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AN OUTLOOK OF SUBALTERNITY IN AMITAV GHOSH'S *SEA OF POPPIES*

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ABSTRACT

The study of Postcolonialism examines the cultural legacies of colonialism and imperialism. An Indian woman who is the subject of the subaltern is battling societal patriarchy. This article examines how the subaltern subject who challenges patriarchy is portrayed using postcolonial theory, notably the theory of Subalternity. In his book *Sea of Poppies*, Amitav Ghosh attempts to portray Subalternity by introducing subaltern individuals. In this article, Deeti is examined as the novel's representation of Subalternity. This article also looked at two issues: How is Subalternity portrayed in Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies*? & How does Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* depict Indian women's fight against patriarchy? Zachery is one of the characters who is shown as a member of the subaltern class. We are able to understand life, events, and problems from the perspectives of marginalized characters like Deeti, Kaula, and Kabutri since they experience numerous hurdles and hardships as a result of their subaltern caste and class.

Keywords: Subalternity, Post-colonialism, Voice of Voiceless, Deeti and Patriarchy

The study of Postcolonialism examines the cultural legacies of colonialism and imperialism. The study's main area of interest is the impact colonization and exploitation have had on people and their lands. The concept of 'Subaltern' holds a significant position in post-colonial theory. It serves as a symbol for the ostracized or disadvantaged segments of society. Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci was the first to coin the word "subaltern". Eventually, it was adopted as a branch of post-colonialism by a group of scholars in postcolonial studies. This group was founded by South East Asian historian Ranajit Guha, and its members have included Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Partha Chatterjee, and Dipesh Chakrabarty. Subaltern literally translates as 'of lower rank'. Peasants, labourers, and other classes denied access to hegemonic power may be considered subaltern classes. Several types of political and cultural binaries, such as colonialism vs. nationalism and imperialism vs. indigenous people, are the concepts of subaltern studies.

In the arena of Indian English literature, Amitav Ghosh is a renowned author. He has won a number of literary prizes. His concern for the disadvantaged and subjugated members of Indian society was expressed in all of his major books. His greatest novels allow us to see his empathy for the voiceless and underprivileged. His most famous books explored the issues of alienation, immigration, and existential crisis in the lives of the underclass of society. By giving them a central role in his main novels and giving them a centripetal stage in his writings, he gave the underclasses relevance. Through his major works, including *Sea of Poppies*, *The Circle of Reason*, *The Calcutta Chromosomes*, *The Hungry Tide*, and *The Glass Palace*, Amitav Ghosh has been attempting to speak for the underprivileged.

In his novel *Sea of Poppies*, Amitav Ghosh attempts to portray Subalternity by using subaltern people. In this essay, Deeti is examined as the novel's representation of Subalternity. This article also looked at two issues, namely: How is Subalternity portrayed in Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies*? & How does Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* depict Indian women's fight against patriarchy? The work exposes caste prejudice, male dominance in patriarchal societies, and the subsequent demotion of women to a subordinate position. He also portrays the actual struggles and experiences of subalterns. Ghosh's *The Sea of Poppies* is a depiction of 19th century Indian society with its beliefs, customs and social problems like poverty and the marginalization of a particular sect of people in the name of caste.

In Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies*, characters from the lowest and more disadvantaged strata of society are highlighted. The various situations that occur in the lives of the characters are connected. The most notable qualities of Amitav Ghosh are these. The story does an excellent job of capturing the patriarchal structure of Indian society during the pre-colonial era. The majority of Ghosh's female characters are Dalit women who are doubly underprivileged. They are considerate of the circumstances they find themselves in. But, they are powerless to stop the causes of oppression.

Ghosh aims to demonstrate how women can be empowered in *Sea of Poppies* so that they can one day become independent. The narrative depicts an evocative picture of the fate of women under colonial rule. Nonetheless, the anguish experienced by a lady from a Zamindar household and an agriculturalist is similar. His book is based on the colonial era's historical background, including the cultivation of opium in India to meet Chinese demand and the migration of indentured labourers to Mauritius to work on plantations. It will focus on the novel's female characters. Deeti is one of the novel's main female characters, and the plot focuses on her. Ghosh has served as a spokesperson for women from all facets of Indian society. Women from higher social classes are in a similar situation to those from lower social classes. Women in the novel experience caste, class, and gender oppression.

The experiences of the characters who are considered subaltern are prevalent in almost all of his works. The Subalternity virtually permeates the mosaic of the characters in his writings. Deeti is a young woman who is married to a drug addict and a retired sepoy. She works at the British opium mill in Bihar and lives there with her husband and their 7-year-old kid. She is still pretty young, but because she was married to a retired sepoy at a young age, she consents to being addressed as a woman.

Living in a social group in India where Deeti, a modern woman, lacks the freedom to choose when, why, and with whom she would get married, as well as what, how, and when to start a family. The same option is made for Deeti, who is informed of her marriage to a former soldier with a small physical impairment—a limp—and a drug addiction. She didn't have to spend much time giving her approval to the marriage. When Deeti considers her position being married to an affeem-khoor, drug addict, she infers that she cannot escape the confines of the patriarchal society where it is her destiny to be submissive. She is married to the drug addict Hukum Singh, who is senior to her Deeti. Ghosh expressed this as "Her prospects had always been bad evilled by her stars, her fate being ruled by Saturn- Shani- a planet that exercised great power on those born under its influence, often brings discord, unhappiness and disharmony" (SP 30).

Deeti, a woman in Indian society, was tortured by her own husband and was unable to receive assistance from anyone. When her brother-in-law threatens her with further rapes, Deeti is forced to consider performing the Sati rite as her only alternative. But, Kalua, the untouchable Caste ox man from the nearby hamlet, steps in to save her. The couple runs away together. The inhabitants of high caste find this unacceptable. Deeti and Kalua are forced into servitude by Deeti's in-laws in order to flee. In a sense, Kalua assumes the role as the embodiment of subaltern consciousness.

According to the postcolonial perspective, the idea of Subalternity emerged from the ideas of self and other. These hierarchies and binaries were created by the self to silence the other. These are the self's creations meant to silence the other and create and uphold its rule over it. A significant and universal issue is the concept of other, which encompasses self-declared primacy and supremacy as well as all other claims to existence. The context determines the meaning of the extremely complicated and relative word 'other'. Zachery is one of the

characters who is shown as a member of the subaltern class. This passage from the book illustrates how they were dressed and what they did: "Zachery was dressed in his workday clothes, canvas trousers and the usual sailor's banyan—a loose fitting tunic made, in this stance, of course and faded osanaburg cloth. After weeks at sea his face was unshaven and his curly hair was grimy with grease, tar and salt." (SP 18)

Socially subaltern groups had the ability to challenge individuals in positions of hegemonic power. Kusum from *The Hungry Tide* provides a great illustration of this. Nirmal receives a vision from Kusum that allows him to witness the entire Morichjhapi movement and see the misery that these refugees are going through. This uprising is being expressed by silent nobodies who want to be heard, or by the subalterns. For Nirmal, the cries of the refugees come to stand for all such downtrodden groups without a place to call home.

Hence, King Neel and his family can be considered as the point at which society on the ship shifts from being the centre of authority to being marginalised. Deeti can also be cited as a former high caste man's wife who is now a subaltern woman or as someone who became a victim after marrying Kalua. Ghosh deliberately includes underprivileged characters in his books and emphasises the lives of these people:

Kaula lived in the Chamar-basti, a cluster of huts inhabited only by people of his caste. To enter the hamlet would have been difficult for Deeti and Kabutari, but fortunately for them, Kalua's dwelling lay in the periphery, not far from the main road to Gazipur. Deeti had passed that way many times before he had often seen Kaula lumbering about. (SP 53)

We are able to understand life, events, and problems from the perspectives of marginalised characters like Deeti, Kaula, and Kabutri since they experience numerous hurdles and hardships as a result of their lower caste and class. The themes evoked in his works are in tune with the concerns of subaltern theory.

Nearly all of the characters in Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* experience a sense of place, and several of them even yearn for their home towns. The ibis, the ship, serves as a different setting for people to create new communities and identities. The colonial sense of place conveys the feeling that the concept of place and its history are changing now. The character of human existence is heavily emphasized by Ghosh, which causes us to focus on the small rather than the global.

The other female characters on the deck, whether it is Heeru, Munia, Champa, Ratna or Dookhaneer have common past of Patriarchal Society and they desert restrictions of complex society and go ahead identify themselves as indentured on a strange land. They wish to leave their complicated past experience and seek betterment in future. They build up an egalitarian community which is classless and casteless. Their vision of a community stands for equality is an enthralling imagination.

Sea of Poppies, which is regarded as a post-colonial novel, has been crucial in illuminating the contemporary western culture and the problems it raises. This novel gives a lot of attention to Indian women and the different issues they face in Indian society. This novel can benefit from the postcolonial criticism of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.

To sum up, this article reveals that she became a subaltern subject due to the external circumstances. She comes from a lower class, is poor, and is not intelligent. The fundamental explanation of this is because Deeti continually adopted a submissive role in her life due to social and family patriarchal structures. Although though she made an effort to protect herself by running away from her Family with Kalua, the two of them ended up as migrants on the Ibis. She then received assistance from her friends who lead similarly miserable lives. Afterwards they departed the Ibis in search of a more suitable location. These strategies are put into action on the system through leveraging oppression, subordination, submissiveness, and patriarchy. Some of the characters in this book play certain roles that exemplify Gayatri's Subalternity philosophy. Most of them are victims that being the subjects who cannot speak what they want.

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