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Perspectives on Systematic Marginalization in Indian Writing in English

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Abstract

The present paper deals with the study of the multi-layered concept of marginality. The term has different connotations and shades in the modern era to which I have searched out thoroughly in the major Indian writings. The main focus is on how the marginalized are compelled to suffer for the sins of others; how government-cum-bureaucratic system's way off working has suspended the buoyant quality of marginalized life and how the writers being appalled by the situation pulled their writings' trigger against the privileged criminals.

Keywords- *Caste, Marginalization, Nexus, Systematic, Underdogs*

Marginalization is a multi-layered concept or an umbrella term. A whole society can be marginalized at the global level. A class and community can be marginalized from the dominant social order. Similarly, ethnic groups, families or individuals can be marginalized within localities. Thus, marginalization is a metaphor that refers to how individuals or groups are kept at or pushed beyond the edges of society. It may have various forms like class, caste, community, gender, and so on at one level and at the other level groups who are subjected to economic and social hardships. Marginal writings are narratives of trauma, pain, resistance, protest and social changes. Marginal texts paint the sufferings of and atrocities committed upon the underdogs. The writings proceed from a live experience of poverty, violence, rejection and suffering.

To whom the blame may concern

It is not certified but established by research that the wages of marginality proves the proverb "someone suffers for the sins of others". I purposefully choose the phrase

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“systematic marginality” for my research topic and the purpose is to show that the title of marginality was not bestowed from heaven upon the marginalized people. It was the result of our social and governmental system. It has been our government policies, socio-economic norms, soaring ambitions of our elite class etc. that cause havoc upon the unprivileged people and resultant we have marginalized classes in our society.

A bird eye view of the major Indian English novels written on the theme of marginalization offers vital insights into the Indian social system that caused marginality. The favourable-to-capitalists connection between the functioning of Indian democracy and the capitalists widened the gap between the poor class and the rich class. The corruption in Indian bureaucracy system only compelled the downtrodden to lead a more miserable life. Thanks to “Globalization” the lands of poor classes were taken by the neo-liberal capitalists but were not fairly compensated due to close nexus between governments concerned and the capitalists.

For the sake of large development projects tribal classes lost their lands. In the name of higher economic development and modernization, the tribal peoples were forcefully displaced from their lands and homes without any sincere efforts being made for their proper rehabilitation. They were pushed far backwards from the modern development process. Thus the acquisition of land for large industries, mines or special economic zones has given rise to the livelihood insecurity of the poor and less privileged people. As Rajkishor puts the situation,

Mega development projects like multipurpose river dams and large-scale mining generate benefits for the few relatively better off sections of population while marginalizing and excluding the poorer tribal people¹ (Meher, Rajkishor, 2009).

Therefore, time to time, the policy planners of India have initiated several steps for socio-economic upliftment of tribal communities through many development schemes. A provision for reduction of economic inequalities in the society was enforced in the second Five-year Plan. But regardless of all the efforts, tribal communities in India continue to lag behind due to deep rooted corruption in Indian bureaucracy system. On the one hand the system swallowed up almost all the government sums which were issued for the rejuvenation of the downtrodden classes, on the other tribal communities are poor but they are vulnerable to socio-cultural and political alienation. Thus, the various key components like social empowerment, economic empowerment, social justice etc. are such lustrous phrases that only embellish the speeches of the looters and freebooters.

Since the time immemorial, there has been a wide gap between the rich and the poor in Indian social set up. Modernity is but a mute witness to the widening gap between the mighty and the weak, the exploiters and the exploited, the small things and the big things. The privileged people always are madly engaging in selfish accumulation of unlimited wealth

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and power. They miss no opportunity to snatch the share of their unprivileged brethren. The poor people's dependence on the rich for sustenance and betterment of life is still a prominent socio-economic norm despite amazing development in areas like economy and education. Given these conditions, the rich are growing richer and the poor poorer.

The issues relating to human rights have been under critical focus, literary portrayals of the experiences of marginalized groups have acquired great significance worldly. The modern spray in marginalized literature in India is an attempt to bring to the forefront the experiences of discrimination, violence and poverty of the marginalized people. But expressions of these experiences are always trying to be buried in silence. More recent is the trend to deny their existence altogether. As the then Marxist Chief Minister of Kerala, Mr. E K Nayanar, said that Arundhati Roy had painted a "factually incorrect picture of the social conditions in Kerala."² (Alam <http://www.postcolonialweb>)

And all these types of situations appalled to the major Indian writers that resultant in marginalization themes for their writings.

An overview to Indian democracy

The major Indian English writings on marginalized life clearly expose the functioning of the Indian state-governments especially the vital roles of government and its bureaucracy that cause mayhem over the marginalized classes. And this common theme runs through all following discussed novels.

A close reading reveals that the Indian state-governments that were founded for the noble cause of democracy. Their primary duty must and should be safety, equality, fulfillment of basic needs, and upliftment of all classes biaslessly, but the pious purpose of the democracy was manipulated by power-hungry politicians and bitterly failed to meet the just expectations of the public in the face of rapid socio-economic change. Public institutions have been losing their ethical responsibilities and ability to govern. The all-powerful capitalist lobbies hijacked the Indian political system and the poor masses were held far away from inclusive development. Thanks to utter corruption and criminalization of political parties and electoral politics, the good governance is totally collapsed which can be marked in almost all the novels especially Swarup's *Six Suspects*, Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* and Tejpal's *The Story of My Assassins*. Our best legislations are made null by the corruption in the bureaucracy. The overburdened, ill-equipped and poorly paid police machinery suffers from the tag of brutality, partiality and inefficiency. Each novel presents a bleak picture of a deeply politicized police and bureaucracy. Police atrocities figure in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*, Vikas Swarup's *Q&A*, Arun Joshi's *The City and The River* and Tarun Tejpal's *The Story of My Assassins*. The soul-dead bureaucracy is fairly figured out in Vikas Swarup's *Six Suspects*, Joshi's *The City and The River* and Tejpal's *The Story of My Assassins*. Through inaction or endless delay, the public institutions relinquish their own powers. The passivity of police or civilian administration and

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lack of responsibility on the part of public servants can be marked as the chief cause of public misery, whether it is the scene of 1975 emergency by Gurcharan Das, Rohinton Mistry and Arun Joshi, or the miseries of the anti-Sikh riots in the 1984 by Rohinton Mistry, in the portrayal of the 1992-93 religious riots in Meher Pestonji's *Pervez-A Novel* and David Davidar's *The Solitude of Emperors*. The present-day corrupt behaviour of public servants from lower level as clerks, constables, staff in government schools and hospitals to higher administrative officers is castigated by Pestonji, Davidar, Adiga, Swarup and Tarun Tejpal. Due to the increasing materialism, public servants and political leaders not only disregard the rule of law but also accept manifold bribes. Even civil society institutions and the media are not free from this malaise. How the justice system is paralyzed and criminals are left to go scot free by endless delay in prosecuting system is fairly dealt by the major writers.

In *The Story of My Assassins* Tejpal depicts the unpredictable actions of the government. When the narrator exposes the massive scam in the Agriculture Ministry that cheats millions of poor, he is branded an anti-state agent. After staging an attack on him, the government guards him to shift attention from the corrupt Agriculture Ministry. This strategy involves the submissive cop, the dishonest magistrate, the omnipresent, omnipotent politician and their working puppets; almighty bureaucratic officers. Eventually, the dreaded criminals at the instructions of bleak politicians try to eliminate the narrator. Politicians are described as; "...men who commandeered the fates of millions, outside whose doors...the influential bowed...who could transfer officials with a nod, grant licenses with a squiggle, make and break...fortunes between the taking of toast and tea".³ (Tejpal, *The Story of My Assassins* 30)

In Vikas Swarup's *Q & A*, rule of law and democracy are handmaidens of the rich and the marginalized cannot even dream of a good life. (Because dreams reflect what one sees and feels in life) Zero amenities, malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, constant terror of anti-social elements and police are the ornaments of the have-nots. The inhuman conditions of the slum dwellers in urban wasteland of Mumbai really laugh at the "India Shining";

...a two-hundred-hectare triangle of swampy urban wasteland... Destitute migrants from all over the country jostle for their own handful of sky in Asia's biggest slum..... They came to Mumbai, the city of gold, with dreams in their hearts of striking it rich.... But that gold turned to lead a long time ago.... Its open drains teem with mosquitoes. Its stinking, excrement-lined communal latrines are full of rats... Mounds of filthy garbage lie on every corner...you have to suck in your breath to squeeze through its narrow, claustrophobic alleys..... Amidst the modern skyscrapers and neon-lit shopping complexes of Mumbai, Dharavi sits like a cancerous lump...And the city refuses to recognize it. ... the residents...struggling simply to survive...don't care. So they live in illegal houses and use illegal electricity, drink illegal water and watch illegal cable TV. They work in... illegal factories and illegal shops, and even

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travel illegally... but a cancer cannot be stopped simply by being declared illegal. It still kills with its slow poison.⁴ (Vikas Swarup, *Q&A* 156-157)

After the murder of his guardian Father Timothy, abandoned by birth, little Ram had been shifted to this orphanage-cum-prison. Where, the officials pocket government funds leaving orphans to fade away without proper food, clothes, hygiene environment, medicines, education and games. What orphanage-dwellers eat, wear, learn, play and enjoy are only tortures. Each orphan has a tragic tale reflecting the cruel fate, horrible poverty, burnt alive families in communal riots, addicted fathers, prostitute mothers, bonded labour and insensitive police. As Ram puts asserts: "...Whatever you do, wherever you go, never go to the police. Ever." (Vikas Swarup, *Q&A* 118)

Aravind Adiga in his *The White Tiger* presents the actual practice of democracy at the grass-roots level. Foreign leaders visiting India, says the protagonist Balram, are told a lot about – "the splendour of democracy in India - the awe-inspiring spectacle of one billion people casting their votes to determine their own future..."⁵ (Adiga, *The White Tiger* 97)

In reality, as is seen in Balram's village of Laxmangarh, politicians and the wealthy fix elections. Balram's father who had seen twelve elections could never vote for himself. Balram mocks the powerless voters,

These are the three main diseases of this country...typhoid, cholera and election fever. The last one is the worst; it makes people talk and talk about things that they have no say in....Like eunuchs discussing the Kama Sutra, the voters discuss the elections in Laxmangarh. (Adiga, *The White Tiger* 98)

When the mighty doubt on somebody or any marginalized man dares to question the gross malpractices s/he is finished off. As Balram sums up:

...he also went after the servant's family. One brother was set upon while working in the fields; beaten to death there. That brother's wife was finished off by three men working together. A sister, still unmarried, was also finished off. Then the house where the family had lived was surrounded by the four henchmen and set on fire. (Adiga, *The White Tiger* 67)

The nexus between the rich and the politicians works in a more clandestine manner that causes only mayhem on the marginalized communities. While the rich agree to fill their treasuries, politicians allow them to siphon off public resources. Balram's masters are from such a mining mafia in the coal rich town of Dhanbad. The achievements of the popularly elected Chief Minister are only shocking:

...a total of ninety-three criminal cases - for murder, rape, grand larceny, gun-smuggling, pimping, and many other such minor offences - are pending against the Great Socialist and his ministers.... Not easy to get convictions when the judges are judging in the Darkness, yet....three of the ministers are currently in jail, but continue to be ministers. The Great Socialist himself is

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said to have embezzled one billion rupees ... and transferred that money into a bank account in a small, beautiful country in Europe full of white people and black money. (Adiga, *The White Tiger* 97-98)

The objective critique of the roles of the citizens and the governments in post-liberalised India, clearly focuses on both with regard to what their roles are and what theirs ought to be. All these writers praise the positive contributions of citizens as well as governments but censure where they prove failures from their duties. Each writer gives voice firmly for rebuilding what has been damaged by the unfair working of democracy, bureaucracy and other systems – whether it is the pain of partition or break of religious harmony or the struggle of the downtrodden to overcome an elitist system or struggle of womankind against the long choking ordeals of patriarchy system or religion-based terrorism in the new millennium. Each novel contains stories of the endless struggle with an ardor of triumph over corrupt systems and cruel destinies. As far as the governments are concerned, the selected novels reveal that they are messing with the fates of millions, gradually increasing totalitarianism, populism and divorcing from constitutional values.

Literary survey of marginalized literature

The Indian novels with reference to marginalization generally deal in protest against the situations which are responsible for the marginalized conditions or subalternity of the unprivileged people. It emphasizes the necessity of a change in the popular sensitivity about these sociological problems through the portrayal of the psychodynamics of the person or group of persons that are forced to lead a marginalized life. In Indian fiction in English, as well as in its counterpart in Indian regional language fiction, the varied shades of marginality reflect like a prism, the myriad nuances of tradition and change in Indian life.

The marginalized literature has also gained energy from the socio-political stand of the Ambedkar-Phule-ideology-inspired neo-Buddhists as mirrored in the different marginalized stories, which replies to several issues implied in the struggle of the marginalized community.

From Mulk Raj Anand's classic novel, *Untouchable* (1935) to *No Other World* (2017) by Rahul Mehta (Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), Githa Hariharan's *In Times of Siege* (2003), Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008), Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* (2010), and Cyrus Mistry's *Chronicle of a Corpse Bearer* (2012) in between], the reader finds the multiple perspectives of marginalized life in eventful narrations. The Mahars, whose age-old social responsibility in Shankarrao Kharat's story, 'A Corpse in the Well' (1994), is to dispose of the corpses, and the Khandhias, who bear corpses in Mistry's *Chronicle of a Corpse Bearer*, are fated to receive similar inhuman treatment. Though they are called by different names as Harijan or Antyaja or Panchama or Paravan or Pariah, but they are all untouchable outcastes bearing bitter tang of the marginalized on their heads. Mistry's first novel, *The Radiance of Ashes* (2006 in India) is the demonstration of social

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inequality and the consequence of man's cruelty to man. Luxman Gaikwad's *The Branded* (1998), (the English translation by P. A. Kolharkar of his Marathi autobiographical novel, *Uchalya* (1987), which won him the Sahitya Akademi Award, is a notable work on the theme of marginality. Gaikwad, himself is an Uchalya, was the first to bring to light the inner workings, the suffering and the exploitation of the community. If any one of the tribe, Uchalya, wished to leave the place, they would had to obtain a permit from the police and had to bribe the police for the purpose. Uchalya is a wandering tribe whose main profession for ages has been stealing. The caste system of India had rejected this lowly placed segment of the society as born criminals.

Tamil novelist Bama Faustina's *Karukku* appeared in the Tamil version in 1992 (English translation, 2000). It depicts the life of a marginalized woman and in the process criticizes the casteism of an Indian village. *Karukku* is an influential writing on Indian social system as the educational system, the church and the bureaucracy and highlights the complicity between class and caste in post-independence India.

P. Shivkami's *The Grip of Change* (English Translation of *Pazhainya Kazhithalum* written in Tamil) is based on the inter-caste sexual relations. The novel opens with the panic-stricken, furious treatment of a Parayar woman, Thangam, who has been violently abused and tortured due to her love-relations with upper caste man. The author throws light on her sin of widowhood, the harassment by her brothers-in-law due to non-submitting to them, the sexploitation by her Hindu landlord, ParanjothiUdayar, denial of her share in the land and so on.

Narayan's *The Araya Woman* (2010) (English translation of *Kocharethi* by Catherine Thankamma) especially explains about the life of the young Araya woman Kunjipennu and Kochuraman and their family as well as the community. The work depicts the tyranny faced by the tribes due to various socio-economic and political realities. Throughout the novel one can find the suppression of the marginalized tribe, bureaucratic greed and repression, freedom struggle, survival struggle, and struggle for native identity.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) criticizes the government policies in Kerala, which proved failure to face the seething issue of caste struggles and resultant atrocities. More shocking is that the political leaders fuel the fire the caste struggles to take unfair advantage for their political motives. Roy's sarcasm encircles the political oligarchy, social, political, and religious injustices with her brilliant lampoon. The marginalized in the saga are a mother Ammu, two twins Eshta and Rahel and an untouchable Velutha. Their marginalization is intensified due to their lack of power and class politics. How high honour holds the haughty heads when the policemen imagine the headlines that will herald their courage for arresting and torturing a so-called rapist Velutha. Eventually he is a true lover and love does not know the frontier of cast as Shakespeare says:

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Love looks not with the eyes, but with mind, “and therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.”⁶
(Rasmussen ed. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 26)

Inspector Thomas Mathew resents Velutha because “he had a Touchable wife, two Touchable daughters whole Touchable generations waiting in their Touchable wombs...”⁷
(Roy, *The God of Small Things* 259) The beating of Velutha is very hard and full of bias. After a fatal beating by the “touchable” policemen Velutha is transformed, in Estha’s horrified eyes, into a man with a head which *look[ed] like a pumpkin . . . with a monstrous upside-down smile*. (Roy, *The God of Small Things* 231) For the corrupt politicians like K. N. M Pillai the death of an untouchable is actually more beneficial than his life. Before the death of Velutha, K. N. M Pillai the weathercock not only denies Velutha the protection of the party but betrays Velutha also. But after the custody murder of Velutha, he makes the party members mobilise against the incident.

Khushwant Singh's *The Company of Women* (1999) attacks the malevolence of sexual exploitation of the marginalized women in the society. The novel focuses on the playboy, Mohan's sexual adventures with nine women to mollify his sexual hunger. Singh too exposes that behind the offering any help to a marginalized women by the upper caste men conceals evil emotions of upper-class men. Mohan kumar feels that Dhanno a woman of the lowest class of the society termed as “untouchable” is in fact the most touchable to him but only when they are all aloof. Under the pretext of facilitation to the suppressed downtrodden, Mohan Kumar finds opportunity of sexual harassment and with temptation of little monetary help at that. His mentality changes by the coming and going of the Sun. Thus, for Mohan Kumar it is not tough to take Dhanno to his bedroom with lure of toys to her children and a little extra money. The canker of poverty makes Dhanno docile and her acceptance of servility reflects when Mohan Kumar brings ice- cream and balloons for her children. Extremely obliged Dhanno asks her children to touch sahib’s feet.

Om Prakash Valmiki’s *Joothan: A Dalit’s Life* (2003), translated by Arun Prabha Mukherjee, is a highly significant marginalized novel. Throughout the novel, Valmiki repeatedly narrates his experiences of pain as keeping out due to the continued practice of marginality. He depicts how marginalized people have to live a hellish life mainly due to the suppressive mentality of the upper caste people. How they are deprived of all the opportunities of life, how they are compelled to live animal like life and segregated from the upper-class community, how they are deprived of basic human rights and made the puppets of the upper caste people. Valmiki describes how the entire community depends on the leftover food thrown out by the upper castes in return for their hard but unpaid work. The entire community had to depend on the mercy of the upper castes who, instead of paying labour, exploit them.

Perumal Murugan’s *Seasons of the Palm*, (2004) sheds tears on the pitiable plight of Shortie and her family from the *Chakkilis*, the lowest rung of the hierarchal in the society –

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untouchable. The rich and the greedy moneylenders exploit the marginalized poor. Their exploitation is so cruel that they are cheated and their lands are illegally taken away by upper class Gounder families. They keep their life in pawn to the upper castes to do bonded labour for their masters. The Social backwardness, lack of food, money, education and health care has made them wretched. It is shocking that their wages are vary not accordingly to their capabilities but according to their castes.

The marginalized sections have not only been exploited socially, politically and economically, but they have also been deprived of the right to education because they have to work for whole life for only their masters. The sting of caste stigma and segregation has benumbed the intellectual life of the marginalized. Shortie has to graze the goats of his Gounder master in open field, at cowshed, he has to do all cleaning works thus he cannot spare even a free minute but has to starve;

He has to feed the animals. He fetches hay and dried stalks of the kambu to the shed, huge piles that exhaust his thin hands. The animals immediately set up a chewing rhythm that follows Shortie as he sets about his next task. There is not a minute to be lost between his various duties.⁸ (Murugan, *Seasons of the Palm* 17).

Vikas Swarup's novel, *Q & A* (2005), later published as *Slumdog Millionaire*, which turned into the Oscar winning film, "Slumdog Millionaire" (2008), is based on the perspective of a street-child who has won a billion in a quiz-show and the cinematic visualized scene of the twenty-first century India. It mirrored almost every national issue - slums and poverty, the world of glamour, corruption, breakdown of law and order, abuse of women and children. The perceptive of life and practical wisdom become powerful weapons of the have-nots as they employ against plutocratic system. *Q&A* is full of the positive energy of the never-say-die spirit of the Slumdogs that keeps India moving. The protagonist, Ram Mohammad Thomas, projects a synthesized identity of the insolvent children of three religious sections of Indian society.

Vikas Swarup's *Six Suspects* (2005), portrays varied spheres of Indian life which have deteriorated into fiefs of corrupt and crooked ruling elites. It condemns the Indian political system and the failure of citizens to fulfil their civic responsibilities. Vivek Rai, the playboy son of the Home Minister of Uttar Pradesh, murdered Ruby Gill at a stylish restaurant in New Delhi on the ground that she refused to serve him a drink. Vicky Rai is slaughtered at his farmhouse at a party he had thrown to celebrate his acquittal. Six suspects unknot the case before our eyes: a corrupt bureaucrat; an American tourist; a stone-age tribesman; a Bollywood sex symbol; a mobile phone thief; and an ambitious politician. The novel offers a top diplomat's view of Indian society and accelerates the revolutionary feelings of the have-nots who can finally overthrow constitutional structures. He is firmly on the side of the underdogs and rages against the abuse of power.

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Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* (2006) is a satirical novel against the societal tyranny and corrupt, omnipotent, Indian political system whose upper-class leaning is so far responsible for the poor plight of the marginalized communities. The marginality or untouchability or Dalitism is assaulted very hard in the novel. He provides a detailed account of the atrocities committed against the marginalized. The author depicts the cruelty and oppression against "Chamirs" who are born into a leather-making chamir family. The upper caste people have treated them brutally in a distressing manner. The inhumanity of upper castes against the lower classes is very scandalous and shameful as reflects in the following lines,

For walking on the upper-caste side of the street, Sita was stoned, though not to death- the stones had ceased at first blood. Gambir was less fortunate; he had molten lead poured into his ears because he ventured within hearing range of the temple while prayers were in progress. Dayaram, reneging on an agreement to plough a landlord's field, had been forced to eat the landlord's excrement in the village square. Dhiraj tried to negotiate in advance with Pandit Ghanshyam.⁹

Tarun Tejpal's *The Story of My Assassins* (2009) is the narrative of dazzling Delhi with its social activists, corporate honchos, police officers, lawyers, media persons, bureaucrats and politicians on the one hand and that of the dark slums, gangsters, caste and class wars, miserable poverty, excessive cruelty, and underdogs' desire for revenge and liberty on the other hand. It projects a contemporary Delhi full of dark world of crime and corruption. The novel focuses on how the poor and the marginal groups live an unsafe life of dispossession, criminality and violence due to the massive division of class and caste. It is a society where rape is a weapon of mass destruction, where the sensitive learn to stick knives into or hammer the brains out of those who cross their paths, and where forgiveness comes with the successful murder.

Sub Inspector Hathi Ram accepts the mindless and heartless way in which policemen are forced to act; "We do what those above us in the department tell us to do..." (Tejpal, *The Story of My Assassins* 20) We are "a mouse in front of seniors, an elephant in front of juniors, a wolf with suspects, a tiger before convicts, a lamb around politicians, a fox with men of money." (Tejpal, *The Story of My Assassins* 38) "No one trusts the police...were we not such eunuchs the very look of this country would change.... We are only one of our great country's many illusions... I am a very small nut-bolt...The big machine tells me what to do..." (Tejpal, *The Story Of My Assassins* 39-40)

In a democracy where money is worshipped like God and doubt and suspicion reign supreme by the blessing of all powerful politicians murder is only a play. As Sub-Inspector Hathi asserts; "...In this country anyone will kill...for a few thousand rupees. Sons will kill

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fathers, brothers will kill brothers, husbands will kill wives - what is it to kill a stranger!....” (Tejpal, *The Story of My Assassins* 97-98)

The views about class and caste divisions which is the basic feature of Indian society are very shocking; “Generation after generation learns that the equalities of the schoolroom are a delusion. You pass through the greatest educational mixer-grinder and when you emerge...what remains...intact are class, caste, religion and wealth.” (Tejpal, *The Story of My Assassins* 261-262) “And again Power is a greater principle than family, friendship, race, colour, religion. But caste is skin...indelible...” (Tejpal, *The Story of My Assassins* 400)

Vaidehi's *Vasudeva's Family* (2013), (Asprushyaru which literally means “untouchables” was first published in 1980 in Kannada) exposes the multiple layers of marginality. It offers a scathing criticism of caste hierarchies, with all its complexities and nuances through the inter-caste marriage between a Brahmin and a woman of the lowly Korago community.

No Other World (2017) by Rahul Mehta tells the story about an American-Indian boy who feels the sting of marginality and it also reveals the struggle of his family to confront the racism and other difficulties simply because they belong to a marginalized community and they are fated only to accept the tortures and abuses by the upper classes.

Intra-marginalized atrocities

In brief, the marginalized literature in India, somewhat like the black literature in America, deals with the position of the marginalized communities in our caste ridden society and their endless struggle for self-respect, dignity, political-cultural equality and socio-economic justice. It is, basically, a reaction against the Brahminical view of life, the Vedic foundations of social structure.

The negative features about this word-fight cannot be ignored. Firstly, the allegations are so common in nature and essence that they seem only promoting a culture of controversy to gain political capital. They are frequently tried for power politics. Secondly, the reaction to the given situation is so unsure that it becomes self-defeating. To differentiate between the marginalized writing by a marginalized and that by a non-marginalized seems only annoying especially when the marginalized literature is written for the pious purpose as the rejuvenation of marginalized communities. To label the works of even Premchand, Phanishwar Nath Renu, Mulk Raj Anand and Mahasweta Devi as ‘discourse(s) of pity’ never can sound to be true.

The writing of US-based Narendra Jadhav, for instance, is not accepted as a representative document of marginalized writing for the simple reason that he has become an elite settled in his dreamland. He is disqualified due to his English language expertise and his western experience has become an impediment. This interrogates Alok Mukherjee's stand that “English education for the Dalits in India ... alone can empower and emancipate the historically disenfranchised Dalits¹⁰ (Singh, *The Indian English Novel of the New Millennium*

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18) It is utterly true that liberation also involves elitism and every marginalized who receives English education ceases to be a marginalized.

Thirdly, not everybody is equally eligible for the equal opportunity in marginalized communities is generally overlooked. Atrocities caused by marginalized against the marginalized are also not uncommon. There may be rebellious reactions to these types of facts, but this is clearly discernible that a kind of class system works within the frame of the marginalized communities also.

Bama in her novel, *Vanmam (Vendetta)* 2008, translated by Malini Sheshadri focuses on the problem of inequality and hatred, rivalry and revenge among different marginalized communities. It highlights the animosity between the Pallars and the Parayars of Kandampatti village who identify themselves as Hindus and Christians respectively. It describes how the landowners of the dominant marginalized caste stoke the fires of intra-marginalized hostilities to benefit themselves. So the fact should and must not be denied that a corrupt elite or a corrupt marginalized both are equally condemnable and dangerous for a civil society.

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