ARTICULATING THE COMMUNITY, MYTH AND RELIGION

Just as the word community can be interpreted in diverse way ‘Myth’ too has accumulated multiple commutations. A whole range of meaning attached to it, from the most casual one signifying false hood to the one that argues that it is indeed the reservoir of authentic history. Both community and myth are situated within indigenous constructs of time and space which interest to produce concepts of identity and difference, external and internal, past and present, inclusion and exclusion. These concepts are important for the country in the process of creating, reproducing or changing its identity.

The term community has been interpreted in different ways and has acquired a multiplicity of meaning. However a primary meaning of the concept is based on of a group of people who share a number of common characteristics and therefore seen as distinctive from any other group. This commonness can be seen in terms of a range of
variables like religion … language caste territory profession or even a category as extensive as the nation state.

The term community has several meanings, many of which are conflict with each other. Yet none of the definition fully communicates the meaning of the term as I use the term community as meaning the traditional village community in India. India is a land of myths and legend. Every place in India has a local legend and every temple has a story around it. Only in India art and religion mix in a coherent way and one is not able to separate art from religion and religion from art. Our temples are a mixture of art, culture and religion. So are the novels of this South Indian writer, who creates an imaginary town and spins his stories around it.

An anonymous tale, ostensible historical, the origins of which are unknown. A mythology, which is a collection of such tales, may contain the story of the origin of the world, the creation of mankind, the feats of gods or heroes, or the tragedies which befell ancient families. For the primitive mentality, many myths provided explanations of natural phenomena; with an increase in scientific knowledge, however, this function is often supplanted and myths survive simply as stories.
Writers have always been fascinated by the remoteness, mystery, and heroism of myth. Blake, for example, created his own mythology. For him, spiritual realities existed in the visions, chiefly Christian, which he embodied in his verse. Like Blake, other writers, seeking aesthetically satisfying systems, have invented their own myths or have turned to those already established. Yeats, for example, employed Irish myths early in his poetic career, but later developed his own metaphysical system or mythology in A Vision (1926), which became the source for many images in his verse.

For other writers, established myth satisfied a metaphysical hunger and provided material for their art. D.H. Lawrence in The Plumed Serpent used both elements of Christianity and the myth of the Mexican god Quetzalcoatl to formulate his own vision. In Joyce’s novels, elements of Classical, Christian, and Hebraic myth are fused to create a universal myth which, he felt, embodied the experiences of all men. On this point, C.G. Jung has declared that the materials of myths lie in the collective unconscious of the race; the widespread similarity between myths, he has stated, results from a common inheritance.

Myths are the stories of gods and supermen and these myths are created to teach a moral to a community, or to give divine sanction to
the rulers of that community or to give unity to that community. A land without myth is a land without faith in the supernatural and the divine. A study of Greek myths reveals the fact the gods and goddesses of heaven are as jealous as mortals and as narrow-minded as the ignorant.

2. A MYTH AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Myth is and has always been an integral element of literature. According to Alan W. Watts, “Myth is to be defined as a complex of stories some no doubt fact, and some fantasy – which, for various regions, human beings regard as demonstrations of the inner meaning of the universe and of human life.” Mark Schorer said that, “Myth is fundamental, the dramatic representation of our deepest instinctual life, of a primary awareness of man in the universe,... upon which all particular opinions and attitudes depend.”


Myth is seen manifesting itself in two ways in literature, the Unconscious and Conscious use of Myth. There are literary works where the writer may not be aware of using a mythical situation: but critics have discovered them; for example: Hamlet which Gilbert Murray traced to a primitive myth connected with the ritual battle of summer and winter, of life and death. This kind of archetypal criticism claims descent from anthropology and Jung’s theory of archetypes and racial memory.

The conscious use of myth by writers is a literary device and part of a modern method. The method of Eliot in *Waste Land*, of Joyce in *Ulysses*, of O’Neill in *Mourning Becomes Electra*. The old myth often return touched with a new radiance and immediacy of appeal. T.S.Eliot’s *The Family Reunion* is a fresh rendering of the myth of The *Eumenides* of Aeschylus, and the *Cocktail Party of The Alcestis* of Euripdes. Eliot, Joyce, O’ Neill and other differ widely in their techniques and intentions, but there is a one element common in their diverse method: each of them use mythical (or classical) situations or characters in a modern context, there by seeking to illuminate the predicament of contemporary man, viewing him a larger perspective of time. Eliot praised Joyce for having invented a ‘Mythical method’ or a
‘continuous parallel between ‘contemporaneity’ and ‘antiquity’ which enables a modern writer to give a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.’

The Indian people ‘as a whole’ are even today close to their mythology than the modern European people are to their own Lores. But in comparison to the European writers, the Indian English writer seems to have made very scant used the myth in his work. It is the only nineteen fifties that we find any significant use of myth in the Indo – Anglian novel, and that too only in exceptional writers like Sudhin Ghose and Raja Rao. Raja Rao uses the mythical parallel to extend the reader’s understanding of the present situation.

Myths often after ways in which the socially degraded communities makes their present suffering easier to bear. It simultaneously infuses some illusion of self-esteem too. The myth of Santhali Snake Charmers also refers to a time when they had high social states equivalent to the

Brahmin and explaining the reason for their downfall. The unquestioning accept once of their low status and pollution-ridden self-identity is made possible by the internalization of these myths of origins. We see this in Chinnmastaa of Dr.Goswami, the Kahar of Hansulibak ki Upkatha, Santhali Snake Charmers in Nagini Kanya, Chamar in Dharti Dhan Na Apna, potters in Kanthapura and untouchability in God of Small Things of Arundhati Roy.

With a whole range of meanings attached to the term myth—from the most derogatory one signifying falsehood, to the one that argues that it is indeed the reservoir of authentic history—the concept of myth is interpreted and comprehended in multiple ways. Ranajit Guha for example, sees the myth of repressed communities as an expression of subversion as well as protest within the given social order. Myths also offer ways in which socially degraded communities make sense of their suffering. They generally hold the memory of a glorious past and provide a rationale for acceptance of their present degradation.

The Bangla novel Nagini Kanyar Kahini (Story of the Snake Girl) by Tarashankar Bandopadhyay (1898–1971) describes the community of the Santhali snake charmers that had settled in the dense forest on
the banks of Bhagirathi in Bengal. The community is described to be a primitive one, still pinned to the food gathering stage. The Santhali snake charmers are forbidden to cultivate land. They collect their food mainly by hunting, fishing, selling poison of snakes, and collecting whatever grain, clothes or money they manage to get from the settlements around the forest. The close identification between human beings and the forces of nature, one of the hallmarks of 'primitive' communities, survives in its extreme form in Nangini Kanya. The community believes that the nagini kanya—the snake girl, who is the mediator between them and their community deity Vish-hari—is actually a nagini, a female snake, born in the shape of a woman. The nagini kanya must never marry as a penalty for the suffering that the black nagini had caused to Behula by biting her husband Lakhinder to death.

In the novel, the myth of the nagini kanya and her reincarnation as a woman has been orally handed down the generations of Santhali snake charmers and provides them with the story of their origin. This is traced back to the long battle for authority between Manasa, the goddess of snakes and Chand Saudagar (the merchant named Chand) the worshipper of Shiva.

Parts of the myth are as follows:
The snake charmers consider Dhanvantari [he is believed to have come out of the churning ocean with a pot of ambrosia in his hand and is therefore accepted as their first guru] to be the first man to possess the knowledge of poisons. He had protected the Santhali mountain considered to be the first home of the Santhali snake charmers with his mantra...Amongst the rocks, there were poison-sucking stones spread all around. They sucked poison like water. The snakes that dared to enter this territory fell like chopped creepers. They lost consciousness. Such was the power of breeze that was loaded with the smell of plants that killed all poison.

... ...Dhanvantari had given the responsibility of the Santhali mountains to his disciples. Dhanvantari was a friend of Chand Saudagar the owner of seven ships, a worshipper of Shiva but an antagonist of Vish-hari, the daughter of Shiva and the goddess of snakes. He took no tax from the disciples of Dhanvantari and allowed them to settle on the Santhali Mountain. The disciples of Dhanvantari, the curers of snakebite enjoyed status and respect in society. They were not untouchables. They had the right to wear the creeper of the poison killing plant around their shoulders like janeu – a symbol of high caste. They were like the ascetic bauls.[13] ...The enmity between Vish-hari and Chand Saudagar continued. There was confrontation.
The battle started...The immense knowledge vanished. Dhanvantari went![14]

It is the myth of the *nagini kanya* that determines and controls Pingla's sexual identity. The fact once again brings us back to Foucault's understanding of the realm of sexuality as a cultural construct, made subjective only after cultural and social mediation. He goes on to discuss how the construction of sexual meaning is an instrument by which social institutions control and shape human relationships. The myth of the *nagini kanya* bestows a spiritual identity and cohesiveness to the snake charmers' community that becomes the bulwark of their identity and survival in a hostile world.

Surrounded by an antagonistic external society, their fragile existence is dependent on their ability to sustain their distinctiveness. The myth of the *nagini kanya* becomes the pivotal institution that provides them with a spiritual and historical rationale to remain together. No wonder, the end of the institution of the *nagini kanya* also sees the end of the community of the snake charmers who get scattered and go deeper into the forest. What, however, continues to haunt us is the possibility of Pingla expressing her sexuality freely if she had survived her community? Nonetheless, the nagging doubt of Pingla's psychosexual identity being shaped by the myth of her being the *nagini kanya* does
not leave us. Neither does the doubt that the myth and the community is not a mere external appendage but an internal compulsion that controlled her desires and responses.

The second novel by Tarashankar Bandopadhyaya, *Hansulibanker Upokatha* (Stories of the Bend in the River)[25] moves away from the primitive community of the Santhali snake charmers into the kahar community in Bengali agricultural society. It describes the dynamics of a multi-caste village society within which the sub-community of the kahars is located at the lowest rung of caste segregation.[26]

*Hansulibak* traces the process of change as the community of the kahars undergoes various social transformations when confronted with external forces like mechanisation, monetisation and colonisation. The dialectics of community existence and external compulsions impact deeply on community norms, its shared history and the collective survival of the kahars. The novel narrates incidents of battles fought; *neel kothi*, the houses of the British indigo masters, getting built and destroyed, with the white masters losing much of their control and migrating from the region. The inexorable march of history ushers in a new social order in *Hansulibak*. The 'high caste' Choudhurys become the owners of land and gain in wealth and status. The kahars on the
other hand, lose their earlier occupation as domestic and guards of
the neel kothi and sink further down in social prestige. The devastation
of the great flood unsettles several social equations, leading to the
creation of new centers of power. However, through all this what
remains intact is the caste system with the kahars pinned down to their
poverty and degradation.

Actually the temple of Devi Kamakhya is the centre for the ‘Bali’, in the
very beginning of the novel it is shown that the painter Ratandhar cried
and fell down. He scratched on the earth by his nails and the foam/fena
began to come out from his mouth, he cries with his whole power,”
‘caught’, caught- it has brought here for sacrifice (Bali).

The male buffalo was brought forcefully for “Bali”, oh “it does not want
to go to that place, there is a fear in his eyes – please forgive him. He
does not want to die. He did not want peace, no need to give him
peace like this, ‘Caught’, Caught, he wants to remain live, after this the
people who were seating there began to talk the voice of male buffalo
was set in the chest of Rantandhar. This voice has been mingled with
the blood-pressure. He (Ratandhar) felt down in the same condition
when he saw the buffalo during ‘Bali’. The same is today; the foam is
coming out from his mouth and scratching the earth by his nails, and crying with shivering body.

This incident shows the custom and myth of the temple, the author Dr. Indira Goswami wanted to show the unexpected custom and myth of his state, before writing this novel she has passed a couple of years in the same temple, because she wants to clear all the superstitious notions behind such a custom, like ‘Bali’. No doubt that Indian people follow all the custom of their forefather’s, they are always ready to do anything in the name of their God. But what about English person, they are educated, have rationality in them, why they are ready to do such a custom.

In the next episode there is an English lady named Dorothy Brown, who came in the temple, because she could not produce any child and had gone to London for her treatment, in her absence her husband engaged with other woman. Now Dorothy came into the temple for her mental peace. Jatadhari asked to Dorothy,” why have you come here?” her servant ‘Munshi’ replied on her behalf, “ there is no peace in her heart.” Now Jatadhari asked with surprised to crowd, “there is anyone, who has the peace in his or her heart? Are you happy?” Jatadhari smiled and said to the woman,” see, no one is happy, No one is happy in this entire world .everybody has to adjust.
Munshi said after this,” Dorothy madam wants to meet you in alone, and she want to become your student.” Actually it is not clear that what she wants exactly and why she has been come here (temple). There is another priest who revolt all this and began to speak against Jatadhari,” what are you doing all, that white skin woman is going to enter in the room of Jatadhari, I know all, I know. He will naked to this white lady for result.”

There were a lot of examples in Chinnmastaa that show all the superstitious notions of the people of Assam in the form of myth. There is another woman who came to Jatadhari with her ten year old son, there were some women presented in the temple. all of them were waiting to tell their own problems to Jatadhari, as only one touch of Jatadhari can remove their problems. The first woman said,” listen to me, everybody began to see her.

She said again, “listen to me, there was an accident in the morning.” Everybody asked,” what happened to this morning, than she replied,” in that field, where officer used to practice with their guns, my son was playing there.” Some one reply,” but that is not a secure place, officer used to target a kind of lemon having tied to this with a tree, and if
someone goes there than they kicked him.” Woman said,” right at there my son touched something at his feet. Jatadhari asked,” what was that thing?” after some hesitation she replied,” That was a skeleton.” Perhaps it was a separated head. Than some one said,” it must be an old skeleton that has been sacrificed to Devi. The woman shocked and began to fear for the evil cause to his son. It is right that his son has touched the separated head, sacrificed to Devi. Jatadhari said to her,” he is a baby; a mother should not worry about a baby.

There is another episode which clears the fact that the people of Assam follow their mythical values. Their lives are full of such kind of episodes, which taken place in the temple of Devi Kamakhya. Another person came to the temple with his three year old son in one hand and holed the goat for ‘Bali’ in the other hand. The baby was playing with the goat, a dazzle and healthy goat was also playing with the baby. The poor goat did not know that after some time his blood will be painted on the forehead of the baby.

Another priest came there with a copper bowl and asked the man, would you like to give the blood of ‘Bali’. After this the man holds the goat tightly and priest said once again, would you give me the blood.” This incident shows all the superstitious notions of the people of
Assam that were prevailing in their society. Dr. Indira Goswami also wants to show in an indirect way that such types of custom are fruitless.

Kanthapura is an outstanding example of the combination of Puranic and folk-tale elements. The myth of the descent of Kenchamma from heaven on earth to kill demon is puranic but when the narrator chooses to make a specific point of the colour of the hill, the elements of legend and purana mixed together make a ‘Sthala Purana’. The characters are presented longer than life. Jayamachar, the Hari-Katha man gives Gandhi the status of a god as he is first identified with Rama, for killing the demon Ravana (The Red-man) and then with Krishna, killing the Kaliya (The poisonous British Government). Gandhi’s visit to England for the Second Round Table conference has puranic overtones. “They say that Mahatma will go to Redman’s country... he will get us Swarajya … come back with Sita on his right in a chariot of air.”

Kantahpura is a novel which represents the freedom –movement in India, in a village divided into two sections: the Brahmins and the pariahs. hence it signifies the Advaita Philosophy of Indian culture. Rao himself states that it is impossible to separate reality from orthodox Advaita Vedanta.
The goddess of the village people is Kanchamma. The legend holds that she killed a demon who visited the place asking for the young sons as food and the young women as wives. The sages Tripura underwent penances to bring such a goddess down to the place. There was a battle between the demon and the goddess Kenchamma and the hills on which it took place become red with the blood of the victim. The villagers have great faith in Kanchamma who never lets them down.

The theme of the Kanthapura is the continuity of Indian traditions naturally in the Indian air from the soil just as wild flower from the jungle. Moorthy, Rangagowda, Bhatta, Ratna, Subhha Chetty, Ranganna and many other men and women seem to be rising from soil of Kanthapura.

Kanthapura is a spectrum coloured with three hues the social, political and mythological. It is in a sense, a work of realism in fiction and yet it is not purely realistic or naturalistic. This is combined with the strains of myth, of gods and goddess, of blind superstitious belief and uncanny insights. It is an image of real life observed in a visionary state of mind.
The village has its goddess, its legends, its ploughing season, its epidemic of small pox, its toddy boot etc., its village priest, its village bully and a village money lender. It is a beautiful small village of simple people who still belongs to the old world of superstition.

The revolution in the sphere of the caste takes place with great determination. “There is neither caste, nor clan, nor family and yet ‘they live like us’, only they say too one should not marry early, one should allow widows to take husbands and Brahmin might marry a pariah and a pariah a Brahmin.” This is what Moorthy is preaching in the village and which further leads to pollution of caste.

Moorthy’s defection, however has little effect on the immutable nature of Indian culture represented in Kanthapura. Inspite of the challenge from socialism, Rao reinstates the sanctity of his Gandhi purana by abandoning Moorthy towards the end pat of the novel, thereby maintain the dharmic inevitability of Gandhism.

Moorthy was a young man who felt dissatisfied after he suffered a defeat. His faith in Gandhi was snaken for a moment but the novel does project the Mahatma as the chief inspiration. At onetime Nehru was also dissatisfied with Gandhi way of struggle but if Nehru had not
been a true Gandhian, India would not have been in the state we are
today. At best you can say that Moorthy was a deviating gandhian.

Apparently, it is Rao’s intention to show Gandhi without flows. Any
deviation from gandhi’s polices and ideologies is sidelined to the extent
that even Moorthy, the protagonist is given up in the ende in order to
keep a competing socialism at bay which has the potential of impairing
a cultural nationalist discourse.

As a heroic character, Moorthy possess all the traits of a Mohatma
martyr. Yet his departure is contrary to the expectations. The reader
builds of his character and his particular role in history for Rao’s
nationalist ideology leads one to expect the underpinning of the novel
within a timeless religious ethos that Raja Rao writes into novel the
hero’s defection from its prevailing ideology is a remarkable testimony
to his loyalty to history in the usual sense of the term. Moorthy ‘s
departure thus creates an inconsistency with the cyclical nature of the
narrative and even suggests an alternative history.

The use of myths and legends in the case of Mulk Raj Anand. R.K.
Narayan and Manohar Malgonkar is casual and does not fall in a
deliberate design. But in Raja Rao myths form an integral part of the
organic structure of the novel. Prof. M.M.Naik has rightly remarked about the use of myth in Kanthapura. “It is so vividly at the centre of the novel that any criticism which ignores this, is itself bound to appear aperipheral.” Dr. P. Dayal in this connection boldly asserts. “He (Rajeev Taranath) compares his mythical sensibility with that of T.S. Eliot and concludes that Rao’s use of myth is peripheral. However it may be pointed out that Raja Rao’s treatment of myth is effective both in Kanthapura and The Serpent and the Rope. He employs myth to extend our understanding of a particular situation or give meaning, symbolic meaning to the theme undertaken by him. As a great artist, he often assimilates the myth into the narrative.” Prof. R.S. Singh’s remark is very significant in this connection:

It may be clarified at outset that Kanthapura, is not an allegory because the comparison between Gandhi-British rule and Rama-Ravana situation is not elaborate and complete. It is only a convenient comparison. A villager born and brought up in Indian Tradition understands easily a contemporary problem if it is explained through fable or an episode of the Ramayana or the Mahabharata or the Geeta etc.

Moreover, the narrator, being an old woman found it easier to explain subtle thoughts of woman found it easier to explain subtle thoughts of
Mahatma Gandhi and the complications of contemporary situation through the widely-known fables, legends, and the complications of contemporary situation through the widely-known fables, legends, and religious stories of god, demons and supermen. The stories of the Ramayana are repeated in our villages. Therefore it is but natural that a novel dealing with political awareness takes into consideration the rural vocabulary and obsessive images.

2. MYTH AND COMMUNITY HISTORY

In any society, human beings are involved in a series of roles in terms of which they are identified and identity others. This practice gives rise to a great number of identifications based on traits, beliefs, etc. In order to maintain a particular structure of power some of these identifications become accepted as norm and are used to classify individuals. In turn, these identifications, sanctioned formally or informally, are related to each other in certain ways and help establish privileges or privations. This is why social identities represent”… a blend of normatively and power, being legitimized in terms of the prevailing body of beliefs and sustained by the prevailing relations of power. Society often sees to ensure that its members not only conform to but internalize the norms of these identities.”
This shows that, on the one hand, social identities confer freedom in the sense that they give us visibility and help us function in society. On the other hand, as they are sources of order and they are organized in a hierarchical way, they can also become a threat to our freedom, particularly, for those “whose identities are not recognized—that is, accepted as legitimate and respected by it; and those whose identities are recognized but marginalized and interiorized.” This shows that some identification can colonize others within society and, as already stated, they can become prisons that curtail our actions and development in every possible way.

There is some discussion of Hinduism in The White Tiger and it plays a number of roles throughout the story. Balram takes advantage of the limited knowledge of rural beliefs of the upper classes by making up signs of respect for various objects or buildings like a sacred temple, statue, or tree. Balram doesn’t take his religion too seriously and often pokes fun at it, especially at the number of gods Hinduism has, which he quotes as 36,000,000.

Religion plays a major role in an Indian’s life as it symbolizes tradition and honour. This is revealed through the marriage of Ashok and Pinky
Madam as Ashok’s father did not approve of their union because she wasn’t a Hindu.

There is also some debate on the tensions between Hindus and Muslims. According to what is depicted in The White Tiger, there is not much love for Muslims in India. For instance, Balram is able to get the other driver of Ashok’s family, Ram Persad, fired because Persad is a Muslim in hiding. However, Balram does feel sorry for Persad and feels some remorse for his actions.

Balram himself bears no grudges against Muslims. In fact, he even respects them and says that they are good people. He makes plenty of references to the "four greatest poets who have ever lived" who are all Muslims, and agrees with the meanings he finds in their poetry.

Balram gradually reveals himself and his background to the reader as he introduces himself to Premier Wen Jiabao of China in a series of one-sided conversations. Hearing reports that the Premier is to visit India seeking information about how to encourage entrepreneurial talent, Balram offers his own life experiences as the ultimate guide.

The son of a rickshaw puller, Balram is removed from school at an early age so that he can work to earn money for his family. Frustrated
by his miserable life, Balram looks for opportunities to improve his lot. His chance comes when he secures a position as a driver to the son of the local landlord. In Delhi his naïve country beliefs are challenged by the cut-throat network of city servants, the disdain of the upper classes and his own experiences and apperceptions.

An incredibly complex character, Balram appears at different times worldly wise and rustically naïve, honest and corrupt, subservient and unbearably arrogant. At times he rigidly adheres to the correct standards of behaviors, awhile also being distressingly dismissive of his amoral response and actions. His story reveals a shocking disregard for the sanctity of human life and basic human rights from individuals at all levels of society.

Balram calls himself; “half-baked”, like many others in the country—not allowed finishing the school, with only a smattering of all sorts of knowledge. In fact, he was a smart lad, and that was even recognized by a school inspector, who praised him as a ‘white tiger’, “the rarest of animals—the creature that only comes along once in a generation”. The school inspector promises to arrange a scholarship and proper schooling for the young boy, but of course, instead his family takes him out of school and puts him to work at a teashop (to pay for marrying off one of the daughters in the family).
The community represented in the novel Dharti Dhan Na Apna, is Chamar community, the term Chamar refers to Dalit or scheduled caste. They remained untouchables since 1935, but still the Zamindars or landlord community think that they are untouchable. In the particular novel, the main character Kali who enters the scene as a common man who got some money and came back to his own village. Kali finds where in a city people are fighting for bread and butter it is in the village too. But here they are fighting for their rights also. Dalit society still remains themselves as a servant to Jaat community. They work in the fields of Jaat’s and find their bread against this.

But Jaat behaves many times that a Chamar is like a dog, and many times they realize that a dog is superior to a Chamar. As Kali came to village, one day he saw that there is a crowd in his area, and he listened some vulgar words by a chaudhary. Who was rebuking to all the Dalit community. And one person from that community was crying and saying, Oh,’ I am dying….. Save me. Actually it is a normal incident in Dalit area, whenever the crops of a chaudhary had been stolen or ruined by animals or sometimes any Dalit person was absent from his duty, than a Zamindar, or chaudhary came in that area to do
the same, and all the Dalit listened as if they have no tongue in their mouths.

Suddenly chaudhary caught ‘Santu’, because he was laughing, Santu said,” Chaudhary Ji, I have no fault”, but chaudhary beaten him by his leather shoe, Santu again said,” I am dying, Save me....”.After this chaudhary left Santu by saying this,” The son of a dog, you are shouting like this as I hang you.” After this chaudhary Harnam asked to tell the truth that, who is responsible for the loss of his crops? He said,” tell the truth otherwise I will beat all the community by shoe.

It shows the differences between scheduled caste and upper caste. After sometime chaudhary caught Jeetu because, he could not reply in a right manner, and he was in doubt. Chaudhary began to beat Jeetu, he was beating by hand, for sometime Jeetu remained silent but soon he caught the hand of chaudhary, now chaudhary became angry, he had two solid reasons for this, first one is, his crops had been lost and second is a person of Dalit community was showing his ego by holding the hand of a chaudhary. Now chaudhary said,” how dare you to hold my hand, I will cut you into pieces.” And he beat Jeetu till him faint.
Along with Jaat and Chamar community, the community which has enough importance in the novel to show the thinking of society, that is Christian community, in that society where Dalit or poor person could not find job and enough food for living, the Christian community had been shown to live like a rich person, there cloths are imported and they are eating properly getting milk and all the facilities, which was impossible for a Dalit person. It is shown in the novel that many of them are dying with hunger but still there is an ego in their characters.

On the other hand there are some Dalit who withdraws with their lives and try to convert their caste into Christian. Because the caste in which they are living was like an untouchable, there is a character named Nand Singh, who is a shoe maker had been converted into another caste and became a Sikh, he has tasted the “Guru Amrit” and known as Ramdasiya, but many times Jaat zamindars called him Chamar, its irritate him more. Now he is ready to become a Christian, because his elder son got a job in the city with the help of the priest, and he is going to get many more things to become a Christian.

After cutting his hairs, and dressing well, when Nand Singh and his family came infront of villagers at the door of church, than everyone was grazing to them, some of them were laughing on them, and many
of them feeling jealous at the same time. One of the villager from the same caste “Bantu” said,” there is hardly any difference, first he was a Sikh now he is Monna, another one reply, “what do you think that his appearance will be change to become a Christian?” than Santu asked,” what are the benefits for Nand Singh for become a Christian?” Dr. Bishan Das said in a philosophical manner,” he will get the power to rule over the world.” Again he said,” having seated in the shop he will make the shoe, first he sing, Wahe Guru, now he will have to say “Jesus” but he will get some money surely.

The community represented in The god of Small Things is Syrian Christian. The Christians of Kerala are divided into five churches: Roman Catholic, Orthodox Syrian, Nestorian, Marthoma, and Anglican. Syrian Christians acclaim the Apostle Thomas as their founder. The term “Syrian” refers to the West Asian origins of the group’s ancestors and to their use of syriac as a liturgical language.

For centuries, their spoken language has been Malayalam. Syrian Christians have a history that predates European rule. While the Jesuits made only limited alteration to community life in 1830s and 40s, the nineteenth century British Colonial state played a significant role in undermining Syrian Christian-Hindu connections. The old Catholic-Jacobie division gave away to as many as fourteen competing
Episcopal allegiances. One of the most significant splits took place in 1888 when the Travancore High Court ruled in favour of the Jacobites (Mar Dionysius Vs Mar Thomas Athanasius). The losers formed a separate ecclesiastical body, the Mar Thoma Syrian Church.

In the novel religious difference appear in the disagreements between Father Mulliagan (who belongs to the Roman Catholic Church) and Reverend Ipe (who belongs to the Mar Thoma Church) as well as in Baby Kochamma’s conversion to Catholicism and her consequent lack of suitors. The socio-political changes brought about by colonial rule led to upper-caste Hindus shunning the Syrian Christians.

Between 1888 and 1892 every one of the main Syrian Christian denominations founded so-called Evangelical Societies that sought out low-caste converts and built schools and chapels and publicized mass baptisms (Bayly 314-320). The God of Small Things thus refers to the school for “Untouchables” built by the great-grandfather of the twins, Estha and Rahel. However, as Roy points out, even though a number of Paravas and members of other low castes converted to Christianity, they were made to have separate churches and thus continued to be treated as “Untouchables”. After Independence, they were denied government benefits created for
“Untouchables” because officially, on paper, they were Christians and therefore casteless (Roy 71).

Since 1935 Untouchables have been called “scheduled castes.” they are also called Mahatma Ghandi’s name for them “Harifjan” (The children of God). More recently these group refer to themselves as Dalits, a Hindi word which means oppressed or downtrodden. Despite, some improvements in certain aspects of Dalit life, 90% of them still live in rural areas, and more than 50% are landless labourers. In many parts of India, land is still held by the upper castes who use the ideology of the caste system to economically exploit low-ranking landless labourers” (Study Guide-South Asia Reading Series).

In 1957, under E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Kerala became the first Indian state to elect a communist government. Despite a damaging split in the party in 1964, there have been communist-led governments in Kerala amore often than not. Roy writes that the reason behind the Communist Party’s success in Kerala was athat ait “never overtly questioned the traditional values of a caste-ridden, extremely traditional community. The Marxists worked from within the communal divides, never challenging them, never appearing not to” (64). This double standard is emphasized when Comrade Pillai incites the
workers of Paradise Pickles and Preserves to strike against their owner. Chacko, but refers to the latter in theoretical terms.

It is within this social, political and religious context that we read the tragedy of the Koachammans. Shunned by the upper class Hindus, they are over conscious of their family’s prestige.

In the God of Small Things the conflict exists at individual and societal levels. The novel graphically shows that how people are helpless to resolve these levels of friction. Velutha, the outcast, can never co exist peaceful with the “touchable” communities for so long as the stigma of untouchability attached to him and countless others alike him. Velutha is “highly intelligent” an excellent carpenter with an engineer’s mind, but he is also “The God of loss”, “The God of Small Things”-He left no footprints in sand, no ripples in water, no images in mirrors” (265)

2 C. Creation of personal and community myths:

The Myths are generally based on the existence of a community. The identities of members of such communities get constructed by foregrounding some community modes like caste, gotra, religion and language, with the relationship between the individual member and community being rather dense.
In every village in India, there is a lot of community, for example Dalit community. Every community has their own myths. One of the main myths is when a person becomes ill, and then instead of calling a doctor they prefer to call a Tantrik or an Ojha. They believe that there is no disease but it is because of Ghost or any evil soul. That ghost or evil soul is responsible for all the diseases.

In the Novel Dharti Dhan Na Apna, by Jagdish Chandra Basu, when the Partapi becomes ill (the great aunt of the hero Kali), Kali calls the doctor first but when she could not get well, then the Bebe Hukma asked Kali to call a Tantrik for Jadoo Tona. Kali get ready and calls Rakha Dheemer by the help of Julu – because Rakha is well known in the area for this job.

In the dark-night, there is a sound of some iron instruments in the street. Suddenly Kali came into the street and become happy to see the Rakha along with Julu and said,” Aaa Gaye Maraaj ji” then they enter into the house of kali, and Kali offers a seat to Rakha. Rakha has painted his face with a kind of oil and it shines in the light of a candle, Rakha has worn some garland and there is also a dirty turban on his head. In one hand Rakha is carrying a bag, and in the other an iron instrument with sound.
Rakha asked,” is this room is newly constructed?” Kali replied,” yes, 10 or 15 days back, we have shifted in it.” Rakha began to think and asked again,” have you called any Tantrik or an Ojha before entering into this room?” Kali replied,” No.”

With a cruel smile Rakha said,” just because of this ghost is here, inside the room. Always remember, whenever a new building is constructed then ghost will certainly come, because they want chola, (a kind of dress), Rakha said. Kali can’t get anything and keep standing with silence in a corner.

After some time the women of that particular community enter into the house of Kali, everyone wish to Rakha like a God. Rakha asked him about their locality. They replied very slowly, Nihaliya! This boy is innocent. But why you don’t tell him that never enters into a newly constructed building, Rakha said. Nihali replied with a smile,” Maraaj ji, the teenagers don’t want to listen anyone, as they think that they are more intelligent than the God. Rakha asked,” Where is the person who is suffering from ghost.”
Rakha came to his Aunty (Partapi), as he (Rakha) saw Partapi he made a sound with iron instrument, and gives a cruel look to her. Partapi shimmers with fear. Rakha reply with a smile, “I have not done anything yet and you are shimmering. After some time Rakha asked for some commodities like, *Dhoopbatti*, and some dry-fruits to eat. After this Rakha asked Kali to put 25 paisa in the plate, for the easy removal from the ghost.

Then Rakha puts some red chili seeds into that plate, and he heat up them as they produce smoke. Than Rakha began to whisper and said something, everyone was thinking that the ghost will go from here. Rakha said, ”get lost from here; I will give treat to your senior group.” And he repeated this act seven times. But there is no positive sign from Partapi, and then Rakha think, if there is no improvement in the condition of her than people will ask what happened? Then Rakha said,” this is not an ordinary Ghost, this is the ghost of Daku Harbel Singh, everyone began to fear, because he was a great robber and murdered a number of persons. At last he was burnt by the people into a house.

Rakha applied all the formulas, but there is no improvement in Chachi Partapi. Finally he put red chili into the fire and produced unbearable
smoke. After this everyone had covered their faces with the help of their cloths. And the Chachi Partapi began to cough continuously. After some time Chachi became serious, because of the cough and smoke, Kali became afraid, and wants to offer some water to her, but Rakha said no. After this Rakha demands for 1.25 rupees, just after this a strong wind starts to blow. Everyone began to think that this air was blowing because of the ghost. Than Rakha began to shot, ”I have controlled the ghost, I can also control the wind, and I can do anything. Than Rakha took the 1.25 rupees and said to Kali not to give any white food to Chachi for five days.

The Chamar community in Dharti Dhan Na Apna by Jagdish Chandra strongly approves the beliefs like Black Magic and Bali (Martyred). Another episode in the novel when there was a heavy rain and the rain water entered into the houses. Now it became the problem of all the villagers and the Chamar’s, because water first came into the area of Chamar’s. Poor people can not do anything; they are helpless to stop it. There is no exit for the water in the area of Chamar’s, that night there was a heavy rainfall, the water level was continuously rising, there was not a single one who could sleep comfortably that night. The water has entered into the houses ant the roofs of many houses are leaking. Early morning the people came outside and they found that
there is a lot of rain water around them. Every one began to afraid that how they survive without the drinking water. They can not use the well, because it was filled with the rain water. They think that how we arrange can arrange the water for drinking and for domestic purposes. They start a discussion about that, there was also another well, but that belongs to Jaat community. Chamar’s are prohibited from taking the water from that well, there was another well that belongs to Pandit community, and the Chamar’s are also not allowed to take water from that well.

After some time the rain water covered the whole village, because of heavy rain fall. In the evening all the villagers gathered and they began to discuss the problem with each other. Laalu Pahalvan said,” it can be stopped, if we give the ‘Bali’ to the khwaza peer.” All the villagers accept the proposal at once. Now the question arises, how they arrange a goat for ‘Bali’, than some people suggest that we should collect the money for this. Now another problem arises, that should we collect the money according to the caste or according to the wealth. Than Boota Singh said, I have two goat, if all of you are agree than I can give you one of the.
Some of the people like Dr. Bishan Singh and the hero of the novel Kali were against the ‘Bali’, they said that it is not right, but nobody wants to hear them. Now Boota Singh said to his son ‘Paalo’, ” go and bring that dazzale goat, hurry up son.”

All the customs have been done, now the goat is ready for bali, Lalu Pradhan closed his eyes and lift his mouth towards the sky and began to pray that ‘Khwaza peer’ forgive us for all the mistakes and for all the evil works, we have done. The son of Buta Singh holded the Neck bank of the goat and Chaudhary Munshi holed the legs of the goat, Dilksukh targeted the neck of the goat and attacked on it, with a long knife, but unfortunately it could not separated from the body,” move from hear” according to your mother she has given birth to a son, Buta Singh said.

It shows that every community in Indian villages has their own mythical values, does not matter that they are poor or rich, Dalit or Swarn. Whenever they need they perform their myth according to their community. Such types of communities are the centre, where all the incidents happened and perform each and every time. In this novel Jagdish Chandra shows that these types of myths are fruitless, first Kali lost his Chachi (Partapi) after the episode of Ghost. Secondly the
water of rain could not control after the ‘Bali’ of the goat. Actually Jagdish Chandra leave the readers to think about these myths, he only wants to show such type of myths through his novel.

The novel ‘Chinnmastaa’ covers a long period in Assam. The author of this novel Dr. Indira Goswami learnt all the experiences, by becoming an audience at the temple of Devi Kamakhya. There was a fashion of Bali in the name of Chinnmastaa, the people of that are believes in bali and they think that they can find the actual peace and happiness, if they follow the customs of bali.

Whenever they fell ill, or they find them in problem, than they did it to please Devi. They believe if the Devi becomes happy than everything will be alright. The aim of Dr. Indira Goswami is to show all the evil deeds which happened in the name of God, through this novel. As we have discussed it earlier that the author has gained all experience of all the things through her stay in the temple, during the stay at Chinnmastaa. The novel is full of superstitious episodes, which are based on their personal belief. In the very beginning when Dorothy Brown came to the temple, she did not know why she came. But she came in a confused condition, she could not produce any child and her
husband has cheated her, so she was very sad and came to temple in the search of peace and satisfaction.

The more, Dr. Indira Goswami has given a vivid picture of personal myths, when she describes the man who had been killed a cow. The man was speaking and behaving like a cow, and he would have to pass his entire life as a beggar, through this he can reduce his evil works. The next episode when Dorothy stayed at ashram without any kind of fear of forest or animals than people began to say that,” Dorothy has seen Devi in the early morning in the river water.” It is also shown in the novel that people of Assam were expert to create any myth about Devi Kamakhya.

It has been described that Dorothy, Jatadhari and Ratandhar were all against the Bali, and they started a movement to stop it. Jatadhari praise to Devi and asked,” Maa, Maa, Maa, sacrifice the blooded clothes! Tear the blooded clothes! “all the priest shouted at once ,” Maa, having sacrificed the blooded cloths, please to adopt the flower cloths.

When the students of cotton college were planning against Bali. Then a priest shouted,” all of you will be disappearing by the curse of Devi
Chinnmastaa, you will became ash after burnt, your purpose will not be solved. All of you are trying to stop, this will become the reason of your deaths, and this place will be sunken with your blood. It seems in one more episode when Dorothy Brown was attempted to rape and she revolt it with a tremendous power and injured the rapist than people began to talk to each other, first one," is she pious now." Other one replied," yes, she is pious, it is said that Maa Durga came into her body, and she defeated all of them."

Immediately after this, it is shown that a student of cotton college was learning, how to control a girl by the priest of Chinnmastaa. He has been told that a mixture of blood, sperm and kaurithutiya (a kind of medicine) and some roots of plants will be worshiped by 108 times and after this feed it to the girl than she can be controlled. Even after your death, she will follow you till the cremation place.

Another significant aspect of the novel is that, where some person’s are following the custom of Bali, some others were against it on the other hand. In an episode of Devi Chinnmastaa’s temple a goat is going to cut for Bali, she began to fear. Every one is gathered to see the Bali on that place, after Bali the blood spreads all around rapidly, people were watching that there was a priest who began to taste the
blood and painted his forehead with the fresh blood, at the same time a
dog came and began to licking the blood. Than a priest declare,” this
Bali had been finished in three days, the throat of Devi become dry due
to thrust, all of you paint your forehead with the blood of Bali. Listen,”
you would have to attack on the neck of Jatadhari, who snatched the
blood from the thru sty Devi.” Say yes.

Some people said, yes, than the priest replied,” Bali is all; you can find
the heaven after Bali’. It is in the mythology,” Devi remains happy for
ten lakh years by the Bali of three men, for eight months by the blood
of a deer, for twelve years by the Bali of a pig. And listen, she remains
satisfied till hundred of years by the blood of a male buffalo. And if a
man can sacrifice his own blood than Devi remains happy till
thousands of year”. Come on, move forward, after sometime an old
woman came out and said about the goat,” it was eating grass before
some time. Why did you cut that? That was a live creature. See the
goat has passed the toilet with fear. Devi, take my head! Cut it, cut it,
and cut it too”. After this a priest said that if you will sacrifice only two
drops of your blood with a smallest quantity of your own flesh, than
your wish will be fulfilled within six months. Just after this a short priest
came out, and began to shout,” what a sacrifice, when you sacrificed
an animal than all of you are enjoying and when it come to you that why are you running.

All this shows that Dr. Goswami portrayed the history of the myth of the temple of Devi Chinnmasta, no doubt she has given a true picture of that community. Her presentation is so live that we find our self very close to the plot. Through her novel she has given a massage that there is no fruit of Bali in the life of a human being.

As in Nagini Kanya the prediction by astrologer that Chand Saudagar’s son Lakhinder would be bitten to death by a snake on his wedding night. Chand Saudagar therefore built an iron wedding chamber for his son and gave the responsibility of his son’s securiry on the night of his marriage to Behula, to his son and gave the responsibility of his son’s security on the night of his marriage to Behula, to the Santhali snake charmers. The headman of the Santhali snake charmers was however, deceived by the black nagini who took the form of his dead daughter and put a spell on him. The black nagini then managed to enter the wedding chamber through a tiny gap and bite Lakhinder to his death. It was then that Chand Saudagar cursed the headman:

You have not kept your word. I trusted you and you have stabbed me in the back … you must be exiled if you deceive the man who bestows
his faith on you … I take away your right of living on this mountain, this area and this community … your settlement, caste, respect, wealth-all his left you … Nobody will touch you. Nobody will allow you to settle down with them … their beauty was darkened … their bodily aroma changed to a disgusting smell.

Before leaving the Santhali Mountain, the headman caught the black nagini and imprisoned it in the basket hanging from his shoulder. The group of Santhali snake charmers then set off and afloated down the river Bhagirathi in search of a spot to settle down the headman soon heard the black nagini speaking to him:

Dear father, it’s me … Father I will always remain your ablack daughter … I will be born as your daughter in your group of people. You are the headman. You will recognize me from my sympthoms … Her appearance will be like mine … She will carry the responsibility of worshipping Mother Vish-hari for you. She will bring about the welfare of your people. She will obey you and will read the mind of Mother vish-hari and communicate it to you.

The snake charmers finally settle in Hijal Bil and believe that the nagini kanya continues to live with them. Generation after generation, she takes the shape of a girl and is born in the community of the Santhali
snake charmers. She is touched with divinity but there exists one rule that she must never break, which is to remain celibate all her life. Generations go by but the fate of the nagini kanya to remain chaste and not cohabit with any man does not change. We are told that, ‘The nagini kanya is born as a human being but with the fate of the kaalnagin.’

Nagini Kanyar Kahini describes the events that occur during the time of two nagini kanyas, Shabala and Pingla. The writer weaves elements of myth, instincts and sexual desires to create characters with complex choices and motivations. The multiple levels at which the narrative moves are so closely interwoven into each other that it becomes impossible to reach easy conclusions. At one level, the image of primeval sexuality creeps in through an intricate palimpsest of the sexual desire of the animal and the human world. It is a popular belief that some animals exude a strong smell during the mating season to attract their mate.

The smell is the evidence of sexual desire, the desire to mate and the desire to reproduce. ‘Any man who knows the village land... and the
various forms of life that exist therein know that the smell of the champa is the smell of the body of the impassioned nagini for her union with the nag. Because of the law of nature, the body of the waiting nagini is filled with the smell. The smell of the champa sends its invitation through all directions in the dark world.’18 The Santhali snake charmers share the belief that when the female snake is overtaken with the desire to mate, its body exudes the smell of the champa flower.

At one point in the novel it is suspected that Pingala-the second nagini kanya-is in love with Nago Thakur. This would have violated the community norm that prescribed complete mental, emotional and physical isolation from any man for the nagini kanya. Pingla is believed to be a nagini in the form of a girl, the community also agrees that if the passion for sex had arisen in Pingla, the her body too would exude the smell of the champa flower. Eventually, Pingla seeks out her own method of proving that she, the nagini, was free of asexual passion.

She decides to throw herself in front of the male snake after her community agreed that if her body were filled with the champa smell, then the male snake would recognize the smell of desire and embrace and caress her. Pingla does throw herself in front of the snake which attacks her viciously. Being an expert in snaring snakes, Pingla manages to seize it and save herself. For her community, this
becomes and infallible evidence of complete absence of sexual desire in Pingla.

Pingla identifies with her role as the nagini kanya very closely and believes that the welfare of her community is dependent on her remaining celibate both in mind and body. She tries to repress and discipline herself through fasting and meditation. Despite all her genuine efforts, she continues to be tormented by a force that she cannot fully comprehend. She confesses to Shivram, the local practitioner of indigenous medicine, ‘My body is burning. So is my heart and mind.’19 Confused about her own responses, the begins to wonder whether she was really a female snake in human form of just another ordinary flesh and blood woman. She continues to tell Shivram, ‘Shabala and said “Nagini kanya is a lie. Can girls ever be a snakes?”

In fact, Shabala, the nagini kanya abefore Pingla had revolted against the community rule that prohibited her from having sexual contact with any man. She falls in love with another Young man of her community who is treacherously murdered by the earlier headman. Shabala then kills the headman, jumps into the Bhagirathi and swims away. We later discover that she had eventually got married and lived far away from the Santhali snake charmer community with her husband and children.
Pingla is completely different from Shabala. Unlike Shabala who rejects her community role as the nagini kanya, Pingla cannot abandon her faith in the myth of her being a reincarnation of the nagini. Despite her attraction to Nago Thakur, she fails to dissociate herself from her other identity—that of the nagini—and says, ‘Whatever I believe in, I believe in earnest. Whenever, I close my eyes, I see my snake soul dancing with its hood spread out. It swings, away. Its tongue moving in and out, its eyes burning like coal, it is snarling.’

Pingla soon begins to have epileptic fits. Pingla herself, as well as her community, sees this as an indication of entry into a divine state and a medium through which their goddess Vish-hari communicates with them. Shivraj however, diagnoses the condition in medical terms, ‘If human beings cannot express a desire, that repressed desire gets transformed into ether and wind that poisons the body. It changes gradually into a storm and then... control of the mind.’ The novel ends with Pingla’s death and the complete annihilation of the community of the Santhali snake charmers.

What however, remains unresolved is the tension between Pingla’s social role and her natural sexual urge. It is evident that Pingla’s mental and physical agony was rooted in repressed sexual desire. Yet, what remains fuzzy is whether she would have been untroubled in her
rejection of her identity as the nagini. While one would agree with Sigmund Freud in considering sexual desire as the primary motivational energy of human life, it is impossible to ignore the manner in which social and community codes get internalized by individuals and challenge and dominate their ‘sexual universe’.