

## **Tribal Displacement for Natural Resources and Culture of Silence Maintained by Indian English Literary Intellectuals**

---

**Dr. Manoj Shankarrao Madavi**

Assistant Professor, Department of English,  
Annasaheb Gundewar College, Katol Road, Nagpur,  
Maharashtra, India

---

### **Abstract:**

Because of the growing global policies of a handful of multinationals, the issues like cultural identities and existentialism of dispossessed communities became very grave. Man becomes self-centered. His connections with ground realities are broken. The concept of the welfare state becomes a myth in the postcolonial era. But not only in the postcolonial period, the marginal groups of India faced this untouchability, but also, for the last many centuries, they have been going through these phases of dehumanization. Therefore they were not part of mainstream pieces of literature. Their craving for identity, aspirations, and creativities was denied by social hegemony. The hegemonic literature could not give voice to the broken identities of the Adivasi community. This research article tries to examine the intensity and involvement of Indian English fiction writers while dealing with their existential issues and identical crises that arise in the post-global and neoliberal corporate world order.

**Keywords:** Literary Marginalization, Aesthetic Amnesia, Culture of Silence, Intellectual Divergence,

We are criticizing postcolonialism and postmodernism for not representing Adivasi in their literature, but these realities in India have gone through the hegemonic strata of Indian society for the lost many centuries. Mainstream literature was not socially responsible literature but largely dealt with an elite class of society. For the last many centuries, tribal wants to speak up for their displacement, subjugation, and disillusionment, but their voices were unheard by mainstream literary stalwarts. Mainstream literature is full of dominancy, and mass society is unable to find its true reflections. The educated middle class of Indian society educated themselves through colonial education and became the blind products of globalization. They are huge admirers of materialistic prosperities. These Indian English literary stalwarts could not become the mouthpieces for the Adivasi, who had the first claim of being an indigenous community of these geographical territories. In this context, B. Poovilangothai observes:

Indigenous is an umbrella term that often refers to the heterogeneous groups of indigenous populations, which include Aboriginals in Australia, Maoris in New Zealand, First Nation In Canada, Native Red Indians in America, and Tribal-Adivasis In India. Aboriginal, tribal, and Indigenous are some of the legitimate terms used by different countries to refer to the indigenous peoples of their nations. (Poovilangothai: 2016:17)

Therefore tribal, their existence and identity never became the important subjects of their writings. Now man-women relationships, marital and extramarital relationships, migration generations, and multi-citizenships comprise the themes of their writings. Their novels seem full of hype and body celebrations, but malnutrition tribal young generation, the battle of tribals for drinking water in remote tribal areas, defectives food policies, and insufficient employment policies were never in their gaze while writing the fiction. Such psychology of the writers seems not ready to accept that there are other ethnic groups to which we have to give representation through literary creativity. Their scope of vision is very limited. You cannot claim mastery of farming only by standing in one field, in the same manner, visiting tribal areas, and doing some case studies cannot make you the master of literature of tribal life.

*The Strange Case of Billy Biswas 1973, The English August 1988, and Geeta Mehta's The River Sutra 1993* deal with forest life, rituals, and customs of tribal life. Though the tribal life was glorified by these novelists, they have shown the forest as the source of inspiration and the main objectives of their culture. This was the same period of urbanization and industrialization in tribal areas. Many industrial projects like steel plants, Water reservoirs, and Buffer Zones took place after 1955 in the present tribal territory like Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Orissa of India. These projects are to be considered the temples of the industrial progress of India, which would transform tribal life, giving them many benefits. In reality, this development and its benefits were never given to the Adivasis. Forest policies were strictly implemented by the administration, and tribes were restricted from entering the forests. The big forest zones, covering nearly a lack of acre, have been sold to big corporate magnets, nothing doing with Adivasi's constitutional rights in their territorial possession. Indian English novelist could present these forest issues sympathetically, just like presented by C. K. Janu in her *Mother Forest*, but Indian English Novelist lacks this creativity. We find Dalit discourse, famine discourse, the study of marginalization, and the subalterns, but in these major discourses, we do not find tribals' history, their indigenous customs, and aboriginal traditions. They have vanished from the postcolonial waves of Indian English writings. Nobody thinks about their multi-colonialism. In this regard, Gourishankar Jha comments:

With the reform in the freedom movement of the nineteenth century began the major phase of anti-colonialism, which sought the tradition to be re-examined in the modernism of the fifties and sixties; these were also a pan-Indian shift in sensibility, for instance, the Dalit movement the women's movement, etc. In modernizing postcolonial tension and anxieties are visible the colonial education, ruthless urbanization, human

industrialization, loss of faith, erosion of ethos, challenges to the identity, etc. (Jha: 2006:194)

The tribal community is a struggler par excellence. They have been struggling against the most dangerous situations for the last many centuries; therefore, they are still surviving in this nation. Tribals do not know the submissiveness and surrendering to tough situations. Their history is the history of martyrdom. They know that mass revolutions for indigenous communities are taking place across the globe; therefore, they hope for the best. Novelists should feel this dignity of hope of tribal community and should present their picture with realistic points of view. Literary writers of India should establish a big platform for indigenous writing. Then the postcolonial literature of India will be worth posting. Today corporate families are creating dominance in tribal's forest areas.

Many Adivasi movements are doing good work of creating awareness about the constitutional rights of tribal, but mainstream English literature is calm and uninterested in them. When the colonization of India took place, resistance was also taking place. It was the resistance of Adivasi, but it could not be treated as resistance. Racism is attached to colonization in India. The colonizers used this tool of racism and made the mental and physical genocide of Aborigines. The colonization of India was actually British capitalism in India. During postcolonialism in India, the presence of civilized capitalism and its inhuman barbarity openly came out. These global policies seem very sophisticated and cultured in their own countries, but in the colonial territories, it becomes ruthless exploitative machinery. It happened in India in the case of the Adivasis. Today's global economic policies are threatening tribal communities, but postcolonial Indian English novels do not speak about it. Regarding these cultures of silence, Shymcharan Dube opines,

Today's intellectual class is diverting from native issues. They are going away from the common man's realism. They focused on foreign languages and published their work in those languages. To publish their literary work from foreign is to be considered as prestige for them. Writers writing in regional languages are to be considered secondary intellectuals. Crave for Western parameters of literary writing and Western values of materialism are increasing among today's modern writers in India. (Dube: 168: Translated).

Today, the depriving life of the tribal is the result of political unwillingness. After Independence, governments have changed, and numerous policies have been made for tribals, but social and cultural alienation is the reality of Adivasi in India. Naxalism, corruption, lack of political will, and negligence towards regional dialects as mediums of education are the prime reasons for their backwardness. Still, the territories like Dantewada, Bastar, Abhujamad, Sarguja, Telangana, Maharashtra, Gadhachiroli, Palamu, Dumka, Bihar, Manbhum, Singhbhum, West Bengal, Orisa Andhra Pradesh, and Dandkarnya are yet to be free from naxal issues. Issue of employment and economic empowerment are the solution to counter the Naxal violence in tribal regions. Adivasis were the most victimized communities during the colonial and after the Independence period. We find only hope for their betterment through literature writings that gives priority to tribal's problems and their

solutions. Regarding this observation, Vibha Chauhan criticizes:

Historians have recorded the 1855 uprising in detail, especially the active participation of the sepoys and the peasants. The protest by the Adivasi community and their resistance against the colonial regime, however, has not found adequate space in the historiography of the protest movement. This is a clear retention of marginalization of the Adivasis in all spheres. The partial historical ambrosia has its roots in the epistemology of historical methodology and its implicit collusion with the socio-political power structures. (Devy: 2012:60)

We have very few novels in Hindi and English that deal with the realities of the 'Red Zone' and its circumstances on the physical and mental life of Adivasis. In the novel *The English August*, Missionaries are converting to Adivasis. They are ready to pay him a lot of money for this conversion. Augustya comments that missionaries are taking the benefits of tribal poverty by converting them to Christianity. The issue of tribal conversion in Right Wing Orthodoxy is also a very serious matter. This must be taken into consideration that Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Andhra Pradesh are the major tribal territories where conversions of tribals are going on at a rapid speed. A big funding agency is working for them, as Augustya observed that the links of conversion of tribal in Chipanthy are secured to Vatican City. All the reporting of the converted candidates daily goes to Vatican City. Though, on a surface level, it looks very normal, but cultural dominancy of a particular religion often works upon the conversion of indigenous communities. Many women novelists of Indian English established a strong rebellious voice against biased patriarchal mentality and found a major base of women's studies which was as strong as the feminism of the Western world. We do not find expressions of concern and sympathy for Adivasi women in mainstream feminist writings. Tribals are very much neglected by their gaze. Critic M. K. Naik says:

Indian English Literature began as an interesting by-product of an eventful encounter in the late eighteen century between a vigorous and enterprising Britain and a stagnant and chaotic India that is now nearly two hundred years old. It is the literature written originally in English by authors of India by birth, ancestral, or nationality. It is no part of English literature more them American literature or Australian literature since its difference is the expression in it of an Indian ethos. (Naik: 2007:01)

Adivasis are the citizens of this nation; therefore, their upliftment should be a national subject of debates and literary writings. These tribal areas are multifaceted with exploitation, suppression, injustice, disparities, and military repression. The repression of Adivasi in scheduled areas of India reminds us of the genocide of Latin American tribals and the slavery of African tribals. This literature is full of expression of exploitation of indigenous communities, which was now become the international theme for the Fifth World of Indigenous Literature. But these waves of the fifth world of indigeneity could not reach our postcolonial Indian English novel writing. Still, in Canada, the first nation peoples are struggling for their indigenous rights. Australian Aboriginals still look down on the

British as intruders and colonizers. The white people concede that they have taken the responsibility to civilize these native communities and brought them into the mainstream world, but on the other side, Aboriginal thinks that colonizers have snatched their natural resources and distorted their cultured traits. They have cut down natives from their indigenous roots in the name of modernization. Regarding this ideological fight, Ram Sharan Joshi narrates:

After two centuries of subjugation, a First Nation person of Canada looks down on whites as outsiders. Both the communities' white government and the Indigenous look at each other with doubtful eyes. An aboriginal community thinks that colonizers have distracted our way of living a natural life. They have distracted us from our nature and spirituality. They have converted us to the religion which has nothing to do with our cultural, identical roots” (Joshi: 2015:125) (Translated)

Tribals are not followers of the Varna- system. They are the indigenous community of this nation, but by bringing them into the Varna system, their existing international identities are tried to destroy. Of course, this is a very major and serious issue, but Indian English fiction writers have never treated this subject seriously in their novels. Because of the rapid conversion in tribal societies, many tribal-aboriginal communities are legs behind their ancestral cultures. A new generation of tribal youth wants to hide their identity as a part of the tribal community. This is happening because of the internal colonialism that has taken place in India by dominant religious groups. Novelists could give justice to this internal colonialism of Dalit and Adivasi communities in their fiction, but yet there is not much literary awareness and commitment in Indian English fiction and fictionists. The tribal have cost their blood for their rights in their ancestral regions. They even fought for the right of each tribal man. They were, in a true sense, freedom fighters. The *Sanhtal Hool*, which is to be considered the starting of the uprising of 1857, remains in the background, and the postcolonial writer denied this glorious history of the Adivasi revolt, which was full of thrill, sensation, and tension with a higher patriotic sense. About *Santhal Hool* of 1855, which is the unavoidable episode in the history of the greatest tribal uprising against the British Empire, Sanjay Bahadur comments:

When the ancient way of a peaceful but brave tribe is threatened by the arrogance of an empire, the savagery of the civilized: and the greed of the affluent, the only thing left to do is rise in rebellion. The year is 1855. The Tribe, Santhal. Moving through a whirlwind of Passion, greed, betrayal, cruelty, and sacrifice, this gripping narrative of the first mass rebellion against the John Company brings to life a footnote in history that casts a grim shadow on our present.(Bahadur:2013: Blurp)

Indian English Fictional writing seems unaware of the glorious tradition of sacrifice and martyrdom of indigenous warriors against the British encroachments on this Indian soil. They are the real owner and makers of this new India. Their indigenous traditions, folk songs, and nature-worshipping have all the valid and scientific reasons to follow for other mainstream societies for ecological sustenance, and Adivasi heritage should in at the forefront of literary discourse in India.

**SP Publications**

**International Journal Of English and Studies (IJOES)**

An International Peer-Reviewed Journal ; Volume-3, Issue-12, 2021

www.ijoes.in ISSN: 2581-8333; Impact Factor: 5.421(SJIF)

---

**References:**

Bahadur Sanjay. *Hul-The Cry Rebel*. New Delhi. Rolly Books, 2013.Print.

Devy, G.N. *Indigeneity-Culture and Representation*. New Delhi Orient Blackswan, 2012.Print.

Jha, Gourishankar. *Current Perspectives in Indian English Literature*. New Delhi. Atlantic Public, 2006.Print.

Naik. M.K. *The History of Indian Writing in English*. New Delhi. Sahitya Academy,2007.Print.

Poovilangothai, B. *Unearthing The Unexplored-A Critical Companion to Fourth World Literature*. New Delhi.Athorpress, 2016.