
Marginalised Writing Emerged and Focusing on the Identities of Ethnic Groups in India

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ABSTRACT:

In the late 20th century, a political and social movement emerged to elevate the identities of ethnic groups like Tribes, Dalits, Women, and Peasants through marginalized writing. Tribal culture, the longest tradition in Indian culture, is reflected in ancient texts like The Ramayana and The Mahabharata. However, urbanization, print culture, and commerce have marginalized these groups and their languages, highlighting the need for more coordinated efforts to preserve and collect tribal languages and literature.

KEYWORDS:

Tribal Literature, Tribal Culture, Tribal Women, Marginalization of Communities, Intersection, Oral Literature, Written Literature.

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Introduction:

Fourth World Literature provides a platform to understand the cultural experiences of indigenous populations who have suffered due to colonial domination. This literature can be confusing due to dialectic diversity and terminological differences, but it is best understood through the lens of their spoken language and customs. Tribes are marginalized due to their lack of knowledge and access to facilities.

Adikavi Valmiki's *The Ramayana* features periodic allusions to tribal life, with traditional illustrations of tribal figures. Guha, the leader of the Ganges River tribes, greets Rama with strength and cordial greetings. He provides Rama with high-quality rice and other delicacies, and he constructs a grass and branch bed for them.

The episode of Sabari, a tribal lady, is mentioned at the end of *Aranyakand*, revealing her journey to the land of the lord after seeing Shri Rama. The tribal characters from the *Mahabharata* are the epitome of bravery, joy, and devotion, and are crucial to the *Mahabharata* Battle. The epic captures the heroic traits of Abhiraj and Kirat, as well as Ekalavya's dedication to his Guru.

Banabhatta portrayed tribal life in his *Kadambari* in the seventh century. This literary gem exquisitely captures the Sabar and Bhil way of existence in the jungle. However, we observe a dearth of the same sort of tolerance and coexistence in later literature, from the *Mahabharata* to the *Kadambari*.

The Indian writings often romanticize and overlook the diverse tribal literature, including folktales and songs, which is mostly oral and accessible in non-mainstream languages. This lack of recognition is due to the communities' location outside metropolitan areas, where their creative output is often overlooked. This article explores a passage from Indian linguist G.N. Devy's book, *Painted Words*, which is included in *Tribal Verse*.

Gopinath Mohanty's novel *The Ancestor*, is a point of reference. Indian author Gopinath Mohanty is a famous writer who made a daring effort to raise the standard in tribal writing. This study is focused on historical transformations of images, rituals, practices, and social structures that are part of a shared, yet varied, tribal culture. For this research work, a thematic approach from the perspective of tribal concerns about identity

has been adopted.

This essay analyses three distinct Indian English novels that indicate tribal sensitivities and ways of life. To learn how the portrayal of tribes in writing might aid in understanding the articulation and sensitivities of tribes, I have chosen three novels from among these. *The Cofferdam* by Kamala Markandaya, *The Black Hill* by Mamang Dai, and *The Book of Hunter* by Mahasweta Devi are some of the books the researcher tries to find out about.

The Novels and Movie may be used to understand the Tribes:

The essay discusses how contemporary hobbies like watching films and reading books help understand the lifestyles of tribal people. Urban culture often overlooks the way of life of tribal people, but films and literature like *The Immortals of Meluha* and *Jai Bhim* help make their lifestyles more familiar. The film *Jai Bhim* showcases the fundamental way of life of the Irula tribe and their reverence for nature, making it a great example of visually describing tribal life to an audience.

The Immortals of Meluha is a book that is frequently cited as an example of how tribal life is portrayed in literature. The main character in the book, Shiva, is portrayed as a tribal community member who can only live in harmony with nature and finds it challenging to adjust to the changing modernity and so-called upper-class luxury. The essay adopts an ecocritical perspective on both pieces to highlight the elements of tribal life that are present in both, and it describes how the tribes live in harmony.

Mamang Dai's historical fiction, *The Black Hill*, is set in Arunachal Pradesh during the mid-19th century. The novel is based on real events from the 1850s when the British conquered India. Local tribes like Abor and Mishmee tried to pre-

vent outsiders from entering their territory, but their efforts were unsuccessful. The Black Hill is a survival story that emphasizes the importance of Adivasis' land. The protagonist, Kajinsha, tries to unite the tribes against the British to protect their land and livelihood, despite his struggles to keep the white men out of their land.

The Coffe Dam follows Helen, an English woman married to British engineer Howard Clinton, who arrives in India to build a dam. Helen develops a love for tribal people, even though her husband dislikes primitive things. Helen seeks the fullness of life in the huts of tribes, particularly Bashiam, who she believes can provide her with it. When Bashiam visits his hut, he is shocked to see Helen standing in the shadows, as she had travelled to sample the abrasive tastes of a hulking tribesman and an Englishwoman.

“What do you want with me, he said and stood outside warily, because it was Memsahib who wanted. Who would use him like a blackjack upon her white and exquisite body, suck him into her vortex to taste his coarse flavors and when it was done, the rare thing savored, go leaving him to what? What about me, he whipped himself, What about me? While her nearness wafted warm currents about him, about his body”(p.135)

This paper explores the potential of female tribal protagonists in literature to address the marginalized and unexplored tribal women in India. Writers like Mahasweta Devi, Kamala Markandaya, and Gita Mehta have made significant contributions in this area, but there is still room for exploring and expressing their concerns in a feminist manner.

An important tool for empowering women and raising awareness for the issue is the representation of indigenous women in literature. Many literary stories depict the plight of the “tribal hero” or the “tribal family,” but very few of them

feature a “tribal heroine.” Our texts haven’t yet adequately rendered the tribal story from a feminist perspective.

In Kiran Desai’s 2006 novel, *The Inheritance of Loss*, tribal marginalization is not fully explored. The novel’s seventeenth chapter highlights the sadness of the Stone Town tribes, where Saeed, a young boy working in the Queen of Tarts Bakery in the United States, encounters three underprivileged lads outside the bakery’s fence. These lads are the tribal people from his hometown who travel to America in search of work, as they have nowhere else to turn for a living.

These lads travel to the Queen of Tarts Bakery with Saeed’s address and phone number, which they obtained from his mother in the hopes that Saeed will assist them in getting employment. To their utter dismay, however, Saeed, who is now a part of society, does not live up to their expectations but instead fosters hate for them the moment he sees them. He says, revealing his hate for them:

“More tribes, more tribes, I wake up, go to the window, and there-MORE TRIBES. Every time I look ANOTHER TRIBE. Everybody saying. Oh no visas anymore, they are getting very strict, it is so hard, and in the meantime everybody who apply, EVERY BODY is getting a visa. Why they do this to me? That American Embassy in Dar-Why??!!Nobody would give that Dooli a visa. Nobody, one look and you would say OK, something wrong here-but they give it to hm. Saeed’s antipathy to the tribals of his native town is representative of the unjust treatment that is meted out to them wherever they go.(p .61)

Contemporary writing often combines tribal and mainstream elements, with mainstream people seeking refuge from tribal people or vice versa. In Arun Joshi’s *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, the protagonist, a well-established son of a Supreme Court judge, registers for a Ph.D. in anthropology at the

University of New York due to his interest in tribal life. Despite his father's wishes, he pursues his studies, highlighting the struggles and struggles faced by tribal people in society.

“ All I want to do in life is to visit the places they describe, meet the people who live there, find out about the aboriginals of the world” (p.12) Evidently, his interest in tribal life is exceptional. He is also deeply interested in black magic and witchcraft for which the tribals have a special liking. Another field of interest is traveling to those places in India where tribal societies exist. When the narrator asks him about his plan after completing his Ph.D., he replies: “Teach, I believe but before that, I would like to travel. Travel, travel, travel. A little bit here and there, but mostly in India. You have no idea what fascinating societies exist in India”(p.15)

Literature represents culture and tradition, making it an essential part of daily lives. India has over 700 scheduled tribes registered under Article 342 of the Constitution, and over 880 languages are spoken throughout the country. Tribal writing in non-mainstream languages has not been widely appreciated or made available to audiences. Tribal literature is classified based on ethnic, linguistic, and geographical diversity, making it multilingual, multicultural, and considered ancestral literature with global appeal. To understand tribal literature and its history, one must delve deeper into alternative history. By cultivating a more diverse literary environment, we can help create a more just and equitable society by taking steps to combat marginalization.

Conclusion:

Tribals frequently experience reciprocity problems with mainstream societies, which makes them hostile to civilized civilization. It is essential to adopt a cooperative and pleasant approach towards them to promote healthy reciprocity. Dr. Radhakrishnan stresses the significance of treating tribal peo-

ple with respect and friendship rather than hostility. The quote of Mahatma Gandhi, “We must approach the poor with the mind of the poor, so too, we must approach the tribesmen,” is pertinent.

Tribals can be integrated into civilization by encouraging economic and educational advancement while ensuring they preserve their culture and traditions. Encouragement-filled writing about tribal people can also help them see their chances for development and equality with upper-class society. However, Adivasis have shown to be bold, adventurous, daring, sturdy, dedicated, loyal, honest, free, unintentional, innocent, skillful, and well-organized, from Sambara, a hero of the Rigveda, through Eklavya and Matangaka.

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