

Internal Colonization, Internal Orientalism, Tribal Genocide, and Literary Marginalization of Adivasi Society

Dr. Manoj Shankarrao Madavi,

Assistant Professor, Department of English,

Annasaheb Gundewar College, Katol Road, Nagpur,

Maharashtra, India

Abstract: Tribal characters in Indian English novels are totally marginalized and subjugated and find no place to remain in the memory of the readers. All the novels are mainly focused on the urban, elite background of the main characters and the Eastern and Western culture clash. According to the point of view of central characters like Billy Biswas, Clinton-Helen, Abhayraj, and Augustya Sen, tribals are ambitionless, and they have nothing to do with the rapidly changing socio-political milieu. They are far away from cultural evaluations, and tribal's psychological cultivation is an impossible task. Though the novels slightly touch on the theme of displacement, subjugation, and marginalization of tribals, finally, entire sympathies are taken by the main characters, as we found in *The Strange Case Of Billy Biswas*, *The Princess*, and *The English August*. Now the question arises why this happened in postcolonial Indian English novels. This research article tries to examine the internal exploitation and subjugation of Adivasis in their own heartland.

Keywords: Subjugation, Postcolonial, Genocide, Literary Invisibility, Disorientation

Indigenous communities are not secure in the waves of modern utilitarian capitalist society where only profit-mongering mentalities matters. These modern capitalist mentalities are looting the natural resources in the tribal land. Tribals of Latin America proved the victims of this corporate robbery in the nation like Brazil, Peru, Chile, Columbia, Argentina, and Vietnam. In India, regional writers like Mahasweta Devi, C. K. Janu, Shivrama Karanth, Narayan, Gopinath Mohanty, and Ramdayal Munda depicted the Pain and pathos of tribal life and corporate loot in tribal regions, but in postcolonial Indian English literature, lack this spirit of real representation. C. K. Janu has made a serious comment on this contemporary exploitation of tribal,

They would get him drunk on arrack. Only then would they be prepared to enter the forest and cut down trees. When one drinks arrack continuously, a stage comes when one cannot live without it. That is how the overseers make money corrupting their bodies and mind” (Janu: 2004:44).

In Indian English fiction, postcolonial responses deals with the rewriting of history, sociology, and political upheavals, but issue like the displacement of tribals hardly takes any place. Kamala Markandeya's *The Coffer Dam* deals with the theme of displacement. When the team of British Engineers with their families came to tribal villages, they displaced tribal huts and built their own tents there. The Western outlook towards tribal is only as the junglee. While depicting tribal as romantic, superstitious, ignorant, and uncivilized, the mainstream novelist has presented them from a matriarchic point of view. Female is given much respect in the tribal family, but the modern, urban, elite English writers look uninterested in depicting this civilized and splendid side of the tribal. As the tribal came in contact with sophisticated city life, the exploitation of their women increased. Explaining this point, C. K. Janu comments:

What happens among our women is not what happens in civil society. In our case, unity in everything originates from our women. They have something in common that shelters us from meaninglessly adopting the ways of civil society. They have enough resilience in them to stand for what they feel is right, even though they may have to suffer a lot for it. It is among our women that our traditions and the ways we dress live on even now. All our struggles have been struggles to establish the ownership rights of the real owners of this land for the right to live on it. (Sengupta: 2015:26)

Today tribes in India are going through the process of cultural and identical genocide. Genocide means the killing of people of a particular clan or tribe both physically and culturally, and this dehumanization of tribal is taking place with the marginal in India. Tribals in India are the forest dwellers for centuries. The forest is their source of living, inspiration, and everything, but by hook or crook, this heritage is forcibly taken by them, leaving them in a dark future. The tribal of India is claiming that they will accept the death penalty because they cannot live without the company of forests, rivers, and natural objects, which are part of their family. Regarding this mass cultural genocide of tribal, our mainstream Indian English writer does not seem to speak, but hundreds of novels have been written on partition holocaust and exploited feminism. This cultural genocide of tribal going on through the colonial period is now regenerated in neoliberal India, but the postcolonial sensibilities and the danger of neocolonial prophecy seems in dark silence.

The novels dealing with Adivasi life in Indian English Literature are based upon romanticism, glorification, materialism, and sophisticated futile values of urbanity to which the central characters are hanged and demolished, but soothing tribal culture, their nature-worshipping, exploited circumstances that brings poverty to them are nowhere in Indian English fiction writings, their respect for their communal life and many other reasons of their backwardness seems nowhere in the mainstream Postcolonial Indian English Novels. The novels written in India during 1970 dealt with the urban

humdrum and growing materialism which was the result of industrialization. Corporate policies were obviously responsible with its callous city atmosphere for this degeneration. The tribal territories also became the victim of synchronized postcolonial Indian history.

Another regional novel, *Kocharethi*, deals with the disposition of tribes from their land. The exploited machinery of landlords has shown its ugly reality through this novel. This novel is another example that shows a better understanding of tribal life than the mainstream Indian English fiction writers. In the introduction of this novel, Catherine Thankamna opines:

The novel maps the Adivasis changing perceptions of land and its ownership. Its account traces the possession and disposition of land, the innocence of a people who did not even have a notion that land was property and that they could be alienated from it. To the Adivasis, the first inhabitants, there was no question of acquiring individual rights over the land. The land was not separable from their sense of collective identity. They were one with it and celebrated this union on all rites of passage. (Narayan: 2011: Blurb)

Disposition and land grabbing of Adivasis are not modern issues. This is a process that has been running down since the period of colonialism. The landlords were the wretched people who used to grab the tribal land with or without their permission. By taking benefit of tribal illiteracy or by taking benefit of their helplessness, they were used to grab the land. Gopinath Mohanty, another novelist from Orissa, has presented a striking picture of disposed Adivasis in his most celebrated novel *Paraja*. Novels sympathetically deal with tribal ethos, their customs, and the struggle for survival. Mohanty's other novel, *Ancestor*, again deals with tribal ancestry. Many beliefs, traditions, and customs, with their primordial powers, have been kept in this novel. Regarding the theme of the novel, Bikram Das opines:

The novel *Paraja* is much more than sociological or anthropological documentation. Sukru Jani is not merely the primitive tribesman ensnared by the predictor money lender from the city; he is also a quintessential man, waging a heroic but futile war against the holistic universe. The choice of the tribal canvass, whether by accident or design, becomes singularly appropriate to Mohanty's theme; the primeval consciousness of his tribal protagonists perfectly reflects the situation of the archetypal human being; their stark joys and interwoven anguish embody the complexity of the human condition. (Mohanty: 1997:06)

Tribals in India are the victims of the double disposition and internal orientalism. While writing postcolonial literature, our mainstream has never written about this multi colonizations. They were seeking refuge with nostalgic elements in the metaphysical World when several cases of tribal distortion and mental genocides were taking place during colonialism and in the postcolonial period of India.

In the contemporary scenario, major tribal territories of India are disturbed. Social, constitutional, cultural, and economic struggles are taking place in Indian tribal territories. The

government is placing a massive military in these areas. Defense helicopters are wandering in the hilly and dense jungles of the Adivasi area. The tribals of India have been given self-determination rights in Indian Constitution, but with the growing presence of industrial policies, governments have opened up the tribal reserved area for foreign direct investment and for other business purposes. Mining, Bauxite, cement, and iron projects have taken massive shape in these tribal territories, but tribal displacement and employment opportunities are the most threatening problem in India. With the acceptance of the mixed economic policies of 1991, the monster of LPG awakened on tribal land.

Hegemonic industrial houses in India and multinational corporate houses across the globe have arrived with their number of MOU in the Adivasi area. Both of them leave no stone unturned to rob tribal life, culture, and indigenous heritage. In India, nearly eighty types of minerals and other natural resources are to be found in tribal areas, which have a huge cost beyond imagination in the international market. Neoliberal governmental policies and global capitalistic battalions are attacking these natural resources resulting in the displacement of native Adivasis from their shelters.

It really seems strange a writer who had worldly knowledge about imperial exploitation and its crushing power over marginal cultures seems unaware of tribal victimization, exploitation, corporate loot, and hard-core marginalization. While writing colonial impact on the Indian psyche, novels must take tribal culture, subjugation, and deprivation into consideration. In this regard, Virginias Xaxa comments in *State, Society, and Tribes*:

The reclamation of forests for land cultivation, expansion of roads and railways, and exploitation of mineral resources form of a key economic activity during the colonial period. Needless to say, these policies led to the large 'scale destruction of natural resources, and yet the problems and hardships suffered by the tribal were not felt acutely until the post-independence period. Either the exact impact of the policy was not realized, or the policy, despite expropriating the rights of the tribal people, gives some freeway to them. By employing such processes, thousands of square kilometers of tribal land were brought under the forest department. (Xaxa: 2008:108)

Today indigenous communities like Gonds, Kondhs, Baiga, Halba, and Bhil are terribly marginalized in India. Tribal disposed of their native land after Independence is still waiting for rehabilitation and compensation- money. In Bastar, iron factories were set up, and the rivers got polluted. There is no employment, no educational and health facilities for tribal youth, so they chose the option of struggling for basic amenities. Today, tribals themselves seem like outsiders in their own heartland in the tribal area, like Narayanpur, Dantewada, Kanker, Jugdalpur, and Gadchiroli. Tribal people work as sweepers and laymen in the big homes and shops in these areas. In an Independent nation, tribal constitutional rights are marginalized, and tribal are deprived of their forest rights. This chaos was taking place on Indian ground because, for the modern state, there is no significance of tribal community in their agenda of development. In this way, they are left to remain doom in their own territory. Regarding tribal representation in the mainstream, Ram Sharan Joshi says:

Parameters of development should be useful only when the tribal upbringing should be the center of government. Otherwise, these territories will always be unstable with revolts. Government should think large-heartedly that before the concept of the nation took place, the tribal was the owner of this forest, land, and hills. Tribals were the sustainer of the natural resources. British have exploited these tribal communities in very brutal manners. Government should study which laws were responsible for tribal destruction. Today tribals are in the phase of internal colonialism. Now there should be an end to this neo-colonization. (Joshi 2015: 137)

The contemporary realities of Adivasis in India will be the treasure of subjects for mainstream Indian English writers for literary writings. However, they have depicted tribal as marginalized, uncivilized, superstitious, and far away from civilization. Just like Joseph Conrad said in *White Man's Burden*, to see the light of civilization in Africa and Asia, just the same way, Indian English writer performed their role, and they have been handling these burdens for the last many years. Now they have to accept the challenges of the depiction of the realities of displacement, oppressive governmental policies, nepotism, corruption, and cultural genocide of Adivasi along with Adivasis deculturation and disorientation. Novels can be the best tool for strengthening the indigenous voices which crushed under colonialism and global imperialism.

Today Native American Tribes also consider Birsa Munda as the icon of tribal dignity. Birsa Munda is in the heart of Native Americans, but while writing colonial history, a massive part of the tribal's freedom fight against internal colonialism and British colonialism was totally excluded by the historians as well as from the literary platform of Indian English writers. About the historical background of tribal, which could be the most inspiring episode of writing for all Indian, Gladson Dungdung, in his celebrated volume *Whose Country Is This Anyway*, foregrounds:

In Ancient times, the Adivasis had ownership rights on natural resources, and they judicially used these resources for their survival. Consequently, the Adivasis were living with autonomy, peace, and prosperity. The situation changed after the Aryan invasion and became worse during the British rule. On the one hand, the Aryans destroyed the Adivasi civilization, denied their indigenous identity, and did not accept them as fellow human beings, and on the other, the British imposed violence on the Adivasis by grabbing their land, territory, and resources and even named few of them as criminal tribes. (Dungdung: 2013:16)

Today major areas of North East, Jharkhand, are going through the process of conversions. Tribal conversion in different religions means the cultural and identical genocide of their clan. During the colonization of Africa, English, Portugali, and French languages dominated literary scenes. Still, these foreign languages hold their importance in African culture, literature, and administration. Therefore African novelists like N.Gugi WA Thingo started writing in the local Giyaku language. Africa has many native tribal languages like Ibo, Yoruba, Giyaku, Jhulu, and Hausa. African novels are

the caravans of African history.

The African writers started writing in their own dialect to answer the empirical forces that tribal identity, indigenous heritage because and ancestral knowledge of Africa could be better represented by their own dialect. In postcolonial African literature, novels are written in their own dialect. They believe that open veins of Africa and multi-colonization could be brought to World's literary panorama only through African languages. African novelist Obbey Wall accepted that only the African dialect could raise an African consciousness among Africans.

Nugi's statement suggests that the problems of the independent countries are the recolonization of their own power and state. Therefore we should be in a role to decolonize the mind of common people of suppressed cultures. The African literature, culture, and dialects are related to the socio-culture-historical decolonization by the African population. Postcolonial African literature is not confused about their identity. They claim their indigeneity and ancestry through their literature by resisting the imperialism of one's body and mind. African novels have set up the parameter of postcolonialism and decolonization. This seems very weak in postcolonial Indian English novel writing. Latin American literature flourished after the 1950s. Novelists from Brazil, George Amado, Joss Maria, Argadous from Peru, Carlos Fuet from Mexico, and Rao Bestowed from Perauswe have decolonized the European norms of imperial writing and presented the exploitation of Latin America in a very realistic manner. *Open Veins of Latin America* was written in 1967 by Eduardo Galliano and presented five centuries of subjugations and brutal exploitations of indigenous communities in Bolivia, Peru, Brazil, and Columbia. In the beginning, Latin American writing was influenced by British writing, but at the beginning of the 20th century, indigenous roots started to find their identity in literature.

Tribals are shown to be very superstitious in the novel *The River Sutra*. The novel was written in 1993, which was the peak period of globalization in India, where tribal territory is much victimized under the global policies of industrialization, but the novelist shown them adopting Hinduism rituals and customs and sinking in the Narmada River to cure the diseases. She could not present the disorientation and disposition of the tribal. Everything about tribal life, including the rebellious character, Rima, is glorified and romanticized. In the novel, tribal life and characterization are only leftovers and supplementary to the main story of the novel. Tribal heritage, their struggle for existence, and their faith in primordial power find very silent in the postcolonial Indian English fiction *The River Sutra*. India accepted the global and neoliberal policies of development. Foreign multinationals came to the tribal territory of India with big multi-projects. Decolonization of tribal territory took place through the policies of corporate. The social, political, and cultural life of Adivasis came in danger. They are deprived of their education and health. Indian English writing is unsympathetic about the displacement of tribes. Amit Bhaduri says:

The state has focused on land acquisition for mining, Industry, and SEZ. Jharkhand, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and Orissa are tribal-dominated and full of natural resources. Tribal comprises 8% population, but the displacement ratio of tribal is 40%. The state sponsors violence if there is tribal territory. The PESA-implemented tribal territory is

forcibly taken from them. Through terrorizing the local tribal, their land full of iron and resources is given to industrialists. A land full of Bauxite and diamonds of Orissa has the same stories. (Surana: 2009: 227)

This research paper will be an advance and pathfinder of criticism available in contemporary burning tribal issues in the era of globalization and neo-liberalization, which is not properly justified before in novels written in Indian English. This research paper will be a lighthouse not only for tribals but for all the marginalized and deprived sections of societies across the globe that are going through the process of cultural, political, and economic hegemonies and numerous disparities. This research article will provide a humanitarian lens to all mankind to strengthen the voice of social justice, gender equality, communal harmony, and universal brotherhood. We can hope that this research analysis will provoke and inspire other tribal and non-tribal writers to stimulate further work related to descriptions of Adivasis in future literary panorama.

I would like to conclude the paper with the immortal lines of Waharu Sonawane's poem, *Stage*, and expects that his tribal Pain of being neglected and marginalized by the mainstream will recover in the upcoming days through the new literary sensibilities which will be benefitted through this research work.

We never went on Stage.
Nor were we called
A gesturing finger
Showed us our proper places.
There we sat,
And received Praise. And they stood on Stage
Telling us about our own Pain.
Our pains remain ours
It never becomes theirs
Our doubts whispered
They listened
Hummed and hawed
They twisted our ears and warned us
Apologize or else. (Devy: 2016:192)

References:

- Devy, G.N. *Indigeneity-Culture and Representation*. New Delhi Orient Blackswan, 2012.Print.
Dungdung, Gladson. *Whose Country Is This Anyway?* Kolcatta. Adivani Publi, 2013.Print.
Janu. C.K. *Mother Forest*. New Delhi. Kali for women Publi, 2004.Print
Mohanty.Gopinath.Paraja.Noida.Oxford University Press.1997.Print.Translated By Bikram Das(1997)
Narayan. *Kocharethi*. New Delhi. Oxford University Press, 2012. Print.

SP Publications

International Journal Of English and Studies (IJOES)

An International Peer-Reviewed Journal ; Volume-3, Issue-10, 2021

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

Sengupta Amit. *Mother Forest-C.K. Janus Fight for Tribal Land*. Tehalka. Sep 11, 2004, Web 26 May, 2015.Print

Xaxa, Virginias. *State, Society, and Tribes-Issues In Postcolonial India*.Noida.Pearson,2008. Print.