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Harishankar Jaladas's *Sons of the Sea*: A Study of Regional Language, Culture and Community

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Abstract:

Regional Narrative is a kind of genre that typically refers to a particular locality, community, behaviour, society, culture, faith and the language of a specific area which can either be real or imaginary. Such mode of writings are not only fashioned in Ireland and England but in many South Asian countries like India and Bangladesh in English and vernacular dialects by selecting some specific areas for their narratives. Harishankar Jaladas is one of the distinguished regional novelists in contemporary Bangladeshi Literature whose novel *Sons of The Sea* has been deftly composed with regional sentiments based on subaltern fishing community of North Patenga village in the vicinity of Bay of Bengal in Bangladesh. As an inhabitant of the region, Harishankar Jaladas has aptly presented the local scenario and the panorama of culture, social milieu, political and economic dimensions, language and the interaction of the people which perfectly corroborates the novel with regional characteristics. The research paper has selected Harishankar Jaladas's novel *Sons of The Sea* to study regionalism and local colour of North Patenga village.

Keywords: Regionalism, Bangladesh, North Patenga, Socio-Cultural Background, Language.

Introduction

According to K. D. M. Snell (1998), a regional novel means a "fiction that is set in a recognisable region, and which describes features distinguishing the life, social relations, customs, language, dialect, or other aspects of the culture of that area and its people. Fiction

with a strong sense of local geography, topography or landscape is also covered by this definition" (P. 1). Harishankar Jaladas's *Sons of the Sea* as a regional novel emphasizes the plot, setting, language, custom and culture of a particular locality called North Patenga not only as local colour, but also significant circumstances affecting the personality of their characters, their ways of acting, thinking and feeling. *Sons of the Sea* is concerned with an authentic portrayal of the behaviour, dialects, moral and background of a particular geographical territory of Bangladesh near Bay of Bengal that has a general interest to the larger world. This novel is realistic and concerns itself with the lives of rural areas rather than urban centres. It has captured the spirit of the place North Patenga of Bangladesh as Thomas Hardy describes the landscape of Wessex and Malgudi of R K Narayan in their local setting.

Background information

If we notice the regional literature of America it takes us back to the colonial period of 1900 when regional writings developed as an important part of naturalism or realism. The movement of regionalism can be illustrated as a phase of development of national literature that began in 1890 in America, which had its roots in the nineteenth century. The poets and the authors of United States used regionalism as a particular phase of the naturalism-realism study. The opening phase of regionalism initiates prior to 1890. Before 1900, there were many influential writers like Henry David Thoreau, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Mark Twain and Herman Melville. But the influence of European writers after 1920 was over and some writers tried to follow the American traditions in their respective novels and short- stories. Some notable works of American regional literature are Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), Mark Twain's *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), and *Life on the Mississippi* (1899), Alfred Henry Lewis's *Wolfville Days* (1902), and Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, Joseph Kirkland's *Zury* (1855), Thomas Bailey Aldrich's *The Story of a Bad Boy* (1869) etc.

If we look at British literature, the novels of Thomas Hardy can be defined as regional because of the way he employs the regional elements in connection to the area of the West of England, that is of course, Wessex. On the other hand, it looks much or less appropriate to define Charles Dickens as one of the regional novelists of the south of England and London. R. D. Blackmore (1825 – 1900), was another famous English novelist of the second half of the 19th century who also shared a strong sense of regional setting and Western England background in his works like Thomas Hardy.

Harishankar Jaladas's *Sons of the Sea*

Jaladas, an eminent novelist in contemporary Bengali literature, has brought an innovation and devotional spontaneity to the stagnant stream of Bengali river-centric novels with an unimaginable artistic sense. His novel *Sons of the Sea* undoubtedly claims the excellence of one of the riverine regional novels of Bengal. Although, a plethora of novels have been written in Bengali literature about the river, nonetheless, the socio-cultural life and socio-economic position of the fishermen dwelling on the river banks have been largely unaddressed. The novel *Sons of the Sea* is the candid depiction of human life on the seashore, with the realism and contemplation which is unprecedented and unparalleled in Bengali novels. In Bengali literary canon, Jaladas can be deemed as the first authentic creator of the sea-centric novels. In the present piece of work, he has given a flawless account of the survival and social position of the *Jaladas*, a fishing community at North Patenga village in Chittagong in Bangladesh. He is acclaimed as the first highly educated and erudite person in *Jaladas* (fishing) community whose life was associated with the unfathomable water of the sea. The tangible realities that he experienced as a member of the society is lucidly scattered on every page of the novel. While exploring his community, he saw the deplorable and woeful social condition of the people inhabiting the coastal region. In this novel, the people of the Jaladas community who are neglected since long by the civilized society remain inconspicuous and unnoticed. Like other subaltern communities of the world, the joys and agonies of the Jaladas society have become discernible by means of regionalism employed as a literary device by the author. Harishankar Jaladas reveals the unprecedented reality of life and struggle of this unfamiliar fishing society. The author, as a son of a fisherman, joined as an Assistant Professor at Chittagong Government College and later, became the principal of that college. Moreover, he also received the highest scholastic degree that is Ph.D. to his credit. As a result, the life and livelihood of the coastal urban communities as well as their peaceful coexistence has been very exquisitely shown by the author in this novel. In order to give an appropriate answer to the civilized upper caste Hindus and Muslims, he undertook the initiative to compose a historical document based on the fishing community through the novel *Sons of the Sea*. In an interview with Mohit Kamal, the author says,

In the novel *Sons of the Sea*, I have talked about water. There are many novels in Bengali literature about the fishermen. Several novels have been written about riverine fishermen such as *Padma Nadir Manjhi*, *Titash Ekti Nadir Naam*, *Ganga*, *Gahin Gau*, *Abogahon* and so on. There are some historical documents on the sea-dependent fishermen in

Bengali literature, but that could not sufficiently manifest them. This novel is the only representation of their deprivation only...I have tried to build a long 100 years history of fishermen in the Bay of Bengal. (*Apomanito Hoei Likhte Bosa*, 2018).

The author always bore the brunt of the crime of being born in a hapless marginal society when he came to work among the members of a decent educated community. Often the high-ranking officials used to call him *Jaular Pola* (son of fisherman) without calling him by his father's name. Listening to the contemptuous comments of the colleagues, a question always rose in him:

So, are the fishermen really reprehensible? I started research on the origin and development of the fishing community, then I wrote river based Bengali novel on *Kaibarto* (fishing community) society. The book was published by Bangla academy. While working on this, the seed of *Sons of the Sea* rose inside me. (*Apomanito Hoei Likhte Bosa*, 2018)

When the author's neutrality on the one hand and his desire to respond to the opponent's insult on the other, acted as a combined force then it exerts an uncontrollable influence on him. *Sons of the Sea* is such a peerless piece of narrative that it would be wrong to categorize it only as a river-centric novel or a regional novel in the general sense. It is an in-depth assessment and a historical re-examination of the life and livelihood of a community which has been ingeniously painted through the colour of epic consciousness, that has transcended the boundaries of time and space and reached to eternal truth.

Aspects of regionalism

Sons of the Sea is a pathbreaking work where all ingredients of a regional novel have been successfully manifested. Regional characters, occupations, cultures, and regional demands all are presented in the utmost realistic way and with regional values in this novel. The term 'regional' has been explained in terms of the local background, physical features of the specific environment, flora and fauna etc. with acute depiction of realism. According to the *Oxford Companion to American Literature* (1991), regionalism is defined as

the dual influence of romanticism and realism, since the author frequently looks away from ordinary life to distant lands, strange customs, or exotic scenes, but retains through minute detail a sense of fidelity and accuracy of description (2).

The concept of regional novel needs to be adjudged by its level of regionalism. If the level of regionalism is utopian or unrealistic, it can offer great impediment to the composition of a regional novel. The present research paper has selected the novel *Sons of the Sea* to scrutinize how the concept of regionalism has been manifested in its theoretical dimension. As per the afore-mentioned perspective, a regional novel is composed by taking the ingredients of local colours or regional elements. It can achieve optimum success only when it is able to draw the speech, setting and social structure of a particular locality to the maximum level. *Sons of the Sea* puts emphasis on four aspects of regionalism which categorise it as a regional novel. These are respectively: 1) location or place centric regionalism. 2) Character centric regionalism, 3) culture centric regionalism and 4) linguistic regionalism.

Location or place centric regionalism

The research paper has attempted to justify the term regionalism in the novel *Sons of the Sea* in the light of these four aspects in a realistic and appropriate way. Jaladas (2014) addresses the location of the fishermen's quarter in the following way,

The fishermen's quarter of North Patenga is isolated from the habitat of the gentry. It lies lifelessly at the lap of Bay of Bengal about two miles away from the village of the gentry. The Hindu and Muslim villages stand at a safe distance from the fishermen quarter...but fishermen's quarter stinks of dirt and muck. There is energy here, but no emerging atmosphere (*Sons of the Sea* 2).

In fact, it is not possible to ignore the setting in the regional novel. Harishankar Jaladas himself too didn't avoid this aspect. Needless to say, he portrayed the region and the regional people in the utmost reality.

Unlike Manik Bandyopadhyay or Adwaita Mallabarman in the genre of Bengali river-centric regional literature, Harishankar has given *Sons of the Sea* a very different dimension. He says, "Jalputro [*Sons of the Sea*] is the geography and history of my community. It is the depiction of wailing, suffering, dying and awakening of the fishermen...Jalputro [*Sons of the Sea*] is my first novel like my first child." (*Apomanito Hoei Likhte Bosa*, 2018). In fact, Jaladas's novel is a truthful account of his community through the social, psychological and regional perspectives.

In his novel, the author has chosen North Patenga, the fishermen locality in the district Chittagong on the shore of Bay of Bengal, where he himself was born and brought up. He has

opted the region to study the social strata of the community to respond to those who belittled him while teaching in the college. And at the same time, he has also opted this region as the background of the novel which has made it quite easier to appreciate historically-informed feeling for local customs and to understand and admire the natural scenery, language, culture, socio-economic position of that society. The first and foremost characteristic of a regional novel is that it should fulfill the primary criteria of illustrating landscapes and people outside the metropolis such as remote locations, countryside, faraway settings or counties. In that case, the regional colours should be manifested in an unaltered way. In his sea-centric novel, he has greatly emphasized on location or region with an account of country life to make it a regional narrative.

Local anthropology, myth and culture

The features of local anthropology, the biological phenomenon, natural landscapes, the romantic and realistic portrayal of events and their socio-economic conditions have mainly given it the status of a regional novel. In naming it, he has mentioned that the village of Bangladesh of that period still exists in its full glory as the village of that period. Although the villages like Bandar, Burumchara, Koral and Kola ushers into the era of modernity, they still abound in the local culture and the natural scenery. Mentioning the villages' name, the writer narrates,

The chief attraction of the recital is the Loveboy. They are hired for entire *Sraban*. The charges are between Taka 150 and 200. If he didn't get indisposed, he would have to dance in the Puthi recital every night...they are brought from villages like Bandar, Burumchara, Koral and Kola. (Jaladas 4)

Local characteristics become quite discernible when the author moves ahead to delineate that the fishing locality such as "the quarters of North Patenga like Halisahar, Kattoli, Khejurtoli, Bhatiary, Kumira, Sitakundu and Mirsarai are fringed on the sea." (Jaladas 12). The cultural life, livelihood and daily struggle of the fishermen of *Kaibarta* (fishing) society are skilfully integrated with naturalistic color in the present novel.

In order to express regionalism in a colourful way, the novelist has adroitly created socio-economic environment as well as the befitting societal and cultural aspects. The fishing community in the novel has mingled, to a great extent, the culture of the dominant group of Bangladesh with their own indigenous culture. As a result, they have a composite rural culture, an amalgamation of their own and that of the upper caste society, giving it a new appeal and

charm, which has undoubtedly provided it the colour of actual regionalism. *Manasha puja* with the recitation of *Manasha* scripture is a well-known festival in Bangladesh which is celebrated in every Hindu family in East Bengal in the month of *Shravan* with full pomp and gusto. The prevailing customs of worshipping *Manasha*, the goddess of snake and recitation of *Manasha* scripture is widely popular in the fishing community as well. The folk scientists have cited folk culture as a major reason for the introduction of *Manasha puja* in Bangladesh. When the monsoon sets in riverine Bangladesh, venomous snakes infest and people are often bitten by them. Therefore, the serpent goddess *Manasha* is worshiped to ward off this danger. Since the people of the fishing community have to lead an aquatic life, they worship *Manasha* to evade the calamities which may befall them there. The novelist has splendidly presented the beauty of folk culture in the following way,

The goddess *Manasha* is their chief deity. They have great dread for *Manasha*, the goddess of snakes. The great respect for her, too...so, throughout *Sravan* every fishing household worships the goddess *Manasha* ceremoniously. Every night *Manasha Puthi* is recited in one house or the other...the recital is accompanied by songs of separation. (Jaladas 3).

There is a custom of giving money to the members involved in reading and dancing mantras on that occasion. They are very elated to give money to the singers and dancers, for instance, many a times, a garland of money is wrapped around their neck. Child marriage is quite common in the fishing community. They use different types of nets while fishing. The author has mentioned various types of nets used by them while fishing like *Penirjal*, *Jhakirjal*, *Horijal*, *Taingajal*, *Bhindijal*, *Tongjal*, *Kathijal* etc. which are commonly used in this region. The name of each net typically represents the regional trait. The author, in his novel *Sons of the Sea* aptly describes different sorts of folk belief and folk worship prevalent in the region. When a fisherman buys a new boat, he generally performs some kind of ritual so that he can protect himself from an evil eye. On Tuesday in the month of *Ashar*, the fishermen of this area worship the *Ganges* with due pomp and the sacrifice is practised on the occasion of this puja. They usually draw two huge eyes on the fishing boat because these fishermen believe that the boat with these eyes would help to find their owner net in the deep sea. If a woman's husband gets lost while fishing in the river, then there is a special ritual of taking widowhood after some years.

If the husband disappeared in the sea, the wife could lead a married woman's life for twelve years. This was the custom of the Jaladas community. Then giving up all hope of the husband's return, the wife would put on white cloth meant for a widow, breaking her *Shankha* and wiping off the *Shindur* mark (Jaladas 25).

This is the unwritten and unaltered practice of the fishing community in which special customs were prevalent for the observance by the common folk. All the criteria of a regional novel are beautifully ingrained in Jaladas's novel *Sons of the Sea* whose content has been enriched with special care and the language, culture, food and festivals everything has contributed opulently to give it the regional colour, consequently, making this local novel, a grand success.

Myth and religion play a very important role in shaping the cultural atmosphere of a regional novel with its local colour. The author has included the mythical and religious description in his novel in consideration to form spiritual and philosophical experience which is very significant for a writer for his aesthetic creativity. Myth provides an opportunity to the readers to understand the culture and the ways of thinking and living of people of a particular region. The author as a spiritual and rational thinker "resorted to the language of myth to treat such issues." (Parker and Stanton 10). To discuss myths, Carl C. Jung says:

Myths are essentially culturally elaborated representations of the contents of the Deepest recesses of the human psyche: the world of the archetypes. Myths represent the unconscious of the unconscious archetypal, instinctual structures of the mind. They represent these structures not in historical and cultural vacuum but rather as they are culturally elaborated and expressed in terms of the world view of a particular age and culture. Just as human instincts are the same universally, so the collective unconscious is the same for all human beings. (Walker 97)

Linguistic and character centric regionalism

Linguistic regionalism is another element in the novel the *Sons of the Sea* which uses two classes of Bengali dialects. While composing the novel, Harishankar Jaladas has taken recourse to the conventional Bengali language and in the conversations of the regional characters, the original form of the East Bengali dialect of Chittagong has been used. This is an account of the fact that the entire novel has been written in regional dialect; therefore, it may not be acceptable to the general reader. As a matter of fact, if the whole thing had been written in mainstream literary language, it would have been detached from the local colour of the regional novel. This

is why the acclaimed author has tried to coexist with the two languages and not make concoction of the two anywhere. He plainly didn't use the regional dialects where the mainstream language was used. In addition to it, he has sidestepped the regional language or its pronunciation wherever he used mainstream languages. The nature of regionalism and its credibility both have been judiciously presented in the novel. Thus, the reader has been able to unravel every thread of the novel to understand its gist. In the article entitled *History and Tradition of Regional Novel: A Review of Regional Novels in Hindi and Punjabi Literature*, the nexus between language and character has been explained in the regional narrative as:

In regional novel the setting is located to a particular region and language of that particular region puts great influence upon the characters. The characters become the spokesman of that place on writer's behalf. This vernacular comes naturally without any effort. Our folk literature can be seen very rich in words and many languages. From this rich treasure of folk literature, the writers have dedicated so many words, phrases, idioms and folk songs, by which growth of these regional languages have become visible (Kaur, Sen, et. al., 924-925).

James Kelman (2006) once said, "language is the culture if you lose your language, you have lost your culture, so if you have lost the way your family talk the way your friends talk then you have lost your culture" (P. 80). In fact, Jaladas has acted in the light of this statement. He did not want to obliterate his social and cultural norms. Despite being erudite and well-educated in various fields of knowledge, he tried to express his thoughts in simple and lucid way and the medium of expression was the language of his own village Chittagong as language and regional life are virtually identical with each other. There is a dynamic and gravitational force in the use of the language in *Sons of the Sea*. At the very outset, the novel narrates *Utthal Patal Bongoposagorer Dike Takia Ache Unis Bochorer Bhuvoneshwari*, translated in English as "nineteen- years-old Bhuvoneshwari was staring at the turbulent water of the Bay of Bengal." (Jaladas, 2014, P. 1). The beginning as well as the main story both have been beautifully narrated in this language but the characters in the regional novel should always be soaked in regional colour. Thus, he has used the spoken language to maintain the credibility of the novel.

Pertaining to the contribution of the language of the regional novel, it has been said that when developing a special character, the author likes to give him or her as much authenticity as possible by indicating where he is from and how he speaks. A renowned Indian critique Dr.

Upadhyay has opined that, "Regional novel is meant by those novels in which there is a wholesome characterization of a particular populace or life of a region" (qtd in F. Singh 13). A well-defined characterization represents the geographical, social, cultural, economic and political conditions which highly influence the people of every society. Phyllis Eleanor Bentley defines regional novels as,

It is a novel, which concentrating on a particular part, a particular region of a nation, depicts the life of that region in such a way that the reader is conscious of the characteristics which are unique to that region and differentiate it from other in the common motherland. (6)

As a result, the author uses the local language in the depiction of the characters because it successfully reflects the spatial feature of the novel. Here, the human life has been revealed in the most vivid form since the author has applied the regional language and the local colour with the minute description of subaltern community to the utmost possible manner. "Babajire, Ikkinī Opekkha Kor. Aai Vhat Payat Di. Muri U No Khaite Khaite Vhat Oi Jaibo Goi" (Jaladas, *Jalputro* 22). A typical regional form of Bengali dialect has been written which is the language of the Kaibarta community living on the outskirts of Patenga village in the Bay of Bengal in Chittagong. They use this language in their daily life in a way characterized by regionality and spontaneity. Here the people of this locality have merged with the river because Bangladesh is a riverine country. River and people's lives seem to be intertwined in this country that is why the regional language here has close nexus with the inhabitations of this region.

Harishankar Jaladas shows a lot of variations in the use of regional language by both men and women. Both of them have different feelings about the recitation of *Manasha Puthi* and the Loveboy who dances. In order to maintain this dimension, the author has taken the regional language to the highest level in his novel. A gentleman namely Annacharan comments after watching the Loveboy, "no Loveboy like Premadasa had come to our village in the last five years." (Jaladas 6). On the other hand, an aged woman becomes flabbergasted and emotional by watching his dance. She expresses her bewilderment at the poise and rhythm of the dancer who is fully engrossed in his art. She says in this context, "How charming the boy dance! Even at my old age, his dances set my heart fluttering" (Jaladas 6). Premdas dances on the occasion of *Manasha Puthi* recitation. We notice clear differences in the application of language for different levels of feeling. In this way, regionalism has reached to the pinnacle of true reality and credibility.

Premdasa (the Loveboy who dresses up as a young woman) comes to dance every night and fulfils the sexual pleasure and love-sickness of the young gang of the village. Two persons Chandramohan and Subal fight with each other to spend the night with Premdasa. This argument is sparked off in the regional language to a certain extent. When Chandramohan says, “Premdasa is mine tonight” (Jaladas 8), Subal protests with his lust-blazed face and insists that “the Loveboy will spend the night with me” (Jaladas 8). Upendra moves ahead to arbitrate between them and says, “Premdaisa ajia sublerlai thauk. Kalia puthipath aitona. Goda raayet premdeisare tui bayet paribi’.” [Let Premdasa be with Subal tonight. There’s no recital tomorrow. You can bugger Premdasa tomorrow all night (Jaladas 8). This language is exclusively regional and character-oriented. Such dialogues are deeply coloured in the regional language and the novelist maintains a precise level of indigeneity in the conversations.

Harishankar Jaladas neither manipulated the usage of the regional language in the novel nor misrepresented it. He realized it very well that rubbing off the regional dialects would ruin the regional imprint of the reality and hinder the portrayal of the regional colour. As a result, he did not refrain from using obscene words. He skilfully exposed the adventures and the ordeals of the common man in the irresistible light of truth. Thus, Harishankar is indeed the torch bearer of the lower caste people. Linguistic differences in the social environment can be inevitably noticed because it is impossible to assume the culture without language. That is why he has given priority to the infinite reality in the use of the language of the *Kaibartas* on the shore of North Patenga.

When saint Gouranga sings Kirtan and plays his favourite lyre while visiting home to home some children in the neighbourhood annoy him. Unable to control his anger, he uses abusive language. The author, while drawing the lower caste regional character, has also highlighted the language without any alteration. “Fuck you, you sons of bitches” (Jaladas 31). Apparently, this language lies outside the periphery of literary aestheticism but its undaunted application by the author is really a sign of courage because he knows that the dirt of the sewer can never be sanctified by the water of Ganges. Even if the language is freed from the touch of obscenity, the regional colours would finally vanish and the reality of the daily life of the rural society would be unrealistic. The lack of elegance in the conversation of a marginalized or low-class person is often noticeable in such type of narratives. Some writers use them under the guise of politeness. He sees the life of the Kaibarta society through the eyes of a professor and pens it down as a researcher. He uses the insult in an unadulterated form and explains it through the realization of saint Gauranga. He is ashamed of his indecent behaviour despite the insult

and apologized to God for his behaviour. "A deep sense of remorse weighed him down for being foul-mouthed" (Jaladas 31). He introspects his conduct and realizes his sense of crime. "He muttered: 'O Krishna, forgive me. The fishermen's children make my life hell. I cannot bottle up my anger.'" (Jaladas 31). This language highlights the multidimensional nature of a character in terms of regionalism. Many folklore scientists consider abusing to be a part of the culture and acknowledge it in certain circumstances and it is sometimes used in the regional novels to entice its effects. Many people think that abusing is used by a person out of anger and excitement and it varies in terms of place, time and context. By abusing people feel proud of being winner and it calms down their anger. It thus restores their energy afresh. Abusing is common in almost all communities around the world, so many people think that abusing is justified to provide regional colour to something. Harishankar Jaladas has used abusing elsewhere in conversations of the characters. The moneylender Sukkur Abuses Gangapado as "I will see all the Doms, the sons of bitches...I will push an unclean bamboo through the anus of the sons of bitch" (Jaladas 149). Although the regional dialogues and language is obscene for the time being, it has been expressed in a very real and original form by the author. He also used the name of the regional commodity in the Bengali dialect. The words did express the name of the products in a polished or sophisticated language. On the occasion of *Chaitrasankranti*, Gopal's wife tells her husband "*Bjajjarot* Jao. *Chitrasankrantir* Chaibichi Siddo Chaul Aniba. In English, it reads, "go to the market. Bring beans and boiled rice and all the necessary items" (Jaladas 48). Here he uses the regional words in a rather conventional way which is also one of the levels of regionalism. On the other hand, conventional Bangla has been used as a colloquial language. Moreover, the author has also used rural words to provide the novel a regional colour.

The language is simple, lucid and full of idioms. He has fluently expressed the consequences of child marriage and its impact on the *Kaibarta* society in a simple language. He avoids using complex and bombastic language. Rather, he prefers the simple rural words like 'arbhangā', 'narbanga' etc. which does not distort the regional form but reveals the nature of the Kaibarts society in its original form.

Conclusion

It is worth considering that *Sons of the Sea* is undoubtedly a regional novel in regard to the narrative framework. It takes the landscape at Bay of Bengal of Bangladesh with its culture, customs, social structure, manners, the religious practices and emphasizes its attention on the life

of a well-defined particular geographical region North Patenga. The novel includes regional myths, folk culture, folk songs, local names of people and villages, and the vernacular language Bengali. This helps the author to investigate into the working of the society, customs, culture, people and various other related issues.

It is rightly said that a novelist is the mirror of the society. It is the reflection of real-life, events and phenomena. In the context of this novel, the author has beautifully drawn the subaltern fishing community before the readers. The dynamics of regionalism, the exotic life of the fishing community and their ordeals of life have been skilfully brought to the fore. Time and again, he remembers his root or origin and emphasises with them. He has adroitly shown the pain and uncertainty of their lives. Thus, an Ernest effort has been made by the author to present the *Kaibarta* society in an original form to the readers.

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