ABSTRACT

I] Introduction:

Today, we look upon India as a developing nation. It has come a long way since ancient times and is one of the few countries with a long and rich culture and tradition. There was a time when India was the center of learning and scholarship. However, the beautiful culture and traditions of India were marred by inevitable factors like caste and class. Ancient Indian society was divided on the basis of caste and class. Just as our rich traditions and culture are absorbed in the Indian texture and still hold fast, similarly, the issues of caste and class are woven into the Indian fabric and are difficult to abolish.

India, in the 20th century has seen a number of changes like the struggle for freedom and sixty-five years of independence. The British came and went, leaving behind many things, the most noteworthy being a lineage of literary scholars who have enriched Indian English literature and given the world some of the best pieces of creative writing. Stretching from the Gandhian age (1920 to 1947), The Post-Gandhian Age (1947 to 2000) and the advent of the 21st century, India has been through turbulence as well as development. The decade of 1930s came with a new hope for the future in the form of nationalism. Creative writers have been sensitive to the changes and challenges and have expressed themselves in literature, particularly in fiction. The period provided raw material for fiction to three major Indian English novelists: Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao.
The Post-Independence period marks the richness in Indo-Anglian fiction. Writers like Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Prawer Jhabwala, Nayantara Sehgal, Anita Desai and Santha Rama Rao appeared on the literary scene with ample variety. Something that clung to Indian society in spite of economic and political changes were the issues of caste and class. They affected Indian society to a great extent. Literature is always concerned with man’s social world, his adaptation to it and his desire to change it. Accordingly, these writers wrote about poverty, agricultural tradition, ritualistic religions, class systems and the social milieu. India, with its characteristic features, is a challenge to scholars. Its special feature is caste. The caste-hierarchy disturbed the country socially and obstructed its progress. It influenced every aspect of life and made the people inactive. In addition, religions, rituals, customs and cultural aspects made things complicated. The novels reflect the struggle and turbulence. Indian novels are full of these burning issues.

A novel can be studied as a faithful attempt to recreate the social world of man’s concern with his family, society and nation. It delineates person’s role in the family and other institutions. Literature is a product of the general climate of thought and feeling. Indian fiction in English is a creation and reflection of society. Consciousness of the author and social atmosphere in the novels are important in order to study a creative art from a social perspective.

The vast majority of the population of India is Hindus. Religion plays a very important role in Indian life. Caste is more of a sociological reality than a religious phenomenon. The division of caste into sub-castes and the rigid beliefs that prevent
the mingling of castes create inequality among human beings. This is another evil of Indian society which strikes at the very root of democracy.

Socio-economic conditions serve as a background for a story to take place. Writers have maximum scope to dwell on the background in fiction, rather than in any other genre. It is worthwhile to trace the characters and their journeys through life across a span of 70 to 80 years and observe the changes in the background and the attitudes of characters. The researcher selected novels that strongly reflect the changes and observed the effects of time on religion, culture, traditions and specifically, on the issues of caste and class.

Moreover, there is a vast difference in the geographical, religious and cultural factors in different parts of the country. Diversity has created a kaleidoscopic culture in India. Hence, writers from the East, West and North and South of India are selected for the study.

II] Aims & Objectives:

- To study the class and caste concepts and representation of these concepts in Indian English novels.
- To analyze the representation of class and caste concepts in various Indian English novels.
- To interpret the representation from social, economic and religious point of view.
- To take a historical survey of the representation of class and caste in Indian English novels.
III] Hypothesis:

1. Literature represents various social, religious and economic realities of the time.
2. Indian English fiction reflects different references to the sociological development in the country.
3. There is close link between the social reality and artistic manifestation of such reality in literature.
4. Characters, setting and overall atmosphere of the novel present the class and caste concepts.

IV] Research Methodology:

The researcher read all the novels and analyzed the characters, episodes and settings from the perspectives of caste and class. The researcher considered them in the light of sociological, economic and political situations. The researcher also discussed the novels and concerned issues with experts in the fields of sociology, economics and politics and with literary giants.

A major part of the work was library work. The researcher visited a number of university libraries and English departments in Maharashtra and also visited the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages in Hyderabad.

On the basis of the analysis of the novels and discussions with experts, the researcher arrived at the conclusion.
Chapter Scheme:

- Chapter I – Introduction
- Chapter II – Mulk Raj Anand’s Untouchable and Coolie
- Chapter III – Dr. Bhabani Bhattacharya’s So Many Hungers and He Who Rides a Tiger
- Chapter IV – Kamala Markandaya’s Nectar in a Sieve and A Handful of Rice
- Chapter V – Novels of Twenty-first Century - Arundhati Roy’s The God of Small Things, Kiran Desai’s The Inheritance of Loss, Aravind Adiga’s The White Tiger
- Chapter VI - Conclusion

Observation:

The first chapter is introductory and serves as a theoretical and conceptual background to the novels under consideration. The two basic aspects of caste and class are studied in detail from the sociological, historical, political and economic points of view. An attempt has been made to describe the nature and structure of Indian society and how it has been constantly influenced and affected by caste and class. It has been established that caste and class are part of the social background, a persistent social fact and an inseparable part of Indian life.

The second chapter is a core chapter in which the researcher has studied two novels by one of the pioneers of Anglo-Indian literature, Mulk Raj Anand. Both the novels, Untouchable and Coolie were published in succession and date back to 1935 and
1936 respectively. Caste and class factors were dominant in Indian society and religion was of vital importance then. A writer with a social cause, Mulk Raj Anand wanted to point out the miseries of the downtrodden. Hence, his hero is Bakha, an untouchable, who belongs to the lowest of low castes. It is essentially a novel of ‘caste presentation’, which was an everyday reality in the Indian context. It is a forceful indictment of the evils of the fossilized caste system and orthodox Hindu society. The anguish of Bakha is purely and simply a scathing statement of the caste-ridden Hindu society, with its blind adherence to humanitarian values.

Bakha has three solutions to get rid of the ‘untouchable’ tag. He may be a Christian with the help of a missionary man, Colonel Hutchinson. The second solution is that he may believe in the appeal of the Mahatma to eradicate untouchability, wait till the social conscience of the people for the emancipation of the untouchables. The third solution is a machine. The flush system, the water-closets will clean the dirt hopes Bakha that the machines will clean the dirt; the sweepers can be free from the stigma of untouchability.

Mulk Raj Anand has pointedly discussed the miserable conditions of the outcastes, especially the sweepers whose work is to clean the latrines. Time and again, the author has stressed that the birth of an individual is responsible for his caste. Anand has pointed out the difference between the two brothers Lakha and Rakha. While the latter is a typical outcaste and has mingled with their lifestyle perfectly, Bakha is different. Anand’s protagonist does not merely possess a beautiful physique and immense strength, but he has many traits in common with the upper-caste children. He hates everything about the outcastes- their tastes, their way of life and their work.
He has a thirst for knowledge and an extraordinary ability to think, to analyze circumstances, to make observations and also a trace of spiritualism. In spite of the paths shown by Gandhiji and Col. Huthinson, Bakha is not lured away from his roots in the country, its conventions and his belief in the Hindu religion. Finally, the conflict in his mind is set at rest in his temporary acceptance of his fate, with an added ray of hope of change in the future, symbolized by the so-called ‘machine’ for cleaning toilets. Hence, Bakha, belonging to the lowest caste among outcastes, represents a hero who comes to terms with life after a series of grueling experiences in a day, when all his potentials were intense and acute. Finally, he succeeds in resolving the conflicts in his mind created by social, cultural, economic and religious barriers that check his progress. Anand does not fail to suggest that Bakha would have attained great heights had caste barriers not come in his way, since he has tremendous potential to grow and flourish.

The second novel Coolie is the story of an orphan boy Munoo, who is compelled to work as a coolie. People are not born coolies. By birth Munoo is a Kshatriya, a Rajput and a brave boy. He was born in the peasant family, but a poor family. Munoo’s poverty had decided his caste – his only identification was being a ‘Coolie.’ As such, he went through a number of experiences that degraded his self-respect, human dignity, dreams, and ambitions leaving only awareness that he was a coolie. He forgot his birth, his education, his native place, his parents, relatives and childhood friends.

According to C. J. George, “Class system is a greater evil than caste system. This is obvious from the fact that the rich low-caste is better placed in society than the poor
high caste. The caste victims can at least draw sympathy and support from members of their own caste whereas the class victims have no such consolation and have to suffer perpetual deprivation.”¹ (George: 1994) This statement is indeed true in the case of the poor Brahmin boys Varma and Lehnu and also the Kshatriya born Munoo. ‘Coolie, Coolie’, the word reverberated in his brain, be it at the work place, in a train, on the streets, in a hotel or a hospital. He was never allowed to forget this ‘coolie’ caste imposed on him by the society.

The third chapter deals with two novels by the Bengali writer, Bhabani Bhattacharya. Both the novels, namely, So Many Hungers published in 1947 and He Who Rides a Tiger published in 1954, deal with the themes of economic, political and social exploitation. Both novels share the same dismal background of the Bengal famine and clouds of war. So Many Hungers is the story of man-made hunger that took a toll of two million people in Bengal. It is all about different kinds of hungers – hunger for food, money, power and sex.

Unlike Mulk Raj Anand’s Untouchable and Coolie, in which caste was responsible for class, So Many Hungers makes no mention of caste. In the novels of Mulk Raj Anand, it is observed that caste system is so rigid that it does not permit individuals either to rise above or even go below one’s own caste, which also decides the profession, and consequently the economic class. Thus, while the highest class of Brahmins is learned, they earn more than those below who are traders or menial laborers and who are denied the knowledge of Scriptures. While portraying the families of Kajoli and Samarendra Basu, Bhabani Bhattacharya has not made any mention of caste. There is no question of caste when there is the question of survival.
So Many Hungers is set on the background of the National Movement and the World War. Bhabani Bhattacharya’s intention is to show how society gets further stratified socio-economically when selfish and materialistic people take advantage of crises.

Bhabani Bhattacharya is endowed with a transparently positive vision of life, explored and expressed artistically in all his novels. Since he believes that novels should have a social purpose, his stories abound in gruesome social and historical realities like the Bengal Famine of 1942, poverty, corruption, ignorance, superstition, exploitation, greed, sexual perversion etc. the novelist’s unflinching faith in life and its invincibility, indestructibility and worthiness are always present beneath it. Even in the midst of ghastly and heart-rending scenes of human sufferings and tortures, life asserts itself, sparking among ashes. Bhabani Bhattacharya’s final vision of life emanates from the assertion of ethical values and the synthesis of the old and new and of opposite extremes.

He Who Rides a Tiger presents a realistic picture of pre-Independence Indian society. Bengal famine and Quit India movement are major background themes. It describes the sufferings of the homeless destitute, the painful effect of the famine on the poor and protest against rich. It sharply presents the class struggle and the necessity to establish equality and love between two classes.

If social class is the focus of So Many Hungers, Bhabani Bhattacharya has focused caste in his novel He Who Rides a Tiger. The novel is the story of a protest against the ill-treatment of the poor by the rich. The protest is against two prevalent evils – the evil of exploitation and the evil of caste. Kalo and Biten protest against
exploitation and caste respectively. Kalo’s story illustrates the novelist’s belief in human beings. Kalo and Biten succeed in taking revenge on the rich and high-caste Hindus. The novel is an attack on some of the repulsive realities of Indian social life. One of the realities of social life is the unbridgeable gulf between the rich and poor, the high and low. Kalo is able to show the boundaries of caste and class to the rich. Yet, he remains faithful to his own caste and profession. His, “strength seemed based on an inner metal.” In the end, he becomes the champion of the downtrodden and a ‘legend of freedom.’

Bhabani Bhattacharya mounts in the novel a strong attack against the degrading effects of castes, classes and creeds. Kalo perceived the contradiction in social life: 

“While men died of hunger, wealth grew; and while kindness dried up, religion was more in demand.”

The novel further explores and develops Bhabani Bhattacharya’s basic attitude to life. The writer sheds light on the lofty, unbending ideals of the people of the working classes. Even ravenous hunger fails to subdue the poor, and make them take the viscous ways “The lowborn people will not bend but they will crack. God has sent his mighty hunger to teach the lowborn people a true lesson.”

The writer brings out the wonderful fighting spirit of man. The low-caste blacksmith upsets the old social order by investing himself with Brahminhood and rising to the top. They take rules/rides even as high as riding a tiger. He has courage to dismount the tiger at the critical juncture. The story is full of irony and contrast, antithesis and balance. All his novels present a true picture of India and its teeming millions surging with life and substance. He does not believe in the dictum of art for art’s sake. His outlook is highly constructive and purposeful.
The fourth chapter presents perspective of a woman writer. Kamala Markandaya’s *Nectar in a Sieve* was published in 1954. The novel deals with poverty, hunger, starvation and faith. It truly represents the story of an Indian farmer whose life and fate depend entirely on nature. When there is no rain successively for two to three years, the farmers, especially landless peasants have to starve. Rain or no rain, the landowners exploit them and demand their dues. They are sometimes compelled to sell off all belongings to retain the land or quit it although they have tended it for generations. The writer has depicted the ever impending fear and starvation, hunger and poverty which are common aspects of their life. They remain poor and helpless.

When a tannery is constructed, Nathan and Rukmani are rather disgusted with the idea of their sons working in a tannery. Those engaged in leather profession are called Chamars (cobbler) and belong to a very low caste. Hence, Rukmani does not wish that her sons should have anything to do with a low-caste job. However, the sons are of a different nature. They have no interest in tilling the land that belongs to others. They prefer to work in a tannery, regardless of the kind of the work. This shows the change of attitude in the new generations. Moreover, when hunger is concerned, one does not hesitate to stoop to do any kind of work.

The clash between the rich and the poor is the chief focus of this novel. The story of Rukmani is the story of thousands of women in India, who have to face struggle after struggle and have very few expectations from life. Kamala Markandaya expresses the strange attitude of the people that prevents them from breaking the class and social barriers and rising to the top.
The rich and well-settled traders and merchants earn huge profits at the expense of the hard work of the laborers. The gap between the rich and the poor is further widened. Novel after novel, whether it is Kamala Markandaya or Mulk Raj Anand or Bhabani Bhattacharya, we find the same scene, that rising to an upper social class is next to impossible. Even education is futile, as in the case of Kalo’s daughter in He Who Rides a Tiger. Without enough money for food, who can afford education? And without education and strong support there are no bright prospects. This becomes a vicious circle in the life of the poor.

A Handful of Rice was published in 1966. It deals with human relationship, urban economy and hunger for food. A handful of rice is essential for existence. The protagonist’s life suggests that poverty and deprivation make needy man a monster. The economic security is most important for the survival in the materialistic world. His village simplicity, honesty and innocence disappear in his hardships of the city life. The way the novel proceeds reminds us of the Mulk Raj Anand’s Coolie and Untouchable. Just as Anand leads us through the life journey of Munoo and Bakha respectively, Kamala Markandaya leads us through the journey of Ravi’s life in A Handful of Rice. It is through the life of Ravi that Kamala Markandaya shows the struggle between the traditional and the modern. Ravi’s father and Apu are traditional in their outlook while Verma and Damodar and other rich clients are symbols of modernity. The novel is about the struggle between the individual Ravi and an uncompromising society, which prevents Ravi from reaching the many attractions in life. Ravi, Ravi’s father and Apu’s family members belong to the poor class. The merchants, clients and later Damodar belong to the rich class. Ravi
makes every effort to fulfill his dream of crossing the bridge to the higher class, but he is unable to do so. The writer also touches upon the East-West clash of codes which is a part of modern India. Like Bhabani Bhattacharya’s ‘So Many Hungers’, this novel also peeps into the chaotic and neurotic conditions of the people, on account of hunger and suffering. The modern man has to suffer on all fronts, especially in the city, where the basic problems are housing, food and sanitation. Caught in these problems, he has lost all values.

Like Nectar in a Sieve this novel also ends on a positive note. In spite of colossal sufferings, the characters rise above their desperation successfully. Both the novels deal with starvation and poverty but they end on a progressive note. Selvam’s words to his mother ‘Do not worry, we shall manage’\(^4\) (pg.189) and Ravi’s expression ‘Tomorrow, yes, tomorrow’\(^5\) (pg.237) are words that ring with hope, confidence, positivism, determination and undaunted spirit.

In times of crisis, normal relationships were seriously affected. Parents could not rely on their children and husbands and wives lost faith in each other. On the one hand, industrialization is a sign of progress of mankind. On the other hand, it creates social evils.

The fifth chapter deals with three novels from the 21\(^{st}\) century.

Arundhati Roy’s The God of Small Things (1997) presents a simple story in a vivid, articulate and fascinating style. It is a psychological presentation, observations of little children and lifelong impressions of childhood. It deals with the issue of untouchability, poor laborers, and women’s domestic and social suffocation. The
social, economic, political, religious, cultural problems and complications are skillfully presented. It deals with the caste and class issues in India. The novel presents the story of a Syrian Christian family in Kerala in connection with socio-political changes.

Velutha is victimized by many ugly forces because of his birth in an untouchable caste. As he grows up into a young man, he does not seem to toe the line of his father, a typical untouchable who accepts the caste-based discrimination as the will of God. Velutha does not pay serious attention to his father’s advice regarding his conduct with touchable or high caste people. He has a sharp mind and because of his carpentry skill he can understand, maintain and handle machines very well. It induces a sense of self-respect in Velutha and he does not behave the way an untouchable ‘should behave’. The Communist movement has thrived in Kerala off and on since the 1960. Communism spread in Kerala because of its high literacy. It was a reformist movement yet it never questioned the values of a caste ridden, extremely traditional community. They offered a cocktail revolution. A heady mix of Eastern Marxism and orthodox Hinduism spiked with a shot of democracy.

The novelist attacks institutionalized Christianity and the structure of the Communist party precisely because they deny their own values and combine with traditional structures which make no claims to justice and equality. Marxism, a western ideology is accepted in Kerala. But Marxism as a political ideology is accepted only when it is able to create a different kind of power structure. Politicians like Comrade Pillai have adopted the Marxist ideology. But they are professional people who will destroy the expendable in order to maintain power. The Communist Movement was
supposed to aim at a classless society. In spite of Communism’s theoretical emphasis on equality and justice, the institution of the Party in Ayemenem functions from within the caste system. This institution like Christianity is concerned with maintaining itself. Novel proved that the mind-set of the society is impossible to change. The exploitation of the poor class and lower caste is possible in the power-structure.

The Indian society is a patriarchal capitalist caste-ridden traditional power-structure. In this society men dominate over women, the rich over the poor, upper caste over the lower caste, touchable over the untouchables, the educated over the illiterate, capitalist over the proletariat. The individual struggle is crushed under the heavy feet of powerful hierarchy of caste and class. It is impossible to protest against the traditional, conventional religious and social laws. The social inequality, patriarchy, casteism, conservatism cannot be solved by Marxism. Marxist ideology has totally failed in the caste-ridden Indian society. The Marxist movement started to replace God with Marx, Satan with the bourgeoisie, Heaven with a classless society, Church with the Party yet the form and purpose of the journey remained similar. The novelist is successful in appealing the consciousness of the readers to think seriously about the ‘God of Small Things,’ the oppressed class and caste.

Kiran Desai’s The Inheritance of Loss published in 2006 presents the relationship among people from different cultures and social backgrounds. The novel is about love, longings and losses, the destruction of human beings, faith in each other and its reclamations. It deals with East and West, poverty and wealth, the migrant and the resident. It presents the multi-cultural issue, the desire for a better life, better
opportunity and the class barriers to development of an individual. The novel deals with the contemporary social issues as globalization, marginalization, exploitation, economic inequality, poverty, racial discrimination, immigration, political violence, nationalism and insurgency. The novel shows how people feel rootless and alienated not only in a migrated country but also in their own motherland and how they suffer from loss of identity. All the immigrants have bitter experiences of exile. The judge’s experience in England was not different. He faced racial discrimination even though he was a legal migrant. Father Booty was banished from India to his Swiss country because he was a foreigner. On the other hand the GNLF insurgents demanding their own land were migrated. This cultural-social trauma is making human life more rigid and a burden. The novel is a presentation of reality that we all share inheritance of loss. The cultural loss is a result of our heritage of socio-economic-political inequality and injustice. The poor and powerless are always marginalized and suffered in the hands of powerful people. This is underlined by the novelist.

Arvind Adiga’s The White Tiger (2008) tells the story of Balram Halwai, the son of rickshaw puller. He worked in the teashop, wiping tables with a dream to escape from poverty. As a driver to a rich man, he gets a chance to go to Delhi and learns all about the city life-style, about politics and about the life of rich people and ministers. He is obsessed by a desire to ‘better’ himself. He learns new morals, new techniques in an IT age. His life from village to city, from poverty to affluence, from simplicity to cruelty, from morality to immorality is a reality of new India. The author exposes the ‘white tiger’ Balram who was a servant turned murderer turned entrepreneur. It presents effectively the struggles of the deprived and cravings of rich.
A novel about India is bound to touch upon the issue of caste directly or indirectly. As Balram relates his story to the Chinese premier, he refers to caste issue in India. Caste is closely related to religion. India is a secular nation. Christians, Muslims and Hindus form a majority of the population. As has been discussed in connection with previous novels, the issue of class in India is a continuation of the ancient caste system. It is a consequence of the caste system. However, Adiga has pointed out that it has been affected and disturbed in recent years and is slowly being wiped out, as man has become materialistic over a period. One who refuses to cut off the shackles of caste is not likely to succeed in the competitive world. As a nation, India will have to discard the caste system sooner or later, in a rising economy. The social discrimination is not good for the health of the society. Many Balram can be created by such inequality and injustice. He shows that the gap between poor and rich cannot be filled without resorting to bribe and corruption.

He shares the views with Mulk Raj Anand and Bhabani Bhattacharya that the gap between the rich and the poor is widening. What they do not observe is the ways and means that the poor are turning to in order to reduce the gap. The irony is that the rich are doing the same to rise even higher and thus, the situation remains the same. Anand’s characters meekly accept their lot and come to terms with life. Ravi in Kamala Markandaya’s A Handful of Rice retains his honesty in the end. Kajoli is forced to become a prostitute and does so against her will. Unlike all these characters, Balram chooses a foul path, is strong and determined and has no sense of guilt or regret. His attitude is that after all how long will the poor suffer?
As the title depicts, the topic of research is the representation of class and caste in selected Indian novels. All the selected novels are subtly realistic. Social realism is recurrent in every novel. Caste and consequently class are deeply rooted in Indian society. The unity and diversity of people in different parts of the country, social functions and gatherings, democratic elections, education are affected by caste and class. Caste is not an individual and personal affair, nor is religion. They are social issues that influence society, and are in turn influenced by it. The social reality is represented by the writers in their novels.

VII] Conclusion:

On the basis of the above observations, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions:

Caste and class are ingrained and deeply rooted in the culture of India and are not easy to be shaken off. Caste system was extremely rigid in ancient times. But gradually, the attitude of people is changing and these issues are losing their gravity, seriousness and intensity. People belonging to the old generation still find it difficult to cross caste barriers but the new generation is comparatively open and flexible. Inter-caste marriages are becoming common and acceptable.

Caste was connected with religion and religion is very important in India. It is easier to shake off caste differences but difficult to overthrow religion and faith in God. Hence, religion proves to be an obstruction in wiping out caste differences.

All men are born equal. Even those of the lowest of low castes can be strong, intellectual, good-looking and talented. These positive personality traits are not
assigned by God according to caste. In India, birth decides caste, which is very unfortunate.

The privileged Brahmins take undue advantage of their supremacy. The religion advocates humanity but there is no sign of humanity or sympathy in the so-called men of religion. They would prefer to waste milk as offerings to God, rather than let the poor have them. They are hypocrites and can be fooled and mocked at by the less fortunate ones.

In India, people are crazy about religion and would do anything for its sake, without doubting, without raising questions. They seem to lose their reason and sense when it comes to religion.

Class system is a direct consequence of the caste system because the upper castes have access to education and hence the ways and means of earning money. They continue to move higher on the social ladder while those who are denied education, never make progress in spite of having abilities.

With changing times, caste barriers are being wiped out. In the face of crisis, when faced by hunger, one does not care about the work one is doing. Anything from sweeping, working in tanneries or running brothels is acceptable, as long as it serves as a means of livelihood.

Depression, disgust, anger, revolt are common signs of the destitute victims. Yet, for a long span of time, people refused to revolt openly or resort to violence or unfair means. The value system with ideal moral values is a part of the Indian psyche which
prevents people from resorting to violence. Sooner or later, the poor and downtrodden would challenge the system.

Every aspect of life is affected in crisis. Family relationships are severed. Goodness and brotherhood are forgotten. Pangs of hunger lead one to blackmailing, deceit, cheating and corruption.

Everybody seems to be constantly hungry for something or the other. Babhani Bhattacharya has referred to the hungers of the mind and body. Everyone is possessed by a desire to rise higher on the social ladder. Those who control themselves remain passive and suffer. Those who have courage they try to achieve their ambitions.

Man has physical hungers like food and sex. People indulge in anything for satiating these hungers at any cost. There are psychological hungers like power and authority, money and possessions. People strive continuously for achieving these by fair or foul means.

Some kind of talent renders self-respect to individuals. Practicing skills helps them to manage their frustrations and get some relief from stress. They even forget the injustice inflicted by caste when they assess their skills and potentials.

A general human tendency is to exploit others and oppress them for personal gains. There is also a sadistic touch, as if one enjoys one’s privilege to inflict pain on others and overpower them. Perhaps caste and class discrimination would not cause injustice if this brutal and perverse tendency is abandoned. The researcher suggests
that something can be done via educational system so that evil tendencies are not
developed.

This remark by Manju Verma about the novel “The God of Small Things” applies to
each selected novel: “It is a big book about a big question – why there is a tendency
in us to exploit and to humiliate those who are powerless, vulnerable, defenseless
and downtrodden by those who are better placed in life.”

At the end of the study, the researcher is highly disturbed and concerned regarding
the question raised by Manju Verma.
References:


3) Ibid. p. 21.

