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## The Plight of the Subaltern in Joothan



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### **Abstract :**

Literature is the source to understand and evaluate society in many ways in regard with positive and negative aspects of the society. The power relation always plays a vital role in framing the customs and traditions of the society. The power relation in the form of colonizer and colonized has been reflected in literature particularly postcolonial literature. One of the major issues of the postcolonial literature is to highlight the exploitation of colonized masses on various grounds. The issue of subalternity, marginality and oppression on account of caste, class and gender in literature has a special attention in world academy.

Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist, used the word 'subaltern' for denoting as subordinate with the connotative meaning as oppressed, marginalized peasants of Italy. G.C.Spivak raises the question to subaltern study group of historians as 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in regards with the oppression of women. However, the term 'subaltern' is an umbrella one that covers the various oppressions in terms of caste, class, and gender. The paper critiques the subaltern life of the downtrodden community in relation to caste, poverty and marginalization. Joothan : A Dalit's Life represents the plight of *Chuhra (Bhangi)* caste. The Chuhras (Bhangi) are the

broken people; the community has been denied the status of human due to scavenging occupation. Omprakash Valmiki's autobiography accounts the ground realities of the community in day today lives. It penetrates the history of the *Chuhra* community in independent India.

**Keywords :** Colonizer, Colonized, subaltern, Spivak, Dalits, Chuhars (Bhangi)