
Full Length Research Article

Projection of Marginal Existence and Cultural Scenario: A Study of *The Opium Clerk* by Kunal Basu

Dhananjoy Garai

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Kulti College, Affiliated to Kazi Nazrul University, Paschim Bardhaman, West Bengal, India.

Email: dhananjoygarai@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64456/panch2025v16i1.05>

Abstract

*Kunal Basu has presented the marginalized people and the cultural life of the people of the globe in his creative writings. Antonio Gramsci, Gayatri Spivak and Edward Said have elaborated the term subaltern in their theoretical arena. Hiron is the protagonist of the story The Opium Clerk. He becomes a victim of racial marginalization voluntarily. Lilian is an orphan girl. Lilian has raised her marginalized status by Mr. Crabbe. Douglas has overcome his marginalized position by his activities and his will power. Saraladevi becomes a widow and marginalized figure. Ruth is an orphan girl and she is socially excluded. Ibrahim is also an orphan and marginalized figure of this text. Cultural conflict is also projected by the writer. The postmodern hybrid culture is highlighted in this text. Homi K. Bhabha, Raymond Williams and Terry Eagleton have elaborated the term cultural study in their theoretical discussion. Mahim becomes a prey of cultural marginalization. He rejects the western philosophy and western culture. He accepts the Indian spiritual culture. Douglas is a hybrid character in true sense. This research paper is on the socially excluded classes and the culture of the globe as represented by the writer Kunal Basu in his text, *The Opium Clerk*.*

Keywords: Marginalized, Subaltern, Cultural, Excluded, Hybrid, Racial.

1. Introduction

Kunal Basu is a postmodern creative writer who writes both in English and Bengali language. He has recorded the invisible injustices and the diverse oppression of the contemporary society in his literary writings. He has also narrated the Indian cultural life and the foreign cultural aspects in his creative canvasses. *The Opium Clerk* by Kunal Basu describes the colonial subaltern history and the colonial cultural life of India in general and of Bengal in particular. He projects those unrecognized people who lives in the margin of the society and the cultural aspects of the people of Bengal and other foreign countries in this text. He has a direct experience of the society and the culture of the globe. The daily life of the society and the present cultural scenario of the various nations are the raw materials of his creative writings. His focuses are on the marginalized communities and the culture of the people of colonial India as well as the global village. Marginalization has been theorized by Antonio Gramsci, Gayatri Chakrabarty Spivak, Michel Foucault, Edward Said, Dipesh Chakrabarty etc. Mahasweta Devi has documented the marginalized people in her writings such as *The Breast Stories*. Kunal Basu also records all these excluded people in his creative writings. Basu has also focused the culture of the people of colonial

India and the people of the world. Marginalized communities are the backward section of the society. They are the worst victims of the patriarchal capitalist society. They lack education and hence they are unable to take right decision to change their marginalized status. They are not politically organized or united. They are not aware of their constitutional rights. Hence their marginalized history and culture remains unknown to the civil society. Their groups are not unified also. They have to live in the isolated condition. The state also never takes any welfare plans for these muted groups. Antonio Gramsci has elaborated the term subaltern in his *The Prison Notebook*. Antonio Gramsci has defined marginalized or the subaltern class:

“The subaltern classes, by definition, are not unified and cannot unite until they are able to become a “State”: their history, therefore, is intertwined with that of civil society, and thereby with the history of States and groups of States.” [P – 202, *History of the Subaltern Classes: Methodological Criteria*]

Gramsci has used this term subaltern to refer the peasantry class in particular in context of Italy. This marginalized class has no social and political consciousness as a group. They are unorganized and not unified. Apart from the farmers, the females, the males and female sex workers, the refugees, the black people, the children, the L.G.B.T.Q communities, the orphans, the aged people – all are categorized as the subaltern or marginalized groups in general term. On marginalization, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has written *Can Subaltern Speak?* Michel Foucault has talked of the terms such as Truth, power, knowledge, panoptical surveillance and discourse in his discussion of marginalized Other. Loise Althusser has used the term direct state apparatuses and the ideological state apparatus or hegemony in his discussion of controlling power system of the state. Edward Said and Dipesh Chakrabarty have their major contribution in the Oriental Studies and the Subaltern Studies in the context of marginalization and postcolonial theory. Kunal Basu has also projected the culture of the people of the world. Culture is the shared common experiences, faith, customs, rituals and social practices among the people of a nation or community. People share all these cultural practices with the other people of that community and they communicate for their good living style. Religion is the vehicle of culture of a community. Education plays an important role to carry the culture from one generation to another. People learn from the habits, cultural practices from the forefathers and it channels from one generation to other. Food items, songs, music, dances, religious festival, various programs of a community constitute the culture of that community. Respect to the elders, respect to any job, respect to the females, love for the wild animal and taking care to the children, orphans, aged persons and the patients - are the good cultural practices of any community. People voluntarily maintain all these cultural practices. During the living of various communities in a geographical territory, people come to know other culture and accept the other culture. In this way one culture is shaped and modified. Cultural amalgamation creates the hybrid culture or the ‘Third Space’ of Homi K. Bhabha or multicultural atmosphere of

Salman Rushdie due to migration, displacement or the colonization. Diaspora becomes the key term of this cultural studies. The Western culture becomes an object of mimicry. The oriental colonized people have gone through the adopt, the adapt and adept stage in their cultural assimilation process with the western culture of the colonizers. In the cross - cultural mutual transculturation, the western culture is privileged by the non – western countries. In this process, cultural hegemony plays an important role in the postcolonial studies. The culture of the colonized was made inferior to the native people by the colonizers with the help of the discourse of cultural hegemony. In this regard, the postcolonial critic Leela Gandhi states:

“For all its hyperbolic claims, the discourse of hybridity and diaspora is not without its limitations. Despite postcolonial attempts to foreground the mutual transculturation of coloniser and colonised, celebrations of hybridity generally refer to the destabilizing of colonised culture. The West remains the privileged meeting ground for all ostensibly cross-cultural conversation.” [P - 136, *One World*]

Kunal Basu’s text *The Opium Clerk* narrates the story of these marginalized people and the culture of the global village.

2.Literary Review

Literary review is the study area or the field of knowledge on the similar kind of literary work. It gives a brief idea of the topic. Kunal Basu is a contemporary writer. Hence there is a scarcity of research books on Kunal Basu. Few journals, online platforms, research articles are some sources for the literary review for the creative writer Kunal Basu. Sisir Kumar Chatterjee states in his book chapter entitled as *Desire Deconstructed: The Opium Clerk and the Definition of Coloniality, Romancing the Strange: The Fiction of Kunal Basu* on the marginalized situation of the Indian people voluntarily:

"If the colonization of India was the resultant of the British imperial desire for self-expansion and greed for more wealth also issued out of the lack of a counter-desire on the part of the colonized subject to resist the process of being colonized. In fact, the bullet of the English imperialism was as much a force behind the establishment of colony in India as the lack of desire of Indians for self-governance. The British colonized, so to say, not just the geo-political territory of India but the mind of India, which seemed all but ready to accord and acquiesce in the superiority of the white rulers. The colonized other's Otherness thus was a product of his unwillingness or lack of initiative to thwart the process of being othered.” [P - 36, *Desire Deconstructed: The Opium Clerk and the Definition of Coloniality.*]

Rakes Sarkar has quoted in his doctoral thesis entitled as *Exploring the Interface among Marginality, Power and Resistance in Postmillennial Indian Fiction in English: A Study of Select Novels of Kunal Basu, Neel Mukherjee and Aravind Adiga* on the marginalized situation of the characters of the text *The Opium Clerk*:

“Basu’s novel allows the marginal Douglas to draw closer to another marginalized woman Ruth. Through mutual affinity and understanding Basu’s novel allows the solidarity of the marginalized to develop. Like the pair of Norah and Quartley in *Racists*, this novel also shows how the marginalized persons may work out resistance in the form of struggle and escape through mutual help. In a letter Ruth asks Douglas to stop the mission of the Halloween to bring stolen infants to Kuching from China. Gradually his intimacy with Ruth grows and he comes to know that Ruth is actually Perkyns’ sister. Douglas initially finds Ruth and her activities mysterious as he fails to comprehend her marginalization. Haji Ibrahim tells him about Ruth’s misfortune, about how she and her brother Perkyns grew up as orphans but eventually misfortune separated Ruth from the company of ladies as well as of his brother:” [P – 133]

Enakshi Banerjee in her doctoral thesis entitled as *Representation of History in the Novels of Kunal Basu* quotes on the ‘Babu culture’ as well as the hybrid culture of colonial Bengal:

“Thus, mainly through three characters, Mahim, Nabinbaboo and Hiran, the Baboos of the 19th century Bengal come alive on the pages of Basu’s novel. Through the activities of these three characters Basu successfully re-creates the Baboo culture of that time as well as the new forms and shapes that it was taking. While so doing, Basu has also thrown enough light on the Indo-Anglican relationships. It is primarily through the relation between Hiran and the Crabbes that Basu tries to sneak into the complex genemics of the Indo-Anglican, colonizer/colonized relationship. In so doing, Basu focuses on the cultural hybridity produced by colonial interactions.” [P- 62]

Kunal Basu is still writing on the diverse issues. His creative art reflects the subaltern figures. Kunal Basu’s writings present the power of resistance of the excluded society to the oppression and the injustices which are skillfully organized upon them.

3. Methodology

Methodology refers to the principles or overall systematic plan to carry out any research plan. Data collection, research design, sample are some terms of methodology. It helps to achieve the goal or the target of the research work. Survey method, case study method - are popular concepts of methodology. Kunal Basu has used various anecdotes, memory and historical references in his creative writings. He has focused on the marginalized widows, the suppressed women, the excluded orphans and the oppressed sex workers in his *The Opium Clerk*. Hence close readings of the texts of Kunal Basu are mandatory. Hence the close reading of the texts is conducted. Comparative historical method is also used. Philosophical enquiry is applied for this research paper to carry out the research plan smoothly. Various help of research journals, research articles, newspapers, various documents, Government Gazettes are consulted to complete this research paper.

4. Marginalized Voices in *The Opium Clerk*

The Opium Clerk describes the marginal situation of the characters as well as the cultural assimilation of the time of the colonial era. Few writers such as S. T. Coleridge, Thomas De Quincey and Amitav Ghose who has written *The Sea of Poppies* have written on the opium trade of the South Asian countries under the British rule in the colonial period. This opium trade was illegal but profitable business. Kunal Basu has written this text in the context of the opium war between China and western countries such as Britain. Kunal Basu has readdressed the same invisible and unrecorded issue of opium trade in this text. Kunal Basu, the creative writer has narrated the story of the fatherless Hiron who becomes a kind of anti – hero of this text:

“The employment record bearing his full signature - Hiranyagarbha Chakraborti - left the table to join a tide passing over a desk or two, riding on the heads of chaprasis and displacing others before settling down, finally, in a remote corner of the Auction House.” [P – 28, *The Opium Clerk*]

Hiron is very orthodox and introvert in nature. He is an obedient servant. Hiron becomes a victim of racial marginalization voluntarily. He never tries to resist the oppression of the colonizers. He obeys all the orders and the instructions of Mr. Crabbe, the colonial officer of opium trade. He is racially marginalized for his blind support for his white master. He accepts the dominance of the colonizers. Sisir Kumar Chatterjee states on the marginalized situation of Hiron voluntarily:

“Hiron is synecdochically portrayed to represent what this article designates as the average colonized Indian, an unthinking, "unfeeling" (by Hiron's own admission, as he himself once says, "Who can hurt the unfeeling?") person, absolutely devoid of any desire of his own and therefore working faithfully to fulfil the desires of his employer, a self-effacing automaton ever willing to put himself at the service of his boss. He is a stringless marionette in the hands of Jonathan Crabbe, the representative colonialist, whose whims he is only everanxious to satisfy, and in whose designs he is ever ready to proffer himself as human bait.” [P - 38, *Desire Deconstructed: The Opium Clerk and the Definition of Coloniality*”]

He is an obedient servant of the white master Mr. Crabbe. He accepts all the orders and instructions of the white colonizer. As a oriental figure, he is a victim of his supposed inferior culture of his own country. Hiron is a contrasted figure with Douglas. Hiron has a hereditary linkage and social reputation. He is grown up in a family with religious surroundings. He was admitted to a Toll school where Sanskrit hymns were practiced and taught to the students. But his uncle Mahim advised his mother to admit Hiron to the Missionary school where foreign education and western cultural customs were taught to the students. Hiron became accustomed to the “Babu culture.” He had no desire for self – improvement. Hiron supported the colonial culture. He had a fascination for the white people. He never protested against the lost freedom under the colonial rule. He became amazed to see the white people. He had a respect for the white colonizers. When he saw Lilian, the white memsahib for the first time in his life, he started to adore her. K.Gurulakshmi comments in his doctoral thesis entitles as *Treatment of History and Politics in the Select Novels of Kunal Basu* on the attractive power of white culture of the colonizers in which Hiron was a victim of:

“In this novel, Basu reclaims the memory of loss, though not the lost memory. This reclamation can be looked upon as a form of protest, a contest, a refraction from settling with the loss incurred and a robust refusal to remain the flummoxed hybrid that the British conveniently created through a hypnotic manipulation of cultures to meet their ends. Hiran’s reticent obsession with Lilian is proof of this encomiastic kowtowing attitude of the colonized towards the colonizer. This veer towards the white woman, the continuous pandering he felt in her presence and his incorrigible composure to her recalcitrant mood swings, suggest an inexplicable parade of psychobabble and indicate quite obviously how ‘the inferior native’ was smitten by the charms of the ‘white’ skin, beyond reparation. Cultural hypnosis was a potent strategy of the British colonizers and Basu shows through his protagonist Hiran.” [P – 70]

The colonized people are victims of racial inferiority. They think that the white culture is the superior culture and their native culture is the inferior. The white colonizers have used this cultural superiority as a trope for their spreading of colonization process. Hiran is a victim of such kind of cultural hypnotism. He had sacrificed his life for his white master Mr. Crabbe. He obeyed all the orders of his boss. Hiran had a servitude attitude. He would get pleasure to serve the colonizers. For this, he had gone Viper Island to search a baby for childless Lilian. He tried his best to serve his office boss. He wanted to be colonized by the foreigners. He had no wish for freedom. He never tries to be free from the hands of the foreigners who are the oppressor. Hence, he lacks any desire for social and cultural upliftment. He remains a mere clerk of the opium trade. On the other hand, Douglas is an orphan from his early childhood. He is a rejected figure by his foreign father and the native mother. He is hybrid figure and person of hybrid culture. But he has a will power to grow in his career. He is able to take the right decision in the right moment of life. He can adjust himself with the environment and the culture of other country. Hence he is sent as ambassador. Douglas is a successful character in this story. He wants freedom and gets it by his intellectual power and management capacity. At last he sympathizes with the poor excluded orphan girl Ruth. He helps a lot to Ruth. He marries Ruth, another marginalized figure of this story.

Lilian was very poor in her childhood and victim of social exclusion. But she decides to marry the rich person Mr. Crabbe. She becomes rich person but addicted to the opium culture of that era. Basu’s female characters are not submissive. They are the new women of Simon de Beauvoir. Feminism demands the restoration of women in all fields of study and knowledge system. They have a strong will power and strong mentality. They never accept the norms of the patriarchal society. They use various strategies to resist the male culture and male oppression. They go against the violence of the male society. Lilian is such kind of strong woman. She has a distinctive personality. But she is unable to be a mother. She becomes isolated and victim of depression. She desires for a baby but is unable to be a mother. Dr. Sujato Ghosh has said on the excluded figure Lilian of the text, ‘*The Opium Clerk*’:

“Lilian’s trapping of Crabbe to grow up in status destroys the fabulous image of the English memsahibs. She gets addicted to opium after marriage & only dreams of a thousand babies crying for milk because she cannot produce

one.”[pp. 103, Kunal Basu’s ‘*The Opium Clerk*’ – *An Ontological Reading of Postcolonial Perspectives*:”]

Lilian never becomes the memsahib for her addiction to the opium. She marries Mr. Crabe to rid off her marginality and is accustomed to the opium. She becomes the opium eater. Mr. Crabbe is an officer in opium trade in which his wife is a victim.

Widows are the socially excluded class. They are ignored by the society as well as the state. Hence widows are the marginalized group. None cares for the aged Indian widows. They are neglected group. They are deprived of their basic rights of living. They have no shelter, no food, no room and no caretaker. They have to live on begging. They have to depend on the other. The young widows are forced to be a part of the illegal sex business. They are forced to work in factory, shops and they are not provided their remuneration properly by the owner of the factory and the shop. Rajal Dave states on the sufferings of the Indian widows:

“There are many parts of India where widows have no roof over their heads, no food to eat, no relationship to say, no place to go, no one willing to keep them. In India, Vrindavan and Varanasi are also known as the city of widows. Here, old widows are forced to live on the Vrindavan road, they are forced to beg and they are helpless. On the other hand, the young widow is exploited and pushed into prostitution, forcing the young widow into a state of helplessness. Widows whose fortunes are a little better are called to sing hymns for 3-4 hours a day. Widows have to register themselves first and then they are called at a given time and then only they can work. Widows who are called for hymns are given a one-time meal and some financial assistance of 5 rupees in return for singing hymns, this hymns ashram is run by the rich religious people. There is almost no one to take care of the elderly widows, they on their own in every way take care of themselves, some elder widows are forcefully sent for bagging. And this is how life goes, there is almost no one for these people, and they are forced to work this way for their financial help and this is what becomes their daily life”. [P –35, *Widowhood: The problems and Challenges Face by Widows in India*]

Saraladevi has lost her husband suddenly and she becomes a widow. She is an excluded figure. She has to come back her father’s house in Kolkata for her safety and the education of her only son Hiron.

The female sex-workers are the socially excluded category. They have to suffer. They are without education, health scheme, social welfare, no rights for free lifestyle. They lead a deplorable life. They have to beg. Sometime they are kidnapped. They have to earn like any other source of income. Regarding the earning of the sex workers, Swati Ghosh states:

“The importance of sex work here, lies in its income-generating ability for the millions of women trying to support their parental and extended families in times of economic crises. In a situation plagued by unemployment, sex work seems to provide a livelihood to numerous women, just as factory production provides a wage worker. While exploring the reason for joining prostitution, the manifesto cites examples relating to the mainstream work force with the implicit intent of comparing sex work to other kinds of labouring activities” [P - 60, *Elusive choice and agency, A feminist re-reading of the sex workers’ manifesto*]

These sex workers send money to their parents to support them financially. Without any job, it is very difficult for the poor adults to manage their families. Having no option of any government and private job, these frustrated unemployed young adults join in this illegal sex business. Lidia Susan and et al quote on the problems of the female sex workers:

Sex workers are legally marginalized by a system which has in essence criminalized prostitution. Those who engage in sex work often and themselves entangled in a debt trap. Although we need more research on street sex workers, the studies reviewed here provide strong evidence that they face physical and Psychological harassment. Livelihood programmes and savings would break their need to seek sex work as the only alternate means of sustenance. This may break the low self esteem among sex - workers. It is also identified that most of the commercial sex workers have children and were concerned about their future. There was an urgent need to have more homes, which could take care of educational and nutritional needs for their children. The study also recommended addiction centers as majority of them either depend on alcohol or drugs to overcome stress and relieve pain. There is little attention for their special health needs, especially regarding their sexual health, and physical and mental traumas due to violence.” [P – 24, *A Study On Life Satisfaction Among Female Sex Workers*]

These female sex workers are the victims of the system of the state and the society. They are not provided any business or educational loan or financial help for their career. They are harassed by the customers, clients and the eve teasers of the society. They become the victims of traumatic psychological ennui without any home, shelter for their children. To rid off this stress of trauma, they are accustomed to the drugs. Their lives become a burden to them. Basu projects these sex workers in this text:

“In the darkness of the theatre he saw faces writhing in laughter or leering - the actresses, he was told, were whores from their very own Jaanbazaar.” [P – 17]

Douglas was marginalized due to his poverty in his early childhood. He is the person of mixed blood – the British and the Indian. He represents those people who were left behind by the Britishers when they left Indian Territory during the decolonization process. Neither they were accepted by the Britishers nor were they accepted by the Indians. They were in the ‘Third Space’ of Homi K. Bhabha. Sanchari Mitra states in her doctoral thesis entitled as *Tracing the Marginal: A Study of Select Novels of Kunal Basu* on the reverse marginalization in context of Douglas’s hybrid culture:

“Basu presents an interesting instance of reverse marginalisation in the colonised country that happen due to the acculturation and interaction between the two races. While the whites were the superior race leading to the marginalisation of the non-whites, here Basu presents an instance of marginalisation of an individual with part-white lineage by the non-whites. The part-white was shunned, marginalised, despised and pushed to the fringes by the non-whites as he was considered as a bad omen.” [P – 313]

Basu has shown us how reverse marginalization took place in the colonial era. Douglas is an instance of it. Douglas was left by his parents. The Indians have taken the responsibility of the hybrid generation. Douglas was reared by Hiron. But Douglas

manages his life and has overcome his marginal situation. He has a will power. He has also management capacity. He is active in his works. He never ignores his responsibility and duty. He is influenced by the work culture and the philosophy of activism. On Douglas's activism and responsibility of the text *'The Opium Clerk'*, Dr. Sisir Kumar Chatterjee states:

“On the other hand, the narrator portrays Douglas as a perfect antithesis to Hiran, his half foster-father. The narrative of Douglas, a veritable embodiment of the philosophy of activism involving a conscious exercise of choice and free will, actually begins after he starts working as an officer in the Customs House at Kuching in Sarawak, the independent province under friendly British guidance, ruled by a white Rajah. Here, as Perkyns the Chief Customs Officer briefs him, he has to work as Magistrate, Policeman, Postmaster, and Customs Officer - all rolled into one. Douglas is here presented as a responsible individual who has long sloughed off his earlier licentious nature to embrace a life of commitment to his own duties, asking his own decisions, implementing them assertively, and Controlling situations by exercising his distinctive personality.”[P - 48, *Desire Deconstructed*]

Douglas represents the hybrid culture of the postmodern scenario. His mother was an Indian woman and his father was an Englishman. He is a hybrid in true sense. But he grew up in a family of Indian culture. Douglas can't deny his Indian identity and he never accepts the foreign British culture. Douglas is a contrasted figure to Hiron. Hiron is without any action. Douglas is active in his business. He has his freewill and free choice. He tries to remove his marginality. He is fully a responsible figure and has a commitment to his activity. He is an individual who asserts his own self for his personality. Indrani Deb quotes on the hybrid nature of Douglas and his identity:

“Douglas, Lilian's "blackie-white" boy, is the final manifestation: in a way, the product of this long journey towards a hybrid, and consequently, a broader and more human identity. Douglas is the objective representation of the fusion of the white and ethnic cultures, where a separate, homogenous identity is only mythical”. [P – 137, *The Opium Clerk: A Post-postcolonial Experience*]

This Douglas was a marginalized figure. But he has achieved his identity for his unique personality. He remains a hybrid character but becomes the hero of this text for his distinctive qualities. His ethnic quality and the Indian culture have made him an iconic figure. This text *The Opium Clerk* presents the clash of two cultures. The Tole school represents the oriental spiritual culture whereas the Mission school presents the western culture. Hiron was interested in his native culture but Mahim was interested in western culture and western philosophy. Mahim emerges as a Renaissance figure of colonial Bengal. His personality is compared with Derozio and Michal Madhudon Dutta. He accepted the western culture and the western philosophy of life. Mahim became a prey of cultural marginalization. He crossed the 'Kalapani' and realized the value of own culture. Later on, Mahim comes back to his Indian culture rejecting the western philosophy and culture. Douglas is a person of hybrid culture of globe. On the cultural aspects of the text *'The Opium Clerk'*, Nandini Bhattacharya comments:

“The novel is worked out between the two axes -- the desire for cultural and caste purity and the equally strong desire to know the other, to transgress known cultural codes, and embark upon forbidden zones, forbidden professions and forbidden cultures. The protagonists are buffeted between the

necessity of staying rooted to their fathers' cultures, and the intense desire to be reborn, as hybrid men, fathered by history and time. On the one hand, there is the figure of Saraladevi who desperately wishes to situate Hiran within his cultural traditions, by getting him married to a Hindu Bramhin girl, and initiating him into his father's profession of priesthood. On the other hand, there is the looming figure of Mahim, who would be a surrogate father to the fatherless child Hiran, and initiate him into the world of forbidden learning, forbidden professions, and forbidden cultures." [P - 64, *Hiranyagarbha: The Golden Womb of History and Time, A Reading of Kunal Basu's The Opium Clerk*]

This text tries to locate the culture in the globalized commodity culture. On one hand, Saraladevi tries to maintain Hindu culture but the Mission School gives the western culture. Hence Hiron is unable to take a strong decision which culture he will accept. He becomes a true disciple of Mahim who has guided him to be a part of Mission school of western culture.

5. Findings of this Research Paper

Kunal Basu is writing on the excluded community and the culture of the global denizens. His characters of *The Opium Clerk* are Hiron who is racially marginalized; Mahim who is culturally marginalized; the orphan Douglas who represents hybrid culture in true sense; orphan Ruth who is a victim of social exclusion and orphan Hazi Ibrahim who is very poor. Basu's characters are orphans. They have lost their father, mother or their parents in their childhood. They have to struggle for their survival. They are socially marginalized. Mahim realizes the value of his native culture. Douglas has overcome his marginal position by his freewill and actions. He has helped Ruth, another marginalized character. He marries Ruth who learns various skills for her better career. Basu's marginalized figures try to resist the oppression and they show sympathy for other marginalized figures. They meet in their crisis of life. They are unfamiliar and they become friends and relatives later on. Douglas and Ruth have met suddenly and they fall in love. They marry and live happily.

6. Conclusion

In the conclusion of this research paper, it is to be said that the postcolonial literature resists the Eurocentric ideology of the oppression of the colonizers. Kunal Basu belongs to postmodern era and he writes on the issues of diverse oriental discourses and subjects. This creative writer Kunal Basu has given a space to the marginalized figures of the society in his literary works. He has depicted the plight of these excluded people. He has recorded the unrecorded excluded people. Even the unsaid history of the marginalized figures such as Hiron, Mahim, Douglas, Lilian, Ruth and Ibrahim is focused in this text, *The Opium Clerk*. *The Opium Clerk* by Kunal Basu describes the racial culture in which Hiron becomes a victim voluntarily. Mahim's cultural marginalization has been narrated also. Basu's world is the world of love and sympathy for the marginalized figures. The orphans try to survive and resist the oppression of the society. Even the readers of Basu show their empathy for the excluded characters who struggle for their existence in this earth. Basu has also shown the hybrid culture of the postmodern era. Douglas is hybrid figure. 'Babu Culture' of the colonial Bengal is highlighted in this text.

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