



DISCUSSION OF THE STRUGGLES OF MIGRANT WORKERS THROUGH BENYAMIN'S NOVEL "*GOAT DAYS*" AND "*JASMINE DAYS*"

RAJALAKSHMI T

II M.A. English

PG Department of English

Don Bosco College (Co-Ed)

Yelagiri Hills

EVANS SAM VICTOR J

Assistant Professor,

PG Department of English

Don Bosco College (Co-Ed)

Yelagiri Hills

Abstract

The struggles of migrant workers are increasing in all the corners of the world. They were treated very poorly. Most of the migrant workers didn't get any respect from their owners. In this paper, we discuss the struggles of the migrant workers with the book *Goat days* and *Jasmine days* by Benyamin. Benyamin (Benny Daniel) is a famous Indian novelist. His all works were originally published in the language Malayalam. He lived in Bahrain for two decades for the work offered by getting 1st class in his graduation. Both the novels are situated in the Middle East Country and talk about the slavery of the migrated people. He says, how the people get suffer there? , how do they struggle to overcome it? , how were they pulled into slavery? , What is the reason for the migration of people to the Middle East County? These are the common issues we discuss in this paper.

Keywords: Migration, struggles, slave, domination.

Both Goat days and Jasmine Days are the most famous novels by Benyamin. Both talk about the struggles of migrant workers. He was also a migrant worker, worked in Bahrain. He also faced some struggles while working there. His both book looks deeper into the struggles of the migrant workers in the Middle East Country. They were forced to do the work without any respect or sufficient increment. In the novel Goat Days, the character Najeeb facing the struggle as a slave and in Jasmine Days the character Sameera facing domination. Both didn't get respect for their work. Both the novel reveals real-life stories.

Najeeb is a newly married man with four months pregnant wife who has migrated to Saudi Arabia for a betterment in job. But when he and his friend Hakeem landed there and waited till night, an Arab (boss) came and grabbed their passport from them. Both didn't know that they were going to work in a desert as a slave at that time. Najeeb was happy that he was going to become an Arab NRI. But that was not that fact and practical. They were separated in neighbour farms. After that, he became a shepherd of hundreds of goats as a slave to the Arab. He didn't get enough food or water for him. He also didn't get a bath for a long time. In Kerala, his lifestyle was entirely different. They had many rituals and hygienic routines. So, the adaptation of this lifestyle in a migrated place was much difficult for him. He survived there for three and a half years. "I lived on an alien planet inhabited by some goats, my arab and me." (GD 33)

He felt that he is living on an alien planet. In these years he faced many struggles to survive. In the flow of his life, he also behaves like a goat, woke up, does his duty, had few foods to eat and got sleep. These would be the routine of those three and a half years.

Most of the migrant workers are suffering like this. We don't know how many got slaved, returned or died. We hear only a few. After these years on a rainy day, he escaped with the help of his two friends Hakeem and Ibrahim. But he lost both on the way in the desert. It was a huge loss to him. In the city, he got two friends Kunjikka and Hameed. They helped him to recover from his critical health condition. After the planning of several days, he and Hameed went to the police station and surrender themselves and they took to prison by the police. They spent five to six months in the prison. Unfortunately, Hameed's arbab caught

him back to the farm again. It's a big pain to Najeeb. After few days, in the visa confirmation person list, his name came. Then he returned to his hometown Kerala.

"Mine was a goat's life." (GD 45) He said that his life is a goat's life. He suffers more to overcome all the struggles that he faced in these years. It's an unbelievable true story of Najeeb's life in the Gulf Country.

This is one side of the struggles of migrant workers. On the other side in cities also people suffering in a very different manner. That is what the author wanted the readers to know from his novel *Jasmine Days*.

Sameera is a Pakistani woman who migrated to Middle East Gulf country for a better job. Her family is in Pakistan. She worked as a Radio Jockey in an Orange Radio. They record Malayalam and Urdu programs. In that radio station, most of them are immigrate Malayalis. She had a friend Ali Fardan in a Facebook game City Villa. At that time there was a revolution (Arab spring) that affect everyone. It also affected Sameera's life. There was also a conflict went between the Shias (second class citizens) and the Sunnis (first-class citizens). So she got affected by it more. She questioned herself that why the people fighting with the name of the same God. She also faced male dominance. Also, she faced the conflict between her radio station and Malayalam Mafia. But after that, she got affected directly. She faced all these at the same time. She struggled more to face all these herself alone.

Ali is also one of the major characters in the novel. At first, he was not a serious person but in the middle of the revolution, he was also a part of it. She tried to make a constant conversation about the revolution with Ali. She questioned him at such time, "So you have abandoned City Villa and Social War for the revolution? Or is the revolution the latest Facebook game?" (JD 24)

After that, she got house arrested and she supposed that anytime she was deported to Pakistan. Also, her father died at that time. She faced many political issues in her migration to the Middle East Country. This novel has got the JCB Prize for literature on 24 October 2018.

In both the novels, the people were dominated by a group or an individual. They didn't get freedom. They struggled a lot for their basic needs. They didn't have a good income and other provisions. They felt helpless and isolated. After facing all these only few used to overcome it. And we never know all the stories of migrant workers. Both men and women are struggling in different ways. Women mostly get dominated where ever they go. They just came to work for their family for a better economy. Only a few get a good job where they go. But most of the companies dominating the workers. It's not the right thing. These two novels are examples of the struggles of migrant workers. As we saw in these two novels many people were suffering still. But we can't do anything. Just we can pray for them.

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