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## **Manohar: A Voice against Socioeconomic Inequality in *Jibon Ghoshe Agun* (The Spark of Life) by Hasan Azizul Huq**

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*Abstract: This paper is designed to emphasize Manohar, the singer in Hasan Azizul Huq's Jibon Ghoshe Agun (The Spark of Life) to investigate the themes of social injustice, poverty, and belligerence in rural Bengal. The feeling of anguish and prejudiced act that the poor and the oppressed encounter is well exemplified by the character of Manohar, who hails from the Tentule Bagdi community. The novella outlines how the poverty and the domination by the landlord babus force Manohar and his people to turn into tempered men and kill Ghantababu. This course of action is not only delinquent but a fatalistic proclamation of human dignity and disobedience against the depersonalizing impacts of hunger and oppression. This article will also access the psychological and social courses that orchestrates Manohar's growth from a sufferer to a wrongdoer, imprisoned in a cycle of deliberate cruelty resulting from oppression. Moreover, the write up also scrutinizes Manohar's hostilities and his inner turmoil to clarify how organizational factors lead to violence. Thus, by pursuing Manohar's chronicle, the research paper attempts to draw attention to the problem of economic inequality and its potential to fuel rebellion among the burdened societies. This investigation adds to the knowledge of sociopolitical dynamics in rural Bengal and the toll of marginalization and extreme exploitation.*

**Keywords:** Manohar, socioeconomic factors, human dignity, domination, exploitation, disobedience and resistance, psychological factors, social injustice

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## Introduction

Manohar, a key character in Hasan Azizul Huq's *Jibon Ghoshe Agun* (The Spark of Life) performs as an operational representation of the socioeconomic differences and abuse prevailing in rural Bengal. The readers become cognizant of Manohar's plight from his first encounter as he stands by the field, feeling the raw wound on his heel, he reflects on how the service for the mother goddess the previous night had been ruined. This initial glimpse into his life readies the stage to comprehend the larger struggles he is to confront. He sensed as if his brains would burst and the insides of his head would be scattered all around because there was this strange feeling of nothingness, formlessness and a frightful darkness all around. Moreover, the apt description of Manohar pictures the physical and emotional drawback paid by people who are caged in poverty and social exclusion.

Manohar's tale profoundly highlights the degraded economic, psychological as well as emotional anxiety to echo the everyday battle for existence of the vulnerable groups that make them feel hard-pressed and miserable. The American philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum in her book "Creating Capabilities": The Human Development Approach(2013) and Amartya Sen in his book "Development as Freedom"(1999) have opined that poverty stricken people suffer from severe psychological impediments. This psychological feature of poverty faced by the dispirited people is crucial to apprehend and analyze the ultimate effects of poverty and inequality. However, the restricted economic condition and nonphysical aspects of Manohar are quite perceptible through his internal struggles and the external forces that distress him. Hence, the agonizing silence and anguished cry of Krishnabhamini as portrayed in the narrative, accentuate the fathomless emotional trauma experienced by Manohar and his community. Again, Krishnabhamini's futile attempt to twist her windpipe to scream throws light on the absolute cry of silenced and victimized souls in rural Bengal.

It is to be mentioned that the scholars from different parts of the world examine and re-examine the social and economic conformities of rural Bengal, especially in the middle of the twentieth century. Amartya Sen in his significant write up "Poverty and Famines: "An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation" and Sugata Bose in "Peasant Labour and Colonial Capital" elucidates how the semi-feudal structure of agriculture leads to poverty and oppression. Hence, we can assert that the life of Manohar is not only a tale of struggle for existence, but also a portrayal of the harsh reality of countless rural people of Bengal. These conditions are intensified by social orders that sideline lower-caste groups like the Tentule Bagdis, pushing them further into penury. A truthful sketch of these harsh realities is observed when Manohar looks thoughtfully for a long time on the barren, parched land and the angel of death waiting nearby. This is an obvious testament to the unadorned environmental as well as economic conditions that worsen the misery of the rural poor.

Manohar's unparalleled story narrates the vigorous forms of disinclination to accept the enslavement prevailing in the society. However, this resistance is not always explicit but is often unfolded in small ways of rebellion and survival. James C. Scott in his book "Weapons of the Weak:" "Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance," (1985) illustrates how small acts of defiance by the oppressed can be as powerful as large-scale unrests. In Hasan Azizul Huq's *Jibon Ghoshe Agun* (The Spark of Life) this theme has been

displayed in Manohar's actions and observations as he strives to cope with the restraints arising from his community.

Thus Manohar, in *Jibon Ghoshe Agun* (The Spark of Life) offers multiple signals as well as a genuine portrayal of social injustice, mental exploitation, and uprising intertwined in the context of rural Bengal. The novella is a powerful social document on the pattern of society that records the accurate social picture and provides a gateway to observe the lives of the oppressed. The author Hasan Azizul Huq chooses Manohar not only to showcase the suffering and maltreatment of these communities but also their ability to stand firmly against the system, which marks the novella as a commanding story of the human pneuma.

### **Problem Statement and Research Questions**

The novella *Jibon Ghoshe Agun* (The Spark of Life) however, confers the moving journey of Manohar, a rural peasant whose daily struggle for survival projects the deep-rooted social and economic injustices that persists to define postcolonial Bengal. Through Manohar's eyes, readers witness not only the pain of hunger and deprivation but also the psychological toll of living within an unbending caste system and exploitative agrarian structures. His suffering has not been depicted as a solitary tale but as the shared reality of an entire marginalized community whose lives are defined by landlessness, caste inequity and neglect. Manohar's actions, particularly his moments of defiance and despair, portray how the human spirit responds to several years of oppression. Moreover, this research also aims to explore how Manohar's life embodies the broader patterns of socioeconomic imbalance that scholars have identified across South Asia, particularly in rural post-Partition Bengal. The principal research question guiding this study is: How does Hasan Azizul Huq's portrayal of Manohar in *Jibon Ghoshe Agun* clarify wider patterns of socioeconomic inequality in postcolonial rural Bengal.

### **Literature Review**

Huq's narrative showcases the exploitative practices of landlords and moneylenders who capitalize on the vulnerability of the poor. This exploitation is a critical theme in the novella which profusely exhibits the historical accounts of rural Bengal's socio economic landscape. So, Manohar as an entity along with his experiences in the novella highlight the extensive exploitation embedded in the socio economic structures of rural Bengal.

In order to explain significantly the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, we can consider Marxist theory. In *Jibon Ghoshe Agun* (The Spark of Life) the moneylender symbolizes the capitalist forces exploiting the labor and resources of the rural poor, on the other hand, Manohar's indebtedness and subsequent loss of autonomy illustrate the entrapments faced by many peasants.

"But suppose your stomach was empty you had only little rags to put on. And you were only starving for days—you got it? You lost your mind in hunger and lost your good sense only your stomach was burning there was nothing above the stomach and everything below it dried up—Oh my!—you were just out of your mind and then a

babu you know showed you with a lot of money and asked you to sleep with him—” (Shahed, 2013, p. 46) This passage highlights the extreme measures the impoverished are forced to consider, reflecting both the physical and moral degradation imposed by systemic poverty.

The psychological impact of socio-economic hardships on Manohar is another crucial aspect of the novella. Huq investigates the mental angst and disquiet resulting from sustained poverty and exploitation. As for instance, when Manohar touched the wound on his heel, reflecting on how the previous night's service for the mother goddess had been marred, represents the physical and emotional scars caused by systemic neglect. “Manohar the singer, Abhiram’s nephew, was thoroughly smeared with mud and sprinkles of blood here and there, and had a nasty wound extending from the knee to the heel.” (Shahed, 2013, p. 45) Hence, the exploration of Manohar's physical and psychological dimensions attaches him to a broader socio economic condition.

The profound silence of Krishnabhamini terrifies Manohar, who concluded his account with a stern promise that the whole neighborhood had lined up together to eradicate the despicable babu, and that more gentlemen would certainly meet a similar fate in the coming days. This unbearable silence and Krishnabhamini's anguished cry navigate the intense emotional trauma suffered by those exploited by deep rooted oppression.

Manohar's terror is gaudily depicted in his conversation with the inmate Mantaz, exemplifying the intense psychological stress he endures. Mantaz removed the gamchha from his harsh face with a spiky beard, his small eyes were restless show restless. This disturbed Manohar a little. (Shahed, 2013, p. 64) Mantaz questions the absence of the Tentule Bagdis in the fair to Manohar. “The Bagdis are all sleeping-” (Shahed, 2013, p. 65) replies Manohar. Mantaz announces the arrival of the policemen to ‘ruin’ the sleep of the Bagdis. “We’re innocent, believe me. We don’t know anything about it” (Shahed, 2013, p. 65). This proclamation may sound fearless to us but in reality it confides the distress of Manohar.

Manohar confesses the killing of Ghantababu to Krishnabhamini. He is heedful but with an underlying fervor, ventilating the torment felt by his community. His words “How dare you say that! Mother is where she is. But those bastard babus are such shameless sinners, they just manipulate her” (Shahed, 2013, p. 66) reveal the sufferings of his fellow people that have driven them to these exceedingly vigorous actions. He is grieving over their empty stomachs and the exploitative behavior of the upper-class landlords, highlighting the desperate measures they are forced to consider to survive:

“Well, we’ve killed him,” Manohar finally said with caution, then scanned the faces of his brethren before resuming. “We’re burning inside, oh, what a torment! You know very well, uncle,” he continued, his voice heavy with the collective sighs of those around him. “We don’t know what to do now. Our stomachs are empty, and the lewd babus lech at our starving women. People are hanging themselves from trees because they can’t stand it anymore, and our children die of hunger” (Shahed, 2013, p. 66). Mantaz’s response to Manohar summarizes the hostile reality of their situation, likening their existence to that of dogs, emphasizing the dehumanizing effect of their prolonged suffering:

“Listen son, one has to die for another to live, don’t you know? Men have turned into dogs now, and you kill a dog when you kill a man” (Shahed, 2013, p. 66). This exchange illustrates the psychological toll of systemic exploitation and extreme poverty. Manohar’s declaration, coupled with Mantaz’s acceptance, emphasizes the universal sense of hopelessness and the lengths to which the oppressed are willing to assert their humanity. Despite the overwhelming odds, Manohar's character manifests a vigour of resistance and violence. Huq's narrative emphasizes these small acts of defiance and tenacity that characterize Manohar's life.

In his article on Fanon's theory of violence, B.K. Jha (1988) explores several key aspects of Frantz Fanon's views on violence, emphasizing its role in revolutionary processes. Jha highlights how Fanon sees violence as a necessary tool for decolonization, arguing that it is essential for the liberation and self-realization of the oppressed. He talks about Fanon's ideas about violence being a cathartic tool that can refine the colonized of their lowliness and unite them in their struggle against colonial powers. Jha also critically inspects the ethical and practical implications of Fanon's approval of violence, questioning its overall effectuality and moral justification. Frantz Fanon also states that violence is a necessary response to colonial and systemic oppression. So, it can be stated that Manohar's brutal acts are an effort to regain his dignity and combat against dehumanization. The said theory explains the intensity of Manohar's actions as a form of despairing protest against intolerable oppression.

"Then a terrifying scenario unfolded that open barren land stretched before the eyes and the roar of hunger came and struck and went back like waves." (Shahed, 2013, p. 21). The collective suffering and consequent mobilization of the community showcase their strength and readiness to fight despite their appalling circumstances. For instance, when Ghantababu was hit with a spear, Manohar felt a fiery sensation pouring through his veins, creating a turbulent rush that drowned out his inner despair. This scene highlights Manohar's desperation and the intense release of his suppressed rage through violence. Thus Huq masterfully depicts Manohar’s socio-economic problems, and how the issues of caste and class compound his difficulties.

The expression ‘Annapurna, the inexhaustible provider, and we are her children’ (Shahed, 2013, p. 14). used in the novella can be measured as a metaphor to elucidate the plight of the poor and all the lower castes—the blacksmiths, the oilmen, the farmers, the weavers, the deprived castes like the Haanris, the Bagdis and the Doms. Annapurna is a deity of the Hindu pantheon that denotes food and prosperity. Thus, by referring to her as their mother and themselves as her children, the villagers pictorially convey that they are still using the land and its resources to endure, despite the hardships they face. This metaphor accentuates the importance of the land and the fairground as cultural and religious symbols. Thus, the people’s compliance to traditional values even in the face of socio-economic challenges conveys their devotion.

The novella portrays Manohar’s experiences of abuse that is deeply rooted in the socio-economic relations of rural Bengal. Hence, the novella of Hasan Azizul Huq discloses how landlords take advantage of the needy and poor people in the society. This exploitation is one of the most noteworthy themes of the novella, which mirrors the real history of socio-economic conditions of rural Bengal.

Karl Marx's propositions in his pivotal work, *Das Kapital: A Critique of Political Economy* (1867) can be used to examine the socio-economic relations in Hasan Azizul Huq's novella. According to Marxist theory the bourgeoisie exploits the proletariat. In the novella the landlords represent the capitalists who take advantage of the poor labor force in the rural areas. The economic domination and the inability to own the means of production make Manohar and his people to be in a position of subjection. This is well illustrated in the text where the landlords represent the capitalists who are out to exploit the labor and resources of the rural poor.

In Hasan Azizul Huq's *Jibon Ghoshe Agun* (The Spark of Life) the scene where the old Tentule Bagdi gives a toothless laugh, halting the priest, and the rest of the Bagdi chorus, "Who owns this land? Is it ours? Tell us, don't you be silent. What land can we go to?" underlines the impoverished and hopeless state of the Tentule Bagdi people.

This scene depicts the state of vulnerability and displacement that the Bagdi community has to go through. They doubt their ownership of the soil they work on, thus showing their vulnerability and lack of property rights over the soils that feed them. This aligns with Marxist theory, particularly as outlined in Karl Marx's "Das Kapital: A Critique of Political Economy," which is a description of how the bourgeoisie exploits the proletariat.

According to Marx, the owners of capital goods, for example, land owners, take advantage of the working class who are alienated from the product of their work. In this regard, the Tentule Bagdi's question about the ownership of the land shows their subordinate position and the oppression they face. They toil on the land but cannot own it; this is a clear depiction of class exploitation as described by Marx. Their helplessness and appeal to the priest for solutions to the problem represent their vulnerability and the harshest truth of their lives under the unyielding economic system.

The novel portrays Manohar's experiences in rural Bengal where the socio-economic structures are filled with exploitation. The story narrated by Hasan Azizul Huq reveals the exploitative nature of landlords who take advantage of the needy and the poor. This exploitation is one of the most significant themes of the novel and corresponds to the historical reality of socio-economic conditions of rural Bengal.

The economic system is exploitative and since Manohar and his people do not own any means of production, they are condemned to be perpetual servants. This theoretical perspective is evident in the way the landowning classes maintain their dominance through economic manipulation and coercion, pushing the impoverished deeper into despair. This theoretical perspective is evident in the way the landowning classes maintain their dominance through economic manipulation and coercion, pushing the impoverished deeper into despair:

"But suppose your stomach was empty you had only little rags to put on. And you were only starving for days—you got it? You lost your mind in hunger and lost your good sense only your stomach was burning there was nothing above the stomach and everything below it dried up—Oh my!—you were just out of your mind and then a babu you know showed you with a lot of money and asked you to sleep with him—" (Shahed, 2013, p. 47) This passage highlights the extreme measures the impoverished

are forced to consider, reflecting both the physical and moral degradation imposed by systemic poverty.

Manohar's wretchedness is a direct outcome of the exploitation and debasement enforced by these landlords. The novella delineates how the landlords operate economic conditions to their benefits, leaving the laborers with no alternative but to tolerate their oppressive mechanism. This Marxist interpretation discloses the deep-rooted inequities that forces Manohar to his breaking point, highlighting the inherent violence in the socio-economic structure itself.

James C. Scott's "Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance" can be connected to Huq's *Jibon Ghoshe Agun* (The Spark of Life) by analyzing how the oppressed characters in the novella resist their oppressors in a subtle and direct manner. Scott discusses how peasants employ tactics of noncompliance, which include foot-dragging, sabotage, false obedience, and gossip, to challenge the authority of the elite without rebellion.

The final act of killing Ghantababu can be considered as a transition from micro-resistance to macro-violence due to the build-up of frustration and hopelessness. In the novella, the highly integrated and then fragmented nature of the Tentule Bagdis represents James C. Scott's peasant resistance. First, the Bagdis are united into one strong group motivated by the similar awareness of their suffering and the same desire for change. This unity is like an unrevealed script where they express their vexation and resistance against their oppressors. When their anger is united, the Bagdis disperse, which represents the transition from the hidden rebellion to the open action. This dispersion is in line with Scott's notion that small forms of resistance can build up and reach a climax in an overt act of defiance against oppression. The fire of unending unrest that has been exciting them is similar to the persistent discontent that Scott talks about, which, when ignited, results in a rebellion against the socio-economic relations that enslave them.

### Objectives of the Research

1. To illustrate how Hasan Azizul Huq showcases the impact of poverty, caste marginalization, and ineffective power through the character of Manohar, making his own suffering symbolic of injustice and oppression in post-Partition Bengal.
2. To navigate the psychological and emotional damage of extreme hardship and disrepute on Manohar, and how his silence, despair, and eventual rage reflect a deeper narrative of distress among the oppressed.
3. To peruse how Manohar's turn to violence comes out not as an isolated act but as a desperate form of resistance shaped by structural exploitation and collective suffering.
4. To view the novella through critical theoretical lenses, including Marxist class analysis, Fanon's theory of decolonial violence, and the human development perspectives of Sen and Nussbaum to unveil how literary text gives voice to the voiceless and resists effacement of marginalized histories.

### Rationale of the Study

*Jibon Ghoshe Agun* (The Spark of life) elucidates our understanding into the operational violence that defines rural life for the oppressed. Through the character of Manohar, Huq reveals how inequality is lived as hunger, humiliation, helplessness, and, ultimately, rage. Hence, the study is decisive because it uses literature as a lens to realize the emotional and psychological cost of crude injustice in post-Partition Bengal. Manohar's voice, crafted by caste marginalization and economic desperation, retells us that inequality is not abstract; it is intimate, embodied, and political. By analyzing this novella through interdisciplinary frameworks, the research aims to contribute to the broader conversation on how narratives of the rural poor help us confront the human consequences of oppression, and why those chronicles still matter.

### Methodology of the Study

This study takes on a qualitative, interpretive methodology, rooted in literary analysis and informed by interdisciplinary frameworks. The primary source for this research is Hasan Azizul Huq's novella *Jibon Ghoshe Agun* (The Spark of Life), which is interpreted through close reading of narrative structure. The language, character development, and symbolic imagery focusing on the confrontations and tremendous inner battle of Manohar has also been taken care of. Moreover, his journey is reviewed not only as a fictitious chronicle but as a portrait of historical and structural realities in rural post-Partition Bengal.

However, to intensify and contextualize the research, the study consults a wide range of secondary sources. These include theoretical writings on poverty and human development by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, Marxist critiques of class exploitation, Frantz Fanon's theory of violence and colonial trauma, and James C. Scott's concept of everyday resistance. Historical works on agrarian Bengal and caste-based marginalization also inform the social context of the novella.

So, the merged approach allows the research to move between the textual and the historical, treating literature both as art and as demonstration. Manohar's suffering, silence, and eventual violence are understood through frameworks that acknowledge his personal tragedy as well as the broader systems of inequality that determine his fate. By combining literary insight with political and social theory, the study aims to unbury the gaping truths enclosed firmly in Huq's portrayal of rural injustice.

### Manohar's Role and Experiences

This analysis offers a character study of Manohar in Hasan Azizul Huq's *Jibon Ghoshe Agun* (The Spark of Life) with reference to socio-economic gap, oppression, hurtful stress disorder, and viciousness in rural Bengal. The author Hasan Azizul Huq draws a very genuine picture of dearth, lack of capitals and the consequent powerlessness. The socio-economic position of Manohar and the influences that have led to his situation are significant to magnify his anguish.

The economic adversity that Manohar confronts in *Jibon Ghoshe Agun* (The Spark of Life) is an imitation of the socio-economic realities of rural Bengal. The novella also

validates the arrogance of the landlords mentioned in the text as ‘pot-bellied babus’ to posit their role in the lives of the Tentule Bagdis. However, the novella assuredly highlights the dependency of the Bagdis community on agriculture that leads them to a cycle of poverty. By analyzing the historical chronicles of land distribution in Bengal, it can be regarded that the distribution of land was exceedingly slanted in favor of the few landlords and the rest were either dispossessed or had very small plots of land. This setting is clearly apparent in the experiences of Manohar, which exhibits that economic downgrading is operational in nature.

The American sociologist Talcott Parsons, in his influential work "The Social System" (1951), asserted that every action of a person in a particular society needs to be recognized as a product of the interplay of dynamizing and governing forces. However, in the context of rural Bengal, the system is crooked to benefit the landowning classes at the expense of the poor. Karl Marx, in his persuasive work "The Communist Manifesto" (1848), emphasized the role of coercion and power in producing social order. This theory is evident in the socio-economic disparities depicted in the novella, where the landowning classes maintain their dominance through economic manipulation and pressure.

“Oh babus, where are you going?” they asked. “Why don’t you give us something, a little rice or a few coins...” “There will be no fair this time. There will be no sacrifice to the mother god she’s fasting, for her sons are starving...” (Shahed, 2013, p. 13). This heart-rending picture highlights the physical manifestations of Manohar's socio-economic hardships, where even the environment conspires against the poor.

In the novella, the unfavourable environmental and economic conditions are described through Manohar’s lament about the barren land. The narration reflects on the extreme hardships faced by the rural poor, illustrating the devastating impact of the drought and lack of resources. Through the narratives of Manohar, the singer, the parched land, the death of livestock, and the absence of any viable means of sustenance are profoundly portrayed, displaying the indescribable suffering and despair experienced by the community.

Manohar is portrayed as a character deeply impacted by the socio-economic conditions of his era. The famine and drought have rendered the land barren, causing people, including Manohar, to struggle for survival. It is reflected in the narrative when Manohar is unable to contain his feelings, lamenting internally about his wish to marry Bhamini and the harsh realities they face: the blinding sun, the burning land, the lack of a home, and the relentless drought that forces them into a life of shackles and restraints.

Manohar's involvement in the violent act against Ghantababu, a character symbolizing the oppressive class, is a result of the collective anger and frustration of the lower-caste community, particularly the Tentule Bagdis, who suffer from the exploitation and humiliation imposed by the babus (upper-class landlords). This act of violence reflects Manohar's deep-seated resentment and the extreme measures the oppressed are driven to in their pursuit of justice and dignity. The narrative conveys how, in that moment, a sharp outcry on the village path indicated the killing of Ghantababu. Although the killers remained unknown, it was evident that he had been beaten to death, symbolizing

the understood yet unspoken rage of the oppressed community.

Ghanta's actions towards Krishnabhamini are characterized by cruelty and exploitation. The novella depicts how Ghanta abuses her both physically and emotionally, taking advantage of her vulnerability and desperate situation. This is intensely illustrated when it is mentioned that Krishnabhamini, feeling helpless, rushed to the southern corner of the hut with a lamp in her hand and placed it on the floor, with the flame moving violently. These lines call attention to the abusive power dynamics at play and highlight Krishnabhamini's desperation.

Manohar's love for Krishnabhamini is both a source of strength and a motivation for his actions. His deep affection and concern for her well-being compel him to stand against the injustice she faces. The novella captures this protective instinct when Manohar says, "I'll die without you, Bhamini, I'll never live without you, my love, that's the only thing I know, and nothing more." (Shahed, 2013, p. 49) This declaration focuses attention on the depth of his commitment and the personal stakes involved in his fight.

Krishnabhamini, in the novella represents more than just a romantic interest for Manohar; she embodies hope and resistance against the oppressive societal norms. Her suffering at the hands of Ghanta and others becomes a rallying point for Manohar, driving him to act not only for personal reasons but as a stand against immeasurable injustice. However, this is evident when Huq mentions, "Manohar uttered this with profound love and attachment. A hint of softness shining in his look as he had begun talking washed off the sharpness of his words" (Shahed, 2013, p. 48) These lines illustrate how Krishnabhamini's suffering evolves into a dominant symbol of resistance and the fight for self-worth in the case of Manohar.

So, the novella is a truthful portrayal of a complex interplay of personal and socio-political motivations which drives Manohar to act and react. His fight for love is intertwined with a quest for justice and resistance against exploitation, making his love for Krishnabhamini a powerful catalyst for rebellion. On the other hand, Ghantababu represents the oppressive upper class that has consistently exploited and mistreated the lower-caste community, including Manohar and the Tentule Bagdis. This exploitation is evident through unfair labor practices, harsh treatment, and socio-economic control exercised by the babus (landlords). The violence is committed in the name of justice and dignity, which the community feels they have been deprived of. The murder is a way of regaining the lost honor and proving their value in a society that has always dismissed them. "The moment they had almost passed the terrifying area they were stopped. A thin flow of water was cutting its way through the dust". This is suggestive of their efforts to alter their socio-economic status in society through the reticent use of force. Moreover, the psychological impact of the famine and the daily fight for survival is evident in Manohar, who turns into a killer as a result of anguish. This is echoed in his thoughts on their plight, their loss of home, land and freedom and the oppressive effect of the unrelenting drought. This bleakness and the motivation behind their desperate actions are summed up in his musings about being nothing more than slaves for others with no life or future.

The murder of Ghantababu in Hasan Azizul Huq's *Jibon Ghoshe Agun* (The Spark of

Life) represents the upheaval of the downtrodden against the oppressors. It is a rebellion against the socio-economic systems that have tyrannized the lower caste and made them work like bonded labor. The act of striking by Manohar on Ghantababu in the fit of anger and desperation represents the ceaseless struggle of the oppressed class against the dominant class. However, this act becomes a turning point in their struggle against unjust treatment, which demonstrates their concerted efforts and desire to resist the oppression.

Through the killing of Ghantababu, Manohar and his community attempt to liberate themselves from the oppressive system and assert that they will no longer tolerate the subordinate position in society. Furthermore, this act of violence shows how much they detest the ruling class and how far they are willing to go for justice and to recover their dignity. The royal elephant, which is associated with supremacy and royalty, is now depicted as a giant fallen on its knees before the famine, which stands for the powerlessness of the oppressors and the prospect of change. The murder, therefore, symbolizes the collapse of the existing social hierarchy, in which the oppressed are no longer willing to adhere to the oppressive norms and are willing to go to any lengths to alter their situation.

In this case, Manohar redefines the murder as a 'shining protest' through which he transforms the act of violence into a form of protest. This is a significant shift where the oppressed actively fight their subjugation rather than remain passive and accept humiliation. His words "That's why this murder took place" sum up the ultimate experience of their suffering and the ultimate action taken to address the hopeless situation.

The imagery of washing sins with more blood speaks to the amount of his desperation and determination to fight for justice. In these expressions of defiance and rage, Manohar's actions are depicted as a desperate attempt to regain some form of dignity and fight against the socio economic systems that have oppressed his community for so long. This moment of rebellion is not only an individual's release but also the voice of the oppressed, showing how far the oppressed are willing to go in order to be free.

The oppressive heat and desolation of the landscape are prominently described, creating a sense of suffocating hopelessness. Huq states, "The midday Baishakh sky had no clouds anywhere, so the pot-bellied babus on elephant-back got aching eyes, and moaned and groaned as they wiped sweat from their face." (Shahed, 2013, p. 10) This description sets a tone of discomfort and relentless pressure, mirroring Manohar's own feelings of being trapped and overwhelmed by his circumstances. The barren, parched land mirrors the desolation in Manohar's heart. The absence of water and the resulting barrenness symbolize a lack of hope and vitality in his life. The dimly lit sky over the fairground casts a sleepy ambiance, yet Manohar remains awake, gripped by the worry of what lies ahead. His terror, resentment, and anger grow as he confronts his uncertain future. The dry, lifeless earth parallels Manohar's emotional barrenness, highlighting his struggle to find purpose and hope in life.

The novella indirectly illustrates nature's indifference to human suffering, a theme that underscores Manohar's desperation. The vast, uncaring landscape around him continually reminds him of his insignificance and the futility of his efforts. This

indifference is subtly highlighted when Huq describes the stubble still standing in the field after the paddy had been harvested, with a babu casually wondering where the paddy went. This sense of indifference parallels Manohar's feelings of being unnoticed and unimportant in the grand scheme of things.

Through these graphic descriptions of nature and the environment, the novella effectively prepares readers to realize and empathize with Manohar's desperation. The harshness of the landscape, the indifference of nature, and the symbolic use of natural elements all serve to enhance his internal struggles, making his unfortunate situation more arresting for the readers.

### Conclusion

So, the character of Manohar in Hasan Azizul Huq's *Jibon Ghoshe Agun* (The Spark of Life) offers an intricate interpretation of how poverty, mental illness, and violence are intertwined in rural Bengal. The transformation of Manohar from a victim of systematic destitution and abuse to a perpetrator of viciousness is a perfect example of how oppression begets oppression and how far people can be prepared to go in their fight for esteem and existence. This distress is heightened by the economic challenges and social exclusion that the Tentule Bagdi community to which he belongs has been subjected to. It is vital to recognize that the socio-economic features that form the background of Manohar's life are interrelated and intertwined, and the resulting feelings of isolation and hopelessness are the result of these factors.

Manohar's story is not an immunity but a depiction of the predicament of the oppressed class of rural Bengal where social injustice and economic disparity continue to govern the lives of the defenseless section of the society. His character is therefore designed to remind the audience that the distress such individuals experience requires structural resolutions and understanding to solve and bring about social inclusion and justice.

Thus, *Jibon Ghoshe Agun* (The Spark of Life) not only deconstructs the social structures that perpetuate poverty and tyranny but also establishes the agency of the oppressed. In Manohar's character, Hasan Azizul Huq has depicted the sufferings of the oppressed class due to socio economic inequality and has left the readers with a thought-provoking question on the socio political aspect and the necessity of change and support for the needy.

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