

Tribhuvan University

The Margins in Nehru's *Toward Freedom* and Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost*

*Happiness: A Study of Subaltern Consciousness*

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Prabeen Kumar Awasthi has completed his thesis entitled “The Margins in Nehru’s *Toward Freedom* and Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness: A Study of Subaltern Consciousness*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from August 2020 to July 2021. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

.....

Dr. Komal Phuyal

February 2021

### Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "The Margins in Nehru's *Toward Freedom* and Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness: A Study of Subaltern Consciousness*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Prabeen Kumar Awasthi has been approved by the following members of the research committee.

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**Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work. It contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree in any institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published anywhere.

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Prabeen Kumar Awasthi

July 2021

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## Abstract

*Subaltern people, in every part of the world, have been placed at the bottom of the society. They have not got proper space in Indian society too. However, subalterns in India have become successful to hit the discriminatory forces time and again with the help of their consciousness. Subaltern consciousness plays a vital role to dismantle various injustices imposed upon them by the people at the center. The study investigates the politics of subaltern consciousness and the substantive representation of marginalized groups in Jawaharlal Nehru's *Toward Freedom: An Autobiography* (1936) and Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017). The subaltern resist existing social construction in the quest of their autonomous self and it is achieved with the help of continuous resistance on their part. Colonized Indians reveal their resistance to counter the British Raj. In the like manner, Hijras, women and Dalits resist the conventional norms of the mainstream by developing anti-normative body and by adopting new roles in the society. The study employs Gramsci, Spivak and Guha's ideas on 'subaltern' to analyze the life of the people in the periphery of social, economic and political strata in the 1930s and the 2010s in India. Besides them, Migual Tamel and Michael Garnett's notion on 'self,' 'interpretation,' 'agency' and 'resistance' are applied to show the way subalterns dismantle their subordination at multiple levels. Subalterns in India have succeeded to transform themselves from victim of colonialism to self-dignified people capable to challenge discriminations prevalent in the society.*

Keywords: Agency, Identity, Interpretation, Resistance, Subjectivity, Subaltern Consciousness

## Table of Contents

Letter of Recommendation	i
Letter of Approval	ii
Declaration	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	v
Table of Contents	vi
Chapter I. Reading Social History through Literature	1
Chapter II. Subaltern Consciousness: Intersection of History and Literature in India	8
The Subaltern and Critical Debate	10
The Subaltern and Indian Nationalist Movement	25
Revisiting the Promise through Literature	33
Critical Debate on Nehru and Roy	38
Chapter III. Critical Analysis of Nehru's <i>Toward Freedom</i> and Roy's <i>The Ministry of Utmost Happiness</i>	54
Chapter IV. Rereading Nehruvian Promise through Arundhati Roy	67
Chapter V. Politics of Subaltern Consciousness in Indian History	76
Works Cited	

## Chapter I. Reading Social History through Literature

Subaltern people have become victim of colonialism, classism, casteism and gender discrimination during different time periods in India. Though their status has improved in the society in independent India from that of pre-independent India, they are still at the bottom of the society with little opportunities. This study analyzes the representation of subaltern people's struggle from the 1930s to the 2010s in India. It also investigates the position of the subaltern envisioned in pre-independent India and compares it to their position at present in India after more than seven decades of its independence from the British Raj. Besides, the study explores the way subalterns make themselves free from their subordinations through resistance to achieve their independent self in Jawahrlal Nehru's *Toward Freedom: An Autobiography (1936)* and Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness (2017)*. Many research works have been carried out in these text with special focus on representation of discriminations faced by the subaltern in India but nobody has researched on the portrayal of nature and position of subaltern in these texts. The study focuses on subaltern people such as colonized Indians, *Hijras*, Dalits, women, Muslims, and untouchables' quest for independence and examines them against the backdrop of Nehru's promises made in the margin in his autobiography. The study aims to analyze the position of subalterns in pre-independent and post-independent India. Both, Nehru and Roy, have given much space to the marginalized people in their texts. Nehru and Roy try to dismantle the boundary between the center and margins by making subalterns aware about their position as well as by encouraging them to be collective to fight against injustices. The study employs the theoretical insights of Antonio Gramsci, Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak, Ranjit Guha, Partha Chatarjee, Miguel Tamen, and Michael Garnett to analyze the life of the subaltern, role of their consciousness to



resist injustices and the way their position differs in post-independent India from that of pre-independent India. To some extent, subalterns, in independent India, have achieved their autonomous self with the help of their agency.

Nehru's *Toward Freedom* presents the critical situation of the people of Kashmir who had to run away from their place to elsewhere. Nehru sheds lights on the critical life of Indian people under the regime of cruel British rulers. The text shows a clear picture of pre-independent period in India where Indian people were not treated as humans by the British rulers. Nehru's text depicts the political consciousness of marginalized people and their struggle for freedom. Nehru presents Indian people's struggle against the British Raj. The dominant idea in Nehru's text from the beginning is economic freedom and economic equality for the Indian people which is taken as the essence of socialism. He is against taxation. He wants to make Indian farmers free from paying heavy tax. Freedom and independence of Indian people from the British Raj is the main promise made in Nehru's text. He promises to give justice to the semi-naked sons and daughters of India. Nehru wants to eradicate the overflowing poverty and inequality prevalent in India in the 1930s. Nehru seeks a classless society with equal economic justice and opportunity for all. He envisions a society that is organized for higher material and cultural progress, and cultivates spiritual values of cooperation as well as unselfishness. He wishes for the society in India with the spirit of service that desires to do right to maintain world order and equality.

Roy's *The Ministry* presents the critical situation of the subaltern in India who have become victim of casteism, gender discrimination and capitalism. The text presents the flotsam and jetsam of complex Indian society. The text highlights marginalized people such as *Hijras*, lower cast people, the poor and women who have

not found their place in the existing social order at present in India. They struggle to find new spaces for themselves. They challenge conventions, try new possible lives and inhabit new roles in the society. Roy presents 'binarism' and the conflict between the center and the periphery. She presents the conflict between Hindus and Muslims, between male, female and intersex, between upper caste and lower caste, as well as between the graveyard and the surrounding wider city. Her text revolves around the life of Anjum, an intersex, Revathy, a moist comrade, Dayachand, an untouchable, Tilotamma, a wandering Syrian origin half- Dalit woman, and Musa Yeswi, a forced Kashmiri freedom fighter. She narrates the unheard tales about the failure of a secular democratic India. She presents national narrative from the perspective of the marginalized. Roy tries to dismantle the gap created between the subaltern and the elite. She gives freedom of expression to the marginalized characters in her text.

Roy presents the conflict between 'duniya' and the 'other.' Roy, in her text, uses the term 'mainstream' to refer to 'duniya.' The word 'duniya' refers to the world where people with conventionally accepted solid identity live. The protagonist, in Roy's text, tries to be collective to go against the injustices prevalent in India at present. Anjum, with her agency, begins to connect herself with 'duniya' around her and the margins begin to drift towards the mainstream due to her tireless effort. She establishes a Jannat Guest House as a place for discarded and neglected ones from the mainstream. This paradise provides shelter to the marginalized and neglected people of India. The Jannet Guest House works as the world where discarded and neglected people from the mainstream enjoy their life without any discriminations because they are collective. Subalterns gathered at the Jannet Guest House gets some courage to go against the discrimination faced by them. These dropouts realize that even if they

have been discarded from the mainstream, they can establish their own world and live happily without any discriminations.

Subalterns, in Roy's text, tries to be free from internal constraints to challenge injustices. Dayachand, a Dalit belonging to the low caste of the Hinduism stratification, later abandons his faith of social stratification and connects to Islam. He revolts against this marginalization and takes refuge in Islam which strongly discourages caste system in the society. By revolting against one othering, he jumps into a new othering. While working in the hospital, he observed that all the toilet cleaners in the hospital were basically 'Dalits' and untouchables. Saddam later abandons his job and comes to reside in Anjum's Jannat Guest House, the place of dejected, marginalized and fallen ones. Another character, Tilo, attempts to resist the dominating factors. Tilo develops herself as a freedom fighter of Kashmir. She is deprived from the basic necessities of life like home, proper upbringing and parental care. Tilo resists the discriminations prevalent in the society. Tilo protests against the social exclusion of Christian and Dalits, and shows resistance through her anti-normative character. In the same way, Anjum, a trans-gender cannot remain within the boundaries set for *Hijras*. She creates a life for her outside the boundaries set by the society. In short, Anjum breaks the barriers of the society put on her gender by living an anti-normative life. Hence, this study argues that fictional and non-fictional writings make subalterns conscious about their position in the society and that consciousness works as a site of resistance. The consciousness of the subaltern ultimately helps them to achieve their autonomous as well as an independent self.

Nehru, in his autobiography, makes promises to make Indian people free from the cruel British Raj. He wants economic freedom and economic equality in India. He promises to give justice to the semi-naked sons as well as daughters of India and

wants to make Indians free from heavy taxation. Farmers during the 1920s and the 30s in India were compelled to pay heavy taxes. Nehru envisions a classless and organized society for higher material and cultural progress. He wants to cultivate spiritual values of cooperation, unselfishness and the spirit of service among all the people. He wants goodwill and love among all the people that ultimately leads to world order and equality in India. Nehru's autobiography presents the problems faced by colonized Indians, especially people of Kashmir and farmers of India during the 1930s. Nehru takes the real historical position of the subaltern and strength of their self in the whirlpool of massive forces of historical change in India before its independence from the cruel British Raj.

Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry* highlights on the way marginalized people resist conventional norms by adopting new roles in the society. She tries to give agency to the cohorts of marginalized people such as *Hijras*, political rebels, the poor and women who are yet to find their place completely in the existing social order. Roy presents national narrative from the perspective of the marginalized to assign them agency. Subaltern people, in Roy, go against conventional norms of the society and adopt new roles. Both, Nehru and Roy, present marginalized people's struggle with social and political issues in India and insists on the need for their voice to be heard and addressed. They present subaltern people's subordination at multiple levels, their struggle to end their position as subaltern and continuous encounters from the dominant groups to keep the subaltern under their rule. Nehru shows the life of the people at the margin and Roy highlights on the way subalterns develop anti-normative character. Marginalized people can overcome all the discriminations and injustices through interpretation and resistance. They can develop their autonomous self with the help of awakening of agency. Awakening of agency takes place among the

marginalized people when they become free from internal and external factors.

Hence, subaltern consciousness can be a source of resistance for them.

This study explores marginalized people's bitter experiences, their struggle, politics of their consciousness, self-discovery and their transformation from subordinated groups to self-dignified people in Nehru's *Toward Freedom* and Roy's *The Ministry*. The research work also investigates the awakening of agency among the subaltern to resist oppression. Multiple dimensions of these novels have been explored. Many researchers have focused on marginalized people's struggle with social, political, economic and cultural issues in Nehru's *Toward Freedom* and Roy's *The Ministry* but there is no single work done by examining the position of subaltern at present in India against the backdrop of Nehru's original vision of India manifested in his autobiography. This study focuses on the position of subalterns reflected in Roy's text and analyzes it against the backdrop of Nehru's promises made in the margin. This study critically evaluates the representation of marginalized people's struggle in these texts, the way they overcome various injustices, establish themselves as autonomous beings and connect them to the mainstream.

Marginalized position of colonized Indians in pre-independent India and discriminations faced by women, *Hijras* and Dalits in post-independent India in various social, political and economic strata are the main reasons of resistance in Nehru's *Toward Freedom* and Roy's *The Ministry*. Nehru envisions critical situation of colonized Indians in India under the British Raj. He observes the suffering of the farmers who are compelled to pay high tax. He highlights on hand to mouth problems faced by people living in the remote areas of the country. He promises to make the subaltern free from all discriminations and injustices. He also makes promise to connect margins with the center. In the like manner, Roy presents the problems faced

by *Hijras*, Dalits and women in the 2010s in India. This study makes significant contribution to the two areas of critical concern. First, this study casts lights on the situation of colonized Indians, *Hijras*, Dalits and Muslims in India. In addition to this, it studies the way marginalized people's consciousness helps them to resist as well as overcome all the discriminations to develop their autonomous self.

## **Chapter II. Subaltern Consciousness: Intersection of History and Literature in India**

The term 'subaltern' represents the group of people who are at the bottom or in the periphery of the society. They have limited or no opportunities. Besides, they are the people with limited rights lacking agency of their own. They are ignored and neglected by the people at the center. Though they live at the bottom of the society, they can revolt against the mainstream. The concept of 'subaltern' was first developed and used by Antonio Gramsci in 1890 to represent those people in the society who were ignored during the historic transformation of the Italian state in the 1870s. In addition, he used the term to represent the military in the lower rank and who earn little. After Gramsci, South Asian scholars initiated the debate on Subaltern Studies. They wrote a series of volumes on Subaltern Studies since 1982 to let the historians know the culture and existence of the marginalized people in colonial and in postcolonial India. When retracing the concept of subaltern from Gramsci to Spivak, we find the slight difference in the way they define 'subaltern.' Gramsci takes economic status of the people as a measuring rod of the subaltern. Guha focuses on class and caste as a measuring parameters of the subaltern. Chatterjee believes that people are subordinated on the basis of their caste more than their economic status. Spivak takes gender as the measuring rod of the subaltern.

Gramsci, Guha, Chatterjee and Spivak's perspectives on subaltern consciousness show that subalternity is determined on the basis of a person's economic status, and their ownership over other resources. People are not taken as subaltern only on the basis of their caste, religion or gender. It is their financial status in the community that determines whether they are subaltern or elite. Broadly, subaltern is a relative term and there are layers of the subaltern. The determining

parameters of subaltern and privileged class vary with time, place and economic status of an individual. Though caste and gender have become measuring rods of locating the subaltern, they can never be the sole determining factors of the subaltern. Instead, financial and political status of a person determine whether he is subaltern or elite. The position of subalterns in post-independent India has not changed much from that of pre-independent India. Though subalterns' little bit of transformation from empty state of powerlessness to capable of dismantling discriminations can be observed at present in India, they have still got marginal position with little or no opportunities in the society. Subalterns, in India, have made themselves free from colonialism but in the twenty-first century Indian society, they have become victim of capitalism, casteism and gender discrimination. In fact, subaltern in India have witnessed some improvement in their nature but we do not find much change in their position. Women, the poor, lower caste people and trans genders in post-colonial India have not achieved freedom in a true sense yet. Thus, they are considered the new subaltern at present in India.



## **The Subaltern and Critical Debate**

The term 'subaltern' refers to the people who are subordinated at multiple levels. They are marginalized in terms of class, caste, gender, religion and culture. Not only this, people of lower social and political strata like illiterate peasantry, non-elite cultural groups are taken as subalterns. They are under-represented, under-taught and non-canonical. Broadly, subaltern people are subordinated groups who are always directly or indirectly dominated by the ideologies of the elite class. Most of the time, subaltern people remain aware about where and how they have been placed in a certain social structure. Subaltern people's awareness about their position in a certain social, political and economic strata and their efforts to connect them to the center is taken as subaltern consciousness. The concept of 'subaltern' was first used by the Italian Marxist Gramsci in 1890. The text appeared later in 1935 as a part of Gramsci's most widely known book *Prison Notebooks*. Gramsci used the term 'subaltern,' to represent to those people in society who were ignored during the historic transformation of the Italian state in the 1870s. Thus, subalterns are marked by heterogeneity and they are not a proper class as such.

Gramsci's standpoint regarding subaltern is instrumentally fundamental to each and every theorist who wanted to have an understanding of the notion of the subaltern. His standpoint tends to detach itself from the mechanistic and economic form that simply characterizes the traditional Marxist studies. In Gramsci's words, "the subaltern classes fundamentally refer to any 'low rank' person or group in a certain society" (66). Subalterns suffer under the hegemonic domination of a ruling class. Hegemonic domination of the elite denies them the basic rights of participation in constructing their local history and culture. They are not taken as active individuals of the nation. Gramsci used the term to refer to the workers and peasants who were

oppressed and dominated by the members of the National Fascist Party, Benito Mussolini and his agents. After Gramsci, South Asian scholars like Guha, Spivak, Dipesh Chakravorty and Chattarjee initiated the debate on Subaltern Studies. They wrote a series of volumes on Subaltern Studies since 1982 to quench the thirst of the historians who wanted to know the culture and existence of the marginalized people in colonial as well as postcolonial India.

The term 'subaltern' became more debatable with the rise of the post-colonial feminist critic, Spivak. In her ground-breaking essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak highlights the problems of subaltern within new historical developments. She focused on capitalistic politics of ignoring revolutionary voices and divisions of labor in a current globalized world. She dismantled Gramsci's concept of the autonomous self of the subaltern groups. Gramsci argues that "the history of the subalterns was as complex as the history of the dominant elite class" (67). The history of the subaltern is fragmented. So, they always become subject to the activity of the elite groups. Even if subalterns rise against elite groups, they cannot make themselves completely autonomous because they lack history, so the identity.

Marginalized people have little access to the means through which they can control their representation. They have less accesses to social and cultural institutions. Gramsci believes that the only way for subalterns to get rid of their subordination is the permanent victory. But the permanent victory over elite takes time and tireless effort on the part of the subaltern. Gramsci focuses on "intellectual's role in subalterns' cultural and political transformation" (78). As subaltern people lack the means and strategies to get accesses to hegemony, they need the support of intellectuals to lead them properly. The intellectuals, while dealing with elite classes should be able to mobilize the subaltern only then they can be transformed into

revolutionary figures who will work hard to achieve independence and autonomous self.

Gramsci focuses on the idea that elites are hegemonic. In Gramsci's words, "elitists have the hegemony, domination over lower strata sub proletariat groups in politics, economy and other social activities whose voices are heard, in case of writing literature and have the power over group of subordination" (68). Elite takes subalterns as 'other' and assign them marginal position everywhere in everything. Gramsci concentrates more on the role of intellectuals in the society. He states that "all men are intellectuals, in that all have intellectual and rational faculties, but not all men have the social function of intellectuals" (12). He argues that modern intellectuals are not only talkers, but also directors and organizers. They help to build society and produce hegemony by employing ideological apparatuses like education and the media. Moreover, Gramsci differentiates between a 'traditional' intelligentsia and the thinking groups. Traditional intelligentsia sees itself apart from certain societal structure and thinking groups take themselves as organic. Such 'organic' intellectuals do not simply describe social life on the basis of scientific rules through the language of culture. They also describe social life on the basis of the feelings and experiences of the masses which they could not express for themselves. Gramsci believes, there needs a kind of education that could help working-class intellectuals, who would not just define Marxist ideology in absence of proletariats, but renovate the existing intellectual activities of certain social groups.

According to Gramsci, it was the goal of Marxism to celebrate the purely intellectual critique of religion that was found in renaissance humanism which had appealed to the masses. He argues that "to supersede religion, Marxism should meet people's spiritual needs" (78). To do so people should recognize Marxism as a product

of their own experience. Gramsci believes that hegemony relies on coercion. Gramsci noticed the need for formal education to shape subaltern identity and their positionality. Gramsci concludes that if we want to produce a new class of intellectuals with the highest degree of specialization, then we have enormous challenges to overcome. New type of intellectuals should be capable of transforming the spontaneous nature of subaltern culture into the possibility of hegemony. The new 'organic' intellectual should combine formal education to the interest of marginalized social classes.

The South Asian subaltern group which was guided by Guha attempted to give voice to the voiceless. This was a group of historians "who aimed to promote a systematic discussion of subaltern themes in South Asian Society" (Guha 34). Guha and his team aimed to analyze the general attributes of marginalization in South Asian Society in terms of class, caste, and gender. Guha takes subaltern classes as "the social groups and elements included in the category represent the demographic differences between the total Indian population and all those whom we have described as the 'elite'" (18). Subalterns are different from the groups of elite. In Guha's definition, the word 'subaltern' is "a name for the general attribute of subordination ... whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office or in any other way" (27). The aim of Subaltern Studies is to promote a systematic and informed discussion of subaltern themes in the field of South Asian Studies, and thus help to rectify the elitist bias characteristic of much research and academic work in this particular area. Moreover, Guha argues that Subaltern Studies focus on "the history, politics, economics and sociology of subaltern, ... in short, the culture informing the condition" (48). Thus, Subaltern Studies is all about the study on social, economic, and political status of subalterns in existing social order. It makes

subalterns aware about their position and existence in the society and helps them to dismantle the injustices done upon them by the privileged.

The feature that explains subaltern identity for Guha is 'negation.' To evaluate the peasant resistance as a subject of history needs a corresponding epistemological inversion. The challenge is that the empirical fact of such rebellions is recorded precisely in the language and culture of the elites. To know the historical specificity of the subalterns, the historians should read backward from the written record. Guha's attempt is to present the subaltern as a subject of history. Subaltern Studies does not mean that they are just discourses on the subaltern. They have been developed as an academic practice in contemporary setting. Currently, new relations of dominations and subalternity has been produced on a daily basis and old ones have been reinforced. Subaltern Studies responds to the demand of elite groups to control culturally heterogeneous transnational working class. Guha finds politics different from elite politics. He thinks that "it was an autonomous domain for it neither originated from elite politics, nor did its existence depend on the latter" (4). Despite the impact of colonialism, it was developing by adjusting to the existing condition in different form and content.

The development of nationalist consciousness, in relation to elitist historiography, was an achievement of colonialist administrators, culture of elite Indian personalities and ideas. This shows that the subaltern politics varies from the elite politics. People in power mobilize their politics through parliamentary institutions. On the other hand, subaltern classes mobilize their politics through traditional organization of kinship and class association. This strategy of political mobilization shows the link between British colonialism and Bourgeoisie nationalism.

The bourgeoisie nationalists have adopted the legacies of colonialism in such a way that they are successors of colonial regime.

Indian nationalism was an idealist movement. Historiography of the elite claims that “Indian nationalism was primarily an idealist venture in which the indigenous elite led the life from subjugation to freedom” (2). It presents the way elite historiography neglects the roles the subaltern classes. In the like manner, the failure of national narrative to speak for the people at the postcolonial nationalist project directs a form of elitism. The relation of elite class and subaltern class was a wrong evidence of “the failure of the Indian bourgeoisie to speak for the nation. There were vast areas in the life and the consciousness of the people which will never integrate into their hegemony” (76). In spite of colonialism’s injustices on people, the colonialist historiography shows that colonialism spends on people's assent. Broadly, colonial historiography endows colonialism with hegemony. Guha emphasizes that “colonialism involved dominance without hegemony” (106). In other words, colonialism proceeded on with coercion not with consent from the people. The subaltern resisted against colonialism. However, the colonial historiography overlooks their resistance and undermines their political sensibility.

Guha claims that colonialism was domination without hegemony. The hegemony was created out of coercion by colonial historiographers while writing British history. At the same time, they however, believed that they wrote Indian history. Actually, they had written a little portion of British history. The South Asian history was ignored by historiographers. The act of ignoring almost about thousand yearlong Indian histories is certainly an act of colonial arrogance. After independence, the bourgeois nationalism inherited South Asian history as a colonial legacy. Colonialism and bourgeois nationalism takes help of coercion not of persuasion. The

bourgeois nationalism and colonialism are of similar nature as they both go for hegemony. Guha writes, “in short, the piece of blindness about the structure of the colonial regime as domination without hegemony has been, for us, a total want of insight into the character of the successor regime-elite nationalism-too as domination without hegemony” (307). Guha and his team thought that the elite party guided some great anti-imperialist movements like Civil Disobedience, Non-cooperation, and Quit India.

Subaltern Studies claims that the subalterns should defy high commands and the headquarters to maintain these struggles as their own. For this, they appropriate various movements and frames them into the codes which are specific to the traditions of popular resistance. Thus, the bourgeois nationalist historiography emerged deceitful by deploying anti-imperialist mobilization for bourgeois claims to hegemony. But bourgeoisie’s claims were opposed even by the mobilization of themselves. The above discussion on subalternity shows that Subaltern Studies aspires to “rewrite the nation outside the state centered national discourse that replicates colonial power knowledge in a world of globalization” (20). Subaltern studies, through the revision of elite historiographies, have brought a paradigmatic shift in the perspective. Its outcome is that subaltern people at present are identified as the agents of change. They have ability and potential to bring change to counter the elite hegemony.

Elite historiographies ignored the history of the subaltern and gave priority to the elite history. According to Guha, “elite cultural groups abetted directly in laying the foundation of the Raj during the last decades of eighteenth century” (11). The rudimentary historiography was, later on, followed by a more sophisticated discourse during the time when colonial state’s control over the wealth of the land was growing.

In spite of this, the historiography of Indian nationalism was dominated by bourgeois nationalist elitism for a long time. Elitism is taken as the product of bourgeois ideology as well as colonial mentality of colonizers.

Spivak excavates the history of deprived women, and elaborates on the original demarcation of the notion of the subaltern. History of deprived women was first developed by Guha and the others through the exploration of the experiences and struggles of women either from the upper middle class, the peasantry or the sub-proletariat class. The subaltern as females, in India, are more marginalized than the males. As Spivak argues, “the subaltern have no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as a female is even more deeply in shadow” (13). Spivak deals with the realm of subalternity by taking into account the problems of gender especially of Indian women during colonial times. She sheds lights on the status of Indian women depending on her analysis Sati practices under the British colonial rule. This shows that notion of subaltern varies according to time, place and economic status of a person. The subaltern at one time or place may not be subaltern in another place or time. Hence, the term ‘subaltern’ is relational.

Subaltern Studies focuses on the consciousness of the working classes. Spivak also emphasizes on subaltern consciousness. According to Spivak, subaltern consciousness is always subject to the people in power that are never completely recoverable. Spivak argues, “negative consciousness is conceived of having historical stage peculiar to the subaltern rather than the grounding positive view of consciousness, should not be generalized as the groups methodological presupposition” (339). Subaltern consciousness works as a post phenomenological and post psychological issue. Some dominant classes objectify the subaltern and they take knowledge as power. Hence, Subaltern Studies attempts to reflect on its own



subalternity in claiming a better position for the subaltern. Chakravorty defines subaltern consciousness as the “peasant consciousness” (72). According to him, the religious consciousness of the subaltern is not subjected to anything. He assumes that “the peasantry has an ideal for at paradigmatically pure peasant consciousness marked by religiosity existed in a pure state especially in the nineteenth century” (365).

Chakravorty writes:

The central aim of the subaltern studies is to understand the consciousness that informed and still informs political actions taken by the subaltern classes on their own, independently of any elite initiatives. It is only by giving this consciousness a central place in historical analysis that we see the subaltern as the maker of the history he or she lives out. (374)

Chakravorty focuses on the two opposing forces like the elite and the subaltern, the feudal mode of power and the present communal mode of power. This division attempts to undermine and supplement the Marxist method of class analysis. If Subaltern Studies ignores class analysis and emphasizes on action of the subaltern alone, then it is supposed to be ill equipped to analyze the role and examine the effect of colonialism.

Spivak argues that spokesperson of the subaltern becomes their life giver and master. She argues that “the small peasants’ proprietors cannot represent themselves they must be represented” (71). Spivak's effort to raise voice on behalf of working class is against the intellectual elites who only share interpretation of the subaltern voice that comes through elitist viewpoint. Subaltern is put to the position of subject without agency rather than participants in a two-way dialogue. Spivak encourages academicians to find out the way positions of intellectuals affect their integrity to represent the subaltern. She clearly argues that the subaltern cannot speak. The

subaltern always remains subject to the bias of the elite intellectuals. Spivak claims, “there is every chance that the elite intellectuals overshadow the subaltern whom he represents” (41). She finds problem in representing subaltern because elite intellectual scholars work as a spokesperson of marginalized people. Elite cannot represent the living and struggle of subaltern rather it tends to give false impression about the subaltern class.

Chatterjee focuses on the relation between caste and subaltern. He has discussed about the relationship between caste and subaltern. He opines that “we have the clue to a possible method for analyzing the consciousness of the subaltern classes. We see this consciousness as contradictory, fragmented, held together in a more or less haphazard manner” (170). For Chatterjee, the consciousness of the subaltern is not an autonomous whole but the ambiguous, contradictory and multiform concept. He also talks about the formation of subaltern consciousness. He writes:

The contradiction unity of two opposed elements: one, the autonomous element which expresses the common, understanding of the members of a subaltern group engaged in the practical activity of transforming the world through their own labor often at the behest and certainly under the element which is borrowed from the dominant classes and which expresses the fact of the ideological submission of the subaltern group. (170)

According to Chatterjee, the consciousness of the subaltern is not fixed but always in course of change. Subaltern Studies does not take class as the key concept of forming consciousness among subaltern. Chatterjee believes that Indian Society is based on hierarchy not on class. Hence, class is replaced by caste system in the Indian sub-continent. For Chatterjee, “caste is a feature of the superstructure of Indian society ... caste is in fact the specifically Indian form of material relations at the base with its

own historical dynamic, caste in other words is the form in which classes appear in Indian society” (76). Chatterjee believes that societies in India have been fragmented not on the basis of economic condition of the people but on the basis of their caste. He opines that caste is more dominant than class in Indian society.

Guha focuses on the idea that elite and subaltern dichotomy has become significant to study historical development. According to Guha, “the dichotomy between elite and subaltern should not be equated with the familiar categories of caste and class struggle” (36). The elite and subaltern dichotomy has some significance in the context of a Colonial and Post-Colonial society to study the historical processes. He adds, “there is no categorical rigidity in the application of subaltern principles/concepts. But these concepts are put into exploration and explanation. Classes act as a human connection between being and becoming in history” (106). To understand what happens in history and how it takes place, one needs to have an understanding about class and the reality of class consciousness.

Class and reality of class consciousness are inseparable. Subaltern most of the time suffer from political atrophy. They lose strength politically. The Indian masses during power transformation were placed under the overall historical course of Capitalist transition. Guha argues that the dominant classes do not carry any natural link with the society. They are not able to create any consciousness. These dominant classes do not have any feeling of community and national bond. They lack political organization for social transformation. Since elite have wealth and source, they have positioned themselves in the center. But dominant classes place themselves in a strategic control and made their way through the corridors of colonial politics. Later on, they claimed that they were the upholders of nationalism and independence.

The marginalized insurgency is scattered due to various causes. One among them is the failure of elite leadership to identify itself with the mind and energy of the subaltern. The elite often collided with colonial power to suppress them. The elite cannot exactly transform the society. The counter thrust by the subaltern is thwarted by the elite. In Gramsci's words, transformation "is one of the historical forms of 'passive' revolution" (27). The autonomy, spontaneity and consciousness of the subaltern are formed in multiple ways. Forms of protest differs due to the differences in the goals. Among these differences some are clear and apparent rather than real. These difference may be formal, significant and substantial for freedom struggle. Working class people's suffering had to bear the capitalist transition in history. Their suffering did not lead them to the path of unification but it certainly led them to the perpetual duality of periphery. Subaltern's unity of opposition was scattered by the spaces provided by the center. Gramsci writes, "everywhere, it seems, the elite heavens could not be reconciled to the earth of the multitude ready for revolution. These two domains were bound by different necessities" (218). Gramsci believes that the knowledge of the subaltern class relates to real men, formed in specific historical relations, with specific feelings and fragmentary conceptions of the world. The subaltern group's several studies focus on the state community and 'community consciousness' for interpreting a collective action.

Different institutions and administrative procedures have been established in the society to keep subalterns under elites. For Chatterjee, "the formation of the colonial state was done without a clear civil society. The institutions and administrative procedures were fashioned to rule over the population organized as communities" (107). These communities were brought under elite politics. Autonomy of the subaltern shows different reactions against elite politics. As the subaltern

encounters different historical experiences, their autonomy and consciousness demonstrate various reactions. Religion becomes crucial in subaltern protests against an order that gives continuity to oppression and distress. Sumit Sarkar emphasizes on the importance of the religious dimension in understanding four crucial features of popular movements: “the role of rumor, ethical norms and ritual obligations, the mood of renunciation and sacrifice, the persistence of faith.” (67). Subaltern consciousness attempts to find its vision of a ‘paradise lost’ in the sense of community. The autonomy of subaltern consciousness is opposed to elite nationalism.

Thus consciousness according to Spivak is a tool of study which participates in analyzing the nature of the object of study. Spivak argues “to see consciousness thus is to place the historian in a position of irreducible compromise.” (332). Thus, to investigate and establish a subaltern consciousness is a positivistic project. The project will lead firm absolute ground to ‘something’ that is dissolvable. This is more significant because consciousness is the ground that makes all disclosures possible. ‘Consciousness’ is taken as an invisible self-proximate signified or ground. Consciousness is not consciousness in general. It is a historicized political species of subaltern consciousness. Subalterns remain aware about the fact that they are historicized and politicized. People on the whole become hegemonic narratives. Subalterns occupy a peculiar historical stage. Though a historical specificity is bestowed to consciousness, there is always a counter pointing suggestion in the words of the Subaltern Studies group that subaltern consciousness is subject to the mentality of the elite. So, it is never fully recoverable.

The subaltern consciousness is taken as ‘negative consciousness.’ It is conceived as ahistorical stage peculiar to the subaltern. This kind of argument is inevitably historicized. Another view on ‘negative consciousness’ sees it as the

consciousness not of the being of the subaltern, but that of the oppressors. The subaltern's existence depends on the thought of the 'elite.' Subaltern consciousness is contradicted by positioning it in the place of a difference rather than an identity. Spivak attempts "to learn to speak to rather than listen to or speak for the historically muted subject of the non-elite" (271). Spivak uses the term subaltern to refer to everything which is not organized resistance. Spivak thinks about the space that can be taken as subaltern space. Spivak finds problem in specifying the realm of subalternity. She attempts to consider the issues of the subaltern groups by analyzing the problems faced by Indian women during colonial period in India. Spivak highlights on the position on the basis of her analysis of Sati women under the British colonial rule. Spivak becomes successful to elaborate on the original demarcation of the notion of the subaltern by excavating the history of deprived women. Before Spivak, Guha studied the experiences and struggles of women in India in upper middle class and sub-proletariat class. In the colonial India, subalterns were unable to speak. The subaltern as females were more dominated and voiceless. Broadly, the subaltern as females were even more deeply in shadow.

After analyzing the perspectives of Gramsci, Guha, Chatterjee and Spivak on subaltern consciousness, it can be concluded that subalternity is determined on the basis of a person's financial status, jobs and other resources they won provided that they may be of any color, caste, religion or ideology. According to these theorists, people are not taken as subaltern only on the basis of their caste, religion or gender. It is their financial status in the community which determines whether they are subaltern or privileged. Hence, it is unwise to use caste as measuring rods of subaltern. Subaltern is a relative term and there are layers of subaltern. The determining parameters of the subaltern and the elite class varies with time, place and economic

status of the people. The caste and gender can never be the sole determining factors of subaltern. Instead, financial and political status of a person play vital role in locating the subaltern.

The study elaborates on the consciousness of the subaltern to overcome their subordination. They become consciousness about their position in the society in such a way that they openly challenge discriminatory forces. Marginalized people, in both of the texts, reconstruct their identity and become autonomous being by deploying their consciousness as a locus of resistance. By uniquely showing the subaltern characters' transformation from dominated and exploited category to self-dignified people who are capable to respond all the discriminations without any hesitation, Nehru and Roy, in their texts *Toward Freedom* (1936) and *The Ministry* (2017) respectively, are trying to focus on the fact that the subaltern can speak at times. By presenting the subaltern undergoing with great trial, trouble and tribulation, and at the end coming up with their own business and identity in a city of India, both of the writers aspire to highlight the growing subaltern consciousness for the betterment of subaltern people in Indian societies.

## **The Subaltern and Indian Nationalist Movement**

This section of the study highlights on the position of subaltern in the 1930s during the quest for welfare state. It also sheds lights on marginalized people's position envisioned in Nehru's *Toward Freedom* (1936). In addition, this section depicts the position and struggle of Indian people in pre-independent India or in colonial India. Nehru wrote his autobiography when he was in prison between June 1934 and February 1935. He published it in 1936, before he became the first Prime Minister of independent India. Nehru clearly states his aims and objectives of writing his autobiography in the preface of the first edition. According to Nehru, he wrote his autobiography to utilize his time constructively and review past events in India. Nehru's autobiography helped him to begin the job of "self-questioning" in his "personal account." He writes, "my object was...primarily for my own benefit, to trace my own mental growth" (5). He does not have any particular audience in his mind but writes "if I thought of an audience, it was one of my own countrymen and countrywomen" (7). In the beginning of his autobiography he describes his ancestor's migration to Delhi from Kashmir in 1716. He also describes the settling of his family in Agra after the revolt of 1857.

Nehru takes nationalism as anti-feeling and hatred against the rulers. He defines nationalism as "essentially an anti-feeling, and it feeds and fattens on hatred against other national groups, and especially against the foreign rulers of a subject country" (7). Nehru seems critical when he said that he had become a queer mixture of the East and the West, out of place everywhere, at home nowhere. The struggle for political freedom in India moved ahead with the rise of a wealthy capitalist class of Indian industrialists who were getting profit under British rule. These prominent businessmen maintained a partnership with the socialist-led Indian National Congress,



and supported Jawaharlal Nehru's implementation of a centrally-planned economy. In the political history of modern India, David Lockwood highlighted on the roots of capitalist class and concentrated on British economic policy in the nineteenth century in India.

Three major campaigns in the Indian Independence Movement were launched by Mohan K. Gandhi. They were non-cooperation in 1919-1922, the civil disobedience movement and the Salt Satyagraha of 1930-1931. In addition, the Quit India movement from about 1940-1942 was also led by Gandhi. Before involving in these campaigns, Gandhi studied law in England. He also spent twenty years in South Africa where he encountered racial insults and cultivated his non-violent civil resistance called Satyagraha. He joined Nehru after his return to India from South Africa. Nehru started working behind the scenes in Indian National Congress (INC hereafter) political party and focused on what he called “constructive work” of decreasing conflict between Hindu and Muslim communities. Gandhi also acted with other members of INC and raised his voice against British commission that did not include any Indians to help strengthen the course of India’s future.

The INC agreed to pass Gandhi’s resolution in 1929 at its annual meeting in Lahore. They asked for full independence and promised civil disobedience in case it was not granted. The INC celebrated “Independence Day” on 26 January 1930. Gandhi also decided to launch the campaign with an act of civil disobedience involving the British salt tax. It was a political issue that had serious impact on all Indians. Basically, its impact was among the poor. Salt taxation was viewed as British arrogance since salt was the basic necessity for survival. Gandhi wrote a letter to Viceroy Lord Irwin on 2 March 1930 by informing him of his intent to go for civil disobedience in ten days if previously-communicated demands were not met. These

demands included land revenue assessments, military spending levels, currency exchange rates, salt tax and a tariff on foreign cloth. The letter was delivered by British Quaker Reginald Reynolds to show that it was not simply a matter of Indians against the British. The civil disobedience movement was designed to appeal to multiple audiences including the broader Indian civil society, British officials and young radicals in the freedom movement. The movement was also designed to appeal to some Indian elites who opposed independence.

Gandhi set out with seventy-eight members of his ashram on a 241-mile march from Sabarmati, Gujarat, to the coastal village of Dandi where he was greeted by the large crowds. Some people joined the march along the way. Gandhi informed people about his message of Indian independence and injustices of the salt tax. He also talked about the need to be collective in order to promote a boycott of British cloth and attack the British Empire's exploitative relationship with India. Though the campaign failed to bring independence, it inspired the Indian people and widened the outlook of the village masses. After that they "began to think a little in terms of India as a whole" (Nehru 77). Satyagrahis suffered a lot during independence movement. They were beaten, imprisoned and backfired by the British rulers. With the help of their hard fought struggle, India finally achieved independence on 15 August 1947.

The Salt Satyagraha was a heterogeneous campaign of civil disobedience. It included a range of strategic actions against illegal salt making. It focused on the boycott of British cloth and demand for complete and immediate independence. In addition, it set the stage for the Quit India Movement of 1940-1941 and Indian independence in 1947. The Salt March was against the British refusal to accept the INC's declaration of independence in December 1929. It was designed to challenge the injustice of colonial rule. The march visited villages providing opportunities to

make public statements of protest and requesting people to join the movement. People protesting against the making of salt from the Indian Ocean were arrested and beaten by British troops. When they could not slow the movement, British officials finally arrested Gandhi assuming that it would stop its momentum. On the contrary, many participants joined the movement as planned by Gandhi before his arrest. Later, Gandhi was invited to London for the discussion with government officials about the possibility of Indian independence.

The social organization of the Salt March was directed to the British colonial system. Before the campaign, the INC set up lines of leadership succession so that new leaders could replace those who were arrested. The participation of women and 'untouchables' in the march worked as a groundwork for independent India. In the 1900s, India was not independent but it was a part of the British Empire. India achieved independence by the end of 1947. In the Nineteenth Century, India was ruled by the British. India was taken as the jewel in the crown of the British Empire. The British had a major military presence in India after Queen Victoria was made empress of India. Indian nationals were voiceless not only in government but also at the local level. They were lagging behind on policy and decision making. Educated Indian middle class nationals founded the Indian National Congress in 1885 to get information about the way India was governed.

Nationalism within India was intensified after 1918. Nationalism intensified within India because many educated nationals in India were not satisfied with the Morley-Minto reforms and there was still dominance of white Englishman in India. In addition to this, there had been no real decrease in British power. The INC wanted that people from a country should have right to govern themselves. The concept of national self-determination neglected the basic idea of the British Empire. To make

self-determination work fully, India had to be governed by the Indians. Britain had toyed with the idea of giving India a measure of self-government as early as 1917. In 1919, the India Act was introduced. This act introduced a national parliament with two houses for India. Almost a million wealthiest Indians got the right to vote after the act. In addition, it was also decided that the commission will be held in 1929 to find out if India wanted to have more reforms. Yet, the British had a control over all central government and they maintained control over the key posts of tax, law and order. Some people, especially Tory's group in Britain, disagreed with the idea of giving self-rule to India in terms of self-government. They had complaints about the idea that if Indians were given self-rule where would it end? Does it start the process which break-up of the British Empire?

The reforms were introduced very slowly to the people. Their spread throughout in a large country was also slow. Many Indians were against it thinking that the British were deliberately stalling on introducing these reforms to continue their dominance in India. Riots broke out and unarmed protesters were shot dead in Punjab by the British soldiers. This incident shocked many people in India. After Amritsar incident many Indians joined the INC. Hence, INC became the party of the masses. Amritsar incident showed that no matter what concessions the British suggest, British rule will ultimately be swept away. India saw the emergence of three men in the 1920s that could impact on the future of India. They were Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, and Muhammed Jinnah.

Gandhi convinced many of his followers to follow non-violent protests. They followed sit-down strikes. They refused to work and to pay their taxes. However, there were some people in India who wanted to use more extreme ways to go against British. The Simon Commission reported in India in 1930. There were not any Indians

on the commission. It demanded self-government for the people in provinces. When the Simon Commission reported, Gandhi started another civil disobedience campaign. This presented Gandhi deliberately breaking the law. The law clearly stated that only the government could manufacture salt. After his march to the sea, Gandhi produced his own salt. This act of producing salt led to the clash with the British authorities where Gandhi was arrested.

At that time, Viceroy to India, Lord Irwin, was appointed. He believed and publically expressed his idea that India should maintain dominion status. Irwin organized two conferences in 1930 and 1931 that were both held in London. The first conference failed as there were no INC members present. Most of them were in Indian prisons. Irwin talked to the authority for their release and requested Gandhi to travel to Britain for taking part in the second conference. The conference achieved little as it broke down over an issue 'religion' that would haunt India in the future years. Those present members did not agree over how the representation of Muslims would be in an independent Indian parliament.

The Government of India Act was introduced in 1935. The Act was introduced for Indian assembly to put their views regarding everything in India except defense and foreign affairs. The nationalists in India were not agreed with this act as it failed to introduce dominion status. The major failing of the act was that it ignored the religious conflict between the Muslims and Hindus. As two-thirds of India's population was Hindus, the Muslims were afraid thinking that in an independent India, they will be treated unfairly. In provincial elections in 1937, the Hindus dominated the Congress Party under Nehru and won eight out of the eleven provinces. The Muslim demanded a separate state called Pakistan. Gandhi and the Congress

Party wanted to preserve Indian unity. They thought that the rivalry between the Hindus and Muslims could only be threatening for the future of India.

In the Second World War, the Indians provided military help to British in the fight against Japan especially in the campaign in Burma. The British promised dominion status for India after the war had ended. Lord Wavell, the Government General of India, invited Nehru to form an interim government in August 1946. Nehru included just two Muslims in his cabinet and this did not succeed in stopping violence. After realizing that Nehru could not be trusted, Jinnah told Muslims to go for “direct action” for getting an independent Muslim state. As the violence appeared in India, over 5000 people were killed in Calcutta. It led to civil war in India. Then, Atlee announced that Britain will leave India before June 1948. A new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, concluded that peace can only be achieved if the partition was introduced. The Hindu Congress agreed with Mountbatten. Mountbatten was sure that any delay would increase violence. According to Mountbatten, it would also push forward the date for Britain leaving India on 14 August 1947.

The Indian Independence Act was signed on 15 August 1947. This act led the Muslim majority to leave India. Then they created the independent state of Pakistan. In the mixed provinces of the Punjab and Bengal, some people found themselves on the wrong side. Many people moved to the new frontiers. Hindus from Pakistan moved to India. In the like manner, Muslims from India moved to Pakistan. The violence took place where these moving groups met. The violence occurred in Punjab where almost about 250,000 people were murdered in religious clashes between Hindus and Muslims. Most of the people who were murdered in the clashes were Muslims, Muslim women and children.

After the partition, India became Hindustan- a country of Hindus and Pakistan became a Muslim country. But before independence, British ruled India where they exploited Indians. Indian people under the British Raj, were not given any opportunities in various social and political spheres. Indian farmers were compelled to pay heavy taxes. Muslims in India were doubly marginalized. Indian people had no authority to run industries as they were all run by the British. Indian people were treated as animals by the Britishers before independence. People of Punjab, Amritsar and Kashmir faced more trouble during the British Raj. Many people from these parts also lost their lives during partition as well. Broadly, all the Indian people were treated as the subaltern in the 1930s in India. Moreover, Muslims, farmers, people of Kashmir and Punjab were more subaltern than the rest of the Indians. They were at the bottom of the social order at that time. In pre-independent India, subaltern became victim of British colonialism. Indians had little or no opportunities in social, economic and political strata under the British Raj. In pre-independent India, subalterns mostly became victim of colonialism rather than casteism and gender discrimination

### **Revisiting the Promise through Literature**

This section of the study focuses on the position of subaltern at present in India, i.e. in the 2010s. The section concentrates on the position of subalterns in India in the twenty-first century after seven decades of its independence. The term ‘subaltern’ has triggered piles of literature in post-colonial situation. With the change in people’s socio-economic condition, the definition of the term changed a lot. As a conscious writer, Arundhati Roy concentrates in *The Ministry* (2017) on socio-political problems faced by subalterns in independent India. Roy’s text is about subordinated ones at present in India. The issue of transgender has been evoked in the text through the protagonist of the novel. The text also addresses gender discrimination, caste inequality, and effect of capitalism at present in India. Hence, *The Ministry*, without any doubt, is the outcome of author’s representation of the ‘the new subaltern’ at present in India who have become victim of casteism and gender discrimination.

Besides, Roy centers on social injustice that is prevalent in Asia. Roy emphasizes on the gap between the powerful and the powerless in contemporary India. In addition to the oppression in the name of gender and religion, the bitterest form of social injustice in India is caste system. Caste inequality in contemporary India is the main focus of Roy in her novel. According to Roy, lower caste and upper caste people are taken as two worlds in India without any social contact between them. This sense of casteism among the people has led to no intermarriage and no human-human interaction that holds them together. The text presents the critical conditions of the subaltern at present in India. Roy, in her text, retraces the evolution of the term ‘subaltern’ and shows how subaltern are doing in contemporary India. Roy’s representation of the ‘subaltern’ in her text shows that the condition of the



subaltern has not changed much. In colonial time they were the victim of colonization and now they have become victim of casteism, gender discrimination and capitalism. Majority of the characters in the novel can be categorized as subaltern in terms of gender, caste, class etcetera and they have been deprived from the society. But these deprived ones gather together to establish their own world.

The novel presents the characters who experience silence for reasons that are beyond their control including birth and social as well as cultural impositions. But they dismantle the discrimination in their own ways. Roy depicts subaltern's passage, in India, from passivity to autonomy. The novel incorporates some events of contemporary India such as land reform, Godhra train burning and Kashmir insurgency. It illustrates the sufferings and pain of women, lower caste people and transgender at present in India. Roy's text includes the harsh reality of subaltern in India. Roy never shows any hesitation to write on wrongful issue prevalent in the society. She tries her best to unearth suffering of the subaltern. Arundhati Roy tries to give justice to the disadvantaged people in India. Roy questions the patriarchal society, social stigmas and the authority of political power.

Roy presents women who exist in a male body with women's feelings. In this stereotypical society, they lack their identity. They have no room in the society. They lack psychological, economic and political freedom in the society. Contemporary Indian society is a male dominated society where women are slaves to males. This society consists of stereotypes which support men's superiority over women. Women in such a society remains alienated without their own identity. Women are raped, deprived of their rights and opportunities in the society. They are taken away from the public and national discourse. They are never recognized

for their efforts in the society. Basically, Roy's text explores casteism, gender discrimination and effect of capitalism among the subaltern in contemporary India.

Roy's text is a tale of two women and of a low caste Hindu boy. The first woman is Anjum. Anjum is a hermaphrodite. Due to excessive discrimination prevalent in the society, she goes to live with other *Hijras*. To go away from the society which neglects people like Anjum, she makes her home in the graveyard. She welcomes *Hijras* and other marginalized people there. Roy also presents the story of Saddam Hussain, a low caste Hindu. He works in a hospital where he finds all the low caste people working as a cleaner. He finds lower caste people marginalized and not given good opportunities in the society. This also shows the discrimination done upon lower caste people in India. The second major character in the novel is Tilo who is a student of architecture at Delhi University. She is loved by three men. These men have inner intent to use Tilo as a commodity. So, commodification of women in the hands of man can also be seen in Roy's text. Tilo does not want to be ruled by men and this is the reason she decided to break her relationship with her husband. Subalterns face identity crisis in some of the places of India. Though freedom is guaranteed by the constitution at present in India, people in the periphery still find themselves with no solid identity. They are treated as people from foreign land.

Superstition regarding the gender is also well reflected by Roy in her text. When Aftab was born, his sexual identity terrifies his mother. She does not confess about her child's sex to anyone even not to her husband. According to their traditional convention, she was neither boy nor girl. Aftab's father tries his best to normalize his child's gender but is unable to fit into one sex. Aftab, a *Hijra*, is criticized by his friends at school because of his unique identity both as male and

female. Aftab finds himself tortured physically and psychologically because he does not fit into the conventional system regarding the gender. Aftab's body does not fit into the conventional notion of gender. The story of Aftab unearths the problems faced by the people like him in a society characterized by the essentialist explanation of gender.

Aftab becoming Anjum is considered the subaltern's journey into another world. Roy presents the conflict between center and margin. She reflects on the peripheral existence of *Hijras* in Indian society. Anjum wants to escape from the society where gender conflict exists. So, she establishes a Jannet Guest House which provides shelter to the neglected and the discarded people from the mainstream. She agrees with her unique self as a half woman and takes the role of a mother of an abandoned child named Jainab. Anjum takes this world as 'Duniya' as it ignores *Hijras*. Tilotama is another character in the text who is an architect. She has also indeterminate origin like Anjum. The difference between Tilo and Anjum is that Anjum expresses her joy and grief but Tilo destabilizes people with her silence. Anjum and Tilo reflect the conflict in the inner and outer world in contemporary India.

Roy highlights the suffering of Tilo in the world where war and violence often take place. Anjum's story shows the suffering of transgenders in India. Tilo's life reflects the political conflict in India. The sufferings of people of Kashmir have been expressed through Tilo. Tilo is a witness of inhuman punishment given to the people by the military officials. She herself becomes a victim of it. The punishment meted on people shows how the state deploys its approach to gender. Tilo, with her bold nature, extends her public sphere. Productive public sphere, in India, is taken as men's world whereas reproductive private sphere is considered women's world.

Tilottama dismantles all these superstitions. She decides to break up with her husband and lives independently working as an architect. This shapes her public sphere as well. It is the emergence of Tilo's social and political identity. Roy, in her text, gives much emphasis on the stories that take place in the streets of Delhi and Kashmir. In Kashmir, women are extremely insecure, but they compete with the world to dismantle the injustices with the help of their will to act independently. Women still face oppression in India. Lower caste people and *Hijras* have been doubly marginalized. They are not given enough opportunities in different areas and their world has been limited by people at the center.

Women, trans-genders and lower caste people have been subordinated at multiple levels at present in Indian society. They are still struggling to be independent and autonomous in India. They have been displaced from the mainstream social and political strata. But these marginalized people always try to overcome this division with the help of their agency. Broadly, Roy depicts the discriminations faced by women, trans genders and lower caste people in the 2010s in India. The text also highlights the challenges faced by the subaltern and their revolutionary actions against the discriminations. Subaltern people are still struggling to establish their identity at present in India.

### **Critical Debate on Nehru and Roy**

This study basically aims at exploring marginalized people's bitter experiences, their struggle, self-discovery, politics of their consciousness, and their transformation as independent human beings in post-colonial India. The study puts much focus on the awakening of agency among the subaltern people to resist oppressions faced by them. Multiple dimensions of these texts have been explored by various scholars and critics. They have focused on the representation of subaltern people's struggles and injustices faced by them in Nehru's *Toward Freedom* and Roy's *The Ministry*. Basically, researchers have explored the representation of marginalized people's struggle with social, political, economic and cultural issues and the way they overcome injustices. But no research has been carried out by making comparative study between position of subalterns in pre- independent and post-independent India. The study analyses the position of the subaltern at present in India against the backdrop of the position of subalterns envisioned by Nehru in his autobiography. The study revolves around the promises made in the margin in Nehru's autobiography and compares them with the position of subaltern at present in India after more than seven decades of its independence. In addition, the study critically evaluates the representation of marginalized people's struggle in these texts, the way they overcome various injustices and establish themselves as autonomous beings by deploying their consciousness as a locus of resistance.

Nehru presents his political struggle in his autobiography. The autobiography is Nehru's personal account of his struggle and his effort to give justice to the subaltern in India. The text focuses on the self-questioning of the subaltern in India about their social and economic position in the existing social order. It presents the struggle of Indians against the British Raj and the course of freedom movement. In

this line Abid Hussain points out, “Nehru’s work presents the national history of India. By going through his autobiography we come to know about his personality and how he shaped the destiny of other people. Nehru had a Buddha like heart that could respond to the poor and their sufferings” (63). Nehru, by writing an autobiography, informs people of India about the British rule and the struggle of Indian people under it. His text makes subalterns aware about their position in the society and gives them collective strength to fight against discriminations. Nehru, in his autobiography, envisions a classless society in India where there is equality among all the people. He wants to see Indian society free from discriminations based on class, caste and gender. The fundamental idea that dominated Nehru’s autobiography is economic freedom and economic equality-the essence of socialism in India.

Indian people, before independence, in India were dominated and tortured by the British Raj. Looking at the Indian people’s critical condition in India, Nehru returned to India in 1912. He joined the Allahabad court. He found the profession dull and joined politics. Nehru’s political activities were modest in the beginning of his political career. He was not even interested in addressing public meetings. His political career became more exciting when he joined Gandhi. He supported Gandhi’s Satyagraha Sabha to oppose Rowlet Act. According to Narsimhaiah, “here at last was a way out of the tangle, a method of action which was straight and open and possibly effective” (41). Nehru was eager to join Gandhi’s Satyagraha Sabha in spite of his father’s disagreement with his decision. As Nehru’s vision was to make Indian people free from British colonialism, he joined Gandhi and freedom movement in India.

Farmers were doubly marginalized in colonial India. They were compelled to pay heavy tax to the government. They were the poorest among the poor. To observe

the critical condition of the farmers, Nehru visited some villages in Pratapgarh district of the United Province during farmers' agitation in 1920. He was ashamed with the abject poverty of villagers. Looking at the critical condition of the poor and their children in India, Nehru became humanist from the beginning of his political career. Nehru's increasing knowledge and understanding about the life of discarded 'others' in colonial India shows the growth of the self in his Autobiography. Nehru, after visiting some villages, became aware about the life, living and struggle of the village farmers.

Nehru played a leading role in the Lahore Congress in 1929. Nehru was elected as the Chairman of Lahore Congress and he became popular among the people due to his active participation in the freedom struggle, humanism, patriotism, and his love for the discarded people of the society. The massive social and political changes that took place in India in the 1930s have been given much emphasis in Nehru's *Toward Freedom*. He supported Gandhi's non-violent movements. Inspired by Gandhi, he started working for the subordinated people of the society. He was terrified with the life of farmers, Muslims, women and people of Kashmir in India. He hid his emotions and started serving marginalized people of India. That is why he was in great emotional and mental conflict most of the time. Nehru in an interview says:

My real conflict lay within me, a conflict of ideas, desires and loyalties, of subconscious depths struggling with other circumstances, of an inner hunger unsatisfied I became a battleground, where various forces struggled for mastery. I sought an escape from this; I tried to find harmony and equilibrium, and in this attempt I rushed into action. That gave me some peace; outer conflict relieved the strain of inner struggle.

Nehru's respect toward Gandhi never faded away. He learned from Gandhi that hard work, continuous struggle and dedication make people successful in their life. He had firm love and respect for Gandhi. C. D. Narsimhaiah writes, "one of the best things in the Autobiography is the presentation of Gandhi-Nehru relationship, often on the brink of a breakdown, chased on genuine differences, but sure of its ultimate endurance because the links had been forged and the association was disinterested, having been for a cause" (41). When the round-table conference failed, the government let loose a reign of terror. Nehru was again arrested and jailed. He faced monotony and boredom in the jail. To avoid the monotony and boredom of jail life, Nehru started writing and his writings were based on the beauty of nature and chaotic situation of culture and society in India. From the description of nature, rivers and mountains, it can be concluded that Nehru is a man with good knowledge of nature, culture and politics. His autobiography includes the numerous scenes of natural beauty.

Nehru's Autobiography includes his ideas and experiences on religion, secularism, national unity, socialism, and non-violence. His love for nature, animals, mountains and rivers is also beautifully presented in the text. But the main focus of Nehru in his autobiography is India's freedom from cruel British Raj. He faced torture, depression and isolation during independence movement. In Humayun Kabir's words, Nehru's Autobiography "expresses the manifold aspects of his rich personality, more adequately than perhaps anything else he has done" (56). Nehru employs the strategy of an impersonal historian. He seems objective self-biographer, self-interpreter with special focus on problems faced by him and problems faced by subalterns in India under the British Raj in the 1930s.



Nehru, in his autobiography, questions Indian peoples' existence in the society. R. Nanda has rightly pointed out, "Nehru's text reflects his doubts and self-questioning and mental conflict" (19). By presenting national history, the history of Indian political life, Nehru makes marginalized people aware about their struggle throughout their life. This awareness becomes the source of agency for marginalized people to fight collectively against dominations in India. The autobiography is a recording of the growth and development of a freedom fighter during British colonization in India. It presents Nehru's intellectual and political development during the turbulent days of the freedom struggle. Mulraj Anand argues, "Nehru's autobiography seems to have come from the contemplation of the fiery, bitter, arduous and difficult struggles in which the hero had taken part" (13). After his visit to some villages in Pratapgarh district of United Province and observing the problems faced by subaltern in India, he decided to fight for them. Farmers were in critical situation in India in the 1920s and the 1930s. They were compelled to pay heavy tax to the government without getting any assistance from it in the 1920s.

His visit to Pratapgarh remained most influencing in Nehru's freedom struggle. After the visit, he started to find himself with the farmers and feel their suffering. He almost forgot his life and started feeling India's life as his life. He began to identify himself with the sufferings of subaltern people in India. These subalterns were especially farmers, women, political rebels and Muslims. He played a leading role in the Lahore congress in 1929. He joined shouting crowds and public functions for the freedom of subaltern in India. Nehru played a significant role in organizing no-tax campaign in U.P. Humayun Kabir writes, "*Toward Freedom: An Autobiography* expresses the manifold aspects of his rich personality, more adequately than perhaps anything else he has done" (7). Nehru, in his autobiography, promises to make

marginalized people free from various injustices prevalent in Indian society and wants to see them as independent as well as autonomous beings.

Roy's text *The Ministry* highlights the rapidly transforming Indian democracy with the rise of right wing political ideology. She focuses on the degrading situation marginalized groups of people who have been dominated in the name of class, caste, gender and religion. She also presents the struggle of the people in Kashmir valley. Roy attempts her best to dismantle the gap that is prevalent between the margin and the center. She wants to see Indian society well organized and well connected. In this line Dr. Syed Wahaj Mohsin and Ms. Shasta Taskeen writes:

Roy's text focus on the issues of national importance such as casteism in India, the pathetic condition of the marginalized sections of the society, rampant urbanization, consumerism and loss of natural resources, and dismal political atmosphere in the country. She jealously tries to repair the dilapidated societal structure binding the broken fragments and reintegrating the margins with the center. (4)

In Roy's *The Ministry*, mainstream refers to 'duniya.' It is the world where people like Anum, Daychand and Tilo are not given proper space. They are taken as other in this world as they do not fit into it. For Anjum, the main character in the text, the world 'duniya' refers to the outside world where people with solid identity and gender exist. The outside world has no place for people like Anjum who belongs to the category of the third gender, commonly known in India as *Hijra*. Anjum got her name as Aftab when she was born because her bodily structure was closer to that of boys. Children at a school teased Aftab for his body structure and his father was also not so much responsible towards him because of his body. This shows the way people

especially women and third genders suffer in the Indian society. These marginalized people have to struggle with social issues to make their place in the society.

Roy's text is dedicated to the left out of the society. It highlights the struggle, pain, suffering and life of people at the periphery in India. Their story is unheard and not given priority by the mainstream. At the end of the novel, Tilo writes a poem and she reads to Musa on his last visit to her at the Jannat guest house:

*How to*

*Tell a*

*shattered story?*

*By slowly becoming everybody.*

*No. By slowly becoming everything. (442)*

This brief poem includes Roy's underlying premise of this novel. Roy is focusing on the unheard stories of subaltern in India. Subalterns' stories must be unearthed to make them heard. Roy highlights the fragmented stories of the subaltern in the fragmented societies of India. According to Roy, subaltern people should become everyone and everything to make their story heard to the mainstream and to get it addressed.

In *The Ministry*, Roy presents the voices of the voiceless in India. She gives voice to the voiceless, discarded and neglected people of the society. The text includes diverse voices that needs to be addressed. According to Roy, Indian texts especially novels should speak for the freedom for the marginalized people. In *The Ministry*, she tries to give justice to the neglected ones. Arundhati Roy says, "Others have horrible stories" (26). These people at the margin have terrible stories. They have gone through unbearable sufferings in the discriminatory society. Edward Said writes, "occident is 'the self' and the orient is 'the Other' in which 'self' is superior,

privileged and has a vintage point to define or rebuild the silent, weak and passive ‘the other’” (213). Roy’s *The Ministry* focuses on the idea that those who are in power place them as the “the other” in the society. This othering creates “binary opposition” as Edward Said writes in *Orientalism*. This binary opposition between powerful and powerless divides society in different fragments. This discrimination creates the two groups “the Self” and “the Other.”

In Roy’s *The Ministry*, lower caste people, poor and trans genders are taken as others. These are excluded people from the society. Relationship between a Kashmiri and non-Kashmiri, Dalit and Non-Dalit, transgender and non-transgender have been presented in *The Ministry*. The binary opposition between different categories presented in the novel is in accordance with Edward Said’s relevant idea and theoretical framework of “Self” and “the other,” “us” versus “them.” The gap between us and them is so huge that it keeps both of the group stay in their own position. In *The Ministry* ‘self’ is at the background facing identity problems. ‘Self’ has been marginalized and neglected by the ‘others.’

*The Ministry* deals with different social affairs, politics and environmental concerns in Indian society. Anjum, a *Hijra*, in Indian society is “the Other.” She struggles to survive in her culture by adopting the norms and values set by the society for the people like Anjum. Anjum does not find enough space in the discriminatory society for her growth, so she decides to live outside the boundaries set by the society. Anjum decides to live in the Graveyard and welcomes discarded people from the society. Broadly, Anjum breaks the social boundaries created by the society for *Hijras* and other marginalized people. She lives an anti-normative life. The contemporary India seems fragmented as the characters are. This fragmentation affects the society badly. Every character is restless. Nobody is at peace. This restlessness is due to the

memories, unsaid feelings and dreams which are unrealized. That is why Roy brings so many varied voices in this novel. These voices seem political because she highlights those who are overlooked by the mainstream socio-political structure in India. The characters face injustice and inequality in their society.

Roy presents the negative aspects of multicultural society in India. India is a country of different castes, races, languages, religions and spiritual beliefs. But in contemporary democratic India, followers of different faiths and religions have lost their balance. This imbalance ends up in fragmentation and degradation of the society. Various clashes often occur between the largest majority Hindus and biggest minority Muslims in India. Roy quotes the plight of Kashmiri Pundits as well. Hundreds and thousands of Hindu Pundits of Kashmir Valley were killed and murdered brutally in the 1990s in India. Government could not protect them and eventually they started living in the plains. Many Kashmiri Pundits became homeless and faced unending sufferings. Replica of this heartrending plight occurred in Gujarat Massacre when Hindu extremist mob cruelly killed more than seven hundred Muslims, thousands of people injured and lacs of people were internally displaced.

Roy presents the current socio-political situation of India. She shows that people in India still have been discriminated on the basis of their gender, caste and economic status. Under the guise and cover of world biggest democracy and the secularism, injustice, racism and discrimination commonly are being practiced. No place has been left for “the Other” to live except cemetery. People are killed and buried like animals. The current India has lost its balance that once used to be in Mughal Era. Extremism has risen to a frightening degree. This text is an unbearable truth about the current state of India. Through the representation of Anjum, a transgender, Roy tries to present the critical condition of marginalized people in India.

Roy presents discrimination based on class, caste and gender prevalent in India. Roy gives voice to the voiceless people through her text. Gurpreet Singh explicates that “Roy gives voice to the most condemned group in the world’s so-called largest secular democracy” (13). He further argues, “Roy has specifically focused on the marginalized and socially excluded Dalits and Muslim community who are far away from socio-political system of democratic state; the Muslims in India are “the Others” and are compelled to live under persistent threat which is currently ruled by the right wing nationalist Bhartiya Janta Party” (81). Dayachand is a symbolic representation of the entire suffering of Dalits. Caste, in subcontinent, does not only states one’s occupation, but also is linked with one’s identity. Untouchables and Dalits are compelled to work as garbage removal and toilet cleaners. They are taken as polluted and nobody likes to touch them thinking that they will pollute others too.

Untouchables are not allowed to touch public taps and they are prohibited from entering to temples. They Roy in her interview to The Guardian said, “caste is about dividing people up in ways that preclude every form of solidarity, because even in the lowest castes there are divisions and sub-castes, and everyone is co-opted into the business of this hierarchical society. This is the politics of making a grid of class, of caste, of ethnicity, of religion” (13). According to geographical realities of India, Kashmir is the Other and Kashmiris are not “us” but “them” for India. Kashmiris, lower caste people and trans genders are taken as ‘others’ in India. Nehru’s *Toward Freedom* contains the suffering of Indian people under the cruel British Raj. Nehru attempts to make Indian people collective to challenge Britishers’ cruelty over them. Nehru wants to see India as a state with peace and harmony. He wants to maintain harmony among the people and societies in India. British colonizers wanted to

exercise its rule over India as long as they could. They wanted to make the use of illegitimate power and force to dominate Indian people.

Nehru shows how imperialism prevented political, economic and industrial growth in India. He also focuses on socio-cultural progress in India. India and Indian people were marginalized by British colonizers without giving them any space in the society. They never tried to understand Indian people's feelings. British never tried to understand India and the feeling of Indians. Therefore, the British had no idea of what India was. Indians faced multiple problems under the British Raj. Due to these all the problems faced by Indians, the poor and farmers in India, Nehru wanted to establish a new Indian state. He wanted an Indian state with equality and equal opportunity for all. He wanted to have a stable and progressive Indian society. Nehru struggled for the society which is abided by some strict rules, regulations and principles. Nehru followed British civilization but he was against their domination, exploitation and marginalization over the Indian people. Nehru's struggle to establish India as an Independent state was the result of British domination and exploitation over Indian people. He was against the agrarian structure and crisis in India. After looking at Indian people's suffering, Nehru decided to declare 'Purna Swaraj.' He was dedicated to give justice to the semi-necked sons and daughters of India. He wanted to eradicate severe poverty from India. For that Indians had to be free from British colonialism. Then they could think about their prosperity.

Nehru envisioned socialism in India. In addition, he envisioned nationalization of banks, industries, railways, transport and other services. He also wanted to see each and every Indian employed. He worked hard for education, health and social welfare of the Indians. Nehru envisioned a classless society in India where all the people get equal economic justice. Nehru wanted "a classless society with equal economic

justice and opportunity for all, a society organized on a planned basis for the raising of mankind to higher material and cultural levels, to a cultivation of spiritual values of cooperation, unselfishness, the spirit of service, the desire to do right, goodwill and love- ultimately a world order” (2). Nehru wanted unity among all the people for rapid development and prosperity of the country. He was against the unnecessary force used by the Britishers to dominate Indians. But Nehru believed that force and coercion should be used whenever or wherever they are necessary. Nehru focused on the idea that coercive laws are important for peace, prosperity and harmony of the society.

Nehru realized that caste promotes slavery. He maintained equality and freedom within various castes. His faith in the caste system was on the basis of how it was liable for promoting cohesion, cooperation and stability in the societal realm and this is evident in the lines where he quotes Sir George Birdwood “so long as the Hindus hold to the caste system, India will be India, but from the day they break from it, there will be no more India” (53). Nehru did not think about the divisions created by caste system in India. Caste system made Indian society fragmented. There were some people who were out-castes and untouchables in India. Those considered untouchables were neglected from the mainstream. People were assigned various works on the basis of their caste. Thus, this pre-determined division of labor led to boredom, monotonous nature of work, alienation, inequality and injustice.

Nehru also found that religion created division among the people and affected their spiritual growth in India. He believed that religion hindered the spiritual growth of individuals and confined them to the realm of salvation of the self rather than the common good or collective well-being. Nehru was an atheist. He did not use to believe on the idea that one can attain the knowledge of whether god exists or not.



The root of this philosophy was Western science and this method was objective and pragmatic, as opposed to the subjective framework of religion which was burdened with mysticism and self-delusions due to its unrelenting faith in metaphysics.

Roy's *The Ministry* presents the struggle of subaltern people in India who are trying their best to overcome injustices to promote their position. They are compelled to live a vulnerable life because of various social, cultural and political discriminations. They are victims of society and social issues. Aftab, a transgender, struggles a lot in the society. His friends in school tease him because of his unique gender. He is compelled to live with other dropouts from the society. Tilottama, an architect from the South, was loved by three men. They take the lady as a commodity and want to take benefit from her. In fact, it is a text that gives room to such people. The text treats them as if they were maker of a history. Lisa Lau writes:

The novel is inhabited by cohorts of others: *Hijras*, political rebels, the poor, women who will not know their place and abandoned baby girls. The narrative of Roy's latest political narrative romance shows these others carving out new spaces for themselves, defying convention, trying possible new lives and listing out new roles. And at last they become successful to do so. (11)

The subaltern people in India are still reduced to the objects. They are exploited, marginalized and dominated by the powerful. They can be broken, thrown away and destroyed according to the will of the powerful. Roy raises her voice against the suffering of the suppressed class of women and other dropouts of the society including third gender, Muslims and lower caste people.

Roy has unearthed the discrimination prevalent in Indian society at present. She focuses on the critical condition of poor, transgender and lower caste people in India. She focuses on the life of dropouts in India. Subaltern people have been

discarded from the society. These marginalities are the evidence of disintegrated India. These marginalities are binaries of Duniya versus Jannat, dissent versus consent, democracy versus revolution and so forth. Critique Swati Ganguly visualizes the prevailing unbroken, marginalities in the novel. She argues:

The novel is an exploration of a grotesque hybrid existence that the Indian state has forced its people. She has skillfully exposed the corporate and state nexus that has sustained itself by exploiting the country's human beings and natural resources by brutally squashing people's resistance. She gives an upper hand to left wing liberal intelligentsia and disfavors the right wing conservative forces. (492)

The text deals with the issues which are political in nature like Kasmir conflict, Manipur Nationalist Movement, displacement of Adhivasi, Maoist insurgency in central Indian forests, and Gujrat Massacre 2002. Roy gives voice to the voiceless as most of the book is written from the marginalized perspective.

In addition, an issue of untouchability has also been presented through a character named S. Murugesan, a soldier posted in the valley of Kashmir. He was bitterly criticized because of his caste as he was the son of 'Chamar.' Roy points out that how Dalits and other untouchable castes are treated in Northern India. When Murugesan died, his coffin was not allowed to even pass through the village because the village did not belong to the untouchables. So, the people with his coffin had to take a different route to untouchable's cremation ground. This incident shows the problems faced by untouchables in India. Upper caste people behave so rudely with untouchables. Upper caste people go against the military act of giving Murugesan tribute. They go against the decision of building his statue at the entrance of the village. They argue that how untouchables statue can be put at the entrance of the

village. Powerful people take the act of putting Murugesan's statue at the gate as disrespect to them.

Like the colonizers considered their culture to be superior, in a patriarchal society the male figure is considered to be superior. Anjum is a hermaphrodite and possessed both the traits of male and female. But she considers herself as a woman. Anjum's identity slowly changes as she grows up. There is power struggle as she tries to come out of her male body. The fact that Anjum dresses and acts like a woman is a form of mimicry. This shows how Anjum tries to identify herself through imitation and mimicry as she also 'learned' to exaggerate the swing in her hips when she walked. Here, the word 'learned' is something which needs to be pondered on as it reflects that what she does is not something which has been acquired naturally. It represents a form of imitation or mimicry. Her identity is not natural and it is somehow self-made as she only identifies herself with the second sex. Thus, it can be said that she inculcates intermingling of culture and multiculturalism in the way the colonized people often tend to do.

The colonized people often tend to imitate the culture of the colonizers knowingly or unknowingly which often leads to the risk of losing their own cultural identity. Even after the end of colonization, the European cultures are very much alive among the colonized people. One of the main reasons behind this endless effort of imitation can be the superiority and inferiority complex which had been uprooted in the minds of the people during colonization. Anjum, as an in-between individual, tries to fit into the socially constructed norm of being a woman by imitating the gestures of women in every way maybe because her own identity was unknown. Broadly, Roy presents the complex Indian society where people are marginalized on the basis of their caste, gender and economic status.

The above discussion shows that many researchers have researched on the representation of subaltern people and their struggle in Nehru's *Toward Freedom* and Roy's *The Ministry*. But no research has been carried by making comparative study between these two texts taking into account the situation of subaltern in pre-Independent and post-independent India. Thus, this study attempts to analyze the position subaltern represented in Roy' text against the backdrop of Nehru's original vision of India manifested in his autobiography. Basically, this study focuses on the position subaltern envisioned in pre-independent India and compares it with their position at present in India after seven decades of its independence.

### **Chapter III. Critical Analysis of Nehru's *Toward Freedom* and Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness***

Jawahral Nehru in his autobiography *Toward Freedom* presents the critical condition of colonized Indians who were not allowed to run any business in India and who had to follow the cruel British rule without questioning it. In addition to this, Nehru reflects on the life of farmers who were compelled to pay heavy tax to the government. He also sheds lights on semi-necked children of Kashmir who had hands to mouth problems. Nehru's main focus is on representing the life of subaltern in India who were victim of colonialism before 1947 i.e. in pre-independent India. On the other hand, Arundhaty Roy in her text *The Ministry* presents the existing casteism and gender discrimination in India in the twenty-first century after seven decades of its independence from British Raj.

Nehru describes his political life and his involvement in the freedom movement in India. The text includes Nehru's struggle and achievements. His autobiography focuses on the self-questioning of subalterns in India about their marginalized position in the society. It presents the critical condition of Indians under British Raj and their hard fought struggle for freedom. Basically it represents the life of subaltern in India before 1947 AD. According to Gramsci, "subaltern refers to the category of those who are lower in position, who are living in extreme poverty and on the top of that who are cutoff from the mainstream of politics" (212). In Nehru's text, people of Kashmir and farmers of India are presented as subalterns. Nehru visited Pratapgarh district of United Provinces to know about the life of people living there. His intention was to know about the struggle of peasants in Pratapgarh. He visited Pratapgarh district during farmer's agitation in 1920. He found the farmers living under extreme poverty. He writes:

Looking at them and their misery and overflowing gratitude, I was filled with shame and sorrow, shame at my own easy going and comfortable life and our petty politics of the city which ignored this vast multitude of semi-naked sons and daughters of India, sorrow at the degradation and overflowing poverty of India. A new picture of India seemed to rise before me, naked, starving, crushed and utterly miserable. (52)

Nehru started thinking and working for the rights of subalterns in India from the beginning of his political career. He tried his best to be socialist and humanist. Nehru's increasing knowledge and understanding about the poor farmers and representatives of Indian people is taken as the growth of the self in his autobiography. Nehru's effort to give justice to the "collective others" like peasants, people of Kashmir and helpless Indians, shows his positive attitude towards subaltern in India.

People of Kashmir and Pratapgarh were more exploited and dominated than the rest of the Indian people under the British Raj. Spivak argues, "there are layers of subaltern. Those who are at the bottom are more subaltern than those who are in the layers" (173). Though all Indian people were powerless and were prohibited had to run their business in India under the British Raj. Some poor people and farmers were more in trouble than the rest. Nehru writes, "all our people suffered under British Raj. But, the farmers of Pratapgarh suffered more than the rest; they encountered problems in the society as an Indian and as a farmer" (446). After observing the critical condition of subaltern in India, Nehru involved in freedom movement more intensely and started speaking on behalf of the poor farmers as well as other marginalized people in India. He took subaltern people's pain and suffering as his own suffering. Nehru started identifying himself with the life of the poor Indians.

Nehru established himself as a freedom fighter. Michael Garnett in his text “Agency and Inner Freedom” focuses on the idea that “if self-sacrifice is not there, awakening of agency is not possible. An awakened agency is one that hits on weak structures of the society” (6). Nehru challenged all the discriminations prevalent in pre-independent India and questioned all the flaws with Indian politics. Nehru played a leading role in the Lahore congress in 1929. Due to his hard fought struggle for the freedom of subaltern in India, Nehru became popular among all the Indian people. He engaged bravely in the freedom struggle and showed love for the marginalized people in India. He addressed various crowds and public meetings. Nehru played a very significant role in organizing no-tax campaign in India and it became successful too.

Indian people in pre-independent India were under the paws of the British Raj. Moreover, the poor, peasants and people of Kashmir were doubly marginalized. They were not given any opportunities in the society. They were also not holding any higher social position. According to Gramsci, “subaltern refers to any ‘low rank’ person or group of people in a particular society suffering under hegemonic domination of a ruling elite class that denies them the basic rights of participation in the making of local history and culture as active individuals of the same nation” (17). Gramsci thinks that the history of the subaltern classes is fragmented but it is as complex as the history of dominant class. As the history of the subaltern is fragmented and scattered, they become subject to the activity of the elite groups. Even if subalterns rebel and rise up against dominant class, they cannot make themselves completely free. Thus, the subaltern should get permanent victory over dominant class to overcome their subordination. The only way for subaltern to get rid of subordination is the permanent victory. As the history of India and Indians was so complex, the British had no idea of what India was! Nehru writes:

They seized her body and possessed her, but it was the possession of violence. They did not know her or try to know her. They never looked into her eyes, for theirs were averted and hers downcast through shame and humiliation. After centuries of contact, they face each other, strangers still, full of dislike for each other'. Under the British suzerainty, India was 'a servile state, with its splendid strength caged up, hardly daring to breathe freely, governed by strangers afar; her people poor beyond compare, short lived and incapable of resisting disease and epidemic, illiteracy rampant; vast areas devoid of all sanitary or medical provision; unemployment on a prodigious scale, both among the middle classes and the masses. (412)

Due to the excessive domination of British over India and Indian people, Nehru wanted to establish India as an independent country. He wanted to see India as a country without any discrimination among the people. He wanted to establish freedom to speak and freedom to start any business they like for Indian people. Nehru was not happy with his people being governed by the foreigners. Nehru wanted to see Indian people getting education and involving in their own business. He struggled for Indian Independence.

Nehru was not satisfied with the critical condition of Indians under British Raj. Indians were marginalized under British Raj. Thus, as an educated and intellectual Indian, he decided to raise the voice for subaltern people in India. Gramsci talks about the intellectual's role in leading subalterns' cultural and political movement into hegemony. Gramsci argues, "the intellectuals, while serving the elite classes, should mobilize the people only then the subaltern classes can be turned into revolutionary figures who will strive to achieve independence" (78). Gramsci focuses on the idea that subaltern people lack the means and proper strategies to get accesses



to hegemony. So, subalterns need the help of intellectuals to lead them through the right way. Nehru plays the role of an intellectual in India. He writes:

Looking at them and their misery and overflowing gratitude, I was filled with shame and sorrow; shame at my own easy going and comfortable life and our petty politics of the city, which ignores the vast multitude of semi-naked sons and daughters of India; sorrow at the degradation and overwhelming poverty of India. A new picture seemed to rise before me, naked, starving, crushed and utterly miserable. (75)

As the consciousness of subaltern works as locus of resistance, these bitter experiences led Nehru towards the declaration of ‘Purna Swaraj’ and the ‘advancement of a socialist trend’ in the India. He addressed various public gatherings where he basically focused on Indian people’s independence. Nehru envisioned a socialist state with nationalization of banks, industries, railways, transport and other services. He wanted welfare policies for peasants and farmers in India. In addition, he focused on employment opportunities for all. Nehru wanted to establish liberal Indian state. He raised his voice for equal authority of Indians over various areas like defense, arms, resources, mining, education, transport, health, sanitation etcetera. He worked hard to develop a planned economy for the prospective liberated Indian state.

Nehru presents the relation between society and the self. He shows that Indian peasants’ self has been ignored by dominant British. Michael Garnett focuses on the ‘private self’ and ‘public self’ of an individual. According to Garnett, “subaltern people’s public self is controlled by the people at the center” (8). In pre-independent India all Indian people were limited to certain rights. They lacked their public sphere. In the same way, in the post-independent India, Dalits, trans genders and the poor people are neglected from the society. Thus, subaltern struggled hard to broaden their

public self. Nehru does not find his-self separated and isolated but he sees it connected to other people in the society. Garnett argues, “marginalized people have their private and public self. But, their public self is controlled by the people at the center which leads them to think about their autonomous self. To achieve their autonomous self, marginalized people try to gain internal and external freedom” (9). Nehru believes that our self is not aloof but connected with other beings within the shared history. Subaltern should be free from both internal and external constraints to go against the discriminations faced by them. In pre-independent India, they were not free from external constraints but they overcame internal constraints.

Indian people’s overcoming of internal constraints led them to the open protest against cruel British Raj. Nehru writes, “many people joined Salt March on the way. Farmers actively supported no tax campaign. Due to their support, our plans became successful” (713). Various protests, Satyagrahas and no tax campaigns were the result of subalterns overcoming of internal constraints. In post-independent India also people like Anjum, a transgender, Dayachand, a Dalit, Tilo, a daughter of Chamar, and Ravathy, a freedom fighter, are controlled by external forces but they have become successful in challenging discriminations by overcoming their internal constraints. Roy writes, “Anjum opens a Jannet Guest House to welcome discarded people from the society. Tilo breaks up his relationship with her husband to work independently” (331). Subaltern have dismantled social boundaries set for them. They have widened their public sphere through their deep agency as they have established their own society and they are independent. Subaltern people’s struggle for freedom is the result of their overcoming of internal as well as external constraints.

Nehru’s autobiography highlights on pre-critical ideologies which support the myth of “private” and “public” roles of the self. Interior self, according to Nehru,

exists in an organic human collective. But it does not exist in an empty space. The self that Nehru focuses on is not something alienated rather it is connected to his own native folk. Bakhtin argues, “to be exterior meant to be for others, for the collective, for one's own people (84).” And to be for the collective also means to be for oneself, one can add from Nehru’s perspective. Negru writes, “my effort is to give freedom and equality to all the Indians. I want to see them as people with enough space to live in the society” (173). Nehru fights for Indian people’s freedom and equality. Nehru questions all Indian peoples’ existence in the society. R. Nanda has rightly pointed out, “Nehru’s text reflects his doubts and self-questioning and mental conflict” (19). By presenting national history, the history of Indian political life, Nehru makes marginalized people aware about their struggle throughout their life. This awareness becomes the source of agency for marginalized people to fight collectively against dominations faced by them in India.

Arundhati in her text *The Ministry* presents new subaltern in India who have become victim not of colonialism but of capitalism, casteism and gender discrimination. According to Guha, “subaltern is a name for the general attribute of subordination ... whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office or in any other way” (27). Roy presents the life of women in India through two major characters: Anjum, a Hijra and Tilo, a girl born to Chamar family. She shows that women, lower caste people and *Hijras* are the most marginalized people in Indian society. Spivak in her work “The Rani of Sirmur” argues that “colonialism and patriarchy doubly combine to erase women as subaltern” (17). Trans-genders face social and political deprivation in current Indian society. They have become victim of patriarchy, colonialism, capitalism and gender discriminations. Even their body makes them victim of all the discriminations. In Roy’s texts, the major character, Anjum,

faces multiple discriminations in the society. Looking at all the discriminations done upon *Hijras*, Nimmo, a transgender who is a resident at Khawabgah asked Anjum:

Do you know why god made Hijra? ... It was an experiment ... a living creature that is incapable of happiness ... for us the price rise and school admissions, husband's beatings, wives' cheatings, Hindu- Muslim riots, Indo-Pak war ...all inside us. The riot is inside us. ... The war is inside us. Indo-Pak is inside us. It will never settle down. (23)

The transgender lacks history even though they are there in the society. Their rights have been ignored by the people at the center. Subaltern people are treated as a commodity by the dominant people in the society. The condition of *Hijras* in independent India is just like that of Indians under the British Raj in pre-independent India. They are not given opportunities in the society and society does not want to listen to their problems. They are taken as the people from other world with different identity. They lack their solid identity in the society at present in India.

Subaltern people cannot become autonomous because they are subordinated by the dominant people. As they are marginalized groups, they cannot express their true self. According to Spivak, "subaltern cannot express their true self" (81). But here, Roy's portrayal of *Hijras* as subaltern is quite different as they walk towards the possibilities of becoming. Anjum, like a thread, has brought all other marginalized people in one place by opening a Jannat Guest House and potentially becomes the representative of the subaltern as Anjum tells her friend Saddam, "Once you have fallen off the edge like all of us have, including our Biroo. Anjum said, 'you will never stop falling. And as you fall you will hold on to other falling people. The sooner you understand the better result we will have. This place where we live, where we have made our home, is the place of falling people'" (84). Jannat Guest House

becomes the place for discarded and dropouts of the society. Anjum establishes a Jannet Guest House and welcomes all the marginalized people there. The aim of welcoming all the discarded people there is that Anjum wants to form a community of the discarded people. She wants to establish Graveyard as a world of discarded ones from the mainstream society.

Caste inequality is the most common social problem in South Asia, particularly in India in the twenty-first century. For Chatterjee, “Indian Society is fragmented due to excessive casteism than class discrimination... caste is a feature of the superstructure of Indian society. caste in other words is the form in which classes appear in Indian society” (174). Hence, class is replaced by caste system in the Indian sub-continent. Chatterjee believes that different classes occur in India on the basis of caste not on the basis of economic condition of the people. He opines that caste is more dominant than class in Indian society. Societies in India at present are fragmented because of excessive casteism. Different clashes between people take place in Indian society because of caste discrimination. Lower caste people are taken as untouchables by the upper caste people. Some characters in *The Ministry* have become victims of extreme caste discrimination. Roy writes, “when Saddam started working at the hospital, he finds all the lower caste people working as a toilet cleaner. He also finds them working as garbage pickers” (177). Dalits are still not holding better positions in India. They are not allowed to be a master but a slave in Indian society. Saddam, a Dalit, becomes a model of caste inequality in India. In addition, Tilo, a girl born to a Chamar family, faces discriminations everywhere. She is left alone by her mother. Lower caste people in India do not hold higher posts. Most of the untouchables are compelled to work as iron mongers, garbage pickers and cleaners. This shows their critical situation at present in India.

Dalits are not given any space in the society. An issue of untouchability has also been presented through a character named S. Murugesan, a soldier posted in the valley of Kashmir. He was bitterly criticized because of his caste as he was the son of 'Chamar.' Roy points out that how Dalits and other untouchable castes are treated in Northern India. Roy writes, "when Murugesan died, his coffin was not allowed to even pass through the village because the village did not belong to the untouchables. So, the people with his coffin had to take a different route to untouchable's cremation ground" (273). This incident shows the problems faced by untouchables in India. They have been reduced to the objects. Upper caste people behave so rudely with untouchables. When military officers decide to establish a statue of Murugesan at the entrance of the village, upper caste people resist it by saying that statue of Dalits cannot be put at the entrance of the village. Powerful people take the act of putting Murugesan's statue at the gate as disrespect to them. Thus, untouchables are still marginalized in Indian society.

Dalits lack their solid identity in Indian society. Spivak argues, "subaltern has no history so as identity" (96). Saddam as a subaltern has no identity as he had to change his name from "Dayachand" to "Saddam Hossain" and his constant struggle to be fixed in a job indicate how subalterns are socially and economically deprived. He is neglected from the society because he is the son of Chamar. Chamars are people in India who involve in leather works. His father was brutally killed by upper caste Hindus. After the incident with his father, Dayachand said, "everybody watched, nobody stopped them" and "I was the part of the mob that killed my father" (89). After this incident, Dayachand becomes a follower of Islam. He found casteism and untouchability as tool of dominating subalterns or lower caste people in Hinduism.

Subaltern in India are not strong enough to resist all the discriminations and injustices done upon them. They are compelled to be sufferers without resisting the injustices.

Roy presents women as subaltern in *The Ministry*. The text revolves around a female character, Tilo, a half Dalit wondering women. Tilo is doubly marginalized in Indian society. Spivak takes subaltern as “a gendered category in which women are doubly effaced” (96). Tilo can be identified as an obvious subaltern figure who is doubly marginalized in Indian society: as a woman and as a Dalit. Tilo is the daughter of Syrian Christian woman and the Indian man, who belonged to an untouchable caste. Roy writes, “Tilo’s father’s family disowned her mother because she was Christian” (155). Then, Tilo’s mother left Tilo because she is the daughter of an untouchable. Thus, Tilo faced lots of problems in Indian society and she was bitterly exploited by the people at the center. Discriminating people and marginalizing them on the basis of their gender and cast is still prevalent in India. Lower cast women have been doubly marginalized: in terms of their gender and in terms of their cast. They are at the bottom of the existing social order in India.

The subaltern, in India, have questioned and resisted discriminations prevent in Indian society for many times. They are continuously resisting various discriminations to overcome them. Miguen Tamen believes that resistance is not possible without agency. He argues, “there are two forms of resistance to hit the weak structures of the society: overt resistance and covert resistance” (12). Overt resistance is obvious whereas covert resistance is subtle. Overt resistance is easily recognizable but covert resistance is hidden as it is not openly displayed. Both overt and covert resistances are tools of social change for subaltern. Subalterns in pre-independent India had followed overt resistance most of the time. Nehru writes, “Indian people protested against the British rulers in some cities where many Indians were killed

brutally by British troops” (213). Farmers’ protest against elites, no tax campaign, Lahore congress resolution and Nehru addressing various gatherings are the forms of overt resistance. On the other hand, subalterns in post-independent India have followed covert resistance. Subalterns like Tilo, Anjum and Dayachand have established their own world where they enjoy their life. Neither they follow elites nor they attack injustices. They are not directly attacking the discriminations but dismantling them in a subtle manner.

Subaltern people have worked hard to overcome all kinds of discriminations but they are still unable to get complete freedom and independence in India. Spivak argues, “no matter how much subaltern rebel and rise against discriminations, they cannot completely overcome them” (102). In India, subaltern people became victim of colonialism before its independence and now there is discrimination on the basis of caste and gender in India. So, subaltern presented by Roy are new subalterns. Roy presents subalterns who have interpreted their position in the society and with the help of their deep agency they are trying to develop their autonomous self. Kaspar Mase argues, “complete autonomy is beyond imagination” (59). This is true in the case of subaltern in India as well. Subaltern people in India have yet to achieve complete independence and they have to strive hard to dismantle various injustices done upon them. The subaltern, in India, have to go far to develop their autonomous self.

The position of subalterns has not changed much in post-independent India from that of pre-independent India, though we find some differences in their nature in pre and post independent India. In pre-independent India, subalterns were the victim of colonization and now at present, they have become victim of casteism, gender discriminations and severe capitalism. Though, women’s position and status somehow have improved as they are getting education, which was not possible for them in pre-



independent India. However, they are still at the receiving ends. Their public sphere has been ignored by the society. Besides, Dalits and trans-genders have been placed at the bottom of the existing social structure in India. They occupy the lower strata in the social hierarchy.

#### **Chapter IV. Rereading Nehruvian Promise through Arundhati Roy**

This section of the study includes the outcomes of reading Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry* (2017) against the backdrop of Nehru's promises made in the margin in his autobiography *Toward Freedom* (1936). The section analyzes the position of subaltern envisioned in pre-independent India and their status at present in India after seven decades of its independence. Nehru presents the critical situation Kashmiris' who had to run away from Kashmir to elsewhere. Nehru presents the life of Indian people under the regime of cruel British rulers. Nehru shows the picture of happenings in pre-independent period in India. Nehru's autobiography incorporates the social as well as political realization of subaltern in colonized India and their hard fought struggle for freedom. Nehru presents Indian people's struggle against the British Raj. The fundamental idea in Nehru's text is economic freedom and economic equality of the subaltern. Nehru takes Indian people's economic freedom and equality as an essence of socialism. He is against the taxation. He wants to make Indian people free from paying heavy tax. Freedom and independence of Indian people from the British Raj is the main promise made in Nehru's text. He promises to give justice to the semi-naked sons and daughters of India and wants to eradicate this overflowing poverty and inequality. Nehru envisions a classless society. He demands equal economic justice and opportunity for all. He dreams for a society that is organized for higher material and cultural progress. In addition, he envisions a society in India that cultivates spiritual values of cooperation, unselfishness and maintains the spirit of service. Nehru's ultimate goal is to see the world order and equality in India.

Roy's *The Ministry* focuses on the situation of misfits and outsiders like women, *Hijras* and lower caste people at present in Indian society. The text revolves

around the struggle *Hijras*, lower caste people and women who have been neglected from the existing social order. Subalterns in Roy's text attempts to establish their own society. They challenge conventional systems, tries to live on their own and adopt new roles. Roy presents the conflict between the center and the margin. She focuses on the struggle of females, Muslims, *Hijras* and untouchables at present in India. In the like manner, Nehru in his autobiography, makes promises to make India people free from the cruel British Raj. He wants economic freedom and economic equality in India. He promises to give justice to the semi-naked sons as well as daughters of India and make Indian farmers free from paying heavy tax. Nehru envisions a classless and organized society for higher material and cultural progress. He wants to cultivate spiritual values of cooperation, unselfishness, goodwill and love among the people in India that ultimately leads to world order and equality. Nehru's autobiography unearths the history of colonized India where Indians especially Muslims, the poor and women suffered a lot during the time of historical change in India.

Nehru and Roy present marginalized people's struggle with social and political issues in India and the need for their voice to be heard and addressed. Nehru shows the life of the people at the margin and Roy sheds light on the way subalterns develop anti-normative character. Both of the writers emphasize on the idea that marginalized people can overcome all the discriminations and injustices through interpretation and resistance. They can develop their autonomous self with the help of awakening of agency. Awakening of agency takes place among the marginalized people when they become free from internal and external factors. Hence, subaltern consciousness can be a source of resistance for them. Nehru envisions a critical situation of colonized Indians in India under the British Raj. He highlights the suffering of the farmers who are compelled to pay high tax. He focuses on the hand to mouth problems faced by

people living in the remote areas of India. In addition, he shows the extreme gender as well as class discrimination in India. He promises to make the subalterns free from all the discriminations and injustices. He also makes promise to connect margins with the center.

Nehru's autobiography shows his involvement in Indian political life. Nehru's text is a mixture of his personal account and Indian history. The text is about the self-questioning of the Indian marginalized people and their quest for independence. It presents the struggle of Indians against the British Raj and their continuous effort for freedom. Indian people, before independence, in India were dominated and tortured by the British raj. Muslims were neglected, people of Kashmir were compelled to leave their place and farmers had to pay heavy tax. To help Indian people overcome the situation, he joined politics. Nehru came up with modest political activities in the beginning of his political career. Nehru's autobiography shows the detachment of subaltern self from the existing Indian society. Nehru interrogated his self with the self of subaltern to know their pain, suffering and struggle under cruel British Raj. Nehru accepted that his self is not isolated but it is connected with the other human beings in the society. Nehru offers subaltern a sense of identity. Nehru acknowledged that Muslims, farmers, people of Kashmir were doubly marginalized in colonial India. Though all Indians were subordinated by British rulers, these people were at the bottom. Their public self was totally neglected by the British. They had little or no opportunities in the society in colonial period in India.

Roy's *The Ministry* shows the way transgender like Anjum, woman like Tilo and lower caste people like Dayachand are taken as 'others.' They are not treated as humans by so called superiors. Yeswi, a Muslim, Saddam Hussain, a Dalit and Adivasi tribes of South India are not given space in the society. Anjum is neglected

and tortured because of his unique appearance. She is sexually assaulted and abused by her school mates. She is not accepted as a human in a society. After knowing that his child's gender does not fit into the conventional notion of gender, Anjum's father neglects her. Hence, this scene shows that trans-genders or *Hijras* are discarded from their families in the twenty-first century in India. Roy sheds light on social and political scenario of India at present where marginalized people like Anjum, Dayachand and Tilo get little or no space in the society. They are taken as others. They struggle to survive as they find themselves bounded with social and cultural boundaries. Their public sphere has been neglected by the so called superior people, like Britishers did to Indians in colonial period. Anjum finds it tough to live in the society where people like her are not given space. So, she decides to escape from the discriminatory boundaries of the society. She decides to settle down in Graveyard. Graveyard is the place where Anjum starts her spiritual journey and welcomes discarded people from the mainstream society. In short, by settling down in the Graveyard and by welcoming discarded people from the society, Anjum lives an anti-normative life.

Indian society, at present, seems fragmented. People are also fragmented due to excessive discrimination prevalent in the society. Dalits, women and transgender are living restless life in India. Many people including the poor, trans genders and Muslims are neglected by the mainstream. These people face injustice in the society. Lack of identity, opportunity, equality and freedom for the marginalized can be seen in Roy's text. Dalits are not taken as humans and they are considered as 'others' in the society. They do not get opportunity in the society for their growth. Roy, in her text, introduces Saddam Hussain as a representative of a Dalits and their condition in Indian societies. He is taken as untouchable. He is neglected from the society because

he is the son of Chamar. Chamars are people in India who involve in leather works. His father was brutally killed by upper caste Hindus. After the incident with his father, Dayachand said, “everybody watched, nobody stopped them” and “I was the part of the mob that killed my father” (89). After this incident, Dayachand becomes a follower of Islam. He found casteism and untouchability as tool of dominating subalterns or lower caste people in Hinduism. He changes his name as Saddam Hussain. This incident shows that Dalits identity in India is always in flux. Saddam starts working in a hospital as a cleaner. When he finds that every toilet cleaner in the hospital is Dalit, he quits his job and comes to Anjum’s Jannet Guest House.

Roy presents the scenario of the hospital where social exclusion of the lower caste people called untouchables can be seen. Hindu doctors from Brahmin community do not like to accompany untouchables thinking that they will get polluted. Roy narrates the historical exclusion of untouchables. She writes that these lower caste people “evil demons were really dark-skinned Dravidians, indigenous, rulers and Hindu gods who vanquished them were the Aryan invaders” (86-87). Then, Roy focuses on history of modern India. He quotes Gandhi who said, “caste system was India’s salvation. Each caste must do the work it has been born to do, but all works must be respected” (103). Untouchability has threatened contemporary Indian society. It is deep rooted in modern India. Upper caste Hindu like Brahmins and Chhetris can touch their pet animals such as dogs and cats but they do not like to touch lower caste people. Roy also presents the critical life of the Adivasis. In the name of development i.e. in the name of dam construction, they are made homeless. Adivasis are otherized people in India. Adivasis and untouchables are segmented and neglected groups in contemporary India.

Dalits in India have been subordinated at multiple levels by Indian elite people. They always keep Dalits and Adivasis under their paws. Poor peasants have also got marginal position in Indian society. Many people after Indian Independence have been compelled to leave their place in the name of development. They have not been given proper compensation. The displaced are Dalits, working class peasants and Adivasis. Roy also presents female Maiost, Ravathy's story who is a left out women from the society. She fights for marginalized people's liberation. She represents all the marginalized and dominated people in the contemporary Indian society. Roy highlights on the life of the people on the peripheries through Revathy. Revathy is physically and sexually abused at her home and outside. She also has fresh memory of her father exploiting her mother. This anger of Ravathy shows the domination, exploitation, torture and discriminations faced by women in India at their own home and outside. Women are marginalized within family and in the society. Adivasis and Dalits are compelled leave their property and home in the name of development in India. As they are not given rights, they choose to be rigid to the dominant class. They face problems during their struggle. Hence, Roy presents the unheard stories of women and lower caste people's suffering in contemporary India and their exclusion from the society.

Broadly, subalterns have become victim of casteism and gender discrimination in India. Discrimination based on caste and gender can be seen in Tilo's story as well. She is taken as 'other.' Tilo's father is untouchable lower caste man where as her mother is Christian. So, Tilo is marginalized on the basis of her gender as well as her caste, but she resists all the discriminations. Tilo is independent and courageous freedom fighter. She is derived from her family. She is not given essential necessities of life. She does not get proper upbringing. In spite of all this, she rebels against the

conventional norms prevalent in the society that gives women and lower caste people a marginal place. Tilo adopts a child who is illegitimate child of Ravathy. Ravathy was also a Kashmiri freedom fighter. Tilo is neglected in Indian society as she is born to Christian mother and her father is a Dalit. She challenges the existing social exclusion of Christian and Dalits. She shows resistance by deploying her anti-normative character. She broadens her public sphere by being independent, working as an architect and resisting conventional norms of the society.

Roy has portrayed the problems faced by subaltern in multicultural country. People of different caste, race, language and religion live in India. Instead of having respect to all religion, caste and race, Indian society has been divided into various groups. People are dominated in the name of gender, caste, religion etcetera. Due to disrespect to other people's culture, religion and caste, there is imbalance and fragmentation in contemporary Indian society. The conflict between Hindus and Muslims often takes place in India. Muslims have been exploited in India. This exploitation often results into conflict where many people lose their life. Roy presents the socio-political scenario of India. According to Roy, casteism and gender discrimination are still in practice in India. Those discarded people are not given proper space in the society.

Nehru envisioned a classless and casteless society in India in the 1930s. He also envisioned India as an independent country where Indian people stay, work and enjoy together without any discrimination. Nehru worked for unity among all the Indians. India has achieved independence from British Raj and they are now free from colonialism but Indian society is still not free from casteism and gender discrimination. India is an independent country at present but the societies in India are still fragmented and divided. There is a division between the rich and the poor, male



and female, and upper caste and lower caste etcetera. Besides, *Hijras* do not get any space in contemporary Indian society. They are striving hard to promote their position in the society. They have become victim of social and cultural norms of the discriminatory society. People like Anjum, Tilo and Dayachand are discarded people of the society. They are not taken as humans but as a commodity.

In both pre-independent and post independent India, subaltern people have been taken as objects not as human beings by the powerful who have positioned themselves at the center. People who are at the center think that subaltern can be exploited and oppressed according to their will. In the 1930s, all Indian were marginalized by the British. Specially, working class Indians and people of Kashmir were doubly subordinated. But at present, in the 2010s, subalterns have been subordinated on the basis of their caste and gender. Though we find some change in the nature of subaltern in post-independent India from that of pre-independent India but their position has remained the same. Subaltern groups have still got marginal position in the society. In addition, subalterns have been given little or no opportunities and they are still at the bottom of the society.

India got freedom from British Colonialism on August 15, 1947. It has been more than seven decades since India achieved its political autonomy. But women, transgenders, the poor and untouchables have not witnessed freedom in India yet. The subaltern, in India, have got freedom from colonialism but they have been subordinated on the basis of caste, economic status and gender at present in India. Dalit women, the poor and lower caste people have been doubly marginalized. Dalits, the poor and trans-genders are at the bottom of the existing social order in India. Women have found some improvement in their status as most of them are getting education in India. But they still have to broaden their public sphere and make sure

that they are not at the receiving ends. They have to make themselves free from all kinds of discriminations in their homes and in the society. In addition to this, untouchables and the poor have occupied the lower social and economic strata.

The poor, trans genders, Muslims and untouchables are still deprived of their rights in Indian society. They have got little or no opportunities in various spheres. Post- colonial India has not become successful to improve the critical condition of subalterns. Many political parties have emerged in post-colonial India but they failed to address the needs of subalterns. Untouchables and trans-genders in Indian societies are still at the bottom of the society, though the empowerment of women and untouchables is the main focus of post-colonial studies. After analyzing the position of subaltern reflected in Roy's *The Ministry* against the backdrop of Nehru's original vision manifested in his autobiography *Toward Freedom*, the study finds that there is not so much change in the position of the subaltern in post-independent India from that of pre-Independent India. In colonial India, they were the victim of colonization and now they have become victim of casteism, gender discrimination and capitalism.

## **Chapter V. Politics of Subaltern Consciousness in Indian History**

This study has examined the way subaltern consciousness works as a cite of resistance to dismantle various subordinations imposed upon them by the dominant people in Nehru's *Toward Freedom: An Autobiography* (1936) and Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017). The study has focused on the position of subaltern at present in India and has compared it with their position in pre-independent India. Subaltern people, in both pre-independent and post-independent India, have become successful to challenge discriminatory social, political and economic issues through self-government, interpretation and resistance to establish their independent self. Subalterns, in both of the texts, have reconstructed their identity with the help of their awakened agency. Subalterns resist existing discriminatory social construction with the help of continuous resistance on their part. This study argues that consciousness helps subalterns to overcome injustices prevalent in the society as it works as the source of agency. To support this argument, the study has employed Gramsci, Spivak, Chatterjee and Guha's ideas on 'subaltern' to analyze the life of the people at the bottom of social, economic and political strata in pre as well as post-independent India. In addition, MiguelTamel and Michael Garnett's notion on 'agency' and 'resistance' have been applied to show the way subaltern consciousness activates the subaltern agency to dismantle their subordination.

The study has focused on subaltern people such as colonized Indians, Hijras, Dalits, women, Muslims, and untouchables' quest for independence. Nehru's *Toward Freedom* highlights on the problems faced by all the Indians under the British Raj. He emphasizes on the struggle of the people of Kashmir who had to run away from their place to elsewhere. Nehru shows a situation of pre-independent period in India where Indian people were not treated as humans by the Britishers. Nehru depicts the political

consciousness of marginalized people and their struggle against British Raj for freedom. Nehru wants economic freedom and economic equality for the Indian people. He is against the taxation and wants to make Indian farmers free from paying heavy tax. Nehru promises to give justice to the marginalized people of India and strives to eradicate the overflowing poverty in India in 1930s. Nehru envisions an organized society in India. He wishes for the society in India that is free from discriminations and injustices.

Roy's *The Ministry* presents life of the subaltern in India who have become victim of casteism, gender discrimination and capitalism. Roy focuses on the struggle of the discarded people of the society. The text shows the vivid picture of the subaltern at present in India. Roy shows the struggle of subordinated people of the society such as *Hijras*, untouchables, the poor and women who have not found their place in the existing social order at present in India. These subaltern people struggle to find new spaces for themselves. They inhabit new roles by challenging conventional norms in the society. Roy presents 'binarism' and the conflict between the center and the periphery. Her text revolves around the life of Anjum, an intersex, Revathy, a moist comrade, Dayachand, an untouchable, Tilotamma, a wandering Syrian origin half- Dalit woman, and Musa Yeswi, a forced Kasmiri freedom fighter. Roy presents national narrative from the perspective of the marginalized. Roy tries to dismantle the gap created between subaltern and the elite. Roy presents the characters who experience silence for reasons that are beyond their control including birth and social as well as cultural impositions. But they dismantle the discrimination in their own ways. Roy's text includes the harsh reality of subaltern in India. She tries her best to unearth sufferings of the subaltern. Roy questions the patriarchal and conventional norms prevalent in Indian societies at present.

The study puts special focus on the awakening of agency among the subaltern people to resist oppression faced by them. The study has found that multiple dimensions of these texts have been explored by various scholars and critics. Previous researchers and critics have focused on representation of subaltern people's struggles and injustices faced by them in pre-independent and post-independent India. But no research has been carried out by making comparative study between position of subaltern in pre-independent and post-independent India. Hence, this study analyzes the position of subaltern at present in India against the backdrop of position of subaltern envisioned by Nehru in his autobiography. The study revolves around the position of subaltern envisioned in Nehru's autobiography in pre-independent India and compares it with the position of subaltern at present in India after more than seven decades of its independence.

This study has found that nature of subaltern in independent India varies from that of pre-independent India but their position has not changed much. Subalterns, somehow, have become successful to dismantle their subordination in the society but they have still got marginal position with little or no opportunities in the society. Subaltern in India have made themselves free from colonialism but now they have become victim of capitalism, casteism and gender discrimination. In fact, subaltern in India have witnessed some improvement in their status but we do not find much change in their position. Women, the poor, lower caste people and trans genders in post-colonial India have not achieved freedom in a true sense yet. Nehru's autobiography incorporates the social as well as political realization of subaltern in colonized India and their hard fought struggle for freedom. Nehru presents Indian people's struggle against the British Raj. Freedom and independence of Indian people from the British Raj is the main promise made in Nehru's text. He promises to

give justice to the semi-naked sons and daughters of India and wants to eradicate this overflowing poverty and inequality. Nehru envisions a classless society. Nehru's ultimate goal is to see the world order and equality in India.

Indian society at present seems fragmented due to excessive discrimination prevalent in the society. Subalterns are struggling in the society and they are living restless life. Many people including the poor, trans genders and Muslims are neglected by the mainstream. These people face injustice in the society. Lack of identity, opportunity, equality and freedom for the marginalized can be seen in Roy's text. Dalits are not taken as humans and they are considered as 'others' in the society. Roy, in her text, introduces Saddam Hussain as a representative of a Dalits and their condition in Indian societies. In this way, in *The Ministry* majority of the character can be categorized as subaltern in terms of gender, caste, class etc. Women, poor and untouchables living in Indian society are yet to witness freedom. Women, of course, have witnessed some improvement in their status, and now most of them are getting education but their conditions remain problematized as they continue to be at the receiving ends both in private and public spheres. Untouchables are still at the bottom of the social structure. Roy has portrayed the problems faced by subaltern in multicultural country. Due to disrespect to other people's culture, religion and caste, there is imbalance and fragmentation in contemporary Indian society. Roy presents the socio-political scenario of India. The study came up with the idea that casteism and gender discrimination are still in practice in India. People are discarded from the society on the basis of their caste, gender and economic status, and they are not given proper space.

Nehru envisioned a classless and casteless society in India in 1930s. He also envisioned India as an independent country where Indian people stay, work and enjoy

together without any discrimination. Nehru worked for unity among all the Indians. India has achieved independence from British Raj and they are now free from colonialism but Indian society is still not free from casteism and gender discrimination. India is an independent country at present but the societies in India are still fragmented and divided. There is a division between the rich and the poor, male and female, and upper caste and lower caste etcetera. Besides, *Hijras* do not get any space in contemporary Indian society. They are striving hard to promote their position in the society. They have become victim of social and cultural norms of the discriminatory society. People like Anjum, Tilo and Dayachand are discarded people of the society. They are not taken as humans but as a commodity.

The study has concluded that in both pre-independent and post independent India, subaltern people have been taken as objects not as human beings by the mainstream. People who are at the center still exploit and oppress subalterns according to their will. In 1930s, all Indian were marginalized by the British. Specially, working class Indians and people of Kashmir were doubly subordinated. But at present, subalterns have been subordinated on the basis of their caste, gender and their economic status. Though we find some change in the nature of subaltern in post- independent India from that of pre-independent India but their position has remained the same. Subaltern groups have still got marginal position in the society. In addition, subalterns have been given little or no opportunities and they are still at the bottom of the society.

India got freedom from the British Colonialism on August 15, 1947. But women, *Hijras*, the poor and untouchables have not got freedom in India. Though subalterns have started developing their own society without caring about the dominations from above, they lack space in the mainstream. Subaltern in India have

got freedom from colonialism but they have been subordinated on the basis of caste, economic status and gender at present in India. Dalits, the poor and trans-genders are at the bottom of the existing social order in India. Women, in India, still have to broaden their public sphere and make sure that they are not at the receiving ends. They have to make themselves free from all kinds of discriminations at home and outside. Besides, untouchables and the poor have to strive hard to secure higher positions in various sectors.

Broadly, the poor, trans genders, Muslims and untouchables are still deprived of their rights in Indian society. They have got little opportunities in social, political and economic spheres. Some improvement can be observed in the position of subaltern in post- colonial India but they are still far from getting complete freedom. Untouchables and trans-genders in Indian societies are still at the bottom of the society, though the empowerment of woman and untouchables is the main focus of post-colonial studies. After examining the position of subaltern reflected in Roy's *The Ministry* against the backdrop of Nehru's original vision manifested in his autobiography *Toward Freedom*, the study has found that though we find difference in the nature of subaltern in pre-independent India and post-independent India, there is not so much change in the position of the subaltern. In colonial India they were the victim of colonization and now, at present, they have become victim of casteism, gender discrimination and capitalism. Subaltern are still at the receiving ends and they are taken as objects, not as active participants in various social, political and economic strata.

This study casts lights on the situation of colonized Indians, *Hijras*, Dalits and Muslims in India and examines the way marginalized people's consciousness helps them to resist as well as overcome all the discriminations prevalent in the society.



This study shows that subaltern people's public self has still been controlled by the people at the center in India. It has made them think about their autonomous self. To achieve their autonomous self, marginalized people have tried their best to gain internal and external freedom. But they have not become free from internal and external forces yet. Thus, they have not achieved deep agency. Marginalized people should be free from internal and external constraints to achieve deep agency to dismantle injustices and to connect them to the mainstream. They should also be ready to make self-sacrifice. If self-sacrifice is not there, awakening of agency is not possible. An awakened agency is one that hits on weak structures of the society.

Resistance is not possible without agency. Subaltern consciousness works as a source of agency for them. When they are conscious about their subordination in the society, they can hit its weak structures through overt and covert resistance. Overt resistance is obvious whereas covert resistance is subtle. Overt resistance is easily recognizable but covert resistance is hidden as it is not openly displayed. Both overt and covert resistances are tools of social change for the subaltern. Resistance is not possible without interpretation on the part of the subaltern. When subaltern interpret their position, they begin to resist. Interpretation itself is a political act. Resistance is not possible without agency, so is interpretation. Every resistance is an interpretation and every interpretation is an act of resistance. Resistance helps the subaltern to dismantle their subordination and develop their autonomous self in the society.

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