like Buddha, Jyotiba Phule and B.R.Ambedkar. In this context it is appropriate to quote Arjun Dangle:

Dalit literature is not simply literature...Dalit literature is associated with a movement to bring about change...at the very first glance, it will be strongly evident there is no established critical theory or point of view behind them (i.e. Dalit writings) instead there are new thinking and point of view (vii-viii).

Dr B R Ambedkar is the leading figure of dalit movements in India. His ground-breaking speeches are the inspiration for all dalit writers. The principal emphasis of a Dalit writer is to represent the very agony in their writings.

Maharashtra was the birthplace of both Dr B R Ambedkar and the dalit literary movements. The Dalit Panther Movement took place in Maharashtra in 1972. This was the time when all the Dalit leaders across the country came together to abolish the caste system. Eleanor Zelliot, an American scholar writes:

In the early 1970s, two Maharashtra Movements got enough prominence to be noticed by the English anguish press the Dalit Panthers and Dalit literature. By substituting the word 'Black' for 'Dalit' the reader can immediately understand that a phenomenon comparable to the American Black Panthers and Black Literature has surfaced among the lower caste in social and literary affairs in western India. Like the American movements, the Dalit Panthers and the Dalit School of literature represent a new level of pride, militancy and sophisticated creativity. The Marathi word 'Dalit', like the word 'Black', was chosen by the group itself...Dalit implies those who have been broken, grounded down by those above them deliberately and actively. There is in this word itself an inherent denial of pollution, karma, and justified caste hierarchy. (qtd. in Kumar's "Criticism" 7)

Dalit voices were heard during the very initial moment of Bhakti Movement. Raj Kumar in his book *Dalit Literature and Criticism* asserts, "...it was only during the period of Bhakti Movement that we got to hear a few untouchable voices like that of Chokhamela, who broke the shackle of caste and sang their songs of protest in the public domain" (43). However, the emergence of Dalit literature has been entirely new phenomena in the real sense of the word. Dalit literature has only fifty years of history. Dalit literature came out as the struggle against the attack of the caste Hindus.

Dalit literature in Bengal

As Dr Pashupati Prasad Mahato, one of the members of the 'Bengali Dalit Sahitya Sanstha' states:

The consequence of disposition led them to poverty, exploitation, oppression and dehumanization, culminating into cultural silence that debilitates and destroy not only personality but also cultural excellence and creative genius...the Malvasi Dalit, a cluster of ethnic groups lost their cultural strength and were forced to think and act according to the idioms and symbols of dominant nationalities in the Indian situation. This process is termed as cultural silence. (Biswas, "Dalit Literature" 37-38).

Dalit literature has mainly originated from the caste discrimination and untouchability. But things are different in west Bengal. It is commonly accepted that the curse of untouchability is not very frequently seen in the urban areas of West Bengal and very rarely visible in the some parts of the rural areas. But dalit literature in Bengal is also a literature of revolt just like any other dalit literature in other parts of the country. Unlike other parts, it is noteworthy to mention that the dalit literature in Bengal is perceived based on class discrimination, more than caste discrimination.

Another important fact of the Dalit Sahitya (literature) in Bengal is that this literature has arrived much later than other dalit literature like Marathi dalit literature movement. While in Marathi context dalit literature got recognised around 1967, it took almost another 20-25 years to get recognised in Bengal. The partition of Bengal forced the 'Namashudras' and 'Poundokshatriyas' (both belong to lowers castes) to cross the border leaving all their material possessions in their own homeland. They had to live like beggars after coming to India. They had spent most of their lives in refugee camps and be victims of ruthless exploitation. The late emergence of Bengali dalit literature is

an acute reason of this situation. It was an unreasonable luxury to these people to pen down their thoughts and feeling while they were struggling hard to sustain their existence. Still few of them became lucky enough to depict their sorrow in the light of education.

The beginning of Matua religion, which was propounded by Harichand Thakur in east Bengal (now Bangladesh), brought light in the lives of Namashudras. Harichand and his son, Guruchand thought about the significance of education, and thus built school in the village.

The fate of Bengali Dalits became worse under the dominance of upper class people. The dedicated followers of Dr B R Ambedkar from Bengal established *The Bengali Dalit Writers Council* in 1987, and later on *The Bengali Institute for Dalits* was established at Bidhannagar, Kolkata in 1992. *Chaturtha Duniya* is one of the eminent publishing houses in recent days that publishes all the Dalit literary works like poems, drama, short stories etc. It is a fact that the production of novels is very small in numbers compared to the short stories and poetry. These are two most revolutionary genres of Bengali Dalit literature. In recent years Bengali dalit literature has been advanced by the autobiographies. This genre can portray the reality in more authentic way than any other genres. But the richest treasure of Bengali dalit literature is the collection of short stories. The primary texts I have chosen for research work are the collection short stories.

Literature Review:

There is no denying the fact that Dalit literature has been gaining importance in the literary discourses. The Dalit writers from various parts of India are expressing their

experiences through their language to create a space in the 'savarna' literature. The last few decades have been the reigning ground for Dalit literature. Literary genres like poetry, novel, short fiction, drama, autobiographies and essays are coming out and they have influenced all areas of research in academia. Innumerable works have been done and are too vast to be exhausted yet. Not only in India but also in other parts of the world academia is putting much importance to Dalit Literature. In this section, an attempt is made to survey the research works that have already been done on Dalit literature in general and Bengali Dalit short stories in particular. In the doctoral thesis entitled *Discrimination and Resistance: A Comparative Study of Black Movements in the U.S and Dalit Movements in India*, Arvind Kumar tries to examine the two respective movements– one that happened to liberate the Blacks from the white supremacy and the other that occurred in India as a protest against the Brahminical hegemony over the Dalits. The researcher here has analyzed how race and caste are integrally connected to the two respective movements. The study has compared and contrasted the two societies and has explained and exposed the reality of caste and race. In this doctoral thesis, the researcher highlights the self-definition and self-identity of the weaker sections, the two important aspects of these two movements.

In her doctoral thesis, *Caste System and Dalit Feminism: A Comparative Study of Mang and Mahar Women in Western Maharashtra*, Smitha M. Patil has examined a crucial issue related to feminism–Dalit feminism, feminism inside the lower caste. The researcher has succinctly analyzed the fact that the graded inequality of caste is also a pervasive presence in the Dalits. How the two different caste communities i.e. Mahar and Mang are different is one of the findings of the thesis. The thesis also highlights the very fact that the Dalit women are subjugated twice, rather thrice, for their identity based on their caste, class and gender. The researcher further evaluates the identity

crisis of the Dalit women, being doubly or sometimes, triply subjugated by both the male members within their own caste and those of the upper-castes and at the same time by the upper-caste women who themselves are the victim of male chauvinism within their respective communities.

Dalit Writing and Aboriginal Writing: Convergences and Divergences, a doctoral thesis by Rajesh Kumar, analyses the convergences and the divergences that exist in two marginal kinds of literature. The researcher in this thesis has demonstrated the historical genesis of prolific writers of these two kinds of literature –i.e. the Dalit literature in India and the aboriginal literature in Australia. He further evaluates the common grounds from which these two pieces of literature arises- i.e. anguish, pain, exploitation, inequality, marginalization and subjugation. In his thesis, he has examined the divergences of these two marginal kinds of literature as the context and the origin of these two pieces of literature is not the same. Moreover, he has summarized his thesis by establishing the fact that though the two kinds of literature are not alike in many aspects, these two marginal pieces of literature share some common platform for these two marginalized sections of people–the Dalits in India and the Aboriginals in Australia.

In the dissertation entitled, *Representing the Margin: A study of Fiction*, Ajay S. Sekhar has examined the marginal states of the characters of select narratives that he has chosen for his thesis. The texts like *Godden*, *Rudali*, *Woodworm*, *Samaskara*, *Gramayana*, *Kanthapura* and *God of Small Things* have been critically analyzed to represent the marginal space of the marginalized and subjugated characters in a very illuminating manner.

In the doctoral thesis entitled *Social Mobility among Dalit in West Bengal: A Study of the District of Bengal* Dipankar Mandal has tried to give a graphic picture of the social

mobility of the Dalits in Bengal. He has scientifically illustrated the growth and the fundamental aspects of the Dalits in Bengal.

Dalit literature is one of the marginalized kinds of literature. That Dalit literature does not maintain any aesthetic parameter, usually expected from a literary text, is one of the central discourses of Dalit studies. The debate is still going on regarding the central focus of Dalit literature; whether it should provide a true replica of Dalit lives or it should emphasis on creating an aesthetically pleasing work of art.

Milind Eknath Awad in his *Towards an Aesthetics of Dalits* has traced the root of aesthetics in the western concept and examined the fundamental traits of Dalit aesthetics. How Dalit aesthetics is different from the mainstream/savarna aesthetics, is one of the basic explorations of the thesis. The researcher points out the Dalit aesthetics as the aesthetics of resistance. The researcher attempts at creating a structure of aesthetics of Dalits in starting the domain of Dalit aesthetics, and tracing the existential knowledge that create the moral inclusivity of Dalit aesthetics. The researcher has pinpointed the very fact how the traditional Indian classical literature has never given any space for Dalit life words as an adequate subject for theoretical consideration.

In the doctoral thesis entitled *Twice Cursed Lives: A Study of Representations of Dalit Women in Tamil Dalit Fiction* which was submitted at Jawaharlal Nehru University in 2006, the researcher has attempted to portray the Dalit women, as depicted in Tamil select fictions, as doubly suppressed and oppressed. The researcher has shown that the Tamil Dalit women's double suppression is due to their identity as-women and at the same time of being Dalits. It is the Dalit women who suffer more due to their triple marginalization. How caste plays a vicious role inside the Dalit communities, is one of the central issues of this thesis. The thesis also demonstrates the politics of representation. The focal objective of the thesis is literary representations of Dalit

women in the novels of Bama, Shivakami and Iyamam. The researcher has selected two female authors and one male author so that he can bring out the inner psyche of the male writers in representing women in negative aspects, very unlikely to the female writers.

In the doctoral thesis entitled, *Writing the Self: The Thematic Study of Select Dalit Autobiographies*, Bolleddu Siva Nagaiah has examined one of the central aspects of Dalit literature that is coming out of the very self of the writer. The researcher has evaluated how the Dalit autobiographies are breaking the established notions of narrative technique, form and content and setting a completely new paradigm for its own. The researcher establishes his argument based on the various theoreticians like-Althusser, Gramsci and Foucault. The writer in his fourth chapter entitled, "Writing Dalit Gender: Dalit among Dalits" has also touched upon the aspects of Dalit women, the downtrodden among the downtroddens, the Dalits among the Dalits and the 'Other' within the 'Other'.

In his doctoral thesis entitled, *Representation of Dalits in Select Contemporary Indian Short Stories* that was submitted to Rabindra Bharati University in 2017 Arindam Mridha has examined the representation of the Dalits in select contemporary Dalit short stories. He has selected short stories which are included in *Poison Bread* edited by Arjun Dangle and that of in "*Survival and Other Stories: Bangla Dalit Fiction in Translation*" edited by Shankar Prasad Sinha and Indranil Acharya. He has lucidly, yet critically analyzed the representations of the Dalits as represented in the stories from these two anthologies. How vicious the caste system is in our India context, is one of the central findings of his thesis. As it has been reflected in many the other doctoral theses mentioned earlier, in this study too the researcher has brought about a distinction between the mainstream literature and the Dalit literature as such. The researcher has

examined the revolutionary aspects of Dalit literature, focusing on the two anthologies of short stories taken for his research.

In the path-breaking essay published in *Economic and Political Weekly* on October 13, 2007, entitled "Is There Dalit writing in Bangla?" Manoranjan Byapari has given a detailed analysis of Dalit literature in Bangla. This is, perhaps, for the first time Dalit Literature in Bengal got a wide readership and has become one of the central topics for discussions in academia. Dalit Literature in Bengal started extensively after the publication of this seminal essay. The essay is generally written in Bengali and then translated into English by Meenakshi Mukherjee, has set the foundation for further scholarship on Bengali Dalit literature. In this essay, the author has documented a wide range of Dalit literature in Bengal. The different genres like Poetry, novels, short stories, dramas, non-fiction, essays, and autobiographies have been meticulously documented by the author. The various journals and the little magazines that played instrumental role in expanding Dalit literary scholarship in Bengal are artistically documented. The essay sums up with the predictions of Dalit literature in Bengal.

The article entitled *Ambedkar and Contemporary Dalit Literature in Bangla: Notes on a Few Poems and Two Short Stories* by Satyantant Dasgupta which is published in the Journal of the Department of English, Vidyasagar University (Vol. 9, 2011-2012) is a well-researched article where the author has sought to answer the frequently asked question i.e. Is there any Dalit literature in Bengal? He has examined the politics of exclusion in centralizing Dalit discourses in Bengali mainstream literature. The author's meticulous reading of the texts he has taken for his study has helped him to establish the fact that Dalit literature in Bangla does exist and is too subtle a subject to be discussed. How the Bengali Dalit writers are trying to follow the model of Ambedkar's dictum, 'educate, agitate and organize' is one of the central arguments of the paper. The author

has also mentioned the total absence of any significant Dalit literary movement, the reason behind which, he believes, and quite naturally so, is the lack of translations of Bengali Dalit literary texts.

Sharankumar Limbale's seminal book on Dalit aesthetics entitled as *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature: History, Controversies and Considerations* that has been translated from the original Marathi by Alok Mukherjee is a ground breaking book on Dalit aesthetics. This is perhaps the first book where several critical issues related to Dalit literature are raised. Several questions that are frequently asked in Dalit discourses like-Who is a Dalit? What is Dalit literature? What is Dalit aesthetics? What is the difference between Dalit aesthetics and mainstream aesthetic? Is there Dalit aesthetics? What is the difference between race and caste? How does the Dalit literature converge and diverge with the Black writings? How Dalit literature is related to Marxism? These are the most fundamental questions that have been raised and answered by the author in meticulous care. The concluding section of the book has a long interview of the author taken by the English translator of the book, Alok Mukherjee where the author has justified his stands. As far as Dalit aesthetics is concerned, this is the first of any of its kind.

Arjun Dangle's edited volume entitled *The Poison Bread* is a pioneering book in the field of Dalit literature. This is generally regarded as the Bible of Dalit literature. The book, as the sub-title of it suggests, is the translations of Marathi Dalit Literature, the place from where Dalit literature came into being. In the very prefatory part of the book that has been written by Gail Omvedt, entitled *The Literature of Revolt* speaks volume to the revolutionary aspects of Dalit literature. The introductory part, entitled *Introduction: Dalit Literature, Past, Present and Future*, the editor of the book Arjun Dangle has examined the genesis of Dalit literature. The book is a compilation of

poetry, short stories, excerpts from the autobiographies and essays and speeches. The body of literature the book presents is the literature of pain and anguish—the very essence of Dalit literature, the protest literature. The essays and speeches in the very last part of the book are instrumental in bringing about the various theoretical aspects of Dalit Literature.

Apart from all these books, doctoral theses and articles written in English languages, the books and the various articles the researcher have gathered materials from are generally written in Bengali. Since the researcher has selected Bengali Dalit Short stories, translated into English, as his primary texts, it is necessary to maintain a thorough overview of the books and article on Dalit literature of that particular language from where the original texts have been selected. As far as the Bengali books and article are concerned, there are a plethora of books and articles that deserve mention. But due to the paucity of space, all these books can hardly be mentioned. But the books which have created a landmark in the history of Bengali Dalit literature are hardly be missed out either.

The book that deserves mention is Manohar Mouli Biswas's *Dalit Sahityer Ruparekha* (The Outline of Dalit Literature) which has been published in the year 2007 by the Publication house called Banisilpo. The book is a compilation of fifteen well-researched essays on Dalit Literature in general, written in the Bengali language. The essays in the book deal with several aspects of Dalit literature like—Dalit aesthetics, the revolutionary aspects of Dalit literature, Dalit literature versus Bengali mainstream literature, the impact of Manu in framing Dalit consciousness so on and so forth. One of the chapters deep delves on the communist movement in Bengal, and its failure to write an alternative script by erasing caste-discrimination from Bengal soil. In the essay *Jatived: Sekal and Ekal* (Casteism: Then and Now) is an overview of the entire genesis of caste.

In another book entitled “*Vinno Chokhe Probondhomala*” (Essays in Different Views), is a compilation of seven essays on subaltern studies has been published in 2003 by the publication house called “*Chatrurtha Duniya*”, one of the prominent publication houses of Dalit literature in Bangla. These well-researched essays in subaltern studies too deal with the various aspects of Dalit literature, focusing exclusively on Bengali Dalit literature.

The other very significant books of the same author that deserve special mention are *Prabandhe Prantajan: Authoba Asprisyer Dairi* (Essays of the Marginalized: Or The Diary of the Untouchables) published in 2010 by Chaturtha Duniya and *Dalit Sahityer Dikboloi* (Horizon of Dalit Literature) the second edition of which is published in 2019 by the publication house, ‘Ekushsatak’. Like the other two books of the author mentioned above, these two books also deal with Dalit literature in general and Bengali Dalit literature in particular. Like the other two books, these are also the compilations of several essays related to Dalit literature.

Dalit Sahitya: Dalit Sahitya Bisayak Nanamoter Probondha O Dalit Sankalan (Dalit Literature: A collection of Essays on Dalit Literature) which has been edited and published by Nitish Biswas for Aikatan, the latest edition of which is published in 2002, is a landmark of Bengali Dalit literature. This book is compilations of several essays by different writers of Bengal. Though the book is written in Bengali language, the essays do not entirely deal with Bengali Dalit literature.

A survey of literature in the field reveals that no full-length research work has been conducted on contemporary representative Bengali Dalit stories from the perspective of caste, aesthetics, and gender. My present work stands unique in that and it will make original critical interventions into the field of Dalit literary studies in Bengal focusing on the stories taken up for the research.

Methodology

As the study focuses on portrayal of Dalit experiences, the methodology of doing research has been laid stress to understand various experiences of individuals in connection with their fellow human beings and society. However, for this research, I would like to apply the thematic and textual analysis method to analyse the thematic conceptions of the dalitization, refugees and identity reflected in the selected works. I would also like to gather critical analysis through the intensive reading of the texts in order to arrive at a more coherent understanding in the process of the national identity and integrity.

The proposed dissertation will attempt to comparatively regard fiction representing the Dalit experience portraying the same reality. There has been insufficient attention given to this especially by literary critics and writers of Indian English literature. The proposed thesis will attempt to fill this large research gap by looking at works of fiction featuring untouchable figures.

In a broad way the methodology of this thesis will encompass a close reading of the texts to be studied with special attention being to characterization and the representation of the Dalit experience.

Organisation of chapters

In the first chapter, “Refugees”, I would like to focus on the background of 'refugees', how their lives were in refugee camps, and how, gradually, they started writing. In this chapter, I will also introduce the texts I will be working on. This chapter will also talk

about the discriminations these people had to face throughout their journey. The selected autobiographies by Biswas and Byapari will be the main focus in this chapter, though instances from short stories as well will be discussed. According to Sarbani Banerjee the learned *Bhadralok* class was responsible for the depiction of the refugees in Bengal till now. This class tried to speak for the other sections and classes of the society

Biswas and Byapari, both belong to the lower castes- barber and *Chandal*. As a result their characteristics and practises vary from that of the typical East Bengali *Bhadralok*. As first-generation migrated Dalit literates their perceptions and formation of the after-Partition moments create an arena of understanding outside the mainstream notions of East Bengali *Bhadralok*. The narratives of Bengal partition and memory are being regulated by these since a long time. For instance, the characters in Byapari and Biswas's works are not the typical "*Bhadra*" refugees that declare uninterrupted moral decency. Instead of that the "*Chhotolok-turned-Bhadralok*" figures form a style of thought in their narratives detached both from the "elite" and the "underdog" categorizations.

I, here, support my argument by tracking the referential stance of Biswas and Byapari. They are writers, social activists and influential. They do not carry the philosophy of *Bhadralok* immigrants of Bengal. The experiences of after partition challenge the partition literature of Bengal which already exists in the "space politics, familial and cultural sensibilities as well as literacy".

The Second chapter talks about the 'Identity Crisis' of those refugees who never had their own country. The conventional categorized preparations in the refugee camps and refugee colonies also help to invalidate the declaration of unified identity. Taking this

into consideration, as Sarbani Banerjee depicts in the article "Different Identity Formations in Bengal Partition Narratives by Dalit Refugees",

Dalit immigrant writings problematize the politics that inspire East Bengali *bhadralok* migrants' calculated and affective sentiments in literature, and question the latter's self-declared "marginal" position in post-Partition West Bengal.

Manoranjan Byapari, one of the prominent Dalit writers, makes a more explicit confession about the diversity of refugee identity which prevents the establishment of a unified East Bengali chronicle. The writings of the Dalit authors, especially Byapari and Biswas, portray a cynical viewpoint to all including the migrants, the west and east Bengalis. They once had to fight and compete with these people to get lands, jobs and basic amenities.

The Third chapter basically talks about their "Rehabilitation" they had to face in the process of searching their distinctiveness. This provides a graphic depiction of the infliction the Dalits face in day to day existence through the close reading of some of the texts taken for the study. The stories discussed here examine the fact that resistance, may be passive, is the only way to resist a counter-narrative for these destitute masses against the dominant hegemony. This chapter further discusses these issues with textual references.

Finally, the conclusion is drawn with overall analysis of the thesis to bring out major findings of the study.

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Chapter I

Refugees in Selected Short Stories

This chapter portrays the experiences and struggle the dalit refugees had faced in west Bengal after partition. These instances have been discussed with reference to the short stories written by the people who had experienced these in their own lives. The distinction these people had face in their journeys is also depicted here. The short story collections by the authors like Manoranjan Byapari, Manoranjan Biswas, and Jatin Bala are the main focus in this chapter.

According to Sarbani Banerjee the learned Bhadrakalok class was responsible for the depiction of the refugees in Bengal till now. This class tried to speak for the other sections and classes of the society. Here I would like to put forward my argument that Bengali refugees cannot be brought together under one umbrella. This cannot be fabricated as a “homogenised” phenomenon. As both Byapari and Biswas belong to the various caste identities their experiences are also not same to the typical East Bengali Bhadrakalok class. Both of these writers were first generation Dalit writer writing from their own first-hand experience. Therefore their experience is different from the mainstream notions.

The non-upper class migrants had a different view on the entire migration process. The prime writers of dalit literature are writers, activists and do not carry the *Bhadrakalok* status of the upper class people. The experience of the partition and the aftermath forces them question the existing literature of Bengali partition. In the writings of Manoranjan Byapari the style of narration itself declares the authenticity of the words. “Testimonial literature transforms the objects to subjects, while also changing the nature of that

subject” (Gugelberger and Kearney). These works aim at focussing on “others” than the “inner self”. This represents a larger picture of the voiceless, who do not have their own narrative. Rigoberta Menchu describes testimonials as a kind of work in which “the self cannot be defined in individual terms but only as a collective self-engaged in a common struggle”. These kinds of thoughts are also noticeable in the autobiography of Manoranjan Byapari “*Itibritte Chandal Jibon*”. This piece of work is a very powerful text for first generation Dalit Refugees. The family of Byapari belong to an “untouchable” community in Barishal, East Bengal (now Bangladesh). His name changed from “Mandal” to “Byapari” once his grandfather had faced a great loss in a small business. He also mentioned in the book that his father was very satisfied to be a “Namasudra, Kashyap Gotra”.

Byapari, borne in 1950s, and his family had voyaged to India. They did not want to be a part of riots and violence that was happening in East Bengal till then. He recalls the difficulties his family had to face at the time they were starting for the new homeland. His family felt unsure to hold back to this uncertain place as a group of minority people. At the same time they were afraid to start a new forceful bond with unknown leaving all the friendly ties. Byapari’s life was not smooth. He had to spend his life sometimes in the railway stations, sometimes in camps, in Dandakaranya, and at times in other different parts of the country looking for ways to survive. His narratives are mainly based on these obstacles he had faced in India after partition.

The texts are lingering between two main things- the social occurrences and the outcomes of inner psyche. These are carried thorough out the life at different stages. The recounting in the short stories cover most of the phases of life. Going over the instances, or forgetting certain things are the effects of trauma after partition. The immigrants, as recorded by the official documents, who left East Pakistan after the wars

in 1964 and 1965, were the poorest responsibilities of India. The writes mentioned in this chapter belong to this section of the society. The journeys have been shown in the texts portray various social mappings in the diverse culture of West Bengal after partition.

The recordings created an outline of reality which celebrated the unfiltered past of East Bengalis and lamented the unfulfilled present of West Bengalis. The conception of partition by the *Bhadralok* community cultivates an alternative understanding. The Bhadraklok migrants have accrued a lot of strength through the sentimental aspects in these works. An ideal imagination of “home” is being portrayed in these stories. The usual relationship between land owners and peasants has been drawn which develops the seeds of hatred and biasness. The imagination of rural life of East Bengal is sometimes disturbed by the depiction of the *Bhadralok* community. Therefore it is well understood why the refugees have not taken part in the communal presentation of mourning in nostalgia. The middle class refugees have reported that the marginalization was based on the webs of class and caste as described by them, and there were no other issues. The conventional measures of ranks in refugee colonies and refugee camps negate the declaration of cohesive individuality.

These facts question the self-proclaimed peripheral position by the dalit immigrants in literature and the opinions of Bengali Bhadraklok migrants at the same time. This chapter traces the *Bhadralok Chhotolok* connotations formed due to the mingling of these two groups. The new notion of the terms “Bhadra” and “Dalit” arise from here. It becomes difficult to sticking to one identity due to amalgamation in the texts. This chapter examines the alternative reading of the texts while taking about their refugeeeness at same time. It is deceptive to observe all the refugees as a homogenised group in this case.

The “second generation” refugees have gradually become well-educated. It is a clichéd implementation to recall the history of partition and keeping the memories safe. In the tales told by Byapari and Biswas it disturbs the superior and sentimental remarks. Dalits are producing a great number of literatures and it helps to enhance the understanding refugee lives after partition. This helps to make a more balanced discussion with new morals and appealing point of view.

Oppression operates through denial of access. Most stories tell us how this denial is effectively practiced in society. Many authors picked up their pens to tell us readers of the various guises of oppression which operate both within our households and also beyond borders of the private; in the domain of the public. Seldom had any individual who is a survivor of such system of oppression voiced out his protest in Bengal, until the author Manoranjan Byapari wrote a piece which asked “Is there Dalit writing in Bangla?”.

“Deity of the Stony Altar” by Manoranjan Byapari is a story of struggle for access and the comprehensive rejection of that space. It is a story of rejection of the very means of the oppression ineffective. Simultaneously it is a story of triumph and emancipation. Knowledge spirituality and questions of eligibility are re-casted while the position of the examiner is swapped with that of the examinee. Manoranjan Byapari reflects his own resurgence and gives voice and fire to the long awaited resurrection of the Dalits in Bengal through a language that had always belonged to them.

The story “The Son of a Peasant” by Nakul Mallick is a story of revenge by a lower caste person. The story describes the clash between Moti Majumdar, an upper-class zamindar and Sudhanya Sarkar, the undisputed leader of lower-caste working-class population of ten to twenty surrounding villages. The zamindar has a typical dominating attitude over the people in the villages. The number of lower class people

was more than the upper caste people. Still these people didn't have equal access to everything. The issues the story describes create quite a disgusting feeling among readers. There was only one school among the villages the lower caste students were majority in number. During the Saraswati puja in school these people never got a chance to go inside and worship. But when Sudhanya started fighting for it the zamindar arranged police force and the Brahmin priest ran away picking up rice, bananas and other offerings for puja as soon as the upper caste people completed their offering. The zamindar spat his anger out saying, "Don't let even a single one of these shudras enter the pandal, drag every one of them out by the scruff of their necks".

There was not a single shudra member in the school. The reason given when asked was, "no qualified teacher is available from your caste". The misuse of power went on like this by the zamindar till the date when revenge was taken on him. As the story unfolds the reader gets to see the continuous sarcastic insult those people have been tolerating like 'peasant's son, peasant. Chandal, I would have kept you bound with a rope!'. Once the zamindar was walking with his attendants near the field where the attendant were tied with rope as ordered by Sudhanya and the zamindar was tied in place of bull to plough the field. And that is how the revenge was taken as the zamindar kept on calling him as a son of peasant. Proud of his own caste, resolute, fearless Sudhanya caught hold of the plough for the first time in his life sternly said, "Walk on, zamindar, walk on, otherwise you will be punished more. See, how great a peasant, the son of peasant am I! A great chandal, the son of a chandal am I!" it went on to that extreme where the zamindar wept like a child and blubbered with folded hands, "Sudhanya! Strangle me, or murder me anyway you like, that'll be better. Only don't do this to me. You are my brother. I take your hands; please maintain my honour, brother. Please forgive all my crimes. I don't beg for my life to you, only beg for my honour."

The story “The Red Crab of Chaandipur” by Manohar Mouli Biswas is one of the finest Bengali short stories written in the last thirty years. Situated in the backdrop of the famous tourist spot at Bengal Orissa border, it portrays the hardship suffering and loneliness of a Dalit orphan whose parents were outcastes and refugees. The story is remarkable for the tightly knit plot, the pathos and poignancy evoked by central metaphor of the laal kaankra (red crab) and the deft handling of sea scape imagery which is entwined with the life of the central protagonist Simli. The seemingly simple but cogent style captures the various and subtle nuances of emotions revolving round the orphan girl and her developing relationship with Jagadish and his family. The author is able to sustain the tension by introducing a surprising twist at the end of the tale- the hallmark of a successful short story.

The protagonist of the story Simli lost her parents and family member in the refugee camp. When she was kicked out of that place she only had information that she has a brother named Jagadish Mondal who is an engineer. Simli has always been the prey of misfortune. Even when she was in search of her brother she was hit by him unknowingly. The poor fate of Dalit lower class people never change. It flows from generation to generation.

Thus these stories provide a wide spectrum of issues and concerns that Dalit people encounter in contemporary social interactions. The caste discrimination is prominent not only by untouchability, or any other discrimination; rather it revolves around many other issues like forcing someone to quit the occupation he/ she is familiar with and asking to join somewhere else where rejection would come due to lack of experience. Not only this, there are other possible ways of discrimination like sexual exploitation, cheat poor people and show sympathy to confuse them regarding the reality etc.

Such flawless insights fail to forestall the countless of living forms. These things define the social and political maps of west Bengal. The optimistic expectations of dalit labours do not include the complexities of East Bengal and West Bengal. It is deceptive to homogenise the people of east Bengal without mentioning their class caste and cultural nuances. In the same way the government of West Bengal had not applied any uniform process to relocate all the migrants of West Bengal.

Manoranjan Byapari, one of the eminent writers of Bengali dalit literature, makes a more clear expression regarding the “heterogeneity” of refugee self which inhibits the establishment of a unified East Bengali diary. The evidences of the migrants repeatedly focus on their condition of how they were thrown out from the land of wealth to the land of dishonesty because of partition. As Byapari states:

Back in East Bengal, the poor lower caste person would not have much opportunity to become literate. Only desiring to learn was not enough. Here such opening is present. A school has been started with the governmental initiative right inside the camp. All the camp children study here. (*Itibritte* 30)

This contrast of life in camp and life in East Bengal puts the latter one in negativity. This is very much conflicting and disruptive with a proper imagination of “homeland” in the memories of the *Bhadralok* refugees.

The writings represent cynical viewpoint to all including the migrants, the west and east Bengalis. They once had to fight and compete with these people to get lands, jobs and basic amenities. In Byapari’s words:

The caste is intrinsic within class, and the class within caste. If one group dismisses me for being an “Untouchable,” another looks down on me for being a poor illiterate *rickshaw*-puller. For both the parties I am an equally taboo company” (*Itibritte* 363).

In Byapari's writings the anger and frustration is clearly visible. He was forced to find and arrange his basic things like shelter, clothing and hunger. He had to face bitter experience with the *Bhadralok* community in this process. He started his life as a rickshaw puller and gradually he turned into an activist, and then an active writer. He questions the restricted natural value system of society which defines the each section in the society.

No political or religious outlook survived, for Dalits of Bengal, their realistic material want. The lack of association with a specific "group, religion and political ideology" among the Dalits in the camps demonstrates the disloyalty of their ambitions by each leading group at some point. These kinds of groups were not able to withstand the support of Dalits outside the vital understanding of their own plan.

Byapari notices that corruption involves even when a dalit is forced in to the prostitution. This supports the middle class ethics to define the origin of caste. This way the status of the stranded refugees get damaged by the domination of caste. The people were getting tortured without considering any gender. These kinds of atrocities of dominance by superior class unveil the lack of confidence of their selves. An enormous vacuum was created by these activities which pushed people to become flesh traders and beggars shedding all the self-esteem. Male Dalit refugees have never uttered their sexual exploitations. These cases were never registered the way people used take serious actions against the cases of the middle class, and sometimes female dalit refugees. Research shows that the conventional way of linking struggles and tortures are associated with gender. For example fleshly tortures are only done on females, and wars and other rivalries with males. But this massacre which revolved around the discourse of partition does highlight the fact that assaults were done on all categories of

“other”-“Dalit males, minority communities, poor and non-adults”. Biswas points out that such assault is very common in the lives of Dalits even before the massacre took place.

The immature teenaged members of the family had a craving to achieve that Bhadrakalok status in the society after partition. The adult generation had dedicated their lives for social welfare. As a result a constant arrangement was difficult to be constructed. This was mainly a feature of a *Bhadrakalok* society. The absurdity of the unevenness inside a family was not seen in the discourse of Bhadrakalok refugees. The active and rewarding status of an East Bengali Bhadrakalok continued even after partition with the price of excluding those people who could not continue it after coming to West Bengal. Hence the huge population of Dalit was exposed by the family issues as they had no say during the time of rehabilitation. The west Bengal government always wanted to settle these people outside west Bengal as soon as possible. These people had adopted new jargons used in the new land. They started using those to be a part of the society. The refugees had increased the remoteness of their pain from their roots with generations after generation. Therefore they had gradually lost their individuality of being a “Bangal” (East Bengali) while trying to submerge themselves in the new approaches and rules of survival.

As Romola Sanyal states:

...forgetting of one's East Bengali distinctive identity could imply different meanings for the different class of refugees. For the post-1971 Dalit immigrants, who hardly had much socioeconomic resource, not asserting their uniqueness was a sign of lying low in the margins, for fear of deportment. (Sanyal 83)

However the middle class migrants could easily get mingled with the urban lifestyle. The afterward generation of these people would most of the times be unaware of the implications of the statue “refugee”.

Ravinder Kaur and Sanyal, both of them agree to the process of “self-rehabilitation” amidst the migrants belong to the upper class. These people deliberately wanted to forget their past and willingly moved to another country with resources to save their lives. Kaur observes

...the same refugee card had a dual significance for refugees from different stratas – while it signified an uncomfortable remembrance of an inglorious past to the successfully settled refugees, it meant continuance of facilities and assistance for the dependent lot. The card was at the same time a symbol of helplessness, discrimination, and challenge to one’s aristocracy as well as resourcefulness. (Kaur 443).

Byapari describes the acute poverty among the Dalits in the East Bengal village where he was born, with the caste Hindus mostly having left for India. He recounts the unkindness of the Hindus, who had deserted his grandfather’s brother in a cholera-stricken state, and later socially boycotted him, thereby pushing him to convert to Islam because he had received services from a Muslim family. After Partition, these Dalits are pitched into the lowest rank of West Bengal society. The ever-changing nature of Self and Other becomes manifest in Byapari’s experience of working as a servant in a rich East Bengali doctor’s home. While the doctor’s family would usually treat him as an “Untouchable” and make him slave in exchange for food, they would suitably espouse him within the Hindu identification, when required to establish their own distinct religious identity against the Muslim neighbours. Byapari describes how a Dalit refugee’s toil was considered saleable to the labour-demanding elites in Calcutta, in the

same way as cattle are showcased in a marketplace (*Itibritte* 110), which associates the former's body exclusively with the system of labour and production.

In 1950, when the refugees reached Jirat, the village had long been abandoned, its waterways choked with silt, its ponds filthy and overgrown with water hyacinth, its great buildings crumbling and derelict. A rare 'empty' corner in crowded West Bengal, the Government of West Bengal deemed it to be an appropriate place to house and rehabilitate two and a half thousand refugees: men, women and children. Earlier that year, in January 1950, another group of refugees from East Bengal had occupied a vacant plot in the suburbs of Calcutta. The refugees nevertheless went ahead and occupied dividing it into about 400 plots of equal size. They distribute these plots to refugee families on a first-basis'. They named their new colony 'Azadgarh', literally 'bastion of freedom'. Government's efforts to rehabilitate Bengal's Hindu refugees, as scholars of partition and of modern India have come to recognise, proved to be a failure of catastrophic proportions. The detailed findings of the Memoir were among the first to point to this conclusion. The context in which the Bengal migrations took place, government policies towards refugees evolved, was the outbreak communal violence between Hindus and Muslims in the late summer of 1946. The Great Killing in Calcutta in August 1946 left at least three thousand people dead. That autumn and winter, it was followed by tit-for-tat pogroms by Hindus against Muslims in Bihar, and by Muslims against Hindus in Noakahli and Tippera in eastern Bengal. Early in 1947, savage killings in the north Indian town of Gurgaon left many thousands dead. In March 1947, the city of Rawalpindi in the Punjab witnessed horrific carnage. On 15 August 1947, British India was partitioned. Two days later, the Radcliffe line, which defined the new borders between India and Pakistan and divided the provinces of Punjab and Bengal, was published. Violence now assumed genocidal proportions in the Punjab and in parts

of north India. By contrast, Bengal's partition did not spark off violence comparable with the Punjab holocaust. There was much tension between Hindus and Muslims in the two halves of truncated Bengal, but the killings tended to be sporadic and localised, and never assumed the scale of the massacres in the Punjab. Early in 1950, however, there was another bout of widespread violence in East Bengal. This was followed by reprisals against Muslims in West Bengal, particularly in Howrah on the outskirts of Calcutta. These patterns of communal violence critically influenced the flight of refugees and the directions in which they moved between India and Pakistan, as well as government's responses to these events. Immediately after partition, huge numbers of Hindus and Sikhs fled from West Pakistan, as did Muslims from north India more generally to the western wing of Pakistan. Between August and December 1947, some fifteen million people crossed the western borders between India and Pakistan, half of them Hindus and Sikhs seeking refuge in India, and roughly the same number of Muslims escaping to Pakistan in the opposite direction. By contrast, the refugees from eastern Pakistan did not flood into India in one tidal wave. Rather, over a period of many years, sometimes in surges barely perceptible trickles. By 1973, in the quarter of a century six million Hindus from the east had come as Bengal. Significantly, the number of Muslims their co-religionists in the east was much smaller: than a million and a half. Refugees showed a stubborn unwillingness camps and pavements of Calcutta for the places picked by government, and demanded to have a say in where be rehabilitated'.

Partition of Indian subcontinent in 1947 observed millions of people move across borders towards their 'newly formed' respective homelands, India and Pakistan. That was a time of trial and turbulence for many displaced people who sought shelter in transit camps and squatter colonies. Their lives were fraught with massive struggles and hardships. These refugees often became unwitting victims of politicised state policies

and strategic rehabilitation measures. Literary narratives on Partition are replete with tales of dislocation trauma and concomitant hazards.

The disturbing process of dislocation contains within it the devastation of ‘lived space, cultural practice and social ties’. The question of survival struggles and the concomitant violence with respect to refugee conditions raise some important issues pertaining to politicised state policies and strategic rehabilitation programmes. The construction of the sharp borders that was/is inviolable for the partitioned communities in both emotional and material dimensions heightens the gravity of displacement and resettlement. Clearly these spatial divisions carried with them the violence of human separation and the shocking emergence of an extremely struggling life for the displaced. Concurrently Partition also initiated the drawing of cognitive maps that informed who were included and excluded. The task of inhabiting a devastated landscape and consequent processes of demographic transformations after the redrawing of boundaries became the defining core partition legacy. In the late forties and fifties, Indian cities of Delhi Calcutta and Bombay were not merely the nerve centres of political, cultural and commercial activities; rather they were transformed into primary destinations for many million migrant refugees. Partition narratives are replete with representations of varied treatments given to refugees. Paradoxical modes of assimilation, resistance, oppression, exploitation, loss and alienation have got articulated in these narratives. Partition migrants were not integrated in their misfortunes as they are assumed to be. Ravinder Kaur in “The Last Journey: Exploring Social Class in the 1947 Partition Migration” points to this note of variance with regard to the different experiences of the displaced group.

The constant arrival of refugees became a critical issue for the partitioned India. The enduring sense of ‘pain, loss and betrayal’ experienced by the East Bengali refugees in

the wake of 1947 Partition and their reception within a nation that was nominally theirs have been investigated from various academic perspectives. The narratives representing the victimhood of East Bengali migrants struggling to cope with an entirely new set of challenges and constraints are viewed as important archives in recording the far reaching consequences of Partition. This titanic task of rebuilding lives, rearranging priorities were fraught with multitude of problems and difficulties. Debates generated in the Constituent Assembly and other public forums exposed profusely the inadequacies in various rehabilitation policies.

The central government of India, in 1958, had intensely requested the government of West Bengal to shut the process of rehabilitation. It was to control the huge pour over of migrants coming to West Bengal. The central government and the west Bengal state government had come down to a solution after a long meeting. The refugees were divided in to two groups based on their arrivals. The first group includes people who entered between October 1946 to March 1958. They were named “old migrants”. These people were eligible for rehabilitation and minimal aids funded by the government. The second group included people who migrated between April 1958 to Decmber 1963. They were named the “in between migrants”. They were neither eligible for rehabilitation, nor the government aided funds. The government declared that they were influenced to move to a new country with the temptation of the “dole”. The third group who moved relatively after sometime between 1963-1970 were named as the “new migrants”. These people had the access of getting rehabilitation if they agreed to seek a livelihood outside of the West Bengal.

Almost six lakhs people entered west Bengal were denied assistance. The female refugees who had migrated from East Bengal had a negative impact of partition on them. The government of India sensed that the huge number of migration was more

influenced because of the economic incentives. The policy they had adapted after the cumulative discussion was the answer of the Indian government regarding the huge number of migrations. But the assumption had proven to be wrong. As a result people who still continued to be migrated were the victims of worst rehabilitation. Ashoka Gupta, a social reformer at that time, and her team of female welfare worker had tried to visit the refugee camps in India, outside west Bengal. They noticed discrepancies and recommended certain solutions to the government which was rejected with disrespect. Those recommendations were highly needed for the security and safety of the female refugees. The amount of the dole was paid to the female refugees in pan Indian camps was much higher than that of the same in west Bengal. These reports also published the brutal reality of those camps. There were no separate sections for females in the washroom. The training centres were a dream for the female refugees.

The flooded entry of migrants had continued for a long time which stopped the government and delayed to adapt those policies regarding rehabilitation. Pramila basu is living example of the scenarios going on in west Bengal at that time. She had migrated to west Bengal a long back, long before her other family members had migrated. She found it surprising that no academicians have mentioned regarding the system of reimbursement of wealth, and certain permanent assurance for the refugees. She was all alone in a new world. She had struggled to find a proper place to stay:

Barisaler bastu ta bishal chilo...Kolkater bari ta ekdom choto chilo aar otar jono o du bochor laaglo... Governmenter samay aamader samay noy.

(Our ancestral house in east Bengal was monumental, with eighteen rooms and huge outhouses but our house in Calcutta was more like a pigeonhole which took two years to complete because of the bureaucracy. I guess the government works on its own clock whereas the entire world is far ahead of them.) (Trans)

The reimbursement provided by the government as an effect of Partition had a negative connotation. The administration that was taking care of the rehabilitation process had stopped proper implementation of them. The female refugees had to suffer more for this negligence from political, economic, and anthropological viewpoints. There were numerous other women like Pramila Basu who had to struggle in search of new “home” after they were evacuated from their personal homeland. It is noteworthy that there were differences between the home they had in East Bengal and the one they had received as a reimbursement in West Bengal. It might at times sound like an elitist comparison, but the residence they had in east Bengal was unmatched to the ones they had got in this land. The reality of this is way more complicated as this had led to explore more in public territories.

Manikuntala Sen observes:

We see how a single quantitatively measurable phenomenon like economic success can reflect in both positive and negative lights.

It is a noteworthy fact that she belonged to East Bengal, and therefore it is assumed that she would take the side of her people. She has described the people from East Bengal as "simple, unaffected and intelligent" and the people belonged to this part of Bengal as "pretentious". This shows a clearer picture of her thoughts. Here it would be important to add Pramila Basu's statement:

Kolkata ashur por dekhla choto andhokar ghar. Bishal shohor aar aami or modhe ekta pran. Bhoy peichi aami. Upor thekhe niche ashay gelam.

(Only after reaching Calcutta did I realise that houses could be small and dingy, the city was large and I was one mere human. I certainly got scared. We'd been

displaced; from being at the top of our town, we came down to being nothing.)

(Trans)

The dissimilarities between the females of East Bengal and West Bengal could be considered biased as an effect of Partition. Most of these females were hard working people according to the official report. They had motivated the females from West Bengal too to get involved in the work force. India had gone through a sequence of dissections during 1946-1971. Hence there was an enormous number of migrants from East Bengal to the land of West Bengal, especially in sub-urb areas of Kolkata. The female refugees from East Bengal had risen undefeatable even after lot of tortures and turbulences. The females had proved that they can be a part of the public domains and work at the same time with others while taking care of the household things at same time. It was correct that in this way they had gradually become a part of conclusions making group. The females had played an important character during the Communist movement in Bengal. Their active roles helped to bring some changes for women in the society like the doles for remarriages of widows, equal right of women in inherited property etc. The females of West Bengal were highly influenced by the hard working females came from east Bengal. All these women had shown that they can be a part of any fight among these people to gain their own rights and can overlook all the humiliation by the patriarchal society of Bengal. Jasodhara Bagchi, one of the leading feminist writers, mentions:

The women proved that they could be more than just mere conquests of men in a 'man-made' Partition; they charted their own story of emancipation.

The Indian writer Jyotirmoyee Devi argues, while narrating the tale of women who are sexually assaulted during partition, that the women folk were rephrasing the stories about themselves during this massacre. It is disastrous that the borders are still "porous"

and women are still a marginalised section of society. But they are engendering their own path to freedom nevertheless.

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Chapter Two

Identity Crisis in Selected Short Stories

Second chapter talks about the ‘Identity Crisis’ of those refugees who never had their own country. The conventional categorized provisions in the “Refugee Camps” and “Refugee Colonies” also help to nullify the assertion of “Unified Identity”. Sarbani Banerjee in the article “Different Identity Formations in Bengal Partition Narratives by Dalit Refugees” states:

Dalit immigrant writings problematize the politics that inspire East Bengali *bhadralok* migrants’ calculated and affective sentiments in literature, and question the latter’s self-declared “marginal” position in post-Partition West Bengal.

Here, Manoranjan Byapari, one of the eminent writers, makes a more explicit and definite statement about the diversity of the identity of the refugees. These statements stop the foundation of an organised unified chronicle of East Bengal. The writing of the Dalit authors, especially Byapari and Biswas, portray a cynical viewpoint to all including the migrants, the west and east Bengalis. They once had to fight and complete with these people to get lands, jobs and basic amenities.

The “social movements” which had begun to declare and talk about the dalit identities had started in 1870. These movements had very prominent locations and two communities were in the lead of these movements. The two communities were the ‘Rajbanshi Community’ and the “Namashudra Community”. The first group was from the northern side like Dnajpur, Jalpaiguri, Rangpur etc. The second one was places like Faridpur Jessore Khulna etc from East Bengal. There were a few small communities in other parts of Bengal which were not that powerful.

There was, as the history suggests, not much synchronization between Hindu and Muslim peasants. The harmony was often disturbed by the violence, riots. During this time two Scheduled caste groups were formed- the “Depressed Class League” and the Depressed Class Association”. The first group was led by Pramatha Ranjan Thakur, and the later was led by Birat Chandra Mandal. The difference between these two groups was the second group was leaned towards Hindu Mahasabha.

The migration in Bengal happened gradually in waves unlike Punjab, the other part of the country. In the first wave only people belong to well to do family could migrate. The middle class people who had jobs, or who could manage to sell/exchange their properties on time were able to migrate. Only very few peasant family had migrated at this stage. In 1950 the most pouplar discourse regarding the migrants were represented by the upper class hindu people. They were termed as “Minority Hindus” who ran away from Muslim dominated East Pakistan. So the experience was not same for all the migrants which were commonly opinionated at that time by the upper class people.

Thus the refuges never had a homogenised story or experience of the same movement. The lower class people mainly belonging to peasant families had an entirely different experience than those refugees who migrated early. These families had crossed border by feet or by boat. There was no rehabilitation package waiting for them at that time. They had to do everything by themselves. The violence in the border area was on top even during that time. In 1950 the violence between these two had reached an extreme when the Hindu migrants forced the Muslims to go to East Pakistan in Nadia district vacating the land for them.

In India the importance of space had hardly got any importance in the history of Dalit movements. The Rajbanshis and Namashudras had a close geographical location in the

state of Bengal. The loss of that space by spreading all over was one of the reasons of failure of the “Namashudra Movement”.

The writings of the writers like Manohar Mouli Biswas, Manoranjan Byapari, Jatin Bala give a sound clarity on the quest for Identity which they have been focusing for long time in their respective genre, one has to understand subaltern asking question on the caste, colour, status, culture and religion. The prime motive of these writers are of portraying the state of human apathy towards the one's own people who are being ruthlessly ignored in distinct context, we need to understand the point which is being put forth by these Poets based upon the difference which they have undergone for a period of time where everyone was looked with a vivid approach, In the name of caste, the habits of the Dalits have hidden and were not give a chance to expose the true state of affair in their daily life. All we know about Dalit on whole as the symbol of class who according to Gayatri Spivak are the subaltern element of the society, whose views and their thoughts have to be given due respect. Furthermore the subaltern are the once who are the true natives, a careful study of all this poet will give bigger picture about Dalits who are being marginalized for centuries. The dalit literature have identified the consciousness of segregation which was classified by the hegemonic people who wanted the subaltern to be in subjugated state and are not in open minded form to welcome the consciousness which are being put forth. If caste repression is 200, or 500 years old, then the history of resistance is too that old. History plays a central role in the writings Dalit literature as well. The sense of consciousness and the sense of inequality is what connect the dalit literature in all languages. The institutions like political institutions endure these rituals. These powerful writings question the caste system through their writings. These also narrate and raise the strength to fight those obstacles. In a nutshell Dalit literatures depicts the reality, the struggle, the social injustice through

their words. Dalit movements inspire the oppressed people to raise their head against the exploitation.

The caste system, in colonial Bengal, had made its presence sensed in the normal social life of everyday life. The Namashudras had formed the majority caste group. They had dismissed the dominance of superior upper class. In 1947 after the partition billions of hindus had crossed the border. The lower class people could not migrate immediately at that time due to scarce necessary arrangements. The remaining people were forced to migrate due to extreme violence in East Bengal. The upper caste Hindus were permitted to resettle in Kolkata and in its surrounding areas. The Namashudras were sent to other places like Dandakaranya, Andaman Island outside west Bengal. As Sekhar Bandopadhyay states:

...this created a situation in which partition violence and refugee influx had led to a rephrasing of the idioms of victimhood and resistance, placing less emphasis on caste and focusing more on the predicament of migration and the struggles of the refugees.

It could be stated that the caste has been a victim of circumstances in the post-colonial Bengal. This had an affluent conversation over religion, nation and class. However there is a long way to go to triumph over this social injustice. Sekhar Bandyopadhyay also writes in the article “Partition and Ruptures in Dalit Identity Politics in Bengal”:

Caste was as much a potent factor in determining social relations in colonial Bengal as it was in any other region of India (Bose, 1975; Sanyal, 1981; Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, 1990; 2004). There was also no shortage of protest against caste discrimination in Bengal’s history – colonial Bengal witnessed assertion of Dalit identity and protest in the same way as other parts of India (Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, 1997; Usuda, 1997; Basu, 2003).

It is, however, significant to distinguish that identity politics of Dalits in Bengal cannot be completely understood. The Dalits of Bengal had adopted diverse policies of survival and negotiation in their commitment with hierarchies of authority at different historical intervals. This chapter argues that the identity politics of Bengali Dalits was broken and damaged by the trauma and pain of partition, migration, displacement. Therefore they had to strategise their stay and livelihood in a different way. Here I would like to point out that in West Bengal after partition the fierceness and the arrival of refugees had led to change the expressions of victimhood and struggle. It placed less importance on caste issues, and put more on the difficulty of the struggles and displacement of the migrants. Therefore the caste discrimination was not that prominent, but did not fade away at the same time. The discourse was dominated by region and class. The Dalits were forced to strategise in a diverse way which suited them better in Bengal after partition.

Jatin Bala, one of the eminent writers of that period, portrays truth in his stories. These stories represent the dark side at different level of survival. Some of these stories discover the ache and anxiety of a Dalit person trying to survive in a non-dalit environment. These stories travel beyond any tag. These stories play between survival and death, between nothing and something.

The short story “Story of social Consciousness” by Jatin Bala is an experience narrated by the author had experienced in his life. Once he was invited by the Block Development officer in an annual prize distribution ceremony where successful farmers were given certificates for a good produce, increasing production etc., “ I attend these meeting overpowered by my greed to see those human beings who toil hard to make a living and to know the real India”. In that meeting he met a person from the bunch of the invited farmers whose faces seem to be enveloped in dark hopelessness named Jahar

Sarkar who was the only person to protest when the farmers were asked to smile by the assembled photographers , “Look towards us, smile. Smile a little... smile, smile. Today is a great day for all of you. You all will be given prizes. Awards. Flash a smile at us. Smile. Smile. Let us see you all smile. We’ll freeze this moment”. Jahar Sarkar’s protest reached everyone’s ear when he said, “How do you think we can smile? Since the morning, BDO’s men forced us to come here. We are very hungry. *Mashai*, this is farmer’s hunger...your tea and biscuits can’t help.” He stood apart in the crowd like a wonderful straight-forward man, a new resident in the society. This striking characteristics of Jahar, drives the author to find him in the village to get to know more about the reality better. In the progress of conversation the author got to know the actuality of people’s lives who have come from East Bengal. The whole India is deceased. The religious divide and caste politics provoked the partition of India. The higher castes still hate the lower castes as untouchables. When the author met him next he had lost his sanity after the twenty Dalits were slit by some members of the orthodox Brahmin community. He was still limping around across the roads of India.

“Bloody Scythe” is a short story by the same author, Jatin Bala. The protagonist of the story is Mani Mohan who has a paddy field and loves and takes care of his field like his own daughter. He bought seedlings from Aku Moral paying only meagre amount for it. Mani Mohan’s heart is full of joy and happiness because he has whole heartedly taken timely care of the paddy field, oblivious of his food and sleep for days and nights together. He has nurtured every paddy plant at the cost of his own blood. He felt desolate without seeing his field at least once a day. He thought of the field not only as soil- it was almost like a girl, “if taken care of, it would look more beautiful.” The smell of the soil and the green rice enchanted him.

But Mani Mohan lost the spirit when he heard the conspiracy of Asu Daktar who threatened to harvest the crops of Mani Mohan's field during the harvesting time, and carry them away to his own granary. Kalachand, the long-term appointed servant of Asu Daktar warned Mani Mohan saying "Babu would take the previous year's due in the time harvesting these crops". Though Mani Mohan tried to protest bringing the context of last year that last year no crops were harvested and as a result he couldn't give any share; he couldn't even recover the cost of planting crops. Even Kalachand couldn't do anything for him as he claims that he is just a helpless creature tied to the knot. In the house his pregnant wife could not do all the household duties. On the day of cutting the paddy Mani Mohan was having his usual food in the morning before leaving. As soon as he stepped into the field, he was utterly amazed to see something, though it was not properly visible from the distance. There were five men cutting grains in his field. And Asu Babu himself was standing on the ridge of the eastern part of the field. He walked on looking at the labourers' work who were well-known to him. Nobody was his enemy. He starts thinking about other fellow farmers who were also victim of Asu Daktar's money-lending business. He saw in front of him the inhuman drudgeries of the last five or six months. In the light of new history Mani Mohan clearly got to see what was right and what was wrong. He tried begging to the master saying that if he doesn't get the crops, his children and wife along with him would not get anything to eat. But Asu Daktar did not listen to his words, rather rebuked him with thoughtless words. Mani Mohan became desperate in extreme pain. He could not think of witnessing it without protesting until he is alive. Entering in to the light of a new world, he held the handle of the scythe in tight in his hand, rushed towards Asu Daktar and chopped his head off at once. Before his comrades resisted, he held the bloody

scythe on his head, and there was a reddish reflection in the sky of Madhavpur as the bright sun shine reflected on the scythe.

Atul Mistri, a fifty –four year old man, is a timid peasant and the protagonist of the short story named “Resurrection” by Jatin Bala. He is skinny like an old withered bamboo, almost a skeletal, and Namashudra by caste. The place where he stayed with his family was darker and more suffocating than a cell in any jail. The whole colony looks like fat human being, no colour, no shape. Still better than that plastic covered dirty shack from where he had to crawl out to see the fading sky. He had to work very hard, face miserable poverty, and still the future was not sure. His life has come to this all because religious fundamentalism and caste atrocities. A mind ready to protest- one strong push- changes a human being. He considers the earth as his own mother. He loves this soil, there can be no comparison of mother’s beauty. As he says, “This land seems to me just that. So, when pangs of Partition hits her hard, makes her cry, I feel the pain and cry as well. I bleed. I am drenched in my brother’s blood”.

Maya is the beautiful young daughter of Aloka and Atul Mistri who do not have end to their anxieties. Atul had to go through hard struggle in life. He has to bear the pain of partition, moving from one country to another. The darkness that clouded his heart has disappeared- Atul looks at the world with a new vision. Men look up to him. The new panchayat has chosen him as their spokesperson. He stands for all of them. His son Swapan, who was sent to jail with a false accusation, has returned from jail to. He was successful to get her daughter married with extreme happiness.

These stories provide a wide spectrum of issues and concerns that Dalit people encounter in contemporary social interactions. The caste discrimination is prominent not only by untouchability, or any other discrimination; rather it revolves around many other issues like forcing someone to quit the occupation he/ she is familiar with and

asking to join somewhere else where rejection would come due to lack of experience. In this world everyone is a social entity, no one can survive alone- neither farmer, nor the literary artist, nor the common man. In Arjun Dangle's words:

Jatin Bala's world of story writing has the depth and foundation in his being Dalit, refugee and his poverty- stricken life. Combination of these factors constitutes Jatin Bala's stories.

"Akaipur in Flames" is a short story by Jatin Bala where the author becomes successful to portray the unity among the people belongs to same class in the society. The village is known as Akaipur. At the centre of the village there is Durga temple belonging to the muscle flexing Brahmins of that village. In front of the temple there was a small playground carpeted with grass. The Dalit children of the village used to play there and while playing they did enter the temple. This act was not tolerated by the Brahmins, especially Ramapada Mishra who used to flare up in anger. He aggressively threatened these children of dire consequences. The Dalit people used to live in a cluster in the village and their everyday life got swallowed down by hunger, while back-bending hard labour wore out their physique and killed their hunger.

Being very poor Rajen Gharami toiled hard to earn a living in far off cities leaving behind his home and family consisting of his wife Basona and six month old daughter Sunita. One day while playing little Sunita soiled up the veranda of the temple and her mother, Basona promptly washed, cleaned and wiped the place dry. But the news spread in a lightning speed and she was yelled by Ramapada,

You, a low caste untouchable-how dare you enter the temple and soil it! You Basona Gharami, your daughter Sunita has destroyed the sanctity of the temple. Sunita has to be sacrificed in front of the temple and that dirty spot has to be

washed with her blood. You will have to pay a fine of thousand rupees. Then only the penance be complete.

Basona was very well aware of the unhappy face of a Dalit life. She gulped her anger and replied saying, “She is only a child, she did it unknowingly....even then why this violent outburst?” This added fuel to Ramapada’s anger and doubled it up. On hearing her cries Dalit men and women ran to the temple ground. Words of sympathy rustled up from the crowd, and harsh voices uttered, “Men like Ramapada are ferocious. They can also beat the women folk and are capable of scraping out the flesh from their bodies. Only plain words won’t do, we will fight against them with our blood.” The Dalit folk formed a group and advocated for Basona. Their unity made to gather some dark cloud in Ramapada’s heart. Comments from the crowd like “we have to break the poisonous fangs of Ramapada Mishra” made him shiver. Clusters of Dalit people came forward and stood beside each other like black masses roaring angrily. Even the life threats from his four sons, whom the villagers were afraid of, could not force them to change their decision. As a result the mother and daughter had to be the prey of their torture once they came back home.

Banamali Halder, the head of Dalit folks of the neighbourhood stood in front of the crowd and encouraged them for a protest saying that this evil work just could not be tolerated by them and that is why they must unite. More and more people seemed crop up from the soil and the crowd increased. The masses moved forward with the fire of revenge ignited in their hearts and saved the mother and the child from a dire consequence.

The short story “Seed of Consciousness” is another example of unity portrayed by Jatin Bala. The protagonist of the story Mukut Bakshi with soiled pyjama, torn shirt, colourful hat on his head and a string of bell around his wrist and ankles used to sell

‘laddus’ and other stuff in the village. He was very popular among the villagers especially among the house-wives and the children. Mukut is childless, and due to a family tiff between husband-wife, his wife stays at her parents’ home. He is really very poor and does not have any money to buy his wife a single saree even when he has been wearing a single torn saree for more than six months. But the love and attraction between the couple never reduced, and as a result he had gone to his wife, Maya’s village to take her back home, though he had to face a protest from his mother and neighbours, “No, no, you can’t do this. It’s about your family prestige! Should a woman have such attitude? She was one who left! A woman shouldn’t have such ego. If you beg before her to come back, she’ll forever control you. You will regret it. She’ll come back on her own.”

Deben Biswas is the owner of ‘Sarkar Laddu Factory’ where Mukut works. Mukut and his co-workers had the equal disgusted feeling for the owner, a ‘shameless man’, a ‘money lender’, a blood sucking leech. Deben Biswas knew that the workers did not have enough money to start up another business by their own. He was very rude to them whenever they tried to raise any protest against him, “What are you saying? It’s my capital, my raw material, my factory. You are just working with it. If you don’t like it, leave it!”

Finally the workers realised that if they unite and try to raise a voice together Deben Biswas will not be left out with any other choice but to listen to them. In the fiery glow of their eyes, the workers appear to be united as one, a hard concrete wall. They claim, “This is our demand. You’ll have to give a raise. This is our right.” The unity among the workers saved many lives; a couple could finally be in peace.

“A Montage of Shadows” is another short story by Jatin Bala where he describes the power and strength of unity and how it can change life. One day in the village where

Namasudras lived, someone found a chopped off head of a person in the field. It was the body of Subarana Biswas, husband of Pakhi, who worked as a middleman in buying and selling of cattle. Pakhi had a rotten luck, 'hunger', burnt her within day and night. Pakhi was an orphan, getting educated had never been an option. One day Banamali, a teacher had suddenly paid a visit, "Sister, to know oneself fully one needs education". The day Banamali gave Pakhi her first lesson, she crossed the threshold to enter a new world. She was one of the newly educated.

One fine summer day Pakhi became the prey of a person named Nibaran's lust. She thought that the man was like her father, head of society and a respectable man. Anger, disgust, pain crowded in Pakhi's entire being. She managed to save herself with the power of her mental strength and words she learnt.

There had been a meeting in the village. The literacy campaign had forced their women to get out. Their honour and prestige were at stake now. The locals were divided in two- the fight between light and darkness. She had to go through a lot in this process. The so called men in the village could not accept the crude reality, "Wow, look how audacious you have become! You have grown wings and wish to fly away....I shall reduce you and your dream to dust, cut your wings. I shall sever your roots". Every other day there was another sexual attack on women, another rape. Dirty pictures had taken over television sets, videos and cinema halls. The rebels wanted to nip the campaign at the bud. Pakhi managed to gather enough number of girls to continue the campaign against everything. She motivated and encouraged her girls saying that even if she is dead, the campaign should never stop, they should never forget that on the road to freedom, the odds shall always be against them. Though towards the end Pakhi had to pay for it with dire consequences. She was kidnapped and tortured and taken in to the eternal darkness. In the open fields, under the sky, the fight between light and dark rages on for eternity.

These short stories depict a detailed picture of how unity can be powerful and useful to raise voice against the superiors. The unity can happen class wise, caste wise, gender wise etc. What the author is trying to express is unity is must to go against darkness. The unity of look up towards the sky together and breathe. They are no longer separate, no longer weak. They have awakened in a new world as one entity. The light of the entire world is inside us. We just have to wake up and spread the light. The battle is against illiteracy, against darkness, against power.

The short story “Humanity is Truth” by Jatin Bala is a story about humanity that grows within a person even in most unexpected situation. After a week of laborious toil at the factory, Mohan, the protagonist of the story comes back home to meet his pregnant wife Mira and daughter Iti. He slowly trudges on the grassy lanes underneath the stubborn skies. The author gives a vivid description of the poverty in their life. At one corner of the courtyard resting the old dog in the lap of a tree and Mira is sitting with her leg outstretched with their three years old daughter Iti. It has been a long while since all other people from the factory have returned to their homes. An illimitable strain of bitterness seemed to touch her quivering lips, spewing revulsion. Mohan gets pissed off and utters, “No! There is no peace for me anywhere! Even at home I have to hear Mira’s blistering voice. Mira keeps on babbling noisily stomping on the floor saying, “I am not your concubine that you get past your whimsical ways with me....No, this won’t happen!”

Mira might not be pretty, but she is tall and broad, overall healthy, admirable figure and has a soft, round face with arched long eyebrows. Her tattered blouse, ragged near the underarms, somehow held together with a safety-pin tucked inside. She does not have any sense of cleanliness and hygiene. Mira’s continuous nagging makes him feel horrible to be in the house, as he says, “Bereft of mercy or compassion, even a lifeless

stone seems to court defeat against her cruel soul” and compels him to enter the open door of one of the rooms in the ‘forbidden quarters’. Sitting in the girl’s room he rummaged through a lot of things. He felt agonised in his mind and unconsciously from the bottomless depth of his heart came out the reality of his life’s pathetic melancholia in the form of deep sigh. Both the ‘customer’ and the ‘worker’ were nothing but the prey of this situation. The girl’s anxiety of him falling ill and concern for his life takes her motherly feelings out. As, next morning, he woke up and felt guilty he ran to his home, to his wife and shared most of his experience about the previous night. He also added the fact that the girl is from a decent family. She was sold there by one of her relatives, and she wants to go back and leave that place as soon as possible. She gave an address to inform her father and husband. Though Mira was not much willing to get her husband involved in this situation, humanity inside Mohan pushed him to go against his wife. He wrote an anonymous letter to that address and later on he got to know that the girl was rescued from the brothel through a newspaper. Thus the humanity had overcome bitter reality of life both by the girl in the brothel, and Mohan.

“Martyr” is a short story by Jatin Bala where the protagonist of the story, an old man recollects his memory during the second riot in Bangladesh. The old man named Shridam Mandal is presently staying in India, and he has been a victim of the second riot as he had lost one of his hands during that period. During that riot wild beasts masked in human faces all swarmed into the country. Riots were on in villages and cities. Houses being set on fire, gutted, robbery, a complete collapse of rules, rape, murder and rampant killings without any rhyme or reason. The partition, again and again, acts like a toxic wound on the corpus of the motherland, a wound which is continuously bleeding. Everybody was in the state of agitation. It was like celebrating holi with blood. Even Shridam’s family was not an exception. The rioter entered the

house, snatched his sister from his mother's arms and threw her into the devouring flames of fire. Stripped off all her clothing they took his mother away into a shrub. All of a sudden a hand grabbed his hair and asked him, "You bastard, how dare you live here? There is no place for you people here." He was almost in the verge of death when a person with a round head with thinning hair, a long and pointed beard, deep black eyes, sharp nose came and rescued him.

The very detailed description of the person signifies that the person belongs to the Muslim religion, opposite to the Hindu religion; the riot was between the Hindus and the Muslims. His name is Tofajel. There was no one on the earth to save him on that day. That saint of a man went away after few days, but he left with Shridam a brother, someone to call his own. This is what is called humanity, the very same term on which the entire civilization rests. Nowadays these two families stay side by side, and celebrate the festivals together.

The short story, "The Man Called Ratan" by Jatin Bala, portrays another level of humanity. This is a story of a group of carpenters who work under the contractor Gopal Chatterjee. He is a very mean person and does not pay any heed to the welfare of the workers. He just wants to squeeze the workers as much as possible to get the best result. The protagonist of the story named Ratan, belongs to Namah community, was insulted again and again by the fellow workers and the superiors. He had always maintained a safe distance from the ridiculers. As a result, whenever he can lay his hands on any of his tormentors, whoever that be, does not spare him a hard beating. But he was the best worker among this group. Even his co-workers did not like the contractor much because of his behaviour.

Once while supervising the work of a construction, Gopal Chatterjee stomped superciliously over the scaffold. The scaffold-makers jumped on to the roof of the

portico in fear and confusion. Everyone fled to save their lives. Halfway between the fourth and the fifth floor from a horizontal bamboo pole of the scaffold hung Gopal Chatterjee like a bat. If his feet slipped he would come crashing down and get reduced to powder. If he could not be hauled from above he was sure to die. No one was ready to help. Everyone turned their ear deaf. Rather they began to argue among themselves about who was responsible for this. None but Ratan Dhali came up to help though he was warned by the others that he might fall and die, he did not listen to anyone, and said, "You all keep quiet. I am trying. There's no work in this world that the Namahs cannot do." Ratan was fearless and extended his arm to defeat the death. Once more his victory was proclaimed.

When Gopal was ready to pay him extra, he replied him saying, "What I have done was my duty. It's nothing extraordinary. All men do this for his fellow men." Ratan left the place with a stare of disgust to the contractor.

Thus the portrayal of humanity was done by the author Jatin Bala in these short stories. The whole civilization in this world rests on this, Humanity. It is this humanity which turns a stranger into a relative, a very close relative, someone who cannot be separated from our existence. Human beings always do not get the things the way they want them to, but there is no stopping to lead the life.

"On Water and on Shore" is the translation of the 1996 Bengali story, by Gobindo Shoundo, "Jale Dangai" published in 'Chaturtha Duniyar Galpo', which has depicted the hostilities and life risks of a fisherman, Shashi. All through the story the readers are able to see how toilsome it is to catch fish from the sea as it is able to snatch one's precious life. Shashi is a person who has learnt many things whom sea has taught many things but snatched away near and dear ones from him. But apart from that the story has exposed the very contrast between the water and the shore, as it becomes clear from the

title of the story, Shashi remains in his poor territory in spite of all his hardships while Nagenbabu climbs up at the pinnacle of riches using his money. The story brings tears and thoughts on *Dalit* exploitation in the consciousness of the readers. It has a very wonderful narrative technique to depict the miserable plight of the life of Shashi. The story has a strong comment on *Dalit* Consciousness that follows the footsteps of the fisherman Shashi.

In the very introduction part, the critics have spoken out on the story by Gobinda Shoundo,

Gobinda Shoundo's story "Jale Dangai (On Water and on Shore)" is a sad tale of a poor fisherman, Shashi who gets struck in a tempest during his routine trip to the sea in search of fish. The power relation in the rungs of society is so heavily one sided that the mainstream myth of progress seems a distant dream to this hapless social marginals.

The story speaks of the hostile life of the persons who constantly fight with death to earn their livelihood. The story has mentioned the death of the elder son of Shashi, who faced his doom in a tempest at the sea. For a father, it is unimaginable to feel how grief it evokes to see the death of his own son in front of his eyes.

In spite of these grievous incidents, Shashi constantly struggles for his existence. The people like Nagen Sharma who are, the real demons of the shore are the people who deceive the poor men to execute their purpose. The story shows how Nagenbabu, takes all the profit of Shashi, by creating a bizarre story of the rotten fishes in midst of the story. Shashi understands Nagen's intention and fraud stories at the very end.

Is God yours alone? Deep down, Shashi was seething with anger. So you lost all you had and still the bank gave you all this money? A lie! The fish turning bad, your weeping all these were cock and bull stories.

But he fails to protest and ends up the conversation with Nagen Sharma by a meagre *Hmm*. This expresses evidently the *dalit* numbness in front of their money lenders. Where Shashi is completely helpless, his consolation is only three thousand rupees that Sharma gave to him. Thus, the story serves as a very important element in *Dalit* literature.

The story Farmer “Gopal’s Caste and Creed” is the translation of the 1996 story, “Gopal Chashir Jatdharma”, published in “Chaturtha Duniayar Galpo”, that speaks of a person who is compelled to change his job time and again with caste heading towards and uncertain future. He finds himself being intimidated into giving up his productive land and traditional occupation of agriculture to suit the needs of the rapacious land mafia who wished to change the face of Kolkata and after that he is forced to change deliberately his jobs and sometimes live his life as a coolie, then a mason and finally the readers are able to see that he is living a life no better than he lived in earlier days. And even worse while he is forced by government to give his pond up to them and be a fisherman Gopal Ghosh fights against all these whimsicalities of the society and superiors who always dominate over them to serve their own purpose and when the job is done, never even care about their welfare and refuses to give the pond to government. The entire story shows a glance of Gopal’s hope in adolescence to be a citizen of a giant city. His uncertainty in various jobs, his vast alteration of jobs after jobs that has enabled him to practice among all caste and religion basically among Muslims and his lost hopes. The story shows that in a *dalit*’s society like the persons, who follow the footsteps of Gopal Gosh, there is no territory of religion or caste, the only thing that matters is the unprivileged people are forced to live in one society, the society of marginalized people. Gopal has proved himself to be a member of a society where there is no caste or religion but only the immense scarcity of money. The narrator has gifted

the readers the very important thoughts on their state or rather the life at stake which has a strong impression over *Dalit* consciousness. In the introduction part, the critics have commented on the story,

Makhanlal Pradhan's Gopal Chashir Jatdharma (Farmer Gopal's Caste and Creed) is a moving tale of a *dalit* farmer who has to try his luck in different professions in search of his livelihood.

The very character of Gopal Ghosh has been portrayed with unique virulence and unique perfection. He and his father fall victim to the erroneous hopes of becoming a city dweller as his father, Kedar's illiteracy and extreme innocence led them to lose their lands of farming to the government one way (as convinced by some people Kedar went to the office to put his signature.) But the dreams never came true. This incident has displayed a very common phenomena of our society, i.e. the miserable plight of the marginalized people and how rapid *dalitisation* takes place on basis of economic stability. It is to be taken critically that the government has no concern for them but for their lands and its conveyance. At every step of his life Gopal has seen that actually nobody is caring for them. He had to change his job again and again for supporting him and his family. In course of his alteration of jobs he became a mason which is regarded by a number of people in the society, a work of Muslims. At this point, Gopal makes a comment that exposes the secular mindset of the hungry ones.

Do the poor have any caste identity? Who is going to offer me the job of a Hindu? You give me one. this statement of Gopal evidently exposes, he is not farmer anymore, in fact, he has been intermingled with several religions and castes that has at last left an impression in him i.e. he has only one caste, one religion, it is hunger and poverty.

At last he gets agitated from constant negligence and refuses to give his pond to the government as being a revolt against the dominant attitude of the rich ones. The story turns out some of the royal pictures of our country, somewhat ironical. India, with its constant *dalitisation* and a long barrier between the rich and poor ones can never be the greatest. No matter how loud the cry of the son of the Mukherjee family is.

India will again be the greatest of the world's nations! Gopal's near and dear one try to convince him by such words, —Do the poor have any God? For the poor work is the only thing which matters. That indicates rampant *dalitisation* of have-nots have somehow one way or the other succeeded to diminish the caste related or racial ego among the *dalits* themselves.

It seems, at the end of the story, that India has divided itself into two parts, the rich ones who dominate and the poor ones who are deliberately forced to accept their miserable plight for filling the hungry stomach.

“The Other Jew” is the translation of the 1996 Bengali Story, “Anya Ihudi” by Kapil Krishna Thakur published in “Chaturtha Duniyar Galpo” that tales of a burning ache of helplessness of a number of persons in both their motherland and neighbouring country who become a subject of hatred and deprivation at every sphere of life. The story gives space to Bishtu Pandit, once recognized in his own land as a teacher and therefore a man of social importance has been forced to escape from his homeland in the turbulent period of 71. A different kind of *dalitisation* that traumatizes the innocent lives gets celebrated in both East Pakistan and India. The narrator has vehemently presented the character of Bishtucharan, with the intermingling of his face as a teacher and his face as a father. He constantly tries out to find, “—O Bejo, my Bejo for what then did you leave your home behind? What is your real home?” all through the story. This story is able to open our eyes towards a particular portion of time locked in history and rampant

dalitisation of persons based on religion and residence that takes place even today also at various segments of contemporary society.

In the introduction part the critics have stated about the story,

Kapil Krishna Thakur's *Anyahudi* (The Other Jew) manifests the helplessness of a large number of refugee Bengali families who were driven out of erstwhile East Pakistan during and after partition.

All through the story, lies shadows of shame, deprivation, injustice, extreme level of anguish, sorrow, religious animosity and most of all, political; indifference towards a particular crowd of men. The protagonist Bishtucharan, a former teacher of a village school in East Pakistan stays on even after the partition showing no immense power of patriotic love. However, he is compelled to uproot his family from the ground of Bangladesh due to tragic circumstances of the gang-rape and death of Jhunu, his daughter.

...that dirty, rotten scoundrel Ferumiya. One day when Jhunu was coming back from college, Feru and his mates kidnapped her. Feru wanted to marry her. She did not agree. They assaulted her all through the night and just before daybreak...

Unwanted occurrences fell on Bishtucharan like a thunder. This incident shows how religion has created a barrier of mishaps in his life. Ferumiya took the advantage of Jhunu being a Hindu and mercilessly raped her. The suffering of Bisthu in Bangladesh in this turbulent time shows how rapid *dalitisation* based on religion alienated the minor Hindus, making them extremely trivial on society so that they get compelled to leave their home and head towards India.

Fearing the same fate for his younger daughter Rhunu, he comes to stay with Brajabasi, a former friend and relative who fled in India. In India they are forced to live beside the

train lines. The society and the giant politicians have deserted them of all opportunities and advantages. Not only that they are rather regarded as “Banglu” (refugees) by the people. Still they cherish a hope of a better life even knowing it is not possible. Within a night, it seems a crowd of people living in Bangladesh lost their identity as well as unique existence in society and were marginalized based on religious dogmas. Situation turned more grievous when one day Rhunu, Cheno, her cousin and several other girls of their colony are seized and gang raped by the goons of the local leaders. Bishtucharan’s pathetic fate somehow ignites the fire of anger within him and it comes out in the form of bewilderment and tears and his hitting himself.

All the story depicts how a crowd of people is getting wounded in terms of minority that shows the very fact that it can be either caste or religion or financial power or something else but the consequence all the process of constant banishment and marginal people makes is nothing but the addition of a number of *Dalits*. Bishtucharan’s life becomes an example of a number of people who later realized in the turbulent socio economical bias that they are not safe either in Bangladesh or in India. The partition, which comes out has become a milestone in the history of Bengal to engender a crowd of voiceless people who lived as a redundant section with no individual entity.

“Bazaar”, a story translated by Jayjit Ghosh is a 1996 Bengali story “Haat” by Gautam Ali, published in “Chaturtha Dunuyar Galpo”. Though there is a little bit of difference between two terms ‘Haat’ and Bazaar as to be sure the former term is more humble and native and appealing as well as fits appropriate with the central theme of the story but translated complementary Bazaar can also be marked as somewhat appropriate as it evokes the satirical state of the so called contemporary society. According to the glossary, a ‘haat’ is a village market where goods are bought and sold. It is now evident to all of its readers that the name of the story itself has a strong impression on the

commoditization of women. On the surface, it is a tear evoking tale of two women but layers of meanings lie concealed within the story. One is the employer and the latter is the employee, the former is forced to accept the somewhat immoral and excessive sexual urge and sexual exploitation by her husband who being the money giver imposes all his sexual hunger as well as gratifies his lust from the latter who is an innocent poor village girl and is forced to “Submit to the libidinal demands of her middle aged upper class employer.” The story has received strong reactions from all kinds of critics the state of woman in our society has been highly emphasized throughout the story. A woman’s several attempts to hold their own position in a society and as a means of it, the victimization of several poor woman in the hands of a husband’s lascivious nature forms the very eye catching realistic outlook towards a rotten society where woman are nothing but benumbed creatures. From the eye of the *Dalit* critic, the story is “a story of psycho-sexual urges and impulses.”

It shows now the poor woman who came to a big city with a hope of “square meal and a settled state of living” have no individual entity and a subject to regular and often quiet, normal sexual molestation and still are forced to remain dumb in front of all sexual oppressions.

The story enlightens a very common portrayal of the modern society with its natural phenomena of the supremacy of the haves over have-nots. The mistress of the house and her husband represent the class where money speaks of power and power speaks of lust. However, in spite of having all the earthly pleasures and commodities they were deprived of the happiness of having a child. Nevertheless, they lived happily and the story takes a critical turn when, “The ebb and flow of life one day confined the woman to bed as she fell victim to gout.” At that time the woman started to look for the maid

servants as a household help. All would have gone well unless the salacious nature of her husband has caused a number of mishaps in the family.

The incontinent character of her husband presents himself naked when he discovers that, “his wife had a lot to do apart from cooking. He must help her out.”

Here the author has presented the husband’s abnormal kind of sexual needs from the maid servant. As he is positioned at a supreme class in the society, as he is rich, he can buy his sexual ailments from an innocent girl and accept her as nothing but a means of gratifying his diabolic lust, the very thought has been highly exuberated throughout the story, his uncultured utterance, “This maid has awakened my sleeping lust”

Evidently expresses his psychological insight that has a clear and transparent reflection of the underlying malodour of the sexual exploitation of the voiceless section of the society of the *Dalits*.

The mistress ruthlessly and somewhat helplessly dismissed the maidservant as of suspecting her as the real culprit who influenced him to do such a thing. All these show how a maidservant is being humiliated without any vice being accused by not just a person but by an entire portion of the society.

However, the commoditization as well as *dalitisation* of the woman can be seen distinctly in a particular part of the story where the husband returning home late speaks of a specific bazaar or rather a haat.

“Where did you go?” the wife was curious to know. She was applying lime on betel leaves.

I went to the haat

You mean the haat of our town .||

I heard of it often. It was a crowded spectacle. It functions every day. But they sale only one commodity- dolls.

Dolls? You surprise me, what kind of doll? Her curiosity was unquenchable.¶

Yes- it's a doll. Alright! But it's not made of clay or plastic. It's of flesh and blood.

It should be taken critically how mercilessly the man symbolizes the prostitute at the haat as 'dolls'. Well, dolls have no custom entity, they act according to their owners beckoning. Her husband also says without any sense of shame, the very statement which proves their commoditization, —She is yours till there's money in your pocket.¶ Thus this symbol barely exposes the fact that how the large crowd belonging to the lower class dolls of —flesh and blood¶ are forced to act acquiescent to their superiors in spite of all the humiliations they face. They have no soul, no organs, only a bare structure is the possession of them. They are accustomed to act on their superior's wish. This very social practice has been turned out time and again in the story. The mistress just wants to hold her family with all her power. She makes desperate attempts to save her husband from being a subject of insult from her society. That is why, she exchanges a number of servants in the house. The fatherless girl of the village who came with a dream of a square meal and a settled state of living was handed over to the mistress of the house as a servant considering their affluence. The author himself states somewhat satirically,

“it was an affluent household and there was nothing to worry about.”

As if affluence and riches itself engenders courtesy but the real scenario became absolutely ironical to the statement. The girl leaves to her mother being a victim of her master's abusive lust.

At the very last paragraph the author again gives a stinging attack when he speaks humbly, “While reading Saratchandra one fine morning the woman again complained to

her colleague about her gout. She must have a chirping chick- a maid young and buxom.”

The very writer, who spoke of the *Dalits*, of the subalterns the people with the smell of mud, the people with the odour of sweat, can't even leave an impression on an educated woman living in a high class society. Here throughout the story, not a few women but an entire segment of a society has been victimized in the sinister hands of their superiors.

The story gives rise to a number of questions:

1. Is really money an answer of all abusive deeds?
2. Why the women, especially the poor women are being victimized in the hands of the powerful?
3. Why are dream of a square meal turning into a nightmare?

Society remains mute while confronting these questions. There is no answer to it rather the husband's attitude towards the women of the lower class the mistresses several attempts to conceal her helplessness and the author's satirical statements gives a slap in the face of reality, in the face of the society gone wrong, with its false conventions.

“Survival”, is the translation of 1996 story by Shayamal Kumar Pramanik, “Ekhono Adim” published in Chaturthya Duniyar Galpo. Though, the translated title of the story “Ekhono Adim” is entirely different from its original one but the title shows an eye-burning reflection of the situation of a person or rather the persons with a hungry stomach. The wise men all are the world have said indeed that man is a rational animal but defacto that very quality ‘rationality’ is attributed to the well fed, well bred, well lived men only, whenever men are deprived of their basic needs, that very word, ‘rational’ erases itself automatically, or to be true even, unknowingly. The story points out a situation just like this where a family is bereft of one of its basic desires, the food,

and living a life no better than a brute. So, how can they abide by the rules of the very rationality? The name of the story, “Survival” has spoken a lot about its content. Whenever men are dying of hunger they can do, anything, even risking their lives just to bring in even a little bit of grain, Raju, the protagonist of the story, risks his life by fighting with a ferocious snake to get food. The story however shows the light of hope at the far end where Raju finally banishes the snake and finds grain for him and for the rest of the family proving the appropriateness of the title. A man goes that far to snatch grain from a rat-hole. This shows the terrible condition of a man, helpless and at the same time to a primitive age in a modern era where situation, time and society makes a man a beast who can never know one day he was a rational animal.

The story has a strong comment on hunger. In the introduction, it is said,

“Such gripping takes proudly proclaim the invincibility of *Dalit* consciousness as reflected on literature.”

The protagonist Raju Rajawan as well as his wife Matia and Sonu here is hungry for a lot of time. The very condition awakens the beast within him; he goes on searching the rat holes for a little grain of food. That the rat has taken. This situation somehow brings tears in the eyes of the readers. However, as the story go we can see, the kind of life Raju have led throughout his life? His journey of life without destination indicates a crowd of people like Raju, who have no other hope but just something to eat. The name of his wife Matia, is also very significant as it shows a person born of soil, is bound to collect his or her ailments from the soil and perhaps end up in mingling up with it. To follow the glossary,

“Matia: literally one born of the soil shows close connection between under privileged people and nature.”

Matia is the embodiment of such persons who are afraid of fate even in an extreme hostile condition. It becomes evident in her statements;

“Are you crazy? Do you want to kill it? Beware the snake Goddess.”

But perhaps Gods and Goddesses pop up in the consciousness of a person till his stomach is full. Raju desperately inserts his hand into the rat hole to get some food. But to the reader's surprise the story has a happy ending as Raju finally collects food from that hole, banishing the snake but this little story speaks of our heart with its constant beatings of our reality with its unblinking glance on sufferings. Raju's father came to West Bengal with a hope- “The soils of Bengal are golden, nobody starves there.”

Without knowing that golden soils are unavailable in the world of an underprivileged man and starvation has become now a must for him who lives in the ground. However, this hope seems highly ironical when we see the real scenario, the terrible condition of this man constantly fighting against his life to get life in the guise of food. In several passages of the story we are able to see not only he but also his wife and his little child has seen hunger as a constant threat of their lives. Time and society here play the role of a silent killer to them as the epitome of death. Raju, though living a scattered life never loses his hope throughout the end. The author wants to show that not some meagre glances, not some momentary tears, but a helping hand full of food is necessary to bring them back to human society. The reader gets a close vision of the life of this people who need empathy more than sympathy. The author shows how struggle becomes evident and a must to a person to survive though they don't deserve the life of a beast. This at the end, the reader follows the footsteps of Raju and sees nothing but the heart beatings of fear behind the apparent desperate attitude, underlying intense deprivation and tears of pain below the apparent inhuman attitude and above all, at the end, the uncertainty of tomorrow shadowed by the happiness and joy of today.

“Shabori” is Bengali story by Manoranjan Barman, that has two protagonists, Rekha and Padma, with the former representing the woman from a city suffering in a remote village while the latter, a woman of low caste, forced to give into the hands of the rogue. The word ‘Shabori’ literally means a huntress. But here in this story the word has a unique existence that differentiates it from taking the word too literally. The title seems to portray an anguished sore face of a woman socially recognized as an incarnation of a low born forced to capitulate herself in the hands of nefarious lust that appears in the guise of Ratan Shashmal. On one hand there is Rekha who faces a sudden and accidental jeopardy as an outcome of her husband’s (the narrator’s) unanticipated unemployment as a result of losing his job in a private company which seems to reduce all her hopes to give her son Raju a better future possible only in a large city like Kolkata. On the other the author speaks of Padma, the shabori who is forced to keep physical relation with Shashmal babu, who killed both his father and husband. The author shows his mastery by showing two viewpoints as well as deciphering the real facts with proper historical evidence. This is a story, a fiction, intermingled with reality. The story shows at last, the utter helplessness of Padma who is unable to ignite the light of revolt as she has no other way-out. The story with its subtle psychological insight, into the characters, loyal descriptions, and showing common mass becoming victims of political agitations usage of proper words, real life incidents, the daily lives, with proper notice towards the rituals adds up spices to its delineation.

In the introduction part, the critics have said about the story,

Manoranjan Barman’s ‘Shabori’ (literally, huntress, here referring to a woman belonging to the lowly Shabor caste) highlights the different standpoints of the two protagonists- Padma and Rekha.

This story uses a large thematic canvas to empathize two individuals, who, for their unfortunate time face utter helplessness in two different standpoints. On one hand, there is Rekha who is basically a woman from a big city like Kolkata, so gradually she can't cope up with the rural cultures and rituals. In the story, the protagonist has lost his job due to the fact that his company is going to make multi- storey buildings. As a consequence, his wife and son, Rekha and Raju had to move to their village. Rekha finds her life utter hostile in this new place. Her fate shows how helpless people like the narrator are becoming the subject of negligence to the authority. It becomes evident when he speaks,

Everybody takes care of themselves these days. The multi storey building would have been made by the nephew of one of the big leaders. And Mukherjee is going to get a flat.

Which shows not just the industrial authorities but also the politicians take advantage of the poor workers and at last when their purposes done, they take no time to throw them off like a garbage that serves as an example of rampant *dalitisation* in the towns.

On the other hand, the story speaks of Padma, a Shabori who represent a completely abandoned caste of Indian rural society. This very picture of a caste, forbidden to entire human civilization and forced to live outside the society.

“I guess they were no mads at one point of time, before settling on state owned lands near the canal at the end of the village.”

The humiliation over Shabors with a false notion that they are thieves from their very basic instincts gives a clear picture of the *Dalit* humiliation in the rural areas.

As a matter of fact, whenever there was a theft or any such crime, the police would pick some of the Shabor men for questioning irrespective of their guilt or in nonsense.

The story also points out, the victimization of the *Dalits*, of the poor ones in the cruel hands of political turbulence and agitation. The death of Pranath Shabor, Padma's husband and Bholanath Dolui undoubtedly speaks of a number of deaths of a common mass who had to pay with their lives for their very common place demands.

“Padma's husband Pranath Shabor on our side and Bhogirath Dolui of the opposition died.”

Moreover, the story gives a final attack to the readers when it aware us of the very fact of “booking Padma by Shashmal babu to fulfil his carnal lust”. The fate of Padma brings tears to our eyes. She had to submit herself to Shashmal babu, who killed her husband. She has no way. The rapid humiliation over *Dalits* has snatched her words. The story provides a clear reflection of a bitter reality that can be expanded into a novel. “The Deceived” is the translation of the 1996 Bengali story “Bipralabha” by Achintya Biswas published in *Chaturtha Duniyar Galpo* that speaks the tension between a priest who sees competition in Gopal Thakur an outsider who pretends to be a sadhu, and low caste Maya, his companion in spiritual practices ends in revenge of the high- caste. The story is written in a spectacular style that bears a humble appeal to all the readers. At the centre of the story lies Monahar Sadhukhan, who, previously a thief later turned himself into spirituality. He was a man of spirituality apparently but lust was deeply lied inside his heart stealthily. Later he finds real taste of spirituality within when his beard are cut showing a sign of insult. On the other hand there is Maya who acts as if the Goddess Mahamaya have spelled a cast over her, falls in love with Dhananjay and finally finds redemption in flying away with him. The story is long with wonderful sketches of public life, character sketches and rituals and beliefs. It has a large thematic canvas that can be easily extended into a fully-fledged novel. The story is laced with the shadow of caste discrimination and caste hierarchy as well as political bias.

In the introduction part, the critics have commented on the story,

‘Bipralabdha’ (The Deceived) by Achintya Biswas is a long story of immeasurable suffering in the life of two *dalit* individuals- Gopal and Maya.

The story ends up with an intense sense of grief that indicates a sense of humiliation over the *Dalits*. The so called progressive intellectuals who proudly assert that the curse of untouchability has left West Bengal forever, should visit the arid regions of the western part of Bengal to get the real picture. The hypocrisy of the political leaders and parties appears naked in front of the readers in these lines,

“They raised the same slogan: ‘Workers of the world, unite.’ But none of them allowed the Bauris to enter their homes.”

Situation turns grievous when Golap, who being a *Dalit* went to protest, only to lie for three months at Dendua hospital but the hospital refused to take his admission which caused his untimely death.

They did not allow us to enter Rupnarayanpur and neither could we go to Mihijam said someone from the crowd. The whole night they just left him unattended at Kulti hospital. In the first hour of the morning, Golap, the son of a Bauri, died, leaving a son and a young wife behind. —He had just wanted water.

This indicates how caste system prevails in the place rampantly. The horrendous utterance “son of a Bauri” by the author has become a somewhat sarcastic one as if this very attribute of him caused his death.

When Maya in the form of Mahamaya, tried to protest against it by speaking out that she will drink their blood, the two corrupt, high- caste person, Nilu and Anamay sent goons to the temple where Gopal and Maya resided and they cut the beard and matted hair of Gopal, trying to prove his futility of spirituality and what is more pathetic,

brutally raped her (Maya). All these shows how caste discrimination walks on triumphantly over dead bodies of Golaps of our society.

“Mukunda and an Extraordinary Love Affair” is the translation of the 1996 Bengali story, “Mahasweta Gramer Mukunda Ebong Ek Ascharja Pranoy” published in Chaturtha Duniyar Galpo, that has used a completely different canvas to picture the heart-beatings of two lovers irrespective of their caste in a village where this evil practice of caste discrimination has been deeply rooted into the psyche of the villagers. The very Mahasweta Gram performs as a location where all the incidents of this story take place. The writer has evidently spoken of our heart and has found the definition of true education. The story however is full of Mukunda’s thoughts and experiences. The story contains all that is needed to make a story truly spectacular in the eyes of the readers. The title has spoken of an ‘extraordinary’ love affair which serves as the main and most interesting part of the story. Susnata Jana, the writer of the story has depicted a story that has touched our heart.

In the introduction, Critics have commented on the story,

“Susnata Jana’s story “Mahasweta Gramer Mukunda Ebong Ek Ascharja Pranoy” has captured the political space of change in a blood spectrum.”

Mukunda here plays the role of as helpless farmer and at the same time he has to bear the burden of his caste, a fisherman that gives him much trouble. Though he is not a fisherman any more, he is still a subject of laughter to Ambar Bhattacharjee, the newly elected Panchayat leader, “Hey, fisherman’s brat, how goes the family business?”

On the other hand, it becomes ironical, when this very person, Ambar Bhattacharjee, in his speech speaks against, racial discrimination and caste discrimination.

Friends, I promise to turn Mahasweta into an ideal village where there will be no darkness, no class distinction. Bonds of love will hold the village together. It

will be a village of our dreams, where there will be non-enmity between the high and the low.

However, the actual state of the village is completely an antithesis to the imaginary place Ambarbabu is creating in his speech.

But in spite of all these occurrences Mukunda finds peace within himself when he sees, Raju, Ambarbabu's son has fallen in love with Amli, Mukunda's daughter. Raju, in this story shows what the real term 'education' means. The writer somehow seems to indicate, a sense of optimism with the fact that the younger generation has gone far beyond the caste distinction and on the other hand love, knows only one caste and that is mankind. Thus, the story though having an uncertain and sudden end shows the light of hope and the death of caste distinction in the time to come.

"Mukunda wondered if whatever Ambar had been saying in his speech had come true after all."

Thus at some point it seems, 'Mahasweta' is not merely the name of a village in Bengal; it stands witness to the psychological transformation in the young representatives of the new generation upper-caste people who desire to transcend the barrier of 'untouchability'.

"Dhani Bauri Gets 'Salvation'" is the Bengali story "Dhani Bauri Ganga Pelo" by Sunil Kumar Das published in "Gram Ganjer Galpo" depicting a very loyal scenario of this country which speaks of equality in the true sense of the term but in vain, that gets reflected in several passages of the story turning the reader's heads to the raging problem of caste hierarchy. The story goes on delineating on a long period of time. And what is strikingly awesome, the story begins at the scene of fag end of it. That is, the ending part pops up in front of the eyes of the readers which make them enthusiastic to gather and to focus their consciousness to look into the picture of the whole story which

takes a long time of almost 35 years to limn an entire picture of unconditional love, pretention, and deprivation. The very word —salvation is identical to get Ganges as the holy river is believed to preserve and ornamented seat in heaven after someone's death in Hindu mythology. The title indirectly indicates that it is quite unnatural for the untouchable woman like Dhani Bauri to get salvation. The story is written in a conversational method of narration. Two speakers Subhas and Nilu, who appears as somewhat modern and neoteric in their ideology, gradually converse with each other, telling the entire story in a unique pattern that unknowingly reflects the caste discrimination and caste hierarchy even among the *Dalits* themselves. Dhani Bauri who unconditionally loved and became the mother of Hiru Majhi, who being a bit eminent in caste hierarchy, fails to be her son he shows a kind of sense of pity and relief after her death indicating her presence in the house as awkward occurrence taking place for a long time. His wife also scorns and insults Dhani Bauri from entering to their kitchen in spite of being a subaltern in caste. All their concern seems to be on her money. However, the story gives a long description of Dhani's life, which serves as a material to reveal the veil of the 'great communists' like Hiru as well as to indicate the inhuman attitude a helpless woman gets all through her life being like an alien in his country. In the introduction, the critics have delivered as few words on the story,

The story is quite unconventional in its attempt to portray the hierarchy among various *dalit* communities. Ironically, the greater *dalit*, a female employee in Coal India contributes her earning for the welfare of the —lesser *dalit* family.

On the surface the story appears to be the biography of Dhani Bauri, of her early life, her marriage, her loneliness, her affection towards Hiru Maji, a number of insults as a result of it and at last Dhani's tragic death. The author at first, gives a faint light of hope, at the very beginning of the story, where Dhani is carried to Magra. It somehow

seems to the reader, that her sin Hiru Maji takes so care of her that he is organizing all things for her salvation. But as the story goes, we come across layers of sorrow and suffering, of deprivation and insult, concealed within the salvation. The narrator at the very first part of the story throws a very suitable question to the readers,

If mere utterance of ‘_hari bol’ could purify the human body and mind, why do the untouchables remain in the same miserable condition year after year? Why don’t they get social acceptance even when they spend the entire Baishakh month uttering -hari bol.

This very question evidently arouses the concern of the narrator, Nilu for the *Dalits* as well as gives the reader a sharp blow on his psyche. It however serves as a sardonic prologue to the story that gives a grievous account of her life full of lugubrious tears.

All false rituals with their camouflaging pretensions appear to be naked on front of bitter reality. Dhani Bauri had loved Gopal Maji’s son Hiru whole heartedly. Unfortunately, she was gifted with nothing except insult as a return the story has a strong reaction towards her miserable condition and it is inevitable that Gopal Maji’s family had never conceived her as a member of their family, the very rotten concept of caste discrimination and hatred towards the ‘below- standard’ people have been deeply rooted within their psyche. It is a very astonishing and annoying fact that ironically, to be true, Gopal Maji and his family are by caste, Farmers i.e. sudras too. But in spite of being a subaltern, they belong to a comparatively higher class than that of Dhani Bauri. So being as citizen of this country which indirectly indulges its citizens to *dalitise* people as following caste hierarchy. They are bound to be a part of this caste discrimination. The attitude of Hiru after Dhani Masi’s sraddha ceremony, towards Subodh, the other narrator indicates his actual nature and gives or provides a repercussion of what he actually used to think about Dhani Bauri who in spite of nor

conceiving him in her womb, loved him as a son. And this love knew no riches, condition and social barriers that society makers create to ensconce their own purpose.

“Reincarnation of Parashuram” is the translation of the 2010 Bengali story, “Punascha Parashuram” by Anil Gharai published in ‘Kak O Ananya Galpo’, that has presented the dire poverty and opaqueness of the dalits in veteran manners by using the allusion of the myth of Parashuram. At the centre of the story, stands Sunar and her Husband, Bhisnath Barlar bewildered by their child’s acute sickness and high fever. Bhisnath refuses to take his child Madho to hospital for cure showing a lack of proper consciousness when his wife requests him to do it. There will be no remission of this fever in the hospital. He even consults and takes help from local Gunins (a sort of witch doctor that shows his lack of any medical education indeed.) Mangala, who after failing to cure Madho refers Bhisnath’s mother as a witch making Bhisnath to kill her mercilessly in order to save the life of his child. At last the child dies and Bhisnath gets a realization of his guilt and manages to pay the ransom of his guilt by killing Mangala. The story has a totally unique approach on *dalit* superstitions which opened a completely new window of subaltern literature. The author, Gharai has chosen a peerless theme and content to narrate that makes the readers eyes glued to the worlds from beginning to end. Specially, the revival of the myth of Parashuram into their story has added a special flavour to it. It can be well said that the story is extraordinary in approach, humble in choice of words and at the same time very appealing to its content. The story brings out a completely different aspect of life of the *Dalits*. It shows how after celebrating 70 years of independence *Dalits* are plunged into a pool of ignorance and superstitions. The story exposes the affected race of the *Dalits* as a consequence of illiteracy they turn a deaf ear towards mass education and therefore fall victim to the rampant *dalitisation* that occurs by taking the advantage of illiteracy. They are

compelled to remain in the clutches of sorcerer. Even sometimes the situation turns so severe that they keep more faith in sorcerer than the doctors when Bhishnath's father suffers from terrible ache he never utters a word about the hospitals rather says,

“...hold me and carry me the bushes. I know the herbs and plants. You just grind the roots of herbs I identify and feed me the paste.”

The lack of sense has a strong comment on the very *Dalit* consciousness his father's indifference towards proper education seems to be got infiltrated in Bhishnath that bars him from taking his son suffering from high fever as he thinks.

“Which disease has been cured in the hospitals as yet.”

This statement evidently evokes his ignorance but simultaneously it also displays the degenerated condition of the hospitals which —knowing that the *Dalits* have no other way out but to go there— leads a diseased person to death. This lack of proper consciousness compels him to take the hasty decision of consulting Mangala to cure his son that lead him to the consequent catastrophe following his son's painful death.

Following the great tragedy of his life Gharai brings out two very important outlook *Dalit* consciousness: poverty and ignorance that is the scarcity of proper knowledge and education. The former is an integral part of *Dalit*'s life as it becomes clear when Bhishnath's family faces constant scarcity of food, the very basic need when Madho falls ill.

They could not light any lamp even after the previous night's rain and storm for want of Kerosene. Not only kerosene, everything in this village was scarce- rice, dal, makai atta, even edible wild roots and dried mahua.

The write in this story also exposes the fact that in our society, Gunins also are included among the powers that dominates over *dalits* in the name of God and makes prices of *dalitisation* go unfairly rampant in society.

Mangala, the Gunin, not only economically exploits Bhishnath but also, poisons his mind. Influenced by his word Bhishnath kills his mother suspecting to be a witch that harms his son. His deeds lead him to a realization of guilt when he finds his son dead after his mother's unwanted death.

Thus, the story has shown a completely different view of obstacles of a *Dalit's* life that force him to remain at the minimum level. Gharai gives a taste of salvation at last by the death of Mangala in Bhishanth's hand as the death of fears and drastic exploitations, the real witch of their life.

"The Story of the Grey-eyed Oil-fry Seller" is the translation of the 2003 Bengali story, "Bara Bhaja, Kata Chokh o Bankim Badhuker Galpo" which was published in "Srestho Galpo". Nalini Bera has presented the readers almost a tear evoking grievous tale (or rather reality) of Parva Bisoi as to expose a natural phenomenon of superstitions in the rural areas that haunts the lives of destitute old woman with an explicit sense of indignation towards hatred disloyalty and betrayal from once decadence, that plays a mammoth part in the *dalitising* a large amount of poor old persons brainlessly. The story has its narrators Nalini who reminisces his past memories that encircles his friend Bankim, the village boys, an important examination, and most importantly Parva in a nostalgic mod and at the end gets despondent, finding out a sharp contrast between his past and the reality of the present. Parva, for all her affection towards Bankim, receives the reward in the form of getting beaten black and blue receiving the title of a 'witch' and at the same time complete alienation from the family. She had nurtured with all her heart. The story thus reflects the bitter truth of the reactions gone wrong as a result of some amiss and erroneous ideas of witchcraft that happens often in the remote areas even after passing and celebrating 70 years of Independence. Nalin Bera has appointed

a wonderful narrative technique that never loses the local colour of the area he is describing.

The story gives vent to the villager's false notions on the presence of witchcraft that harms the lives of the poor woman as visual as also been echoed in Anil Ghara's story, "Reincarnation of Parashuram."

In the introduction, the critic says,

"...the theme of ingratitude and betrayal of trust becomes quite apparent in the evolving relationship of Parva, the mother surrogate and Bankim Badhu, an ungrateful wretch."

Parva, who in spite of not being Bankim's biological mother finds the case of motherhood with her affection towards him, but at the end of the story Bankim throws her out of his house. Her complete isolation arouses sympathy in the reader's heart. A widowed woman, poor and helpless and can easily be regarded as a witch in a remote area. In the villages, not only in Midnapur but throughout West Bengal, the lack of proper education, plagues the areas, plunging them into a dungeon of superstitions. In the very beginning of the story the narrator gives an account of witches he had seen in his childhood.

I can remember Kamarburih (the old woman from the blacksmith family), Laitan's mother, Maliburih (the old woman whose name Malina was shortened to Mali) and Barikh, all known witches.

It shows how time changes and nothing happens at all. The erroneous thoughts on witchcraft mainly in the marginalized society remains as it was in the days of narrator's childhood. As a result, women like Parva are misjudged even committing no sin at all. This is the tragedy of our modern civilization.

“Friendship” is the translation of the 1996 Bengali story “Shakhya” by Taraknath Majhi, published in Chaturthya Duniyar Galpo which provides us the opportunity of experiencing a unique narrative technique that is rich with a fervent psychological overtone, as well as the underlying rapid use and throw of common people that *dalitises* and at the same time alienates them from the mainstream. The story has a strong comment on *Dalit* Consciousness that, at last proves the fact that in spite of having rivalry at youth, Gayanath and Majed Mian, a *Dalit* and a *Dalit* are actually into the same circle of immobility that has halted their previous glory as well as animosity irrespective of their racial variances. Gayanath dreams of his death and in the dream he himself makes all arrangements alone, indicating his alienation and utter helplessness in the face of raging attacks of old age and insult. The author has, shown his mastery, by enabling the reader to have a pictorial effect of all incidents that go on rapidly. Gayanath, with a surging ache of superannuation finds him completely powerless in dream as well as in reality. Compared to him, his rival Majed Mian lives happily and content devoting himself to the spirituality even after losing his son. The theme apparently seems to be one day drawing of the life of a person, cursed with old age and depression but the underlying melancholy of the death and decay of thousands of people as a consequence of political agitation goes parallel with it. Gayanath has found flavour of friendship in his former enemy and at the same time faces strong and bitter reactions and responses from his near and dear ones like his daughter, in love. the story gives a faithful representation of the futility of expensive political theories and political parties that fails to produce any good impact on the real proletariats, the insignificance of the racial animosity as the title has mentioned has finally, the constant sufferings of poor man irrespective of the change of time and rule, even in democracy as in autocracy.

It is to be noted that Taraknath Majhi is not a familiar face in the field of *Dalit* literature like Anil Gharai rather an unknown persona who has tremendously made the story smell of intensity of the sufferings of a *dalitised* individual. The critics have commented on the introduction

In his story “Shakhya” we notice the unravelling of a unique kind of consciousness. He has skilfully arranged the sequence of numerous political strives and conflicts in the Gangetic plains of West Bengal.

The story starts with a strange and at the same time very unique dream of Gayanath where he watches himself arranging for his death ceremony. Chopping woods and placing them in order over him to light a fire so that his body could be properly burnt. However, this Endeavour of him to make all arrangements alone even his death includes the underlying estrangement from human society as a result of old age in his subconscious mind. He had been of worth when he was young, and laboured a lot under the zamindar Mitra as a fighter. Time changed and vigorous youth burnt to make the ashes of old age. Now Gayanath is absolutely of no worth. His son and son's wife scorns him all the time, “can't you work and earn your living?”

It seems that the younger generation has rejected to recognize him as a part of society and has a somewhat *dalitised* him in spite of having a decent social recognition. Set in the backdrop of political agitation, and triumph of democracy, the story also attracts the attention of the readers to the very fact that the poor raging problem of political agitation. For every revolution, it demands loss of large amount of blood and what is a fact that the blood always sheds from a fragile body of the persons constantly suffering from poverty, who come to this field to fight only with a hope of a little bit of money and a land to live decently. Whether it is a twentieth century political theory of Marxism or age old autocracy, no one, considers the price of a death of a poor person as

a worth. Majed Mian, who later finds peace in spirituality on course of conversation avouches horrendously the bitter truth,

...we were stick fighters in the days of the kings and zamindars and we are still stick fighters in the days of the party leaders...They used us and thrived that way.

The superiors in the social stature gives them worthwhile they have power in physique, and whenever they fail, getting old, they just mercilessly throw them away. The rapid *dalitisation* irrespective of caste and caste and social strata mainly based on wealth and worth has however broadened the very term '*dalit*' and simultaneously represented the helpless condition of the *dalits*, in cruel hands of socio-political agitation and sudden change of authority, a universal catastrophe.

"Munnali" is a 1988 Bengali story by Manohar Mouli Biswas published in 'Krishna Mrittikar Manush'. In this tale, the translator has not changed the Bengali title of to restrain the very effect of the story. It is named after the main protagonist, Munnali, an adolescent with a huge hope of going out of the trash in which she is living. The life society provides her seems to the readers a hell, all her hopes lie on a specific Bishubabu who, though not actually present in the story, performs a very important role in bringing out the true nature of these kind of people. The entire story gives the readers a very brief description as well as consisting a very small plot, which ignites a light to give an honest scenario of India and oppressed ones. The story presents the two pictures which seem to be a bit awkward but at the same time true, Munnali, being a slum dweller cherishes a dream of seeing the light of the town of development but at last all hopes go astray as Bishubabu goes out and it becomes evident that he will never return there in any *puja*. Simultaneously, there is another incident that gives the reader a shock i.e. Munnali's father wants her to marry with the son of Kanna Hella just because he

is greater on caste. It shows how, Kansiram, Munnakli's father though being a part of racial discrimination, himself abides it by blindly without any proper reason. The author has taken up a brief slice of life just to show how a girl feels victim to a foul social system even now in this century. The narrative style and descriptions are honest and at the same time are examples of sheer prosaic art. The author has however shown his mastery by adding a beautiful line at the end,

“Those who grow up in darkness look better with the ornaments of darkness.”

As being a moral to the story it shows how frail, how fragile dreams are as it holds up the dreamers in air and it aches a lot when that 'fragile' and somewhat 'socially forbidden' dream ultimately breaks up smashing the dreamers in the firm ground.

In the introduction, critics have said about Munnali,

“It is a touching tale of an individual who is cruelly reminded of the insurmountable social barrier even in modern times.”

The story of Munnali makes the readers to give a close vigilance on the psychological and social condition of *Dalits*. The story begins with a skyscraper dream of Munnali.

I will not stay here. First I will go to Kolkata, then cross Howrah Bridge and go straight to Mumbai by catching a huge train...No I will not stay to this dirty hell of yours...not any more. Just you see.

It shows how a poor girl is trying to get out of her dirty territory and gradually fighting against all her conditions but her dreams get suppressed by Nathuni Aunti in a harsh voice,

“Oh! What day dreams! As if these babus will take a girl from the scavenging community and keep her as a cook in their homes.”

The statement gives a great reflection of the mentality of the 'Bhadroluk Babus' in the mirror of truth. They can give promises even knowing that they can't fulfil them. There

is no place for the girl like Munnali in the city of civilized people. She is as if condemned, forbidden by the creel hands of society to enter in to the world of educated and polished. The story gives the reader the opportunity to look at themselves and contemplate on their psychological structure as determined by the society that inspires him to take part in the evil practice of racial discrimination and judge people according to their caste as well show pity with a sense of hatred towards the subalterns.

It seems as if society has created a strange barrier between Munnali and civilization. As she is a slum dweller, as she is an epitome of poverty, she has no right to make dream of walking in the paths of a city with due honour. She wants to get out of darkness but nobody comes to her to bring her the light. Bishubabu doesn't even care if Munnali makes her way or not. It seems that he has done a great job by just showing her the dream, now he has no responsibility to help her to accomplish it.

Another aspect which is critical to *dalit* literature has popped out when Munnali's parents consult with each other about Munnali's marriage. In this conversation, the fact that Kanna Hella's other daughter in law has eloped with another man who was a cobbler by caste certainly comes out as an important cause for Kanna Hella, to make Munnali his daughter in law. Following the conversation, it should be taken critically that, how years from brainwash both from society and religion has made his false beliefs so firm that he even refuses to recognize Bhulo's son with whom she has eloped with, as a renowned one in spite of becoming affluent at last, just before being a *dalit*. This part of the story can be quoted as a proof to it,

Our Nathunui supplies hide to that shop and she says that Bhulo's son is like a prince. He has a thriving business which is blessed by Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth. Bhulo is not a cobbler anymore. The last sentence of his wife's speech irritated Kansiram. He looked sharply at his wife and burst out angrily, "Not a

cobbler anymore! What do you mean? Has he moved up in the caste-hierarchy. He tried to make out his wife's secret wishes and with a note of suspicion in his voice he asked, "Are you planning to let our Munnali to be wedded into a cobbler's family?"

That is how throughout the entire story Munnali becomes a symbol, a face of a broken dream, of a number of women who cherish a dream but at last get forced to abandon it due to miserable circumstances. The ironical moral at the end evidently indicates the author's blatant announcement that society forbids the girls like Munnali to make a dream so big that she can't afford to touch even the feet of it.

"The Son of a Peasant" is the translation of the 2000 story written in Bengali, "Chashar Beta" by Nakul Mallik, published in 'Gram Ganjer Galpo' that has the fragrance of the revolt of the people of the lower caste against their superiors who have undermined them so far. The main protagonist, Sudhanya Sarkar appears to be affluent but in fact, is an incarnation of a lower caste. He is an affluent and wealthy farmer, socially recognized as 'Chandal', or 'sudra'. The people of the higher classes as the zamindar Moti Mukherjee, are used to humiliate and insult the lowers like Bishu Mondal. Years after years they have remained at the feet of the superiors. But the writer in this story has pointed out if this large crowd of people living at the dregs of the caste system are in majority, then why are they getting deliberately exploited by the people living in minority. This very question adds fire to their long ago rage of being the —voiceless section of the society. Even the wealthy people like Sudhanya Sarkar has to face the same sort of humiliation while becoming a member of the managing committee of the school. Even he is bound within this territory. This enriches his consciousness and at the same time he becomes a face of the benumbed people. At the end of the story it seems he has established justice in the heart of the diseased society which —Farmer

Gopal's caste and creed lacks. The writer seems to have elicited the psychological structure that has so far barred the lower people with full of false notions about social hierarchy to revolt against their superiors but cannot hold for long. Sarkarmashai becomes a face of revolution and power of majority in the face of social hierarchy.

In the introduction part, critics have commented on the story,

Chashar Beta (The Son of a Peasant)" by Nakul Mallik is a tale of Bold retaliation in order to establish justice. It is a vehement attack on the caste ridden psyche of society.

That explains the very theme of the story. Nakul Mallik has presented an optimistic view that executes his purpose to arouse *dalit* consciousness. Throughout the story, the traders are able to visualize a mammoth inequality as well as a sense of injustice to the people of the lower caste. At the very beginning of the story, Bishtu Mondal, gets rebuked with a reference of a 'Chandal' for just walking with shoes on in the land of Gomostamashai of Khalia who belongs to a higher social caste and class.

...take of your shoes and carry those in your hands while you walk at least in my fiefdom. You, son of a chandal, you think you have become a gentleman, you illiterate fellow, are you showing off like a babu?

Even what is more pathetic the temple of learning the schools are schools are not free from the territory of social, positional, racial, hierarchy. The readers are able to watch and feel clearly the very social discrimination in the name of God., following Saraswati Puja in the high school of Khalia Village.

...every year, Saraswati puja was organized in the school with great pomp. The students from Saramangal, South Khalia, Satpar and Kanaipur paid more subscriptions but they are denied the right to offer the Anjali sitting inside the pandal. They had to worship the Goddess standing outside and then go away just

taking the Prasad. This had been a matter for concern for everybody for quite a long time, but there was scarcely anybody to lead a protest.

All these incidents show the beguiled social exploits of the people of lower caste, irrespective of their wealth or education by the well- established people un social and caste hierarchy.

However, the endeavour of Sudhanya, to put a stop to all that shadows of injustice, can be regarded praiseworthy as it was next to impossible in such a socio economical ambience. The author has shown a light of revolution among the *dalits*.

The way Sudhanya Sarkar makes the unruly, insulting zamindar, Moti Majumdar, his “bullock”, to give him a lesson is laced with his immense hatred towards the persons like him.

“Sarkarmashai ordered —drag that gentleman, son of a gentleman and bind him to the yoke.”

The story can be regarded as completely exceptional from all the other stories as other stories expose only the miserable hostilities of their life while this story becomes an ideal of the *dalit* revolt. Society always undermines and exploits them, but what if, one day, they get agitated and fight back against them? This story brings out the fore of their constant sufferings in the form of establishing equality and justice.

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Chapter III

Rehabilitation

In this chapter I want to introduce the rehabilitation of the huge number of people who became homeless during and after partition in 1947. This was one of the very first assignments in this country. This event forced to create the two groups consisting of the displaced people based on their location; one who came from East Pakistan and the other who came from West Pakistan. This chapter tries to draw a comparison between the policies implemented to those displaced people as they were staying in rehabilitation camps sponsored by the government. The rehabilitation process of the displaced people in a new homeland is also discussed in this chapter. This comparative analysis brings the issues like “deprivation of one set of refugees and privilege to another”. This work tries to look beyond all the politics and debates around partition; instead it focusses on the struggle of the refugees in the new homeland.

The displaced people or the refugees have been defined based on many facts. Here I am going to discuss about a few of those characteristics. The process of defining them becomes very important as identifying the refugees were necessary to be able to enrol to avail the aids funded by the government. In this process a lot of people were included, and excluded too. In the “Resettlement of Displaced Persons (Land Acquisition) Ordinance” the first use of the term “Displaced Persons” occurred. Here the refugees, who were living in India, were defined by the place they had left, and were forming a new country after the first day of March 1947. This definition was further revised for the benefit of the refugees. The newly adapted act in the parliament “The Displaced Persons (Claims) Act (1950)” had brought a new rule that whoever was residing in the

newly formed country were restricted to have any domination over their property that they had left in their old homelands.

Another point of the definition of the displaced people was based on events of violence. The refugees who were forced to migrate to another country due to communal riots or any other disturbances, and had no land in West Bengal were chosen to be aided by the government funds. These people had no intention of going back to their old land, East Bengal. But there was a certain problem with this act. Though it helped the refugees who reached before the mentioned time frame, there was no provision of help for the people who entered after that. That is why a new revised version was needed. Therefore a new definition was recognised where the refugees came from Noakhali and Comilla, (part of newly formed Bangladesh) on or after 1946 were extended with the government aided fund. People who came from other parts of East Pakistan, and were willing to take up permanent residence in the new country were also eligible for this fund. This made the perplexed refugees to settle down in more relaxed way. But the process was not as smooth as it seemed to be. The government of west Bengal had increased the time period, but to get the funded rehabilitation the refugees had to produce the necessary documents like migration certificate citizenship certificate etc. in case non availability of these documents the “Refugee Registration Certificate”, “Border slip”, “Border Ration Slip”, “Certified copy of National Census Register” were also accepted. In case of non-availability of these documents the status of the refugees were determined by the Sub-divisional officer based on their circumstances. However it was declared that any person entering after 1952 will not be entertained or recognised. In the second revised it was not stated clearly that the refugees will take shelter permanently. There was a hint in the verdict that migration in west Bengal just a temporary affair and they will go back to East Pakistan when the situation goes better. But only in the later

half the state government realised that it was not a temporary programme, rather they came here to stay permanently.

Recognition based on time travel was another feature of the identification for the rehabilitation. A “phase wise migration” was visibly seen in the process of migrating from East Pakistan to west Bengal. The migrants who entered between 1947-1958 were considered as the “Old migrants”. This was the first phase. These refugees were identified as the liability of government as they had moved out of their country due to some genuine and serious political grievance. Most of these refugees were rehabilitated in west Bengal and few of them were sent to other states as well. However migration from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) after 31st March 1958 was considered illegal. The refugees who came after the period of 1st April 1958–31st December 1963 were considered as ‘illegal’. The Indian state could not find any valid reason of migration at this period of normalcy. These refugees had to settle on their own and they were denied any kind of aids by the state. The archival record shows that these people were called “infiltrators” and “fugitives”.

The Hazrat Bal masque riot in 1964 had produced a new set of migrants who were given shelter only for two to three days and sent to Dandakaranya, a place across Chattisgarh and Orissa for rehabilitation. The migrants who refused to go there were denied any kind of help from the state government.

Identification based on rehabilitation was another process of division. The migrants were classified based on their potential to rehabilitation. Hence two groups were formed-the “Rehabilitable Group” and the “Permanent Liability Group”. The first group included those people who were physically strong and there could be employed in some productive work. Thus they will be independent from the government funding. The second group was made for refugees who were physically very weak and not able to do

any hard work. These people were on average seventy years old. These people will be remaining under the government funded 'dole' for the life time. There was another group under this "Permanent Liability Group" name "Provisional Permanent Liability Group". This was for the people who were willing to be rehabilitated under the special circumstances. Later on during the screening process this group was divided into a few different named groups- "Rehabilitable Group" and "Permanent Liability Group", and finally the "Border Line Cases" as a few of them could be rehabilitated if they were provided with a minimum amount of dole as aid. The tag "Border Line Cases" were given to those who were in dilemma and could not make up their mind.

The government of west Bengal had taken almost five hundred migrants to Jirat, an area in Hoogly district with the intention of building a permanent refugee camp in 1950. It was intended to open this permanent camp to facilitate the refugees who fled from east Pakistan due to turmoil taking place there. The number of migrants raised to almost two thousand people including children. The empty corner in the state was flooded with these migrants. In the same year, earlier, another migratory group took place in an area in Tollygunge. This was the sub urban part of Kolkata. Indu Ganguly, one of prominent leader at that time lent his helping hands for these homeless people. He approached the owner of that empty land and managed to get it for them. The land was divided into four hundred plots and was divided among the distressed homeless people. This new colony was named as Azadgarh.

The west Bengal government was reluctant to consider this as a serious issue even after there were problems in the streets. There were variances between the two kinds of refugees. The refugees who were given shelter by the government were in a much better condition than the refugees who had to find shelter on their own. The "camp refugees"

got fund from state government, and the “self-settled” refugees had to earn everything by themselves.

According to Nehru, “...all that was needed was for the government in Dacca to deploy well-conceived psychological measures to restore confidence among Hindu minorities”. West Bengal was way too crowded in terms of people. It was getting difficult to supply food for everyone. The residents of west Bengal anyway had faced issues, but then there were so many new people, the refugees. The state could not entirely rely on the central anymore. Kolkata declared that to be a refugee one has to migrate from East Pakistan before 1948, and in addition to that person has to enrol his’ her name in register to be a “Bonafide Refugee” before 1949. These refugees were authorized to “Relief” and no “Rehabilitation”.

In 1947 during partition a huge section of Muslim resident area was separated from the country. A separate country had come into existence by the name of Pakistan. In this connection two province of the country were divided- Punjab and Bengal. East Bengal and west Punjab were the parts of newly formed Pakistan, and West Bengal and east Punjab continued to be a part of India. The Hindus were the minorities in east Bengal and they are coming to India till the recent date in the search for shelter, and India has been providing the same. As a part of this the government of West Bengal had taken the responsibility and opened up new camps as shelter for the migrants. Establishment of camps in the district of Nadia was the first step towards this initiative. The formation of camps like “The Cooper’s Camp”, and some other camps occurred.

In 1946, just before the partition, a tremendous riot had happened in Noakhali. As a result of that riot the refugees started to move to Ranaghat in Nadia. Around twenty three refugee families took shelter in the Chinese mission camp of Ranaghat during that period. But the scenario changed after partition. A huge number of people started

coming to this place. Therefore the government had to look in to the matter, and arranged the process of rehabilitation. The area of Chinese mission camp was spread over twenty bighas, and it was "...full of shawl, Simul tree, through bushes and kush plants were surrounded by prickly iron were under the direction of the intruded Govt. offices".

It was important to take permission from the head to enter the camp as it was guarded by the strict security system. All the entrances were always under surveillance of the security guards. The offices who were taking care of the shelter decide to rename it:

East Bengal is a variegated complexion of the glamorously beautiful land of a folktale. The presence of the sign of beauty or the handsome complexion of the beauty of East Bengal is also noticed in body, mind, education and culture of the refugees coming from the different districts.

This is how the initial camps were established. The number of migrants started to grow gradually, and the government of west Bengal had to build a lot of new camps in and around those areas. Many refugees were later on rehabilitated to places like Dandakaranya, Nainital, Andaman, Andhra Pradesh outside west Bengal. Thus these refugees had become a part of main stream in India. The situation in refugee camps was not very favourable to the refugees.

"Refugees in Dandakaranya" (1981) by K. Maudood Elahi is one of the initial articles to bring up the issues of Dandakaranya in the front. After a long period "Bengali Refugees at Dandakaranya: A Tragedy of Rehabilitation" (2000) by Alok Ghosh brought forth the nonchalant attitude of the government in the focus. This attitude of the government pushed the lives of the refugees in more trouble and misery. The rehabilitation mishap was also not quiet in the land of Andaman. A lot of chaos was

also formed at that place. Udit Sen in her works portrayed the issues of Andaman very well. A few of her notable works in these areas are "Dissident Memories: Exploring Bengali Refugee Narratives in the Andaman Islands", "Refugees and the End of Empire: Imperial Collapse and Forced Migration during the Twentieth Century", and "Citizen Refugee: Forging the Indian Nation after Partition". "From Dandakaranya to Marichjhapi: Rehabilitation, Representation and the Partition of Bengal (1947)" by Debjani Sengupta is also one of the distinguished works in this to know more about the experiences in Dandakaranya. A lot of migrants were frustrated at Dandakaranya due to the lack of proper infrastructure, and slowly they started to leave that place and coming back to West Bengal. In 1977 on the way to this they found their ghetto at Marichjhapi in Sundarbans area. The Marichjhapi massacre occurred in this place. The thousands of returnees from Dandakaranya were shot at by rising political party at that time. It has been compared to the Jaliwanwallabagh massacre too (Ghosh 1999: 8). A lot of prominent literary works talk about this painful massacre, to name a few "Marichjhapi Kanna" by Sibnath Chaudhuri (2004), "Marichjhapi: Udbastu Kara ebong Keno?" and "Marichjhapi Naishabder Antahraley" (2002) by Jagadish Chandra Mondal (2005), "Aprakashito Marichjhapi" by Tushar Bhattacharya (2010), "Dandakban thekey Sundarban" by Sandip Bandyopadhyay (2010), "Marichjhapi: Chhinna Desh, Chhinna Itihaash" (2009) and "Nijer Katha-y Marichjhapi" by Madhumoy Pal (2011). Alok Ghosh's article, "Bengali refugees at Dandakaranya: A Tragedy of Rehabilitation" says a lot about the massacre in the very title itself. This article also points out the inhospitable environment of Dandakaranya and questions if that land was a like lab for the refugees for social experiments.

The refugees moved toward the West Bengal with a better hope getting a new shelter and pain in heart of the massacre and the Home they had left in East Bengal. But

unfortunately these people were of no luck. The refugees were denied shelter and help after coming to west Bengal by the government. They were left with no choice but to get back to that barren land.

The complication of the refugees was categorized into two— “Initial Relief” and “Subsequent Rehabilitation”. The temporary government office camps were set up by the borderline of the country from where the refugees used to enter. To avoid any further issues the refugees were given a token or slip after proving their identity as “fresh arrivals”. These slips were very important and helpful for those refugees who did not need any basic help from government like food, shelter etc. these refugees could avail loans from the institutions showing these slips as a proof of their identity, refugee. A different set of slips were issued to those who needed basic help from the government. These slips allowed them get entry in the refugee camps. After getting admission in the camps these people were questioned further to divide them according to their occupation. In these camps they could get basic amenities and maintenance from the government showing their individual cards.

Camp life did not assure of getting any jobs. Therefore the rehabilitation was important. The government tried to facilitate these people with some kind of jobs, hence divided them into separate groups of “Urban” and “Rural”. The Rural people were further sub categorized into two groups-“Agriculturists” and “non-Agriculturists”. The “Agriculturists” were given both homeland and a land for cultivation in addition to that, where the “non-Agriculturalists” were only given homelands and an amount as loan to start with a new business for survival. A maximum loan of five hundred rupees was allotted to them. The agriculturists group also got some amount as loan to buy cattle and other necessary things. The urban group of people were given a different kind of loans like house building loans, business loan etc. the district magistrate was given power to

grant these loans. The ministry of rehabilitation shares that the migration was a nation level issue, and therefore other states also should extend their helping hands. In this situation states like Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Orissa, Rajasthan, Mysore and Tripura had extended help with providing lands for the refugees. The migrants who did not agree with the schemes of government were provided with “dole” for six months, and then left to the hands of government.

Manoranjan Byapari, one of the most dominant writers of Bengali Dalit Literature, and one of the main authors of the texts I have selected for this project, was a refugee of Siromanipur camp, Bankura. He recollects in his autobiography that during his stay in the camp notice were put up frequently for almost a year to register their names for Dandakaranya as the camps were about to shut down. The family of Byapari did not put their name in the list, and as a result they became homeless again, the second time (Byapari 2012). The migration of the refugees was still continuing till then. After 1964 a new policy was considered. The refugees who were migrating around that time were directly picked up from the border, and were sent to the rehabilitation areas like Dandakaranya, Mana (a place far from Dandakaranya) etc. states like Assam, Tripura Andhra Pradesh eventually withdrew themselves from providing help to the migrants.

A better planning could have helped the migrants in better ways. The Bengali dailies at that time like “Jugantar Patrika”, “Anandabajar Patrika” projected detailed description of these situations on a daily basis. Later on “The United Central Refugee Council” was formed to protect the migrants coming to West Bengal. The detailed survey of this could be found in the "Alternative Proposal for Rehabilitation of Camp Refugees in West Bengal.

Shyamal Kumar Pramanik's *Survival* reveals with luminous clarity the vicious struggle of Dalit lives. It is an epic saga of the central protagonist, Raju; Raju's combat with a deadly snake for his survival is the central theme of the story. The snake has occupied the hole to collect a little amount of grain it contains. Raju targets the grain despite knowing the very fact that the snake may snatch away his life merely with a single bite. Raju, however, prefers death by snakebite to death by persistent hunger. He challenges the snake in his struggle for survival. Raju's son, Sonu repeatedly implores him not to go against the snake and Matia, his wife requests him to leave that hole and find a new one nearby. But the man is so grimly determined to take out the grains from the whole that he hardly takes into account of their repeated pleadings. The reason is clear for Raju. He knows that the hole must have contained more than five kilograms of grain. He knows it very well also that the same amount of grain can be the staple for the next two days or so. The responsibility of being one's father and one's husband falls deeply on him and he must feed them.

The adamant Raju advances to approach the snake. Matia, his wife and Sonu, their son advise Raju not to kill the snake as he should be aware of the snake goddess. He, in a determined and quite logical way, rationalizes the fact, "We too are creatures of God! If I don't send it away, how do we survive?" (Singha and Acharya, "Survival" 143). He is determined to kill the snake "No! I won't retreat! I will kill it today if that is the last thing I do!" (145). The battle between Raju and the snake is the battle between life and death itself. Indeed Raju's fierce combat with the snake is his combat with the very death. The snake here symbolically represents the agent of destruction for Raju and his family. Finally, Raju wins the battle. He snatches life, not only for his own but also for the other two members of his family from near death. Plunging his right hand inside the hole, Raju takes out the snake's head outside the hole. The entire body of the snake is

coiled around his hand in a vice-like grip. The struggle between life and death has been consummately presented by the author. At last the victory falls upon Raju after the fierce battle with the snake.

This is the life of every Dalit in society. The story becomes a microcosmic version of the macrocosmic world of every Dalit life. Sufferings and the lived experience, the two chief components of Dalit life are the primary elements of the story. A Dalit in this society has to battle for his existence. Life is not at all a bed of roses for the people like Raju. The battle of life is ever-challenging and once one fails in this battle the death is his due. Raju's bravery and determination to snatch the grain from the hole deserves approbation. This fierce struggle between the snake and Raju has been presented with singular artistry by the narrator. Dalit literature deals with the life-struggle of these people like Raju. Dalit literature feeds on a realistic and authentic portrayal. Thus the traditional aesthetic consideration, with the emphasis of external beauty of art, is hardly to be discernible here. Most of the body of Dalit literature generates from the very pain, injustices and exploitations of the Dalit life. This realistic portrayal is life-affirming and akin to such life that is lived by the Dalits. Their life itself is a saga of pain and sufferings. We see such a world where pain and suffering is the permanent reality. Such a struggle is synonymous to hell for the individual. The most important aspect of such a representation is purposive in nature as it minutely and authentically portrays the living reality of the Dalit people like Raju. Such representation brings before us a strong sense of resilience on the part of the protagonist to win the battle against all odds. Death is here represented in the form of a venomous snake. The protagonist is determined to win the battle against the evil force of nature— the snake. He says with conviction, “No, I won’t retreat! I will kill it today if that is the last thing I do!” (145). This strong sense of determination and revolutionary attitude makes the protagonist, Raju, a larger-than-life

figure. Readers seeking aesthetic quality in the text will not find anything that can appease the aesthetic palate of their mind and heart. But that does not mean that the text is devoid of any aesthetics in it. This text, like most of the other Dalit texts, cannot be or should not be judged through the traditional canon of aesthetic principles. The very sense of beauty lies in perceiving the beauty in their life struggle. This is also the truth for people like Raju. The life they live in is full of sorrows and sufferings– the *Shivam* for these people like Raju.

This sense of alternative aesthetic beauty is strongly evident in the story “Munnali” by Manohar Mouli Biswas. This is a poignant tale of a little Dalit girl and her untouchable community. The story, like the former one, *Survival* becomes the microcosmic vision of the macrocosmic Dalit world. That the dream of a Dalit girl is of no value is been presented before us in consummate artistry by the narrator. The tale is a staunch critique of the *bhadrolok* higher class and as well as higher caste society of Bengal in particular and that of Indian in general. This realistic and authentic portrayal of the whole society poses a challenge to that imaginative and romantic literature that represents childhood in a different aspect. The world in which Munnali and the other children of her community grow up is far removed from the world of the children of upper caste and upper class. They don't know the propriety and decency which are considered to be some of the basic ingredients of a polite and sophisticated society. Rather the language and the attitude of Munnali as well as the other members of her community are harsh and are devoid of any decency and decorum. Their world is a hostile place for them to live in. They are far from any cultural sphere of modern civilization. The narrator of the story has given a graphic detail of the filthy atmosphere of the place where Munnali and other children of her community grow up:

The entire locality is filled with the stench of rotten filth. But Kansiram was not bothered. Even the stale air coming from the canal heaped with garbage couldn't repulse him. He accepted this as a part of his daily life and so just like any other day; he walked back to his home that was one of those shanties somehow erected on the slope beside the dirty canal. On the other side of the canal stood the garbage heap like hill over which vultures and hawks hovered. The children who were shouting the crows away to make a living out of this pile of garbage were mostly Kanshiram's children (Singha and Acharya, "Survival" 101).

Munnali's father Kanshiram takes bath in that "stinking canal" (101) for "refreshing and purifying himself after a day's work" (101). Battling against poverty is the day-to-day affair for the Dalits like them. The "makeshift stoves made of bricks," "broken cup", and fires out of drenched straw symbolically represent the acute poverty of Kanshiram.

R.G.Jadav at the very end of his essay entitled *Dalit Feelings and Aesthetic Detachment* rightly argued:

I am aware that Dalit literature is deeply immersed in life's struggle. The actual Dalit world is filled with dreadful, terrible, humiliating events. Dalit writers cannot escape being physically and mentally to this world. Dalit writers are doing the difficult work of portraying this life, through personal experience and empathy, absorbing it from all sides in their sensibility. To live this life is painful enough; it can be equally painful to recreate it on the mental level. Dalit writers are deeply involved in this process. It is not easy for them to eradicate themselves from it and write. The creation of literature has its own laws. Higher literary creation is possible only based on these laws. Those who have the right to say that 'our humanity is our burden' can easily master these rules of literary art. The gift of art can never be as heavy as the burden of humanity. (310-11)

Munnali dreams of becoming a maid in a *Bhadralok babu's* household. It's her mother's dream too. But in reality, it is quite impossible as she belongs to an untouchable community. Even an eleven-year-old girl knows this harsh reality. An elderly aunt of Munnali's community also laughs at her when she comes to know the impossible dream of Munnali. But one thing Munnali does not know. She does not know why *bhadrolok* people treat them as untouchables. Why can she not be a maid in a *Bhadralok babu's* home? Who has set this rule in our society? These are the very questions that baffle Munnali. The other girls of her community also desire to get away from the 'stinking hell' and get the job of domestic help in some of *the Bhadralok babu's* home. It is their low station of life that bars them to have kitchen entry of the social elites even in modern time. Munnali's dream shatters at the end of the story when she comes to know that the *Bhadralok* Bengali babu leaves India to a place where everybody speaks in English. Munnali's last hope to be a domestic help is shattered and in complete dejection, Munnali felt that the familiar sky is gradually becoming narrower and coming down to her. The last sentence of the story perhaps justifiably sums up the entire discourse of Dalit reality: "Those who grow up in darkness look better with the ornaments of darkness" (Singha and Acharya, "Survival" 103).

The realistic portrayal of Dalit life that defies any logic of aesthetic consideration can well be discernible in Anil Gharai's short story "The Sky of Drought". How painful and wretched a Dalit life is has been manifested here in this story with singular artistry. This is the story of a Dalit man called Nuna Mandi who, having lost his job and not finding any way to earn his bread had to bring home a dead pig that has been bitten by a mad dog only to save himself from death caused by hunger. But ultimately what happens is that he dies after having his stomach full of pig meat in that very night. This is the ultimate reality in every Dalit household. Dalit life itself is a living hell. There is hardly

any scope of hope and aspiration. Sometimes the very nature acts as an antagonist in the lives of the Dalits like Nuna.

In the story of Manohar Mouli Biswas titled as “Munnali”, we have already discussed how the life of Munnali and the other children of her community consider their location as “stinking hell”. A graphic description of her locality has already been discussed in the earlier section of the story. This is also very much evident in another story titled as “Bara Bhaja, Kata chokh o Bankim Badhuker Galpo” (The story of the Grey-eyed Oil-fry Seller) by Nalini Bera. The story revolves around a wretched Dalit woman called Prava Bisai and her tragic predicament. The point I am trying to emphasize is the very dilapidated location of Prava Bisai. The narrator has given a lucid and clear description of the hut where Prava masi use to live at the very end of the story:

I arrived at a very small cottage which was situated to the west of the well with terracotta rings on the slope towards the river bed, a little distance away from Bankim’s house. The cottage had a thatched roof, but most of the straw had been snatched away and eaten up by the crows. The thin layer of straw that remained could possibly not prevent torrential rain from falling in the room. I saw a few woody stalks of a jute plant spread out on the roof to dry in the sun. These stalks possibly served as fuel for Prava when she did her modest cooking. And her cooking certainly took place rarely. Didn’t she possibly starve on most days? (Singha and Acharya, “Survival” 140)

This concept of lived reality that has been experienced by the Dalits of Bengal has been represented in the texts like “Fisherman” by Utthanpada Bijali and “On Water and Shore” by Gobindo Shoundo. The social margins, represented in these texts, are forced to live a life with ignominy without having the slightest possibilities of emancipation from the wretched condition they live in. Their day-to-day struggle for their survival

makes their life more vulnerable. These two stories deal with the lives of the poor fishermen. Virulent sea constantly plays an antagonistic role in their lives. Still, the show must go on for them. They have to go for fishing as there are no alternatives for them. The powerful selfish owners of the trawlers exploit this opportunity to satisfy their mean selfish desires. Thus these poor wretched fishermen hardly become the independent fishermen. They have to fish for these powerful and rich owners and at the end of the day; they get a minimal share which is insufficient to change their lives. However, in both of these stories, the fishermen come to realise that it is due to the various caste affinities they are not united at the shore though they might be a same fisher community in the water. And this broken identification gives their powerful owner to exploit them. The authors have presented the life-struggle of these fishermen with singular dexterity in both these narratives. And the life of these fishermen, as has been pointed out earlier, is miles away from the mainstream cultural centers/discourse.

In Achintya Biswas's fictional narratives titled "The Deceived" several characters using slangs as a common practice. Gopal Thakur, the transformative figure of Manohar Sadhukhan speaks out addressing to a large gathering, "Just move away, you fools. Are you all enjoying the scene? Don't you have a woman at home? Just go away, all you scoundrel!" (Singha and Acharya, "Survival" 3). Later in this story Pulin Kar, one of the characters of the story, chastises his daughter by calling her as the "daughter of a whore" (18). Though he feels ashamed of himself after using such derogatory remark to his daughter and his wife, it is evident from this remark that such language is quite common in Dalit life. Hence in such a sphere where modesty, decency, delicacy and honour are the words of a completely different planet, we can hardly expect any kind of aesthetic beauty. Again, Gopal Thakur, the fake seer, abuses Maya, his accomplice in

the business of God, by using the word, “whore”. The slangs like ‘whore’, ‘daughter of a whore’, ‘scoundrels’, often used by these characters are very common in a Dalit life.

Jatin Bala’s “On Firm Ground”, originally translated from the Bengali ‘Payer Talar Mati’ is a case in point. It is a narrative staunchly critiquing the Caste-ridden structure of Bengal in particular and that of India in general. Bengal is generally regarded as free from caste atrocities. But this contention has been completely nullified here in this story. It gives a different picture altogether. The story reveals how caste plays a vital role in Bengal and how the stigma of untouchability dominates the psyche of so-called progressive-minded people of Bengal.

The story is divided into three parts. The locale of the story is Ichapasar village. The central character of the story, Haladhar Haldar is a Shudra by birth. Shudra is the lowest of the four-fold hierarchical structure of Hindu caste system the other three being Brahmin, Kashtriya, and Baishaya respectively. All three sections of the story embody the incidents related to the protagonist. Each of the section narrates the vicious nature of caste-based discrimination. The malicious nature of the Brahmins of the village concerned has been delineated with meticulous accuracy by the narrator.

The story revolves around Haladhar, a Shudra by caste who has to face a sea of troubles due to his lowly social status, meted out by his so-called social superiors. The narrative is a burning example to assert that the caste atrocity is still a common social practice in Bengal. The untouchable Haladhar is treated by the Brahmins of his village not better than any animal. But one of the important aspects of the story is that here the protagonist is given the voice of protest at the cost of deadly consequences.

The story reveals how a Dalit like Haladhar becomes an object of ridicule only because he belongs to a Dalit community. Dalits have no identity of their own. Public sources of water like a river, pond, and well are denied to them as they are supposed to be the

polluter of the resources through their untouchable body. Ironically enough the animals of the untouchable community had the permission to use water from these sources, not the untouchables! In traditional Hindu society, Dalit has no right to perform any ritual. Sanskrit, regarded as the language of the saints, is denied to them as a mere utterance of the language may pollute the very chastity of the language. By doing that the caste Hindus tried to keep the production and dissemination of knowledge system only in their own territory.

In this story, Haladhar is chastised and criticized by Gokul Chakraborty, a Brahmin, as he sees with utter surprise that Haladhar is performing the rituals of the dead exactly like the Brahmins do. Gokul's mere utterance of Haladhar's name by calling him 'Hala' shows the signs of a master-slave relationship itself. Gokul asks Haladhar in a tone of banter, "What's up, Hala? Are you also observing these rituals of the dead as we do?" (Singha and Acharya, "Survival" 72).

Unlike the mute spectators of the past, now the Dalits have got a voice of protest. Resistance is one of the significant aspects of Dalit literature. Hala, unlike the Dalits of the past hardly remains suppressive; he has got the voice of protest against the injustices meted out to him by the Brahmins of his village. Thus he replies to him with an equal tone of banter, "No master. I am merely watering my corps" A series of a heated exchange of words made Gokul ponder on the audacity of Haladhar, as the Brahmins like Gokul were not accustomed to the unusual rhetoric of resistance from a Shudra like Haladhar. Haladhar's hitting-back to Gokul has created a tremendous upheaval in the minds of the other Brahmins too in his village. Hence, Shyamal Mukharjee, the owner of the village wheat mill, warned Haladhar, "Untouchable Shudra, base-born piece of muck, dare you to talk back to us Brahmins! Do you know the consequence of such defiance?" (73). He, like the other Dalits, is very well aware of the consequence

Shyamal Mukharjee is talking about. Still, he is an independent voice. This voice of protest and resistance can hardly be curved by any force. He replied with insolence, "I am well aware of the consequences, master... But this river hasn't become a private property for anyone yet, and everyone is free to speak his mind. So you can't prevent me from coming here, can you? Nor can you force me to be silent" (73). Haladhar's resistance exposes the typical mentality of the Brahmins when they gang up to warn Haladhar:

Listen, Hala. If you want to stay on in this village you have to respect its traditions and customs; or else, you are free to leave. You can't dishonour our social and family rights and duties. You cannot behave whatever way you please. Your insolence may prove too costly you know? Too brazen for your birth-are you? It will take us a moment to remove the ground beneath your feet. (73)

The second section of the story reveals Haladhar's suffering as a consequence of his defiance that he has shown towards the Brahmins of his village as discussed in the first part of the story. Haladhar is a mason by his profession and he has acquired enough prominence and respect as a mason in his village. He is not only honest but also an unstinting worker. The locale of the narration shifts to Anandapur village, the adjacent village of Ichapur. Bhabanicharan Roy is the headmaster of the village. The commotion begins when the jewellery, adorning the temple deity of Bhabanicharan Roy's house is missing. Incidentally, on that very night, Haladhar comes late as he had to finish the work assigned to him by Bhabanicharan Roy. However, the incident creates a great commotion among the other Brahmins of the village and they pour their malicious gall into the ears of Bhabanicharan. Haladhar is taken to the custody of Bhabanicharan and is forced to conceive the crime which he has not committed at all! He has his calm

reply, “As I haven't taken the jewels how can I return them? I am innocent; none, neither I nor any of my family could have done anything as foul and sinful as this” (75). But despite Haladhar's confident assertion to Bhabanicharan he fails to soften the rage of the man who has already been gulled by the devilish Brahmins of his village. Bhabanicharan, failing to grasp the conspiracy behind Haladhar, orders, “tie this rogue to a tree. Give him a hundred lashes. If he doesn't return the jewellery even after this, shave his head, tar and feather him, march him through the streets and banish him from the village” (75).

This is what the scheming Brahmins wanted. They were just waiting for this very moment to come so that they could take the revenge of their former insults. They pounce upon Haladhar. By dragging him to a neighbouring mango tree, Haladhar is beaten through a sturdy cane. The wily Brahmins cheered with cruel delight:

Say, Hala how does this feel? Now can you reap the fruits of your arrogance of for answering back at us, Brahmins? Impudent wretch! Now, do you see how the river water reaches our dead parents? Dare you defy us, filthy cur? Promise-out loud-you will never return to these villages dead or alive! (75)

It's now has become as transparent a matter as water to Haladhar. He can sense the foul air behind the whole scheme of the affair. The real implication of the incident now comes to the fore. Still, the unfortunate wretch cannot do anything against the brutal perpetrators. Nobody is there to listen to him. He has no other option remain other than bearing the tortures, remaining silent.

The third and very last part of the story is even more spine-chilling. The depraved Brahmins now have cast their evil eyes on Haladhar's wife and his sons. Sarala, Haladhar's wife who has a five-day-old baby on her lap has been chased and brutally raped. These men in the form of cruel animals quench their lust by brutally raping an

untouchable woman keeping their theory of purity and pollution aside for the time being! Untouchability is not at all a problem for them when coming to the point of exploiting a Dalit body. Untouchability becomes an issue when it comes to the point of marriage. Haladhar raves with a pathetic accent “Wasn't there an inch of earth in this wide world on which they would easily stand?” (76). He further continues with similar accents “what ignominy, to live among men who can stoop so low as to hate me only because I'm low born!” (76).

The most important aspect of the story, however, is the strain of resistance that permeates the whole story. This is the very resistance that, perhaps, was needed so that long-prevailing injustice can be eradicated from the caste-ridden society. Haladhar has been treated thus as he is a Dalit. But he has never brooked the torture and indictment without any protest. But the Brahmins remained victorious as always in this battle. The last hope is that they are articulating resistance through the documentation of their pain. The concluding lines of the story reveal the note of resistance of a Dalit man like Haladhar:

Slowly, however, Haladhar found his rage and despair is replaced by a firm resolve to resist as if his battered and bloodied body was being reborn from his lifetime to injustice and suffering to find new selfhood of protest. Haladhar felt that he was the first man of a new world. (77)

In Bengali Dalit writing, the question of protest as a weapon against untouchability is a major trope. This note of resistance is to be perceived in the next story of my discussion –Nakul Mallick’s “The Son of a Peasant”. It is a moving narrative, a powerful tale of an uneducated lower-caste who faces social humiliation due to his low-born status from his social superior. His social superior Moti Majumder treats him as a low-born and chastises him by calling the ‘son of a peasant’. The son of a peasant,

Sudhanya Sarkar is, however, not a common man. He is the *Kattamoshai* of his village. He earned enough respect and prominence as the leader of his village. He is also called the *Sarkarmoshai* by the people of his clan. The entire village reveres him due to his struggle for his men. His deep sympathy for his people earns for him a god-like stature in his village. His self-respect and fortitude in his character is the key to achieving this stature. In a series of narration in this story, he is seen to be the solitary voice against the dominant hegemonic voices of Moti Majumdar. He is the only voice of justice for his people. He hardly can tolerate the injustice against the lower-caste people, the untouchable community at any circumstances.

Thus he cannot stand the statement made by the Steward of Khalia to Bishtucharan Mondal, a low-born, “you *chandal*, the son of chandal, walking with your shoes on!” (Singha and Acharya, “Survival” 114). Sudhanya Sarkar, *Kattamoshai* flares with anger and chastises Bisthucharan by saying, “And you too took off your shoes in no time and picked those up in your hands, you coward! Why couldn't you say, ‘Have I bought these shoes with your father's money?’” (115). Sarkarmashai is the very person in the entire clan who ignites the drooping spirit of these wretched mass and tries to instill in them the significance of revolt against exploitation. It is he who dares to break the age-old custom of offering *Anjali* to the goddess Saraswati, the goddess of learning, only by the upper-caste boys. The lower-caste boys are not allowed to enter into the temple as their mere presence pollutes the goddess herself! He questions the practice and fights for the temple entry. To do that he immediately calls for a meeting and sternly denounces the practice and resolves that in the ensuing Saraswati Puja the boys from lower-caste villages will offer *Anjali* sitting inside the temple, not from outside it. The proud Jamindar flared with anger and retorts, “The uncouth peasants, the son of peasants have no sense of proportions, they want to reach the top of the tree at one go.

Those low-caste fellows have got the right to worship—this is more than enough; now they even want to enter the temple! Never will this happen?”(116). But Sarkarmashai is not an easy nut to be cracked. He sternly orders his fellow men to act accordingly if some scuffle happens when the boys from his community try to enter into the temple for offering *Anjali*. He is so haughty and domineering that he hardly listens to the police who are supposed to be there for controlling the situation. He shows his red eyes to the police too when the police try to stop the lower-caste boys from entering into the temple. He threatens the police by saying:

Do not you go near the pandal, stand outside at the far end. There are only eighteen of you; you would not be able to do anything. You see about five thousand people are sitting in the ground. You don't even have the time to shoot from your rifles. We will hurl you along with Jamindarbabu into the ditch, carrying you all on your shoulders. Take my advice and go back. (117)

Khagenbabu, the schoolmaster of the village advised *Kattamashai* to build a new school for the lower-caste boys as are not allowed to sit with the other upper-caste boys. *Kattamashai* turned down the proposal. He believes that caste discrimination can never be eradicated if the practice of caste remains. Building up a separate school for the students of the lower caste boys, he thinks, and so was the belief of Ambedkar, is not the panacea for the disease like caste-based discrimination and untouchability. He asserts that he can build a separate school for the lower-caste boys with a blink of an eye. But that will be considered a kind of defeat on the part of the person like him. He says with conviction and that has a deep resemblance to the ideals of Ambedkar who was also against the very idea of building a separate school for the Dalit boys:

Mastermashai, I can build a school within twenty hours. But the point is —if we build a separate school, we will be considered defeated. They are only a few

families, or students are more in number and yet they'll swing their lathies over our heads? I wish to challenge them a little; if I build a separate school, whom do I fight against? They will remain above us forever; we want to cut them down to size and rise above them. (118)

Sarkarmashai is the symbol of rebellion and resistance. It is because of him that the Dalit community of his village finds their voice of protest and rebellion against the dominant and powerful persons like Moti Majumdar. He, like a typical Dalit leader, wants a drastic change in society. A change is in desperate need from the long-existing and traditional systems. In an overbearing and haughty manner, he termed the act of temple entry of the boys from his community by saying, "Let what has continued so long change a little" (122). Sarkarmasai is a person with tremendous self-respect. Immediately after he misbehaves with the steward of Motibabu exactly in the same way the steward insulted Bishtucharan Mondal, the village teacher, Sarkarmashai is called in by Motibabu. Sarkarmasai agrees to visit Motibabu's home as he thinks that if he does not go there he might be deemed as 'weaker' by Motibabu. He visits there. But he refuses to sit on a stool or bench when he is offered to sit. In a tone of banter, he replies Motibabau when he is asked the reason for his refusal to sit, "Then you too have to sit down on a bench" (122). He leaves the place without having a conclusive end of their fiery arguments. He haughtily orders his fellowmen who accompany him, "Get up, let's go. Not a minute here" (122).

As has been mentioned earlier, caste atrocities in Bengal, in comparison to the other provinces of India are less prominent. But it is very much a fact that it is not free from it either. Politics of caste is a constant presence in Bengal too. This story is a capital illustration of this very fact. This narrative is a classic example of the note of resistance; resistance against the onslaught of Brahminical hegemony which is one of the primary

ends of Dalit literature. The story luminously presents the vicious cycle of caste discrimination in Bengal. The story also presents how the Dalits do not stick to their stigmatized self. Rather they are fighting back and fighting back harder. And this revolutionary aspect is the staple of Dalit literature at large.

“The Other Jew” by Kapil Krishna Thakur is a crude partition narrative. It’s a sad tale of few refugees from East Bengal, now Bangladesh, who came here and settled temporarily in a slum nearby Kolkata town. Most of these refugees were of low caste and their miserable stories were penned down by Thakur. Partition has remained one of the dark chapters of Indian nationhood causing millions of people to migrate from one nation to the other. Partition has become a saga of bloodshed, murder, the displacement that parted people on the basis of religious lines—Hindu and Muslims. This story is a capital illustration of the sufferings and the rootlessness of these people who are the 'others' in both of these nations.

Before moving into the detailed analysis of the story, let me cite one similar incident that remains one of the dark chapters of Bengal history-i.e. the Marichjhapi Massacre. It happened during 1978-1979 when the regime of the Communist Party in Bengal was at its helm. Thousands of refugees were murdered; countless women were raped and tortured and many were forced to go back to Bangladesh-from where they came during and after partition. The incident subtly exposes the inherent psyche of the dominant high-caste Hindus. And the myth of progressive and enlightened *bhadrolok babus* is nothing but a hollow exaggeration.

Sasthicharan, the central character of the story lost his wife and his elder daughter in Bangladesh and hence migrated to India. Bangladesh being a Muslim dominated nation, he hoped a hearty welcome in India. But with utter frustration, he finds that the situation is not at all same as he expected it to be. Some insolent brute takes away his

daughter along with the other daughters of the slum and treated them exactly what Farumiya in Bangladesh did with his elder daughter there. Safety, for these homeless and rootless Dalit people, has become an illusion. The author in this narrative presents a realistic picture of these homeless people during and after partition.

The story also highlights the true nature of the power-hungry politicians who, for their own benefit act according to the situation. They are always busy in satisfying their own interest by playing double-standard attitude. They are only manipulating these people in the time of meets and gatherings but when the issue of providing them voter cards and ration card comes, they show their true colour. Hence they remain rootless and homeless 'other' here in India too. Their religious affiliation hardly gives them any sense of stability and safety. In utter frustration, Bistu Pandit raves with pathetic accents, "To whom should I say? Who will listen to me? Nobody counts us even as human beings" (Singha and Acharya, "Survival" 85). The very revelation is the testimony of their inner pangs that keep them in a wretched state of existence.

The rhetoric of protest is unknown to them as they don't have any identity of their own. Moti perhaps has expressed the actual situation of these people. He with a wan smile says, "From where do we get such courage? You have neither house, nor land, nor even people who can stand by you" (86). They are neither considered as Bangladeshi nor are they feel themselves as Indians. They are the people having no identity, no home and hence no root of their own. Their religious affiliation of being Hindu bears no fruits for them. They pay the subscription for the Durga Puja here. Still, they are regarded as the outsiders and have to beg for their identity card. An emotional Bistu Pandit's following words to one of the local political leaders reveal with clarity that their religious identity is a farce, "You people are our real friends dada. We are utterly helpless, please save us. If you cannot manage citizenship for us, please do something so that we are at least

considered as refugees. Arrange camps. Bring help from within the country and from abroad. If you feel pity for us Hindus, why should you not do this much?"(86).

The story is a brilliant illustration for exposing the hypocrisy of religious sentimentalism. Bishtu Pandit can clearly understand that the very man whom he believed to be a well-wisher of the Hindus has turned out to be a selfish wretch, exactly like the other political leaders of the area. He implores the man to do something for their identity. But the man is busy in collecting money so that he can build a Rama Temple! Losing his all interest on the man Bishtu Pandit retorts in a tone of banter, "Lakhs of people are roaming about in the streets like cattle and there is nobody to think for them. What a pity! You cannot give man to live his right to live and you seem to be busy with the rights of god!"(87).

These people in India are treated like Dalits. They are termed as the *Banglus* here in India and are the victims of suspect in Bangladesh as the spies of India. Their identity is at stake in either of these nations– India and Bangladesh, the former a Hindu dominated land while the latter is predominantly a Muslim country. The completely broken and utterly frustrated man Bishtu Pandit raves with pathetic accents which summaries the wretched and helpless condition of these Dalits:

No, we don't have any place for ourselves in the whole world, Bejo. You don't have anything to eat; still, you somehow manage fifty rupees for a subscription. They are saying even that has insulted them has insulted them...these are the devil's excuse. I do not know where these wheels will stop-I can only sit and think over it. It seems all that is left with us is this feeling that we have left our home behind! (87)

The poor gullible untouchables are prone to superstition. The powerful god mongers do hand in hand with the political leaders, who belong often from the higher caste society,

to make the lives of the poor Dalits more vulnerable. This is the central argument of Anil Gharai's "The Deceived". It can hardly be termed as a short story. Rather it can be classified as a novella proper. The story evokes multiple issues which expose the hypocrisy of the present society in Bengal. Set against the backdrop of Mithon dam, the narrative moves on and excavates several enlightening issues like –the corrupt political system, the domination of the powerful against the powerless wretched low-caste masses, the business of god and religion, the superstitious beliefs of the poor Dalits resulting to their misery and doom and so on. The primary focus is to show how these powerful mechanics throttle the lives of the poor and how the Dalits and poor are subjugated due to their overemphasis on superstitious and religious beliefs.

The corrupt political system that has been manifested in the story concerned is chiefly instrumental in keeping the Dalits under the belt. It is a generally accepted fact that Bengal always been the reigning grounds for the political movements. That the political leaders show their oppressive power over the downtrodden and poor Dalits, is a common phenomenon, not only in Bengal but also in every land. The present story shows with luminous clarity, how these political leaders exercise their political power over the Dalits who belong to the nadir of the Caste-hierarchy. However, the opening portion of the story has no iota of political issues. The first portion of the story is dominated by the two characters– Gopal Thakur, who has changed his name from Manohar Sadhukhan and Maya, the incarnation of Goddess Kali or Mahamaya. The story thus opens in a completely religious hue that forces us to believe that the narrative is going to be a religious story. However, the latter half of the story nullifies our pre-conceived notions on the theme of the narrative.

Nanu Mandal, the powerful corrupt political figure appears only in the 12th page of the story from where the dark aspects of the story begin. Nanu acts as the agent of

destruction here in this regard. Mother Kali's possession of Maya brings these leaders on the scene. Their way of talking, rude behaviour, their tone of banter on their very first appearance hardly bears testimony to their identity as human beings. Babu Pan, the trusted henchman of Nanu Mandal replies in a tone of amusement when Nanu Mandal senses an effect of intoxication causing Maya's sudden fit of insanity last night, "No. No. it cannot be intoxication. Haven't you seen the picture of Mother Kali on liquor bottles? It is so because liquor is essential in the worshipping of Mother" (Singha and Acharya, "Survival" 13) that certainly created a burst of huge laughter to everyone present there. Nanu believes that the transformation of Maya to Mother Kali is nothing but an act of hypocrisy on the part of Maya. He threatens in an overbearing manner to, "...end all the nonsense about acting God!"(14). But the same Nanu Mandal changes completely when he comes out of the hut after a short discussion with Gopal Thakur. The matter of their discussion is completely unaware to the people who were present there but it was a surprising fact to everybody after seeing the complete change of their leader, Nanu Mandal. He started to speak in a completely different vein, "Praise be to Mother! Let victory be to the mother of the world" (14). One can sense a foul play underlying this sudden transformation of a person like Nanu Mandal. The reason for this transformation, is, however, made clear in the latter part of the story. Nanu Mandal, along with Gopal Thakur and Maya plotted a scheme of business, the business of God, religion. Nanu Mandal, the mastermind behind the scheme, always remains aloof from the entire scheme. Gopal Thakur, the seer and Maya, the imagined Ma Mahamaya are plotted to run the business of God, religion. Nanu Mandal, the man who means only business is quite clear in his mind that he would do the business of God is quite manifested in his advice to his nephew, Niranjana Mandal, "Build a temple of Mother Kali at this burning Ghat keeping that Gopal Thakur at the helm, occupy the land and

do some business. Begin an affair, a bazaar and bring in some Sadhus” (5-6). And thus the temple of Kali has been established and so the business of Nanu Mandal. Gopal Thakur and Maya become the agents of this business.

The loathsome face of the corrupt political system is quite perceptible at the end of the story when Nanu Mandal and his allies are engaging in exposing Gopal Thakur and Maya. Two of his comrades enter into the hut of Maya and Gopal Thakur and expose them completely at their gun points. It is crystal clear that the very act was the act of Nanu Mandal. The possession of the Mahamaya temple, hence, goes to the stronghold of Janakiram Chakraborty and Rakhohari hereafter. That the powerful exert their power over the powerless Dalits has been executed by the author in this story with singular artistry. Both Gopal Thakur and Maya, under the garb of their apparel of god-like images, are preeminently Dalits by birth. Gopal Thakur, at the very concluding portion of the story, realizes his real identity of being a Dalit. Nanu Mandal, the political leader shows that for his purpose he can make a demi-god, rather false God, a poor beggar from where he/she has been transformed too.

Gopal Thakur, the incarnation of God and Maya, the incarnation of Mother Mahamaya, have been chased to near death. Maya has to bear the pain of gang-rape and Dhananjay has been gagged and tied at Mahamaya pice Hotel from where his groaning has not been heard outside. Maya's saffron sari is soaked with splashed of blood. Thus the story is a case in point to establish the fact how politics plays a carnal role in keeping and manipulating the business of god. It's only a matter of time to show their true colour. Sensing the ensuing danger, Nanu Mandal plays a nasty game so that Maya and Gopal Thakur's reality can come to the forefront. But the business of god never stops.

This story acts as a staunch critique of the superstitious beliefs of the Dalits. Superstitious beliefs often become the very instruments of oppression for them. The

characters like Gopal Thakur and Maya are the fake religious practitioners who act as the demi-gods towards these gullible Dalit people who believe them from their bottom of the heart. Gopal Thakur who changes his identity from Manohar Sadhukhan is represented as the spokesperson of a fraud religious practitioner. From the very initial part of the story, we get a sense of Gopal Thakur's transformation from his earlier identity. However, the author has not given any clue to Manohar's earlier identity at the very outset of the story. We are only told that he has transformed his identity from Manohar Sadhukhan to Gopal Thakur. Not much has been told as far as Manohar's identity is concerned. When the story begins, we see that the devotees doubt Gopal Thakur's identity as a religious practitioner, having the power of eradicating evil from the society. Nobody knows who has given the name Gopal Thakur to Manohar Sadhukhan. Smoking *ganja* is Gopal Thakur's only prerogatives. Perhaps smoke is essential to wake up the consciousness of God! The author has hinted certain plausible assumption regarding the transformation of Gopal Thakur from Manohar Sadhukhan. Perhaps, the man who named him wanted to say, "You are a religious man. Religion is your business. You live at this burning Ghat. You have never begged from anyone. You are not indebted to anybody. You are our very own lord Gopala. We pray from him each morning and each evening. We don't know him. Still, we pray to Him. You are our God whom we can see"(1). There are many other versions which go in the same way. However, as I have already mentioned the devotees cast a suspected look regarding the veracity of the prophet, Gopal Thakur. In reply to one of the questions of devotees regarding the homeland of the prophet, the consummate criminal answers in a peal of light-hearted laughter, " on the bank of the Barakar, just beside Dubudhi" (1), the very place where he is at this present moment as if he is deliberately diverting the question he was asked. But the devotee is determined that the man is lying about his identity in a

very diplomatic and subtle way. The physical appearance of the seer is also forcing someone to believe that “this dark, stout, and primitive sort of man was either a murderer or an untouchable Punjabi *riger* from some factory and now had taken up this mask” (2).

That Maya, the accomplice of Gopal Thakur, is also lying about his identity is quite perceptible. She is the daughter of a prostitute. Gopal Thakur, the then Manohar Sadhukhan, had adopted her as his daughter keeping in mind that—“such a girl would come in handy” (3). Later she becomes Gopal Thakur’s instructor in fooling the poor masses in the name of religion. Manohar Sadhukhan in his earlier days had enough fame as a *tantric*. The people of this part had sexually transmitted diseases. And “it was with that prevention of curing them that he had settled down there. There was not a drop of renunciation in either his body or his soul and he possessed gigantic hypocrisy” (3).

The very hypocrite wretch Manohar Sadhukhan knows it very well that the persons in those parts, chiefly belonging to the lower strata of the society are his customers, not his devotees. In a certain incident when Kajal, the mother of Maya and Golapi her neighbour are in verbal combat, Manohar reacts to his customers in a rude, yet controlled way as he is quite aware of the fact that these customers use to buy amulets, flowers, leaves and other charms from him. He is not the person to risk his business in misbehaving with his customers. He is intelligent enough to say only much that would not harm his own business. Maya, from then on, becomes the centre of attraction for Manohar Sadhukhan and she becomes the very capital in establishing the ashram.

As it is already been discussed earlier, the scheming politician like Nuna Mandal firmly believes that the business of god/religion is the most profitable one and one should try one's luck in this business so that they can befool the poor Dalits in the name of God

and religion. Having such intention in his mind Nuna Mandal advises his nephew to build a temple of mother Kali and place Gopal Thakur at the helm of this business. Thus the temple of Ma Kali begins and so as the business of God.

Gopal Thakur has been presented as a person who is instrumental in exploiting the Dalits in the name of religion despite being himself a Dalit. This consummate criminal who has never maintained a path of virtue and truthfulness advises his followers to pave only the path of virtue and truth, “Speak the truth, keep trying and no greed for other's thing” (8). He further says, “Do not ever leave the path of virtue. Always speak the truth. Never give up. Keep on trying. Do it always. If even after that one cannot find one's God then one can blame Lord Tulsidas. (8). Gopal Thakur believes that life itself has become *maya*—illusion.

Maya's act of being possessed by goddess Mother Mahamaya is an act of hypocrisy to befool the poor Dalits. Thousands of people gathered there to see the goddess behaving like a madwoman. She was roaring and saying, “I am indeed she” (8). Gopal Thakur's silent tears at this moment have been sarcastically compared by the narrator, “as the stream of water coming back from the turbines and as straight as a line of water that slipped through the sluice gates of the DV dam” (10). Gopal Thakur's sobbing is also a sight to see. With a roar, Gopal Thakur gave vent to his feelings by saying, “O my necked mother, Please dance” (10). The incarnation of mother goddess in Maya's soul created certain displeasure in Deogharies.

Gopal Thakur's hypocrisy has been in the spotlight in the latter part of the story when one of his devotees implores Maya to cure his chest-pain. The hypocritical Mother advises him to “offer a Puja worth a goodly sum at Mother's temple” (15). But when the mother is requested to return back his job, the scheming mother remained silent. Dhananjay spoke for Maya and replied, “Your job cannot be given back to you” (15) as

he believed that Mother did not possess such quality. The devotee could hardly understand the theory even goddess Mother's power is limited and she could not do anything at her own disposal.

The real identity of Maya, the possessed Mother and that of Gopal Thakur comes to the forefront when Pulin Kar, with an astonishing smile, revealed, "The girl who yesterday was a daughter of a whore has turned into Mother Kalayaneswari, the deity at Mahamaya temple...Manohar Sadhukhan, who once, as punishment for theft had been sacked from his job, had become Gopal Thakur" (18). This anagnorisis has made everyone spellbound. The entire text critiques the business of religion and God. The author has delineated with luminous clarity how these false demi-gods like Gopal Thakur and Maya are deceiving the gullible and simple-hearted people, the ones who belong to the very nadir of the society. The narrator, perhaps, wants to pinpoint the fact that superstitious beliefs of these poor Dalits are one of the major lacunas in them. And this irrational belief of these poor Dalits is the strong point of the parsons like Gopal Thakur, Maya, Pulin Kar, Nanu Mandal and others. The author has quite brilliantly highlighted the transformation of Manohar Sadhukhan from a theft to a religious practitioner when he was in Kulti. As the narrator has put it:

...Sadhukhan used to work in a factory at Kulti. In the factory premises itself, under the shed of a banyan tree, he had established an altar of god. After getting his attendance punched in the card, he used to come straight to that banyan tree. No one said anything as long as the factory was under private ownership. Labourers used to take rest at that spot. The canteen of the factory was also in front of the site. Manohar, keeping his god at the helm, found a way to fool the people in the name of religion. It was quite a smooth path to sell amulets, armlets, stones and other charms. It was a strange but easy way to earn one's

living. But, no low-caste labourer generally trod that path. It was simply resorting to deception. It was to exploit the superstition of gullible people, making fool of them. (19)

This narrative is a capital illustration to expose the exploitative nature of the power-hungry politicians like Nuna Mandal who for his selfish benefit keep the poor Dalit under their grasp. They not only befool them in the name of God and religion but also they play the politics of caste. This story is also a classic example to dismantle the very tall-talks of the so-called liberal intellectuals who brag that Bengal is a land free from caste-discrimination. Rather, caste is an ever-pervasive one in the psyche of the people in Bengal, though not explosive one, unlike the other provinces of India. That caste plays a very crucial role in determining one's character in Bengal too has been shown by the author of this text with singular artistry. The lower caste people like Bouries, as reflected in the story, are denied access to water of the dam. They were hardly treated by the doctors as they are low-born. Any nursing home bars their admission. One of the youths from the Bouri communities is beaten black and blue by the local police Anamay Banerjee as the youth tried to fetch water from the tap. This is one of the many incidents that establishes the fact that the issue of untouchability, one of the darkest chapters of Indian nationhood, is still in vogue in one of the so-called progressive and laboratory states, Bengal. One of the youths from the Bouri community raves with a pathetic accent, "They will get water from the taps, will give it to the cows to drink and use it in the gardens. But we will not get water even to drink or to bathe. Nanuda we want justice from you" (21).

A consummate hypocrite Nanu Mandal, the so-called revolutionary leader who speaks about the liberation of the common people hardly shows any sympathy for the injured Golap Bouri who is frantically pleading for help. But the same hypocrite loudly says,

“Workers of the world unite! (22). None of these upper-caste people allows the Bouries to enter into their home. Golap Bouri’s death due to the lack of treatment as no hospital allowed the admission of Golap, a low-born has stirred much commotion to the other members of the Bouri community. Golap’s mother, Bilasi wailed, “He was not allowed admission to the hospital of Dendua...” (22). One of the persons from the crowd added, “They did not allow us to enter Rupnarayanpur and neither could we go to Mihijam. The whole night they just left him unattended at Kulti hospital” (22). Dhananjay’s monologue perhaps fits the context here as when somebody asks the Mother’s intervention in this case. Though sound hypocritical, the words do reveal the actual reality of the caste-ridden social structure of west Bengal, “What can the mother say? God is raining water from the sky. But man is not getting a chance to drink it. Those who have constructed the Dam have stopped the floods. That is worthy of praise. But in these days of drought, those who did not allow drops of water are not a human being” (22).

It is quite interesting to note here that even in such a technically advanced age Dalits have to fight for access to public water-bodies like Pond, dam and even to some extent to the river. Apart from this story, we can take the *On Firm Ground* by Jatin Bala for example where the protagonist, Haladhar has to bear the indictment from the Brahmins of his village when he is bathing in the river nearby. However, Haladhar in the story mentioned above gives back a witty reply to his Brahmin counterparts. Here in this present story, one can find the same situation when the lower-castes are denied access to water. The Mother’s intervention is sought. The wailing mother who has just lost her son asks the Mother of All, “why is the situation like this? O Mother you have given us the tongue and have also burdened us with thirst. Then why did not you give us a few drops of water? ” (23). The imagined Mother, the daughter of a whore and the whore

herself emphatically answers to the question, “I will drink blood! I will drink blood! Those who have not given water, I will drink their blood. I will drink blood. I will drink blood! I will drink blood certainly” (23).

The turning point of the story comes when the two fake religious practitioners realize that what they have done is beyond pardonable. Dhananjay too realizes that it is only because of Maya's illusion that drives him to the path of injustice. In his words, Maya's, “Assumed divinity and this metamorphosis in Mother Kalayaneswari sitting in the centre of a crowd, were nothing but an illusion” (26). A strange sense of guilt has engulfed his soul and he believes that no repentance can wash away sins he has committed by cheating the innocent souls.

Poetic justice is done at the end of the story, though not completely. Maya, Gopal Thakur and Dhananjay get their desired treatment of befooling the gullible people of the lower-caste community. Gopal Thakur is severely beaten; Maya has been gang-raped and Dhananjay loud cry is not heard to anybody. Nanu and his allies hardly can miss such a golden chance of raping Maya. Her saffron sari is soaked with the flashes of blood as if in an ironic reversal of fortune. Anamay, the local police and the comrade of Nanu only a moment before raping her cheered in a tone of banter, “You whore. You wanted to drink the blood of those who did not give water. Now let us see who drinks whose blood!” (28). Two men suddenly enter into the hut of Maya and Gopal Thakur and pointing their gun to Gopal Thakur threaten him, “Manohar, you scoundrel! We will make you forget all you're playing at Sainthood” (26). Gopal Thakur, being transformed into a bare-bodied man, finds his real identity, the identity of a Dalit, untouchable. He realizes it very well at this crucial point of his time that, “a man from the lowest castes should not have aspired for the life of a monk” (27).

The present story *The Deceived* is a classic narrative to expose the vicious practice of the god-mongers. Gopal Thakur, Maya, Janakiram Chakraborty, Pulin Kar, Rakhohari are the ones who are directly involved in this business of god as well as religion. But the big fish like Nanu Mandal and Anamay are the masterminds behind this practice since this is a profitable business for them. They are manipulating people like Gopal Thakur. Immediately after the punishment of Gopal Thakur, Maya and Dhananjay, Janakiram Chakraborty, the chairman of Hindu Milan Mandir, has taken the charge of running this very business of god. The earthen idol that Maya and Gopal Thakur used to worship has been immersed and a new idol is inaugurated by Janakiram Chakraborty that testifies the fact that the business cannot stop; the persons involved in this business can be changed according to the need of the hour. That the society is run by the corrupt political leaders like Nanu Mandal, who under the garb of a revolutionary activist, does much damage to the society, is one of the cardinal points I want to make in this section. Rakhohari, the power-hungry Brahmin is perhaps digging for his own grave when he unconsciously demands, “Crime does not pay. One has to face punishment you see...” (27). Needless to say that Rakhohari, now a ‘busy’ man may have to face the same predicament. The following excerpts establish the fact that the business of god must go on and the ‘customers’ who form the lower section of the society will never realize the internal politics of this business:

Time is eternal. Like a flowing river, time is full of waves. Who could have known that yesterday in this place there used to be a deep intimacy and an exchange in the familiar language between the god and the devotee? The loud and sonorous chanting of mantras by Janakiram Chakraborty had created the sombre ambience of a hermitage in this place. One could hear, among the jingling of bells and percussions, the chanting of Sanskrit mantras: “Let there be good for everyone...” On both sides, there were saffron-

clad female volunteers. Rakhohari Deogharia was supervising the whole affair. He was a very busy man (27).

How caste plays a vicious role in creating a division between the two lovers and how the inter-caste marriage is still like a distant dream, is one of the central themes of the next story “Mukunda and an Extraordinary Love Affair” by Susanta Jana. Inter-caste marriage, that has been envisioned by Dr.B.R.Ambedkar as the only remedy of the caste-based discrimination is still a distant dream for the Dalits. Only inter-caste marriage has the potential to break the barriers of caste-based discrimination, Ambedkar firmly believed. In his Speech at Mahad delivered on 25th of December, 1927 Ambedkar envisaged:

If we want to remove untouchability in the home as well as outside, we must break down the prohibition against intermarriage. Nothing else will serve. From another point of view, we see that breaking down the bar against intermarriage is the way to establish real equality. Anyone must confess that then the root division is dissolved, incidental points of separateness will disappear by themselves. (Dangle 265)

Hindu marriage system has been against it to maintain the purity of blood. A boy from the lower caste cannot marry a girl from the upper caste as the marriage is against the law of Manu, the great lawgiver. The marriage of this kind is a threat to the sacrilegious existence of caste. According to the Brahminical structure of society, the purity of blood is defiled if such marriage happens. In this context we can rightly quote Uma Chakravarti who in her ground-breaking book *Gendering Caste: through a feminist lens* quite rightly brings out the latent hypocrisy of the mechanism of marriage in our Hindu society:

At a general level, marriage is an aspect of people's notions and practices built around birth and decent. Marriage is performed to ensure the immortality, continuity and immortality of the male decent line-the *vansa*-and the social group-the caste or sub-caste-for which the line is the organizing principle. Marriage is regarded as vital to the maintenance to the of one's caste status...therefore in the viewpoint of the people of the principles of marriage practices are inseparable from the very principles of hierarchy at the core of caste-based Indian society. Marriage is thus linked to belief and ritual-it is the purity of its practices that yields hierarchy. (29)

This very grave issue has been highlighted in Susanta Jana's "Mukunda and an Extraordinary Love Affair". This story is a supreme example to illustrate the aforementioned statement. The central protagonist of this story is Mukunda, as the title of the story suggests. He is an untouchable, a fisherman by profession. Amli is the nineteen-year-old daughter of Mukunda. Raju, the son of Ambar Bhattacharya, a Brahmin political leader deeply falls in love with Amli. They dream of a completely new world. Raju, unlike his father, desires to change the society where there is no caste-based discrimination. He proposes Amli. But Amli, unlike Raju is more practical about the fact that the dream that they are weaving can hardly be materialized due to the oppressive caste system, a system that is still Brahminical to the very core. She responds to his proposal by saying, "O, you are wrong. This is not done. Ours is low caste. No one in the village will approve of this. It's a sin to think anything of this kind" (Sinha and Acharya, "Survival" 160).

Raju counters her. He wants to prove her wrong rather by emphasizing the kind of education he has. As the narrator narrates—

Raju sat kneeling at Amli's feet, and replied slowly, even before she finished speaking, 'No, Amalina, you mustn't misunderstand me. My education, my ideas are different. It doesn't matter if my father disapproves of our match. The city of Kolkata will receive us with open arms. There we'll build our home, the home we always dreamt of. (161)

Raju as a person has been presented as the complete foil to his father, Ambar. Like a typical political leader, Ambar Bhattacharya speaks fiery words in front of large masses in the gatherings and meetings for social transformation. The issue of idealism, socialism and social justice has been his forte of any speech in the public gathering. But in reality, he does nothing but the exact opposite of what he publicly says. Raju dares to transform society like a truly revolutionary figure. Unlike his father, Raju has deep-rooted sympathy for the poor and downtrodden. Raju has been seen as a “big fish that had strayed into the deep blue waters of a river and having made its presence felt, disappeared as suddenly” (159). Raju is well versed in assessing the character of his father. He knows it very well that his father is not going to accept Amli as his daughter-in-law. Still, he implores Amli to accept his proposal. He has deep faith in himself. He has enough faith in the true education he has had. However, these two love-birds have to retreat. Amli's stern voice ultimately proves to be the marker of our social justice. She declares, as Mukunda hears from the back, in a stern but agonized voice, “No, that is not to be. You are our social superior. You belong to a higher caste and we are petty fishermen. For god's sake please go back” (161). Helpless, Mukunda overhears everything from outside. The episode reminds him of Ambar's speeches he was delivering a few hours back while he was returning from there. He “wondered if whatever Ambar had been saying in his speech had come true after all, Mahasweta, had, indeed, turned to a dream village” (161).

Marriage practices in India are a patriarchal system that desperately tries to retain the political as well as social power. It is the ploy to establish the Brahminical social structure in society. The following lines of an anthropologist perhaps summarise the fundamental importance of marriage in our society:

Marriage is the heart of the Hindu society. It is ...the most important event in a man's life; it is the forefront of Hindu's 'consciousness'; and it is a focal point of the social system. Marriage is directly ingrained with caste which is the basis of a Hindu's primary status position in his society. A man's caste is, first of all, is directed by the status of his parents, and subsequently maintained or modified by his own marriage and sexual encounter. (Chakravarti 49)

The story discussed is a staunch critique of the traditional notion of marriage. Raju, in contrary tries, to come out of this traditional notion of marriage in his act of wishing to marry a girl from an untouchable girl, Amli. In the eye of society, this very act is against the social system. This is an indicator to establish the fact that Bengal is not free from the caste discrimination, the long-ruled communist land which is supposed to have no impact on caste-based discrimination.

These texts reveal in consummate artistry how the nexus between caste and politics is at its full swing as far as Bengal is concerned. It has been pointed out earlier also in the introductory chapter that caste-based discrimination is not so prominent in Bengal. Rather, caste-based discrimination in Bengal is subtle, and hence the wrong notion about the absence of it is quite an accepted a fact. Caste plays a very pivotal role in identity politics in Bengal. However, the scenario of such politics is somewhat different in Bengal, in comparison to the other provinces of India where caste-based discrimination is quite different.

This chapter helps to introduce to the readers the innumerable discourse of the Bengali refugees. The experiences of these migrants migrated from east Bengal to West Bengal is a painful saga. This chapter has portrayed the important voices within the “official discourse”. It also shows how the new settlers managed to settle in that inhospitable barren land and started a new life over there. They did not return to west Bengal. However the story of that place got diversified by multiple narratives of the migrants though the rehabilitation project was unsuccessful to provide the stability to those refugees after they had migrated to West Bengal.

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Conclusion

This concluding chapter sums up the major findings of the earlier four chapters, discusses the limitations of the present research and explores the scope for further research in this field. The introductory chapter entitled “Introduction” maps the origin and development of Dalit literature in general and Bengali Dalit literature in particular. Some of the fundamental questions like-Who are Dalits? Can a non-Dalit write Dalit literature? What is the function of language in Dalit literature? - have been discussed here critically to situate them in the socio-cultural and socio-political context. This is followed by the aims and objectives of the research. The researcher has thoroughly made a literature review to arrive at the gaps in the existing research and has justified how the present work would address those unexplored questions by a substantial contribution to the field of inquiry. Then the methodological approaches adopted for the present work have been introduced.

In the first chapter, it focuses on the background of ‘Refugees’, how their lives were in refugee camps, and how, gradually, they started writing. This chapter observes the representation of experiences faced by the Dalit refugees in West Bengal after partition through the short stories written by the first hand victims. This chapter also introduces the texts I have worked on. This chapter talks about the discriminations these people had to face throughout their journey. The selected autobiographies by Biswas and Byapari will be the main focus in this chapter, though instances from short stories as well will be discussed. According to Sarbani Banerjee the learned Bhadrakalok class was responsible for the depiction of the refugees in Bengal till now. This class tried to speak for the other sections and classes of the society. Here I would like to put forward my

argument that Bengali refugees cannot be brought together under one umbrella. This cannot be fabricated as a “homogenised” phenomenon. As both Byapari and Biswas belong to the various caste identities their experiences are also not same to the typical East Bengali *Bhadralok* class. Both of these writers were first generation Dalit writer writing from their own first-hand experience. Therefore their experience is different from the mainstream notions.

It was only the “voice of the *Bhadralok* class, in terms of the literary depiction of Bengali refugee, as referred by Sarbani Banerjee, which spoke for all sections of refugees. Here I would like to put forward that the Bengali refugee-ness cannot be constructed as a “homogenized” phenomenon belongs only to the *bhadralok* class. As Biswas and Byapari are respectively from the castes of barber and *chandal*, their characteristics and experiences differ from that of the typical East Bengali ‘gentleman’. As migrant first-generation Dalit literates, their perspectives and conception of the post-Partition moments create a field of knowledge outside of the mainstream East Bengali *bhadralok* notions, and this has been regulating Bengal Partition narratives and memory. For example, the characters in Biswas and Byapari’s works are not the typical “*bhadra*” exiles, who proclaim uninterrupted moral decency. Instead, the *chhotolok*-turned-*bhadralok* characters in their narratives form a style of thought isolated both from the “elite” and the “underdog” classifications. Here I support my argument by exploring the authorial positions of Byapari and Biswas, who are ‘at the same time writers, vagabonds, activists and anti-socials’, and therefore do not carry the ‘ideology’ of Bengali *bhadralok* refugees. The post-Partition experiences of Biswas and Byapari challenge the ‘existing corpuses’ of Bengal Partition literature in terms of ‘space politics, familial and cultural sensibilities as well as literacy’.

Second chapter talks about the ‘Identity Crisis’ of those refugees who never had their own country. The conventional categorized provisions in the “Refugee Camps” and “Refugee Colonies” also help to nullify the assertion of “Unified Identity”. Sarbani Banerjee in the article “Different Identity Formations in Bengal Partition Narratives by Dalit Refugees” states:

Dalit immigrant writings problematize the politics that inspire East Bengali *bhadralok* migrants’ calculated and affective sentiments in literature, and question the latter’s self-declared “marginal” position in post-Partition West Bengal.

Here, Manoranjan Byapari, one of the eminent writers, makes a more explicit and definite statement about the diversity of the identity of the refugees. These statements stop the foundation of an organised unified chronicle of East Bengal. The writing of the Dalit authors, especially Byapari and Biswas, portray a cynical viewpoint to all including the migrants, the west and east Bengalis. They once had to fight and complete with these people to get lands, jobs and basic amenities. The stories are completely exceptional from all the other stories as other stories expose only the miserable hostilities of their life while these stories become an ideal of the *dalit* revolt. Society always undermines and exploits them, but what if, one day, they get agitated and fight back against them? These stories bring out the fore of their constant sufferings in the form of establishing equality and justice.

The third chapter talks about the ‘Rehabilitation’ of the refugees. This chapter analyses the very first task set for the nascent nation state of India—the rehabilitation of a vast number of displaced persons who were rendered homeless in the wake of the Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. Refugees were classified on the basis of their potential to be rehabilitated. Thus, there was the Rehabilitable Group and the Permanent

Liability Group. This chapter helps to introduce to the readers the innumerable discourse of the Bengali refugees. The experiences of these migrants migrated from east Bengal to West Bengal is a painful saga. This chapter has portrayed the important voices within the “official discourse”. It also shows how the new settlers managed to settle in that inhospitable barren land and started a new life over there. They did not return to west Bengal. However the story of that place got diversified by multiple narratives of the migrants though the rehabilitation project was unsuccessful to provide the stability to those refugees after they had migrated to West Bengal.

Thus, I argue that Bengal is no way free from caste-based discrimination. Hence, the proposition that caste is less pronounced in Bengal is thus a falsified conception. Bengal, rather, is not different from the other states of India. Some of the recent newspaper articles will suffice to justify my arguments here. In such a recent groundbreaking report which is published in *The Print* on March 11, 2020, under the title “Not a Single Dalit in 60% of Kolkata’s Neighbourhoods: How Caste Divides Indian Cities” it has been reported how the Indian cities are inherently casteist and thereby shatters the general myth that caste only exists in the rural part of Bengal. This report shows how the metro city like Kolkata, the hot bed for the so-called progressive and enlightened *bhadrolok* Bengali babus, is no less dogmatic and uncivilized as the rural parts of Bengal are considered to be. The people, mostly from the upper echelon of the society considers the people outside their domain and hence, the ‘Other’. Dalits are attributed to everything that is associated with evil, ugly and other social signifiers. Uncultured and uneducated people are popularly known as *chotolok* (people who are considered to be lower than the social elites). This dehumanizing attribution is instrumental in belittling one’s own self and pushing them to feel inferior. In the case of Dalit woman, they are treated even more brutally. It has been pointed out Dalit women are the victim of double-marginalization. According to the behavioural pattern set by the society, Dalit

women have to be submissive, docile, not argumentative, and ugly and so on and so forth. Language of reason and rationality of a Dalit woman should be miles away from their day-to-day discourses. Anything against this is considered to be the violation of the rule. Sarbani Bandyopadhyay in her article “ Does the Caste System Really Not Exist in Bengal ?”, published in *Open Democracy* on April 21, 2016 has excavated these burning issues by citing one incident of a school teacher Lata Biswas who happens to be an S.C by her caste identity. Bandyopadhyay, here in her article has mentioned some of the ill-treatments that Lata had to face by her upper-caste colleagues for not fulfilling any of the above codified criteria that society has reserved for a Dalit woman. Lata, in contrary, is self-assertive, fearless, confident and above all beautiful (Bandyopadhyay) This incident once again counters the very notion that caste in Bengal is not exclusive. In one of his ground-breaking articles, namely, “*Search for an Alternative Aesthetic in Bangla Dalit Poetry*” Dr. Indranil Acharya has pointed out how Bangla Dalit poetry asserts its identity through the deliberate use of the slang and certain such obscene languages that are generally regarded as contemptuous and obnoxious in the general mainstream literary discourse of Bengal (97). Talking about the reality of caste in Bengal, Acharya argues:

Untouchability is still a practice that exists in thousands of villages in Bengal where there is always a *Namopara* (Lower part of a village) at the outskirts, generally inhabited by the lower caste people. This physical segregation indicates other separation as well. The play of desire and revulsion, the psychological framework which helped Frantz Fanon to explain black and white relation, can equally be applied to the scenario in Bengal. But the revulsion is almost always expressed in an oblique manner or is masked in some other social

behaviour. Consequently, the reactions on the part of the low-caste people generally reach to the degree of fiery explosion. (103)

It is a fact that Dalit literature in Bengal came much later compared to the other regions of India like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Gujarat. As far as Bengali Dalit literature is concerned, there is a large corpus of texts in original Bangla. Unfortunately, due to the lack of translation, they are not available in English. It's primarily because of this reason why the researcher had to opt for Short stories. There was hardly any Bengali Dalit novel, with an exception of one or two, which was translated into English from the source language at that time when the researcher has started his research. The situation is even worse as far as Dalit dramas or autobiographical genres are concerned. The researcher had to select texts which were available in English translation. Finding secondary sources has been one of the major problems faced by the researcher. The unavailability of the texts in the English language speaks volume to the complete erasure of Dalit space from the mainstream discourse. But it is no denying the fact that the situation is gradually changing at a very rapid scale.

The gradual and graphical growth of Dalit studies in India can be discernible through the inclusion of Dalit literary texts in various Indian and foreign academic institutions. Dalit literary studies have become one of the thrust areas of research in academia in the last few decades or so. Various seminars, conferences, webinars, workshops, talk shows both in India and foreign speak volume to the immense potential of Dalit literature as such. In Bengal, there is a substantial growth of Dalit literary studies in intellectual academia.

The future of Bengali Dalit literature looks very bright. Thanks to the tremendous efforts by scholars in recent times in translating many of the Bengali Dalit literary texts

into English and other Indian languages. A good number of short stories, novels, essay collections, an anthology of poetry are being translated and are made accessible to global audiences. The study has focused only on the genre of stories and it can be extended to novels, dramas and poetry. Also one can go for a comparative study of Bengali short stories with its counterparts from other languages. One can explore new avenues in the other Dalit literary genres like novel, poetry, drama and autobiographies are available in English. There is a huge potential for the study of marginal literatures in a trans-cultural perspective. The same experiments can be extended to Dalit literary studies in India. The vast corpus of Dalit literary texts and cultural artifacts and images can help in building up archives. New directions in humanities known as spatial humanities and medical humanities can be extended to Dalit literatures to expand its contours and horizons in days to come.

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Course: Ph.D.
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Month & Year: November 2016
Semester I

Sl. No	Regn.No.	Name of the Student	Course No. Credits 4	Course No. Credits 2	Course No. Credits 2	Course No. Credits 4	Course No. Credits 4	Course No. Credits 2	Course No. Credits 2	Course No. Credits 4	Course No. Credits 4	Course No. Credits 2	Course No. Credits 2	Course No. Credits 4
1	16HEPH01	Boniface Gaiguilung Kamei	EN- 801	EN- 802	EN- 821	EN- 823	EN- 824	EN- 826	PASS	EN- 828	EN- 829	EN- 830	EN- 831	EN- 831
2	16HEPH02	Moumita Chowdhury	PASS	PASS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	16HEPH03	Rameesa P.M	-	-	-	-	PASS	-	-	-	-	PASS	-	-
4	16HEPH04	Asima Baral	-	-	PASS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	PASS
5	16HEPH05	Md. Samsujjaman	-	-	-	FAIL	-	-	FAIL	-	-	-	-	-

Course No. Title of the Course

- EN-801 Critical Approaches -4
EN-802 Research Methods & Dissertation Writing -2
EN-821 Bengali Dalit Literature in Translation -2
EN-823 Introduction to Nationalism -2
EN-824 English in India: Development of Indian English Literature -4
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128	15MMPP01	Arijit Mukherjee	2	MM 810	Research Methodology and Ethics	4	pass	Regular	Aug	2020
129	16MMPP01	Pabitra Narayan Mandal	2	MM-815	Advanced Functional Analysis	5	pass	Regular	May	2017
130	16MMPP01	Pabitra Narayan Mandal	2	MM 810	Research Methodology and Ethics	4	pass	Regular	Aug	2020
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136	17MMPP04	Rubayya	2	MM 810	Research Methodology and Ethics	4	pass	Regular	Aug	2020
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138	17MMPA01	Joydev Halder	2	MM 810	Research Methodology and Ethics	4	pass	Regular	Aug	2020
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3	16HEPH03	RAMEESA PM	EN872 PASS						
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