

# Deculturation, Disorientation and Political Strategies against the Tribal: A Missing Chapter in Contemporary Mainstream Indian Fiction Writing:

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## Abstract

Indian English fiction writers have made their particular assertions about tribals which are incomplete therefore; we do not find much reality in their novels. In the novels like *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, *The Princess*, *The White Tiger* and *The English August*, we find the unauthentic representation of the tribal life. In every novel, tribal life and characters are shown dependable on mainstream heroes for the help. Novelist's tribal women and man, surrender to mainstream sophisticated social arrangements. In most of the novels, they consider the non-tribal person as god and savior for them who is outsider of their tribal territory. This is a kind of internal orientalism. The political victimization of the tribal is the colonial phenomena. Mainstream writers assume that the tribals are the uncivilized and no need of cultivation hence tribals are the community for political victimization. Mainstream literatures have never depicted their victimization on ground realities and given place in mainstream canonical literature. This research article tries to examine the displacement and distortion of Adivasi life in the selected novels written in Indian English.

## Keywords— Displacement, Subjugation, Political Strategy and cultural Genocide

In postcolonial Indian English literature, the society and its importance was dominated by particular communities and their established values. Hierarchy of Indian society played a vital role in literature writing in English. Therefore, freedom struggle, diaspora, imagined communities, marital-extramarital issues, concept of single women, independent women, single father, single mother, cola generations and butterfly generations often become the central themes of postcolonial Indian English novel writings. In postcolonial Indian English literary scenario, most of the time announcement is done for 'Death of novel' but the novel writing flourished again in recent decades. A huge number of novels are written on above themes but we lack the presence of Adivasi community, their exploitation by bureaucracy and corporate policies. We do not find the subjects like intrusion of corporates along with state interference in tribal schedule areas in the Indian English novels. In these sense, Adivasi in India is nowhere in this postcolonial Indian English novel writing.

In the novel, *The Princes* and *The English August*, politicians, ruling parties, bureaucrats and officialdoms find complete failure to win the heart of the tribal. It happens in the novel, because the concepts of tribal development or the

necessities of the local tribal were not taken in granted according to their natural way of living life and thinking of the tribal community for their self upliftment. In the novel, *The Princess*, tribal are loyal to Maharaja Heroji, gave tax to their *Mumimji*, honours them but when Congress wants their land for development project of a major dam, they oppose to the Congress. Tribals do not understand the language of negotiation and marketing strategies in the novel. They lack the political pedagogy. Again Augustya in *The English August* came to know that tribals are not the materialistic. They only demand their basic rights of drinking water, food, school and health facilities. In this novel, governmental policies in tribal areas are so lethargic that tribals could not take the benefit of these policies. Tribal communities in India are double disposed and triple colonized by the mainstream society and from the British imperialism. Postcolonial Indian English novelist must accept and explore this truth that when one community reads the pain, pathos and hardships of other community, it has some significance and worth value. Today in Indian literary world, one can clearly notice that postcolonial novels are written in the favor of state, power and the caste hierarchy. The political nepotism manages the postcolonial

literary flow in India. A political ideology decides to give or not to give voice to minorities and tribals. Therefore, Shambhunath opines:

Cosmopolitanism and Globalization have widened the terrible gap between social, political behavior and ideologies. Therefore in contemporary novels feminism, Dalit consciousness, native responses, surviving environments, threats to Adivasi life, dispossession, military repression, metro verse agrarian, religious secularism, religious orthodoxy, a number of fragmented peoples movements from local places are becoming the dominant themes of literary writings.(Shambhunath: 2016: 236)

Tribals as depicted in the selected Indian English novels, *The Coffin Dam*, *The River Sutra*, *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, have a common treatment in themselves. They remained unseen, unheard, silent and invisible. Even hundreds of research papers might be published on these novels but no effort was taken to give tribal community as its central place in the mainstream literature. No doubt, these novels are one of the rich heritages of postcolonial Indian English literature but it lacks the marginal representation and several hardship of tribal life. These novelists are unique in their aesthetic sense, style and techniques but seem weaker in its moved vision and virtues of subjugated and broken classes.

This novel of Arun Joshi, presents tribal as primitive as he can show. The images of drum beating, drinking, and ambitionless identities of tribals have created through the novel but issues of displacement find no touch in the novel. Novelist seems unaware about the industrialization in tribal areas started soon after the independence. Regarding this concern, G.N.Devy comments:

Development as envisaged by the Indian state has more often than not turned out to be a nightmarish experience for the Adivasis, leading to a disruption of their tradition. Different project including large irrigation dam, hydroelectric schemes, open cast and underground coal mines, thermal power plant, mineral based industries have displaced large number of adivasis from their traditional habitation and constantly shrinking economic base has led their increased population. (Devy: 2009:62)

Arun Joshi's novel *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* is good and artistic only for those who fully believe in imaginative flight. M. K. Naik the famous academician and critic of Indian English literature makes the comment about the novel as follow, "The novels to be a major fictional achievement because it is not, in the final analysis, informed with sufficient imaginative power to make so unusual a narrative absolutely convincing, especially in its picture of tribal society in which Billy finds himself king, its beliefs and practices and its apotheosis of the professor" (Naik: 2009:230).

These novels show two societies, one with ample sources of living opportunities and other one show less opportunities of survival. It clearly shows economic, social, cultural separations in Indian society, particularly marginal classes. A wide gap has been shown between areal life of mainstream characters and earthly struggle of tribal characters. It's surprising that novelist has not even showing sympathy for cultural deprivation of tribals. Most of the selected novel ends only with philosophical musing and with ending life of its hero's provocative thoughts about urban alienation but less discourse are taken places about inequalities in social strata. It seems that tribal life for them in the novel is only hype oriented or only for introduction of an imaginary or illusive savage world and nothing else than that.

The Indian English fiction writers have not taken care when they write about, Postcolonial and Postglobal India. Along with globalization there must be humanitarian aspects in their novel writing. India is the country of villages. Our national concerns originates from villages, of course metro cultures have its different importance. The process of novel writings never stands on the same place. For creating new humanitarian consciousness, novelists have to break the narrow wall of elite mentality and traditional orthodoxy. There is risk at breaking stereotype walls of caste, class and religion but it is also true that writing literatures particularly about ancient communities is not a matter of luxury and romanticization. Justice to the masses should be the reality of literary writings. Indian English Literature is now becoming global. The story, event, pathos, predicaments of a particular community mentioned in literature, does not remain longer to them only but it becomes national-international issues. The ways, Indian English writers have projected the description of tribal characters, their ways of looking at life seem really unconvincing. In the novels like, *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, *The English August* and *The River Sutra*, novelists have presented them as backward and dependent as they can show them. However globalization has destructed tribal culture and their territory as compare to other communities. While deeply peeping into novel one can noticed that waves

of globalization, capitalistic mentalist, industrial hazard and Environmental three could be noticed in the novel *The English August*. Augustya found a typical colonial setup of a missionary Dutch hospital while moving to Chipanthi, he feels surprising that in such damaged, draught stricken area, what is the use of such big hospital but gradually he comes to know that they are undercover centers of religious conversion who tried its possible to convert tribals people in Chnitanity. They are ready to give lacks of rupees to the poor tribal to accept the Christian religion. Augusty opines:

What had induced the Dutch to build a hospital of charity in an obscure corner of India or the German to funds an Indian curer of leapers? But missionaries at the hospital were converting tribals to Christianity. It is observed in this age of AIDS and the atom; some missionaries were converting the heathens to the Lords path before healing them. (Chatterjee: 1988: 244)

Situation of tribals seems more pathetic when Augusty went to village well. When he goes to well, he comes to know the muteness of village. There was no laughter, no conversation. All the youngest of the village was busy into bring water from mud. After sometime of inside the well, the ropes were bringing up buckets. His glanced through the well and he is shocked the sight inside the well that sight is the slap to the Independent nation. Obviously some of the loyal and responsible officers really wanted to do good to society through the power they have. Bajaj is an officer who is responsible one but he did not find support from his superiors and colliges. In modern democracy in India, officialdom, become a tedious job. Bajaj gives orders for water tanker, he calls to junior engineer. He shows his constant business can come to know the responsibility of Bajaj when he opines,

You know, sir, their laziness hidden by jargon – and I would have agreed, because sitting in the block office at Jompanna, Chiponthya and its problems would have seemed remote and everything would have been postponed. (Chatterjee: 1988:255)

Augusty was observing the hustle bustle of other officers including the tribal youngster with a crowd of women and mens. Augusty was really ignored with all this day to day problems of tribal life. It seems really hard to think for him that only for the sake of drinking water; tribals of remote area had to struggle like death. He was standing their looking to the wounded tribal children into the well but something was going in his mind.

He wanted to get away from the office for at least a few hours to a new world where he could see some sexy faces of women. The jeep left, blaming gracelessly over the red sand, crowded with glum and confused men. He and the tribals watched it career into the forest. He was feeling heroic and foolish. (Chatterjee: 1988: 256)

In Upamanyu Chatterjee's *The English August*, the problem of tribal leadership has slightly described where a tribal lady, Para goes to district office with the complaint of the scarcity of drinking water in the tribal village. Rao is another character in the novel to whom Augustya considers as Naxal but he is leader of the village and much aware of the changing policies of government against common masses and helps to other tribals to understand these contemporary changes. Prof. Ramanna, a hardcore Gandhian also tries to give a non-violent vision to tribal people in Chipanthi village in Madana district. Chatterjee could elaborate this problem of leadership for the upliftment of tribals and can give a new vision to other novelists and writers to understand the basic problems of the tribal community. The scarcity of leadership in political, social and cultural arena is a reality in tribal society.

*The White Tiger* is the gripping story of tribal, underclass, than they misery, life begin for food, struggle for their land right, seeking shelter new rodeside, struggling for their identity and their place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century of India. Balram was also belongs to the marginal community. Here we one consider that Balram is the representative, mouthpiece for Dalits, tribals, labourers, farmers because most of the part of the novel is situated in Dhanbad (Zarkhand) which is the major tribal territory here Balram opines:

“So the rest of the village waited in a big group outside the shop. When the buses came, they got on packing the inside, hanging from the rolling, climbing into the roofs and went to gaya, there they went to the station and rushed into the train, packing the incide, hanging from the railings, climbing into the roofs and went to Delhi, Calcutta and Dhanbad to find work. A month before the rain, the men come back from Dhanbad and Delhi and Calcutta, learner, darker, anger but with money in their pockets. The women were waiting for them, they hide behind the door and as soon as men walked in,

the pained like wild cuts on a slab of flesh. (Adiga: 2008:26)

Arvind Adiga, in his novel *The White Tiger* convey that most of the labourers, farmer and poor man goes to Delhi, Bangalore with full of crowd in the trains. Though he directly does not comments as *tribal migration* but the scene in the novel efficient enough to convey the problem of unemployment in the tribal regions like Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa. Tribal migration from their local land to which they are the real owner, moving to other places is the big issue for literature writings but yet to be literaturized. In the case of tribals, when someone dislocates them from their territory, they became homeless, unidentical human beings. Adiga's novel comments very faintly about this unavoidable problem which is largely avoided by many Indian English novelist. If government could offer them their ancestral right, then the problems of deculturation among tribal could not take serious turn but even after 70 years of Independence, tribal are disoriented from their Cultural Socialism because of the negligence of the Governmental authorities.

If the gradual doses of westernization, materialism, cosmopolitanism and globalization are given through education, one cannot easily understand the cultural and identical transformations of one's country, one's culture and one's individual. This had happened exactly with the literary classes or writing classes of the India and rest of the world. The promoters of Indian postcolonial writings have educated themselves from the western universities. They studies big western theories but never link them with native issues of internal colonialism. These intellectual classes could not understand the real face and hidden make up of global liberalism. Imperialism is again neocolonizing the world. On surface level it seems idealistic but internally it breaks native tribal culture by displacing them from their resources and indigenous roots. They promote multiculturalism to hide the identities and questions of marginal classes. It is the responsibility of the Indian English fiction writers to contemplate on Foucault, Chomsky and Edward Said and must resist the neocolonization of the world particularly, of the marginal and broken communities.

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