

# Literature in English : Other Voices

Proceedings of International  
Webinar  
held on 3rd & 4th July, 2021



Department of English  
Bijni College, Bijni

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# Literature in English: Other Voices

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held on 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2021



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
BIJNI COLLEGE, BIJNI

This is the Proceedings of two-day International Webinar on Literature in English: Other Voices conducted on 3<sup>rd</sup>& 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 by Department of English, Bijni College, Bijni. This is a compilation of the papers presented in the webinar by the participants. This compilation is edited by Saroj Kumar Pasayat and Dr. Arup Sarkar on behalf of the Department.

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## CONCEPT NOTE

Literature represents our lived experiences both individually and comprehensively. It animates and engages the imagination of the audience or reader in myriad manners. In presenting the author's perception articulated in his /her inscription, literature involves in shaping the mass consciousness. The act of writing or presenting one's own story is very intrinsic to this perception that reveals through an intricate mechanism of style, tone, person, syntax etc. The author's voice refers to this quality that makes the writing palpably unique and becomes a medium to bring out and transgress the new dynamics between both visible and invisible binaries. Literature in English being so expansive and varied in spatio-temporal dimension necessitates the adoption of equally variegated but accentuated voices across the globe to question the prevalent hegemonic structures that engage in homogenising the accumulated/unfolding reality. Thus, we do encounter a multitude of resistive voices that arise from the necessity to assert nuances within the notion of identity, culture, gender, race etc. in an effort to subvert the dominion of a master narrative. The contemporary period has witnessed the emergence of such voices across the horizon of literature in English that entails an exhaustive appraisal. The webinar will make an attempt to critically locate those spectrums which are yet to be highlighted and simultaneously to illustrate the readers and young scholars in approaching the texts.

#### Sub Theme

- ♦ Apartheid Literature
- ♦ Tribal Writings from India : Voices Unheard
- ♦ Writings from North East India
- ♦ Literature of Identity
- ♦ Literature of Trauma
- ♦ Post-Colonial Writings
- ♦ Dalit Literature
- ♦ Diaspora Literature
- ♦ Literature of Resistance
- ♦ Women's Writings
- ♦ Children's Literature

## OTHER VOICES

Voices unheard,  
Are searching for truth;  
Those in darkness,  
Are vouching to the light.  
Voices trampled,  
Are seeking for a story;  
Those drowned in the rhetoric,  
Are rambling for a Lori.  
Voices disgraced,  
Are meandering to meaning;  
Those muted in the discourse,  
For the bard are they waiting.  
No voice will be ever lost,  
In this motley space;  
Every one is a beauty,  
That reveals its grace.

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## MESSAGE

It is indeed a great pleasure to know that, the proceedings of the international Webinar on **Literature in English: Other Voices** conducted by the Department of English Bijni College, Bijni on 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 is going to be published by the Department.

I do sincerely hope that the thought-provoking and erudite writings on the state of other voices within English Literature will provide a platform for all concerned to further their investigations and enrich their knowledge.

I extend my warm greetings and felicitations to the paper writers on this occasion and congratulate the organizers as well as everyone associated with editing and publication of this collection. It will definitely be an invaluable document for future.

With Best Wishes

Dr. Birhash Giri Basumatary  
Principal,  
Bijni College, Bijni  
Principal  
Bijni College

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## The Voice of the Marginal: A Study of the Problems of Contemporary Bodo Society as Depicted in Dharanidhar Owary's Novel *Mwihur* (The Hunt)

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### Introduction

The "Sameswari Brahma Literary Award"<sup>1</sup> winning novel "Mwihur" (The Hunt) in Bodo language by Dharanidhar Owary is translated into English and Assamese languages. It is a significant social novel inviting multiple perspectives and viewpoints. The novel also explores various issues and problems faced by contemporary Bodo community. The present article is an attempt to critically analyze the problems related of identity crisis, demographic change and displacement faced by contemporary Bodo people as depicted in the novel.

Set in the rural landscape of remote Bodo villages adjacent to the popular 'Manas National Park', the novel tells the story of struggle for livelihood by a young hunter named Golo, his love for his beloved Dodere and their tragic death. Yet the novel is not merely a tragic love story but also a realistic account of the multiple issues faced by poor Bodo people living in the remote villages adjacent to the protected forest areas. Through the fictionalization of the lives of the Bodo

<sup>1</sup> A literary award initiated by Bodo Sahitya Sabha

people living in the area the novelist attempts to investigate the issues related to their identity, demography and displacement along with a host of other issues like illiteracy, poverty, erosion, deforestation, superstition etc. Here, the issues related to the identity of the Bodos, the demographical changes, and their displacement due to various causes and circumstances as narrated in the novel are studied.

### Objectives

- i. To study how the novelist has addressed the issues of Bodo identity in the novel under study.
- ii. To study how the novelist has highlighted the issue of demographic change in Bodo areas.
- iii. To study how the novelist has presented the displacement suffered by Bodo people.

### Methodology

The analytical research method is applied in the present research.

### The plot of the novel

The plot of the novel is about the life of a young hunter named Golo; the circumstance that forced him to adopt hunting as his way of livelihood, his love for a young maiden named Dodere, his transformation from a hunter to a protector of wild lives and his tragic death while performing his duty in the hand of a hunter and rival in love named Mwblao.

### The narrative of Bodo identity

It needs to be mentioned that the Bodos neither had properly recorded history nor any written literature for long. Though there is no historical record about the origin and migration of the Bodos, the prevailing legends and other folklore items clearly indicate that they are the earliest settlers of Assam and some other parts of North-East India. Much later, a few scholars like Sir Edward Gait, Dr. Suniti Kr. Chatterjee wrote about the Bodos. Edward Gait argues that the early, wide extension and long duration of Bodo inhabitation is reflected by the

names of rivers and places of Assam. In the Epic Mahabharata also there are references of the Bodos although in derogatory terms such as the Asuras and the Danavas. In the great war of Kurukshetra the Kirata or Bodo king Bhagadatta fought for the Kauravas.

### The deep rootedness of Bodo identity in the geography of Assam

In the novel, "Mwihur", the novelist Owarly also speaks about the deep rootedness of Bodo history and identity with the rivers and places of Assam and goes further to suggest that the rivers and streams remind the glorious past of the Bodos and their heroes and heroines. Here is a quote:

"The history does not speak about Bwrsi. But the river Bwrsi was dear to the Bodos living in the plain. It appears that it is not the river but the observer sent by 'Sibrai-Sibrui' living at mountain top. Yes, Bwrsi is the Bwrsi of 'Sibrai-Sibrui', Bwrsi means 'pure blessing'. After crossing the Bhutan hill, this river is divided into two in the plain, one of them is 'Manas' or 'Mwnasw'. It flows between the border of Kamrup and Goalpara. A boat-woman from Phatwibari village near Bijni having two husbands used to sail her boat letting people cross the river by tying scarf at her head through this river... Today, the rivers Manas and Bwrsi do not remind about that boatwoman only, it also speaks about the powers and victory tactics of lady Gambari, lady Birgwsri and Jaolia Dewan. It echoes the sound of the movements of lady Birgwsri's sword while fighting with Dogor Panlo, a soldier of East India Company."

(Mwihur: p.17-18)

The quoted paragraph speaks a lot about the past of the Bodos; their livelihood in the midst of nature, by the river banks, their conflict with the colonial forces and their hard work which enable them to construct the identity of the Bodos as one of the earliest settlers, hardworking and warrior tribe.

The novelist gives an anecdote about the original name of the river 'Beki' which again reveal the connection of Bodo language with the names of rivers in Assam. "But is the name of the river Bwrsi is

'Beki' as called by people of other communities? No, Golo heard a story told by an old man- at that time 'Hasting Sahab' came to inspect lands for tea plantation at Bangswbari. When he had been coming on elephant along the river Bwrsi he saw an old Bodo man sitting sadly on the bank of the river. He asked in English- "hallow old man why are you feeling sad.?" The old man got shocked when he had been asked in an unintelligible language. The old man was sad at the havoc done the river Bwrsi and he had been inwardly asking the river as to why it had not been still feeling pacified (bengakwi). Being shocked, the old man loudly said 'bengakwi'. The Sahab thought that the old man is telling the name of the river. From this time onwards the river is called-Bengakwi- Bengaki-Bengki and then Beki." (Mwihur: p.20)

The above quoted lines again suggest the deep rootedness of Bodo identity with places and rivers. They are the early settlers of the geographical area of present Assam and they provided names to most rivers and places of the region some which are now corrupted.

### **The race and religion of Bodos**

The Bodos belong to Mongoloid race who have migrated to north east India much before other communities. They have their own practice of religious worship known as "Bathouism"<sup>2</sup> which is distinct from Hinduism. The Bodos do not encourage caste/class discrimination. They believe in the equality of entire human race. Here is a quote from the novel." The Bodos are not related to Hinduism. Bathouism is the original religion of the Bodos. We are great Mongoloid race in India who entered here before 1500 B.C. crossing different places and civilizations like the Mediterranean Sea of Central Asia, the China near the river Huang-Ho, Babylon and Siberia. Thankfully, there is no caste discrimination among us. The Bodos believe that there is no high or low among human race, everybody is equal." (Mwihur: p.39)

### **Threats to Bodo identity**

While the novelist is very much vocal in claiming the identity of

<sup>2</sup> Bathouism is the traditional religion of the Bodos.

the Bodos as a distinct racial, religious and linguistic group, he is simultaneously concerned with the threats to the identity.

### **Ignorance of religious rites and ceremonies**

Many contemporary Bodo people are either ignorant or indifferent to their own religious practices due to the influence of other cultures and religions. This trend started with the invasions the Mugals and the Ahoms. There were many Bodo villages on the bank of the river Bwrsi. They used to perform religious rites of Bathouism with much devotion and enthusiasm. But with the invasions of the Mugals and the Ahoms the Bodo people were disturbed; some of them have moved upwards to the hills in the north and some have scattered in the forest. The Bodos living in this place at present have ceased to perform their religious rites.

### **Decline of work culture**

Decline of work culture and indulgence on drinking and idle gossiping in groups particularly, by younger generation Bodo people is a major threat to Bodo identity as well as the existence of the community."... Bodo people will need to wait for long time to become self-reliant. What do the Bodo people possess today? The Bodo people who prepare rice bear in the pots do not know how to make pots, the Bodos clear the forest do not know how to make big knife and axes. They do not know how to make ornaments of gold or silver. But they have time to pass sitting idly in the newly emerged small-markets in the neighborhood or group-gossiping in tea-shops in the streets."(Mwihur: p.31)

### **Contamination of culture**

Lack of awareness about cultural values and traditions among the people of present time is also a major threat to Bodo identity. An example cited by the novelist is the "Bwisagu"<sup>3</sup> celebration of present time Bodos. According to him the Bwisagu celebration in the past uphold the Bodo cultural values imbibing the very spirit of the people. But the present day Bwisagu celebration does not at all represent the

<sup>3</sup> Bwisagu is the Spring festival of the Bodos.



true Bodo culture.” The contemporary Bwisagu celebration is projecting the Bodo culture and civilization to other communities in shameful way.” Loren says from the crowd “in the past the Bwisagu songs, music and dances of the Bodos were not like these. Now they have ceased to play on kham, shiphung, serja, gongona and jotha (all these are traditional musical instruments of the Bodos.) though these were the original musical instruments of the Bodos. Harmonium and drums are musical instruments of western India. These do not belong to Mongoloids. The play of melancholic music on serja can make a real Bodo cry even today because serja is associated with the life-soul of the Bodos. Our present-day dress-manners are also shameful. These are like the dresses worn by actors or dancers of Jattrra show. The drunken old Bodo people are not excited if the music of Hindi duet or Ball dance is played by wearing such dress during Bwisagu. But if Kham, shiphung, serja is played they will dance keeping aside the bowls of their rice-bear. This is called the culture reflecting the feeling of the community.” (Mwihur: p.90)

### **The narrative of demographic change and displacement**

The various causes of demographic change and displacement of Bodo people as narrated by the novelist are studied below.

#### **Infiltration from neighboring country Bangladesh**

The large-scale infiltration by Bangladeshi people in Assam including tribal belt and blocks is the major cause of demographic change in Bodo areas and their displacement. Here is a quote from the novel: “In the past there were only Bodo villages near the river Bwrsi. Today they do not exist. They have scattered far and wide. Now thousands of people from East Bengal or Bangladesh have come here in groups and build their houses in the banks of the river Bwrsi, they have settled there. Gradually they have also infiltrated into the western grazing reserve. There is no more grazing field. The local people could not stop them due to the lack of unity among themselves. Nwrsingbari and Narenguri have been completely taken over by the Muslims.” (Mwihur: p.46)

#### **Vote bank politics by political parties**

The government and political parties are also responsible for large scale infiltration of the Bangladeshi migrants. According to the novelist the congress government and its agencies have encouraged in such infiltration for their votes. He says: “The congress government has also helped them, the leaders from other communities, and Mondols and other officials fulfilled their own needs only. But they have not thought that this will be an important event for entire Assam someday. The government has also ruled for thirty years with their votes in the independent India.” (Mwihur: p.46-47)

#### **Lack of stability among Bodo people**

One of the reasons of displacement of Bodo people is their own nature of the lack of stability and impatience. They have the habit of leaving their own settled places and moving to more backward places in search of new habitat.” Look Dodere, we just prepare land for other people. The present town and cities were once the inhabitation of the Bodos. The present Guwahati or Furgatowput of the past, Dispur or Dwisapur were also once living places of the Bodos. But now the few people who live here lead their lives by selling alcohols. Kokrajhar was Bodo people’s own and original town. Now they have left the town for other places by selling households.” (Mwihur: p.25)

#### **Natural calamities**

The recurring flood and soil erosion are also major reasons of the displacement of Bodo people. Many Bodo villages are located by the riversides. During rainy seasons these rivers flooded frequently and destroy the nearby villages. In the novel, the protagonist’s village is also destroyed by the river Bwrsi forcing him to feel the pangs of poverty and landlessness.” For that reason, Bwrsi was taking the terrible path and swept away some Bodo villages. Golo takes a sigh, feels sad because their land and plantations were swept away in the Burlungbuthur in the flood. Today Golo has nothing.” (Mwihur: p.19)

### Conclusion

Dharanidhar Owary's novel "Mwihur" offers thought provoking narratives on issues of Bodo identity, demography and their displacement in the backdrop of the tragic love story of the protagonists Golo and Dodere. The author himself admitted that the incidents of the novel are the creation of his imagination but at the same time he made it clear that these are also not far away from the day-to-day reality. The novel does not present a photographic reality but it offers a fictionalized account of the reality confronted by Bodo people living in and around the Manas forest.

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## Toni Morrison's Beloved Trilogy: Revisiting African-American Identity

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### Abstract :

The question of identity arises when a crisis takes place, be it an individual, a race, a nation or a religion; when a situation of hegemonic exercise takes place in the social hierarchy, a process of polarization begins to enter into the social structure thereby pushing one set of people into the sideline, who are subsequently treated as the "Others". As a literary genre, African-American literature began to flourish on the life tales of the African slaves brought to the USA during the colonial regime and who later got settled in the American soil, in most cases, by wiping out the traces of their cultural root. Morrison's *Beloved* scrutinizes the horrific effects of slavery on the identity of the African-American s. Together with her two other novels—*Jazz* and *Paradise*—Morrison writes a trilogy of slave identity where she depicts the state of slavery and their troublesome lives even after coming into freedom. Throughout her narratives in these novels, Morrison uses the coloured folk's memory of their origin identity or their cultural root and produces strong discourses on the race's history of oppression and exploitation. Reading the three novels as a series of fiction, we find a chronology of the evolution of the African-American s from the state of animal-like slavery to a free and modernised race. This paper is an attempt to analyse the three novels of Morrison from the point of view of racism in African-American identity.

**Key Words:** Slavery, identity, race, hegemony, hierarchy.

**Introduction:**

Toni Morrison, being one of the most prominent figures of African - American literature, has not only contributed eleven scholarly and popular novels to the bulk of this branch of American literature but also given a worldwide recognition to African-American literature as an established literary genre belonging to an enlightened race after centuries of oppression. Her novels are known for their epic themes, vivid dialogue, and richly detailed African-American characters. Toni Morrison, a prolific writer that she was, published eleven novels with acute realistic picture of the African-American socio-cultural life— *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Tar Baby* (1981), *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992), *Paradise* (1997), *Love* (2003), *A Mercy* (2008), *Home* (2012) and the latest one *God Help the Child* (2015). Her novels, by and large, deal with the themes of racial difference, racial exploitation and many other important issues of African-American identity; and in fact, the whole body of literary works that Morrison has produced make powerful discourses on racism and black feminism.

**Black Identity and the Beloved Trilogy:**

The novels *Beloved*, *Jazz* and *Paradise*, together can be read as a series of fiction dealing with some of the vital issues of Black identity; where Morrison has rewritten the history of racial exploitation in America. The thematic uniformity of a trilogy is displayed in the gradual development of the community that the novels focus in its chronological order. For instance, the spirit of resistance in the African-American people under slavery, which she has focused in *Beloved*, the first novel of her trilogy, continues through *Jazz* with the realistic observation and commentary upon freed black life during and after the Great Migration from the American South to the North; and completes with *Paradise* narrating the experiences of black segregation thereby making the three novels a chronology of racial exploitation of the blacks in America from the state of slavery to freedom. Using the fresh memory of a hateful black experience of slavery in *Beloved*,

Morrison reveals an aversion to the white dominance over the black community and her despise against the racial exploitation is intricately woven in the novel. Although Morrison does not specify the time when the novel was set, except Sethe's infanticide in 1855, the novel can be traced back to 1850, when the Fugitive Slave Act<sup>1</sup> was enforced, which led to numerous insurrections: it is reported that 46 slaves were executed on a charge of murdering slave masters and overseers in the 1950s (Mori, 2001).

Morrison, who is mostly haunted by her racial background finds it problematic to forget the past, decides to raise the issues about slavery in *Beloved*. The novel is based on a newspaper article about a fugitive slave, Margaret Garner, which Morrison found in the *American Baptist* when she was working as an editor at Random House. Margaret Garner killed her own child when she was likely to be captured by slave catchers. Being a victim of enforced slavery, the ex-slave mother was so terrified by the experience of slave catching that she considered infanticide to be better than slavery; and gave salvation to her beloved daughter rather than handing over her to the slave catchers. Inspired by this particular incident, Morrison decides to write a novel to recover the voice and the subjectivity of the slave woman, which was totally ignored in the newspaper article.

The quest for identity of the black American people makes a recurrent theme in almost all her fictional creations. Right from the beginning Toni Morrison has been creating novels dealing with the themes of racial exploitations in the American soil. Her debut novel *The Bluest Eye* deals with the psychological effect of racism upon the coloured people and narrates the story of Pecola Breedlove who seeks for the bluest eye in order to achieve a white standard of beauty. *Beloved* is a fictional recreation of the true-life events of a female slave in the late 19th century. Sethe, the main character, manages to escape slavery by fleeing from a Kentucky plantation. But she is soon forced by her dire circumstances to make a heartbreaking decision of infanticide and must sacrifice the life of her young daughter, called 'Beloved', in the fear of allowing her child to be recaptured and enslaved. Morrison's *Beloved* scrutinizes the horrific effects of slavery

on the identity of the African-American s. The novel presents Sethe's personal and narrative history fused with the historical context of slavery in the American South in a brilliant cultural and political commentary. Together with her two other novels—*Jazz* and *Paradise*—Morrison rewrites a historical trilogy of slave identity where she depicts the state of slavery and their troublesome lives even after coming into freedom; everywhere Morrison uses the coloured folk's memory of their origin identity or their cultural root.

Commenting on the beginning of the novel *Beloved*, "124 was spiteful. Full of a baby's venom.", Morrison points out that with numerals rather than spelled out numbers, it was her intention to give the house an identity separate from the street or even the city; to name it the way "Sweet Home" was named; the way plantations were named, but not with nouns or "proper" names—with numbers instead, because numbers have no adjectives, no posture of coziness or grandeur or the haughty yearning of arrivistes and estate builders for the parallel beautifications of the nation they left behind, laying claim to instant history and legend (*Black Matters, Mouth Full of Blood*, p. 194). Morrison makes it clear for the readers that 124 refers to a house which hints at the event of the house being spiteful. She says that the psychological state of the residents of the house is revealed by the way their minds are haunted by the ghostly presence around the house; and this condition reveals the trauma in which they were living. According to Morrison, the presence of the haunting is both a major incumbent of the narrative and sleight of hand (*Beloved* 195). If *Beloved* narrates the plight of the American Blacks under the grip of slavery, *Jazz* narrates the way of Black Freedom which came to them mostly by means of the Great Migration, where the blacks began to move towards the northern cities in search of a modern standard of living. In *Paradise* on the other hand Morrison talks about a free black society and brings back the memory of the historical events of Desegregation.

#### Racial Hybridity and the New Negro:

In her trilogy Morrison has presented the changing scenario in the

African-American cultural tradition. This change is marked in their social and cultural behaviour that Morrison has presented throughout her trilogy in terms of their lives under slavery through the Great Migration to freedom after the Civil War. The process of the black endeavour to come out of the darkness of slavery is depicted in *Beloved*, where Morrison has shown the persistent efforts of the slaves to escape or buy freedom at the cost of money, extra labour and other affordable means. In her *Beloved*, Halle Suggs buys the freedom for his mother Baby Suggs by offering all his Sundays to his master at Sweet Home, but could not manage to buy it for himself because he lacked the money, he would need for it. Likewise, the slaves at Sweet Home made a secret plan to escape the estate of Schoolteacher together, though they failed because of their lack of the skill of maintaining secrecy. The novel *Beloved* presents three generations of slaves and ex-slaves in three different states of affair: Baby Suggs who wrought all her life is freed by her son at her old age stands at the first generation, the second generation is represented by Sethe who tries to resist forceful slavery for children and finally triumphs in her resistance though she has to sacrifice one of the kids for the purpose; her daughter Denver lives out of slavery since her birth and experiences the traces of slavery in her social surrounding represents the third generation of the victims of slavery. Here, Morrison narrates the racial experiences under the social condition of slavery, and her narrative gives us a raw vision of a slave society. After all, the slaves as depicted in *Beloved* were always found to be in search of a change in their cultural identity, which we see in the other two novels of Morrison's trilogy.

In *Jazz*, Morrison narrates the social status of the freed blacks after the Great Migration, and shows the humiliating condition they had to confront in a rather freed environment. The picture that Morrison gives about the lives of the free blacks after achieving the advantages of modernization may seem pessimistic, but the novel gives us quite a realistic picture about the changing social scenario in the African-American socio-cultural life. Together with the blessings of modernity that the blacks have provoked, they have also adopted some of the negative practices of modern liberty. The urban liberty they have

acquired has changed the cultural behaviour of the blacks; now they have learned the use of modern facilities in their day-to-day affairs. The African-Americans who lived no better than the animals during slavery, now live in the apartment houses, with all the modern amenities. There has been racial mixture which happened by means of love and sexual habits, bringing about the elements of hybridity in the racialised people. In the novel we see progenies of mixed blood, who are made to suffer the crisis of identity in the society motivated by racial feelings. Under such an orthodox social set up Vera Louise Gray has to hide the identity of her mixed blooded child in the white social surrounding. Even among the black people of the blood of racial purity, various elements of white culture have been intruded, thus producing racial hybridity in all sphere of a black society. The manners and habits of Joe and Violet are much influenced by the urban life of America. They are no longer confined to the tropical life that the blacks had passed, and there have been persistent efforts in the black people of the South to come out of the monotonous life in the midst of tropical nature. Joe recalls his bitter experience of living in the South, so does his wife Violet, "Before I came North, I made sense and so did the world. We didn't have nothing but we didn't miss it (p.207)." Like every other southern black, she was fatigued with the tropical life and fond of the city life in the North, "Living in the City was the best thing in the world (207)." Coming North and witnessing the white sophistication, she too longed for a life as blessed as that of the whites. Hence, she replies to the narrator's question, "Who? Who'd you want to be?" We see the sense of longing for whiteness in her desire, "Not who so much as what. White. Light. Young again (p.208)." These sorts of tendencies no doubt, cannot change the colour of their skin, but they can at least make the blacks borrow the white cultural habits; thus, the cultural tradition that the blacks have developed in the city life lead them towards cultural hybridity. These Negroes may not fully form the orthodox New Negroes<sup>2</sup> but they are the blacks with a hybrid cultural mixture who are greatly polished in their cultural habits with the white urban habits.

In the novel *Paradise*, Morrison represents the black experience

she has observed and witnessed around her social surrounding; and at the same time, it seems to be her attempt to write several concentric histories of the American experience from a distinctively African-American perspective. In other words, her *Paradise* is a history of the black population in America from a time as early as 1775, as mentioned in the novel. While narrating the black history, Morrison has tried to move the concentration from the traditional white history to the black social and cultural lives. In an interview with Carolyn Denard, Morrison declares how she actually tries to deviate her novels from the common interest in the white subjects to the black ones. She says, "[...] for me, in doing novels about African-Americans, I was trying to move away from the unstated but overwhelming and dominant context that was white history and to move into another one" (Denard 1998: 4-5). Morrison mentions in her critical work *Playing in the Dark* that "there is a four-hundred-year-old overwhelming presence of black people in the United States, and it is very important for the recognition of the black identity in the nation" and her observation about this novel asserts the black experience in its cultural narrative as she says: "*Paradise* ... draws that black presence forward from the margins of imagination to the center of American literature and history." Regarding the Black existence in Morrison's narrative as an identity marker, a critic on Morrison, Widdowson says that in place of the expected story of specifically black experience as "a shadowy adjunct to the 'real' normative story of national life, the official national founding myth of America's white 'Fathers' is a shadow of African-Americans' own, in a community where shadows are not dark, but white (2001)."

#### Notes:

1. The Fugitive Slave Act (1850) guaranteed federal enforcement of the constitutional provision for reclaiming runaway slaves or servants. It enabled the slave owners to get help from the US marshals and deputies to reclaim human property and it levied a fine of \$1000 if they refused. Cf. Raymond Gavins: *The Cambridge Guide to African-American History*, p.112; will be abbreviated hereafter as *Cambridge Guide* for parenthetical and other references.

2. The term "New Negro" was used by the Black Press as early as 1895, applauding a generation who refused to be kept in the "Negro's place". Against the campaign of Booker T. Washington for black service in the US Armed Forces, the African-American newspapers popularized the image of an "assertive race-proud New Negro at home." See Gavins, p.212.

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## Thengphakhri: Orality, Narratives and Bodo Identity

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#### Abstract:

Narratives of Thengphakhri, specially, Indira Goswami's the Bronze Sword of Thengphakhri Tehsildar (2009) and Bidyasagar Narzary's the Sword of Birgwsri (2004) have been of significant contribution in exploring and identifying the Bodos from historical perspectives. Such narratives also seek to redefine, reconstruct and validate their distinct identity. Even though the Bodos believe that they had glorious historical past, however, in the absence of written history of their own, the same became forgotten and scattered. The story of Thengphakhri was traced from the available oral expressions of some of the old Bodo people who, in reality, could see and meet her working as a tax collector with British officers. The importance laid upon her character flourished after her story was fictionalized by the above stated two novelists. Consequently, propagation and exploration about her character among the Bodos got accelerated through different activities like the translation of the novels specially, in English, the aftermath formation of preservation committee, the dramatic performances on her story and so on. This paper is an attempt to read the Bodo identity through the narratives of Thengphakhri.

**Key Words:** Bodo identity, culture, History, orality, Thengphakhri. Orality as a part of human discourse always tends to express various

aspects of human life and existence. In today's context, it remains a source of "unearthing wealth of knowledge". Barbara W. Sommer and Mary Kay Quinlan in the Introduction part of the book *The Oral History Manual* write: oral history, with its emphasis on personal outreach, can help benefit an entire community by bringing people together. Regardless of the role it plays in community organization, it can become a vehicle for documenting not only facts about the past but also more subjective insights into how people organize their views of their history. (4)

For being a repository of precious information and knowledge, orality can be regarded as a door to the past through which history, culture, traditions and so on can be reconnected, reconfigured and retrieved in negotiating the present. Therefore, the wide dimensions of orality can play crucial role in transfiguring the identity of a race by giving an insight into their historical and cultural significance.

The Bodos are one of the earliest settlers of Assam, India and the largest tribe of it. They had glorious past with their distinct language, culture, traditions, religion, rituals, food habits and so on. Edward Gait regarded them as the earliest known inhabitants of the Brahmaputra valley. They occupied the plains of Assam for a long time. Sidney Endlein in his monograph *The Kacharis* writes that "Bodos who are known as Kacharis and to themselves as Bada (Bara) were in early days the dominant race in Assam" (4). They possess their own language, culture, customs, rituals, religion and so on. Since time immemorial, oral expressions among them too played a vital role in transferring and inheriting their cultural values and history. The transmission of knowledge, history and experiences, among them took place mainly through the oral tradition and performances rather than on written texts. Their proverbs, riddles, myths, ballads, legends and so on are some of the examples which help us to understand and realize their past history and culture to a great extent. Even though they do not have written history they still recall that they had their glory and great kingdom in the past.

The Bodos are still struggling to establish their distinct identity. They seek and feel that the sense of security and safety to their racial

identity can only be granted with the creation of a separate state of Bodoland under the provision of Indian constitution. They have undergone different phases of movements and protests in availing their constitutional rights. In the present context of their existence and their insistence in establishing them as a distinct race with dignity, and in the absence of some solid written historical documents on their past, their available orality has tremendously influenced them in understanding their glorious past. In due course of time, along with the germination of racial consciousness, it has helped to shape and develop their identity. Their oral literature is filled with unknown and unexplored information and knowledge. Filled with charming information and knowledge, it has helped them to decode, deconstruct and redefine the idea of Bodo nation and identity which remained subsumed and unexplored since long. Therefore, in such situation, the past history recollected through their orality can be one of the crucial sources in reconfiguring and redefining their misrepresented identity as history according to Stephen Greenblatt is "changing" and filled with "shifting interests" and "jostling of orthodox and subversive impulses". For Michel Foucault too, "history is brought into existence, as a discipline, as a time, in response to the rise of a discourse of the present" (Brannigan 215).

Historical characters are inseparable part for the identification of not only about one's history but also about the culture and traditions. Though the Bodos had great heroes of their national importance, most of them got forgotten as remained unpreserved in time. Moreover, they still recall some of their oral accounts which are significant enough in transplanting and configuring the Bodo identity. The discovery of such historical figures not only identifies them, rather it also helps their claims to be validated. This can be rightly observed as Hans Bertens says, "Self is always construction, (that) our identity is never given, but always the product of an interaction between the way we want to represent our selves". It is a fact that the Bodos have been noticed nationwide due to their ongoing agitation for separate state of Bodoland, but much about their customs, religion, ethics and most importantly their history still remain an unknown fact for others.

In reclaiming their identity, the historical characters are never inseparable part. Human beings need history for understanding themselves as well as to make others know who they are. Their history helps in reverting and defending the baseless notion from others. Through historical characters the cultural and political realities can be discovered and consequently such discovery helps in growing a racial identity stronger and wider. Therefore, it can also be called that discovery of history is a way of producing identity.

Though the Bodo society is patriarchal in nature, women in their society play a very crucial role, specially, in cultural and religious aspects. Based on their cultural and religious rituals, it can be stated that women in Bodo society possess dignified and revered positions. Since time immemorial, Bodo women have been inseparable part in their traditional religion and culture. Since the unknown past, the Bodo women equally contributed in the process of nation building and protecting their nation with equal participation along with men in warfare, battle, administration etc. This further gets strengthened while the historical participation of Bodo women in Indian freedom movement is brought into the light which remained silenced and forgotten since long. The exploration of Thengphakhri's character is an example to foreground the position and contribution of the Bodo women to their society.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century only, effort has been put by some of the Bodo writers in documenting and translating the story of their past legends depending on the availability of oral accounts amongst them. Creating consciousness about their identity became the guiding factor in looking back to their oral tradition. The rising interest in the study of Bodo culture and tradition began from 1960 onwards. Sukumar Basumatary's *Abou Aboini Solo* (1960) and *BoroKachari Solo* (1972) edited by P. Goswami and Muhini Mahan Brahma, *Folk Songs of the Bodos* (1960) edited by Muhini Mahan Brahma are some of them to be mentioned. It is also around this time that composition of historical plays based on renowned Bodo historical figures got published. Kamal Kumar Brahma's *Raja Iragdao* (1978), Mongolsing hHazowary's *Swmdwn* (1979), Jwhwlao Dwimalu (1991), Jaolia Dewan (1991),

Dwarendranath Basumatary's *Sonani Maibang* and Raja Nilambar (1993), Aniram Basumatary's *Gambari Sikhla* (1992) are some of the examples. These are based on legends which are capable of providing important lessons of heroism and patriotism and in return could instill love and pride for their culture and race. The emergence of various oral narratives into the above-mentioned texts is significant as it marks the new beginning of consciousness among the Bodos towards their race and identity. Such period of time also coincides with various important socio-political moments and events in the history of the Bodos. However, documentation or recording in a textual form about the character of Thengphakhri was not initiated by those authors. Her story just remained within the minds of some old Bodo men for prolonged days and did not get translated into the forms of written texts. Moreover, there have also been the publication of some works by the Bodo authors and their works reveal a conscious effort for reviving and retelling the stories about the significant Bodo historical figures. Anil Boro's *Folk Literature of the Boros: An Introduction* (2001), Kameswar Brahma's *Raithai Bidang* (1995) and *An Introduction to the Myths and Legends of the Bodos* (2004), Bijni Jarimin (*History of Bijni*) published by Bijni District Bodo Literary Association in 2005, and Rupnath Basumatary's *BaidiBithing* (2016) are to be mentioned. Conscious effort has been given by these authors in reviving and retelling the story of almost lost and forgotten heroes of the Bodos as the glorious past history of them can be imagined through those historical characters. The fragmented narration on Thengphakhri's character is also one of those characters who was a tax collector of a Mouza called Chaudhuripara under Bag Duar during the time of British administration.

It is fact that the distorted life-account of Birgwsri could be traced only from the memories of some old Bodo men and their traditional oral literature. However, though nothing is mentioned about her brave story in mainstream Assamese history like *Buranjis*, Assam *Buranjior* other Indian history books, there is still a historical relic of her in Bijini, under Chirang District of Assam. BatiramBoro, from Londonfara, who saw Birgwsri alive, coming to collect taxes riding



horse with some British Officers was a live example of the source, whom even Indira Goswami too met once in 2007. Rupnath Basumatary, a retired principal of Bengtol Higher Secondary school, also met Rupsing Dafadar, a close and most appreciated soldier of Thengphakhri. She was the one who conspired along with another historic character of the Bodos, Jaolia Dewan, to establish a free Bodo nation against the taxation of Bhutan kingdom and British domination and exploitation during the colonial period.

The rewriting of her story, specially by Bidyasagar Narzary in his *Birgwsrini Thungri* (In English *The Sword of Birgwsri*) and Indira Goswami's *Thengphakhri Tehsildaror Tamor Tarowal* (In English *The Bronze Sword of Thengphakhri Tehsildar*) has been a significant moment for Bodos that seeks to transplant the history, culture and the contribution of the Bodos to India's freedom movement with that of mainstream Indian literary and cultural space. Though there are differing views on the identity of *Birgwsri* and *Thengphakhri*, the mentioned two novels by Narzary and Goswami are closely allied. Goswami projects her novel around the three years of time where *Thengphakhri* was working as a tax collector along with the British colonial officers, whereas, Narzary delineates the evolution of the identity of *Birgwsri* from *Thengphakhri*. The fictional recreation of her story has been quite effective in creating a discourse of Bodo identity from the historical perspectives. Her story stands as a symbol of strength and reminds the glorious past of the Bodos, which is of enormous importance for strengthening the national sentiment among them and thereby to propagate their distinct identity. Both narratives have played crucial role in opening avenues to explore and identify the Bodos from historical perspectives to a great extent. Exploration of almost ignored and forgotten story through fictionalized forms also opened extensive scope for the Bodos to reconstruct and establish their distinct identity.

Historical characters are not only the source to provide idea of the past but also often referred and brought into the discourse of strengthening the process of identity assertion. They are precious pearl to a race and inseparable part as the unknown facts of past come out

through them. They can disseminate lessons of past values in the field of social structure, racial identity, cultural legacy, human relationships and so on. Therefore, Stuart Hall rightly observes as he says, "the past continues to speak with us" (Rutherford 226). Their stories not only reflect history but also "actively make history". It also helps in fulfilling the political aspirations of the community. The Bodos seek to exist as a distinct race with dignity, sustained sense of security and freedom to their own culture, traditions, history, language etc. Therefore, they seek to attain such political autonomy through which they can have self-determination and enjoy the sense of freedom.

As a cultural product, literature may have a constant interaction with politics as telling stories through it "may be used as a way to shore up a sense of self, to relate oneself to the world by relating or hearing a story about one's place in the world" (Robson 34). Therefore, writing narratives on the subject of cultural or historical importance "act as an attempt to assert an identity" and subsequently arouses "a sense of nationalism. As the Bodos are still in the state of identity crisis and undergoing though its reformation and reconstruction, the reminiscence to their glorious past history, literally unite them as "nationalism thinks in terms of historical destinies" (Anderson 149).

It is fact that, the documentations on the character of *Thengphakhri* based on the available oral expressions among the Bodos, did not get much focused earlier before the publication of the two novels mentioned above. The fictionalization of her character through their respective novels, which are based on their individual research work executed on the available oral expressions, significantly contributed towards the character formation of *Thengphakhri*/*Birgwsri* and in disseminating the importance of her character specially for the Bodo nation and identity. Bidyasagar Narzary has attempted in unfurling a complete historical account of *Birgwsri*'s brave historic story, who sacrificed her life for the sake of her people. He has given a dramatic portrayal of the character of *Birgwsri* through which the bitter sweet relationship between the Bodos and the Bhutiyas and also the impact of British colonial rule upon the Bodos can be understood. The revival of such historic and significant character could sensitize

the history and identity of the Bodo people in a large extent as the unknown history of the Bodos which remained unexplored and silenced since long has now been undertaken to be negotiated by the author. The portrayal of such historical account has become significant in instilling the knowledge of glorious history of the Bodos and in raising a defensive voice against marginalization and exploitation at least to some extent.

Before the publication of Bidyasagar Narzary and Indira Goswami's novel, nothing much was explored about Thengphakhri's brave historic story. Though, Goswami herself declared that she had not written the novel with the line of historical fiction, she has left a positive avenue to trace the unexplored historical account of Thengphakhri's life. Aruni Kashyap in his introduction of *The Bronze Sword of Thengphakhri Tehsilder* reveals that Goswami's writing is actually transplanting the Bodo life and culture, their story of contribution to India's Freedom struggle into the centre of India's literary and cultural imagination. Goswami's writing has contributed a lot in expanding and propagating the invaluable character of Thengphakhri otherwise she became almost forgotten heroine even among the Bodos. Understanding the cultural and racial significance with the publication of Thengphakhri's story for the Bodos, Goswami was awarded the 7<sup>th</sup> Upendranath Brahma Soldier of Humanity award by the Upendranath Brahma Trust in 2010 as her novel recreates national sentiment among the Bodos. It has also promoted the historical and cultural Identity of Bodos to a great extent. The fictional recreation of the character of Thengphakhri brought back the past forgotten history of the Bodos and made it alive as the bravery of the Bodo heroine has been transformed so well from the oral expression to fictional imagination lying in the minds of people thereby widening the Bodo identity and their national sentiment. Her narratives provide us the scope in knowing the past socio-historical conditions which make us realize the extent of atrocity and exploitation that the Bodos had to undergo in the name of taxation both from Bhutan as well as British colonizers.

The literary re-birth of Thengphakhri's story in different languages

too, could project the past history and culture of the Bodos not only to the readers of Assamese or Bodo language but also to readers throughout India and abroad. Both of the texts depict the historical events related to the heroic exploit of Thengphakhri which could be a key to an understanding of the socio-political history of the Bodos. The textual content of such narrative brought significant transformation over the years together with the changing socio-political landscape of the Bodos. It shows how historical imagination and social memory, mostly drawn from the downtrodden Bodo society, influenced the Bodo nation building process in the twentieth century. Literary imagination makes it possible to take the self-identity of nationalism beyond from merely being textual to the wider level of human discourse as Gayatri Spivak writes "that literature and the arts can support an advanced nationalism is no secret. They join in the task of a massive remembering project, saying 'we all suffered this way, you remember, this is what happened, you remember,' so that history is turned into cultural memory".

As the Bodo identity is still in the state of reformation and reconstruction, the exploration of her character has been a significant one for changing the outlook of their identity. Aruni Kashyap in this regard writes: "...Thengphakhri has no doubt joined the ranks of Kanaklata Barua and Mula Gabhoru because of Goswami's literary intervention and hopefully, one day, will also be remembered in the same way as Jhansi ki Rani" (xiv). Goswami's novel is an exploration of the silent and hidden history of a Bodo heroine, Thengphakhri, a powerful tax collector under the British colonialism in India in such a time when learned Indians, social reformers and the British Government were jointly trying to fight against certain evil social practices such as sati, child marriage and purdah-system which is assumed to occur during her life from 1857 to 1859 (As per Aruni Kashyap's statement). The novelist has vividly portrayed Thengphakhri's brave personality, who sacrificed her life for the sake of Bodo people by raising sword against the exploitation and dominance of British colonisers. Her character, undoubtedly, visualizes and reminds the glorious past of Bodos and their identity as a whole. Her emergence

and assertion of Bodo identity directly or indirectly touches the heart of entire Bodo people and even equally capable to highlight the same to others as well, that consequently strengthens the process of Bodo identity formation. Both the narratives become more significant as they urge to revisit the past traditions and positions of the Bodo women in their society which has many virtues to be highlighted.

The installation of Thengphakhri's statues at Bijni and Tipkai signify the historical and cultural significance of her character to the Bodos and the honour and glorification that they seek to offer her. Besides this, a Thengphakhri Preservation Committee was also formed in May, 2009 with the active initiation of Bijni Writers' Academy at Bijni under present Chirang District of BTAD, Assam. They have also constructed an office nearby the installation of the statue of Thengphakhri. Moreover, based on her brave story, live stage performances in some of the Bodo inhabitant villages also took place and with due permission from Bidyasagar Narzary, a TV serial based on his novel Birgwsrini Thungri under the initiative of Guwahati based Tarulata Film Production to be telecasted under the Commissioned Programme of Doordarshan, New Delhi has also been completed. Such series of evolutions are undoubtedly a symbolic manifestation to remind the glorious past of the Bodos which is of enormous importance for strengthening the national sentiment among them and thereby to establish and propagate their distinct identity. This is also an effort of hero making process of the forgotten heroine among the Bodos, which in return will inculcate heroic identity to them and also becomes a source of inspiration for their future generations. This will also definitely create a new understanding about the Bodos and their contribution to Indian freedom struggle and keeps open avenues to revisit the forgotten history of underrepresented region in Assam.

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## *Disgrace: A Critique of Race and Patriarchy*

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### Abstract:

The present study makes an effort to analyze *Disgrace* (1999), a novel by J. M. Coetzee which takes into account the representation of sexual exploitation of women and the race-sex issue within its oeuvre. The narrative juxtaposes the issue of sexual violation of a native student by a white academician, with the rape of his lesbian daughter by three black men in the postapartheid South-African context. Though the novel seems to project subjugation of woman/woman's body (in racial situation), the study contends that *Disgrace* rather interrogates the complicated yet complicit power structures in the patriarchal/racial arena and subverts the mainstream approaches towards the issues of sexuality, patriarchy and race.

**Key Words:** Apartheid, patriarchal domination, power structure, sexual exploitation, subversion.

**Introduction :** The present study focuses on *Disgrace* (1999), a novel by the South Africa-born author, J. M. Coetzee. *Disgrace* interrogates the mainstream approaches towards the issues of sexuality, patriarchy and race. According to Ania Loomba, "race, gender and sexuality are not just additive to one another in the colonial arena... but work together and develop in each other's crucible" (172). Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari observe: "man is majoritarian par excellence" and 'majority' refers to "the determination of a state or standard" such as "white-man, adult-male, etc" and "implies a state of domination" (291).

In colonial/patriarchal discourse both natives and women are posited as the 'other' to the mainstream 'norm/standard' and obliterated as cultural agencies. Feminist and postcolonial discourses both seek to reinstate the marginalized by challenging dominant ideologies/practices (Ashcroft et al 175). Domination based on racial/sexual difference (there are other modes of differentiation pertaining to religion, caste and so on) is prevalent in colonial discourse. The construction of the colonial subject and exercise of colonial power through discourse demands a form of difference which is both racial and sexual (Bhabha 67). Both feminist and postcolonial scholarships attempt to invert the prevailing hierarchy of gender/culture/race by refusing the binaries upon which patriarchal/colonial authority constructs itself (Gandhi 83).

The South African society has experienced white domination for centuries. Nelson Mandela comments: "The often haphazard segregation of the past three hundred years was to be consolidated into a monolithic system that was diabolical in its detail ... The premise of apartheid was that whites were superior to Africans, Coloureds and Indians" (104). The country geared up for socio-political transformations with the ANC (African National Congress) leader, Mandela as the first black President of the country and the abolition of the apartheid regime in 1994. Yet historian Leonard Thompson opines: "Racism survives in the new South Africa; full reconciliation was not to be expected before the remnants of apartheid attitudes and practices were dismantled" (287).

Laura L. Fisher observes in Coetzee's writings qualities of the "female aesthetic," a position that challenges dominant patriarchal society (6). His works question the 'father-born' epistemologies of history, geography and categorization (Easton 588). The incident central to *Disgrace* (1999) is the sexual violation of a woman's body. Professor David Lurie gets dismissed from Cape Technical University due to sexual misconduct with a native student named Melanie. David's abuse exposes power operating at levels of gender, race and institution. *Disgrace* performs a subversion of 'black-peril' (social anxiety about rape of white women by black men) by scripting a narrative of 'white-

peril — sexual exploitation of black women by white men that has existed for centuries (Graham 437).

*Disgrace* shows how David always countson his “magnetism.” He tells Melanie: “a woman’s beauty does not belong to her alone... She has a duty to share it” (16). The first time he makes love to her, “she is passive throughout” (19). Next time, “All she does is avert herself... Not rape” but “undesired to the core” (25). Melanie becomes a metonym for the exotic/ethnic/racial/ colonized other (Stratton 85). She wants to give up studies. A Rape Awareness Week is observed in the university campus and complaint is lodged against David. He later condemns the rapists of Lucy. For Mike Marais, David is party to what he condemns: “Lurie’s attempt to possess his student is emblematic of the relations of power that pervade South African society as a whole. The significance of the parallel rape scenes is that the ethical, that is, compassion or care for the other which leads to a respect for the otherness of the other, is absent from the political in this society” (58).

During the official enquiry, David admits guilty but refuses to gain a reprieve. The official enquiry has resonance with the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Demonstrating a firm desire to overcome the arbitrary barriers associated with apartheid, Mandela named the TRC in 1995 (Cottrell 115). It conducted hearings (from victims and perpetrators) across the country in order to achieve nationwide-coming-to-terms with the terrible years of repression. Yet, Thompson finds: “Notwithstanding the noble efforts of many South Africans... race continued to be the basic line of division in South African society, with class becoming increasingly significant among blacks” (278).

David’s lesbian daughter Lucy is a farmer. In her personality David “recognizes a statement of independence” (Coetzee 89). He dislikes women who make no effort to be attractive. To him, Lucy’s friend Bev is “dumpy.” They become physically intimate yet this attitude is patronizing. Lucy’s girl friend Helen does not fit in the image of his gaze/desire. To his heteronormative perspective “what women do together” remains a question. Lucy’s rape reminds David “of what

women undergo in the hands of men” (98). He “wonders whether women would not be happier living in communities of women, accepting visits from men only when they choose... Or perhaps that is all that lesbians are: women who have no need of men” (104). David sees “a history of wrong” speaking through the black rapists while Lucy analyzes the hateful-sex-act as a “murder.” Coetzee is making pertinent to our time and place a mythos of agonized renewal that is as old as Western civilization and for which sexual violence is often the vehicle (Smith 20). David Attwell too finds a sociobiological strain in the novel which reinterprets history as a record of male sexuality shared by all races (338).

David is shocked that the intruders are sought only for “robbery and assault.” Lucy says: “what happened to me is a purely private matter. In another time, in another place it might be held to be a public matter” (Coetzee 112). He feels alarmed that she would not abort her child, nor escape anywhere. She asserts: “You behave as if everything I do is part of the story of your life. You are the main character; I am a minor character... I have a life of my own... in my life I am the one who makes the decisions” (198). Lucy asks David: “Should I choose against the child because of who its father is?” (198). She further says: “Love will grow — one can trust Mother Nature for that. I am determined to be... A good mother and a good person” (216). David’s perception changes as he regards the unborn child would be “a child of this earth.” He also visits Melanie’s family to apologize and learns about her progress in theatre.

Petrus seems to have wrong ideas about girls like “A girl is very expensive” or “it is best if the first one is a boy. Then he can show his sisters... how to behave” (130). However, he finds Lucy “different” and “as good as a boy.” Pollux, one of the rapists, is Petrus’ relative. As Pollux is very young, Petrus would marry Lucy. She objectively judges her situation. Staying on has become “a point of honour” that she is ready to be called “his third wife” and the baby will be part of his family. She would be a “tenant on his land” but will keep the kennels and none can enter her house without permission, including Petrus.

*Disgrace* has faced much criticism for its portrayal of the race-sex

issue. Derek Attridge mentions how the South African playwright Athol Fugard, without having read the novel, expresses outrage: "That white women are going to accept being raped as penance for what was done in the past? Jesus. It's an expression of a very morbid phenomenon" (164). The novel was cited by the ANC in its submission to the South African Human Rights Commission hearings on racism in the media. Elleke Boehmer too thinks that *Disgrace* notes how the white dominance and the overcoming of it involve the subjection of the female body, as part of a long history of female exploitation (344).

Simone Drichelsees in Lucy "an alterity" that "escapes the accounting mind" of David (158). David is unable to touch either the racial or the gendered other (Spivak 22). Gareth Cornwell finds the "refusal to acknowledge the self's necessary passage through the other" lies at the heart of *Disgrace's* thematic burden (315). The road Lucy follows may be wrong but if she leaves the farm, she will taste defeat in life. For Stefanie Boese, Lucy discovers that there is no such biopolitical blank slate in which the social effects of apartheid and colonialism are simply erased. She embraces her position as an embodied experience to transcend the antagonisms underlying hierarchical understandings of identity. Her decision is a singular act that is not reducible to existing interpretive frameworks (254).

Considering *Disgrace* as "a novel about ethical choices," Sue Kossew views that both David and Lucy find a "modus Vivendi" not through any grand revelation, but through attending to the everyday, respective needs of an unborn child and desperate dogs and "in this quiet way, humanity is measured in a society that has made a spectacle of its inhumanity" (161). *Disgrace* as a post-apartheid novel carefully treats the representation of the race-sex issue while questioning the colonial/patriarchal domination.

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## Women, Liberation and Identity in Anita Desai's novel *Fasting, Feasting*

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### Abstract:

In literature Women, Identity and Liberation has been focused as the major themes in Indian fiction writings since decades long. Indian Women writers have been basically seen to focused and portray enduring self-sacrificing women, conflicts, female characters searching for identity, liberation and their victimized status. Anita Desai is one such prominent Indian author who portrays issues focusing on the condition of women in India. In *Fasting Feasting* Desai represents her women characters as forgotten, exploited and as seekers for freedom, struggling for care free life against patriarchal oppression. Through *Fasting Feasting* she aims to outlook on the socio cultural issues such as female freedom, empowerment, ideological conditioning and patriarchal oppression. Focusing on male dominated frame work her novel brings light further on the psychological plight, and women's traumatic experiences. She also further brings to the fore silent resistance, voicing inertly against oppressive bondage of their male counterpart and seek ways to break the patriarchal norms. She further explores deeply in a very heartrending manner the life and politics of gender and cultural inequality of her woman character, bearing all the injustice meted out against women in the society specifically focusing the old customs and traditions of patriarchal society. This paper is an attempt to study the condition of women in Anita Desai's novel *Fasting Feasting* and to bring possible outcome of the bondage and domination women faced in patriarchal

society and to confer women, Identity and Liberation.

**Key words:** Domination, Exploitation, Oppression, Patriarchy, Resistance.

### Introduction:

Women, Liberation and Identity are perhaps Anita Desai's most widely recognized themes that she has focused in her novels. As an Indian feminist writing in English she has beautifully put forth the inevitable sufferings that women had to face in patriarchal society. In her novels she has remarkably painted her women characters as voiceless and silent observers, mostly suffering at the dictates of men. Anita Desai through her writing tries to project the misery and problems that woman suffers in the Indian society.

In India, by decades we have experienced women with great qualities and saw as well women leaders with existing practice of empowerment. On the other hand we have as well experienced women facing extreme suppression and exploitation. Many reformists have cried out with slogans for women freedom and empowerment. While there are circumstances where many women choose to remain trapped into it knowingly or unknowingly. Many women put themselves as a hindrance in the enlightenment of another woman, but however, at the inner hearts women silently agree that their sufferings and victimization world has been due to intolerance of custom and culture of patriarchal society. However, though constant effort has been made by focusing in writing by many writers to remove such evil notions in men and encourage society to safeguard every woman yet the struggle and entrapment continues.

Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* is one such novel that highlights women sufferings. It has become one of her most celebrated novels. The novel gained world appreciation as one of her most absorbing and appealing works. Through *Fasting, Feasting* she tries to change the mindset and outlook of Indian society and particularly aims to emancipate the position of women suffering with hardships. She reflects through the novel how women in society constantly are suppressed emotionally, physically and mentally under the dictates of

men and try to give a status equal to men. By highlighting the problems of women in a male dominated society her novel *Fasting, Feasting*, has received global admiration and profusely remarked as a masterpiece by her critics.

In the novel *Fasting, Feasting* Desai presents female characters as victimized and tried to present the loopholes existed in a patriarchal society. Desai portrays the suffering of several women characters in her novel who became victimized at the dictated norms of patriarchal society. Uma the protagonist of her novel *Fasting, Feasting* suffers the most in all circumstances in her life from her childhood to adulthood. Uma though showed constant resilience from her part seeking to grow and enjoy as a woman with freedom in a carefree world yet the story of the novel always moves against her. In her life she has to live as a spinster whose individual life is diminished to the life of a maid forever. She has grown older by day fulfilling each and every demand of her 'Mama Papa'. In her whole life she struggles to create an identity of her own and live an independent life. Uma's life has been caged by her socially respected parents, her life and every activity stood at the disposal of her 'Mama Papa' whose every thought towards her was only confined at the dictates of a patriarchal world. It was a tough time and never easy for Uma to strike and cut down the age long tradition of male domination to gain freedom and emancipation.

The novel *Fasting, Feasting* describes the status and role of woman in a defined manner. It is divided into two parts, the first part pictures India, its customs and tradition, the second part revolves life in the USA. The novel is provided with a picture of a typical middleclass Indian household where all the love and care is bestowed to a boy child. In the typical Indian family "Papa" is the head of the family and "Mama" is the helper. 'Mama' is a silent spectator she assists him in each and every walk of life. The family is dragged by orthodox ways of reasoning and ruled by customs and traditions. Their sole aim is to marry off their daughters Uma the first girl and Aruna the second and educate the boy Arun, who is the life, the soul, the only successor of the ancestral family of papa.

The story of the novel further revolves around several women



characters who throughout the narration stood as victims of their male counterparts. Uma, Anamika, Aruna, Mama, Mrs. Patton, Melanie, Mira Masi whose role as characters in the novel never got the opportunity to attain their freedom, to grow and excess their desires and become completely liberated Women. Their activities have been always followed by man's dictates and their every emotion measured to customs and culture of patriarchal society. Even in USA Mrs. Patton and her daughter Melanie are never free to exercise their freedom as women. While Mrs. Patton seems to find her happiness in the supermarket and Melanie, their daughter takes comfort in her bulimia which seems to give her a kind of relief from the strains of her life. Even their real happiness in the world of freedom under USA is a matter of question. This perhaps can be visualized as the way of best contemplation that men might have thought for women for generations that by making them to follow their dictates can educate and achieve better civilization.

The novel opening with Uma as grey haired women doing her as usual daily work and 'Mama Papa' at their pavilion accustomed to order her to meet their daily needs shows the life long suffering that her parents had bestow on her for being a women. She had suffered from the lifelong curse and emotional brokenness from the day she was born women. Being a woman was a burden to her parents and her weakness in study at Convent school was the worst disaster she might have had added to her Mama Papa. Uma's less attractiveness at her looks was to a large extent a fear for mounting dowry and burdening concern. Her life has been blessed only in fulfilling the demands of her parents. This is why Anita Desai has artistically portrait her novel *Fasting, Feasting* into two half symbolizing women of the two world, India and USA where sufferings are never differentiated though cultural differences existed for women and remain as victims of the male domination seeking for emancipation in their life.

In a socially confined mind set, Papa though an educated man restrict Uma from schooling and force her to care her brother Arun. Mama silently supports the idea at the dictates and fear of her husband. She has known the fact of the weight being given to the boys in the

society from the past generations. Mama thus says, "In my day, girls in the family were not given sweets, nuts, good things to eat. If something special had been bought in the market, like sweets or nuts, It was given to the boys in the family". Mama approves being a women, discontinuing Uma from school and instead regards her in the difficult challenges of Uma as "unpromising material," "an outcast from the world of marriage," "disposed", calls her as hub of all gossips and rumours, "madcap" disheartening her promises and expectations. She has been compared with Aruna her sister as low, cheap, unattractive, clumsy and dull. All her inner space silent longings got buried within her for she had no one to share. Uma's efforts has been underestimated, thus when Uma is offered a job by Dr. Dutt, insultingly Papa says, "Our daughter does not need to go out to work, Dr. Dutt. There is no need." This sharp rejections and denial for Uma by her papa, showed how much of great concern parents offer for their daughter's liberation in Indian society. Uma feels utterly friendless, alone and dejected. In her search for liberation she feels only death could truly liberate her, to attain freedom she has even attempted to die, "...It was not fear she felt, or danger... it was exactly what she had always wanted, she realized. Then they saved her. The saving was what made her shudder and cry..."

The disparity in education between the genders and unfair treatment between children was a glooming and realistic picture in Indian families that Anita Desai sharply indicates in her novel. This difference in gender biasness has been observed since decades as a system of practice and as a frame work of culture, tradition and customs in Indian society. The birth of Arun, the young brother of Uma, is celebrated by Papa with happiness that knew no bounds. The following lines from the novel gives us the picture, "Papa, in his elation, leaping over three chairs in the hall, one after the other, like a boy playing leapfrog, his arms flung up in the air and his hair flying." A boy!" he screamed, 'a bo-oy! Arun, Arun at last!" Arun will enjoy all the family pleasure and freedom only because of being a boy. Arun's birth was to be celebrated and feasted. He has become the signifier of happiness and joy whereas Uma has been the object of shame and insult to the glory of the

family.

Further Anita Desai focuses the life of a beautiful and talented girl Anamika, Uma's cousin who was as well trap at the dispose of male domination and exploitative culture. She was by large opposite to Uma, she was graceful, beautiful and brilliant but Anamika's fate was far worse to Uma. Anmika was born to her parents with defined individuality, innocence, simplicity with godliness being. She was very clever in her studies. Her excellence in studies had given her the opportunity for the scholarship to study in Oxford. Anamika never reached Oxford for her studies, rather her fame and meritorious efforts was preserve only in her matrimonial search. Anamika lives in a patriarchal society that considers higher education to be the privilege of males, and marriage as the major preoccupation of females. She was married to a man who was no match to her and bitter consequences of marriage led her to death. Anita Desai, thus states in the novel, "so much older than her, so grim-faced and conscious of his own superiority", the man could never be a match to her "totally impervious to Anamika's beauty grace and distinction". Her good qualities had become the trap under vicious eyes of male domination and endless misfortune challenged her to face sufferings "...Anamika had been beaten, Anamika was beaten regularly by her mother-in law while her husband stood by and approved- or at least did not object. Anamika spent her entire time in the kitchen, cooking for his family which was so large so that meals were eaten in shifts- first the men, then the children, finally the women. She herself ate the remains in the pots before scouring them... When Anamika was not scrubbing or cooking, she was in her mother-in law's room, either massing the lady's feet or folding and tidying her clothes." In the novel Anamika's fate meets ultimately tragic death at the hands of her in-laws through exploitation.

Anita Desai thus, through her novel *Fasting, Feasting* sensitively portrays the inner life of her woman characters. She presents the reality and the shocking sad suffering of the Indian Women through the characters of Uma and Anamika. Uma as protagonist had been an enduring self-sacrificing woman, searching for identity, freedom but always victimized by patriarchal oppression and clutching system of

culture, tradition and norms. She portrays how male dominated frame work has made women affect psychologically and created traumatic experiences. Anamika's good fortune has turned her life only to suffering and death. Therefore, through her novel *Fasting, Feasting*, Anita Desai aims to liberate and build optimistic identity for every woman from patriarchal dominance. She further, encourages recognizing and accepting the values of every woman who share their sense of joy as mothers, daughters and wives in the society.

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## Verrier Elwin: A Voice for the Tribal in India

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### Abstract

Verrier Elwin is one of the most unparalleled champions in the fight for establishing the identity and dignity of the tribals in India. His dynamic persona as an anthropologist, scholar, writer with enviable prose style, charming nature and his committed struggle for the cause of tribal in India makes him an immortal name in India particularly as a voice for the cause of the preservation and upliftment of the tribal. This paper aims to explore his role in foregrounding the issues of the tribal in India followed by the formation of policy. The paper also highlights the modification of his policy from Isolationist to partial Assimilatory and the reasons behind such modification. His voice as resistance played vital role in protecting the tribes against both missionaries and mainstream Hindu Puritans from encroachment, exploitation and total assimilation followed by possible extinction. His strongly voiced for less interference in the maintenance of their distinctive identity in respect to their culture, religion, and lifestyle. The provisions of tribal autonomy can largely be attributed to the efforts of Verrier Elwin.

### Keywords:

Verrier Elwin, tribal, policy, identity, encroachment, isolationist, assimilatory.

### Introduction

Verrier Elwin is the name that leads the rest while enlisting the champions for the struggle of the cause and upliftment of tribal in

India. His lifelong service and dedicated effort in this regard provided valuable inputs to deal and formulate policy towards the tribes in India. His endless toil among the tribes throughout India in the jungles as well as hills along with his literary expression and anthropological zeal helped him to produce a number of books, pamphlets, newspaper and magazine articles to foreground the tribal culture and problems before the world. Besides, his participation in govt. committees in pre-andpost-colonial India also helped to change the worldview towards the tribes in India. In brief, Verrier Elwin not only contributed the govt. of India to formulate the policy towards the tribe in India but also helped the tribal to earn a separate identity and deserving respect against the colonial aggression of mainstream India.

### Plight in India

Verrier Elwin was born in 1902 in Dover but shifted to India in 1927 as a missionary consequently to receive permanent Indian citizenship as the first British in 1954. By the time, he was already a scholar in English literature being honoured with doctorate degree from Oxford. Besides, he was also a practicing anthropologist though not formally trained. However, controversy followed him when he was de-licensed by the Church of England in 1936 for being an ardent follower of Gandhi and asympathizer of Indian nationalism. Turning point came in his life when, at the advice of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, he focused on the plight of the Indian tribal and work for their cause. Thereafter, he started his association with the tribal from Gond village of Mandla district. Subsequently, he was appointed as the Deputy Director of the Anthropological Survey of India in 1946. He was also invited to join the scheduled Tribes Commission by the govt. of India to plan the policy for tribes in India. In fact, his inputs as the secretary of the commission proved instrumental in formulating the govt. policy for the tribes in India. But his highest contribution and responsibility in this regard came when he was selected the adviser of Tribal Affairs to the Administration of the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) in 1953 which continued till his death in 1964.

**Verrier Elwin's Policy for Tribal**

Verrier Elwin's views regarding the policy for the tribal was basically isolationist though it was modified into partial assimilation later under the influence of Nehru. He preferred to respect the tribal as a separate and distinct identity who needs no interference from colonial forces both missionaries and mainstream Indian Hindu puritans. He strongly argued to have a tolerant and respectful approach to their culture, religion and lifestyle. They should be left free to live their traditional lives. Actually, he feared encroachment and exploitation of tribal by the mainland, the process of which was already prevalent as he witnessed practically over the years. Therefore, initially he was in support of his isolationist policy in almost full sense. But in later years his views were influenced not only by his intimate relation with Nehru but also by his active role as a servant of the govt. of India. Further, his policy was also criticized by the ones like Ghurje who called it a means to keep the tribal in isolation and permanent state of suffering away from the benefits of modernization like medicine, education and modern agriculture. Thereafter, Verrier Elwin reformulated his policy to make it a balanced and moderate one. Thus, he preached for adopting a policy to introduce progressive innovations but without destroying their traditional customs and values. At any cost, they should be protected from any form of exploitation. Effort should be made to initiate the introduction of education, healthcare, modern agriculture and economic reform but not without their active participation. However, in the process, their participation with the outside world should be controlled to the maximum limit. He sharply cautioned against reformation policy of the mainstream Hindu puritanical forces. He strongly voiced for the lively and simplistic qualities of the tribal which should be kept intact. Thus, the present provisions of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> schedules and the concept of tribal autonomy are in a way the offspring of Verrier Elwin's isolationist policy. He felt strongly the need of constitutional provisions to protect the land rights of the tribal to save them from being extinct under the influence of mainstream. Besides, he also urged the need to foreground and preserve the indigenous art, culture and heritage by establishing Research centers.

Verrier Elwin's policy for the tribal was not without controversy and criticism as it was often blamed as a reason for the disconnection of the tribal from the rest of the country. According to the critics, such isolationist policy might detach them from intellectual, social and emotional integration. Further, he was also criticized for projecting the tribal as homogenous with no trace of individuality and as passive objects. Besides everything, he was mainly criticized for being hindrance for national integration. But such criticism holds no water when we analyze the tribal empathetically to comprehend that his fear and apprehension was not whimsical but based on the results of historical evidence. Implementation of his moderate isolationist policy in Arunachal Pradesh has already produced result as far as controlled growth, assimilation and local participation is concerned.

**Formulation of Nehru's policy for NEFA**

It was widely admitted by the intellectuals and leaders of India including Nehru that Verrier Elwin's inputs were most influential informing policy for the tribal welfare in India. In this context, then Home Minister, Pundit G.B. Pant remarked, "It has been the great work of Dr. Elwin to raise the status of tribal people in public opinion all over India. He has shown us that they are not just backward people but have an art and a culture of their own, and so has influenced the policy of the whole country" (p.315). Thus, as per his advice Nehru formulated the renowned Panchasheel- the five principles for NEFA as is mentioned below:

1. People should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture.
2. Tribal rights in land and forests should be protected.
3. We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside, will no doubt, be needed, especially in the beginning. But we should avoid introducing too many outsiders into tribal-territory.
4. We should not over-administer these areas or overwhelm them

with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through, and not in rivalry to, their own social and cultural institutions.

5. We should judge results, not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved (as cited in Dele, 2018. Para.10).

### Conclusion

In conclusion, it can safely be assumed that had Verrier Elwin not arrived in India and took up the cudgels to fight for the cause of the tribal in time, their plight could have been even more pathetic in independent India than ever before. The effort by the mainstream India for total assimilation could bring them at the verge of extinction in regard to their identity, culture and language. It was Verrier Elwin's tooth and nail fight that helped in providing the tribal their due right, place, and identity in free India through the formation tribal policy, to a great extent, after his ideology. His balanced policy of neither complete isolation, nor large scale development minus their participation proved extremely fruitful so far. His sincerity in his fight for the safeguard and upliftment of the tribal can be summarised with the recollection of the fact that he breathed his last at the age of 62 arguing against the govt. proposal for the settlement of 1,00,000 Punjabi farmers in NEFA.

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## Subjugation of Women in Manjula Padmanavan's "Lights Out"

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### Abstract :

Manjula Padmanavan's "Lights Out" is an important three act play relating to man-woman relationship and the patriarchal manipulation of that relationship. Though the main theme of the play is associated with a sensitive issue of "gang rape", the play mainly highlights the homely relationship of a middle-class husband and wife, respectively Bhaskar and Leela. Leela's becoming hysteric regarding the issue of a 'gang-rape' that takes place in her neighborhood at an under-constructed building is the main focus of the play. The woman, who is being molested in the neighborhood of Leela, is a great concern for Leela and she becomes hysteric concerning the issue. But Leela's husband Bhaskar is not a bit sensitive about Leela's concern and tries to convince Leela that she should not stick her neck in such trivial matters happening outside her home. The status of a woman at home and the plight of her suffering at society are conspicuously highlighted in the play. The dramatist beautifully highlights the reactions of both man and woman characters regarding the sexual assault happening in the neighborhood of Leela and Bhaskar's flat in Bombay. The present paper is going to analyze the man-woman relationship from the view point of gender-identity and sexual politics.

### Keywords:

Manjula Padmanavan, Lights out, Patriarchy, Subjugation.

### Introduction:

Manjula Padmanabhan writes her play "Lights Out" in 1984. The play "Lights Out" by Manjula Padmanabhan was first published in "Body Blows: Women, Violence and Survival: Three Plays, Seagull Books, 2000. "Lights Out" is based on an eye-witness account of a crime that was also published in newspapers in the early 1980s. The incident is a real fact. In real life, as in the play as well, some common or ordinary middle-class people choose to watch a criminal incident more than to help the victim. "Lights Out" is about such an activity where four men rape or brutalize a woman, or may be different women every night. And shouts and terrifying shrieks are heard by the people of the locality. Their peace has been shattered and yet they are not reporting the incident to the police. The culprits have been emboldened by the residents and in turn they become more mighty and fearless and start terrorizing them by throwing stones to their windows if someone dares to spy on them. (Thakore, 1987, p.86-87). In real life also most of the people stay coward and does not want to take responsibility of rectifying and reforming the vices of the society. In the play "Lights Out" as well, the same is with the character of Bhaskar. Bhaskar says to Leela: "I don't want to stick my neck out, that's all." There is also a perspective that touches voyeurism which has an important role in the play. So, in this play as well, the two prominent characters Bhaskar and Mohan are curious like teenage voyeurs. Voyeurism in literature is one kind of non-involvement in any affairs that we feel that we should not interfere or it is a tendency among us which makes us separate from those whom we feel as not like us. (Tripathi, 1987, p. 81). Or it is about a feeling within us that why and what I should do or why should I have to have responsibility of any kind that is not directly related to me. But in this play "Lights Out" the characters who choose to be voyeurs are basically male characters. Specially, the wife Leela. The wife called Leela has to suffer as she remains at home and the gang-rape continues in a nearby under-constructed building and she hears the screams and feel the horror. But the husband of Leela does not pay any heed to her and tries to evade the issue. As we know that Leela is a wife in a patriarchal society

and can not perform a stark initiation quickly and independently she has to depend on her husband. My current paper has thrown or will be throwing the perspective of gender difference and identity crisis from the very relationship of the husband and wife in the play. The inmates of high society are a mute audience to the crime being committed right outside their own house. The crimes against women are increasing and people refrain from talking about it. Manjula Padmanabhan exposes the apathy of society towards a woman who was subjected to gang rape. The play also poses the question of men's responsibility towards women through the plot of the play as well as through the husband and wife relationship in the play.

The play "Lights Out" is based on a real incident that took place in Santa Cruz, Bombay, 1982. The characters are fictional. The incident is a fact. (Padmanavan, 2020, p. 63). Towards the end of the play, there is a curtain in a window and in the curtain some words are projected. The audiences are informed about the play being based on a real incident. And the last line in the slide is supposed to be held in the curtain. Slowly it fills over with red, till the lettering is quite obliterated. (Padmanavan, 2020, p. 63). There is no curtain call and the play ends. The last line that is supposed to be filled over with red is "And in real life, as in the play, no one went to the aid of the victims." The lettering or the technique might mean that Padmanavan is highlighting the issue of the lack of responsibility or the neglect of women's sensitivity in a male dominated society.

In the beginning of the play, we are introduced to a middle-class husband and wife, namely, Leela and Bhaskar. They live in a sixth-floor apartment in a building in Bombay. Bhaskar has come from office when the sky declines from dusk into night. Leela reminds Bhaskar about calling the police. Leela has been hearing noises from a neighbouring under constructed building that is yet unpainted. She is very tense with anxiety. But Bhaskar seems to be immersed in his paper and does not pay too much heed regarding the matter of informing or calling the police. The sounds come inside Leela's house and she can't bear it. But Bhaskar says Leela to ignore the matter just like the other people of that locality. He also advises her to do

meditation to avoid the issue. He has invited Mohan Ram, one of his friends from Delhi tonight. All of them discuss about the matter. Then one of Leela's friends called Naina suddenly appears at their house as Naina's husband has gone to get some petrol because they do not want to run short of petrol on the way home. Naina also notices the noises and feels it as strange. She says that the sound seems like someone calling for help. Naina peers out of the window and sees a woman being dragged around by the feet. Bhaskar says that it may be exorcism as it is repeated night after night. Bhaskar also says that the woman might be a whore. Surindar, the husband of Naina also appears. Finally they decide to go for help. Then they discuss various approaches to confront the culprits. And finally they are too late and the screaming is stopped. The culprits are able to leave the place. This unique plot of the play is full with heavy philosophy and argumentative thoughts. Though the arguments seem to be without depths and do not lead the plot ahead quickly it brings out the philosophy of responsibility as conspicuously perceptible. After all, the play is structured upon dialogic debate. The playwright hints various perspectives of an idea through its characters. The playwright has not privileged one over the other; these are presented in the form of a problem play for the audience to look for the way out. For example, when Mohan, seeing exhibitionism and nakedness etc. calls the incident a religious ceremony; it leads to a number of discussions like secular nation, constitution of India and freedom to worship and so on.

But the overall focus remains on the character of Leela and the relationship of Leela and Bhaskar. Leela becomes hysterical regarding the incident. At one point in the play, Leela screams bringing the discussions among the characters to a halt. Leela screams: "AAAAAAHHH!" Naina says, "Quick! She's hysterical". Leela again utters the same scream. Bhaskar asks for water to their servant Frieda. Leela screams one more. Naina tries to console that no one is going to harm Leela. Then Bhaskar says that Leela is hypersensitive. This time Leela utters a relatively long scream: "AAAAAAA HHHHHHHHHH" along with a sob. Then Frieda brings the water and Naina provides the same to Leela. Then what Leela speaks out is

highly significant. Leela says that she no longer wants water but she wants the police. Leela repeats twice that she wants the police. She says: "No! I don't want any water! I want the police! I want the police!" Metaphorically we can say that what Leela wants is emotional and mental support from her husband and what Leela gets is not what Leela wants. Leela is provided water which is helpful to numb her body in the time of high anxiety that Bhaskar calls hypersensitive but Leela wants something else that would numb her mind. Emotional and mental support for which Leela is urging over the weeks. But it is clear from the beginning of the play that Bhaskar has not paid any heed to Leela. In the very beginning Leela says: "You don't care what I feel, what I go through every day!" But Bhaskar says that there is nothing to be frightened of and the culprits can't hurt Leela. But Leela has an obvious ground to be frightful. Leela's speech will highlight how much upset she has been for the incident. Leela ignores her husband and says how deep she is affected by the incident. The playwright writes before Leela's speech in bracket: (ignoring him). (Padmanawan, 2020, p. 06). Leela says: (Ignoring her husband) - "At first it was only at the time it was going on. Then, as soon as it got dark. Then around teatime, when the children came home from school. Then in the middle of the day, whenever the doorbell rang. Then in the morning, when I sent the children off to school. And now from the moment I wake up..." Leela wants to say more and the three dots towards the end of her speech tend to prove that. But Bhaskar makes her silent.

Bhaskar: Oh, come on! You are making too much of it! (Padmanawan, 2020, p. 06)

There are many patriarchal characters who do not want to listen to others and want others to listen to him. They do not know the linguistic term called 'turn taking' where other speakers enter into the conversation. They think they are the only animate objects in this world. Here also both Leela and Naina implore unto man about their troubles but get no help. Both Bhaskar and Mohan feign academic interest to cover up their voyeuristic tendencies. (Joseph, 1986, p.72). Leela has to play a subservient role to her husband Bhaskar. So, in "Lights Out" Padmanawan creates a world in which a woman has to face identity

crisis and her every utterance is made silent.

Leela: But I can hear them...

Bhaskar: (as if to a child) But sound can't hurt you...

Leela: Oh, but they do, those dirty, ugly sounds...

Bhaskar: So shut your ears, see? Like this- (places his hands over her ears) There! Is that better? (Padmanawan, 2020, p.10)

Even when Leela says that she feels awful and sick because of the sounds she is hearing and she even barely eat, Bhaskar tells her that she must learn to relax and calling the police would make no difference. But Leela says that it would really make a difference to her.

Leela: Yes! Oh yes, it would! Really it would. (Padmanawan, 2020, p. 11).

Bhaskar still insists Leela to ignore the sounds. That they will shut the window, draw the curtains and play music to avoid the sound. But Leela says that she feels tense and she can't bear the sounds any more. But Bhaskar still insists to make her ignore it.

Bhaskar: Baby, you must learn to ignore it now, I insist. (Padmanawan, 2020, p. 13)

The word 'insists' in Bhaskar's saying is very significant. The word represents the focal voice of patriarchy by which the role of women in the world is designated by men ever since history has been written. Body abuse is the most ghastly thing a woman can't bear. In "Lights Out" the sounds abuse Leela both mentally and bodily as she is even unable to eat for those ugly sounds she hears. So far as the main plot of the play is concerned 'rape' symbolizes the brutality of men upon women and Leela voices out to help the victim. But for Bhaskar it is just an event. Bhaskar advises Leela to practice yoga to reduce the tense instead of thinking of the incident.

In the play, another important character is the cook called Frieda. Frieda remains silent throughout the play. She comes across her troubles with the weapon of silence. Her presence and her silence further confuse the readers' understanding of suppression or subjugation of women in a male-dominated patriarchal society. Naina is another character in the play who has been made silent by her husband Surinder. Towards the end of the play, it is Surinder who immediately agrees to go and



attack the culprits. For the time being it is a relaxation for the audiences that Surinder does not behave like Bhaskar and Mohan. But immediately the audiences come to know that Surinder agrees to go to the spot not for the pain he feels for the victim but for the insult he perceives on the culprits' act of throwing stones at the windows of the building. He thinks that the goondas or the culprits are making jackasses of the common people of the locality. Naina says Surinder not to be exited. But Surinder asks Naina to shut up and tells that this is no time for women's nonsense. (Padmanavan, 2020, p. 55). Again Naina has to stop Surinder when the group discusses that there will be lots of bloodshed and they will take towels with them. Naina says- "Surinder, please! Now stop all this nonsense!" How Surinder reacts is very significant.

Surinder: (turns on her suddenly) Shut up or I'll kick your teeth in!...

Naina subsides in embarrassment. Her silence also may be a weapon to overthrow the domination of men over women.

Though the women characters are a bit silent except Leela, they raise their voices through their silence.

Manjula Padmanavan theatricalizes the rape of Santa Cruz of Bombay as the main plot and simultaneously shows the violence on women at home, both mental and emotional, in an middle-class family in Bombay through the relationship of Leela and Bhaskar. The main plot of the play and the hysterical Leela's suffering run simultaneously in the play. Manjula Padmanavan shows that violence is multi-faceted. When the readers look the traits and attitudes of the three major male characters in the play, the discourse of patriarchy seems to be deeply complex and indirect. The playwright seems to show that it is difficult to overcome the discourse of patriarchy so easily. But the play has been successful in raising different themes and voices. As a social play "Lights Out" is successful in raising awareness amongst the readers regarding issues relating to violence against women. The play has been successful in highlighting many issues like gender discrimination, identity crisis, realization of responsibility, notions of fairness (Leela has been labeled as hysteric for her display of anxiety), and moral sensibility

and so on.

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## Tussle Between Tradition and Modernity in Post-Colonial Indian English Fiction

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### Abstract:

India has been known for its custom and tradition since time immemorial. Tradition, by definition is practices, beliefs and habits that have acquired prestige and value with the passage of time. It has become submerged in the Indian way of life in such a way that it's difficult to discard or even discredit it. Modernity, on the other hand is a western phenomenon which was introduced to India by British who brought it as an administrative tool to show their authority as a superior race. Modernity refuted the established code of conduct and instead of accepting tradition as it is, it makes an analytical, rational and critical approach towards the existing order of things. Rather than getting rid of conventions altogether, modernity focuses on modifying them according to the changing circumstances of a society; while tradition always means unquestioned acceptance. Though the changes brought by British to India as a part of modernity such as introduction of railways, modern education, new administrative policy, various types of social reforms including abolishment of sati system and child marriage etc. were unconventional to Indians at first, they eventually accepted it as a part of life and it continued to be even after British had left India. This binary between tradition and modernity is one of the prime issues addressed in many post-colonial fiction from India. The relationship between tradition and modernity depicted in these fictions is complex as well as ambivalent. Sometimes these two

are seen to be in conflict and sometimes in harmony. In this paper I have tried to analyse how this tussle between tradition and modernity has been handled by R.K Narayan in "The Guide"(1958), Salman Rushdie in "The Midnight's Children"(1981) and Arundhati Roy in "The God of Small Things"(1997).

### Keywords :

tradition, modernity, identity crisis, post-colonial, hybridity.

The confrontation between tradition and modernity is a dominant theme in the novels of R.K. Narayan, one of the most acclaimed novelists of India. His Sahitya Akademi Award winning novel "The Guide" is one such novel which deals with this duality of Indian society. Here he shows modernity coming to Indian villages through railways. The novel is set in Malgudi, the fictional village in South India which is like any typical village of post-colonial India. The arrival of railroad brings various changes to Malgudi, including economic development as it boosts up business and opens up new job opportunities for people. The father of the novel's protagonist Raju becomes rich by opening a new shop in the railway station and Raju transforms from a shopkeeper to tourist guide.

Some of the characters in the novels are deeply rooted in tradition, while some are torn between tradition and modernity. Raju's mother is a conventional orthodox woman who is taken aback by the name of Rosie which sounds strange to her. Her disgust towards Rosie increases after learning that she is a dancer. Women from Rosie's caste are viewed as public woman and hence not considered respectable and civilised. But Raju falls apart with these kind of orthodox ideas and says that "All that narrow notion may be true of old days but it's different now. Things have changed. There is no caste or class today." (Narayan, 85) Both Rosie and Raju represent the modern approach towards gender and caste hierarchies. Rosie is an educated woman with a master's degree in Economics who dares to marry outside her caste. Her relation with Raju is not traditional. But underneath this modern way of life she is trapped in the world of traditional beliefs

and constraints; her life is surrounded by endless conflict between modern ideas and traditional custom. She goes through an identity crisis as she faces the dilemma of having to choose between becoming a dancer or something else after completing her education. This crisis comes again when Raju asks her to change her name to Nalini. This shows his dominance over Rosie as a typical patriarch. Rosie considers it a wife's duty to guard and help her husband despite his misbehaviour and cruelty towards her. Instead of hiring a cook, she prefers to cook herself in order to stay connected to her 'womanly duties. All these shows that the traits of a typical Indian woman are still alive inside her.

Towards the end of the novel, Rosie becomes completely independent as she breaks away from the domineering grip of Raju as well as her husband Marco. She gains her own identity as a dancer. It is notable that she achieves modern status through tradition as dancing is something she inherited from her ancestors. In a way Rosie is a bridge that connects tradition and modernity. While Rosie's story shows harmony between tradition and modernity, Raju's story depicts the greatness of tradition over modernity. In the beginning of the novel Raju is shown condemning every traditional notion by embracing modernity. He takes up the unconventional job of a tourist guide, refuses to marry his cousin and instead maintains a relationship with Rosie who is not only from outside of his caste but also a married woman. But as we go through the novel, we see Raju embracing only the negative aspects of modernity- indulgence in the pursuit of worldly pleasure, adultery, forgery, treachery, contaminating the sanctity of wedlock etc. To redeem himself from all these sins, he takes abode in a traditional method i.e. fasting.

In contrast to Raju, Rosie and Marco stands the other characters like Raju's mother, his maternal uncle, Velan and the villagers who are unwilling to dismiss their traditional beliefs and remains orthodox, superstitious and ignorant. It is the main reason why the villagers get tricked and manipulated by Raju so easily and believe him to be a saint. When the drought comes they give various false theories regarding its reason for occurrence like movement of aero-plane, atom bombs

etc.

There are some other instances in the novel where this tussle between tradition and modernity is seen. The Albert Mission School is an English medium school which provides modern education and stands in stark contrast to the Pyol school which has a traditional mode of teaching. A traditional dance form 'Bharat Natyam' is commercialised to make it like a popular culture. This spread of popular culture is farther shown in the novel when a Californian filmmaker James J Malone comes to see and shoot Raju's fasting. In this way Malgudi is in the process of continuous modernisation without total extinction of the traditional structure.

R.K Narayan is neither a reformer like Mulk Raj Anand nor a philosopher like Raja Rao. In this novel he is not trying to propagate any ideology but tries to present the typical South Indian conservative society in a realistic manner. He is not trying to reject modernism or celebrate the greatness of Indian tradition. He wants the readers to be aware of the changes happening in the society and himself accepts it as a fact.

Like most post-modern novelists and thinkers Salman Rushdie argues for hybridity of culture, asserting that in today's post-modern world, no one can or should try to retain a singular identity. "As a Cambridge-educated person spending his entire adult life in England, he is naturally at home in a sophisticated cosmopolitan artistic universe and by setting these two frames- desi and western- against each other, he can achieve telling comic/satiric effect sometimes directed towards himself" (Mukherjee,25).

Rushdie's 'Midnight's Children' is widely acclaimed one of the landmark of post-colonial fiction. Here we can see elements of both folk culture (magician, soothsayer, oral tale etc.) as well as popular culture (Bombay cinema). This novel also depicts Rushdie's use of various elements from Indian classical epic like 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharata' and Indian mythology in the context of post-colonial world often in a satirical tone. He creates many goddess-like female characters to show allusion to these epics. He also parodically draws parallel between Budhha and Saleem because both of them were not

able to live in their house and also both of them saw sufferings of people around them.

Again, the tussle between tradition and modernity is also shown through Rushdie's portrayal of many characters in the novel. Adam Aziz is modern, secular, liberal who is the polar opposite of his wife Naseem, a very sectarian orthodox kind of woman. To the ferryman Tai, the bag of Adam Aziz represents abroad; it is the modern thing, the invader, progress.

Unlike R.K. Narayan who doesn't take side of either tradition or modernity, Rushdie is an iconoclast who is subversive towards orthodoxy in this novel as well as in his other works.

In the 'God of Small Things' Arundhati Roy perfectly describes India's cultural transformation from colonial through post-colonial period to contemporary era of globalisation. In early Indian fiction, Indian women were depicted as someone limited to domesticity and social compromises incorporating their identities with Indian traditional values. But the post-colonial fiction, especially those by women writers depict women as someone aspiring to be recognised as dynamic counterparts of a family, even though they may not succeed.

The Ipe family in the novel is a typical Indian family that represents modernity – Pappachi is a high-ranking ex government official, Chacko has been a Rhodes scholar at Oxford, Baby Kochamma has been taught in the English curriculum and Mammachi with her entrepreneurship zeal which led to 'Paradise Pickles and Preserves'. Yet their modernity is shown as often coming to conflict with their traditional beliefs – Pappachi doesn't allow Paravan into the house, is not willing to tolerate his wife's independence, doesn't allow higher education for his daughter and thinks that "...college education was an unnecessary expense for a girl" (Roy,38); Chacko batter down and expels Ammu from the Ayemenem house when her affair with Velutha is exposed. Though Ammu works as much as Chacko in the factory, she cannot claim her right to property.

Thus in the novel Arundhati Roy talks about duality and hypocrisy of post-colonial Indian society where on the one hand people takes pride in being called 'modern' and aspire to take modern education in

order to be called so; but on the other hand, they are very conservative when it comes to issues like gender equality and caste system.

#### Conclusion :

Though all the three novelists discussed above has taken different agenda in their respective works, what connects them together is their depiction of the tussle between tradition and modernity. These novels show how every act of escape from tradition comes face to face with surprising discoveries of modernity in the backwater.

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## Manipur's experience during the Second World War's Intermission Period of Peace

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### Abstract:

Between the Japanese bombing of Imphal in 1942 and the Battle of Imphal in 1944, Manipur experienced a brief period of relative peace. Massive transformation in infrastructure, mobilization of resources, and labor as a part of war preparation activity took place. Allied soldiers and the local people interacted in economic, social, and cultural activities. The paper attempts to recreate and understand the particular time and its influences from the local people's perspectives. Memoirs and interviews of the local survivors of the war are integral in the reimagination of the collective experience of the people. The local accounts indicate how war economy/war activities influenced the lives of the people. The locals became an essential element in the preparation of the war. It also relates how new vistas of opportunities and learning in economy and commerce sprung up from the activities. The peacetime enabled social and cultural interaction among many allied soldiers from different parts of the world and the local people, thus allowing a space of association of different worldviews and cultures. The encounter helped reformulate/ influence the social and cultural dynamics of the region.

### Keywords:

Second World War Literature of Manipur, North-East India war writings, War literature, War memoirs/interviews, Local narrative of war.

### Introduction:

The Second World War (WII) began in Manipur with the first Japanese bombing on 10 May 1942. Although there were intermittent bombings in 1943, they did not carry out a full-scale offensive against the Allied position in Manipur till March 1944. The intervening period witnessed relative peace in the region where by massive scale war preparation started in Manipur.

Manipur lay at a strategic position between the frontiers of India and Burma, and its position holds the key in defending British India and directing Allied War operations in East Asia. The flat Imphal valley plain served as an ideal operational base for carrying out air operations (Katoch). Moreover, Japan's continued rise of power and her stronghold over Asia threatened the British positions. Japan's occupation of Burma in 1942, followed by subsequent attacks on the neighboring region of Manipur, put Allied forces in an alarming situation as the territory of British India was exposed as the next possible target. Accordingly, the allied army planned to forestall any Japanese offensive in the immediate future by developing Manipur as a robust military base.

After the Japanese bombings in Manipur in 1942, the Allied power developed the infrastructure of Manipur at a rapid pace to strengthen their position (Evans and Brett-James). Within a short period, six airfields, bridges, numerous military camps, including critical roads such as Imphal-Tamu, Imphal Kohima, Imphal- Tiddim, came up.

The locals witnessed the intensity and scale of operations carried out in the valley. Naorem Kalimohon, in his interview, recalls that "Things changed a lot with the arrival of the Second World War. Hills were cut, boulders were used, and many laborers were put into work to make a proper road... likewise many small roads within villages were also built because of the Second World War" (Kangjam 110). The development of infrastructure or the execution of the allied war preparation plans involved many local people. Their involvement helped spur the war preparation activities.

The locals were in a dire situation under the colonial rule of the British. The local economy crumbled due to colonial taxation policies,

narrates in his interview:

“Festivals like Kang (Rath Yatra) and Yaoshang (Holi) were not affected by the war in our area. During Yaoshang, the soldiers and Pilots would come and join us in the ThabalChongba (Moonlight Dance) with the local girls. Nobody created any problem since Ramdas had already advised the soldiers about the local culture(Kangjam 35-36)”

The local Manipuri dancers known as Marbak Jagoi dancers became popular among the military. Troupes of women dancers performed in military camps. Nimaicharan in his memoir *Second World War in Manipur and My Childhood* remembers, “The performers of the dance could earn a lot of money in a single night primarily at places where they could be witnessed and enjoyed by a huge crowd of British officials”(Nimaicharan Singh 84). As a result, local art and entertainment served as a conduit for bringing the Allies and the people together.

Thoibi Devi mentions that performers and entertainers were looked down upon before the war; however it began to change as their popularity and demand grew during the war. There was more appreciation of art and culture as it served an essential purpose as a source of income and as a platform for bringing people together. “How different the nature of art and culture before the war and the during the war. The performers of the prewar time didn’t occupy a place of respect in the society. They were ostracized and looked down on. There was no place for dance and entertainment”(Devi, *Mityeng Ama 12*).

Art and performance occupied a central position during wartime. People were more enthusiastic about art and performances than before. Through celebration, they found an outlet to release the angst and fear of the uncertain war. It brought them together and helped ease the anxiety of the war.

It was a strange time. Everyone had a restless mind. The thought of death coming at any time occupied their minds. So at every nook and corner, there were sounds of celebration of dance and music. It made people forget the worries of the war. Since time

immemorial, Manipur is famous for art and festivals, and it was more frequent during wartime. Before the war, art, dance, and music didn’t occupy a central position. But during wartime, it developed so much that anyone could earn sufficiently and save for the future (Devi, *Mityeng Ama 11*)

The social and cultural activities initiated from both sides- the allied army and the civilians allowed an amicable space of association and socialization, where people found an outlet to release their feelings of ‘uncertainty of life.’ It created a common ground for interaction between the soldiers and locals. Through the celebrations, the locals strengthened their communal bond of unity and helped dilute the familiar feeling of fear, dread, and restlessness. The need for the collective gathering was desired and enjoyed by all. The art and cultural activities made the locals experience the life and culture of the modern world. The experience gave them a broader perspective of life and an appreciation of diversity. It helped in the redefinition of their own culture and society.

The wartime experience of massive infrastructural changes and economic transactions brought the knowledge of the modern world. The locals view the development plans as a source of sustenance and knowledge. The contact with the allied soldiers made them experience the culture and worldview of the outside world. It helped them in the reformation and rethinking of their own cultural and social values. All aspects of life such as religion, politics, culture began to reformulate. Above all, the intermission period of peace brought a range of experiences that influences the culture and society of Manipur.

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## Enunciating The Other Voices: A Study of Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*

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### Abstract:

Drawing on the prevalent social condition of our society this paper seeks to examine the debates on emphasizing the suppressed voices of the Lesbian community and their efforts to justify their identity in the society with reference to Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. Homosexuality has always been an innuendo in our society. The conventional social norms set by the heterosexual culture consider it as something defective or demonic. They either were thrown out of their household and social precincts or compelled to adjust with the conventionally accepted norms. Jeanette Winterson has always tried to take a stand for these people through her opuses. She herself being a lesbian had the first-hand experience of the injustices of the society which she tried to reflect in her novels. This write-up will be a scrutiny of the attempts made in her novel *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* to bring to light the restrained voices and their aspirations. The novel projects the parochial mindset of the heterosexual culture that perceives homosexuality as diabolical or as a malady. The struggle of the protagonist Jeanette and her endeavors to establish her lesbian identity in the society is what this paper centers around. Winterson's portrayal of the trauma which Jeanette had to go through and her efforts to stand for herself is the focal point of discussion here.

**Keywords:** Homosexual, Identity, heterosexual, lesbian, trauma.

**Introduction:**

Literature is the portrayal of life and lived experiences in its myriad shades. The role professed by an oeuvre in the formation of the collective consciousness is immense. The inscription of a piece of work is a huge responsibility owned by the novelists. The reason behind this is that any work of art, when presented before the mass is sure to sway their perception. So, while inscribing the author's views, he/she must be careful what values they are advocating through their opuses. Many writers, taking it as a medium is either trying to question the hegemonic structure rampant in our society or to give forum to those resistive voices which have always become a victim of the conventional norms. As a result of this zeal some writers have felt the urgent need to represent female bonding through their works. They realized that if not done now it will lead to a complete erasure of them from the entire scenario. Jeanette Winterson, one among such writers, is constantly trying to accentuate it through her opuses.

Born in Manchester, a self-acknowledged outsider, Jeanette Winterson is famously known for her brawny voice through which she tries to break all the conservatively accepted norms related to gender and sexuality. She is widely admired for her punchy lines as well as her eccentric characterization. Such experimentations are Winterson's attempt to unshackle the narrative voice from the constraint of traditionalism. Most of her works in one way or the other is trying to question the time immemorial idea which divides 'gender' into male and female. In spite of the fact that her works can be categorized into a genre called 'lesbian fiction' she repudiated to call herself by this label. Rather she wanted to be called just an author because she believed a tag like this will limit her possibilities. Winterson in her *Art Object* opined, "...You should ignore me; a writer's work is not a chart of their sex, sexuality, sanity and physical health." (80)

Judith Butler in her "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" is of the opinion that "...the body becomes its gender through a series of acts which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time" (523). Butler, in this argument of her desires to assert that our gender is a result of

social construction. This collective edifice categorizes 'gender' into male/female and supports the heterosexual relationship. This is nothing but a result of the norms imposed on us by the patriarchal society. As a consequence of incessant repetition, it becomes a part of us and the forerunners of these norms depict it as the only way of categorizing our gender. However, Winterson is trying to break away from this structure and create a new space for those who do not belong to or oppose these binaries. Her novel *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is a result of such an endeavor. Through this work, she is trying to give a forum to the lesbians who choose not to categorize themselves within this twofold structure. Rather they crave for recognition of their own as an individual self. The core of this paper is to look at Winterson's effort to give opportunity to the resistive voices of the lesbian community and bring forth the thrash about they had to undergo in this process.

**Analysis:**

Susana Onega in her *Contemporary British Novelists: Jeanette Winterson* said "*Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* reveals itself as an astonishing *tour de force*, a truly innovative and self-conscious experiment in *écriture lesbienne*..." (34) Considered as Jeanette Winterson's semi-autobiographical work, to which she hardly agrees, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is the tale of Jeanette and her quest to establish her uniqueness as a lesbian in the society which considers heterosexuality as the only possible gender identity. This work brilliantly portrays the fate of the lesbians in our society that does not consider it as sane. At the same time the novel also brings into view the adversities they had to face. Winterson through this work is trying to rupture the typically accepted notions related to gender and sexuality. The title of this book is itself suggestive of this fact. A careful analysis of the text reveals that 'orange' of the title indicates the only fruit that can be considered as holy. But the title denies this by stating that 'oranges are not the only fruit'. Other fruits are regarded by Jeanette's mother as grimy or fruits to anomalous passion. This might also be suggestive of the Biblical apple as well which led to fall of Man. Even her first love Melanie's name is compared to melon, which is considered as a forbidden fruit.



Besides her mother always gave her an orange no matter what the occasion is. For example, when she denied going to school her mother said "You have got to. Here have an orange" (27). Her mother thought that if she gives Jeanette oranges continuously, she will not be attracted towards the forbidden things. However, Jeanette knew that it was not the only fruit. Where on one hand Jeanette's mother is trying to convince her to adjust with the conventions, Winterson through her character is trying to break it.

She was brought up by her adoptive mother in a culture which viewed the world in black and white. Her mother adopted her because she considered sex as something unnatural. As we see Jeanette saying, "She had a mysterious attitude towards the begetting children; it wasn't that she could not do it; more than that she did not want to do it" (2). Jeanette herself was trained to view the world in the same light till the moment she meets a gypsy woman who examining her palm predicts that she will never marry. "You'll never marry, not you and you'll never be still" (Winterson 4). When she heard this, she became curious instead of being scared and always imagined what her future holds for her. Her mother did not send her to school rather she had to attend sermons regularly in the church. There she was taught about evils and of demonic possession. How evil powers might use our body as a tool to fulfill their desires. But when she was compelled to go to school, she realizes that many things that are taught in the church are not correct. Jeanette was questioning the long-established traditions which were forced upon them in the name of God.

When Jeanette was fourteen, her focus was shifted towards the functionality of heterosexual relationships of the society and she started questioning them. She has developed a form of thinking that all women marry a beast. And it is reflected in one of the episodes in the novel where she asks, "Did that mean that all over the globe, in all innocence, women are marrying beasts? Why are so many men beast?" (Winterson 54) This is actually an attempt by Winterson to reject the heterosexual romances and an effort to question the fact that women must be with men. This heterosexual culture believes that homosexuality is insane. By portraying an image of men as beast,

Winterson is trying to show the dysfunctionality of heterosexual marriage. During the course of this period Jeanette encounters her first love Melanie and they instantly connect. They often met, spent time together, it seemed separation was impossible for them. One day while they were listening to Pastor Finch speaking about 'unnatural passion' (67), there was a tremor that shook both Jeanette and Melanie. Her mother tried her best to keep Jeanette out of all these by constantly telling her that love does not exist or advising her "Don't let anyone touch you Down there" (70) but she failed. That very night Jeanette and Melanie spent their first night together, "She stroked my head for a long time, and then we hugged and it felt like drowning. Then I was frightened but could not stop. There was something crawling in my belly..." (70)

When the relationship of Jeanette and Melanie was exposed all the members of the church except Mrs. Jewsbury considered that they were possessed by a demon. Pastor Finch commenting on this event said, "These children of God have fallen under Satan's spell." (78) They all considered homosexuality as demonic and in order to separate them they left no stone unturned. But Jeanette did not surrender rather she boldly agreed that they were in love. When she was asked "Do you deny you love this woman with love reserved for man and wife?" (78) She replied "No, yes I mean of course I love her." (78) Though Melanie surrendered to the conventional norms Jeanette was headstrong. She did not capitulate. She was locked in a room and was not given food for days. At last, they even tried exorcism. But they could not alter her. Later she was involved with another girl Katy, but after they were caught Pastor said "The demon had returned sevenfold" (100) Later she along with other women were prohibited from preaching the church because they thought that it was due to man's role was given to women that this corruption started. Jeanette left her home and started living alone. She was banished from the society. She was not even allowed to attend the funeral of Elsie as she was considered as an outcast. When asked about the funeral to her mother she said "You can't come it's for holy." (Winterson 114) In fact she was made fun of when she was serving ice-cream to the

people who came to Elsie's funeral. It was a kind of harassment that almost every homosexual had to go through at some point of their life.

At last, she started working in a mental hospital. She did not like the job but felt alive because she got to live according to her own. She said "It was not something I would have chosen normally, but it had a distinct advantage over other jobs, because I could live in. A room of my own, at least" (119). In this particular line, the phrase 'room of my own' contains many hidden interpretations. One instance can be an indirect reference to Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, where she discussed about the fact that in order to be empowered women must have a room of their own. Winterson was greatly influenced by Virginia Woolf and her philosophies which are reflected in this work. Besides she also referred to the mental hospital as a place to live in which shows that she considers that place as saner compared to the normal society.

Jeanette is not the only lesbian in this entire novel. There are other characters like Melanie, Katy, Mrs. Jewsbury as well as some other women who are suspected of having feelings for each other. But apart from Jeanette all surrendered to the parochial mindset of the conventional society. Even Jeanette's mother is suspected to have same kind of feelings towards a woman. But she had to yield as well. As Adrienne Rich in her "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" says "I wrote ... with this energy of hope and desire—the pressures to conform in a society increasingly conservative in mood have become more intense" (11). Rich here is trying to raise a voice for those who giving up their own desires are behaving according to the time-honored way of life. Winterson took the same initiative by her opus.

#### Conclusion:

From the above discussion, we can conclude that our archetypal society has always been very harsh upon the homosexuals. They never considered them as normal. Rather they felt something is flawed about these people. Winterson through this text is trying to portray this callous

and brutal reality of the so called 'civilized society'. This work is an attempt by the author to give voice to their pain and suffering. Kate Bornstein in her *Gender outlaw: On men, women and the rest of us* proclaims, "...Gender is not the issue. Gender is the battlefield. Or the playground. The issue is us versus them. Any us versus any them" (222). This quote speaks for itself. The problem is not with the homosexuals. It is the heterosexual culture which is trying to rip apart the society. They live in a black and white world that rejects any form of resistance to this binary structure. They have a hidebound frame of mind that considers the homosexuals as filthy. This book by Winterson comprehensibly reveals the prejudices of the society upon this section of the populace and the trauma which they had to undergo because of such chauvinism. It is her way of protesting as well as bringing into light the wrong doings which are preached by the dogmatic society. As Veronica Ticha in her "Modern Feminism According To Jeanette Winterson" says, "In *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit* Winterson tries to free men and women from their sex predestined roles by avoiding the gender of the orange demon that is a literary device the author uses to help Jeanette find her identity.... She also breaks the cultural barriers by introducing the homosexual world into the world of heterosexuals." (9)

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## Resisting Through the Body, of Text and the Corporeal: A study of Meena Kandasamy's Poetry

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### Abstract

Dalit literature is marked by a rejection of tradition and aesthetics of the Brahminical literature. It moves away from the 'upper' caste narratives that evoke empathy towards an assertion of selfhood, history and agency. There is a change in meaning and discussion of aesthetics, which according to Limbale, is a discussion concerning "the equality, liberty, justice and fraternity of human beings." The emergence of Dalit literature rooted in this construction of an alternate aesthetics foregrounds the difference in voices that animates the Dalit consciousness in its expression of everyday accounts entailing oppression and subjugation. Kandasamy's poetry makes a conscious attempt to deconstruct the dominant narrative with her unapologetic, raw and dauntless voice that challenges both casteist and patriarchal frameworks. In this, she performs an act of reclaiming the body, the corporeal as well as the body of literature of the marginalized, that has become a site of ceaseless exploitation and condescence. This paper attempts to trace the politics and aesthetics of Kandasamy's work where she uses sexuality as a tool of resistance to Brahmanical Patriarchy and for retrieving the "Self" within androcentric patriarchal discourse. The paper further tries to unfold through her works, the contestations and complexities entailing the engagement with the notion of patriarchy propounded by Gopal Guru within mainstream feminist

discourse.

### Keywords

Brahminical literature, sexuality, body, aesthetics, Patriarchy

### Methodology

This paper is prepared by using both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources entail the selected poems of the poet and the various secondary sources includes resources from journals, articles, online resources etc.

### Introduction

Gopal Guru in his seminal essay, "Dalit Women Talk Differently", emphasized on three central issues taking into account the subjugation and oppression faced by Dalit women in the socio-cultural setup, namely; "(1) It is not only caste and class identity but also one's gender positioning that decides the validity of an event; (2) Dalit men are reproducing the same mechanisms against their women which their high caste adversaries had used to dominate them; (3) The experience of dalit women shows that local resistance within Dalits is important." (Guru, 2549) Thus, he went on to argue that dalit women's claim to 'talk differently' assumes certain position wherein it is their social location that validates this representative different voice. The article pertinently opens up new areas of debate encompassing the issue of intersectionality and representation by articulating the idea of 'difference' to contextualize their struggles and resistance. The 'voice' of Dalit women is often curbed both by non-dalit women and dalit men, enmeshed in forms of tokenism both within the political and cultural arena. Although, Guru's argument in favour of an identity-based politics for dalit women has been critiqued while advocating a more affiliative approach by Sharmila Rege, wherein she argues that in order for dalit feminism to flourish there is a need for a transformation of 'their cause' into 'our cause' (Rege, 45). The idea of 'difference' propounded by Guru remains of utmost importance. Dalit literature is rooted in this difference in voices that animates the Dalit consciousness and serves as a medium to give expression to the pain and sorrows entailing their everyday accounts of oppression,

humiliation and subjugation. Based on these observations Sharankumar Limbale, a Dalit writer and critic, questions the ground of any purely aesthetic criticism of the resistant literature that is subjected to accusations of staging anger that seem false and its sentiments of rejection, rebellion and revenge that appear anti-people. He says that, "Freedom is the [highest] aesthetic value...Equality, freedom, justice and love are basic sentiments of people and society. They are many times more important than pleasure and beauty." He proposes an alternative framework to analyse the aesthetics of Dalit writing as he begins by questioning the very notion of beauty as a parameter of aestheticism; "Dalit writers believe that their literature should be analysed from a sociological perspective focused on social values rather than beauty. An exclusively aesthetic construction of Dalit literature will disregard the Dalit writer's fundamental role". According to the traditional theory, the beauty of an artistic creation lies in its expression of world consciousness or other-worldliness which is transgressed by the dalit writers in delineating the pain and suffering that forms their consciousness of the 'self'. In the process, the literature primarily focuses on the search for freedom, expressed both in moving away from traditional literary conventions and representations. This paper attempts to trace this alternative voice through the politics and aesthetics of Kandasamy's work where she uses sexuality as a tool of resistance to Brahmanical Patriarchy and for retrieving the "Self" within androcentric patriarchal discourse. The paper further tries to unfold through her works, the contestations and complexities entailing the engagement with the notion of patriarchy propounded by Gopal Guru within mainstream feminist discourse.

### Kandasamy's poetic practice

Meena Kandasamy regards her poetic corpus as a process of coming to terms with her identity and consciousness: her "womanness, Tamilness and low/ outcasteness", labels that she wears with pride. She states, and rightly so, "My poetry is naked, my poetry is in tears, my poetry screams in anger, my poetry writhes in pain. My poetry smells of blood, my poetry salutes sacrifice. My poetry speaks like

my people; my poetry speaks for my people." Her poetry highlights the caste and gender-based discrimination, especially in the collection *Ms Militancy* which uses language and the corporeal to annihilate the Brahminical Patriarchal traditions. The collection repeatedly revisits and invalidates the age-old Hindu and Tamil Myths in an attempt to put forth the challenges dalit women face due to their double-marginalisation. In the preface, "Should you take offence", Kandasamy critiques the dominant masculine figures of Hinduism as she writes,

"You are the repressed Ram from whom I run away repeatedly...  
You are Brahma fucking up my fates.

The opening sets the tone as it begins with questioning the limitations imposed by Brahminical patriarchy that construct our identities and mode of functioning within the socio-cultural space. The manner of her writing quite sarcastically invites the reader to take offence, to be uncomfortable, for readers to question but themselves in situating the problematic propositions enmeshed within mythologies and the mythic figures. In the lines that follow we trace her reference to Manu, as she bluntly writes how he robs her of an agency, to live the way she wants, free from codes set by their texts. Kandasamy's poetry further the act of subverting and deconstructing the ideologies that prevail within Indian philosophy and Hinduism, in the poem titled; "Moksha" that largely experiments with its form to expose the hypocrisy prevalent within the society. The terminology connotes freedom from ignorance, i.e., self-realisation, self-knowledge and self - actualisation. But by juxtaposing the three paths to attain this utmost aim; dharma, artha and kama with 'word-plower', 'war-mongers' and 'womb-raiders', it strikes out what is instead practiced by the agents of biopower. Her criticism of Hinduism comes out not only from occupying a marginalised space but also for her identity as a woman. As in these mythologies female sexuality and desire are seen as weak forces, instead practicing a negation of agency over their bodies, especially when the woman is marginalized at multiple levels. Instead of succumbing to these conventional notions, she uses sexuality and language as weapons to fight the injustices inflicted through the power structures, evident in her fearless assertion in the preface, "My lines are feverish with the

heat of the bodies you banish in your *Manusmriti* and *Kamasutra*'. As exemplified in the poem, "Massacre of the innocents" wherein 'Indra', who is considered the king of gods and heaven in Hindu mythology, is portrayed as an 'inspirational hate—monger',

"indra who butchered  
her fetus into forty-nine bits,  
so that, as the legend goes, they  
were reborn as wailing winds.

indra. indra. narindra.

The hindu god of war."

The poem gives perspective to the way Diti, mother of demons, and precisely her womb was attacked by Indra disintegrating her child. By subverting the perspective through which the dominant androcentric narratives have been constructed, she unleashes the wrath of her verses directly on the Hindu deities Indra and Brahma, to depict the plight and struggles of women functioning within the hegemonic setup. The deity Brahma, is the one who kills the children of the "other" even before they are born and the one who has the audacity to call himself the "father figure" after raping his own daughter, and then writing the story of the marginalized as if it is his own. This renders the marginalized incapable of transgression by snatching away their voices. The perspective of yet another victimized woman from the Ramayana is shown in Kandasamy's work titled "Traitor". She presents the tale of Shoorpanaka from a different view. Ram is shown as the ideal in the myth even though he violates the woman who speaks about her desires. Considered as immoral and a taboo to voice her desires, Shoorpanaka has to go through the act of dismemberment by the "ideal" brothers. Painting the picture of Shoorpanaka as an ugly one, the shallowness of these myths is evident which bases themselves on conventional beauty and moral norms. Her poems sharply critique the way we idealise these masculine figures and abide by the mythologies that rather emphasise on justifying the violence on the female body by demonising her.

This struggle of the female body, their suppression of sexuality and desire intertwined with the politics of language through which an

erasure of voice is manifested comes into full light in the poem, "A Cunning Stunt". The poem introduces a nameless figure as 'man of words', who is 'sniffing in Sanskrit'. The speaker blindfolded and bound in bed symbolises her oppressed position in the society.

"he says cunt by any other name  
Would smell as complicated...  
He christens it yoni, the womb,  
Uterus, vulva, vagina, the female  
Organs of generation."

The process of naming that expose the functioning of the inherent power-structures exemplifies how female identities are reduced by these acts to a set of signifiers that refer to the female body's biological and sexual functions only, constructing them as mere subjects. The agent bearing phallic symbol tears both her body and identity to "make the meanings fit in",

"and I am torn apart  
To contain the meanings of  
Family, race, stock, and caste  
And form of existence  
And station fixed by birth  
And I can take it no more"

The act of penetration is intertwined with the way caste markers push the speaker into a marginalised space. Kandasamy subverts this project of dominance and exploitation that denies pleasure to the desiring body and rather urges for her submission to the needs of a man by using the term 'faker'. The authority seeks in his assault on the body a certain satisfaction and control but instead as she writes, "I turn faker", the body becomes a site for resistance. The female body is no more passive; rather she asserts a performative power by juxtaposing "cunning" use of language unfolding from the untied tongue with the resistive body.

Phillipa Levine, in her essay "States of Undress: Nakedness and the Colonial Imagination", notes that, "to be native was to be monstrously and overly sexual". She also talks about how an idiom developed around the natives' sexuality and nakedness whereby "going

primitive", was used in order to address the act of "getting physical". In the local context of India, with the prominent register of caste defining the hierarchies, one is reminded of the way the bodies of Dalit women are associated with overt sexuality and the violence associated with the state of nakedness that is often forced on them. Women from the marginalised communities have largely been engaged in various forms of labour. This presence beyond the private spaces led to their increased sexual assaults and labelling as 'fallen' or 'loose women'. Kandasamy's poem, "Backstreet Girls" addresses to the moral policing that women are to deal with and specifically these stereotypes attached to Dalit women. Her voice is bold, rash and sensual when she addresses the notion of chastity. Virtue and chastity are often forced upon women and these backstreet girls represent all the misfits of the society who refuse to stick to the regressive and problematic norms. She lists out all kinds of name calling women are subjected to in a mocking tone- slut, bitches and witches, terms that she now embodies to assert unbridled female sexuality. The root of branding women as sluts and whores take us to Manu and his assertion that all women are harlot giving licence to men. Through these age-old texts written/perceived by men, norms relating to the idea of the female body and sexuality were created. Kandasamy highlights and counters this idea in her poem "Jouissance" where,

"An angry philosopher froze  
His philandering wife: passivity  
As punishment for promiscuity."

Jouissance is a combination of physical and intellectual pleasure. As described by the French feminist, Helen Cixous, it borders on the combination of the mental, spiritual, and physical experiences of a woman. According to her, a woman's creative power emerges from jouissance, the suppression of which prevents the unravelling of her empowered voice in its entirety. Kandasamy engages in constructing the female body, full of desire and sexuality, in Jouissance. The performative nature of her work allows the text to morph itself as the corporeal. It is as if the pleasure that has been denied to the female body by the ancient texts, now in her very act of writing attains an

overt expression. The text as a body depicts the stages of orgasm, the voices of women.

“They knew no man would ever  
Let them be, ever set them free.  
So, when asked, they answered  
With wide-eyed wonder  
Yesyesyes o yes yesyes  
O yes yesyesyesyesyes”

The covert allusion to the myth of Ahalya, her ‘curiosity’ owing to which she was punished by sage Gautama, reflect on the shallowness of domesticity which tries to limit the body and the discourse, that is further revealed in Kandasamy’s “Dead Women Walking”. It showcases a retelling of the myth of *Karaikal Ammaiyar*, in asserting how it is expected of the woman to dedicate herself completely to her husband and the life that is built around him whereas the man can choose to do as he pleases. Eventually, she rejects the body that is socially validated, a form that is recognisable to men; instead taking shape “with hollowed cheeks that offset bulging eyes, with welts on my wrists, with creasing skin.” Like she sheds the standard norms of beauty related to women, takes a new shape in the process, Kandasamy’s act of writing similarly constructs a body of text that moves away from standard norms of language and aesthetics foregrounding a voice that is written out within androcentric discourse.

“with seizures of speech and song, with a single story  
between my sobbing, pendulous breasts.”

Through her poetry Kandasamy asserts her moving out of the language of patriarchy as she writes; “This tongue allows me to resist rape, to rescue my dreams. This tongue is not man-made”. In doing so her language privileges and re-writes the stories of goddesses and women, as the agency is now given to them. The collective, autobiographical as well as the mythical that the assertion of “I” within Kandasamy’s poem attains, embodies multiple subjectivities rather than producing unified essentialising sense of selfhood. As expressed in “Random Access Man” and “Princess-In-Exile”, the powerful voice of woman is portrayed through the figure of Sita who does not cater

to the Hindu myth of the self-sacrificing wife and puts herself and her needs before her husband’s. Ram becomes a random-access man for her. She very directly questions the manhood of Ram by her strong choice of words. Drowned in sexual frustration, Sita chooses to satisfy her needs by picking up a random man who knew how to make love to her rather than succumbing to Ram’s flickering attitude towards her. The goddesses of Kandasamy are dangerous who militate. They are a threat to the regressive normative society. She turns around the myths and presents before us the vicious deities who are explicit in the depiction of their sexuality and are not afraid to dissent. As because they revolt, they are nailed, bolted, and thrown away. These are the goddesses they try to silence and the women who do not pose much threat are locked away in their homes. This is precisely what Kandasamy covers in her poem “Nailed”. The patriarchal society silences them because “Men are afraid of any woman who makes poetry and dangerous portents.”

### Conclusion

In the process of subverting the Brahmanical myths, her work also opens up the contestations and complexities entailing the engagement with the notion of patriarchy within mainstream feminist discourse. Her poetic practice elucidates problematic areas that makes necessary to question the discourse of privileged feminist theory primarily on the grounds of representation and authenticity. Even as mainstream Indian feminists’ study and translate dalit women’s sufferings to produce literature, they merely adopt forms of tokenism. It looks as if they are here to rescue the marginalised. She unveils the hypocrisy of the so-called upper-caste feminists in her poem titled “Emergency”. The ‘upper’ caste women do not acknowledge the caste discrimination and the multiple-exploitation of lower caste women, as they turn a blind eye failing to recognize the systemic, deep-rooted mechanism of control.

This opens up another forum of contestation as we are to analyse and understand Guru’s assertion of ‘Dalit Patriarchy’ that he introduced in his essay we begun with. Precisely, the problematic stance of

mainstream feminism in India has been encountered with the formulation and understanding of the term 'Patriarchy'. Recent scholarship has popularised and adhered to the term, 'Dalit Patriarchy', suggesting a separate form of Patriarchy free from the umbrella of 'Brahmanical Patriarchy' (Arya, 218). While Guru referred to the term 'Dalit Patriarchy' in his article, his intention was not the way it has been appropriated by mainstream Indian feminists. Their ideas of pluralism are counter-productive as it gives rise to the politics of exclusion or rather it is fallacious to consider pluralism within its structure in this sense as it diverts attention from what is at the centre, the practice and politics of Brahmanical hierarchy. Even though there are claims of 'multiple patriarchies' taking up the socio-cultural structures, are the projects of mainstream Indian feminism being inclusive in their approach to challenge the same? The ideas of pluralism are counter-productive as it shifts the onus on women from marginalised communities, as Rege argues, the issues of caste then become the sole responsibility of the dalit women's organisation. Thus, the poetry of Kandasamy represents the distinctive voice from the edge echoing anguish, anger, agony and assertion of an identity that dislocates/ disrupts the veneer of self-possessed literary commandment.

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## Regionalism in The Legends of Pensamby Mamang Dai

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### Abstract:

Literature represents and explores the ways in which the world is viewed and experienced by people in that society. Among different types of literary genre, Regional literature plays a crucial role in maintaining our bond with our native soil i.e. our culture and tradition. Mamang Dai is one of the most acclaimed North-Eastern Poets and novelists writing in English. Her work represents the glory of her homeland, the natural beauty and its landscape, the rich culture, tribal folklore and the splendid oral tradition of the region. Her most celebrated novel *The legends of Pensam* (2006) represents the word of Adis, the most populous groups of indigenous peoples in the Indian North-Eastern states of Arunachal Pradesh. As Dai herself hailed from the Adi community, she is well aware about the age-old customs and the belief system of the Adis as well as their Legends, Myths and fables. Thus, in the novel she intermingled myth and reality to create the mystic world of spirits. The paper attempts to analyse the selected novel *The Legends of Pensam* (2006) as a regional novel. This novel foregrounds the symphony of the particular Adi community, the place of their inhabitants and most importantly the people of the region.

### Keywords.

Literature, Regional, North-Eastern, Landscape, Culture, Folklore, Tradition, Adi, Arunachal Pradesh, Mamang Dai.

### Introduction.

In Literature, Regionalism is a characteristic aspect of distinguishing

the life, social relations, customs, language, dialect or other aspect of the culture of that area and its people. It contains detailed description of a place, setting or region usually rural bearing an approximation to a real place. Therefore, it is highly realistic but not necessarily a factual reporting or photographic reproduction, but a highly creative work of art. Phyllis Eleanor Bentley, 20<sup>th</sup> Century English novelist, in her novel *The English Regional Novel* (1941) highlights that the Regional Novel concentrates on a particular region of a nation being conscious of its characteristics which are unique to that region and differentiate it from other common motherland. Sometimes regional literature focuses on a clash between two different ideologies, cultures and beliefs. It does not merely describe the landscape, Socio-cultural norms of people but it also highlights the Socio-political and economic aspects of the region.

Sometimes the writers created their own fictional world in order to express their own ideas, views, and emotion. In this regard the Victorian novelist Thomas Hardy's 'Wessex' and R.K. Narayan's 'Malgudi Days' are supreme examples.

As a literary category, its origin is traced back to the post-civil war era but many critics locate its origin in the Antebellum period when women writers like Harriet Beecher Stowe offered sketches of rural New England, while South-Western humorists promoted the story telling style and wilderness settings of the nation's frontier territories. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the term gets used interchangeably with 'local color' to designate stories set in relatively underdeveloped country areas.

Regional literature helps us to understand a particular region of a nation, its people, their culture, the historical significance of the place as it brings attention to the life of that particular region in such a unique way that the readers are aware of the characteristics which are unique to the region and differentiate it from other regions. For the writers, the concerned region becomes synonymous with the world at large, a microcosm which reflects the great world beyond. The greatness of a regional writer lies on his/her ability to transcend the limitations of the boundary of his/her chosen region and can make its universal in

its aesthetic appeal.

In Literature, Regionalism served the purpose in two ways; first, by depicting the particular cultural variations in different parts of the world and second, Regional Literature is an important source of documenting and preserving the rural heritage.

#### The Aspects of Regionalism in *The Legends of Pensam*.

The novella *Legends of Pensam* (2006) is a collection of Nineteen stories which represents the world of Adi Community situated in the mountains of Arunachal Pradesh. In the title the word 'Pensam' in the language of Adi Tribe means 'in-between' - "a small world where anything can happen and everything can be lived; where the narrow boat we call life sails along somehow in calm or stormy weather; where the life of a man can be measured in the span of a song" (Epigraph, vi). In the novella the author, Mamang Dai provides a detailed picture of Arunachal Pradesh i.e., its geographical features, the socio-cultural temperament of its indigenous communities, the Myths, legends, folklores etc. which are crucial to explain and understand the people of the Northeastern region. In her "Author's note" Dai Says,

"Arunachal Pradesh... is one of the largest states in the country and one of the greatest. It is the homeland of TwentySix tribes and with over one hundred and ten sub clans, each with different language and dialect. Part of the Eastern Himalaya, the land is criss-crossed by rivers and high mountain ranges running North-South divide it into five river Valleys. The mightiest of its rivers is the Siang, known as the Tsangpo in Tibet and the Siang valley, stretching northwards to the Tsangpo gorge where the river enters India, is the territory of the Adi Tribe who are the subject of the Subject of this Book". (Dai, 7)

A characteristic aspect of regional literature is the influence of regional stories, legends, myths, kathas, fables etc. on the work. These stories, myths, kathas etc. are plays as an alternative source of knowing the history of any particular community, their socio-cultural taste which is unique to their region, their faith and tradition of the land. *The Legends of Pensam* (2006) is a collection of legends set in the place called Pensam. Pensam means 'a world in between' which represents the hilly landscape of Arunachal Pradesh. These legends and stories

are prevalent in the region from the ancient times and serves us with the purpose of teaching ethics, values and cultural norms and differences. The author narrates these legends from the point of view of Adi Tribe, the native of the land and the practitioner of the faith. The series of stories are divided into four sections titled *A diary of the World*, *Song of the Rhapsodist*, *Daughters of the village* and *A matter of the Time* represents the roots of Adi Tribe who are in the cross road of negotiating the rapid changes in the tribal communities of North-East India with the onslaught of modernization and enduring their animistic faith and strong beliefs of the native place during the colonial rule in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The First section "ADiary of the World" describes the Adibelief of human origin. The book opens with the story of Hoxo, "the boy who Fell from the sky" and was found in the Forest by Lutor, chief of the Ida clan of Adis, who brought him home. When the villagers asked about the child, Rakut's father who was with Lutor replied that "There was a great noise and fire in the sky and then our son fell to earth" (Dai, 40). The story of Hoxo's birth shows the tribal beliefs of their origin. The novel also reveals the beliefs of Adi community which are closely related to certain dances, which tells folklores as well as myths. These dances are led by the Miri, The Shaman who recites spiritual verses, which tells the origin of humans;

"In the beginning, there was only keyum. Nothingness. It was neither darkness nor light, nor had it any colour, shape or movement. Keyum is the remote Past, way beyond the reach of our senses. It is the place of ancient things from where no answer is received. Out of this place of great stillness, the first flicker of thought began to shinelike a light in the soul of a man. It becomes a shimmering trail, took shape and expanded and become the pathway. Out of this nebulous zone, a spark was born that that was the light of imagination. This spark grew into a shining stream that was the consciousness of man, and from this all stories of the world and all its creatures came into being" (Dai, 56).

Like the majority of tribes inhabitants, the central belt of Arunachal Pradesh, the Adi's practice animism, or spirit-based religion. This beliefs

centered around for estecology and their co-existence with the natural and supernatural world, the 'Shamans' engage themselves in conversation with the spirits. Belief in spirits and their influence on people is an important aspect of Adi world view. In the novel there are numbers of characters living a vulnerable life under the influence of spirits. The pre motion of the death of Luthor, when he saw the Biribik, the water serpent with ancient eyes and a head with horns and the small fish found in the pocket of Luthor when he died was also considered as the spirit manifestation."So, no one was surprised when Hoxo's father was killed in a hunting accident shortly afterwards. A tragedy was expected". (10). Villages accepted the death of Luthor as being caused by displeased nature or spirits. This incident is a clear indication that the slightest disruption in their social order can dislodge the balance between the human and natural world. In the novel, Mamang Dai presents the belief of Adis about the existence of different types of spirit for e.g., good and bad spirit or jealous spirit. *In the Heart of the Inscet* included in *The Legends of Pensam* (2006) we have different instances of spirit There is a spirit named Dimi Tayang, "the lonely spirit who stripsup the lake waters and clutches trespassingmen in an embrace of ice" (Dai, 59). These spirits can easily be offended which can bring destruction to their village. Therefore, the Shamans and Priests performs various kinds of rituals and offerings to gratify the spirits.

The novella represents various aspects of socio-cultural beliefs customs, practices and tradition of the Adi community. In the novel, the story titled 'Pinyar, the Widow' disclose the myth about origin of rice beer. According to Pinyar, "once upon a time, there lived a supernatural being called the Miti Mili. These small, quiet people were the first to make the mysterious si-ye, that is the yeast used to ferment rice into beer" (Dai, 28). According to the belief of Adi, Mili race taught this method to mankind before they disappeared from their land. Since then, people started believing that rice beer has certain special powers which must be treated respectfully and it becomes a part of every auspicious ritual of the Adis. The novella also represents the traditional spring festival which is also known as 'Aran Festival'.

During this festival the village men disappears into the forest for several days to hunt for game. On such one hunt game Lutor, the leader of the Adi community finds the mysterious boy Hoxo and also offended a spirit which caused his life.

According to the people of Adi community nature is a divine spirit who needs to be satisfied with offerings and prayers. They spend a secured life amidst nature and thrive upon it. From worshipping the nature, the people of the region depend on nature for the minimum necessities of life. The narrator describes the natural phenomenon in a most creative and visionary way. But this symbiotic relationship of Adi's with the natural world hampered by the impact of modernization, which was introduced by the British ersup on the primitive life of Adis. In the novel, Dai record the entrance of Britishers in the region with the construction of the famous 'Stiwell Road' in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since Arunachal Pradesh is a place of natural state, forests play a crucial role in the life of Adicommunity. They considered forests as aliving supernatural being which protects them from the influences of bad spirits. Here rain is being personified having a mind of its own with the ability to think. The Adi community holds the view that everything which is coming from nature is sacred living being. Therefore no one should dare to disrupt the ecologicalbalance.

In conclusion, *The Legends of Pensam* is a collection of simple stories which recounts the images and history of a tribal community. It describes the geographical features of the region, the socio-cultural, traditional faiths and customs of the Adi Community, the native of this hillland. All the seelements have been employed by Dai in a metaphoric way to assert the identity of Adi Community. In this novella Dai has creatively juxtaposed different world views of Adi community. Through these different set of stories Dai rediscovers the rich cultural heritage and Myths of Adi Tribe and helps the modern reader to know more about an indigenous tribal community.

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## Darkness and Silence in Manjula Padmanabhan's

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### Abstract:

Literature being the mirror of the society reflects its beautiful and ugly faces with utter reality and precision. A profound author of an age or a nation never evades the serious issues of the age. Manjula Padmanabhan is one such writer who takes up sensitive issues in Indian Writing in English. The contemporary Indian English writers are engrossed with the idea of anticipating the social and political substances of the times. Manjula Padmanabhan is one of the authors who portrays realism and feminism through her writings. The plays of Manjula Padmanabhan not only have a prominent place in the Indian English Drama, but also are equally important in the canon of Feminist theatre. 'Lights Out' (1984) a Padmanabhan is an attempt to highlight the patriarchal insensitivity towards violence against women. The play is based on an eye-witness account of sexual assault in Mumbai suburb in 1982. Set in an urban society, it brings to the fore the apathetic behaviour of patriarchy towards women at large. With an unambiguous impression of gender divide, the playwright makes a very powerful plea of comprehending the feminine sensibilities in a world which hardly allows women to be heard. The present Manjula Padmanabhan's 'Lights Out' seeks to the shadow cast by the patriarchy women as the invoice is muted, and through 'silence' the purview of prevalent patriarchal insensitivity and male dominance.

**Keywords:**

patriarchy, insensitivity, male dominance, gender divide, feminism, darkness, silence.

**Introduction:**

Women's voices in the field of playwriting h exposure to the otherwise denied space of the public sphere. Theatre being a form of public expression, involved the vulnerability of women to public gaze. It was in the 1970s in India that women entered the spaces hitherto unexplored. With the burgeoning of Feminism, and the spread of feminist consciousness at around this time, women ventured to write plays for performance. This group of women, no longer content with their images in the plays of men, sought to re-script their own lives, with due prominence given to their experiences. They counter their own marginalization and erasure from the history of playwriting by strongly asserting their presence and active production of plays. Manjula Padmanabhan, already recognised and applauded as a graphic artist, designer and cartoonist began her playwriting career with the one-act play, 'Lights Out' which touches women exploitation and subjugation with the patriarchal apathy and insensitivity that surrounds it. With her very first play, Padmanabhan has left a mark as a prominent feminist playwright in modern Indian drama. In 'Lights Out' Padmanabhan atrocities social beyond evil in 'phy fact, no criminal or victim or socio-political jargon makes it to the stage during the performance of the play. She mirrors the central issue through the dialogues of the characters in the play. Without any display of violence on stage, the audience could sense the horror of the crime through the conversations of the characters. Based on a real-life incident that took place in suburban Bombay in -1982, called 'the decent, plays educated, middle class urban society.

**Exploring the and 'darkness' 'silence' in 'Lights-Out':**

'Lights Out' opens in-floor the apartment drawing belonging to married room of a couple -Leela and Bhasker in Santa Cruz, Bombay where Leela, in the very first scene asks Bhasker if he has called the

police as he returns from work. Leela is frightened by the screams of a helpless woman she hears from the neighboring building every night for weeks and wants to inform the police of it. But her husband, Bhasker pays no heed to it.

LEELA: I feel frightened. All through the day, I feel tense—

BHASKER: But there's nothing to— be fright (Padmanabhan, 6) Bhasker is well aware that a criminal activity is going on in the neighbouring building but he is purely apathetic to the victim and also insensitive towards the fear and concern of her wife who is being empathetic to the victim. Unless the criminals hurt his wife, he sees no point of her being concerned or frightened. This unmasks the self-centric urban behaviour.

LEELA: (*wheelingly*) Can't you call the police? Just

BHASKER: (*drawing away*) No. (Padmanabhan, 6)

Leela being his wife stands no importance to Bhasker. Her pleas, her cries, her fear and concern mean simply nothing to him. He simply shoos away the matter and asks her to ignore it and rather meditate to calm herself down.

LEELA: (*changing tack*) You know what Sushila said?

BHASKER: No idea. (*pointedly losing interest. Looks around for his paper*)

LEELA: That we're part of... of what happen making ourselves responsible.

BHASKER: (*finds his paper*) Rubbish!

LEELA: That's I said what first! But then...

BHASKER: (*starts reading*) Sushila's a fool. (Padmanabhan, 7)

Bhasker is clearly an insensitive person who takes no interest in going to the aid of the victim and lends a deaf ear to the pleas of her wife. Then his friend Mohan arrives in the second scene who voyeuristically watches the gang-rape through the window and questions the character and social class of the victim. He doesn't rape, rather he calls admit t it a religious ceremony- some sort of religious ritual taking place. Leela tries every possible way to convince them to call the police but the two men- Bhaskar and Mohan try equal arguments to justify that it's not a rape, doe ignored. In the third scene

when Leela's friend Naina arrives Mohan calls it an act of exorcism and says that women are more susceptible to demonic possession. To this, Bhasker says that women When Naina finally affirms the incident as an act of rape, Mohan terms the victim as a whore who doesn't realm fall of decent under human society them. According to Mohan, a whore is not a decent woman as a decent woman would never submit to such sort of thing. Bhasker argues that if she is a whore, the all acther isn't rights the moment she becomes a whore. Naina argues that a whore can also be raped if theact of sex is against her desire and inclination. But the two men insist that a whore has lost her chastity and so, has lost her position as decent or respectable. The two women and their pleas to rescue the victim of a horrific sexual violence are shut aside by the men. Rather, they indulge in discussions and speculations.

In 'Lights Out' Manjula Padmanabhan presents a world where the females have no identity, no voice and no standing of their own; they have to plead before men for consideration of their concerns, for their rightful existence, and this leads to discrimination against them in every walk of life. The main motive behind the adoption of indifferent attitude by Bhasker and Mohan in the play is to internalize the fear-psychosis in the minds of the female characters Leela and Naina and keep the position of male dominance status quo. The prevailing patriarchy keeps the women existence in the dark and their voice unheard.

Patriarchal discrimination commodifies women and strips them off their rights and sheer existence. It is to be noted that none of the female characters - Leela and Naina - take a step against the sexual violence on their own. Instead, they plead their male counterparts to stop it. This proves how patriarchy has gained control over women. On account of her perennial subjugation and subordination to men in every walk of life, women have been so conditioned socially as well as psychologically that she cannot take any independent decision. She is bound by the shackles of patriarchy in every sphere of her life. Man is not her master only in social and material spheres, rather he controls the inner recesses of her mind. He decides what she should

want, what she should feel and think. This predominant practice of male chauvinism in the play, subverting the very psyche of the feminine world reflects the position of woman in the society. She lives under the constant shadow identity and existence. The age-old tradition of referring the 'weaker sex' puts woman in a lower pedestal and authority while woman as someone who remains in awe of his lofty position. Raman Seldon's quote of Beauvoir about the socially conditioned subordination of woman gives immense authority to man which the latter uses to further weaken the position of woman in his relations with her." When a woman tries to define "I am a woman herself," : noman would she do this. This fact reveals the basic asymmetry between the term's 'masculine' and 'feminine': man defines the human, not woman, in an imbalance which goes back to the Old Testament. Being dispersed among men, women have no separate history, no natural solidarity; nor have they combined as other oppressed groups have. Woman is riveted into a lop-sided relationship with man: he is the 'One', she the 'Other'. Man's dominance has secured an ideological climate of compliance; 'legislators, priests, philosophers, writers and scientists have striven to show that the subordinate position of woman is willed in heaven and advantageous on earth'..." (Seldon, -130) 129 The identity or role that a woman gets is just a construct of social, cultural mores which have their sanction from the patriarchal society.

Frieda, the maid working in Bhasker and Leel play. She is only given orders which she carries out obediently. She hails from a lower stratum of the society and neatly projects society. Ages of subjugation has muted the voice of women and she is an epitome of it in this play. In the third scene when Naina's husband Surinder arrive criminals with knives, Naina protests against this decision taken in the spur of anger but Surinder silences her with his dominating time for women's nonsense, clearly nullifying her voice.

NAINA: Surinder, —don't get excited, now

SURINDER: You shut up! This is no time for (Padmanabhan 55)

NAINA: Surinder, *please!* Now stop all this nonsense

SURINDER: (*turns on her suddenly*) Shut up or I'll (*turningkick your back*) We'll take— these

NAINA *subsides, embarrassed.* (Padmanabhan, 58)

The cultural and social inheritance of dominance by man across the timeline offers him exclusive authority to silence any voice from woman that asserts or protests against him, and this results in disintegration or subversion of woman. Silence is a symbol of submission to the patriarchy. Salil Tripathi, thinking about modern-day oppressed women, reminisces about the place of woman in Indian society in the past:

The cultural and social inheritance of dominance by man across the timeline offers him exclusive authority to silence any voice from woman that asserts or protests against him, and this results in disintegration or subversion of woman. Silence is a symbol of submission to the patriarchy. Salil Tripathi, thinking about modern-day oppressed women, reminisces about the place of woman in Indian society in the past:

“From the time of the ritual disrobing of Draupadi in Mahabharata, many men have participated in such public stripping of a woman, forming a tight circle around her, as they have cheered, jeered and leered. Most men who should have stepped in to stop have turned their eyes away, expressing their inability to do anything, leaving Draupadi to the mercy of divine powers. And all that Krishna can do is to keep adding yards to her never-ending sari, prolonging the humiliation”(Salil. Tripathi, Jul 19, 2012).

And this continuous humiliation of woman acquires symbolic significance as she will continue to experience the patronizing attitude of man and live on his charity. The subjugation of women may be different but the age-old system of dominance by men over women will continue.

### Conclusion:

From the relationships between the two married couples in the play; the comments about sexual violence, prostitution and the sensitivity and susceptibility of the ‘Weaker sex’ to the women’s own

perceptions— ‘Lights Out’ subtly exposesonaboutmanywomen, decencyprevailingandmorality.Since thenot disrobing of Draupadi in the Mahabharata to the gang-rape of several innocent women likeNirbhaya in the 21<sup>st</sup> century India, women have always been an object of exploitation andsuppression in the hands of the patriarchy. ‘Lights Out’ unra the victim of gang-rape in the play and also the crime surrounding the inaction of thecharacters in the play. The women, both the victim and the female characters in the play are in the dark of their sheer existence and their voices are muted by the overpowering patriarchy that rules the society. The play ends with Leela saying that it (the horrendous act of gang-rape) must be over for tonight. This points to the reality that women exploitation and violence is never-ending. It might take a pause but it comes back in different forms.

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sources of data. The primary sources here are the poems of the selected poets and the various secondary sources like computer, online books, journals, etc.

### Introduction

North-East India incorporating seven different states with endless sovereignty movements and ethnic reformation during and after the British invasion itself problematizes the notion of national identity alienated from the mainland India. The literature of North-East India has various political and cultural causes. The confluence of various ethnic groups and communities of people have given rise to a body of writing that is completely different from Indian English literature. Northeast India comprises the seven states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. It is a study in diversity; it has diverse and different voices. The best writings from the Northeast have been produced in acquired language, including English. The English poetry of Temsula Ao, Mamang Dai, Robin S Ngangom, Desmond Kharmawphlang, Monalisha Changkiza, Easterine Iralu, Aruni Kashyap, and Nini Lungalong represents the new voices in the literature of the North-East. These poets have effectively combined music, rhythm and pattern of their own language and cultures with the forceful communicative power of the English language. Towards the time of India's Independence, the flourishing of nationalist struggle and sovereignty movements in most of the tribal communities of the region created a kind of ethnicity boom leading to the assertion of typical cultural identity and tribal ethos. The unique difference in between ethnic communities on which the identity of the tribes internally depends is also expunged by the centrifugal forces of globalization. Apart from geographical alienation and culture plurality, the factors contributing towards the sense of identity crisis and cultural alienation have incorporated the forces of globalization and alien cultural hegemony more prominently than colonization.

Poetry of the English language, produced in contemporary Northeast India is marked by voices of dissent and concerns of ethnic identity. Identity is an important factor that marks an individual into a

## Ethnic Identity and Crisis of Humanity: An Overview on the writings of selected poets of Northeast

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### Abstract

The Northeast India has dimensions of cultural heterogeneity and a diversity of outlook. The communities of Northeast have always been isolated from the mainstream India. The Northeast region has a tragic suffering from the range of violence and the blood that has been shed in the name of preserving national unity and the ethnic identity. The literature of Northeast India encompasses the psyche and sensibility of the society at large. The distinctive features of Northeastern states are its poetry and their uniqueness in the representation of contemporary problems like loss of identity, cultural values, conflict, migration and violence. Among many poets of Northeast, four poets have been selected with the purview of this paper- Temsula Ao (Nagaland), Robin S Ngangom (Manipur), Desmond Kharmawphlang (Meghalaya) and Monalisha Changkiza (Assam\Nagaland). This paper is an attempt at reading some selected poems of the respective poets, which reflects the experiences of change, struggle, violence, loss humanity and identity crisis.

### Keywords

Identity, Ethnic, Humanity, Violence, Struggle, Homeland, Nationality

### Methodology

This paper is prepared by using both primary and secondary



community having its own regional identity. The construction of North east as the binary, other in the pre and post-colonial times brings a potential treat for losing of one's identity/culture. Inhabited by different groups of people who have settled down in the region in different times, the Northeast is home to various ethnic entities, leading to the presence of great diversity, "in terms of language, dress code, food habits and ethnic composition (*Mabanta, 98*) The fear of losing identity gives rise to a false sense of, nationalism which in process, harms the innocent people and they become victim in the human terms. Writings from the North-East tend to focus on the unresolved issues. Most of the literature from the region reflects the experience of change, identity, ethnicity, violence, marginalization and life lived amidst the volatility are, understandably, the content of creative and critical writings from this region. Dealing with an analysis of how the poets of the region have used their myths and legends in poetry to assert their ethnic identity.

Subir Bhowmik in his sophisticated reading of crisis of Northeast India reads the levels of crisis of identity in four different ideological paradigms. He remarks:-

The crisis of identity has been evident at four levels :- a) tribes have so far failed to evolve as nationalities either by themselves or as a part of along ergeneric identity so even when a, Naga and Mizo organisation fights for a homeland tribes and clans seek to assert their identity within the movement and weaken the generic identities; b) the large generic identities like the Nagas and the Mizos on even a larger nationality like the Assamese have failed to raise beyond its primordial boundaries and envisage a polytechnic regional identity for the Northeast; c) the ethnic groups in the Northeast continue to be confused about their identity in India. Some realize succession is not a viable action, much as cultural assimilation with the dominant pattern of the mainland is not possible or desirable, but there is a clear lack of consensus on how to institutionalize the relationship between the locality, province and the nation in North-East, and the ethnic groups are very hostile to settlers from outside the region or the immediate neighbourhood even those who settled or were settled in the area more than 100 years ago. (*Borah, 104*)

Following postcolonial attempt at recovering one's past, poets of the region have used the medium of poetry as a platform to assert their ethnic identities. Because post-colonial writings seek to recover from colonial stereotyping, poets have negotiated with their present hybridized identity by going back to their mythic past where the folk elements become „a forked weapon of assimilation and dissemination (*Syiem, 218*).

### **TemsulaAo**

Temsula Ao a retired professor of North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) Shillong is an Ao-Naga poet and a writer. She has published six volumes of poetry, published an autographic book "*The Ao-Naga Oral Tradition*" (2009), two short stories collection and an autobiography titled "*Once upon a Life*" (2019).

Ao, a Naga by origin, expresses been against the treat: "the cultures of Northeast India are already facing tremendous challenges from education and modernization. In the evolution of such cultures and the identities that they embody, the loss of distinctive identity does not bode well for the tribes of the region". Her fear is evident in her fictional work "*These hills called home: Stories from A war zone*", as she describes about her purpose of writing these stories: "what the stories are trying to say is that in such conflicts, there are no winners, only victims. The thrust of her narratives is to probe how the events of that era has restructured or even revolutionized the Nag psyche. She expresses that some remain untouched by the events while others go transformed into being almost unrecognizable even to themselves". All her stories in these hills called home has a focus on the past traumatic experiences of Naga people and identify crisis both collective and individual sue to globalization, fake nationalism, colonization, insurgency. In her poem titled "*My Hills*", Ao laments the loss of peace in her region. She reflects upon a sense of alienation thathunts her in the present and a longing for the bygone days. The poet depicts the one heaven like paradise as "*Happy gurgling brooks....the reasons playing magic/ on their many splendored sheen/ of autumnal leaves*". Referring to the violence in the valley, the poetsays:-

*But to day I no longer know my hills, The birdsong is gone, Replaced by the staccato of sophisticated weaponry.*

The study reveals that Temsula Ao is a writer who gives voice to her community. The Naga people fought for a separate identity, the battle shorted even before India's independence. The poetry of Temsula Ao mainly focused on the issue of Naga nationalism. She "depicts the anxiety of "otherness", the necessity of the separatist tendency the subsequent evasion of the Naga nationalism and the emergence of „new literature .(Ahmed, 20)

Temsula Ao's famous poem „*Blood of Others*' tries to depict how since the pre-independence era the people of Nagaland are pushed to margins and they are struggling for their own identity. The formation of Indian nation state with its tacit agencies of nationalism continues to be a repressive force over the way of life:

*In the re-awakened songs and stories A new breed of cultural heroes Articulate a different discourse. And re-designates new enemies. Demanding reinstatement of customary identity.*

Through these lines Ao tries to suggest that the Nagas are pushed to the periphery and this actually makes them more aware of their loss cultural heritage and identity.

### Robin S Ngangom

Robin S Ngangom, eminent Manipuri bilingual poet, who writes in English and Manipuri. He studied literature at St. Edmunds College and the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, where he currently teaches. Ngangom describes his poetry as mostly autobiographical. His poetry bears witness to his deep attachment to send profound love for the land in which he is born and grows up. "*The Strange Affair of Robin Ngangom*" is Ngangom's most ambitious and poetical poem. In this poem, Ngangom attempts to sketch the narrative of an individual desire for freedom from multiple voices that the poetic voice adopts resonates the individual's desire for freedom from multiple levels of oppression, domination, subjugation and tyrannies. The individual 'I', however, paves way for a collective and communitarian 'we'. As the poem progresses, it talks about the decay of morality, culture,

and humanity as well as destruction of personal relationships for material gains and overall tragic lives of the people of Manipur. By using his own name in the title of the poem; Ngangom drives home the point of his unique affiliation with his homeland. The lines "misplacing/ a bronze bell" could be a suggestion of losing its cultural identity and the changes in Manipur experiences. This is emphasized by the line "I left behind many untended hearths". The 'I' in the poem stands for the collective voices of people of Manipur, who are facing the violence, the terror and struggling for their loss identity. The poem ends with a pessimistic tone that he has been bound to live in this prison-like homeland forever from where he can't escape.

In his other poem "*Poem of Joseph*", Ngangom examines the assertion of identity based on ethnicity and delves into issues of exclusivity, governance and territory that have resulted in deadly violence. The lines of the poem- *It has never too late... I recognise myself to mark a spot... in my native land you didn't regret... Back to pure blood,* shows the ethnic violence from 1992-1997 between the Nagas and the Kukis has resulted many deaths, destruction of homes and displacement of thousands of peoples. The violence and destruction have left nothing for the survivors; "there's nothing to return for" as Ngangom writes in poem, quoted above. Children who have been bundled underneath into "burrows" for safety roam in emptiness, homeless and orphaned. The conflicts among the tribes and the violence resemble the loss of humanity. The inhabitants of Manipur with conflicting identities are insecure about their land, culture, language and people. Ethnic differences are used to identify one opposing group from another. These groups then become powerful mobilizing weapons often engaged in ethnic conflicts. The clash of preservation of ethnic identity slowly takes the form of militant nationalism.

### Desmond L. Kharmawphlang

A poet and a folklorist, Desmond L. Kharmawphlang is professor and Head in the Department of Cultural Studies in North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong. He has to his credit a number of books and numerous articles published in national and international

journals. Desmond L Kharmawphlang looks at the past in an ambivalent manner writing of it at times, with a kind of ferocity. Kharmawphlang gives voices to the anger felt by the Khasis an impact of colonialism on their life and land. He's poem "The Conquest" is really appealing, based on his introspective eye to his own identity. He is deeply in love with his own hometown, but his town tends to lose its identity. The basic peaceful nature of his hometown was subjected to change as the British made presence to their land. "I never get tired of talking about my Hometown", his poem starts. *Later came the British with gifts of bullets | Blood money and religion | A steady conquest to the sound of guns begun*, his poem expresses resentment and frustration with a different kind of conquest. The arrival of the British had brought with them nothing significant but only the gifts of bullets, which took over the things and which ultimately destroyed the inherent peace of the people of his homeland. The poem portrays the poet's lost-identity of the peaceful past and looks at the past in an ambivalent manner with a kind offerocity.

In his other poem "Letter from Pahambir", Kharmawphlang undergoes a journey to the remote village of Pahambir in search of his cultural roots, which has lost in the midst of urban generation. A tale of lost cultural identity with the invasion of the British to his land, the story is like,

*"The stories burn our memories like A distant meteor searing. The unnamed gloom, by their light I examine the great hurt I carry in my soul for having denied my own."*

It is true that coming of westernised culture had definitely given a new lease of life, but at the same time tended to lose own identity in the process. Kharmawphlang explains that our culture is our identity, losing our culture is losing the ethnic identity. The domination of irony in his poems makes it subtle and the identity of an individual is strongly portrayed throughout his poems.

### Monalisha Changkiza

Monalisha Changkiza, a journalist and poet of Ao Naga ethnicity, born in Assam. She is the only editor, proprietor and publisher of as

English Daily- Nagaland Page- in the Northeast. Changkiza tries to present the hollowness of idea of nation in her poems. She has used her writings as a weapon against the Naga's union with India. Her poem "One of the Decades" deals with the ground of which Naga people try to seek their identity and create a kind of uniqueness. In the poem she describes the coming of the Indians to their native land has spoiled the peace and their life has become full of nightmares: *One of these decades when our dreams Become as real as nightmare now we will gather around the fire on moonlit nights as did our forefathers before strangers traversed across our strong and secure hills.*

The word "strangers" refers to the British invaders and the other Indian people who came to the Naga Hills in terms of a forced negotiation of Nagaland to become a part of India. The poet has expressed her disgust towards the process of nation making that involves brutality and forceful acts and increase hatred of people among themselves. In search of their own identity, the shaded blood and struggled the violence over the land. The decades refer to the time of conflict that set Nagaland against India.

Another poem of Changkiza, "Shoot" is a poem of resistance. The poem talks about the conviction of the poet that Naga Unity can be attained in spite of threats from those who wield guns and exercise gun power. She challenges the instigator of violence and utter in disgust,

*Go, ahead, shoot and blast us to eternity I give you myword, we will not move neither from our stands nor to distract your aim Shoot, what's stoopingyou? What's making you tremble?*

Presenting the perception of the violence in Nagaland, they can have bullets but can't leave the quest of making their own ethnic identity. She tries to show that violence is not any religion, cultural or nationality. Violence is itself a conquest and it has a very destruction attitude within human beings, there is no mercy during the conflict, the humans destroying the humanity. The common man is the cross fire from both the sides. Thus, the poet through the poem conveying to resist this violence from both the side.

### Conclusion

To conclude, one can say that the poets of the north-eastern region are rooted in their culture and voice the issues and concerns of the own people. All the four poets- Ao, Changkiza, Ngangom and Kharmawphlang have written on their native lands, culture, violence, resistance, ethnicity and the identity. Being the poets from northeast they feel that they have an obligation to write about the crucial contemporary problems of their region. The voice of the people of the land that tries to create an identity and name out of its of own region. The nostalgia for the cultural and indigenous way of life is equated with the idea of selfhood and a revived identity, and this is manifested in the writings of the poets of the region.

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## Protest, Resistance and Peace : A Study of some selected poetry from North East India

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### Abstract:

This paper is an attempt to analyse the inherent strains of voices of protest, resistance and searching for peace and harmony in North-Eastern poetry of India. It has focused on the theme of protest, resistance and peace depicted on some selected North East poets, namely-Thangjam Ibopishak (Manipur), Robin S. Ngangom (Manipur) and Mamang Dai (Arunachal Pradesh). A glimpse of some other poetry hailing from this region is also a matter of concern. It should be worth mentioning that the poets taken for present study are mostly modern and representing the panorama of social reality persisting in the region over the centuries. Conforming the track of modern Indian poetry in English as well poetry translated from regional languages into English, all these North-Eastern poets are found to be adopting ironical stance as an overwhelming strategy of mocking and resisting present frightening situation but simultaneously hoping for a better future.

### Keywords :

North East, violence, resistance, peace, dystopian satire, diatribe, other, nature.

### Methodology :

This paper is prepared by using primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources here are the textbook from where poems are borrowed and the various secondary sources like internet materials,

Ebooks, Journal, video clips etc.

### Introduction :

Pithy and powerful, **poetry** is a popular art form in every aspect, when it comes to protest, resistance or searching for peace. Since the inception of human civilisation, poetry meant imagination with exaggerated words written to flatter and motivate one's emotions, which is not the case in the recent times. From the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century poets have realized that the function of poetry should be to reality of the time. Thus, they started writing on the current situation they were witnessing. For instance, 1930s 'Audenian circle' (War Poets), poetry's of Adrienne Rich, T.S Eliot, Walt Whitman, Nathalie Handal, Langston Hughes manifest the social reality of the time. This type of poetry emerged and gather currency in the North-Eastern part of India from 1980s onward.

The representation of contemporary events and problems like insurgency, violence, corruption, loss of identity and cultural values, crisis of humanity can be seen as the distinctive features of North-Eastern poetry. Poets like Thangjam Ibopishak, Robin S. Ngangom Mamang Dai, Temsula Ao, Monalisha Chankieza, Nabakanta Baruah, Hiren Bhattacharya, Yemblem Imbocha write what they encounter. Although they hail from different states of North East India and their agendas vary, one thing they stick is to protest and to resist against all sources of violence and corruption and the spirit hope for better future.

**Northeast India** (officially **North Eastern Region, NER**) is the easternmost region of India representing both a geographic and political administrative division of the country. It comprises eight states- Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. The term 'North-East' under which the eight states are bundled up have 475 distinct ethnic groups, 400 languages/ dialects and also 57 active militant groups. But despite the fact that India is considered of 'unity in diversity', North east often identified as 'other' or 'marginalised' from mainland India. To some this region is also known as 'valley of violence and disturbance'.

**Protest, Resistance, and Peace :Thangjam Ibopishak, R.S.**

**Ngangom, and Mamang Dai** : Poetry is a popular art form at protest and rallies. From the civil rights and women's liberation movement to Black Lives Matter poetry is commanding enough to gather crowds in a city square and compact enough to demand attention on social media. Speaking truths to power remains a crucial role of the poet in the face of political and media rhetoric designed to obscure, manipulate, or worse. Some insists, as Langston Hughes writes- "*That all these walls oppression builds/ will have to go!*" (Hughes: *I Look At The World*). Others seek ways to actively 'make peace' as Denise Levertov implores, suggesting that "*each act of living*" might cultivate collective resistance. The poet from Manipur (North East India) Robin S. Ngangom explicitly speaks the general voice of all the peace seekers amid violence-

*All I wanted to sing*

*With the mystical sparrows,*

*But only a murder of crows*

*Nest in my throat at dawn* ({"Poetry" 49-52)

The inherent peace seeker inside the poet is ensnared by the trauma of violence and thereby contaminated from within.

**Thangjam Ibopishak Singh (1987-)** is among the leading and most popular poets of the Northeast India. Based in Imphal, he writes in Manipuri, the language of the indigenous Meitei community. He has published six volumes of poetry, three of which earned him some of the most prestigious awards in the state including the Manipur State Kala Akademi Award in 1986, the Jamini Sundar Guha Gold Medal in 1989. Ibopishak also won the Sahitya Akademi Award for poetry in 1997. The poems appear in this edition have been translated into English in an anthology "The Dancing Earth: An Anthology of Poetry from North-East India" by noted poet Robin S. Ngangom.

Ibopishak's vision of poetry is dark and shows the inherent strains of voices of protest against insurgency, terrorism, ethnic conflict and humanity crisis. In his poetry Ibopishak presents pathology of dehumanized existential conditions wrecked and ruined by cult of violence and intolerance. Thangjam Ibopishak's poem "*I want to be killed by an Indian Bullet*" is a dystopian satire charged against the oppressive

system and diabolic mechanism of those in control of power to silence the voices of protest. To the poet the power is organized, calculated and systematic in destruction of divisive power. These lines from the poem have ironical stance attacking the omnipotent power structure-

*They can create men; also  
Destroy men at whims  
They do whatever they fancy  
The very avatar of fancy.  
The very avatar of might*

*I ask them when will you kill me? (Ibopishak, Kapse ed.2015,135)*

The poet uses here the prosaic dialogue method to dramatize and intensify the satirical tone. The narrator's fearlessness, his cool surrender to the bullets of the opponent can't be seen as an act of timidity but signs of inner resource and strength who defies death as a protest against antagonistic forces. The last line of the poem is important and quite dramatically, it attains the climax of the poet- "*Being fastidious about death/I escaped with my life*".

Voices of protest can be seen in the form of poetry when stereotypical views such as 'other' from mainstream India reach its peak. This kind of identity crisis is still prevalent in liberal and secular country like India. Can anybody say how an Indian look like? Is there any definition for looking like an Indian? In this regards Cherrie L. Chhngte in her poem "*What does an Indian Look Like*" writes-

*"You look at me, and you see  
My eyes, my skin, my language  
My faith... What does an Indian look like?  
An Indian looks like me,  
An Indian is me"(76)*

In present times, Northeast poetry has become an important channel for exhibiting resistance. More people in the world, particularly from Northeast have been turning to poetry to better express their anger and frustration. Resistance poems capture the speaker's rage at the modern world along with their desire to resist oppression and injustice. Langston Hughes one of his poem "*Let America Be American*

*Again*" resists racial oppression and articulates 'every man' to be free to live in this world:

*"O let America be America again-  
The land that never has been yet-  
And yet must be the land where  
Every man is free."(Hughes,67-70)*

**Robin S. Ngangom(1959-)** is an Indian poet and translator from Manipur, North East India. He is one of the great literary pillar of North East India. His poetry bears testimony of a period he had personally witnessed and expresses his anxiety and fear about his people and land. According to him-

"Manipuri poets seems to be preoccupied with realities such as ethnic violence, corruption, exhortation, terrorism, oppression. While it may not make him or her a better writer, living in a menace of the gun does not permit the Manipuri poet to indulge in verbal wizardly or wooly aesthetics, but is a constant reminder that the poet must perforce master 'the art of witness.' Hence whatever our personal weakness may be the nobility of our craft will always be... the resistance to oppression"(Misra 299)

Using the technique of poetic reportage, the poet lays bare the macabre, the details of horrific events in his popular poems "*Native Land*" (Translated in *The Desire of Roots*)-

*First came the scream of the dying  
In a bad dream, then the radio report,  
And a newspaper: six shot dead'  
Twenty-five houses razed, sixteen beheaded with  
Hands tied  
Behind their backs inside a church.(1-6)*

The incident is the result of the raising conflict between the Nagas, Kukis and the agony of the common people. The fierce irony lies in the fact that the horror is enacted inside the church. The teaching of Christianity such as love, patience and kindness towards each other is so far followed ardently took backstage blinded by hatred.

He further narrates an incident of twelve middle class women protesting outside the Kangla fort on July 15, 2004 holding a banner

"Indian army, rape us too, we are all Manorama Mothers" against the brutal rape of Thangjam Manorama by Assam Rifles Force. She was raped multiple times and shot in genitals. This was the reason for the protest and resistance against humiliation and violence. This incident is also known as Naked Women protest or Kangla Protest 2004:

*And I want to tell my poet friends  
Of the twelve mothers who stripped  
Themselves and ask soldier to rape them  
In fact, I make imaginary journeys  
To its little world everyday*

*And wait for the fog of justice ("Everywhere I Go" 16-21).*

By depicting the scenario of the region and resisting through his poems Robin is looking for solution. His poetry is 'diatribe' against conflicts among the different tribes and message for reconciliation and harmony. Through his poems the poet is trying to send a gentle reminder to be aware of all these and not propagate again. His writing thus turns into a voice of protest, resistance and of harmony:

*"But the bread and revenge is not sweet  
They destroy and with bleeding peace*

*We try to mend and dream again". ("In the Beginning was Love" 26-28)*

**Mamang Dai(1957-)** is a leading poet, novelist and journalist from North East India. She belongs to Adi tribe and is one of the renowned tribal voices from Arunachal Pradesh and North East India. She is best known for her non-fictional work *Arunachal Pradesh: The Hidden Land*(2003) followed by her collection of poetry *Stupid Cupid*(2008), *River Poems*(2004), *Midsummer Survival Lyrics*(2014) and so on.

Mamang Dai is basically an optimistic poet. Her optimism lies in the depiction of nature. She treats nature as a transcendental force which influences the life of the people. Dai delineates in her poems how every elements of nature is imbued with love and hope for better future. One of her poem called 'No Dreams' she sings-

*The hills are washed with light  
The river sings  
Love floats!*

*Love floats! (1-4)*

These line indicates that amidst all kinds violence, corruption, ethnic crisis, rape; there will be light and tenderness. 'Love' hints many sided dimensions touching on immutable relationships. Dai's optimism and her latent faith to resurrect the glorious past of her race surges in her poem "Us". Dai asks-

*Keep an eye on that door,  
Just in case a familiar face walks in  
Carrying the night sky like a shining dome,  
Telling us, with a circle of friends*

*All things are possible(Dai, Midsummer Survival Lyrics)*

Mamang Dai captures in her poetry the essential beauty of Arunachal Pradesh. She chronicles the harsh reality that people encounter in their homeland. And her poems stand as a testimony to the latent faith and optimism that enable the people to live with hope in spite of the cruelties that pervade their life. Similarly, Hiren Bhattacharya, one of the prominent Assamese poets tells in his poem "Sara Sandhan" which was translated into English by Pradip Acharya as "Shooting an Arrow":

*This my lovely sky  
And the bordering green grass  
After that so much summer heat  
Passed by. (6-9)*

These lines in its beautiful tone and imagination appeals a sense peace and freedom in Assam after a long era of turmoil such as Burmese invasion, war between Ahoms and Mughals, immigration and crisis of humanity.

### Conclusion

Diving into the theme of protest, resistance and peace in northeast poetry, it is evident that each and every poet and their poetry seeks the meaning of life. They write so as to survive, they write so that they can't be recognized as 'other' from the mainstream. Their poetry seems to become the voice of the voiceless-'the marginalised'. The world already has a history of violence, hatred, bloodshed and destruction

but amidst all these violence and atrocity poets like Ibopishak, R S. Ngangom, Temsula Ao, Mamang Dai, Nabakanta Baruah or Hiren Bhattacharya find the spirit of hope in their poetry

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## Post Colonialism in Joseph Conrad's Novel

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#### Abstract :

The paper revolves around the "Post-Colonial Writings" and repercussions of the de-colonization of a country, especially questions relating to the political and cultural autonomy or independence of formerly subjugated people. Post-colonial writings also become important because it is capable of providing a representation of the colonized as well as the colonizers, and hence offers a representation of conflicting views and ideologies. So, taking a Western canonical post-Colonial novel the "Heart of Joseph Conrad we continue: the novel's main purpose is to show the evil colonial exploitation reality to Europeans and also leads the readers to think in a way that demonstrates a sensible and practical idea of what can be achieved or realistically and reflects the truth of colonialism imposed by England in Africa. Critics have no rebuking its dehumanizing representation of suppressed people and contemptuous treatment of women. Therefore, Heart of Darkness has endured, and today it stands as a Modernist masterpiece directly engaged with post-colonial realities.

**Keywords:** imperialism, colonial exploitation, dehumanizing, European colonizers, etc.

#### Introduction :

Post-Colonial writings or literature has started since the end of World War II from regions of the world experienced decolonization.



The goal of post-colonialism is accounting for and fight the residual cause of colonialism on cultures. It is not simply bothered with past worlds, but learning how the world can move beyond this period together, towards a place of mutual respect. Most of the post-colonial writers reflected and demonstrated many thematic concepts which are connected with 'bothandsuppressedand the idea that there is little difference between civilized people and wild or thus, savages. And hence, the book "Heart of Darken Joseph Conrad is considered as an attack on imperialism. Also, it criticizes immoral treatments of the colonizers in Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### Post Colonialism in Joseph Conrad's Novel

Joseph idea Conrad's and work this novel "Heart of Darkness" had been acknowledged around the world as an extraordinary piece of writing. The novel's story is an incident of his own experience when he took journey to Congo or can be understood through its semi-autobiographical relationship So, wanted to exhibit to that evil Conrad's is human entity, which anyone acting without the requirement or moral restraint can become sode based that anything is possible. In this case Conrad changes spoke and of hope people can become insensible monsters, killing innocent people without having a single second thought.

The main central theme that is used in this book is mainly Imperialism, colonization, exploitation, racial discrimination, alienation and isolation, moral corruption, etc. Fundamentally, the theme is an extensive message or idea demonstrated by an author and is a pivotal element of literature since it elucidates universal concepts. Marlowe, the main character, describes how the Europeans dominated the Africans during their imperialism, lessening the natives of the country to a status. Marlow witnesses the inhumane or near slavery of Africans at the hands of the whites.

The moral determination of the Europeans coming into Africa was to enlighten or we can say civilize the natives, but instead they concluded colonizing their land and corrupting them. The Congo became victim to imperialist. The main moral dilemma in this book is

of the insufficiency of a firm moral system with a Centre to hold moral decisions. Once the white colonizers leave Europe with its stable beyond society, and once there restrains they on leave t behaviour set by a society are extracted, people tend to become savages to obtain power and profits.

When reading Heart of Darkness, there are ideas or thoughts we can say that most of that actions depicted by the characters doubtlessly must be over exaggerated. When really, our society has come more comfortable to speak of evil or immoral as something outside people rather than admit within us, and that we are just as adept to become monsters as the ones we consider evil. People can become insensible monsters, killing guilt less people without having a single second thought.

People become wicked when we abandon our morals and the potentiality to do what is right from what is wrong. One reason for this is when there is an excessive 'power' that influ people to change who they are. People become almost delude or brainwashed.

### Conclusion :

Heart of Darkness examines the horrors of Western colonialism, depicting it as a phenomenon that not only tarnishes the lands and peoples but also those in the West who advance it. Conrad wrote this novel to reveal the menacing operations happening all the time in our world. So, he wanted to reveal or we can say to expose the ugliness on the planet that all people are responsible for. The novel is only astonishing to readers because it is not edited to make people look true and fair. Joseph wrote what he saw in the Congo, he exited an alarming but forthright story that reflected what he saw in society, and that divulged or revealed the darkness wrapped in our hearts. "Heart of Darkness" exposed the wickedness or evilness happening in the world, not only in the people. Then, Heart of Darkness is a critique of colonialism, it takes place at a time when there were mere hints that colonialism was not working as it should; it was a time that came into sight on the surface perhaps to be the height of Empire, a time to be bullish about colonialism in Congo. This is not the only

postcolonial view of the novel. Other critics believe that Heart of Darkness presents a positive message.

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## A Critical Study of Dalit Literature in India

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#### Abstract :

Dalit literature tell us about the cultural conflict of the socially, economically, and culturally deprived and disadvantaged group of people. Contemporary Dalit literature portrays dreadful and humiliating events of dalit World. The poets or writers of the dalit literature used word "Dalit" which replaces the earlier name Untouchables. The motive of writings is the liberation of Dalits. The dalit community struggle against casteism. The Dalits are deprived of their Social, Political, And right of education, possession of assets and right to equality. Thus, dalit literature emerges to voice all those oppressed. Dalit literature is, in fact, the writings that are about dalits. The Dalit movement is a contention against anti-caste movement to build a modern democratic and secular Indian identity. According to Ambedkar the root cause of social and cultural exploitation of the dalit lies in disparaging laws pertaining to the status of the dalit ordained in ancient Indian scriptures of Hindu religion and philosophy.

#### Keywords:

Caste, Dalit, Oppressed, Untouchables, Equality, Banned, Social, Political, Struggle

#### Methodology:

To Prepare the paper I have used secondary Data. I have collected data from website, Article, Journal, Books, Newspaper, Others Research papers, Class room teaching, Discussion with Teachers and Friends.

**Introduction:**

Dalit writing is a post-Independence literary phenomenon. The emergence of Dalit literature has a great historical significance. The causes and effects leading to the age-old existence of oppression and despair of the lives of marginalized class of nation's vast population are also observed in many other parts of the world. Arjun Dangle has defined Dalit literature as: "Dalit literature is one which acquaints people with the caste system and untouchability in India... It matures with a sociological point of view and is related to the principles of negativity, rebellion and loyalty to science, thus finally ending as revolutionary." Most of the marginalized groups all over the world have a similar system of oppression but the titles are different as per the class and class divide. In India it was under the pretext of the Caste and in the western World it was under the name of the Race. Inequality was the main source of this marginality which led to insecurity, injustice and exploitation. Marginalized sections were always on the periphery and distanced from the power centers. In this research work the main objective is to draw similarities between the politics of Caste and Race in Indian Dalits and the American Blacks.

**Meaning of Dalit:**

The term "Dalit" comes from the Sanskrit root 'dal' and means broken ground down, downtrodden, or oppressed. Dalit literature means "writing about Dalits by Dalit writers with a Dalit consciousness", writes Sarankumar Limbale (Limbale, 19). The term Dalit literally means cut off, oppressed, downtrodden, broken, or reduced to pieces. Originally used by Jyotiba Phule, it designates castes and classes who have been held inferior by Varnashrama Dharma. Comprising the 18% of Indian population Dalits for centuries have been subjected to the hegemony and ill treatment of the upper castes. The efforts of social activists like Jyotirao Phule and B.R. Ambedkar stimulated their self-recognition and inspired them to come to the forefront. This social awakening culminated in the emergence of a literary space to record their voice which came to be called Dalit Literature. According to Alok Mukherjee, "the central concern of Dalit literature (Limbale, 10). Show best to represent the authentic

experience of Dalits" Essentially this literature constitutes writing from the margins to the centre intending a revolutionary social change. Commenting on the nature of Dalit Literature, Arjun Dangle writes: "Dalit literature is not simply literature... Dalit literature is associated with a movement to bring about change ...At the very first glance, it will be strongly evident that there is no established critical theory or point of view behind them: instead there is a new thinking and new point of view (Limbale.viii).

**The Dalit Movement:**

Against these atrocities, the subalterns, especially the Dalits, initiated several movements in Indian history. Today, a majority of these discriminated subaltern communities identify themselves as Dalits, thereby acquiring a new identity by coming together with the perspective that "Dalit is dignified". The Dalit movements, aimed at the liberation of Dalit folk from the oppressive structures in Indian society, are directly connected to subaltern movements. They reject the sub-human status imposed on them by the Hindu social order. Sathianathan Clark remarks that the subordination and subjection that marks the life of Dalits in India bring them into the contours of a particularly contextual assembly of subalternity. (Dalits and Christianity, p.6) Oliver Mendelshon and Marika Vieziany express similar opinion, Untouchables (Dalits) have retained their identity as a subordinated people within Indian society, and by this we mean to identify a condition that is far more severe than merely being bottom of an inevitable hierarchy. (The Rights of Subordinated People, p.115) Explaining the term subaltern, Homi Bhabha, a key postcolonial scholar, emphasizes the importance of social power relations in his working definition of subaltern groups as oppressed, minority groups whose presence was crucial to the self-definition of the majority group: subaltern social groups were also in a position to subvert the authority of those who have hegemonic power. (The Post-Colonial Question, p.210) The emergence of Dalit Aesthetics the Dalit litterateurs were busy to formulate what they called Dalit aesthetics. While doing so, they were keener to reject rather than accept the traditional concepts and terminology of the existing upper Caste literature. They preferred the

structure of poetry by the Black Americans, the words of the Prostitutes, of the criminal world, and locutions of the underworld dons (Dalit p. 12.) Like maggots', ravishment', gag', vomiting fire', hole to fuck in', cock in your pocket', whore' piss in the bastard gutter' are the preferred expressions in these dalit writings. They rejected the Upper class Hindu litterateurs writing on the Dalit life. Not only this, those Dalits who did not protest Against the Hindu-subjugation of the Dalits in their writings, were also eliminated from the list of the Dalits. Thus Chokhamela, a member of the Mahar caste and a saint in Maharashtra in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Was also rejected by them. His poems were regarded to be a blatant resignation to the Hindu Religion and his devotion as a defeat. With such separatist and isolationist strategies in literature, They've succeeded in creating a specific genre in Indian literature across Indian languages. However, this sort of pursuit for distinct identity seems to have brought in other consequences Such as a feeling of exiled life in their own land. The basic assumption that only a Dalit-creative Writing can be part of Dalit literature demands closer scrutiny.

#### **Dalit Poetry:**

More or less, in a deeply caste-ridden society, Dalit poetry is a quest to verbalise the complexities of Finding an identity as a human being. The Dalit poetry takes the lead to be the impassioned voice of the third generation of the Ambedkarite movement. This voice reverberates in almost all the poems of the anthology No entry for the New Sun. The poems express pain to be an outcaste in the upper-Caste dominated society. Often, a sense of identity crisis too leads to anguish in these poems. Similarly, these poems also sound militancy. In a poem in the collection "To be or Not to be born", The Dalit poet L.S. Rokade, rejects the meek and submissive manner of the older generation. Here, The character plays upon the word 'mother' symbolising both his mother and the motherland. The Motherland discriminates against the Dalit son. He is hurt to such an extent that he promises not To be born again. As he goes to collect water, he is humiliated by the upper caste for his DalitIdentity, although it is in abundance in his motherland. So, he bewails:

Rivers break their banks

Lakes brim over

And you, one of the human race

Must shed blood

Struggle and strike

For a palmful of water (Poisoned Bread p.2)

Intolerable is the injustice meted out and he reacts violently 'I spit on this great civilisation.' The continuous exclusion of the Dalits by the upper caste people is the theme of Vilas Rashinkar's poem 'No Entry for the New Sun'. He scoffs at the racial policy. The low caste, the Poet corroborates, is the new sun and the leader of the new social order. The existing Vedic Social order of the high caste is debauched and appears to be ridiculous to the poet.

Dalit Fiction: The 1980s have seen a considerable development of autobiographical works by the Dalit litterateurs Is to write autobiographies, where the first stage of the Dalit life ends with his marriage. After his Marriage, a new phase opens up – the life of a Dalit citizen. (Dalit, p.16) These writings capture the nuances of their struggle through a wide variety of regional, experiential and linguistic means. There is a distinction between testimony and something of deeper personal and cultural import in these narratives. The narratives are more than an account of or a testimony to achievements in one's Individual life. Instead, they help articulate for the writer a social as well as a personal identity. To that extent, they fashion a self in the articulation as much as they situate this self within a larger social and cultural context. They speak not merely to an individual identity but to a collective identity. The narratives themselves experiment with formal language use in a variety of ways. Daya Pawar s Balut (1989) is told as a story by Dagdu Pawar to the more literate Daya Pawar – both daya and Dagdu being the same person in different situation. These writers use particular spoken dialects, connected to the region, locality and caste from which they narrate. (Handbook, p.373) There is another variety which the dalit writers prefer the most besides poems – the short story writing.

**Conclusion :**

Dalit literature represent the collective consciousness of social discrimination suffered by the Dalits for hundreds of Years. This Suffering is due to the age-old Barua system envisaged by manu that created Caste based heirachy in Hindu Society forcing the lower caste people to undergo humiliation and exploitation at the upper caste hands. So basically, Dalit literature contains seeds of rebellions against This old evil practice. The contributions of Dalit writers have been emerging every day to enrich Dalit literature, as well as Indian literature in recent Years. Critics and reviewers have showed interest in this literature at national and international level. John C.B. Webster, Josiane Racine, Jean-Luc Racine, Dr. Gail Omvedt, Eleanor Zelliot, Christophe Jaffrelot and many Indian researchers have been Making significant contributions on Dalit lives in their recent Writings. The significances of Dalit identity in the caste hegemonic Society are brought out in the Dalit literature. Besides, Dalits Realized their identity by reading the works of Rabindra Nath Tagore, JyotibqaFule, M.K. Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar, Premchand, Mulk Raj Anand, Vijay Tendulkar in religion and education. Dalit Men and women actively participated in Ambedkar's ideology and considered as "God of Dalits." Rejection and revolt in Dalit Literature have been birthed from the womb of Dalits' pain. It Is about the oppressed according to the Indian caste system. It Forms an important and distinct part of Indian literature.

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## Oral Literature and Folk culture of Naga Community: With Special reference to Easterine Kire's "Son of the Thundercloud"

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**Abstract:**

Oral narratives are cultural materials and documents transmitted verbally from one generation to speeches and songs that later take up the form of folktales, folksongs, ballads, saying or Even chants. Oral tradition and literature play a crucial role in every indigenouse culture to maintain its customs, rituals, beliefs, traditions, way of living and way of being. EasterineKire, a writer from Nagaland in the North-East of India, expresses the pressing concern of climate change and the role of narrative retelling of Naga creation myth in her novella "Son of the Thundercloud". This paper focuses on examining the effectiveness of her novella in revealing the Naga culture, their tradition, aspirations, expression and their mute sorrow through the fusion of the spiritual world and Universal wisdom. She is a poet and novelist from Angami Naga tribe of Nagaland who aims to celebrate the uniqueness of her culture through her work in an attempt to acquire homogeneity among various tribes for this particular region. Now-a-days, globalization and modernization have negatively impacted the core essence of different culture and Naga culture too has become a victim of western cultural hegemony. The paper also Sheds light on the fact that in her novella Kire tries to analyze influence of western culture on the aboriginal Naga oral tradition and its various constituent and their experiences.

**Keywords:**

Aboriginal Naga Oral tradition, Angami tribe, indigenous knowledge, cultural hegemony, climate change, homogeneity, Universal wisdom.

**Methodology of the study:**

To prepare this paper I have used the secondary data. The data are collected from website, books, previous published articles, case studies, and various research report. In this study I have tried to discuss the Oral tradition and folk Culture of Naga community and their various perspectives.

**Objective of the study:**

This write-up endeavours its best to foreground the very traits of Naga tradition and their culture by taking into consideration selective but relevant literary fabrication, the brainchild of internationally recognized Naga writer Dr. EasterineKire. The other objective are: -

- To Show the Oral and Folk culture of Naga community.
- To trace the Comprehensive history of Naga oral literature.
- To study the oral narrative and folk tradition that reflects in Easterine Kire's novella Son of the Thundercloud.
- To study Oral literature of Naga community and their style, theme and characterization.

**Introduction:**

There are many indigenous communities in North-East India, such as- Adi, Angami, Garo, khasi, Jaintia, Nyshi, Kuke, Bodo etc. and they have their own culture. As they are indigenous their lives and culture marked by Orality, the reservoirs of Oral tradition. The North-East Indian Writers feel the importance of Orality in their lives and use it as a key factor in their writing. It is stated that: "Orality, Oral tradition and Oral literature carry great meaning within indigenous communities even as their usage narrows the Scope of our understanding of indigenous knowledge communication and expressive culture." (Teuton,169)

The most acclaimed writer or novelist of north-east India such as Mamong Dai, Monalisa Changkija, TensulaAao, Dhruva Hazarika, Siddhartha Deb, Mitra Phukan show in their novel how orality becomes main tools to represent the culture of the indigenous communities. One such celebrated writer the most recent voice of Nagaland is EasterineKire who expresses her ideas and cultural ethos through their writings, her most popular novel such as- The Naga Village Remembered (2003), Bitter wormwood (2011), When the River Sleeps(2014), Son of the Thundercloud (2016) etc. and other stories take into account the lived experience of the people of Nagaland.

**Oral tradition and Folk culture of Naga's:**

The origin of Oral tradition may date back to some stone-age when men knew not the art of writing yet watermark their every deed for their forth coming generation. It might also have originated in circumstances where a grandmother or a grandfather attempt to quench the thirst of their grandchildren about the outer world which according to them is a world full of adventures and strange happenings. In this way, it is possible for a society to transcend materials of the past across time. For the Nagas, their Orality, their folktales and stories are pathfinders to knowing who they are and who their forefather were. As Sue Monk Kidd said in "The Secret life of Bees": "Stories have to be told or they die and When they die, we can'tremember who we are or where we have come from."

The Naga oral tradition records, the lives of the common people, their beliefs, simple joy and sorrow, customs and their encounter with strange forces of nature. It can be considered borrowing its, accounts from an individual's or group's cultures functioning as a mediator to political decisions, validates conduct release emotions and evaluates their social administration. The general theme of the tales are adventures, love, beauty hunting, hero tales, legendary tales, revenge and vengeance. The tales also manipulate the customs rites and rituals of the people beliefs faculty to farm the plots and sub plots or the wardrobe of it (Darlong, Literature of North-East India, 9 Oct 2014,).

**Naga's and their belief and practices:**

Nagaland, Tripura, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, and

Arunachal Pradesh are considered as seven sister states, which collectively forms "Paradise Unexplored". Sikkim, the Himalayan state, constitutes the North-Eastern part of the country. The literature of this region is saturated with their cultural spirit and age-old customs. Nagaland was formed in Dec 1, 1963, and is sharing its border with Assam, Manipur, Myanmar, and Arunachal Pradesh. The history of Nagas teaches us that Naga is not Indian by choice but by brutal circumstances (Mills 27). In the backdrop of Indo-Naga conflict the state of Nagaland was created in North-East part of India, which way different than other states in context of culture, language, history, politics and physical appearances of the local people. There is a lack of written evidence which explains their history and origin. Hence, the folklores and myths help the Nagas to get to know about their history and establish their identity. Different Naga tribes believe in different myths of origin. Hence, it can be said that the folklores and myths are of much importance in Naga culture (Deka, 174).

#### **Orality, myth, folklore in Easterine Kire's Son of the Thundercloud:**

The novel "Son of the Thundercloud" published in 2016 is an in-depth penetration into the richness of Naga folklores and myth. In her writing, Kire performs her duty as one of the best storytellers of her region. She is the first Naga writer in English who textualizes 'Orality' in her writings to represent the cultural life of Angami community as well as attempt to resurrect oral Narrative. In an interview Kire stated, "We felt we needed to create written Naga literature. We have so much oral Narratives but with oral dying out, it's all going to be lost." In this novel the protagonist Pele is on a journey through the Naga territory, which eventually results in Pele appreciating Naga culture, along with the myth and the supernatural elements to the core. The protagonist Pele leave his village and begins a journey nowhere after the demise of his dear ones caused by a famine. His life changes after meeting two women in an abandoned village. Which was once called village of Noune. Pele witnesses the birth of the son of the Thundercloud, Rhalie by Measanuo. Measanou was impregnated by a drop of rain. With the birth of Rhalie barren

villages retrieve their fertility. Rhalie is brought up by Measanuo and Pele, who also provides him guidance to fulfill his purpose of life which is killing the spirit tiger and unshackling humanity from the evil. Unaware about Rhalie's goodness the dark heart of the mortal world murders him and as an aftermath, famine is restored. At the end of the novel, Pele is seen as a transformed man possessing a realistic understanding of true Naga culture who starts another journey where he aims to explore the unexplored facts of Nagaland (Barber, 17). In her novel "Son of the Thundercloud" Kire unravels the arcane world of Nagas which is tangled with universal wisdom. Having a foundation of folklore and oral tradition, Naga culture is divulged through the novels of Kire. The novel has spirits, folklores, myths and transcendent nature. Through the clash with an enigmatic world, the Universal wisdom is revealed. Wisdom of Compassion, love, forgiveness and hope points an image of deal human world in the reader sand allows the water of North-East to form an unbreakable bond among the Nagas in order to preserve the Naga culture and tradition.

"In general, a myth is a story which is not true and which involves (as a rule) supernatural beings – or at any rate supra-human beings. Myth is always concerned with creation. Myth explains how something came to exist. Myth embodies feeling and concept..." (Cuddon, 526)

The outstanding Landscape of Nagaland along with its supernatural elements is represented in the novels of Kire culminated in the disclosure of isolation-swathed culture Nagas and instinctive wisdom of mankind. The natural world of the Nagas is preserved to be the abode of mythical beings. Kethonuo and Siedze from the novel were transformed into spirit. Gradually their body starts to disappear. Pele looks on as Kethonuo's legs begin to transform into spirit form while she bids farewell. Therefore, Kire's novels just like Naga culture, bridge the disparities among natural, spiritual and human world (Barbar, 17).

"Hope Sir, we have been living on Hope. Every morning when we wake up, we eat hope and so we live to see another day." – (Kire, 2016, p.27)

The paramount soul of human is disclosed by the exposure of the protagonist to supernatural a natural world. This supernatural

environment of the Naga guides them towards the revelation. In the novella *Measanuo*, *Kethonuo* and *Siedze* unfurls the extramundane world of the Nagas, entangled in universal wisdom. Now-a-days, when the modern generation of Nagaland rejects their tradition and culture, the above-mentioned characters from Kire's novella work as medium of disperse the supernatural knowledge of the world of Nagas, along with its omnipresent wisdom, therefore fulfilling the obligation of the author to pursuit the Naga culture (Mandal, 2019). Kire focuses on enlightening the Naga regarding the relevance of acceptance of their mystical World to understand the actual essence of Naga culture. Kire confines the faith of the Nagas in supernatural in her writings. The supernatural powers are merged with vast knowledge of Naga landscapes and the assistance of the save with ordinary people. The three sisters *Measanuo*, *kethonuo* and *Siedze* endured the famine with faith and hope, revealing the power of Naga Culture, which is conserved by the spiritual world of folktales and storytellers.

In the works of Kire, it is found that life of the Nagas is blended with universal Wisdom of hope, love and forgiveness, thereby disclosing Naga tradition and culture with profundity as care attributes. The villagers who abandoned *Measanuo* and blamed her for the death of her Seven children and husband, are forgiven by her. *Measanuo* states, "My Son (Son of the Thundercloud-Rhalie) Forgives you headman. Do not condemn yourself any further." (Kire, 2016, p.45)

### Conclusion:

The analysis presented with utmost meticulously so far will be undoubtedly acknowledged as having proven the tenet that Naga culture has its own instinctive serendipity and significant. As such there is sufficient justification to preserve the cultural ethos by embattling oneself against all agents intimidating the extirpation of the native traits. Kire's approach is fully a post-colonial response as she vouches for the recognition of her native Angami culture and beyond that the consolidated scape of the cultures of entire Naga Tribes with her fictional characters challenging time and again the

hegemony of Imperialism spearheaded by the British under the pretext development propaganda. Considered as one of eminent voices in the present times, the Naga oral tradition divulged through the novel of Kire, *Son of the Thundercloud*, which is considered as being vulnerable to modernization and globalization taking place to modern world. Naga culture is spoiled by the views of Christianity and western education. Kire's novels unravel the divinity of Naga culture along with their amalgamation of supernatural and natural world. The idea which is propagated though these novels are rational hardly means negligence of the indigenous culture. It is the comprehension of a particular culture just the way it is. We can also say that It's differs from the conventional literature which only believe in aesthetic beauty. In Naga culture we found a sense of self identity, nationalism, struggle for existence blended with myth, folklore, legend etc. She has developed another type of narrative to suggest the living experience. The voice of the novellas aboriginal spirit, existence of literature that not only show the human emotion but also the Universal voice.

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## Silence and Sensibility in Mitra Phukan's Character Rukmini in the Novel "*The Collector's Wife*"

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### Abstract

The experiences of women have always been distinctively different from that of men. Women have faced patriarchal social discriminations since ages and they suffer from various disabilities imposed upon them by the society. A woman is treated as "second sex" in patriarchal society and placed at different disadvantageous position due to gender difference. Women always found themselves hidden behind a mist of illusion and misled by the imposed ideal of womanhood. The society considers women as belonging to the private space of the household whereas men occupy the public sphere. North-East is an area that has faced innumerable instances of violence, political and military unrest, insurgency etc. Women, who are biologically and physically vulnerable to men, are the worst sufferers of these. These instances not only disrupt peace and security in the public sphere but affect the lives of women in a very different way. In normal times women face patriarchal domination and sexual exploitation within the society. Due to this, women relapse into alienation and silence. There are umpteen instances of sexual exploitation within the North-East Indian literature has depicted myriad manners of such discriminations, exploitation and alienations in various manner. Thus, this paper tries to examine the silence and sensibility of women in North-East India with reference to Mitra Phukan's "*The Collector's Wife*".

The novel, *"The Collector's Wife"* brings out the problematic system of the society, exploitation, kidnappings, the hopeless situation and women's Silence. Mitra Phukan's character Rukmini, being the wife of the District Collector, undergoes numerous conflicts in her life. She struggles both inwardly and outwardly longing to lead a peaceful life, thrives to stay happy yet is desolated.

#### **Key Words:**

Women, Violence, Silence, Patriarchy, Political Unrest, Sexual Exploitation.

#### **Methodology**

In this paper the data are collected through secondary source. Besides, online sources are also used.

#### **Introduction**

The North-East India is known for dimensions of cultural heterogeneity and a diversity of outlook. Representations of women by writers from the North-East, like Indira Goswami, Arupa Patangia Kalita, Rita Choudhury, Mamang Dai, Temsula Ao, Anjum Hasan, Monalisa Chankija etc. are celebratory and liberating. To a considerable extent, their writings map a social and historical space that is polyphonic and variegated. Their writings interrogate the canonical texts, elitist practices and heterosexist assumptions of culture. These women writers from the North-East have invariably dealt with the issues of oppression, subjugation, invisibility, silences, and gaps in the periphery. However, their writings also question a legacy of what are being discarded, de-valued, and discredited in the context of the North-East. (Pathak, 2016,9)

Mitra Phukan, a popular writer, translator, columnist and trained vocalist has published children's books, short stories and novels. Her works reflect the themes of death and violence. *"The Collector's Wife"* revolves around the character Rukmini Bezboruah. The novel depicts its protagonists Rukmini witnessing these instabilities and thriving in an atmosphere of ever-present threat of violence. The political gets inextricably intertwined with the personal in the novel. From a state of witnessing the violence from a distance and sympathizing with the

victims at the beginning of the novel, the protagonist encounters the violence in her own personal life towards the end. The impersonal experience of death culminates into a very close personal experience at the end of the novel.

#### **Discussion**

Mitra Phukan's *"The Collector's Wife"* (Zubaan, 2005), has presented a few strong womanist characters. All the events in the novel unfold at the perfect amalgamation of insurgency and women's silent search for identity, having several adverse impacts on the lives of the characters. Rukmini Bezboruah, the protagonist of the novel, is a hard-core womanist who engages herself in silent observation of the injustice done towards the society. She, in her monologues, complains about her existing situation, the superstitions that affect her, her husband's attitude towards her, and everything that shapes the course of her life. The taunts that she receives from the society for being a barren woman affects her mentally and hates the way she is being taunted, but, unfortunately, she remains silent and rather she expresses her fake apologies to those people. In the very first chapter, we come across such a situation where Rukmini attends the marriage ceremony of her colleague and is embarrassed by the bitter confrontation of two elderly ladies who look down upon her for her barrenness. The bride, who is the witness of this insult directed towards Rukmini, apologises to the latter for such an embarrassment in her own wedding reception. But surprisingly, Rukmini had a womanist reply to her colleague's apology:

"I don't mind, really, I don't," said Rukmini quietly. "In fact, I should have thought of it myself. It was inexcusable for me to sit so near the bride." (16)

The very confrontation she had with those two ladies disturbs her a lot and she is unable to have a proper sleep that night. She despised the way she was looked down upon by those two elderly women. But her silence, rather we should say it as her fake humility, bounds her to accept the fault of her barrenness. She accepts the mental injustice acted upon her by the society, even though she dislikes it.

There are many more instances in the novel that proves Rukmini

being a strong womanist. Rukmini, the wife of Siddharth Bezboruah, the District Collector of a small town, Parbatpuri, compromises her career for the sake of her husband's transferable job. She works as a part time English lecturer in government colleges, shifting herself from one college to another in different places according to her husband's places of transfer. She does not receive any job satisfaction.

In spite of the job dissatisfaction she has, Rukmini makes peace with the situation by justifying her compromise in career. Even though she does not have any fault in her barrenness, she is mentally depressed and feels guilty of her condition. The guilt she carried within her is expressed by Phukan in the following words:

These days Rukmini was always burdened with the feeling that she had been unable to fulfil her part of a social contract. That she had not kept a bargain. That she had regened on a promise of vital importance. (54)

Siddharth, the husband of Rukmini, did not have the least interest in having a baby. He tried to avoid all dealings related to Rukmini's pregnancy. This was very annoying to Rukmini. But she chose to remain silent and preferred to engage herself in silent complaining. In the words of Mitra Phukan:

Rukmini said nothing. But she couldn't help feeling a twinge of annoyance. Surely he could at least have telephoned the doctor? After all, it was possible to have this baby all by herself. (158)

Another character in the novel, Bondona, a student of Rukmini, has a few feminist traits in her. She, belonging to a poor family, is the victim of the large number of migrations taking place from different parts of the country and from the neighbouring country, Bangladesh to her own state, Assam. Even though she knows, that her protest against this immigration can hamper her future, she continues with it (Chutia, 2019, 30-32). Rukmini has the notion of her husband's disregard towards her is because of his work pressure. Eventually, the fact is revealed when she discovers her husband's relationship with one of her colleagues, PriyamDeka, whom she thinks to be her friend. Rukmini feels desolated and depressed by his negligence towards her. Rukmini and Siddharth have visited the fertility clinic in Guwahati

to cure her malady, "barrenness". She decides to take fertility drugs. But it does not affect her husband much. She is ignored by her husband who is not bothered about her emotional feelings. He neither intervenes on these medical issues nor discusses her present situation in Parbatpuri. It is she who has the burden of giving birth to a child for Siddharth, as her husband is the only son for his parents. On the other hand, RenuBezboruah, Siddharth's mother cares Rukmini as a daughter. She gives her an amulet which she got from Mahamaya Temple to have a fertile womb which increases her mental stress and agony.

Apart from her inner struggle, she has to endure political turbulences also. Parbatpuri is filled with insurgency, kidnappings, extortion and threat for the lives of the people. The present situation in Parbatpuri is even more complicated than before. Rukmini is constantly affected by the outer agitations in the town which makes her mind a bit insecure. Having been isolated from her friends and relatives, she often turns to Siddharth for a good companionship but he fails to understand her. He distances himself from her, concentrates more on his work. Eventually, the couple has stopped living as husband and wife staying amidst such political turmoil in Parbatpuri.

The novel also points out the agitation which goes on among the college students where Rukmini is working. Some students are protesting against the illegal immigration of infiltrators. Rukmini is deeply distressed to see them that they are sacrificing their education to protest for the sake of the upcoming generation. She even worries about their future life in case of unemployment and wonders.

Apart from the outward perplexities, Rukmini has conscious of her inner self also. She confronts Manoj Mahanta, a divorced man, in her colleague's wedding reception and gets gradually attracted towards him. They meet one another occasionally but she feels happy in his presence. As the writer points out, "She felt surprisingly at ease with Manoj even after their embarrassing collision on MG Road. She found him engaging, easy to talk to, with a frankness that was rare in the kind of people that surrounded her in Parbatpuri" (117). She compared Manoj with Siddharth that the latter "always gave the impression that he was burdened with weighty matters, even while watching a sitcom

on TV”(111). She realised that she is attracted to him. Eventually, they shared some intimate moments on the way to Bhatiya’s garden. He offers her all that she craved for. But then, he too leaves her without providing her with the constant warmth of relationship.

There comes a twist in the life of the protagonist when she comes to know that she is pregnant and Manoj is the cause of her pregnancy. She is perplexed whether to be glad or grieve for it. Her journey rushes to a chaotic situation when Manoj is abducted by MOFEH. The end of the fiction delineates the pathetic death of Manoj and Siddharth during the terrorist attack. When she sees the dead bodies,...tears had come. Tears for two men. One who had died, not knowing that he was going to be a father. And another who had been prepared to be a father to an unborn child, not his. Tears for her child, who would never know either of them. And tears for all the other deaths, the ones before, and the ones to follow. (349)(Angel, 2020, 269-270)

### Conclusion

Feminism is one of the modes of protest admits millenniums of silence with the aspirations for some changes. Mitra Phukan projects the ideas of liberating women through self-realisation and the quest for self-identity. Phukan believes that women should have an independent identity and entity by being aware of the choices open to her. (Bhuyan,2019,78). Rukmini struggles to find meaning in her loveless marriage, to shed the name of barren women, to search for a better job. The emergence of Rukmini from a silent sufferer in loneliness and loveliness to an independent thinker to decide her future presents her as a strong woman. Throughout the novel, Mitra Phukan present the protagonist Rukmini Bezbaruah as a silent, Sensible and also strong-willed women craving for a better career and longing for the joys of motherhood.

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## A Study of Feminine Identity, Sensibility, Status of a female in Anita Desai's Novel : The voices in the city.

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### Abstract :

Anita Desai herself being a feminine voice as she shown the world that the share of the female novelist is not at all insignificant in such works and at times similarly contributive. Even Among many great male writers Anita Desai occupies a unique place in the history of English fiction. Desai is a sincere novelist engaged in subtle gender reality and as she is a female thus capable of understanding the women's psyche better than the male writers. Her novels deal with the life of women in Indian society that we will find in this selected novel *The Voices in The City* where application of Indian feministic concern and feminine experience of a women highlighted in family and society. Desai depicts the Indian women protagonist as a victim of social system and also a resilient spirit. In her novels she has portrayed both kinds of women strong and emotional. She has characterised the sensitive intellectual woman mainly through Monisha she is sensitive and victim of unmatched marriage who is suffocated in uneasy family atmosphere. In the other hand Amla is totally opposite who is a free and sharp-witted woman. Where she able to find out her identity. She appears to be strongest among others.

The paper aims at scrutinising the feminine psyche and its complex concerning in her female character like Monisha and Amla. The struggle, residence, aspiration and achievement of women under

patriarchy will be examine thoroughly. I hope the present study will change the traditional mentality of our society that woman should be in the four wall and also urge the society to think of a woman has equal significance.

### Keywords:

Feminine voice, English fiction, Anita Desai, Sensibility, identity emotions, victim, Indian, struggle, patriarchy society.

### Methodology :

The data sources of this present paper collected through secondary sources, eg: different internet websites, journals, PDF, Online articles, other research paper etc.

### Aims and Objectives :

The study of the paper is-

- ◆ To give light on feminine concept.
- ◆ Contribution of Indian women writers in literature.
- ◆ To study about social cultural problems of women in society.

### Introduction:

Indian women writing in English received the major recognition in the contemporary world of English literature. The picture of female in fiction has encounter a change in last few decades. women writers in post-colonial. India have shifted from traditional images of enduring self-sacrificing women; women characters searching for identity and have shaped literature of their own placing female in the context of their own placing women in context of the changing social scenario specially focusing upon the feminine psyche.

The very first voice in for females right was placed by marry Wollstonecraft in *A vindication of the right of women* (1792) she urged similar opportunities for female in the field of economics and politics education. The movement fought for the related to female like gender differentiation male domination, suppressive tradition, domestic violence, harassment, equal right and opportunities, freedom, women empowerment. It has brought a notable change in the status of woman across the world. (Raghunath ,2012, para1). The idea led to radical changes for women, and the literature started to reflect

all agony of a woman who was free bird before her marriage and whose feathers were tied in the name of marriage. Her independence thoughts and liberty at her husband and personal life stand questioned on the day when she takes money from her husband savings in his absence. (Yedavalli,2018,para 5-8) Her in-laws look at her in disgust manner that Monisha cannot tolerate this atmosphere anymore, The incident also highlights the Indian women's economic dependence. Her awful condition of suffering indicates the educated unemployed women in our society.

The bitter experiences that she faces at different levels makes her to question about her useless existence. She is in such toughest and pitiable situation where she lost all her identity and dreams and where she could find any space to stand. She was frustrated. Lonely in the crowded family. The only feeling that she had her life is worthless without any meaning and the only option left for her is death. She understands that not only her life but human life as such is an undistinguished mystery.

She reads Bhagawat Gita for answers of all the disturbance that in her mind. She debates whether to go back to her mother place or not as she is afraid of her mother's disapproval. so that leaves no opinion to her.

In such a painful desperate condition, Monisha ends her labyrinth life by committing suicide where she puts an end to all her psychic problems. Her last words are significant: *'I am turned in to a woman who keeps a diary. I do not like a woman who keeps a diary. Traceless meaningless uninvolves-does this amount to non-existence, please...'* (p 140) Monisha grows sorely conscious of passion of love, lying dried in her when she fails to respond like other spectators it is only that she feels bereft as she has forgotten and lost touch with it because of her tragic situation. (Maheswari and Clement 2016 para-24-27)

In the other hand Amla is quite different from both Monisha and the others from the novel. Amla comes to Calcutta to start her career and she loves new occupation and freedom. She appears the most likely to succeed in her efforts, she is a free and sharp-witted woman so she observes life from an entirely different perspective than others.

The message of Monisha's death is understood by Amla, she realizes that her sister had 'pointed the way for her'. Amla searches for the signifying self an integral, aesthetically and morally coherent unique individual. Amla eschews the role of wife and mother while examining her choice, Amla's short lived infatuation with Dharma proves to be little sweet short anaesthesia she realizes that in her love for Dharma makes Amla profoundly feminine in principle consciousness.

Gajendra Kumar observes that Anita Desai's novels explores issues like identified woman's struggle for self-definition woman's quest for her identity her pursuit of freedom equality and transcendence, her rebellion and protest against oppression at every level. The voices in the city portray female protagonists struggle to achieve a liberated identity s opposed to the ones imposed by the patriarchal society and this defiant attitude challenging the society accepted order gives rise to feminist sensibility

#### Conclusion:

Woman's identity crisis is that where a female conflict to achieve as a human being in its full feeling against those forces of society who blind a woman in boundaries and neglect her as a being incorporation and equal to man.

In this novel we witnessed the most sensitive character Monisha also wanted to achieved her individual identity that shows her individuality also Desai intends to expose the inner psyche of the character especially middle-class woman in burden with mental stress unfulfilled aspiration and unsatisfied desires, she also underlines the individuality and quest for freedom. The voices in the city image of rattling reverberations of Anita Desai's sensitive characters under the evil dominating force of the city of Calcutta, thus the novelist solves intrigue of human relationship of the society and the problem of women's search for identity and raised the voice against miseries and helpless millions of women tormented by existentialist problems and predicaments.

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## The Voice of Resistance on Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable

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### Abstract:

The paper analyse the resistance of the untouchables and the inhumanity of upper caste depicted on them within the novel of Mulk Raj Anand's 'Untouchable'. Untouchability could be a deeply ingrained consequence of the class structure and is an unacceptable and hurtful social practice. They are compelled to do 'a dirty work' to survive. The novel 'Untouchable' creates a way of our responsibility towards the victims of social injustice and exploitation. They need their human rights and justice. The novel 'Untouchable', published in 1935, story of a sweeper boy, named Bakha, eighteen years old, son of Lakha, the jamadar of sweeper could be a child of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and therefore the impact of latest influences reverberates within him. The plight of untouchable is artistically portrayed within the novel. According to E.M.Forster "the sweeper is worse off than a slave, for the slave may change his master and his duties and will even become free, but the sweeper is bound for ever, born into a state from which he cannot escape and where he's excluded from intercommunication and also the consolation of his religion. Unclean himself, he pollutes others when he touches them. They have to purify themselves, and to rearrange their plans for the day. Thus he is a disquieting as well as a disgusting object to the orthodox as he walks along the public roads, and it is his duty to call out and warn them that he is coming" (Anand 2001:vi). Mulk Raj Anand has raised voice against the ethnical issues

like economical exploitation, socio political exclusion, land displacement and sexual harassment which were pervaded in dalit's life in colonial and post colonial India. He protested against the upper caste people for the betterment and alleviation of the Dalits.

**Keywords:**

Resistance, Untouchable, Social injustice and exploitation, Caste, Suffering, Dalits.

**Methodology:**

In this paper the primary sources of data are collected through secondary data's. Beside, computer and online sources are used.

**Introduction:**

Dalit literature emerged because the radical literature and it challenged the norms and standards and therefore the mainstream of brahminical literature, aesthetics and literary theory. The Dalit literature in India is an endeavor to bring the experiences of discrimination, violence and poverty of the Dalit. Dalit is a vital part of society. But right from ancient period, he has been subjugated under the pretext of subordinate, inferior cog of this prestigious Hindu society. Now a days, Dalits are not any more remained to be dalit they're equally stronger with others of the society. 'Four Varna' system was supported caste and its restricted people to their occupation, without changing. But class structure-upper class, social class emerged during this epoch where money decides the status of the people. The voice of resistance that's essentially a voice of rebellion that opposes still as exposes all types of oppression and exploitation of the weak, the minority by the strong majority.

Mulk Raj Anand is one amongst the prominent English writer of his era. His aim is to evoke compassion within the minds of the upper crust and privileged section of the society for the poor. The novel 'Untouchable' expose the silent passions that burst within the hearts of the those that are forbidden to rise and express themselves. His main purpose in writing fiction has been to focus attention on the suffering, misery of the poor and also the down trodden people of the society. Mulk Raj Anand is against every type of exploitation

whether by the 'White Sahibs' or by the 'Brown Sahibs'. All the victims of exploitation portrayed by him are supported people in world. His humanism makes him to jot down for the betterment and upliftment of the underdogs of the society.

The novel is inspired by the particular incident that happened along with his aunt. The novel centred towards the deprived section of Indian society who were treated as "Achhut" untouchable which don't seem to be to be touched by "Swarna Varga" upper crust people. The injustice, humiliation, oppression felt by the entire community of the low caste in India were portrayed through his character like Bakha who was born with the fate of unfortunate and pathetic as he was untouchable. Through his novel he wants to allow a message towards the community's higher literate section for curiously and deliberately wanting a change within the inhumane, evil, brutal and rotten custom prevailed in Hindu society.

**Discussion:**

Untouchable may be a protest novel during which Mulk Raj Anand's method of attaching the social evil of class structure invited the eye of the people. The novel Untouchable deals with protagonist named Bakha, an eighteen years old sweeper in pre-independence period. It also examines period of outcasts or working-class people and their anger against the upper caste. Anand presented him because the child of recent Indian while he belongs to lower caste. Bakha has not surrendered to his fate like his father Lakha. He is a toddler of 20<sup>th</sup> century and needing to accept modern way of dressing as "he has secured a pair of old breeches and from a sepoy a pair of old boots, he would, if he could, prefer to look the while foreigner than be within the fashion" (Dar 2018:85). The novel presents a stimulating opening for the Indian English writer to analyze new world of resistance.

The novel occupies someday journey of Bakha, the story begins with the alarming call of his father Lakha for visiting work for cleaning latrines for the upper-caste people. After completing his work of cleaning the latrines, he returns home and worries his works-cleaning the latrines, sweeping roads and therefore the temple courtyard makes him inferior to high caste. He doesn't understand how his Karma



sufferings show these untouchables weren't allowed to enter into temples also. Through the "Temple incident" Bakha and his sister Sohini both are being accused of polluting the temple. Bakha wants to know that what has actually happened as he is not involved in any of the crime. But suddenly, a crowd of angry caste Hindus gathers there and sounds as, "Polluted! Polluted! Polluted!" (Anand, 68).

In the end of the novel Bakha meets with Colonel Hutchinson, chief of the Salvation Army. He tells Bakha to take Christian religion, but Bakha deny his proposal. When Bakha listens the speech of Mahatma Gandhi, he is highly influenced by his speech. In the meeting Gandhi says that untouchability is one of the greatest bolt on Hinduism. Gandhi realised that the people of India should be freed not only from land rule but also from the depravity of class structure. Gandhi had made tough efforts to travel everywhere the country to spread the message of affection and brotherhood and had appealed to the people of our country to not like inhuman activities of class system. Bakha also meet with a poet named Iqbal Nath Sarshar and he heard a news from him that the problem of untouchability can be solved with the flush system. Bakha feels consoled by his heart, after hearing such words.

Bakha is a kind of example for millions of untouchables lived in India, because he represents the agony, frustration of untouchability, misery, social injustice of upper caste and the suffering of the innumerable lower caste people. Nobody has taught about the life style, their feelings and pains of a 'Dalit' especially the latrine cleaner. Because they had no right to express their feelings, problems and pains. They had become muted and silenced by the casteism. Through the novel, Anand raised a voice of the resistance of the innumerable "Dalits".

#### Conclusion :

So, Mukul Raj Anand as social critic conveys a powerful message through his novel Untouchable and lift the voice against caste segregation within the Indian society. He echoed the voice of resistance, their mentality and reality. The class structure has played a good

separates him from high caste people and the way his community people are considered physically impure and Untouchable although they clean and purify society yet as social environment. The high caste Hindus don't prefer to touching him, but Muslims don't mind to touching him. So, Bakha thinks that "It is simply the Hindus and also the outcastes who don't seem to be sweepers. For them I'm a sweeper, sweeps Untouchable! Untouchable! Untouchable! That's the world! Untouchable! I'm a Untouchable!" (Anand 2001:43).

Bakha's sufferings are not seems because his fault is to born in a lower caste. He faced a lot of humiliation and oppression everywhere in the society. Whenever he goes, he's welcomed with the words like 'defiled' and 'polluted'. Bakha buys a packet of 'Red-Lamp' cigarettes and the shop keeper thrown the packet at him because of the fear of pollution. Even the shopkeeper sprinkling some water on the nickel coins given by him for purifying. When Bakha gets touched by an upper caste Hindu, Lalaji, he starts shouting at him and also, he gives Bakha a slap because he gets polluted for touching Bakha. Bakha gets hurt but he stands motionless without speaking any word. Everyone gathered there around him but keep a distance from him. They are all from upper caste so they take side of Lalaji. No one is takes side of Bakha. So, he feels very insulted and embarrassment. But he can't do anything because of his social position. Here, Anand explains the pain and suffering of Bakha in these words, "My aim isn't negative, merely to shock, but to stimulate consciousness the least bit levels" (Datta 2018:86). Through his novel Anand raised a question that if an untouchable boy touches a upper caste, it is considered as pollution. But, when a priest like Kalinath tries to touch an untouchable girl for his physical need it is not considered as pollution. Why?

Indian over-caste people weren't allowed to urge water from common well because the high caste people think that it will be polluted by their touching. In the novel, the people of lower-caste have to at the well for long time for getting the water with the assistance of some upper-caste Hindus. This intolerable force keeps untouchables to stay thirsty, dirty and filthy. Anand shows another example of their

are also discussed. The third part analyses the postcolonial Indian English authors like Salman Rushdie and Anita Desai with special reference to their novels "Midnight Children" and "Cry the Peacock" respectively. The final part analyses the impact created by the Postcolonial Indian English writers on the Indian readers with regard to 'Nationalism'. In this article, the authors examine peculiarities of the post-colonial Indian literature, as well as the language, culture and identity in the post-colonial literature in India.

#### Keywords:

Post colonialism, Postcolonial Literary theory, post-colonial theorists, Post-colonial Indian English writers, Post colonialism and nationalisms.

#### Objectives

1. To study about Post-Colonial Literature, Post-Colonial Writers.
2. To study about the Post-Colonial Indian writings in Indian Literature and Nationalism.
3. To study about Post-Colonial Theory.
4. To study about Post-Colonial Indian English Literature.

#### Introduction:

The broad meaning of the term "Post colonialism" can be best understood by tracing the etymology of the words, "Post" and "Colony". The word "Post" is derived from the Latin term "Postis", which means "after" or "behind". The word "Colony" takes its origin from the Latin term "Colonus", which refers to "a cultivator, a planter or a settler in a new land". Literally, the term "Post colonialism" refers to the "period after colonialism". Broadly, the term "Post colonialism" refers to "the ways in which race, ethnicity, culture and human identity itself are represented in the modern era, after many colonized countries gained their independence. Until the mid-twentieth century, the European powers exerted their dominance over the vast regions of Asia, Africa and South America. The dominance was confined not only to the political lives of the people, but also extended to the cultural, economic and social living conditions of the colonized people.

A massive struggle in the colonized nations resulted in the overthrow of the colonial rule.

**Postcolonial Literature:** The term "Postcolonial Literature" refers to "the literature produced by the people, who were formerly colonized and subjugated". In other words, "Postcolonial Literature" refers to "the body of works by the colonized people to annihilate the influences exerted by the colonizers in their lives". Postcolonial literature emerged in the mid-twentieth century, when many colonized nations were fighting for their liberation from the colonizers. Helen Gilbert's definition of "Postcolonialism" reads as, it is the term that indicates a degree of agency or a programme of resistance, against cultural domination, signals the existence of a particular historical legacy, a stage in a culture's transition into a modern nation state. The term "Postcolonial" has become a convenient term to describe any kind of resistance against class, race and gender oppression.

**The Postcolonial Writers:** Postcolonial writers differ in their view of the choice of language in Postcolonial writings. Some writers stress the use of native language in their works. These writers strongly believe that their age-old customs, manners and traditions can be expressed best in their native language. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, a Post colonialist writer from Kenya is one such writer who had a successful start in the English language. Ngũgĩ then ceased to write in English and started writing in Gikuyu, a language spoken primarily by the Kikuyu people of Kenya. Another set of writers prefer the usage of the language of the colonisers, may it be English or French. These writers wanted to enhance the inter-nation communication, by writing in English. They aim at redirecting the tool of 'language' against the colonisers. The Postcolonial English writers employ the colonisers' languages, to oppose the colonisers and to rectify the damages created by them in the historical, social, cultural and economic sectors. However, these writers transform the English language, so as to create a native experience.

**Post-colonial Indian Writing in English Literature and Nationalism 166:** Rao, Mukul Raj Anand and Chinua Achebe are of the view that the imperial language need to be transformed in order

Peter Barry in his comments on Said's "Orientalism" says as, Edward Said's "Orientalism", is a specific expose of the Eurocentric Universalism, which takes for granted both the superiority of what is European or Western, and the inferiority of what is not. The major exponents of "Postcolonial theory" are Robert J.C. Young, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi. K. Bhabha. These critics have contributed a lot to the field of post-colonial discourse.

**Postcolonial Indian English Literature:** The Indian subcontinent remained under the British Imperial rule for more than two hundred years. During the imperial rule, the natives were subjected to a number of harassments. Especially, the cultural and moral lives of the natives were deeply disfigured. Accordingly, the Indian writers emerged with a view to unite Indians and to wipe out the colonial perspectives. As there were many regional languages in India, the Indian writers chose English as the medium of their writings. The literature produced by the Indian writers in English, came to be known as "Indian English Literature". The early works of the Indian English authors were set against the backdrop of the "Postcolonial" themes of 'Nationalism', 'Racism', 'Ethnicism' and 'cultural Identity'. The writers also dealt with a variety of sub-themes such as 'rootlessness', 'alienation', 'gender discrimination', 'labor exploitation', 'hybridity', 'poverty', 'corruption', 'marginalism' and so on. Among the various genres of Postcolonial Indian English Literature, the genre of 'novel', emerged as the most successful and effective one. Amit Chaudhuri, in his book, "The Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature", expresses his view about novel as, "The Postcolonial novel, becomes a trope for an ideal hybridity by which the West celebrates not so much Indianness, whatever that infinitely complex thing is, but its own historical quest, its reinterpretation of itself. The early exponents of Postcolonial Indian English Literature are Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan and so on. The writers of the modern age are Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi, Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Shashi Tharoor and so on. The Postcolonial Indian English Literature gave enormous scope for the women writers. The

to suit the native readers. Therefore, they employed the techniques of "appropriation" and "nativisation" of the English language. In his foreword to "Kanthapura", Raja Rao writes as, one has to convey in a language that is not one's own, the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought - movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word 'alien; yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make up - like Sanskrit or Persian was before - but not of our emotional make up. The Postcolonial writings are replete with regional dialects and native phrases so as to suit the native readers. Chinua Achebe, a renowned Post-colonial writer, expresses his view as....the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new surroundings. (Achebe, 223)

**Postcolonial Theory :** "Postcolonialism" as a "critical literary theory emerged in the mid- twentieth century. Postcolonial theory is a literary theory or critical approach, which focuses on the literature produced by the countries, which were once colonised. In some instances, it also deals with the literature written by the colonizing countries, which takes "colonies and their people" as the subject matter. The Australian critics. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, summarise the essence of "Postcolonial theory" in a nutshell as, Postcolonial theory involves discussion about experience of various kinds: migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial Europe such as history, philosophy and linguistics, and the fundamental experiences of speaking and writing by which all these come into being. None of these is 'essentially' postcolonial, but together they form the complex fabric of the field.

**Nationalism 167:** The ancestry of Postcolonial criticism can be traced to Franz Fanon's "The Wretched of the Earth", published in French, in 1961. However, Edward Said's book, "Orientalism", published in 1978, is considered as the foundational work in Postcolonial studies.

women writers who received universal recognition are Nayanantara Sehgal, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri and so on. Salman Rushdie's second novel, "Midnight's Children", published in 1981, ushered a new trend in the Postcolonial writings through the application of a Language in India.

#### Post-colonial Indian Writing in English Literature and

**Nationalism 168:** Technique named 'magical realism'. The Cuban novelist, Alejo Carpentier, defines the term 'magical realism' as, .....an unexpected alteration of reality...., an unaccustomed insight that is singularly favoured by the unexpected richness of reality or an amplification of the scale and categories of reality. The technique of 'magical realism' is used by the Indian English Writers as a Postcolonial effort to resist the European notions of realism. 'Magical realism' promotes hybridity of cultures by defamiliarising the readers and by broadening their perspective of the global world. The novel is narrated by the protagonist, Saleem Sinai, who stands as a representative of the new class of Indian Youths after independence. By endowing the protagonist with magical powers, the novelist speculates on a variety of themes like 'nationalism', 'realism', 'partition', 'politics' and so on. The novelist asserts the fact that, in the Postcolonial Indian scene, the growth and development of each and every individual is directly proportional to the wholesome development of the nation. The women writers of the Postcolonial Indian English Literature, switched on to the microscopic themes of 'alienation', 'poverty', 'isolation' and 'disillusionment' in the familial lives of the Indian folk. Anita Desai's first novel, "Cry the Peacock", published in 1963, echoes the sufferings and agony of the Indian women folk. Maya, the woman protagonist of the novel, experiences an unhappy marital life. Maya has been married to a middle-aged lawyer named Gautama, who devotes much of his time to his career. The astrologer's prediction about Maya's early demise, makes her nervous. She wants to enjoy life to the fullest, with this minimal time. However, all her sexual advances have a cold response from Gautama. In a sense of dejection, Maya is driven insane, which leads to Gautama's tragic death. Maya's sense of 'alienation' and 'rootlessness' reflects the plight of the entire Indian womenfolk.

In his book, "The Second Sex", Simone de Beauvoir, says as, one is not born but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society, it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature. In this way, the Postcolonial Indian English authors composed their works with a view to voice the sufferings of the under privileged, in order to uplift them, thereby contributing to the growth of the nation, both culturally and socially. (Choudhury, 294298)

#### Conclusion:

The Oxford Dictionary of the English language defines the term "nationalism as, Postcolonial Indian Writing in English Literature and Nationalism 169....a sense of identification with one's own nation and to extend one's support for its interests; especially to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations. Having relieved themselves from the manacles of Imperialism, the Indian people rejoiced and enjoyed the fresh air of freedom with a sense of reverence towards the nation. But this unity was soon shaken up by the various anti-social elements, who encouraged a sense of discrimination in the minds of the Indians in terms of race, gender, caste, color, creed, region, language and so on. The anti-nationalist forces wanted to divide people so as to obstruct the progress of the country. Hence, the people of India must bear in mind the importance of "Unity"; which alone can pave way for the nation's progress. In the book, "Rise Up and Salute the Sun", Suzy Kasseem, writes as, Mankind should always stay united, standing shoulder to shoulder so evil can never cheat and divide them. In this regard, Literature plays an important role in the national integration of a country. Albert Camus expresses his view about the responsibility of the writers as...the purpose of a writer is to protect the civilization from destroying itself. It is possible only for a writer to shape the minds of the readers, so as to lead them towards a holistic view of "Nationalism". The Postcolonial Indian writers continue to exert a dominant influence in the Indian scenario, by inculcating the values and significance of "Nationalism".

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## Women and Society : A Study on the position of Women in Manjula . Padmanabham's play Lights Out

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### Abstract :

Manjula Padmanabham's play 'Lights Out' is a realistic play that generates a lot of discussion. The main theme of the play is associated with a sensitive issue, a 'gang rape', probing various questions pertaining to exploitation of women in the society and home. The role of women in the world is designated by man ever since history has been written. Manjula's plays are mostly women centric. They deal with the lives of women, their status in society as well as family and their mind set towards the gender dynamic. The play 'Lights Out' which is often described as being "about rape" is, in reality, about social responses to violence and the other issues of gender. Padmanabham exhibits a world in which women have identity crisis, her every utterance is made silent, she implores unto man about her own existence and troubles and finds no response. The present paper is an attempt to analyze the subject matter of exploitation of women by taking away their rights through the view point of gender inequality.

### Keywords:

Realistic, Sensitive, Exploitation, Violence and Gender inequality.

### Methodology

To prepare the paper I have used the secondary data. I have collected the data from books, webs, articles and other research paper.

you call the police? Just for me? I'm frightened! Can't you see that? Isn't that enough? All through the day, I feel tense. At first it was only at the time it was going on. Then, as soon as it got dark. Then around teatime, when the children came home from school. Then in the middle of the day, whenever the doorbell rang. Then in the morning, when I sent the children off to school. And now from the moment I wake up..." (Padmanabhan, 2015, para-5-6)

From the above quoted line we can analyze that Leela becomes frustrated from the noises in the next building she was too frightened that she stop sending children out and she also spends the whole day with all the windows shut, with all the curtains drawn, with cotton in her ears to avoid the sound. But yet she hears the sound all over the house including the children room. Even she can hear the sounds of victim women in her subconscious mind. By observing and hearing the sound frequently, Leela feels that they themselves are responsible rather than protesting against violence and revealing the active role a woman assumes in the making of a society in spite of being confined to the four walls: "That we're part of... Of what happens outside. That by watching it, we're making ourselves responsible. (Padmanabhan, 2015, para-7)

"But this! Just enough not to get involved, just close enough not to get involved just close enough to see everything clearly or so Bhaskar tells me". "...These intellectuals always react like that, always confuse simple issues. After all, what's the harm in simply watching something? Even when there's an accident in the street, there's an accident in the street, don't we all turn our heads to look?"

What follows in a middle class intellectual analysis, which leads to inaction:

MOHAN: But anyway, what kind of screaming is it? High-pitched? Hysterical?

BHASKER: You'll hear it yourself in a minute. Why waste time talking about it?

MOHAN: How shall I describe what I mean? Was there... Okay! Was it, for instance, like a singer's voice, high and sweet? Was it musical? BHASKER: "...What sort of situation would produce that, d'

Padmanabhan's play *Lights Out* is based on real life feminist dramatist of modern Indian drama she not prominent place in the Indian English, but also is equally canon Feminist theatre. In this play Manjula particularly towards the suffering of women that how they are how their rights are taking away in this male chauvinist Wright displays an unambiguous impression of gender creates a dominant appeal to understand the women world where she hardly finds herself to be free, resilient,

well thought out. (Rao, 2015, para-2)

Padmanabhan represents a world in which women is her identity, her rights, her freedom, her own voice, and also treated inferior than man and she has to solicit unto her concerns, this further leads to gender discrimination of life. *Lights Out* is about one such activity where utilize a woman every night, and terrifying shrieks and help have shattered the peace of the locality for over a long to many losing their equilibrium, and yet displaying loss and excusing and exonerating themselves from guilt long the happenings to the police or taking any action Padmanabhan, 2020, Pp-86-87)

### Investigation and Gender Inequality in the Play *Lights*

*Lights Out* is set in sixth floor apartment, in Mumbai. Leela they have been hearing to the periodic sound of and cries from their neighbouring building. Leela is all the police to investigate the agonizing sounds, but helplessness in lodging a complaint. The following reveals a normal Indian household. (Rao, 2015, para-2)

are what I feel, what I go through every day! ...can't

you suppose?"

MOHAN: "...Well, all right, we'll rule out pleasure for the moment..."

"After all, it may be something private, a domestic fight, how can we intervene? Personally, I'm against becoming entangled in other people's private lives. Outsiders can never really be the judge of who is right and who is wrong."

From the above quotation and conversation it reveals that the crime is a rape and the two men are commenting and talking pleasure discussing the issue. An ordinary middle-class people chose to stand and watch while a woman was suffering and being brutalized in the neighbouring colony. Feminist writer like Padmanabhan tries to depict the injustice done to women for centuries by male dominance and patriarchy in society through her play 'Lights

### Harsh Reality and Mentality of Society projected through Lights Out

Harsh reality and mentality of society is exposes through play lights out by Padmanabhan this below conversation will show us the low mentality of two ordinary man.

LEELA: so we are listening to the sounds of a woman being raped. Outside our window, under the lights.

BHASKER: Don't over react, Leela, it's almost definitely an exorcism.

MOHAN: Don't you see, that's the only situation which explains why this is being repeated night after night. I read somewhere that there's a pattern to demonic possessions that the fits come on at regular times, every day.

NAINA: You're... You're mad! Both of you you're talking nonsense! Just one look outside the window and you'll know its rape!

BHASKER: If she's a whore, Leela, then, this isn't rape ... so on what grounds could we call the police?

NAINA: You mean, if she's a whore there's nothing we can do about all this?

MOHAN: What's there to do? We can either watch or not watch

that's all.

So, from the above conversation we can see that how the male character is judging and giving tag women with different words like- Whore, demonic etc. For many women are mere an instrument of pleasure. Women are relegating as 'weaker sex' which always make a woman inferior base to man Padmanabhan provokes a point that why always man are superior to woman? On what basis male and female discriminate in the name of gender? Why male always rule and female subservient. In this play Naina is support of Leela and essential help for Leela but even her voice is made silent. She frequently argues to call police but the arrival of her husband changes the perspective of Naina's personality and she becomes silent. The play reveals the harsh reality that world one lives in is a man's world and the controls are in their hand. Man has treated woman as a liability. This kind of undemocratic attitude disturbs a woman to the core. Violence, assault, discrimination against a women's issue its human rights issue. (Alford, 2018, para2)

### Conclusion

From the above discussion we can conclude that, the main focus of the play is about the occurrence of the daily gang rape perpetrated by the unknown hoodlums. Through this play the author tries to convey us the message that man-women relationship and the patriarchal power that always rule the society. The women are always seen in the position playing a subservient role to a man. In end part of the play generate the observers that where the society stands when it comes to the question of woman's protection, right, freedom and her identity is concerned. Manjula Padmanabhan has unwrap the follies of the people and made them aware through her work.

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## Dalit Literature as a Literature of Protest

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### Abstract:

Dalit writers write with a vision and a cause, Dalit literature stands for resistance, equality, fraternity and plurality. It is a literary movement for historical social change. The Dalits-submerged communities, began their movement for emancipation in India with their basic demand for equality, because they struggle to combat inequality in society as having firm belief in the ideal of equality. The movement was launched in 1956 by Ambedkar when nearly half a million Dalits-formerly untouchables-joined him and converted to Navayana Buddhism. It rejected the prevalent Hindu ideology, challenged the caste system in India and promoted the rights of the Dalit community. The paper makes an attempt to comprehend the vision and voice of the Dalit writers and their journey from voiceless passive objects of history to self-conscious subjects. Dalit literature after a long time emerges the post-colonial writings in India emphasizes in their aspirations, struggle and self-realization for Dalits for their rights and equality and freedom. Dr. B.R.Ambedkar is the sole inspiration behind the creation of dalit writings. Presently, a growing of dalit writers are composing their works not only centering the ideas of Ambedkar but also on various aspects of exploitation and alienation being meted out to them. Dalit literature is a body of texts produced by writers whose caste background used to be referred to as "Untouchable" or "Schedule caste" and whose writing engages with caste, gender discrimination, and Indian community life from a Dalit point of view. The present



paper will focus on the legacy of B.R. Ambedkar on the emerging Dalit literature that attempt to challenge the main stream literature and its perception with a new voice.

**Keywords:**

Equality, Fraternity, Caste, Rights, Movement, Dalit, Freedom, Community, Dalit Literature, Freedom, Fraternity, Voice, Untouchables.

**Methodology:**

This paper includes that the Dalits are deprived of their fundamental rights of education, possession of assets and right to equality. The main concern of Dalits literature is the emancipation of Dalits from this ageless bondage of slavery. Dalits use their writings as a weapon to vent out their anger against the social hierarchy which is responsible for their degradation. Dalit literature tried to portray the hopes and aspiration of the exploited masses. Their fight for survival, their problems the insults they have undergone, their experiences all these events are portrayed in Dalit literature.

**Objectives:**

These research paper aims at fulfilling aims and objectives-

1. To study the Dalit literature as a new dimension in literature as something newer.
2. To study the rise, growth and development of Dalit literature with its consequences on society.
3. To analyze the social condition of Dalit in India.
4. To study the heart rendering tortures faced by Dalit with their experiences.
5. To study about B.R. Ambedkar's view on Caste System.
6. To study about the Dalit Movement, Dalit Literary Movement and its causes.
7. To study about the rising of the Dalits in 1920s.
8. To study about the review of Dalit literature.

**Introduction:**

The term 'Dalit' refers to a particular group or community in India which has been ostracized, exploited and humiliated due

caste structure and social order ardently followed in India. The etymology of the word 'Dalit' can be traced to the root word dal in Sanskrit and dalan in Hindi meaning 'broken down' or 'broken into pieces'. It is believed that Jyotibarao Phule first used the term to describe condition of outcastes and untouchables in India. Later, the term was popularized by B.R. Ambedkar as he used it profusely in his speeches and writings in Marathi. The term gained new meaning in 1970s, a period of literary and cultural boom that witnessed the birth of Dalit literature and in the present, the term refers to belated recognition of the Dalit's militant claims upon a history of humiliation and suffering (Rao, 11). The word 'Dalit' is used to be of Marathi origin which literally means 'of the earth' and 'that which has been ground down' and signifies socially oppressed groups. Dalit is not only a caste but a realization and it is related to the experiences, joys, sorrows and struggles of those in the lowest stratum of society. Dalit literature as a whole thus not only shares experiences but their meaning is also explained. Dalit traditionally connotes wretchedness, poverty and humiliation.

Arjun Dangle, the Marathi writer, editor and activist suggests, "Dalit literature is marked by revolt and negativism, since it is closely associated with the hopes for freedom by a group of people, who as untouchables, are victim of social, economic and cultural inequality" Arjun Dangle has defined Dalit Literature as: "Dalit literature is one which acquaints people with the caste system and untouchability in India. It matures with a sociological point of view and is related to the principles of negativity, rebellion and loyalty to science, thus finally ending as revolutionary" (Dangle, 150). Dalit literature being a new dimension is the primary concept the literature of marginality. Dalit literature that remained speechless for centuries opened their hearts in the form of Poems, Ballads, Dramas, Short Narratives, Novels, Critical Essays, Biographies, Autobiographies and Historical Writings.

**Dr Ambedkar's views on Caste System and Discrimination**

He focused not only on the issues faced by the untouchables but also examined the root cause of such malpractices. He referred inter

marriage as one of the key features to propagate equality. He advocates that the untouchables must acknowledge their fight against it themselves. He considers untouchability not merely as a social concern but as the source of poverty and all kinds of lowliness that is associated with the untouchables. He argues that the only way to invigorate the Hindu society is to abolish untouchability and establish a single caste system devoid of inequality (Eleanor,159).

### **Dalit Movement-The Struggle of the Submerged Communities**

The Dalits began their movement in India with their basic demand for resistance, fraternity, plurality and equality because they struggle to combat equality in society. The inhuman and barbaric practices committed against the Dalits, led them to protest against the caste. The Dalit movement that had gained momentum in the post-independence period, have its root in the Vedic period. It was to the Shramanic-Brahmanic confrontation and then to the Mukti movement. With the introduction of western language, and with the influence of the Christian missionaries, the Dalits began to come across the ideals of equality and liberty and thus began the Dalit Movement in modern times. Educated Dalits, gradually began to talk about the problems of poor and about exploitation and humiliations from upper castes without any hesitation educated Dalits tried to explain to the other illiterate brothers about the required change in the society (Barman,94).

### **Major causes of the Dalit Movement**

The Dalit Movement is the result of the constant hatred being generated from centuries in their heart from the barbaric activities of the upper caste of India. The caste system degenerated Dalits lives into pathogenic condition where occupations changed into castes. The higher castes of the society looked down upon the Shudras. It was general belief that the Dalits are part of the lowest of low Varnas. For centuries, Dalits were excluded from the mainstream society and were only allowed to pursue menial occupations like cleaning, sweeping, tanning or working as landless labour for meager daily wages. The most inhuman practice is that of untouchability, which

made the Dalits to live in extreme inhuman situation. In other words, they lived a barbaric life, starving for food in their own land where they themselves are the owner of the land, enraged the Dalits. This has made the Dalits to rise and protest, against the inhuman practices of Brahminism. Brahminism was the root cause of Dalit movement.

Today, Dalits constitute the marginalized section of society. The reason behind this is that they denied access to resources-material or intellectual as well as were exploited. It was thus the Dalits decided to stop the following of such unequal practices in society where one group benefits stealing from the other and began their movement due to the fact that they were denied equal status (Barman,94).

### **Dalit Literary Movement**

At a time when there was no means of communication to support Dalits, pen was the only solution. The media, newspapers were all under the control of the powerful class-the Brahmins. It was said that the Brahmins would never allow the Dalits voice to be expressed, as it would be a threat for their own survival, the Dalits began to write their own magazine and began to express their own experiences. Their pen wrote not with ink, but with blood, of their own cuts. Later, with the formation of Dalit panthers, there began to flourish a series of Dalit poetry and stories depicting the miseries of the Dalits. All their feelings were bursting out in the form of writings. Writing is not simple; it is an act that reflect one's continuous fight against evil. It seemed as if the entire Dalit community found the space to break out their silence of thousand years. Such effective were the writings that each of its word had the capability to draw blood. Dalit literature, try to compare the past situation of Dalits to the present and future generation not to create hatred, but to make them aware of their pitiable condition (Barman,95).

As a literary movement it continues to grow as a new authors continue to add their individual voices to the collective outrage of resistance against caste-based discrimination and humiliation suffered for ages. In the present writers and critics are working to carve out a niche for Dalit voice in both Indian and International literary contexts.

A new generation of writers are transforming Dalit literature from merely a narrative humiliation and exploitation to include issues such as feminism, literary self-consciousness, individual introspection, while increasingly wrestling with the question of how mainstream this literature may become without losing its authentic Dalit identity (Brueck,193).

### The Dalit rising in the 1920s

The mobilization of the oppressed and exploited sections of the society, the peasants, Dalits, women and low caste rebelled on a large scale in the 1920s and 1930s, under varying leadership and with varying ideologies. Dalit writing in a post-Independence literary phenomenon. The emergence of Dalit literature has great historical significance. The cause and effects leading to the age-old existence of oppression and despair of the lives of a marginalised class of the nation's vast population are also observed in many other parts of the world. Dalit literature represents a powerful emerging trend in the Indian literary scene. Dr. B.R Ambedkar, a champion of Dalit's rights has beautifully summed up the essence of Dalit Literature: "My words of advice to you is to educate, agitate and organize; have faith in yourself. With justice on our side, I donot see how we can lose our battle. For ours in a battle not wealth or power it is a battle of freedom. It is a battle for the reclamation of human personality."

In the year 1992, Indian Literature virtually started a new chapter, with the publication of Arjun Dangle's *Poisoned Bread*, which was the first ever attempt to anthologize Dalit writings in English. He involved all the genres available in Marathi Dalit literature, poetry, short stories, essays, autobiographical excerpts and public speeches. As a result, today we have several collections of Dalit writings coming out in both Indian languages and English. Following are some of the most widely read writers of Dalit literature that are available in English translation- Bama's *Karukku* and *Sangati*, Dr. Narendra Jadhav's *Untouchables: My Family's Triumphant Journey Out of the Caste System in Modern India*. Sharankumar Limbale's *the Outside: Akkarmashi*, Joseph Macwan's *The Stepchild* etc. Among the prominent Dalit writers are

Arjun Dagle, Rabi Singh, Daya Pawar, Baburao Bagu, Namdeo Dhasal, Neerava Patel, Sudhakar, Palamalai, Laxman Mane, Dutta Bhagat. Several other writers are writing Dalit literature but do not share the Dalit writers' category as the latter are not Dalit by birth as the other Dalit writers

A study of Dalit literature is a promising one as it has bright prospects for making our society largely integrated. It promotes cooperation and love which are major forces of a good society. In this way it has begun to bring about a change, to enable non-dalits to demonstrate a traditional mindset which makes them perceive Dalits as lower than themselves; and instead to see Dalits as equal rather than pitiful victim. Their ultimate aim is to bring them in equation with others and to provide confidence and pride in themselves. So typical Dalit literature fights against the system and not against man (Oza,09).

### Review of Dalit Literature

Dalit literature is a new phenomenon in the modern era of literature where the tormenting experiences of Dalit, Untouchable writers are exposed to present the contemporary social, mental condition before Dalit and non-dalit readers. Mulk Raj Anand was the first to cover Dalit literature through his novels like 'Untouchable', 'Coolie' in English and there are simultaneously translated an English and different languages. This Dalit literature is made popular in Marathi by Maharashtra Dalit poets, writers. It solely aims at generating awareness of dalits their social situation in the society, to all conscious readers.

#### (A) Dalit poetry:

There is a plenty of Dalit poetry expressing the violent lashing experiences of poet's life effectively. Narayan Survey was one of the prominent poets in the early Dalit literature. His famous poem was 'Vidhyapith'. The other poets like Keshav Meshram- 'Utkhanan', Daya Pawar - 'Kondwada' Nandedo Dhasal- 'Golpitha' and so on. The new generation of Dalit poetry emerged in the contemporary period as a revolt or protest against the oppressive traditional shakles.

#### (B) Dalit folk poetry:

Unlike the tremendous Dalit poetry as a powerful mean of dalit

expression, folk poetry too practiced for propoganding Dalit sensibility. Vamandakardak, Bhimrao Kardak, Vitthal Umap and soon are the prominent Dalit folk poets. The folk poetry includes Ballads which enthralled the common people of Dalit community. It too creates awareness about Dalit reform movement.

**(C) Dalit shortstories:**

Short stories and novels are important genre of literature that exploited by dalit writers for expressing Dalit sensibility aptly. The short stories like 'Fakira'-Anna Bhau Sathe, 'Davandi'-Shankarao Kharat, 'Jevah Mi Jaat Chorli Hoti-1963 Maran Swast Hot Aahe-1969- Baburao Bagul, Red stone-N.G. Shende are the best examples of Dalit short stories by Dalitwriters.

**(D) Dalit Autonarratives:**

Dalit writers mostly interpreted their own experiences regarding social injustice in their own autobiographies. It is called Dalit Auto-narrative. This form of literature is best suited to Dalit writer (Kavitha, 03).

**Conclusion**

In conclusion the meaning of Dalit and Dalit literature conveys a message about his/her community, but not individuality, about his/her revolt, but not passivity, about her progress but not regression. The message is conveyed about the whole world about the socio, political, economic and educational status. Dalit authors questioned the society about the freedom, identity of Dalit, throughout the literature. It could be said that the dalit literature achieved a firm foundation in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Dalit writers published numerous journals. They also have a number of political organizations supporting them. Dalit literature is a new dimension in the day today and used up literature. In the meantime, Dalit studies have been introduced in several universities in India and abroad. Though the occurrences of opposition against various forms of injustice were noted even earlier, yet such opposition continues more consciously now and the untouchables and Dalit section appears to follow these with more strength, determination, political support and defence of law. Obviously, they have acquired a different

identity, but they have still to go a long way towards becoming apart of democratic society to be evolved so that the irunique identity of Dalits or Schedule Class gets dissolved in that civil society, which is supposed to be still in the process of making. Today, Dalit writers have their literary foundation with ideology and have political support too. Thus, the output of Dalit literature is growing day by day. And, we can hope, oneday, it will establish itself as a most significant genre of world literature.

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## Poetic Voices from North-East India: A Study on Robin S Ngangom's and Desmond L Kharmawphlang's Poetry

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### Abstract

Though the English Poetry from North-East India is not a different branch of Indian poetry in English, there are certain factors that naturally calls for considering English poetry from this region a bit differently. Most of the poets from North-East India are basically concerned with local issues rather than nationhood. Since the beginning of the post Independence era the region has been the hotspot of many controversial and contentious issues concerning immigration and demand for separate nationhood leading to conflict, rise of separatist outfits, and killing of innocent lives. The poetry from this region, be it written in English or in any other languages in arealistic manner deal with all these. This paper is an attempt to show how both the poets Robin S Ngangom and Desmond L Kharmawphlang expresses their innermost feelings related to their Land, culture, nationhood, nationality, nostalgia the landscape, folklore etc and how their writings deal with the issues related to it.

### Keywords :

Region, nationhood, contentious issues, language, culture, nostalgia etc.

### Methodology :

To prepare this paper I have used the secondary data and collected from webs, articles and other research paper.

### Introduction:

The North Eastern part of India is a culturally rich and socially diversified region. It has a deep-rooted tradition of literature and folklore and one that survives in the inherent impulses of the shared awareness of its community. A very difficult term to define literature from the North-East with its common stock of tradition, folklore and myth passionately grapples with some of the psychological and social perplexities of the present. North-East poetry, in all its manifestation, demonstrate a kind of uniqueness in that it speaks predominantly of contemporary events, affairs which repeatedly makes them aware of a troubled, hopeless existence. North-East poetry reflects the traumas of a society in transition. According to Ananya S Guha "there is in their poetry a deep-seated conflict between what is and what could have been, the hiatus between the past and the present" (Borghain, 5).

Voices From North-East poetry: The poetry from North-East India is basically reflective of the socio-cultural and socio-political that loom large in all the states of the region. Hence, some of the dominant themes found in the poetry from the region. It will be wrong to say the North-East poets are concerned only with those themes which are connected with the aspects that express the region as troubled and conflict prone. There are many good poets in the region, who are also concerned with other aspects such as the environment, the natural beauty of the region folklore, myth, traditional values etc.

The poets of the region are unequivocal in their love and concern for the land and its inhabitants. Hence history, myth, folklore is some of the aspects which find frequent expression in the prominent poets such as Robin Sing Ngangom and Desmond L Kharmawphlang. As a bilingual, lyric poet and a translator of long standings, Robin S Ngangom is a significant presence in the literature of North-East India. Kharmawphlang also one of the most articulate voices in the context of imperialist culture both within and outside of the country. The themes of Ngangom's poetry mainly are isolation, detachment, fragmentation of the self lose of identity born from is lived experience.

And the features of Kharmawphlang's poetry are the appearance of myth and tribal folklore.

Ngangom's 'The Strange Affair of Robin S Ngangom' is one his prominent poems. In this poem, he describes about his native place Manipur, which was ravaged in the conflict between Indian armed forces and the insurgents. The poem is divided into four parts and each part of the poem describes his own experiences. The first part of the poem is a description of how the 'pristine' native land of his boyhood have been turned into murderous in the present with pervading hunger, distrust and destruction. In the second part of the part, he describes how the Indian armed forces through their appliances of death and destruction brought havoc to his native land. The third part of the poem describes his all the youths to cherish the new faith abandoning 'ideological horror' and remain ethically obliged to their identity. In the fourth part of the poem, he explains pessimistically the darkness that the 'coarse theatre of time' has inflicted on him and the people of his native land creating a sense of hopelessness and imprisonment which usually prevail in a war-ravaged region.

Ngangom's 'The Strange Affair of Robin S Ngangom' maybe a subjective expression of the people of Manipur has suffered due to the conflict between his state and the nation, but it is also a document for having a peep into their life before and after the conflict erupted.

In his 'Last Word' Ngangom said, "I wanted my poems to exude heady odor but only the sweet taint of blood or burning flesh emanates from my poems" (Ngangom, pp 12-17)

Desmond L Kharmawphlang in "The Conquest" gives voice to anger felt by the Khasis at the impact of colonialism on their life and hand. His poems express resentment and frustration with a different kind of 'conquest'. In the poem he expresses his deep love for his hometown, but his hometown tends to lose its identity and becomes a metropolitan city in turn. Desmond L Kharmawphlang looks at the past in an ambivalent manner with a kind of ferocity. According to him, the past is permeating, yet the past and the present interface with a sense of longing: the emotional pause created between the past and the present leads to sadness layered with irony; not withstanding a

touch of sarcasm. This is best reflected in the following excerpt from the poem 'The Conquest'.

Kharmawphlang's another poem 'Letter from Pahambir' is a story of unfolded in a poem and worked upon insightful words. He expresses through the poem the tale of lost culture with the invasion of the British to his land. Kharmawphlang's poetry has universal appeal, as often writes his poems based on own folklore and myth. The lyrical warmth is to be seen in almost all his poems. His poems are explicit with the modern angst. As a critic Ananya S Guha stated, "A very positive element in their poems is a finely tuned introspection and the ability to achieve moments of self-criticism" (Choudhury, p 87).

Since Kharmawphlang writes both in English as well as in Khasis, so his themes were based on strong local resources. In an interview, Oriya poet, Sitakant Mahapatra said, "Unless a poet is rooted in his own milieu, he or she cannot speak to any reader." (Choudhury, p 86)

### Conclusion:

By concluding we can say that both the poets, Robin S Ngangom and Desmond L Kharmawphlang have a very deep love and pain for their land, culture and inhabitants. Both the poets have written on love and human relationships and culture. Through the writings of both poets, we can see a kind of maturity and vigor of expression that come from a sensitive tapping of the rich resources of the vernacular languages. Robin S Ngangom tries to express his personal experiences through his poems. Ngangom and Kharmawphlang along with the other poets from North-East feels that they have an obligation to write about the contemporary problems of the region.

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## Myth in Kire's "Son of the Thundercloud"

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### Abstract

This paper is based on how a North Eastern writer Easterine Kire shows the Naga creation myth in her novel *Son of the Thundercloud*. The plot of the novel is about the perpetual traveler named Pele, a man who lost his family and happiness due to a devastating famine. His journey leads him to a drought affected abandoned village Nouné, where he met the sisters of Mesanuo who had been living their life on "hope". They told him to wait for a prophecy, the birth of the Son of the Thundercloud; because they believed it is the only way they would survive. The mythical narrative offers an alternative truth and points out that it is through language that the natural world is reduced to objects or resources to be subjectivized. Myth is farther along the language dictated by culture that people respect and thus, care for the systems that support life.

**Keywords:** myth, famine, prophecy, alternative truth.

### Introduction :

Easterine Kire, a writer from Nagaland within the North East of India, expresses the pressing concern of climate and ecological change which has caused famine and annihilated complete tribes. These are complex natural phenomena which are beyond rational truth and beyond the comprehension of individuals. Kire is worried about the Nagas, especially the Angamis, dying of starvation because of famine. She addresses this concern by means of retelling of a Naga creation

myth in her novel *Son of the Thundercloud*. By means of retelling the Naga myth of creation and sustenance, Kire presents a story of hope, love, endurance and sustainability participated in by the Angami communities represented by a mythic village and three ancient women and the young man, Pele. She consciously recounts this mythic story of her own that enacts a positive and progressive philosophy. "One of the features of environmental discourse is the frequency of what is often called metaphor" (Harris, 155). Talking about the use of metaphors and myths Roy Harris says that "there is a fundamental division about the role of language that can surface in all kinds of ways. At its sharpest, it emerges in where you draw the line between sense and nonsense, metaphor comes into its own whenever an attempt is made to bridge the gap between surrogational and non-surrogational discourse. It provides a means of integrating the two". In Kire's novel the gap is bridged by the impregnation of Mesanuo by the raindrop and the birth of the Son of the Thundercloud. He becomes the metaphor of prosperity as his birth brings rain and salvation by regenerating the land to its fruitfulness once again.

#### **Son of the Thundercloud**

Kire describes the journey of Pele, a person who lost his family and happiness because of devastating famine. He was advised to travel to the Village of Weavers where he would find food and hospitality. His journey leads him to a drought affected "abandoned village" Nouné which had been destroyed by a devastating famine. He learns that "new born babies died because their mother's milk dried up and there was nothing else to give them" (Kire, 19). Here he meets two sisters who were four hundred years old and had been living on "hope": "Hope, sir, we've been living on hope. Every morning when we wake up, we eat hope, and so we live to see another day" (Kire, 20). Kire's narrative plunges us into a world of despair where the social atmosphere is kind of non-existent and hunger is that the prime motif, that the four hundred years old sisters have survived a seven hundred years old famine is incredible but is rendered normal before the readers through the mythic narration. The sisters told Pele to wait for a prophecy, the birth of the Son of the Thundercloud, which

could regenerate the land to its fruitfulness all over again. "They say that those people who survived have done so, thanks to the hope of the ancestors who accuse me to say that our ancient misfortune will end when the Son of the Thundercloud is born. Everything is going to be transformed then. He will bring rain and mist that softens the soil, and also the earth will sprout again and grass again. There will be food and life. This is why we've been kept alive" (Kire, 19). There is no justification behind this explanation, yet it appears valid creating an affective atmosphere where the deprived characters are offered so laceandal so the force to survive in worse than direcondition.

Easterine Kire through her narration infers the characteristics of her people, their culture and the immediate problem at hand through a special language code that the suffering people of the Angami tribe understood. It is by means of simple retelling of Naga myths that she expresses the pressing concern of climate change that could be due to the hilly terrain of Nagaland, deforestation, cultivation along the slopes which induce erosion and loss. The myths enact the role of Naga culture and the role of the present Naga patriarchy in subjugating and exploiting nature without heeding the wisdom inherent in the cultural stories which basically protected them. Kire narrates the plight of villages which were now ghost villages because they did not pay attention to the warning in ancient knowledge. The narrative, here, is capable of formulating and proving propositions about a reality that lies beyond language. People disrespected nature's gifts, nature retaliated with "black clouds of field mice swarming over their granaries and homes" (Kire, 13). Not a home was spared and people had to abandon that village because it was a "taboo to live in a village when its food stores have been wiped out by animals and insects". The people of the village suffer immensely due to such disaster resulting from disrespect for the taboos.

In the novel Kire talks about the loss of the ancient stories that preserved the wisdom of the world. Mesanuo, the third sister, the mother of the Son of the Thundercloud, tells Pele that "the other famine killedm anymore the famine of stories and songs. They killed all the storytellers who tried to tell them about the Son of the



Thundercloud. Pele becomes a witness to extraordinary events. In Chapter three and four he sees stars suddenly appear “not as fixed pin points of light, but as celestial bodies moving in harmony with each other, like a orchestral dance” (Kire, 24-25). Kire’s narrative explores the Naga spiritual universe, basing upon the folktales and Angami belief system that she grew up in. *Son of the Thundercloud* tells us that the forces of nature or environment can act directly only on an individual whereby, the individual impresses upon other people her experience and thus summons processes both tangible and intangible to make it a communal trait. The third sister Mesanuo gives birth to the Son of the Thundercloud and thus, becomes capable of environmental influence supported by Pele and her two other sisters. As soon as her son is born the environment undergoes a sudden change. Nature becomes benevolent and the Village of Weavers was abundant with trees and crops and water where there was none before. The discourse in the *Son of the Thundercloud* encourages people to respect and care for the systems that support life. The headman of the drought stricken, barren village of weavers, asks Mesanuo, the mother of the son of the Thundercloud, “Where have those trees and rocks come from?” (Kire, 46). To this Mesanuo has a very simple answer. She says, “It’s called birthing, headman. The earth has birthed trees, rocks, stones, and grain, just as a mother give birth to her offspring. The trees and rocks are the sons of the earth. Take care of them and they will take care of you and your children” (Kire, 46).

The mythic narrative of *Son of the Thundercloud* forms the link between ecology and language. The Angami village elders pronounced an ancestral taboo lived by them. One such taboo was in favour of conservation and against waste: “that every village must keep aside some grain after the harvest as seed grain” (Kire, 13); the other was against jealousy, drunkenness and unnecessary bloodshed among people. The Angami economic system was built on these beliefs that were deeply entrenched in their cultural and collective psyche. Chapter twenty of *Son of the Thundercloud* “Prophecies Die in the Face of Unbelief” validates the essence of the referential and social adequacies of environmental discourse. Rhalietuo, the son of the thundercloud

in fact fulfils the prophecy and kills the spirit tiger and saves the village from evil influence. This induces jealousy and envy in the mind of the son of the headman, Viphru, representing a power politics of the wealthy oppressive system of the village. First the head man plants these edofdis belief by scornfully falsifying the miraculous birth of Rhalietuo. He says: ‘Surely you don’t believe the story that a raindrop fell on her and made her conceive a child? ... ‘She had a lover. She must have had one; the whole village believes that now’... ‘People prefer to believe what is more plausible rather than what is miraculous...’ (Kire, 116). Thus influenced, the villagers believed that the tiger spirit killed by Rhalie had been actually protecting their crops by asking for regular sacrifice and blood.

### Conclusion

Kire’s novel presents allegorically the relationship between human and nature in a symbiotic equation which is necessary for the present generation to understand if they are to sustain life on earth. The mythical discourse in the narrative of Kire’s novel subverts the language that the rational world conceives and understands. Kire’s novel operating through myth establishes that it is through ancient stories that people can be encouraged to be more responsible towards the systems that support life and contribute to harmonious living and sustainability.

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## The Postcolonial Identity and Its Nuances in Amitav Ghosh's Novel *The Shadow Lines*

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### Abstract :

This paper discusses the postcolonial identity that is depicted by Amitav Ghosh in his novel *The Shadow Lines* through the memory in the situations of socio-cultural conflict, war and separation, travelling and hybridity. The term postcolonial is applied to the cultures affected by the condition which comes after the colonization process. From this perspective, it is only possible to formulate the idea of a postcolonial state after the end of the empire or after the colonies under foreign occupation have been restored to the people who consider it their own. In *The Shadow Lines* Amitav Ghosh has no faith and belief in national borders and geographical boundaries that divide and separate both the country and its people from their own. From the beginning to the last, we find a blurred line between the nation, land and families. The novel recollects historical events as Swadeshi Movement, Second World War, partition of India, and riots of 1960s in Dhaka and Calcutta. It focuses on historical facts, the post partition scenario of violence. He has mentioned these memories to construct the concept of freedom and its numerous connotations in the modern world, which is dominant theme of the novel by interweaving memory, history and contemporary life. It spans across three generations of the narrator's family living in Dhaka, Calcutta and London. The novel is highlighted by the characters those belong to different races, ideologies, imaginations, ethnicities, cultures, languages, religions and

memories of past.

### Keywords:

Postcolonial, Amitav Ghosh, war, partition, hybridity, imagination, memories, government, travel, nation.

### Methodology :

To prepare the paper I have used the secondary data. I have collected the data from books, webs, articles and other research paper. Through this paper I try to show the condition of postcolonial India in Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Shadow Lines*.

### Objective :

This paper is included the following objectives:-

- a) To study about the postcolonial literature.
- b) To study Indian English writer Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Shadow Lines*.
- c) To study about the Bengal division.
- d) To study about self-identity, hybridity and imagination.
- e) To study about the nuances between Indian culture and western culture.

### Introduction :

Amitav Ghosh is one of the prominent writers of Indian English literature. His sincere nature is to portrait the real facts of family, government and sometimes religion. His writings are mainly dealing with identity crisis, partition, memory of past. He was born in Calcutta on 11 July 1956, after nine years of Bengal division. The Bengal division is very much affected to his soul. He was not in agreement with the matter of partition. He spent his early years in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, while he studied in Delhi, Oxford and in Egypt. In his childhood days he was used to listening the stories of partition, the struggle for independence and Second World War. His fiction is inspired with both political and historical consciousness. He is one of most significant literary voices to arise from India in recent decades, and has contributed to the development of ideas on the postcolonial in particular. (Kasikhan, 2015: 3)

His novel *The Shadow Lines* focuses on the narrator's family in Calcutta and Dhaka and their relation with an English family in London. The differences between them in terms of culture, geographical structures have been discussed. The boundary line between nations and families showed the readers in purpose of self-identity existed in us. The characters in the novel are caught between two nations and the struggle to come of their artificially self-made personalities due to the impact of partition.

### Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Shadow Lines*

Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* won the Sahitya Academy Award in the year 1989. The novel concerns with the search for identity, the need for independent, the difficult relationship with colonial culture. In *The Shadow Lines* he analyses the political and economic growth of India through the lives of two families Bengali and English. His family and the Price family in London are connected by the friendship between their respective patriarchs Justice Datta Chaudhuri and Lionel Tresawson. The boy narrator presents the views of the members of his immediate and extended family, thus giving each a well-defined character. The narrator idolizes Tridib, his uncle because of his tremendous knowledge and his perspective of the incidents and places. (Sumathy, 2013:2)

Tha'mma, narrator's grandmother is the memorable character in the novel. It is chiefly through her character that Ghosh offers the most significant message of the novel; the vainness of creating nation states, the absurdity of drawing lines which divide people when their memories remain undivided. Tha'mma was born in 1902 in Dhaka. Tha'mma's father and her uncle, Jethamoshai, begin feuding, so they divide their huge communal house in half with a wall. Tha'mma tells her younger sister, Mayadebi, that Jethamoshai's family lives in the upside-down house. After Tha'mma and Mayadebi marry, they lost contact with Jethamoshai. Tha'mma follows her husband as he works on the railroad until he dies in 1936. Tha'mma becomes a teacher and refuses to accept help of any sort from her family. Though Tha'mma had been very interested in the terrorist movements against British

rules in her youth, when the Partition happens in 1947.

Mayaebi's husband Shaheb is a wealthy diplomat and in 1939 he needs a special medical operation that can't be possible in India. So, Mrs. Price, Lionel Tresawson's daughter invites the Shaheb for medical treatment in London. Tridib who is nine years old accompanies his father. In the time leading up to the Second World War and the early days of the Blitz, Tridib's family returns to India.

The narrator's father marries the narrator's mother who soon gives birth to a son, the narrator. Tridib's elder brother, Jatin also marries a woman affectionately known as Queen Victoria and the couple has a daughter named Ila, who is the narrator's age. Ila's parents are wealthy and she spends her childhood traveling around the world for her father's work. On the other hand, the narrator never gets far outside of Calcutta. Ila's family lives with the Prices in London, when she is eight years old, her family visits Calcutta for a festival. When the narrator and Ila reach the massive house, Ila leads the narrator into a half-underground storage room, where stores a massive table and Ila decides that they are going to play a game called Houses, which she plays with Nick, Mrs. Price's son in London. She informs the narrator that who Nick is and the narrator understands that Nick is his competitor for Ila's affection.

In 1959, Mr. Price's daughter May and Tridib begin writing to each other. May makes plans to visit Tridib in India. Around the same time, Tha'mma who is retired and has time on her hands for the first time in her life and wants to meet her uncle Jethamoshai. Finally, the Shaheb receives a job posting in Dhaka and Mayadebi invites Tha'mma to visit there and they make plans to save their uncle from the growing unrest in the Muslim-majority city. May makes plan for visit to Calcutta and then to Dhaka with Tha'mma. Tridib decides to accompany them to Dhaka. In Dhaka, the Shaheb warns Mayadebi and Tha'mma that trouble is gathering there but Tha'mma wants to see Jethamoshai anyway. There is a rickshaw driver named Khalil cares for Jethamoshai. When Khalil arrives, he leads his guests into the house, Jethamoshai doesn't recognize his nieces but he tells Tridib that he is waiting for his family to return so that he can give them the full ownership of the

house. In that moment, the driver races to the door and says that there is trouble, and they have to leave. Khalil agrees to drive Jethamoshai to Mayadebi's house. When they are in the car, they turn a corner and come to face with a mob. It surrounds the car and breaks the windshield. When the mob descends on the rickshaw, Tha'mma tells the driver to go but May gets out to save Jethamoshai. Tridib follows her but he, Jethamoshai and Khalil are all brutally murdered by the mob. The narrator's parents tell him later that Tridib died in an accident. In college, the narrator continues to love Ila and her frustrating as she never understands why he is so insistent on remembering Tridib's stories or their own childhood memories.

After seeing a lecture in Delhi, the narrator realizes that he never connected the events as a child, the riot he experienced in Calcutta and the riot that killed Tridib in Dhaka was part of the same political event. As he studies Tridib's atlas the narrator discovers that borders are meaningless. The narrator goes to pursue an advanced degree in London. A few years later, Ila marries Nick, at their marriage party, the narrator gets very drunk and May offers to take him home. The narrator assaults May but feels horrible about it in the morning. A few months later, Ila realized that Nick is cheating with her. The night before the narrator leaves London he has dinner with May. At dinner May tells the narrator about the riots and asks if he thinks that she killed Tridib. May tells him that she used to think she did, but she knows now that Tridib sacrificed himself for the nation and he was going to die. She asks the narrator to stay the night and he accepts glad to finally understand the mystery to Tridib's death. (Rani, 2018:5)

### Post Colonial Identity and its Nuances in the Shadow Lines

The novel *The Shadow Lines* provides an account of the national adventure for postcolonial identity. History teaches Tha'mma and her uncle to be loyal to the territorial forms of identity. The nationalist identities of both jethamoshai and Tha'mma are created beyond the borders. Jethamoshai tried to live the last breath of his life in a country where he was born but the nationality doesn't give him security. On the other hand, Tha'mma is separated from own birthplace that makes

her a foreigner in her home town, Dhaka. So, Tha'mma became a nationalist and wanted to fight against the country which was once motherland. The shadow of the border lines has an effect on both of them. Finally, Tha'mma accepts the truth of her identity by trying to forget her past.

Hybridity is a concept that popularized by postcolonial critic Homi Bhabha which is created a cultural form of identities. Ila and Tha'mma are two unrooted characters of twentieth century. Ila decided to live in London as she wanted a free life to live but Tha'mma wanted to know why Ila preferred to live in London because in India she can live a very affluent life. The incident described by the narrator to his grandmother about Ila wants to search for an identity. The place for an identity created by Ila for herself in London was not a real identity with a voice. Ila wants an identity which is formed from her freedom as a woman brought up in western culture. This is an enchanted freedom without an inner and true voice from heart for a desire to her country and culture. But the narrator has not changed his likeness for his own country and culture.

The postcolonial character in Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Shadow Lines* are in quest for an own identity generated by themselves from the situations. The grandmother in the novel is a refugee in one sense and Ila is a rootless in this modern world and the narrator's identity is based on the memories of history through the eyes of his uncle Tridib. The unnamed narrator in the novel is continuously involved in the imaginative renewal of times, places, events and people of the past. The personal history of anti-imperialism has created a notion of identity in the novel. The postcolonial sensation of personal identity is shaped a horrible tragedy of partition in this novel. Thus, identity is a product of images and desires of human subjectivity. (Phukan, 2019:1-2)

### Conclusion

In the novel *The Shadow Line* at first a family was going away from the mother land and later this family has returned into same place, so the boundary between communities also removed from the division of the power of imagination. The unnamed narrator has

related the story of his experiences and his uncle Tridib's experiences. Tridib teaches the narrator to use his imagination and explains that the only imagination breaks the boundary of two countries. But Ila always visited various parts of the world so it is her modern style to break the gap between nations and countries. Though the narrator doesn't discover the truth of the riot between India and East Pakistan until the very end of the novel. Therefore, the novelist presents the overall structure of the novel through postcolonial identity and provides examples from novel regarding of some postcolonial elements such as memory, nationalism, imagination, obscurity etc.

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## Women's Writings

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#### Abstract

In the West, the notion of an opposition between the sexes dates back to ancient Greek philosophy. Aristotle, for instance, believed that nature always aimed at perfection, but proceeded to argue that a woman was merely an inferior, incomplete version of man, who was presented as the ideal enactment of nature's objective. In equally misogynistic terms, as we now perceive, the archetypal first woman in Hebrew religious texts was tempted by an evil serpent and together they bring about the downfall of humanity and expulsion from Paradise. Yet even these well-known narratives are open to challenge. The Greek poet Sappho, for instance, celebrated love between women; similarly, religious texts also featured strong idealized depictions of women. Although the documents of women's oppression historically exceed the literature on liberation, the balance in our own times is beginning to shift.

This paper is going to analyze the life and status of women in the society and women as writers in the society.

**Key Words :** Women, Equal, Sex, Society, Power

#### Introduction

The academic discipline of Women's writing as a separate part of women of literary studies which is based on the notion that the experience of women, historically, has been shaped by their gender, and so women writers by definition are a group worthy of separate

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