Representation of the Tribe in Indian Fiction in English: A study of select Novels

(Thesis submitted to Nagaland University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English)
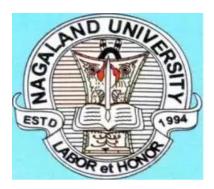
By

LAKHSMINATH RABHA

Registration No. 810/2018

Under the supervision of

Dr. M.A.J. Khan

Associate Professor

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION

NAGALAND UNIVERSITY, KOHIMA CAMPUS,

MIRIEMA, NAGALAND

2022

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I, Mr. Lakshminath Rabha , hereby declare that the subject matter of my thesis titled "**Representation of the Tribe in Indian Fiction in English: A study of select Novels**" is the bonafide record of work done by me under the supervision of Dr. M.A.J. Khan and that the content of the thesis did not form the basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any other research degree, fellowship etc. in any other university or institute. This is being submitted to Nagaland University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English.

Dated: 25th May, 2022

Lakshminath Rabha

Regn. No. 810/2018

Countersigned by:

Supervisor

Head of the Department

Nagaland University

(A Central University established by the Act of Parliament, 35/1989)

Department of English

Kohima Campus, Meriema, Kohima – 797004, Nagaland, India

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Dated: 25th May, 2022 Dr. M.A.J. Khan

Kohima Associate Professor

Department of English

Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema

Kohima-797004, Nagaland, Mob. - +919348068308/8118922839

Email – ajkctc@gmail.com

Nagaland University

(A Central University established by the Act of Parliament, 35/1989)

Department of English

Kohima Campus, Meriema, Kohima – 797004, Nagaland, India

PLAGIARISM TEST CERTIFICATTE

Name of the Research Scholar	LAKSHMINATH RABHA
Ph.D. Registration Number	Regn. No. 810/2018 (w.e.f. 16/08/2016)
Title of Ph.D. Dissertation	"Representation of the Tribe in Indian Fiction in English: A study of select Novels"
Name & Institutional Address of the Supervisor	Dr. M.A.J. Khan Associate Professor, Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema Kohima-797004, Nagaland, Mob. - +919348068308/8118922839 Email – ajkctc@gmail.com
Name of the Department and School	Department of English, School of Humanities and Education
Date of Submission	25th May, 2022
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Kohima   Regn. No. 810/2018

Dr. M.A.J. Khan

Supervisor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis is the result of encouragement and support of numerous people who have helped me in the course of my research work. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to them. I would like to acknowledge my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. M.A.J. Khan, who has constantly and kindly guided me at every stage. I am highly indebted to him for his understanding, support and guidance throughout my research period. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Nigamananda Das, Nagaland University for his encouragement and valuable advice at various stages of my work. I offer my sincere gratitude to my teacher, Prof. K.C. Baral, who offered me valuable advice in deciding the topic. I extend my gratitude to all the faculty members of the Department of English, Nagaland University, for their valuable suggestions. I have to thank, Prof. Jano S. Liegise, Head, Department of English, Nagaland University for her valuable advice and guidance. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Nagaland University authorities for academic and administrative support. I gracefully thank all my colleagues and friends for their help at different stages of my research. I express my gratitude to my parents and all my family members for their support and understanding. Finally, I thank my wife, Lhingneikim Gamlhou for her endless support and faith in me.

Kohima   Lakshminath Rabha

                                                                   Regn. No. 810/2018

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the process of representation and its nuanced political undercurrents in the representation of tribal communities of India. It is argued that representation is not an innocent process of simply transferring of information from one domain to the other. It is invariably enmeshed in the power relations of representational discourse, in which the representing agency holds the absolute power of maneuvering the entire process to suit its political interest. On the other hand the represented section is assigned with a subordinate position in the representational narrative having been the object of representation. Representation also raises questions: who speaks for whom and even who represents whom. Such questions at the level of discourse underwrite the tensions that exist between articulation, its suppression or its manipulation. Thus representation, whatever meaning it carries in different contexts, seems to be a core concept of literature more so when we talk of marginalized communities, for example, the tribals of India.

The inherent power relation of representation manifests starkly in the colonial representation of the natives as evidenced in the ethnographic texts produced during the colonial period. Indian natives including tribals were subjected to both coercive and ideological subjugation during the colonial period and their representation in colonial texts largely contributed to the design of ideological subjugation by creation and legitimization of certain stereotypes. Such stereotyped identities were further perpetuated during the post-independence period to describe the tribal communities with little effort at understanding their diverse indigenous life-worlds and cultural value systems leading to further marginalization and 'othering'. Tribal societies and their voices have been largely subjected to perpetual exclusion from the nationalistic elitist discourse of India, as the inner dynamics of their life-worlds are

often misjudged and mis-represented by way of filtration, alteration or even obliteration. However, in the recent times the colonial narratives and their political intents have been brought to close scrutiny under the theoretical premise of postcolonial criticism. This new critical approach to writing questioning the authority of colonial discourse, with heightened sensibility and social awareness, has inaugurated exploration of certain areas of tribal society hitherto neglected as little worthy of representation. Emergence of autochthonous writing has added yet another dimension to the examination of tribal representation by facilitating articulation of their lived reality from their own perspectives largely focusing on the issues of marginality, exploitation and social discrimination. In this premise, this thesis examines the political implications of representational texts concerning the tribes of India starting from the colonial times to the present with special focus of five select Indian novels in English viz. *Paraja, The Primal Land*, *Love in the Time of Insurgency* , *The Legends of Pensam* and *Kocharethi: The Araya Woman*.

The thesis has been divided into five main chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction to the entire thesis and its relevance with a general overview of the nature of tribal representation in the colonial as well as mainstream Indian narratives. The second chapter examines the inherent political undercurrents of the process of representation in detail under the theoretical interpolations of postcolonial criticism. In this chapter it is argued that representation elicits power exercise by contributing to knowledge production and at the same time appropriates the knowledge thus produced to perpetuate the power. The third chapter undertakes the examination of the socio-politico-historic-cultural conditions of Indian tribes since pre-colonial period to the present and provides a detailed analysis of the nature of tribal representation in Indian fictional narratives. This chapter argues that tribal representation in Indian literature has

undergone a tremendous transformation, especially in the post-independence period, with writers emphasizing on the core issues of tribal societies by contesting certain colonial stereotypes. The fourth chapter examines the possibility of using representation as a tool of literary resistance in the discourse of elitist Indian literary writing, especially with the emergence of autochthonous writings representing different tribal societies. This chapter examines the nuanced political angles of representation as employed by the writers of the five select novels. The fifth chapter provides the findings of the entire thesis in a nutshell.

Lakshminath Rabha

Regn. No. 810/2018

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

Ethnographic literature offers a closer understanding of the life-world of a particular group of people through first hand documentation and representation of their lived experiences. Having its origin in the disciplinary bedrock of Anthropology, ethnographic literature adheres to the observatory approach of field-study for the collection of facts. Nonetheless, foreseeable enough, it often ceases to remain faithful to the narrative objectivity owing to fictionalization and authorial subjectivity involved in its production. The nature of representation in ethnographic literature bears the possibility of being guided by the intention of the author that may result in complete transformation of the identity of the represented body. It has been observed that representation in colonial ethnographic writing go much further in this scheme with the practice of construction and assigning of a new identity to the colonized races. Representation of the tribals in Indian context is one such area that led to the construction/assigning of identity indicating subtle power exercise in the discourse of representation. In the postcolonial context it is pertinent to examine the nuanced layers of representational grand narrative keeping in view of the political undertone and power relations in its production. It is to be noted that the nature of representation has undergone epistemic change under the theoretical premise of postcolonial studies in the recent times. Representation as a text may no longer be seen as an isolated and innocent practice given the variability of its implications under different conditions. Examination of the power relations in the discourse of representation further leads to its relational historicity, both temporal and spatial, for a discourse itself is an arbitrary concept. On the contrary, under the theoretical parameters of subaltern studies, representation may also be seen as a site of resistance and assertion of self-identity on the part of hitherto unrecognized subaltern groups, for it also

offers a platform for the production and dissemination of alternative narrative with authentic expression of their life-worlds.

The present study seeks to examine the representation of the tribal in Indian literary fiction and ethnographic narratives. The study will rely specifically on five novels authored by Indian writers to examine the nature of representation of the tribals with emphasis on their marginality. It is pertinent to mention that using the term 'tribal' or 'tribe' in the postcolonial context is problematic, hence largely contested considering its historical background of having been embedded in the apparent colonial intent of homogenizing the heterogeneous races of people irrespective of their distinctive cultural identities. Nonetheless, the term 'tribal' or 'tribe' will be used as a generic term in the present study for referential purpose. The four novels selected for the study are *Paraja* (first published in Oriya in 1945, translated into English in 1987*), The Primal Land* (translated into English in 2001 from *Adibhumi*, first published in Oriya in 1993), *Love in the Time of Insurgency* (translated into English in 2005 from *Yaruingam*, first published in Assamese in 1960), *The Legends of Pensam* (2006) and *Kocharethi: The Araya Woman* (translated into English in 2011 from *Kocharethi*, first published in Malayalam in 1998). All these novels may loosely be identified as ethnographic novels on the rationale that they attempt to represent the life-world of those communities which are classified as Scheduled Tribes (S.T.) by the Constitution of India. The focal point of this study will be to analyze the efficacy of the narrative techniques of ethnographic novels in doing justice to the authentic representation of tribal life-world and to examine the theoretical insinuation of ethnographic novels in the postcolonial condition.

W. J. T. Mitchell in his essay titled "Representation" argues that "representation has always played a central role in the understanding of literature" (11). To complement Mitchell's argument it may further be argued that literature is primarily a mode of representation through language, for language acts as the vehicle of representation.

Representation may also be understood as a process of presenting the substance of certain entity that involves two principal axes i.e. a representing agency and the substance of representation. However, it is to be noted that the binaries of the process of representation are interlocked with the relation of power where the representing agency assumes the dominant position. On the contrary, the substance of representation is considered to be a voiceless entity lacking in power to articulate and represent itself. The representing agency also appropriates and sanctions authority to its dominant position under the rhetoric that by performing the task of representation of the so far unrepresented voiceless substance, it is rendering humanitarian service. However, it is to be noted that in the context of colonial ethnographic texts the represented substance is constituted by the colonized section. The power relation in colonial representation calls for a close examination under postcolonial rubrics for it may be seen as an extension of the colonial 'self/other' binary into the study of the colonized races that further leads to the construction of certain stereotyped identity of the 'other'. The above mentioned novels will be extensively discussed in the subsequent chapters taking cue from postcolonial theoretical parameters to examine the political undertone involved in the representation of the marginalized.

Language, as the medium of expression, plays a crucial role in the process of representation. Language constitutes the largest part of the web of signification that confirms the epistemic existence of the cognitive universe that we understand and inhabit. Representation not only transfers the abstract concept derived from the physical world through language but largely capitalizes on the expression of subjective thoughts and imaginations, diagonally representing the cultural dynamics of a specific social structure. In a political sense, it represents ideology and power relations that pervades through a given society. Ideology emanates from the power relations within a society and complements to the perpetuation of the power structure. Marxist analysis of ideology expounds that ideology is a

construct of the larger paradigm of dominant capitalist power structure. Ideology in Marxist terms is designed to supplement to the perpetuation of the legitimacy of power in a state. In its sociological meaning, representation underlines how communities are represented, often trying to construct or break the stereotypes of caste, race, class, gender and even sexualities. Representation of the marginalized and subaltern section of a society is always fraught with contradictory theoretical interpolations. Representation also raises questions: who speaks for whom and even who represents whom? Such questions at the level of discourse underwrite the tensions that exist between articulation, its suppression or its manipulation. Thus, representation as a genre of narrative technique corresponds to plurality of meaning with the possibility of inherent contesting voices under different conditions.

Postcolonial analysis of representation underscores the examination of the dividing line between the colonial 'self' and the 'other'. Elleke Boehmer in the book *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (2005) defines colonial discourse as "that collection of symbolic practices, including textual codes and conventions and implied meanings, which Europe deployed in the process of its colonial expansion" (48). European colonial expansion is not only administrative and political extension in the colonial locations but also the extension of European values informed by the colonial texts and symbolism. Colonial power legitimized and established its domination largely through textual representations of the colonial subjects as inferior and decadent civilization urgently in need of European intervention. Textual representation of the colonized was largely instrumental in the propagation of ideological domination that contributed to the retention of colonial power for its impact on the native subconscious was seemingly more sustainable than physical domination achieved by means of coercion. Colonial representation, in the first place, involved the construction of the 'other' by capitalizing on the racial difference of the colonized from the European 'self' as its binary opposite. It is to be noted that representation of the racial difference in colonial texts, by

extension, further emphasized on the projection of native cultural practices as inferior and primitive which accordingly led to the construction of derogatory racial stereotypes.

Colonial representation further supplements to the nefarious design of subjugation and denigration of the 'other' through the social codes and conventions established by the textual symbolic practices. Textualization of racial difference privileges the culture of writing over orality and the colonizer's control over the art of writing permanently establishes the binary of 'written/oral' coinciding with the dichotomous relation of 'self/other'. What concerns us is that the production of written history and its legitimization as the grand narrative granting unconditional authority to written culture is reductive in nature, for it reduces the tradition of oral culture of the native to hearsay knowledge. It is this unconditional authority of colonial representation that negates the value system embedded in the collective consciousness of native culture. The entire colonized race is thus stripped of its historicity and cultural ethos with the rejection of its values, for among the colonized people "…an inferiority complex take*s* root" and their "…local cultural originality *is* committed to the grave." (Fanon, 2; emphasis added)

Thus representation, with multiple contextual meanings, seems to be a core concept of literature more so when we talk of marginalized communities, for example, the tribals of India. Tribals in India, having been the inhabitants of the remotest geographical locations, did not have easy access to formal education started at the initiative of the European missionaries nor did they have any inkling of the current societal changes. They were at loss when it came to the articulation of their worldviews in officially recognized language. Their bonafide voice did not get a space in the colonial ethnographic representation as the mode of representation was alien and incomprehensible to them. Consequently, representation of the tribals in India suffered from the epistemic violence of misappropriation and misrepresentation of their reality. Drawing attention to the apparent imbalance of power in

articulation, Abdul R. JanMohamed contends, "Since the object of representation – the native – dose not have access to these texts (because of linguistic barriers) and since the European audience has no direct contact with the native, imperialist fiction tends to be unconcerned with the truth value of its representation" (Economy, 63). JanMohamed's deliberation on the deep-seated fallacy in colonial approach to representation focuses on the manipulation of facts in colonial narratives through the representation of distorted images of the colonized. In order to emphasize the dehumanizing approach of colonial representation he draws our attention towards the process of objectification of the natives by way of which they were dispossessed of all human attributes including the ability of articulation. He hints at the construction of colonial stereotype in the representation of the colonized in the "imperialist fiction" with subtle reiteration of racial difference and deliberate distortion of the truth.

In this premise, it is pertinent to put the culture of inscription or 'writing' under close scrutiny in the examination of the pattern of ethnographic representation of the Tribal in Indian context, for the process of representation may be understood as a site of 'writing' owing to its rudimentary contract with language. 'Writing', in broader sense, may be understood as a form of narrative technique that tends to overlook the theoretical differences in the representation of facts from fiction. Factual details overlap with fictionalization in the process of 'writing' that leads to the alteration of the real. The principal force of the process of 'writing' lies in language or the sign system that is indispensable for the realization of the meaning of the real world. It is to be noted that language is arbitrary in nature though it is seen as an essential system of signification for meaningful cognition of reality. Examination of the process of representation reveals that it is largely affected by the arbitrariness of language due to its reliance on language for meaningful cognition. Representation pretends to be an innocent and objective undertaking towards demonstration of fact, whereas in reality it involves fictional narrative techniques administered with authorial subjectivity that further

poses question on the authenticity of representational text. Given the uncertainty concerning the maintenance of objectivity in the manifestation of the real, representation fails to do justice to the authenticity of the represented substance. Representation also accentuates inherent power relations involved in the subjugation and appropriation of the represented body conversely assigning the representing agency a superior position in representational discourse. Representation involves filtration of the facts in which the substance of the representation is made to undergo multiple levels of transformation under the political interest of the representing agency. Consequently, correspondence between the entirety of the fact and the represented substance is lost having been glossed with the intention of the representing agency. Thus, colonial ethnographic representation of the tribals tends to deviate from tribal reality by engaging itself in the production of a text guided by racial difference.

Digressing a little from the colonial ethnographic representations, when we shift our focus to the representation of tribals in the classical Indian literature, it is observed that misrepresentation of tribals in India had been a continuous practice since pre-colonial times. Tribals in India were subjected to social, political and economic marginalization by negation of their cultural values since the ancient period. Tracing the examples of tribal representation in the great Indian epics such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* till the recent times, it is found that different terminologies have been used to describe tribal communities such as hill and forest dwellers, savages, primitive, barbarous, backward Hindus and 'ethnic other' of the dominant culture in mainstream literature. The most important but contestable image of the tribals represented in Indian classical literature as well as colonial writings is that of a noble savage or believers of animism that apparently accentuating the cultural difference.

The idea of the noble savage in Europe dates back to the Eighteenth century enlightenment period especially found in the works of Rousseau where he celebrated the innocence of the primitive man as a part of nature positing as the opposite of the urban

metropole. The noble savage was an Eighteenth century construct to denote the opposite entity of the rational thinking and much modernized society of the contemporary generation. However, over the ages, in the conflict between nature and culture, the tribal of India has lost its ground and gradually been subjected to marginalization. In the modernist hermeneutics, 'nature' invariably corresponds to primitiveness having no historicity of culture, rationality, technological development and social order of the civilized world. Primitiveness of the tribal corresponds to savagery and inert social structure without any evolutionary progression. On the contrary, 'culture' refers to the evolution of human species to civilization cultivating reason and scientific temperament under an ordered structure of ideal civil society. This definition of 'culture' alludes to the concept of Darwinian Theory of survival of the fittest dividing it further into two principal categories of high and low cultures. Culture also alludes to the power relations inevitably permeated in human society that helps establish a social hierarchy based on differences in relation to the degree of civilization. Representation of tribal in written narratives underscores nuanced expressions in the contexts of historicity and repressive power relations, for representation does not occur bereft of ideological connotations. It transmits certain ideological motives of the representing authority and acts as a tool of domination as evidenced in the representation of the tribals in India and elsewhere.

It is nonetheless pertinent to mention that the scope and area of literature is infinite as far as the matter of representation is concerned considering the nuanced expressions it can accommodate. Literature as a genre of narrative accentuates that it is not merely centered on the narration of a story but corresponds to subtle expressions of different layers of reality concerning identity, power, hegemony, nationality, ethnicity and resistance that unfold with every reading of the text under different perspectives. For instance, the works of Gopinath Mohanty and Pratibha Ray represent the tribal being exploited to no end by non-tribal and also offer explorations of their socio-cultural aspects; Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya writes

about a tribe from Northeast India at the backdrop of the Indo-Japanese war during the colonial period in India and the gradual transformation on ideological level that takes over the community. Mamang Dai and Narayan as insiders of tribal communities represent the anxiety and agony of their respective communities having been subjected to marginalization in free India. For Dai and Narayan the republic of India appears to be a vague concept with very little noticeable socio-cultural affinity between them and the rest of the country. Literary representation of various images of tribal society not only draw attention to different modes of representation but also hold these narratives in articulating diverse aspects of tribal life.

The concept of representation dates back to the ancient Greek term *mimesis* that literally means imitation of the cognitive world through representation. The concept of *mimesis* corresponds to the representation of reality as we experience in the physical world. Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plato consider literature as a mimetic product in which the author imitates the nature. The concept of nature for the Greek philosophers refers to the human nature which is represented in the works of art and poetry. With emphasis laid on human nature, Plato refers to his notion of ideal knowledge which is an abstract idea of what and how reality should be perceived. Plato's ideal knowledge is thus a concept based on individual perception of the reality. It is the ideal of human epistemology that shapes the represented reality infused with subjectivity of the author in poetry. In *The Republic,* Plato contends that reality is the imitation or representation of the ideal world. In the attempt of capturing and representing the essence of reality we construct an impression of subjective reality which is not the actual reality per se but the shadows of the real as perceived individually, for "imitation is surely far removed from the truth. And the reason that it produces everything, it seems, is that it grasps only a small part of each thing – and that is an illusion" (Plato, 301). We create a simulated knowledge of the physical world situating it on the impression of the real as we receive from the empirical cognition. To Plato, representation

creates worlds of illusion leading one away from the 'real thing' by creating a perforated sheet between the viewer and the real. Plato reiterates that *mimesis* is a controlled and filtered manifestation of the real manifesting only those portions of the reality that the author or the representing agency deems appropriate to unravel. He, therefore, cautions against the dangers of fallacious representation of reality.

Aristotle, on the other hand, contends that human beings create signs and manipulate them in order to make sense of the world. In his deliberation on the concept of poetry in *Poetics*, Aristotle explains that poetry should not be considered as the embodiment of truth and therefore he too provides a cautionary note on keeping a certain distance from the ideal truth represented in poetry. Aristotle defined poetry or any work of art as a mimetic concept where the author's subjective ideas are infused in order to create a heightened effect of sublimity, especially in tragedy. He suggests that *catharsis* or purgation of the soul in tragedy is only possible when one maintains a conscious distance between a work of art and lived reality. In doing so, Aristotle accentuates the unreliability of the process of representation that is fundamentally based on the concept of mimesis or imitation of the truth. During the process of mimetic representation, the truth or reality is totally dislocated from the original resulting in the metamorphosis of the represented text into a work of imagination with little semblance to reality. It is therefore inferred that the represented reality is not the real but a false impression of the reality proper.

Representation, as a medium or so called 'perforated sheet' relies on sign system for "the process of representation is characterized by using signs that we recall mentally or phonetically to comprehend the world" (Klarer, 1). Representation as a process of signification primarily perpetuates through configuration of the concept of reality in psychological or ideological realm. The ideological concept of reality is then expressed phonetically through the medium of language. Comprehension of the physical world owes

much to the meaningful codification of the linguistic signs. Thus, representation aims at the construction of cognitive meanings out of the impression derived from the physical world. In this context, Stuart Hall contends, "Language is one of the 'media' through which thoughts, ideas and feelings are represented in a culture. Representation through language is therefore central to the process by which meaning is produced" (*Representation,* 1). Language functions as the 'media' that is central to the process of representation of the abstract concept of what Plato contends as the ideal that corresponds to thought, imagination and the subconscious realm of human understanding. Plato's notion of sign system is also mimetic, for linguistic signs imitate the ideal in order to comprehend reality. Thus words or the signs are doubly removed from the reality. The abstract concept called the ideal is later given expression through the medium of language that constructs the meaning of the substance of the representation. But, representational meaning is inconsistent in nature persistently denying totality for it may vary with relation to various contexts of signification and its relational historicity. Post-structuralist analysis of meaning underlines that it is not absolute as the signifier is never hooked by the signified. It further rejects the myth of absolute signified and contends that there are 'signifiers of signifiers' negating the structuralist concept of a definite centre of totality. The meaning of a representation is, therefore, never absolute considering its temporal and spatial historicities.

In post-structuralist analysis, temporal difference refers to the difference of time and its impact on the meaning of representation while spatial difference is the difference in terms of space or location of the representation. Representational meaning or truth is relative in nature, for with the shift in time and location its implication undergoes epistemic transformation. Stuart Hall in his essay "The Work of Representation" (1997) maintains, "language *unfixes* meaning, breaking any natural and inevitable tie between signifier and signified. This opens representation to the constant ' play' or slippage of meaning,

to the constant production of new meanings, new interpretations" (32). Subject to constant 'play' of signifiers in sign system, representation can never be linked to the only and absolute meaning. Arbitrary nature of sign system negates every authority in the totality of construction of meaning in a discourse. The theory of deconstruction demystifies the totalitarian concept of absolute authority with rejection of the centre of totality. Jacques Derrida, in his book *Writing and Difference* (1978) lays emphasis on the arbitrary nature of language and moves beyond the structuralist binary of signifier and signified expounded by Ferdinand de Saussure. Derrida explains that the absolute signified is a non-existent entity for there are signifiers of signifiers with an unending continuity of significations. Derrida's theory is based on the concept of differences originally propounded by Saussure which believes that identical meaning of an object is confirmed by its differences from its binary opposite. Derrida, nonetheless, shifts his attention from the binary opposite to the spatial and temporal differences. Construction of meaning or the truth as asserted by Derrida refers to the concept of 'differance' that he coined by combining two terms i.e. 'difference' and 'to defer'. Signification in sign system involves the difference of the sign from other entities that confirms its meaningful perception in human ontology. Nonetheless, the difference as explained by Derrida is not absolute in nature corresponding to the arbitrariness of signs. The notion of absolute difference is perpetually extended with infinite deferral of the final and absolute meaning. By doing so, he negates the fixity of the meaning for meaning changes with the change in the temporality and spatiality of the represented entity. Representation is an elastic notion of subtle significations that leads to multiple interpretations depending on the agency involved with relation to the time and space.

New Historicist criticism that emerged on the theoretical premises of deconstruction lays emphasis on the relevance of supplementary historical details in the interpretation of a literary text. New Historicism argues that any narrative, including written history of human

civilization, is a product of imagination for they are invariably influenced by the subjectivity of the author. The author of a text employs subjective prejudices in the process of writing and the putative subjectivity corroborates to the power relations of the discourse. A historical text therefore is not an inclusive representation of the entirety of the society in a given period of representation. The absolute authority of historical representation is rejected by the New Historicist critics on the rationale that supplementary historicity of representation can alter the meaning of historical texts.

Representation corresponds to the inherent power relations involved in the construction of truth or meaning. The implication of the relation between power and meaning in the process of representation communicates to the agency involved in the appropriation of the represented reality. It is therefore important to examine representation under the hypothetical question on whether it is 'somebody speaking' or somebody 'speaking for' someone. And if it is somebody 'speaking for' someone/something, what is the degree of reliability of the text produced in the act of speaking or representing. Examination of colonial representation of the tribals with reference to its historicity relocates multiple subaltern voices that were negated recognition owing to their subordinate position in the power relations.

The question of representation and its link to subaltern voice comes from the ethnographic writings by the colonial administrators, travelers, doctors, teachers and missionaries where the "colonized body" was represented as "ethnographic text" (Baral, 84). The study of the 'colonized body' was undertaken with certain ulterior motive that served the political interest of the colonial power. Anthropology as a discipline of scientific study on mankind emerged in Europe with the humanist vision of Enlightenment period. The expansion of European colonialism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century may also be seen as a major contributing factor to the rise of Anthropology. Anthropological writing gained currency with the colonial enterprise getting momentum in the wake of

colonial expansion of imperialist Europe in other parts of the world. Colonial anthropology developed with the basic idea of studying their colonial subjects as the 'other' by placing it as the binary opposite of European 'self'. It undertook to emphasize on the cultural and racial distinctiveness of the colonized races as the subordinate opposite of European race and accordingly facilitated cultural, racial and political hegemony over the natives employing a systematic strategy aided by both coercion and consent.

Anthropology foregrounds itself on the theory of social evolution inspired by Darwinian notion and positions Europe at the top of the evolutionary hierarchy while the qualities like savagery and primitiveness are assigned to its 'other'. Material and ideological developments of Europe are further highlighted as an important marker of progress from the embryonic stages of human brain to civilized totality. The same theory is employed to legitimize the subjugation of the colonized race under the justification that European intervention is crucial for their progress. Anthropology became a site of perpetuation of the colonial production of knowledge on the colonized as the opposite of European man. The colonized race was thus identified as the embodiment of the profane bereft of all European morality and piety. However, it is to be noted that the construction of colonial stereotype on the native was not an easy undertaking on the part of the colonial power. It was rather made possible by distortion of native cultural ethos through manipulative representation that eventually caused irretrievable cultural erosion. Ethnographic texts employed a superior colonial gaze in their study of the colonized body thereby engaging in the production and dissemination of imaginary knowledge with the primary agenda of representing the colonized as inferior. Ethnographic representations may therefore be understood as a work of fiction that bear traces of an outsider's observation dispensed from the vantage point of a superior position skewed in the faculty of subjective imagination. Ethnographic representations are thus reductive in nature for it curbs out the cultural and historical essence of the native to

primitivity as Peter Mason argues, "All ethnography is an experience of the confrontation with Other set down in writing, an act by which that Other is deprived of its specificity" (*Deconstructing,* 13). The epistemic violence involving erasure of the 'specificity' maneuvered in accordance with the putative political interest of the colonizer also includes assigning of a new identity to the colonized with a view to support the theory of racial difference.

The colonized 'other' without its essence is thus presented as ethnographic text for the consumption of the larger readership around the world. It is to be noted that global readership of a text and its acceptance in the contemporary academia contributes to the formation of grand narrative and knowledge production. Colonial stereotypes constructed through their representation in ethnographic texts constituted the grand narrative on the colonial 'other'. Ethnographic representation invariably ignored empirical knowledge of the represented body and identified the 'other' as uncivilized part of the discourse thereby rationalizing the domination and taming of the degenerate race. This colonial rhetoric paved the way for absorption of the grand narrative supplemented by ethnographic texts and appropriated colonial occupation and perpetuation of imperialist design of exploitation.

Nonetheless, under the theoretical premise of deconstruction it is argued that the centrality of grand narrative can be contested for "narrative unfolds in time, and the past, present, and future of a given event of action affects our interpretation of that action" (Bridgeman, 52). There is no grand narrative as such but narratives of different types such as oral, visual and written in the form of myths, folk songs, folk arts, paintings, literatures, folk tales, legends, folk dance etc. that corresponds to the collective memories and life-worlds of communities. Colonial ethnographic writings are now being contested under postcolonial theories for it is fraught in the history of epistemic violence involving the silencing of native voices. Colonial ethnographic representations have been proved to be fallacious and not

inclusive of the entirety of the colonized body. It is observed that different constituent minority groups of the colonized body were not properly represented by colonial ethnographers owing to the prevalent 'self/other' dichotomy. Tribal and Dalit life-worlds including gender issues suffered from marginalized treatment in colonial representation. Women of the marginalized groups continued to be the target of colonial patriarchal gaze and, more often than not, treated as sensuous exotic objects. Such fallacious and exclusivist representation of the marginalized body led to the formation of a racially prejudiced notion of these groups.

It is however pertinent to note that the fallacious representation of the marginalized section continued unchallenged despite blatant manifestation of the error involved in the construction of the 'other'. The model of dichotomous relation of colonial 'self/other' binary is further carried forward in the construction and representation of tribal identity in India that calls for thorough examination under the theoretical parameters discussed above. Tribals continue to form a large portion of the various marginalized groups in India owing to unequal distribution of opportunities of empowerment and social mobility in post-independence Indian society. In this context Ania Loomba argues, "The term 'postcolonialism' does not apply to those at the bottom end of the hierarchy, who are still 'at the far economic margins of the nation-state' so that nothing is 'post' about their colonization" (*Colonialism*, 13).

It is argued that stratification of Indian society is not a colonial phenomenon for it was already divided according to the ancient system of caste hierarchy. During colonial period, the British government did not want to meddle with caste system as it was considered a far sensitive issue. Besides, the apparent disharmony in pre-colonial Indian society leveraged by caste system inversely facilitated an easy route to colonial establishment. In the post-independence period the pre-existent caste hierarchy, intermixed with colonial racial consciousness, was further stretched to the political economy of Indian nation state leaving

the interests of the marginalized groups largely unattended. It is pertinent to mention that majority of the activists of Indian freedom movement was constituted by the educated members of the upper caste/class society who eventually held the political and bureaucratic power after independence. This elite class of India emulated the colonial model of subjugation and administrative control in independent India perpetuating the oppression of the weaker section. In this context, Ranajit Guha in his book *Subalter Studies 1: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (2006) comments, "Colonialist elitism and Bourgeois-National elitism…survived the transfer of power and been assimilated to neo-colonialist, imitated colonialism in politics and literature" (1).

Freedom of India from the colonial power failed miserably to ensure collective transformation in the broader social structure. Very few remarkable changes have been witnessed in the conditions of certain marginalized groups such as women, tribals, dalits, working class people and peasantry till recently in India. Hence, independence for the marginalized section of the caste-ridden Indian society technically implied mere transferring of the power of governance to another group that continued with the similar design of exploitation. Conversely, the larger non-elite population of India including the tribals, remained ignored and uninformed about their constitutional rights without significant empowerment. It is further observed that the representation of tribals in the post-independence mainstream Indian narratives largely corresponds to the colonial binary of 'self/other', for the very terms such as 'tribe', 'aboriginal' or 'Adivasi', in praxis, hint at colonial stereotypical construct. Tribals in India continue to be the 'ethnic other' of the mainstream society informed by such representations made in the dominant literature. Postcolonial society thus harks back to the colonial cultural residues and wittingly or unwittingly participates in the perpetuation of the same colonial power relations which is, in nationalistic discourse, assumed to have been uprooted with decolonizing process. It may

therefore be inferred that ethnographic representation of tribal in India is a process that involves construction, imposition and legitimization of an imaginary and homogenous racial identity to a certain population hitherto thriving with multicultural heterogeneous identities.

It is nonetheless pertinent to mention that Construction of tribal identity and its perpetuation through representation do not necessarily involve exercise of coercive power. It rather is embedded in the 'consent' of the subordinate group that necessitates the understanding of what Louis Althusser calls the ideological state apparatus (ISA) (Althusser, 1971). In Marxist criticism ideology is understood as the product of superstructure that ensures the protection and legitimization of the power of the dominant social classes. Dominant ideology facilitates possession and control over the mode of production by the leading class in a class based economic society. On the contrary, the subordinate class accepts coercive domination by consenting to the ideological domination of the dominant class. Ideology is rather a false consciousness that feeds on the voluntary consent of the mass resulting in the emergence of a power regulated social structure that Antonio Gramsci calls hegemony (*Selections,* 1971). Hegemony is not achieved by the exercise of direct domination but by creation of a certain class that consents to its own subordination under the influence of dominant ideology. To Gramsci, ideology is not real but construction of certain ideas that are transmitted in the psychological domain of the subordinate group as the truth. Ideology reproduces consent of the subordinate class with its influence on the common sense of the people. Ideology refers to the systematic manipulation of the meaning of lived reality of the subordinate class. Consent of the subordinate group is core to the concept of Althusser's Ideological State Apparatus that primarily functions on ideological plane and secondarily on repression. But ideology is subject to its temporality and spatiality when examined in the theoretical premises of deconstruction. Postmodern analysis accentuates that ideology is not absolute in nature. Ideologies may differ with respect to the diversity in contexts. Thus, every

ideology may not necessarily correspond to the dominant power dynamics. Althusser makes a brief and passing remark on art and literature as a counter force that seeks to interrogate ideology. According to Althusser, literature and art invariably take an oppositional position though at rudimentary level both are embedded in human imagination, like dominant ideology. Literature and Art try to manifest what dominant ideology attempts to hide or manipulate. Althusser obliquely indicates about the possible emergence of literary resistance in the wake of oppressive design of exploitation of the weak through ideological manipulation.

Literary representation in contrast to other narratives such as historical, anthropological, sociological and so on adds a new dimension to the entirety of representational discourse. As mentioned earlier, literature and art emerge as counter narratives to the power permeated grand narrative by subversion of dominant ideology. Literary writing largely contributes to the shaping of a just social order by accommodation of marginalized voices hitherto suppressed and located outside the periphery of mainstream discourse. It is pertinent to mention that colonial ethnographers were economically and logistically patronized by the British Empire and therefore it was desirable that their narratives added to the imperialist design of ideological domination of the natives. On the contrary, fictional representation is usually not burdened with such liabilities. Literary narrative creates its own discourse and hence it is capable of self-representation. It has the power to interrogate the dominant discourse through the authentic representation of the real which is largely witnessed in the literature of resistance. In the premise of postcolonial and subaltern studies, it is observed that literature and art often tend to manifest increasing social consciousness at the backdrop of exploitation and marginality. Furthermore, it has also been observed that literary representation involves the sensitivity of attending to the subtle nuances and minute details of a particular society contributing to the authentic representation of lived

reality. However, it would be a hasty inference to construe literary representation as completely innocent undertaking uncorrupt by immanent power relations, for we cannot dismiss the relevance of individual and cultural prejudices of the author in the production and perception of literary narrative. Every individual is moulded by society, and a literary author is not an exception in this premise. As an individual, a literary author cannot disregard his/her cultural indoctrination. This ideological rupture and latent political intent of a literary writer at subconscious level call for a curious investigation in the examination of subtle nuances of literary representation. The fine line of ideological unease in a literary writer is rather manifestly witnessed in the nature of representation of tribals in the literary writings produced during colonial period in India. Literary representation of tribals by both British and mainstream Indian writers of colonial period was invariably guided by the consciousness of cultural difference, and hence such representations failed to address the core issues of tribal reality and functioned as a purveyor of the same colonial narrative embedded in master/slave binary.

Manifestation of power relations in the process of representation corresponds to the concept to the 'discursive approach' of representation expounded by Michel Foucault (*The Archaeology,* 2002). Literature as a discursive practice underwrites Foucault's concept of 'power/knowledge', 'power/authority' and 'history'. 'Location' or 'who' is located 'where' is one important aspect in the discourse of representation that calls for a critical examination. It is important to investigate the social position of the representing agency in the discourse of representation keeping in view of the power relation. It further calls to scrutiny to know if the enunciated position is outside the 'regime of truth'. Mainstream representation is an integral part of the 'regime of truth' by virtue of its validation as the absolute truth by the power of the regime. Legitimization of the mainstream representational narrative as the grand narrative places other and alternative truths outside the boundary of the 'regime of truth. Fictional

representation as an alternative truth by positing itself as the 'other' of the 'regime of truth' is often negated its due recognition. Foucault in his interview on "Truth and Power" (1980) argues,

> Truth isn't outside power…Truth is a thing of this world; it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as truth, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish truth and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned…the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (*Power*, 131)

In the above statement Foucault underlines the production, legitimization and dissemination of 'truth' or knowledge within a given power structure for its own functioning and sustenance. In this premise, it may be argued that knowledge is not as innocent as it is perceived. Because knowledge overlaps with power since its inception and they complement each other. In precise, knowledge is inseparable from power. However, Foucault again contends that, power does not function in a hierarchical manner. Power is not operated in a linear order in accordance to social hierarchy but permeates within the discourse in a capillary movement (*Power*, 1980). Therefore, power is invariably present everywhere, which also substantiates that every society has its own structure of power and by extension individual 'regime of truth'. Truth is a construct of the regime that regulates the discourse. Hence, individual regime holds the absolute power of deciding the nature of the truth that eventually contributes to the perpetuation of its authority.

In this premise it may be argued that each tribal society has its own regime of truth since it has its individual traditional system of autonomous power structure. But the truth or knowledge of tribal society seldom finds recognition in the representational narratives of

Indian mainstream discourse. Negation of the truth or knowledge of tribal society in mainstream representation also leads to invalidation of their self-representing voices. Such a premise holds good in case of tribals as their self-representation is denied only being subjected to other's and other constructions. Having this in mind, K. C. Baral in his essay titled "Colonialism and Ethnography: In Search of an Alternative Mode of Representation" (2009) argues, "Differences in race, culture and ways of life have always provided the occasion how a particular ethnic group is constructed and an identity is assigned to it" (86). Colonial construct on tribes as primitive turns out to be an area of concern in the postcolonial context because the moment a group is called primitive; it is stripped of its right to equality and positive aspects of its autonomous socio-cultural practices, value system and worldview. These aspects of tribal life-world are considered redundant for logical understanding in colonial representation having the mark of inferior culture. In the context of globalization and the way it affects the concept of representation, R. Radhakrishnan argues that even at the age of massive globalization the colonial suppression of the nineteenth century continues to prevail (*Theory*, 2003).

Having the understanding of representation as a conceptual category, examination of the discourse of tribal representation from a sociological perspective shall be undertaken in this thesis. Tribal studies in Indian context have gained widespread significance in the recent times. Tribal studies have been instrumental in throwing light on the issue of discrimination of the marginalized and voiceless groups and finding appropriate articulation to respond to the manifest crevices in Indian society. Theoretically the term 'tribe' is, more often than not, used for a group of people who shares a common blood relationship by descent and a significant social organization. In some cases such relationships are based on fictional or oral narratives. Tribal society has its own traditional codes of law, governance and cultural practices often unaffected by external influences. Traditionally their socio-economic

sustenance has been self sufficient owing to its independent economic system, mostly based on barter system and agrarian produce. It has its own set of cultural values that holds importance in its own social contexts. Nevertheless, the socio-cultural ethos of the tribal life-world remained obscure to the mainstream discourse owing to their geographical isolation without any remarkable cultural exchange for a long period. Tribal society of India was often misread and misrepresented as barbaric and primitive for not befitting in any of the gradations of caste Hindu society. The idea of India as a nation state during colonial as well as post-independence period was largely a construct of the educated upper caste/class elites that invariably marginalized the groups living in the periphery with no attention to their socio-political aspirations. Tribal life-world in India became an important topic of anthropological study during the colonial period when the territories inhabited by the tribal population were required to bring under the jurisdiction of uniform colonial administration. As discussed earlier, colonial anthropological studies are fraught with many contradictions considering the redundant knowledge production involving colonial prejudice foregrounded on the racial plane of 'self/other' binary. Colonial production of knowledge on tribals of India was primarily influenced and guided by the Indian middleclass of the pre-independence period, educated and hired by colonial administration. Consequently, tribals in India were labeled as 'primitive' and 'illusory' having little evolutionary progression in their socio-cultural practices in the ethnographic texts produced during that period. Construction of tribal identity as primitive and giving currency to that knowledge served the purpose of solidifying the supremacy of the Indian middleclass as well as the colonial masters. In this context, Charlotte Seymour Smith argues,

> The concept of tribe was largely a colonial creation … tribal division and tribal consciousness were largely a creation of the efforts of colonial rulers to impose order and supra local unity among the previously largely autonomous

local community, and where there was previously a loose and contextually relative sense of ethnic identity, colonial rule often imposed a tribal division which then acquired increasing concreteness due to the need to adapt to the administrative and political demand of colonial rule. (*Macmillan*, 281)

Smith's definition of the term 'tribe' accentuates the fact that it is a colonial construct and it negates the individuality and autonomy of certain ethnic society. It is rather a device of grouping different ethnic societies within a singular concept of the term tribe for the convenience of colonial administration. Commenting on the etymological problematics and immanent political undertone in the use of the term 'tribe' in colonial discourse Virginius Xaxa argues,

> The need for such a category was necessitated by a concern to subsume the enormous diversity into neat and meaningful categories for both classificatory purposes and administrative conveniences…the term tribe since the sixteenth century has referred to groups and/or communities living under primitive and barbarous conditions. (*State,* 2)

Going back to the mythological texts like *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, it is observed that representation of tribal and the construction of their identity in Indian society have a long history that calls for a thorough scrutiny in the present study. In the ancient epics, an identity of the 'other' was ascribed to the tribals of India by way of construction of the stereotype as anti-vedic, uncouth, flesh-eating Asuras who were always in a hostile relation with the Aryan race. These myths have been written and re-written for innumerable times over the ages but the stereotype which was constructed by these texts still continue to prevail in the pan Indian psyche, for "Sanskritic and Hindu religious texts and traditions describe and depict tribes in a similar fashion" (*State*, 2). It is pertinent to find out the nature of tribal stereotype associated with the pan Indian consciousness, for it seems that incorporation of

negativity in the tribal image and their apparent marginalization on the basis of racial difference was initiated long before European colonialism in India.

Colonial knowledge production on tribal society remained descriptive without trying to understand the inner dynamics of tribal culture and world-view and also without any substantial attempt to contextualize their cultural articulation in the premise of ecological import. Consequently, certain tribal cultural practices were stigmatized as blasphemous and in most cases forcefully erased from their collective memory. Though tribals in India and their worldviews received partial mention in colonial ethnographic texts, fictions, government documents, personal diaries, travelogues and paintings; it has largely remained clichéd owing to fallacious representation. However, Indian mainstream authors like Gopinath Mohanty, Pratibha Ray, Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya and Mahasweta Devi have shown greater sense of understanding of the tribal life-world and taken up issues of exploitation, marginality and the question of preservation of tribal socio-cultural ethos conterminously emphasizing their cultural autonomy. What distinguishes the representations made by these writers from others is their choice of the thrust area that centers on the issue of marginality, long denied proper representation in the elitist literature of India, and its resultant social disproportion that continues to cripple Indian society. By responding to such problematic areas in literature, they seek to expose the larger picture of disservice done to the tribals by the nation and its privileged group. These literary representations may also be understood as a strong counter narrative and alternative history as they give sufficient privilege to the orality of tribal culture in the negotiation with writing culture thereby transcending individual ideological prejudice. In theory, each of these writers represents the margins of mainstream literature as they largely write in vernacular medium. In that sense these literary writings may be perceived as representations of peripheral life-world often neglected by the mainstream literature dominated largely by writers from the metropole. Marginality in terms of tribal society raises

the question of who marginalizes whom in a given condition and also underlines the issue of resistance to the domination. Marginalization of the tribal occurs as a result of the construction of the 'ethnic other' of the dominant mainstream society in the similar plane of colonial racial differences. Exploitation of the tribals is a crucial area of concern under the contemporary theoretical interpolations as the tribals in India have traditionally been exploited by traders and money-lenders mostly constituted by the outsiders of tribal society. With the initiation of colonialism in India and inauguration of a globalised market, exploitation of tribals by negation of their traditional autonomy became a common phenomenon as the coercive mechanisms of colonial power started taking control of their territories in the form of government officials, judiciary, excise, revenue, police and forest guards. Identity consciousness and preservation of tribal mode of life is another concern in that tribal authors themselves have started asserting new idiom for the articulation of tribal condition. The question of preservation of tribal ethnicity and cultural autonomy through voluntary isolation is one important concern for the writers at the backdrop of newly emerging globalized culture in the present context, for cultural globalization intensifies the existential threats of cultural erosion and acculturation to the less empowered groups.

Jnanpith award winning Oriya novelist Gopinath Mohanty's *Paraja* is one of the five novels chosen for analysis in the present study. The novel focuses on the theme of exploitation and marginalization of Paraja tribe by the mainstream Indian society during the pre-independence period. The novel primarily discusses the economic exploitation of tribals by the non-tribal moneylenders and attempts to establish money-lending business as the principal cause of the deplorable condition of tribal communities in Orissa. The novel compels the readers to contemplate on the justification of the state on imposing monetized economy without much consideration of their traditional practice of barter system, for apparently monetized economy opens easy route to the agencies of exploitation. Lacking in

education and the required acumen to resist the onslaught of outsiders and modern agencies, the tribal population in Mohanty's novel is robbed off all their possessions including ancestral land and eventually converted into gotis or bonded labourers. However, the novelist does not delimit the factor that lead to the marginalization of tribal communities only to the evil design of the money lenders. Employing his acute sensibility, he delves much deeper in his exploration and equally holds state machinery responsible for the deplorable condition of the tribals. It is not only the greedy money lender from outside that exploits the tribals, for the exploitation is rather initiated by the forest guards and excise department in the novel. The novel shows how the abrupt imposition of Forest Act in tribal areas has affected their socio-economic and cultural sustenance considering the fact that the relation of man and forest in tribal life-world is a pre-historic concept. Forest Act of colonial government comes to the life of tribal communities as an invisible wall that debars their accessibility to the forest. It largely affects their economic sustenance for it is mentioned in the novel that everything they needed was available in the forest. To make the matter worse, when the tribals venture out from their villages to seek for justice at the court of law, they are subjected to further exploitation due to corrupt system even in the judiciary. Furthermore, the novel also focuses on how tribal women are commodified by the outsiders as exotic pieces in contrast to the fact that woman in tribal society is invariably respected. Mohanty further explores the cultural practices of tribal community with a view to demystify the social stigma of primitiveness and barbarity. He specifically focuses on the rituals, dance, festivals, social governance, food habits, marriage system and the dormitory system of tribal society in order to provide a detailed insight to their cultural importance.

The novel explores the above mentioned issues through the narration of trials and tribulations in the life of Sukru Jani and his family comprising of two sons and two daughters. At the beginning of the novel Sukru Jani leads the usual nonchalant life largely

identical to every tribal society without much contact with the outside world. He does not know much about the current developments in the outside world and hence equally not much bothered about his future. If anything that is in his mind is the piece of land which is enough to ensure him necessary security. However, the calmness of his life is soon perturbed when he is penalized as an offender of Forest Law for felling trees in the forest. Without much option left for procuring the money for the payment of the fine, he decides to borrow money from the money-lender and gets hooked to the system of bonded labour as goti (bonded labour). He works hard with his son in the hope of repaying the borrowed money but his struggle proves to be futile as he is gradually dragged further into more troubles. His elder son Mandia also gets caught by the excise department while distilling country liquor and fined with a huge sum of money. Mandia follows the similar path of his father and ends up becoming a goti. Both the daughters of Sukru have to work as labourers of road construction for their survival at the absence of male members in the family. They become the victims of sexual exploitation of the supervisor of road construction while taking shelter at labourer's camp. The elder daughter Jili is finally possessed by the money-lender as mistress sardonically foiling Sukru Jani's every attempt at guarding his family. The novel ends with the murder of the money-lender by Sukru Jani and his sons as an outburst of the mute repressed anger. However, the novelist does not show Sukru Jani's last act as a well planned murder, for after killing the Sahukar he repents and surrenders himself at the police station.

Born in 1914 in Nagbali near Cuttack, Gopinath Mohanty joined the Orissa Administrative Services from 1938 to 1969. Most of his service tenure was spent in the tribal inhabited areas of Koraput region that provided him with the first hand knowledge on tribal society and cultural practices that largely became instrumental in the representation of tribal life-world. Having been directly engaged in the administration himself, he had a closer understanding of the corrupt system in the administration and the problem of money-lending

and bonded labour system prevalent in tribal areas. Mohanty exposes the exploitation and systematic discrimination of tribal communities in India in the light of his exposure to tribal reality. *Dadi Budha* (1944)*, Amrutara Santana* (1947)*, Sibu Bhai* (1955) and *Apahancha* (1961) are other four novels by Mohanty that focuses on the exploration of different issues of tribal society from humanitarian perspective. The novel *Paraja* was first published in 1945 in Oriya language and translated into English in 1987 by Bikram K. Das.

The Second novel included in this study is *The Primal Land* by another Oriya novelist Pratibha Ray. Pratibha Ray has made outstanding contribution to Oriya literature with a reformist mindset against social evils prevailing in Indian society. Some of her important works include *Aranya* (1977), *Punyatoya* (1979), *Nilatrushna* (1981), *Jagyaseni* (1985) and *Mahamoh* (1997) among others. She has been conferred with the Jnanpith (2011), Padma Bhushan (2022), Padmashree (2007), Moorthidevi Award (1991) and the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award (2000) among others for her contribution to the field of literature. Her *The Primal Land* is an in-depth study of the life-world of the Bonda tribe where she has made an insightful and authentic representation of Bonda society which is mostly dreaded and stereotyped by outsiders as aggressive and primitive. She also explores the issues of negligence on the part of the state in initiating socio-economic transformation in Bonda society and perennial exploitation by the outsiders inciting a critical conjecture of their condition.

Taking cue from postcolonial approach, the novel *The Primal Land* tries to explain how certain traditions in practice among the tribals are different from the mainstream culture and looks quite irrational from an outsider's lens. At the very beginning of the novel, she makes a comprehensive analysis of Bonda stereotype and contends how inappropriate it is to make a judgment on tribal life-world through the prism of an outsider's ideological framework. Her ethnographic details on the Bonda way of life contends that for a Bonda man

pride and honour is way too higher than his life and hence a Bonda man would never hesitate to pick up his weapon when provoked. She critically examines the issues of corruption in which politicians and bureaucrats participate equally and contribute to the continuation of exploitation. In her narrative, government policies framed with an aim of developing tribal areas surface as mere façade to conceal the larger picture of failure on the part of the state.

Ray has put considerable emphasis on the representation of tribal woman in Bonda society though she denies to be identified as a radical feminist writer. She makes specific mention of Bonda marriage system in which the wife is usually of older age than the husband which is quite unusual, if not a taboo, for mainstream society. Bonda marriage system along with their aggressive nature has attracted the curiosity of anthropologists for ages and it is not surprising a fact that these two aspects of Bonda society have become their identity markers. Contesting the Bonda stereotype, she contends that having married to a younger man, sometimes half the age younger, a Bonda women is doubly burdened with taking care of household chores and her husband. Ray's narrative shows that Bonda women are subjected to massive exploitation due to their gender roles prescribed by the male dominated society and unequal distribution of labour. Ray's female characters are subjugated and exploited at every level of their lives and when they try to transgress societal boundaries, they suffer.

Ray, in her novel presents a skeptical view on modernity as a concept of civilization and material progress by contextualizing it in tribal life-world. She shows that apart from its seemingly progressive nature in terms of material and economic gain, it also bears the residues of negativity like imminent threat to the survival of distinctive cultural identity and exploitation of indigenous ecology. In this premise, Ray brings up the issue of globalization and cultural assimilation taking place in the lives of tribal communities. Cultural assimilation may be seen as a significant step towards modernity and cosmopolitanism in a rather isolated tribal society. However, it is pertinent to look at the undercurrent power relations that

emanate from the assimilation of two cultures. It is important to see if the tribals get equal share of space and opportunities for articulation in the power relations of globalized culture. The novel questions if the idea of modernity is inclusive of the needs and aspirations of the marginalized groups, in this case the tribal in general and woman in particular. Ray's skepticism comes to the fore regarding the tribals' ability to survive the offensive of modernity, for they are not adequately equipped to incorporate the dynamics of change.

The third novel selected for discussion in this thesis is *Love in the Time of Insurgency* (2005) by Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya. The first *Jnanpith* awardee Assamese novelist Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya, published his first novel *Rajpathe Ringiay* in 1957. His most celebrated novel *Yaruingam* was first published in the year 1960 in Assamese language which was later translated by the author himself. It was published posthumously in 2005 under the title *Love in the Time of Insurgency*. The translated version of this novel will be used for referential purpose in this thesis; hence the English title will be used throughout the thesis. In the novel the author provides an in-depth study of the political tension that started brewing in the society of Tangkhul Naga tribe of Manipur since the pre-independence period of India. This was arguably the first novel by any writer that addressed the aspiration of the Nagas for self-governance and an independent sovereign state. Bhattacharya won the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award for this novel in 1961 and became an important figure of Indian literature for his contribution to the genre of political novels in Assamese literature. The setting of the novel is Tangkhul dominated areas of Manipur during the late 1940s and early 1950s. The novel also provides details on the impact of the World War-II on the lives of the Naga population when Kohima town of Nagaland became the war theatre of the infamous Indo-Japanese war. During the war the Naga population suffered great loss in terms of property and human lives in spite of not being a part of either sides of the parties involved in the combat. However, the traumatic experiences of the World War-II initiated a new

realization of self-consciousness among the Naga population that shaped the foundation of their demand for self rule.

Love in the Time of Insurgency is a novel that centers on the story of three friends namely Rishang, Khating and Phanitphang. The novel tries to explore the historical events that lead these three friends in three different ideological directions under the influence of the socio-political changes taking over the lives of the Nagas with the declaration of Indian independence. The protagonist of the novel, Rishang, takes the path of Indian nationalist ideology inspired by Gandhian philosophy and hopes to uphold Naga identity and self-governance within the constitutional ambit of Indian nation state. At times he is apprehensive of Indian nationalist political ideology but supports the idea of Indian nation state in the hope of receiving adequate response and importance to Naga political aspirations. Khating joins Indian Army and becomes a part of the Indian bureaucracy. Phanitphang, on the other hand, joins the Naga nationalist extremist movement following Videsselie to fight for the cause of an independent Naga state. The novel underlines the dilemma of choosing between traditional societal norms in practice among the tribe and modern ideology introduced by a globalized world, simultaneously preoccupied with the uncertainty concerning the survival of their cultural identity at the onslaught of modernity. Through the portrayal of the predicament of Tangkhul tribe, Bhattacharya corresponds to the problems of identity crisis faced by every tribal society and their assorted response to it. The principal concern of the novel is the articulation of the independent nature of tribal society and how their political aspiration received rather apathetic response from Indian bureaucratic system leading to no concrete solution. Modernity is represented as the conveyor of negativity into the lives of tribals in the northeastern part of India for it introduces a new set of codes of evaluation and perception of their life-world. Contradictory debates concerning the impact of modern ideas on Naga identity are expressed in the novel echoing the dilemmatic condition of making the most

suitable decision for the community at the emergence of a new nation state. The novel also focuses on the position of woman by exploring gender norms of Naga society.

Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya served as a teacher in Tangkhul dominated Ukhrul district of Manipur from 1950 to 1953 and during his stay he had the opportunity of gathering firsthand knowledge on the life-world of the tribe. Though an outsider to the Tangkhul society, Bhattacharya's sensitive deliberation on tribal life-world is reflected in his narration and it adds to the authentic representation of the tribe in addition to his explorations on the response of the tribe to the socio-political transformation taking place at the backdrop of the war. The novel initiated immense national attention and importance for the Naga community in the literary domain of India.

One of the pioneering modernist Assamese novelists, Bhattacharya was conferred with many national awards for his contribution to the development of Indian literature. He published seventeen novels, two short story collections, two plays, two travelogues, one biography and many essays in Assamese language. He was also the President of Asom Sahitya Sabha (Assam Literary Society) during the session 1983-1985. In 1988 he was conferred with the honourable chair of the President of the Sahitya Akademi. Many of his novels have been translated into English and other Indian languages.

The fourth novel selected for the present study is *The Legends of Pensam* (2006) by Padma Shri awardee writer, journalist and former civil servant Mamang Dai. Published in 2006, *The Legends of Pensam*, is an attempt at the representation of Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh by an insider. Dai's novel is an attempt at the articulation of inner dynamics of the tribal population of Arunachal Pradesh drawing a parallel with the condition of being entangled in an in-between space incapable of locating its own position in the negotiation with advancing globalization and modernity. India's northeast has been subjected to layers of marginalization and exploitation owing to its distant geographical location and distinct racial

differences with the rest of the country's population. It is no exaggeration that vast linguistic and cultural diversity of the Northeast India seldom gets reflected in pan-Indian discourse. Instead, the Northeast India is often superficially reduced to a homogenized entity without adequate attention to its cultural and linguistic diversity. The Northeast India is rather exoticized with little attention to the nuanced socio-politico-economic problems and aspirations of its diverse demographic condition. It is the realization of such discrimination and marginality that suspends the entire Northeast India in the condition of in-betweenness as discussed in the novel. Dai, in this novel, poignantly focuses on the discontentment and angst on the part of the indigenous population in the wake of the apparent discrimination and marginality and attempts to address the perennial skepticism in which the entire Northeastern tribal population is caught in. With representation of her contemporary times under eco-critical lens, her take on the issue of rapidly advancing modernity into the biodiversity hotspot of Arunachal Pradesh is apprehensive of the adverse effects on the environment and cultural identity of the tribals.

Mamang Dai worked as local correspondent to various news dailies like *Sentinel, The Telegraph* and *The Hindustan Times* and contributed to Indian literature with four novels *The Sky Queen* (2003), *The Legends of Pensam* (2006), *Stupid Cupid* (2008) and *The Black Hill* (2014). *Arunachal Pradesh: The Hidden Land and River Poems* (2004) is a non-fiction by her that documented the customs and culture of Arunachal Pradesh. She also authored one more non-fiction *Mountain Harvest: The Food of Arunachal* (2004). Her three published poetry collections are *River Poems* (2004*), The Balm of Time* (2008) and *Midsummer: Survival Lyrics* (2014). She has also published two children literature based on folktales *Sky Queen* (2005) and *Once Upon a Moon Time* (2005).

The fifth novel chosen for this study is *Kocharethi: the Araya Woman* by Narayan. The novel was translated into English from Malayalam by Catherine Thankamma. English

version of the novel will be used for referential purpose in this study. Described as the first Adivasi novel written in Malayalam from Kerala, *Kocharethi* narrates the transition in the conditions of Malayarayar tribe from the pre-independence period to the post-independence period of India. The novel primarily focuses on the issue of exploitation of tribal communities by the outsiders and non-tribal traders taking advantage of illiteracy and poverty of the Malayarayar people. It also highlights the issue of tribal autonomy over their lands and subversion of that right by the imposition of tax by the privileged upper caste society. He also brings to discussion the issue of state mechanism equally participating in the exploitation of the tribal people in the capacity of forest guards and police. Narayan narrates the story of his community from an insider's perspective and vividly explores the ecological importance of various customary practices prevalent in his community. His narrative tells us how it is important to keep different spirits of tribal belief system in good humour for the prosperity of the entire community. He also expresses his concern for the survival of the cultural practices of his community at the backdrop of rapid modernization and social transformation inaugurated by continuous contact with the outsiders. He is equally concerned with the cultural erosion caused by the recurrent phenomenon of religious conversion of his people by abandoning their traditional belief system and cultural practices that he locates as one of the adverse effects of modernity. He underlines education as the only means of social mobility for the tribals but at the same time appears to be skeptic of its effect on tribal society as the educated youths tend to move away from their ancestral habitats in search of better opportunity.

The plot of the novel revolves around the life of a couple named Kochuraman and Kunjipennu who fall in love and get married by transgressing the societal norms marriage. They lead a happy and contented life but soon their fate takes an adverse turn as the entire region is badly affected by drought followed by a wild fire that kills their only son leaving

them severely injured. Soon a torrential rainy season ensues and breaks the morale of the entire community making them vulnerable to the allurement of moneylenders and traders who swindle them with treachery. Many of them lose their possession of traditional lands to the moneylenders and fall into abject poverty. Kochuraman and Kunjipennu find solace in their daughter Parvati who starts going to school and finds a government job but soon their happiness is shattered as Parvati decides to get married according to her choice and leaves them behind. The novel concludes with both Kochuraman and Kunjipennu departing into the ignominious darkness of despair and sorrow having no concrete ending drawing analogy to the condition of every indigenous community at the backdrop of massive exploitation and apathetic treatment of their problems by the state.

Born on 26th September, 1940 Narayan is regarded as the first tribal novelist from Kerala. A postal serviceman by profession, he penned down a total of eight novels and five short story collections in Malayalam. In 1999 he was conferred with Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award for his novel *Kocharethi*. The English translation of the novel was also able to win the Economist Crossword Book Award in 2011.

The present study intends to examine representation of the tribal in Indian literature by contrast to the racial representations of colonial ethnographic texts and elitist Indian discourse that purportedly tends to ignore the subtle nuances of tribal life-world. In Indian literature, writers such as Gopinath Mohanty, Pratibha Ray, Mahasweta Devi, Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya, Yese Dorje Thongshi, Mamang Dai, Narayan, Temsula Ao, Lummer Dai, Sitakanta Mahapatra, Verrier Elwin and many others have made remarkable contributions towards the representation of tribal life-world in India. Given the apparent diversity in terms of linguistic, racial, geographical and cultural identity of tribal population; their representation in Indian narratives calls for thorough examination. Literary articulation of tribal reality is often fraught in the representational politics of silencing the racial 'other',

for the act of representation elicits power. On the other hand, representations of some literary texts have been instrumental in reviving and rewriting tribal history by exploration of the unseen patches of their oral folk literature. Representation with its many nuances and implications opens up a rather versatile ground for re-examination of the aspirations and articulation of the subaltern groups. Authochthonous representations of the self, as in the case of Mamang Dai, Narayan, Temsula Ao, Yese Dorje Thongshi, Lummer Dai and Easterine Kire among others, adds a new dimension to the discourse of tribal representation in literature with authentic articulations of their lived realities.

A discursive approach will be adopted for the examination of the pattern and politics involved in the representation of tribal reality in Indian context taking cue from the theoretical parameters of postcolonial studies. Certain stereotypes on tribal identity as a result of objectification and vilification of tribal culture during colonial period has been arguably relayed to the present times that has further led to their marginalization on racial ground. The study seeks to address different shades of tribal marginality and racial discrimination focusing on the representation of tribal in the five select novels mentioned above. The study proceeds with the hypotheses that fiction promises a realistic justification to the representation of tribal life-world considering its range of narrative techniques in the accommodation of the nuanced layers of tribal reality. Having this premise in mind the study has been divided into five chapters.

In the first chapter the plans and objectives of the study is discussed in a nutshell along with the introduction of the writers selected for the study. It also introduces the theoretical parameters that will be employed for the development of arguments in the following chapters.

The second chapter focuses on the theories of representation and its implications in understanding the inner dynamics and undercurrent power politics involved in representation.

Postcolonial approach is maintained in the evaluation of the locations of the representing agency and the represented substance. It is inferred in this chapter that representation is invariably enmeshed with the politics of power and hence it acts as an apparatus for regimentation of power under the rhetoric of simply representing something/someone. Colonial representation of the native in ethnographic texts is viewed as a trope used by the colonizers for the purpose of furthering the colonial narrative of racial difference.

The third chapter focuses on the nature of tribal representation in different fictional narratives produced in India by comparison with the representation in colonial ethnographic texts. It is argued that representation of tribal in ethnographic texts is largely influenced by the colonial prejudice of racial difference that further leads to the construction of tribal stereotypes. It is also argued that representation of the tribal in India has always been subjected to marginalization on different occasions given the practice of racial, linguistic, cultural and geographic differences. However, it is noticed that since the late twentieth century onwards the discourse of tribal representation has witnessed a paradigmatic shift in terms of approach as observed in the fictional narratives discussed in this chapter. The focal point of the chapter will be on the examination of tribal representation in literature as an act of resistance and subversion of the colonial construct.

The fourth chapter provides a detailed discussion on the representation of tribals and their life-worlds as expressed in the select novels under the rubrics of theoretical discussions undertaken in the previous chapters. The select Oriya novels by Gopinath Mohanty and Pratibha Ray provide empathetic representation of the tribals subjugated and discriminated for ages in the state of Orissa. Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya's novel focuses on tribals' realization of political and historical marginality and the awakening of identity consciousness in the remote hills of Manipur and Nagaland of the Northeast India. Mamang Dai's novel narrates the stories of tribal myths juxtaposing with advancing modernity since colonial

period in India. Narayan's novel focuses on the transition of the Malayarayar tribe from colonial to post-independence period having been battered by the continuous exploitation and social exclusion. The nuances of tribal identity and their sense of marginality that hardly get expression in other forms of representation are attempted to address in this chapter. The chapter has been divided into two sub-headings titled "Representation by the outsiders" and "Representation by the insiders" in order to examine the variations of inherent political undercurrents of tribal representations on the basis of socio-cultural backgrounds of the writers.

The fifth chapter sums up the findings of the previous chapters and the thesis as a whole. It is found that representation is a fallacious project as it relies much on the intention of the representing agency allowing an uncontested ground for giving currency to its/his subjective deliberation as the grand narrative. In this premise the study conducts a critical study of tribal representation in colonial anthropological texts and their apparent connotations which concludes that they are invariably guided by colonial racial prejudices. The study further focuses on the fictional representations of tribal in India and comes to the conclusion that tribal life-world and its representation is largely nuanced which is pretty hard to address considering the range of diversity that pervades the tribal communities in India.

The project offers critical insight into the politics of representation and also in the understanding of the nature and design of colonial representation of the tribals. It highlights the seemingly diverse implications of tribal identity and their aspirations as well as discontentment against the backdrop of marginalization and discrimination in independent India.

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CHAPTER-II

REPRESENTATION: THEORY AND POLITICS

In this chapter an attempt has been made to undertake a critical overview of the theory of representation and the political undercurrent that regulates the process of representation in human ontology. The chapter begins with the concept that representation is a socio-linguistic construct and it is nuanced with an array of diverse connotations. The chapter also focuses on the representation of the tribal in mainstream Indian discourse and the construct of tribal image since the colonial period in India. It further attempts to make a postcolonial reading of certain stereotypes concerning the tribal life-world. A discursive approach has been employed in this chapter for the analysis of the political undertones of representation taking cue from postcolonial theory. The chapter focuses primarily on the attitudes and implications adopted for representing the native population in the ethnographic texts produced during colonial period. The study in this chapter conjectures that the colonial attitude is further relayed in the representation of tribal life-world in the mainstream discourse of independent India. It focuses on the hidden agendas involved in the representation of tribal in literary, historical, political and social narratives across India.

In an essay published under the title "From Work to Text" (1977), Roland Barthes declared that "the text is plural…it accomplishes the very plural of meaning: an irreducible (and not merely an acceptable) plural" (159). With the publication of the said essay, the uncontested authority of grand narrative suffered an irrevocable collapse due to the amassing of critical attention exclusively on the textuality of a literary work by negation of the earlier parent-child relationship between an author and his work. In the subsequent times, this new method of reading engendered an array of possibilities in the interpretation of a single work situating the focal point on its textuality, often completely transforming the image of the work and challenging the inherent political undertone.

Under the polemics of Barthesian theoretical interpolation a representational work, when read as a text, draws our attention to many nuanced areas, for it is no more acceptable to understand representation as an innocent project of transmission of knowledge and information considering the inherent power relation. Representation is by nature a political undertaking of the dominant largely aimed at the transmission and legitimization of dominant ideology. Postcolonial reading of the representational text on the natives puts the authenticity and legitimacy of colonial representation under critical examination due to the problematics relating to the inherent power relation. The problematics of colonial representation manifests more starkly when it is about the representation of marginalized groups who did not stand a chance of articulation due to the apparent disparity in privileges caused by lack of literacy and almost non-existent social standing in colonial condition. Following the said disparity, a distinctive line of disproportion may be drawn in terms of representation of the mainstream elites and subaltern section of Indian society in colonial narratives. In colonial India the English educated section from the higher caste/class constituted the mainstream elite society who eventually helped the colonial power in maintaining their dominance over the rest of the population. It is not that the entire educated class sided with the colonial power, for the movement for freedom from colonial subjugation was pioneered by leaders from this very class. However, mere involvement of the elite class in the freedom movement does not ensure equal import to the interest of the marginalized groups in the nationalistic discourse of post-independence representation. Commenting on the incongruity of representation largely witnessed in Indian historiography Ranajit Guha in his seminal essay "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India" argues, "The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism – colonialist elitism and bourgeois- nationalist elitism" (1). He further argues that this purportedly "un-historical historiography" requires a thorough revision and possibly a re-writing due to the apparent "poverty" of coherence between facts and what is narrated in

the elitist historical representation, for 'elitist' chauvinism is not only a hindrance to the authentic representation of the multitude of Indian cultural diversity but contributes largely to the production of distorted knowledge on certain marginalized cultural identities, such as the tribals of India. In this premise, the present study intends to examine the political undercurrent of literary representation from postcolonial theoretical standpoint. In this context Abdul R. JanMohamed's observation draws relevance as he argues, "colonialists' discourse "commodifies" the native subject into a stereotyped object and uses him as resource for colonial fiction" (83). The "colonialists' discourse" as referred by JanMohamed was further continued in the mainstream narrative on tribal representation in India even after independence, for the colonialists' approach of commodification and subordination unflinchingly continue to be in place imitating the colonial self/other binary.

Representation and its implications are often contested under the theoretical parameters of post-modern discourse due to its temporal and spatial historicity. The meaning of representation differs with respect to the time and space of its production, legitimation and interpretation. Postcolonial reading of colonial representation and its subtexts unfolds scores of undocumented histories of racial subjugation and socio-politico-economic exploitation of the colonized. It is to be noted that the semantics of colonized body, though used in a generic sense to signify a totality having the experiences of colonial subjugation, is invariably graded and diverse in nature in Indian context. The graded nature of colonized body in Indian context alludes to the classification of Indian society on the basis of caste and religious practices. Indian population is full of diversity with respect to linguistic, cultural and racial identities in addition to the religious and caste based classification. It is pertinent to mention that colonial representation of Indian population seldom attended to the vastness of its demographic condition and socio-cultural heterogeneity. Instead, more emphasis was laid on the identification and classification of its population with the exclusive intent of

fulfilling colonial administrative demands in a rather hasty and preposterous manner. Marginalized groups of India like dalits and tribals were largely underrepresented, if not totally overlooked, in the colonial discourse seemingly due to their social exclusion and cultural isolation by the Indian mainstream society since the inception of caste system. In this context Anand Mahanand in his book *Representations of Tribal India in Fiction* (2011) argues,

> …(T)he rise of anthropology and ethnography in the colonial era helped in establishing fieldwork as a methodology for imperial rule. In this context, it is interesting to see how tribal India was depicted in colonial fiction and ethnography. There have been several attempts to represent different tribes in ethnography and fiction by the Anglo-Indian writers during the colonial period. These writings on the tribals evoked different kinds of images and feed into the ethnographical and administrative inputs to colonial discourse. (48-49)

Here, Mahanand focuses on the political undercurrent of colonial representation of tribes in India. On theoretical as well as practical ground, every representation is performed invariably keeping in mind of a specific target audience. In the case of colonial representation, the target audience was the entire world and more specifically the mother country. Colonial anthropological representation of the natives was considered as the guide book to the exotic culture of the colonized body. Colonial anthropological representation apparently served two purposes of the colonizers – primarily to identify the tribes for the purpose of colonial administration and secondly to establish the colonial construct of racial inferiority of the tribes as uncivilized and primitive. Colonial representation of the tribes may be understood as an attempt at denigration of the entire race both physically and psychologically by way of construction of colonial stereotypes such as uncivilized, primitive, barbarous and sometimes even hereditary criminals.

Tribal society of India was traditionally viewed as a separate entity outside the periphery of the caste based structure of the mainstream society owing to their animistic faith and distinctive socio-linguistic identity quite asymmetrical to the condition of untouchable communities of India. However, the distinctive identity of the tribal in India with its many nuances did not receive due attention and reflection in colonial representation. Instead, tribal population in India was subjected to homogenization under the overarching anthropological term 'tribe' overlooking the intrinsic diversity in terms of cultural and linguistic identities. Unsurprisingly enough, tribal population in colonial India lived under the condition of acute negligence and marginality sans any articulation of their distinctive voices. It is pertinent to mention that even after the independence of India, marginalization and racial discrimination of the tribal continues as "tryst with tribal destiny since independence has not been encouraging. Despite Constitutional safeguards and guarantees, tribals are still victims of various exploitative methods" (Verma, 189).

Representation of tribal in India has been misleading and prejudiced throughout the ages owing to the perpetuation of colonial approach of disregarding the inner dynamics of cultural heterogeneity and deliberate inattention to independent nature of tribal society since colonial period. Post-independence India has witnessed surfacing of the legacy of colonial racism time and again in the mainstream discourse concerning policies adopted for development in tribal areas that has led to further discontentment and consequential violence in the recent times. In this premise a discursive study will be undertaken in this chapter for comprehensive understanding of the politics involved in representation that arguably plays a major role in the construction of the meaning of represented text.

As discussed in the introductory chapter, representation involves two principal axes i.e. representing agency and the substance of representation. The representing agency occupies the position of authority in the power relation of representation by

virtue of its apparent capacity to 'speak for' the represented substance. On the contrary, the represented substance is objectified and rather assumed to be voiceless, owing to its powerlessness in the discourse of representation. On a cursory observation the process of representation appears to be rather benevolent in nature as the representing agency does the job of articulating the voice of the subaltern. In this context, the works of colonial anthropology and other colonial texts such as official documents, historical writings, travelogues and diaries among others may be viewed as texts that took to the task of representing the colonial subjects under the apparent rhetoric of establishing discipline and order in the chaotic colonial environment bereft of reason. However, a close examination of the political interest involved in such imperialist projects reveals that colonial representation of the natives in fact served to the purpose of colonizing the native mind that further straightened the road to complete conquest. Moreover, to add to the fact of acting as the conduit of realizing the expansionist project of British empire, colonial representation was largely guided by racial prejudices of reducing the colonized as of inferior race. The benevolent and innocent looking nature of representation comes under scrutiny when it is seen as a one sided affair where the represented body is not provided with adequate space for self articulation. Needless to mention that in representation, the narrative of the representing agency is invariably guided by his/her subjective deliberation informed by the knowledge derived from personal observation by positioning the 'self' at a superior location.

Representation elicits subtle forms of power and violence. Representation facilitates power exercise by the representing agency with the legitimization of its subjective articulation, for the subjective narrative of the representing agency becomes the master narrative in the absence of the authentic voice of the represented section. The power exercise involved in representation further leads to violence, for the represented section is forcefully assigned with subordinate position in the power relation. Representation ceases to remain impartial the moment it involves a representing agency

for it is largely affected by the historical and cultural prejudices of the agency. Subconscious cultural baggage on the part of the representing agency intersects the narrative of representation despite a conscious effort at authentic representation of the substance. In this context JanMohamed argues, "The power relations underlying this model set in motion such strong currents that even a writer who is reluctant to acknowledge it and who may indeed be highly critical of imperialist exploitation is drawn into its vortex" (Economy, 63). Here JanMohamed talks about the "representational economy" (64) that come into force in the colonial representation of the natives. He contends that a colonialist writer enjoys "moral and psychological pleasure of Manichean Superiority" (63) and this very condition guides the representational narrative of the colonialist writer engaging him in the construction of colonial stereotype. Thus, Representation engages in the epistemic violence of construction of stereotypes with distortion of the image of the represented substance. To allude to the statement, reference may be made to the construction of a number of tribal stereotypes in colonial narratives that gained currency during colonial period. It is needless to mention that those stereotypes underline dehumanization of Indian tribes designating them as uncivilized, barbarous and having hereditary criminal tendencies. The legislation of the Criminal Tribal Act, 1871 and its Indian version, the Habitual Offenders Act of 1952, may be understood as examples of scandalizing tribal communities of India on the basis of colonial construct of racial stereotype.

On its theoretical context of functionality, representation involves maneuvering of the sign system by the representing agency for its legitimate recognition and dissemination of intended meaning. Representation permeates its meanings through the medium of language. Here language alludes to a common code of signification that constructs reality by way of formation of an idea of the physical world. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, the association of language in the process of representation adds a problematic dimension that is often precarious to the represented

reality, for the meaning of representation is invariably controlled by the representing agency by virtue of its superiority in the representational economy. While examining the role of language in representation, Stuart Hall in his essay titled "The Work of Representation" (1997) comments,

> …(It) is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things. (15)

In his definition of representation, Stuart Hall focuses on the importance of language in the process of representation. Hall accentuates the complex areas of sign system in the production of meaning through which the represented text has to travel for cognitive subsistence. It is pertinent to mention that representation as a process of construction of meaning is bound by certain limitations and uncertainty. Representation is primarily dependent on language, for language works as the vehicle of transmitting, disseminating and establishing a meaningful understanding of the represented substance by way of translating the 'idea' of the substance into 'reality'. Representation may therefore be understood as a process of constructing meaning under the aegis of its relative context and condition. Hall further comments that language operates more like a 'media' that produces meaning out of the representation and also helps circulate it (Hall, 1997). Representation thus invariably negotiates with language for its epistemic recognition. However, what concerns us more is that in the negotiation with sign system, the process of representation undergoes an irreversible alteration distancing the substance of the represented text largely from the rudiments of the primary text. Eventually the represented text becomes the reality of the primary text with legitimation granted by the power inherent in language. Thus the represented reality loses its coherence with the fact, for in the process of constructing reality the fact undergoes manipulation and sometimes obliteration. The dependence of the process of representation on language (for it is the 'media') confines it within certain limitations

when it comes to the question of authentic representation, for language itself is a slippery phenomenon as far as it is understood as a meaning making process.

Drawing attention to representation and its certain connotative meanings with reference to its relation to language or sign system, Hall further argues that there are three different approaches to representation that describe elaborately on how language comes into play a major role in its operation which are identified as - reflective, intentional and constructionist approaches. Hall maintains,

> In the reflective approach, meaning is thought to lie in the object, person, idea or event in the real world, and language functions like a mirror, to reflect the true meaning as it already exists in the world. (24)

The reflective approach is primarily based on the mimetic approach of representation of the world that lies in front of us as it is in the nature or the physical world without any transformation of the meaning. Here, language simply works like a 'media' that translates the concept of the object into an image or reality and the meaning is represented exactly as it is assumed to be present in the cognitive world. Hall calls this approach a 'mimetic' approach as meaning is already fixed in the physical world and representation simply does the task of formulating the concept of meaning into reality. However, Hall is critical of the viability of understanding representation simply as a 'mimetic' approach and maintains that this approach to meaning making is enmeshed with certain limitations as meaning cannot be a fixed entity owing to its relational historicity.

In this context, mention may be made of Hayden White's critique of historical writing in his seminal book *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (1973), where he argues that historical writings can be seen as a form of narrative and owing to its narrative quality, the truth as expounded by a historian may not be the absolute truth for all historical explanations are rhetorical and poetic by nature. White further argues that historical writing as narrative bears certain prejudices on the

part of the writer owing to its narrative quality. Historical representation may also be seen as a practice of imaginative construction of the reality or the truth. Besides, the truth represented in the historical text may not be inclusive of all the truths of the society that it seeks to represent, for the author has every possibilities of being guided by his individual cultural prejudices in his representation of the truth. Hence, the 'mimetic' approach to representation suffers from certain limitations and conditions that may lead to partial or fallacious representation of the truth by way of transforming the meaning.

The second approach to meaning in representation as provided by Staurt Hall is the intentional approach that underscores the intention of the representing agency as the solicitor of meaning. He argues,

> It holds that it is the speaker, the author, who imposes his or her unique meaning on the world through language. Words mean what the author intends they should mean. This is the intentional approach. (25)

The intentional approach to meaning or truth in representation is a product of the subjective perception of the cognitive world by the representing agency. It involves the subjective representation of the reality as experienced by the author and as deemed correct to be represented on the basis of his subjective observation. Intentional approach to representation alludes to subjective prejudices of the author or representing agency leading to the possibility of manipulation of reality. Intentional approach does not allow any room to the narrative that is external to the author's subjectivity and as such it fails to do justice to certain requirements of authentic representation. Hall rejects the reliability of this approach as 'flawed' by stressing on the primary reliance of the system of representation on language. According to Hall, it is language that grants the power of manipulation of reality to the representing agency acting as the 'media' of representation. He maintains that in order to successfully reproduce the meaning in representation one must hinge on a shared code of linguistic system and as such an individual code does not stand viable for a meaningful communication. The intention or subjectivity of an author

is subject to negotiation with a shared code of collective language for a meaningful cognition and as such the truth or the reality cannot be expressed in cognizable manner through the intentional approach to representation. Hayden White's argument on historical narrative again holds pertinence in this approach to representation as it is argued that history is one of the concerns of the past event that has every possibility of bearing subjective and imaginative approach to narrative that calls for a critical and objective re-reading and re-writing of a text (White, 1973).

The third or the constructionist approach to meaning in representation through language, as suggested by Hall, involves the construction of meaning with reference to its spatial and temporal historicity. He argues,

> The third approach recognizes this public, social character of language. It acknowledges that neither things in themselves nor the individual users of language can fix meaning in language. Things don't mean: we construct meaning, using representational systems- concepts and signs. (25)

In the constructionist approach to representation through language, Hall emphasizes on the hegemonic importance of language as an all encompassing entity under which the system of representation takes place. This approach surmises that language is a system of shared codes that establishes communication in a given culture and meaning is a construct of the system. By emphasizing on the importance of language, Hall indirectly signals the manipulation of the entire sign system in the process of representation for, "signs can only convey meaning if we possess codes which allow us to translate our concepts into language" (29). Language is considered as a system that precedes human ontology. In this premise it may be recapitulated that the idea of the physical world was already inscribed prior to the translation of the idea through the medium of language for human cognition. But what makes language so important is that it functions as the only relational thread between the two separate entities – i.e. ideological perception and cognitive reality. Here Hall emphasizes on the power that

emanates from language. In the context of representation, language as the medium of converting the idea into reality renders the power of articulation to the representing authority. But at the same time he also maintains that language is a culturally shared concept that requires a common code for understanding. By this argument he prescribes a discursive approach to the evaluation of representation and indicates that the validity of the power relation in representational economy is relevant to its temporal and spatial historicity. Thus representational meaning is not absolute for; in a discursive reading, a representational text provokes its own contesting powers relation.

Hall further explains the system of representation with reference to Ferdinand de Sassure's semiotic approach to language as he maintains,

> …(semiotic) approach to language unfixes meaning, breaking any natural and inevitable tie between signifier and signified. This opens representation to the constant 'play' or slippage of meaning, to the constant production of new meanings, new interpretation. (The Work, 32)

Given the unstable nature of language, which is the 'media' of representation, a conclusion may be arrived at that representation and the meaning it constructs may also be treated as unreliable pertaining to its partial or wrong conceptualization of the truth. However, further extension of this same theory also leads to another dimension of interpretation of the representation for it may also be seen as unfixing of innumerable possibilities of new interpretation of the same representation with reference to different historical contexts.

With the consideration of the context of historicity of sign system and its ubiquitous pertinence, Jonathan Culler in his book titled *Saussure* (1976) provides his reflection on the theory of Linguistics developed by Saussure and argues, "Because it is arbitrary, the sign is totally subject to history and the combination at the particular moment of a given signifier and signified is a contingent result of the historical process" (36). Culler's argument with reference to sign system indicates wider possibility of

interpretation of the system of representation as it emphasizes on the supplementary historicity. The time and space of representation appears to be an integral part of the entire process when it is seen as a historical phenomenon. The semantics of spatial and temporal historicity of the substance of representation lead to a new hypothetical conclusion that with the shift in the time and space there is always a possibility of paradigmatic metamorphosis in the meaning or the truth. The integral components of sign system i.e. both signifier and signified are not free entities for these are not independent of the predominance of historicity of represented text. In representation the meaning is determined by the historicity of the sign, hence a parallel may be drawn between the processes of construction of meanings in both sign system and representation keeping in mind of the analogous nature of having rudimentary relation to historicity of events.

Evaluating the theoretical problematics in reading historical representation as master narrative without further examination of its merit, the American New Historicist Stephen Greenblatt in his essay "The Circulation of Social Energy" (1988) mentions a cautionary note on the possibility of "textual traces" that often remain unobserved in the traditional linear reading of historical texts. He rightly argues that, "…it is impossible to take the 'text itself' as the perfect, unsubstitutable, freestanding container of all of its meanings" (3). Foregrounding his argument on the theoretical premise of post-structuralist close reading of texts, Greenblatt accentuates that the fundamental problem exists in the method of understanding a text as an autonomous transcendental entity without any prospect of contestation. A representational text, therefore, calls for further scrutiny of the historicity stored hidden within the layers of the text expanding further debate on the authenticity of the representation. The emergence of New Historicism in the 1980s, as a literary theory in North America, opened a new ground for interpretation of a given text. The New Historicists challenged the autonomy of a literary work by negation of the traditional approaches of reading a text as an autonomous entity. New

Historicist close reading suggests taking into account of all the literary as well as non-literary texts from the margins for the complete understanding of the literary or written text in its historical context. Representation too, when seen as a text, has its historical nuance which is often ignored or taken for granted following the traditional approach of looking at it as a self-explanatory autonomous body.

Examination of colonial representation of the tribal in India taking cue from the theory of New Historicism calls for the exploration of representational historicity of colonial subjugation. It is needless to mention that the process of colonial representation of the natives was largely based on racial difference between the European 'self' and its 'other' though the principal driving force of colonialism was capitalist interest. Colonial representation of the colonized body may be understood as a mechanism of emphasizing the racial difference on the part of the colonizers, for in order to accentuate the supremacy of their civilization it was necessary to create its complementary opposite. Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* (1978) accentuates that "Orient and Occident are man-made" (5). The west or the Occident created the Orient in the East for the confirmation of its existence and supremacy. The opposite of European civilization and rationality of the Enlightenment period was traced in the cultural spheres of the colonized body which was identified as the nucleus of the profane, thereby reconfirming European piety. The supposed profanity of the colonized race was established and given currency with the help of their representation in the colonial discourse. However, the racial and political undercurrent of the colonial discourse was tactfully concealed in the representation and the manipulated facts were reproduced as the reality. In this premise, postcolonial studies underscores examination of the historicity of colonial representation at the backdrop of continuation of the manipulated facts concerning certain subaltern groups such as the tribal of India, for "The European writer commodifies the native by negating his individuality, his subjectivity, so that he is now perceived as a generic being" (JanMohamed, 64).

In the premise of the above discussion, the concept of historicity calls for a minute reading, understanding and scrutiny in the realm of tribal representation. Historicity as an entity refers to its two distinctive factors i.e. temporality or period specific and spatiality or space specific details that add to the meaning of the concerned fact. Jacques Derrida in his seminal essay "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (2002) probes into the schematic development of signification in language and argues that signification is a limitless process as the 'signifier' is never fastened into an absolute and final 'signified' which presumably stands for the final and conclusive meaning of totality. Referring to the works of structuralist linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, Derrida explains his take on the sign system by rejecting the binary opposition of logocentrism with reference to the construction of meaning. He critiques the structuralist method of signification on the ground that binary opposition negates the presence of supplementary 'differences' attached to the phenomenon of signification. He further divides the 'difference' into two axes i.e. 'temporal difference' and 'spatial difference' with a view to accentuate the significance of time and space in the formation of meaning. Derrida coins a word 'differance' by juxtaposing the words 'differ' and 'defer' with a view of focusing on the concept of spatial and temporal difference involved in the process of signification. The meaning of a text in the process of signification can differ with reference to the time and space or age and culture of interpretation for the meaning is always deferred to irreducible infinity. Derrida, with the word 'differance', completely rejects the autonomy of transcendental signified, for according to him there is no signified but an array of signifiers. He also mentions another term 'trace' in order to explain the relevance of differance in his explanation of the process of signification, for every idea bears the 'trace' of the 'other' in order to have a meaningful existence. An idea or a meaning can never be ahistorical in its essence under the consideration that the conceptualization of that idea is relational to its difference from its historical 'other'. The knowledge of the historical 'other' supplements to the

formation of the idea of the meaning of a represented body and the 'trace' of the 'other' constitutes the essence of the represented body. Hence; time and space combined with the historicity of the representation may be considered as essential for the authentic and objective interpretation of the represented body. Derrida argues, "…the domain or play of signification henceforth has no limit; one must reject even the concept and word 'sign' itself." (Derrida, 354)

Derrida explains that signification, which is the principal phenomenon of the sign system, is a limitless and continuous play of signifiers that keeps on moving further into infinity by completely negating the reducibility of meaning to a conclusive and compact whole. Representation, as it is indebted to sign system for its meaningful subsistence, may be read as incapable of making the exact reproduction of the represented body, for language itself is unstable in nature owing to its arbitrariness. He further argues,

> …(language is) a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of difference. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely. (Derrida, 354)

He explains that the perception of the existence of an absolute meaning or the structuralist transcendental signified is a rhetorical concept by claiming rather audaciously that "the center is not the centre" (Derrida, 352). He negates the absolute nature of any authority or authorial position by displacing the centre of its position of totality in a discourse and as such rejects the immutability of signified proper in the sign system. Derrida defends a decentered world of significations by rejection of the concept of binary oppositions of the structuralist logocentrism. He contends that the discourse of meaning is invariably without hierarchy or a definite centre of the things suggesting that meanings can differ with respect to the difference in time, space and the interpretation of the same text. He deconstructs the myth of transcendental signified with the rejection of the hierarchy of the centre and unleashes the meaning making process to an infinite

possibility with reference to its inherent historicity. According to Derrida the transcendental signified, which is the basis of the totality in the process of signification, never really existed and therefore the process of signification can continue infinitely which also implies that a text of representation may also be interpreted and reinterpreted in an infinite continuum, for under the theoretical interpolation of post-structuralism the autonomy of representation is always contestable.

The process of representation is not free from the intricacies of the process of signification as it relies on sign system for realizing its existence and finally acquiring epistemic recognition. The narrative produced by a representation is also affected by the continuum of sign system of not coming to a certain and definite conclusion when it comes to the creation of an absolute meaning or setting of a definite order of the things. Representation as a nuanced area calls for a critical examination of all its constructs under the theoretical parameter of deconstruction.

Representation as a system of production of meaning engages in the construction of identity and assigning of position to the represented body by virtue of its association with the power relations in a given society. The problematics of representation lies in the fact that the primary text of representation is made to travel through certain layers of manipulation in order to fit in the dominant discourse. The reality of the represented substance becomes a distorted reality by the time it is represented before the audience due to the historicity of manipulation and inherent power relations. Language as the medium of representation makes this manipulation much easier by virtue of its arbitrary fluidity. Representation ceases to be authentic reportage of facts owing to its engagement to the power relations and manipulative nature of language. Instead, imaginary conclusions are added to represented substance during the intricate process of production of meaning as a subtle extension of the apparent manipulation.

In his analysis of the constructionist approach to representation through language, Staurt Hall comments that a paradigmatic shift of focus from semiotic approach to

discursive approach was witnessed in the theory expounded by Michel Foucault (Hall, 1997). Instead of looking at representation as a phenomenon guided by language alone, Foucault goes further in his analysis and draws a conclusion that it is power that regulates the system of representation. Foucault deliberately uses the term discourse in his analysis of language and representation with the contention that representation is essentially a process of production of knowledge or the truth. Staurt Hall in his chapter titled "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power" (1992) argues, "Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But since all social practices entail meaning, and meanings shape and influence what we do- our conduct- all practices have a discursive aspect" (291). Discursive approach to representation looks at representation as a system that constructs meaning or the knowledge but then the construction of knowledge is very much a work of power. Hence it may be surmised that knowledge is totally guided by the power that controls the discourse of the knowledge production. Foucault in an interview titled "Prison Talk" published in the book *Power/Knowledge* (1980) argues,

> The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power…knowledge and power are integrated with one another, and there is no point in dreaming of a time when knowledge will cease to depend on power; …It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power. (52)

Foucault's commentary on the relations of power and knowledge confirms that they are mutually complementary to each other and Knowledge is not at all an innocent entity. Knowledge elicits power and vice versa in human epistemology. Foucault argues that power and knowledge supplements each other for their mutual subsistence and indicates the possible existence of a power structure that regulates the formation of knowledge or meaning of a text, for the knowledge thus produced helps in the perpetuation of the hegemony of power. The meaning of a text is not an autonomous

entity for it is dependent on the power for its legitimation much to allude to the Derridian concept of a sign being supplemented by its historicity of differences. The above statement by Foucault also contends that the knowledge produced by the discourse of power further sanctions legitimacy to the exercise of power.

In this premise, colonial representational texts call for further enquiry of the implicit power relations in the wake of colonial subjugation of the natives. It is needless to mention that colonial ethnographic texts were essentially produced with a view of manufacturing knowledge on the colonized. Ethnographic texts not only served to look into the administrative requirements of colonial power by contribution of figures and numbers accumulated from anthropological studies but also engaged in the production of knowledge on the colonized race as "degenerate type" (Bhabha, 70). The knowledge production on the colonized race confirmed the racial inferiority of the 'other' of Europe coterminously sanctioning legitimacy to colonial power exercise. For example, the production of knowledge on tribal population in India through their representation as uncivilized and lacking in reason facilitated a legitimate ground for the exercise of colonial power in the tribal areas by negation of the autonomy of their indigenous power relations. It is pertinent to note that the rationale of development and civilization was largely rhetorical and fraught with political undercurrent, for the implied intention behind such colonial enterprise was to denigrate the colonial 'other' as culturally primitive and thereby destabilize their political autonomy. Thus the knowledge produced by colonial representation added more legitimate authority to colonial enterprise. Critiquing colonialism, Aime Cesaire in his essay "Discourse on Colonialism" (1955) argues that "between colonization and civilization there is an infinite distance" (2) and the relation between the colonizer and colonized is "relation of domination and submission" (6). He focuses on the effects of colonialism on the socio-cultural identity of the colonized race and raises question on the ethical side of European civilization that participates in the heinous act of violating the rights of individual native culture.

Emphasizing more on the psychoanalysis of both colonizer and colonized, Cesaire contends that both the axes of colonialism are equally affected by the violence of colonization, for it "dehumanizes even the most civilized man" (5). By saying so, he subverts the idea of European racial supremacy largely given currency during the colonial period and thereby contests the authority of colonial discourse of representation under the contention that all colonial enterprises including the missionary activities share the similar practice of dehumanization.

In his book *The Archeology of Knowledge* (2002), Foucault contends that meaning is produced not necessarily by language but by what he defines as 'discourse'. In his definition of discourse he focuses on the effect of language on the society emphasizing on the practice of production of meaning or knowledge. Discourse is the practice of assigning a meaning to an object and also granting legitimacy to the assigned meaning. However, at the same time he also draws our attention to the power of discourse that distinguishes the constructed meaning from other entities by emphasizing on the quality of the constructed meaning that separates it from others. Discourse of power functions by imposing a normative restriction on further re-examination of the knowledge it produces. He maintains that every meaning in the cognitive world is the product of its concerned discourse of power and it is the very discourse that gives a cognizable shape to the represented body by way of production of knowledge and thereby sanctioning the legitimacy essential for its subsistence and cognition. However, he adds that a discourse of power is not an absolute transcendental concept that can continue eternally unaffected by power struggle. The knowledge or meaning of a certain entity changes with the rise of a new discourse of power. Foucault further extends the relations of power and knowledge towards the formation of the 'regime of truth' in every discourse as he argues in the book *Power/Knowledge* (1980),

> Truth isn't outside power…Truth is a thing of this world; it is produced only by
>
> virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power.

Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true. (131)

Foucault in his deliberation on the 'regime of truth' accentuates the existence of power structure that regulates the mechanism of production of knowledge or truth. Truth is fashioned in the similar manner of fashioning of knowledge and draws allusion to the supplementary historicity of truth. The essence of truth is confirmed in relation to its 'other' with emphasis laid on the differences that separates it from the 'other'. Nonetheless, the 'difference' also signifies temporality and spatiality of the truth, inversely rejecting the autonomy of the truth with the shifts in time and space. Truth is therefore contestable when examined under the premise of the argument that it is a subjective construct of the political agency involved in the fashioning of the knowledge. The substance of the represented truth may alter when examined in relation to the supplementary historicity suggested by the New Historical close reading of the text. Extension of Foucault's argument into the system of production of meaning in representation poses threat to the authority of the represented text, for under the polemics of Foucaultian theoretical interpolation we cannot deny the possibility of the emergence of a new regime of truth with its own discourse of power, producing a 'counter truth' which may reduce the 'earlier truth' to 'untruth'. In the similar vein, it may be argued that colonial texts and their representation of the tribal life-world may be brought to contestation under the discourse of postcolonial reading, obliquely producing a new and counter narrative to colonial master narrative.

The process of representation, therefore, may be seen as a 'flawed' process as claimed by Stuart Hall. Representation involves the distortion, alteration and obliteration of the 'real truth' and the truth or reality is largely distanced from the real as soon as it undergoes the process of representation. Meaning or the truth that we draw from a representation is not a fixed entity pertaining to the innumerable possibilities of interpretations with reference to different regimes of truth regulated by different power

structures, as the regime of truth or the discourse is subject to substitution with the emergence of a new discourse. Representation thus culminates in acting like a perforated sheet that demonstrates a distorted substitute of the real. The substitution of the real further causes damage to the totality of the represented body, for the substituted image seemingly misguides the perception of the audience. Furthermore, representation may also be seen as an instrument of shrouding certain facts that the "regime of truth" deems inappropriate and precarious to its interest and hence a false image of the real is presented for display. Keeping this in mind Stuart Hall rightly reiterates,

> Meaning, consequently, will always change, from one culture or period to another. There is no guarantee that every object in one culture will have an equivalent meaning in another, precisely because cultures differ, sometimes radically, from one another in their codes- the ways they crave up, classify and assign meaning to the world. (The Work, 61)

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the process of representation is conditioned with the dichotomy of 'self'/'other' for it invariably involves two principal axes i.e. the representing authority and the represented body. The spatial position and identity of these two axes are not evenly distributed in the process of representation, for the representing authority always occupies the authorial position by virtue of its power of representing someone/something. The position of the representing authority is rather consciously assumed involving certain political interest. On the other hand, the represented body is assigned with a subservient position under the putative rationale of having no voice of its own. It is pertinent to mention here that subordination of the represented body by default leads to the formation of a permanent dichotomous relationship between the representing authority and the represented body, much to allude to the colonial 'self/other' binary. The author or the authority, that controls the process of representation, facilitates the reproduction of colonial power relation emphasizing on the difference of the 'self' from the 'other' to serve its own political interest. The position of

the representing authority is politically conditioned and appropriated with subtle exercise of hegemonic power, which is rightly highlighted by Edward Said as he argues,

> There is nothing mysterious or natural about authority. It is formed, irradiated, disseminated; it is instrumental, it is persuasive; it has status, it establishes canons of taste and value; it is virtually indistinguishable from certain ideas it dignifies as true, and from traditions, perceptions, and judgments it forms, transmits, reproduces. (*Orientalism*, 19-20)

Said's argument clearly states that authority in every circumstances operates like a mechanism that is driven by certain political scheme, as it designs the entire discourse according to its own interest. The position and role of the authority in representation is by no means different from what Said's argument envisages in terms of colonial condition. The agency that operates the process of representation has the power to manipulate the entire process by means of which the represented body is assigned with a subordinate identity and a certain spatial location in the totality of the power relations. The act of imposing an identity and a specific location to the subordinated body is done with conscious effort so that the subordinated body continues to remain in its assigned location without further upward mobility in the power structure. Said's argument further accentuates the importance of the underlying supplementary historicity of the represented text for the authentic understanding of represented substance. Emphasizing the analysis of the authority, he necessitates the re-examination of the canonized texts with intensified importance on the relational historicity in order to establish coherence between the represented texts and facts. Said's *Orientalism* is a postcolonial reading of the European imperialism where he examines the position and inherent relation of the 'Orient' and 'Occident'. While defining 'Orient' and 'Occident', he argues that, "the two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other" (*Orientalism*, 5) accentuating the historicity attached to both the entities, for primarily it is their historical differences that supplements to their cognitive realities. He also underscores the exercise

of power in the relation of 'Orient' and 'Occident' and refers to it as "a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of complex hegemony" (*Orientalism*, 5). Regimentation of the 'Orient' for the rhetorical purpose of civilizing the 'other' by way of perpetuation of the exercise of power at different level constitutes one important aspect of the historicity of colonial domination. In his book, Said emphasizes on the 'traces of power' borne by the 'Orient' that is perpetuated in the form of modern 'Orient' in the subconscious of the colonized body in a country with colonial experience. All the traces of individual cultural practices of the colonized are systematically erased and reduced to a big vacuum and this politically constructed vacuum is stuffed with the ideals of the mother country with a view of creating a modern 'Orient'. The modern 'Orient' functions as the surrogate child for it emulates all the values of the mother country bearing the same traces of power that was employed for its construction. Hence, it is important to bring into account all the historical allusions including the power relations for complete understanding of the represented body. Examination of the represented body in isolation without the relational historicity is reductive in nature and further entails inaccuracy.

It is pertinent to mention that power in relation to the process of representation does not refer to the overt coercive power exercise by the dominant, for the expression of power has subtle nuances in the works of representation. The present study seeks to explore more intricate and rather covert exercise of power that permeates the process of representations. The power relation of representation operates in a complicated and concealed trajectory of sociological, cultural and political spheres and hence its effect on the substance of representation may not be starkly visible. It rather affects the represented body in a much subtler manner at the subconscious level, for it works in the ideological plane that involves consensual giving up of all the values of the self further leading to complete denigration and erasure of one's identity. Referring to Gramsci's work, Said argues,

Gramsci has made the useful analytic distinction between civil and political society in which the former is made up of voluntary (or at least rational and noncoercive) affiliations like schools, families, and unions, the latter of state institutions (the army, the police, the central bureaucracy) whose role in the polity is direct dominion. Culture, of course, is to be found operating within civil society, where the influence of ideas, of institutions, and of other persons work not through dominion but by what Gramsci calls consent. (*Orientalism*, 6-7)

Here, Said shifts his attention to civil society from the ostensibly aggressive area of political institution that involves more visible and direct exercise of power in the form of different coercive devices employed by the state. It is pertinent to mention that colonial subjugation entails cultural conversion, often with the erasure and replacement of the native culture by the dominant culture of the colonizer. Culture belongs more to the ideological domain of a particular society and therefore erasure and replacement of culture is not possible with direct exercise of coercive power. Cultural conversion requires a subtle mechanism that operates in the ideological plane involving the consent of the subordinated body. In colonial context cultural domination involves two stages that complements each other – first the erasure of the native culture and secondly the implanting of the cultural values of the mother country in the subconscious of the native. The colonial binary of 'self/other' is analogous to the binary of 'good/evil' and may be considered as the principal ground of creation of the colonial stereotype accentuating a parallel between the native and the evil. The profane culture of the native is further characterized with obscurity, inertness, criminality and infamy as the opposite of the pious, progressive, modern and rational culture of the mother country. Pedagogy, religious institutions and representations in the colonial texts constitute the instrument of cultural transition in colonial condition that emphasizes the necessity of transformation of the native society by negation of its culture and simultaneous instilling of the European values in the native subconscious. Continuous and organized rejection of the

native cultural values through colonial representation resulted in the erasure of the same from the subconscious of the native self. Cultural loss on the part on the colonized may be understood as a consensual phenomenon of rejection of cultural identity and embracing of new values implanted by the exertion of colonial ideology. Religious and cultural conversion of the tribal population during colonial period may be seen as an important example of ideological shift caused by colonial representation of their cultural habits as uncivilized and immoral. Cultural conversion of the tribal in India resulted in the loss of their indigenous cultural identities without any provision of recollection, for the cultural loss caused by ideological conversion is irrevocable.

In his book *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1971), Antonio Gramsci remarks that 'hegemony' or class domination is not simply based on the economy but relies to a great extent on the political and cultural ideologies. Gramsci's shift of interest, from economy to politics and culture, in his analysis of the civil society accentuates the state as the principal agency that participates in the continuation of class domination. In his deliberation on capitalist state, Gramsci divides it into two principal constituent entities - political society and civil society. By political society he meant the coercive state apparatuses like police, legal system, army etc. that operates on a much cognizable plane. On the other hand, civil society according to him corroborates to the seemingly private institutions like family, education, cultural practices etc. and thereby concentrating emphasis on the invisible exercise of power. He argues that in order to maintain absolute authority, the state uses two different modes of power exercise- 'Dominio' (coercion or domination) and 'Direzione' (consensus or consent). Commenting on the power that is derived by way of consent, Gramsci further maintains,

> Undoubtedly the fact of hegemony presupposes that account be taken of the interests and tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised, and that a certain compromise equilibrium should be formed- in other words, that the leading group should make sacrifices of an economic-corporate kind. (161)

Gramsci suggests that in order to maintain its power the 'leading group' cannot solely depend on coercive power but must make certain negotiation or sacrifice for extracting consent from the subordinate group for the production of a false sense of equilibrium in the society, which he calls a state of balance. It is however pertinent to mention that the negotiation takes place to serve the political interest of the 'leading group' and the 'sacrifice' that the 'leading group' makes, as stated by Gramsci, is not equivalent to the magnitude of the loss incurred on the subordinate group. The 'sacrifice' referred here is economic in nature that is retrievable in any condition on the part of the 'leading group' whereas the sacrifice made by the subordinate group is ideological, for they give their consent to remain loyal to the hegemonic dominance. The economic or corporate sacrifice in the said negotiation promises more in return to the 'leading group', for it ensures legitimacy of the hegemony leading to further exploitation of the subordinate group at various levels.

Representation may be seen as an instrument employed by the 'leading group' for the extraction of consent from the subordinate group to contribute to the perpetuation and extension of hegemony. Apart from presenting the selective substance of the subordinate group, representation also involves canonization of the represented substance for the production of a standardized common perception of the represented body. Canonization of the represented text sanctions absolute authority to the said text thereby rejecting significance of the supplementary spatial and temporal historicity of represented body. Representation nonetheless takes the privilege of attaching the consent of the represented body that is rather assumed to have added to it by default in the absence of contesting voice. Representation thus supplements to the maintenance of power of the leading group in hegemonic condition by acting as a device of expressing the consent of subordinate group.

Extension of Gramsci's views with reference to the process of representation draws to the conclusion that it operates much like what Louis Althusser defines as

Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) in his seminal essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1971). Commenting on the functions of state apparatuses in a hegemonic state Althusser argues, "The Repressive State Apparatus functions 'by violence', whereas the Ideological State Apparatuses' function 'by Ideology'" (Althusser, 145). The process of representation facilitates non-coercive power exercise for the appropriation of its authority, but relies primarily on what both Althusser and Gramsci call extraction of the consent of the represented body as it predominantly functions by ideology and secondarily by repression. But 'the ideology' that is responsible for the function of the ideological state apparatuses, is again defined by Althusser as an imaginary concept as he argues, "Ideology is a 'Representation' of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser, 162). Ideology for Althusser is artificial and redundant concept, for it is an imaginary construct reproducing a make-believe reality. Hence a scheme built on the flimsy ground of ideology may not subscribe to the authenticity of the consent of the subordinate group in a hegemonic state. Instead, there are possibilities of extracting the consent of the subordinate group under dubious agreement.

Like the ideological state apparatuses, representation primarily works much on an imaginary plane and creates a deceptive reality of the represented section. The illusory reality is further appropriated and accentuated as the absolute truth by the coercive power of the state. The consent of the represented section is rather easily extracted through negotiation between these two unequal groups in view of the lack of strong resistance from the weaker group. The represented group apparently submits to the hostility of their condition and gives away their consent without much resistance accepting the dictate of the dominant group that constitutes the mainstream of a society. The possession of power further grants absolute authority to the dominant group for the construction and perpetuation of the truth that it deems proper. Althusser calls the construction of the

absolute truth as the formation of ruling ideology which comes at the expense of continuous class struggle and exploitation of the subordinate class (Althusser, 185).

Representation may also be defined as an action carried out by an agency on behalf of a person or a larger group. This very 'action' further creates a divide between the authoritative agency in control of the task of representation and the objectified body that is the substance of representation. Extension of this definition leads to the inevitable question of the identity and the intention of the authorial agency involved in the process of representation circuitously demanding a close reading of the intrinsic political undercurrent. Hyphenated re-presentation further multiplies its subtexts with the indications of the many temporal and spatial presentations repeated by multiple authorities at various circumstances. The repetitive process itself poses certain doubt over the authenticity of the substance of representation as it may seemingly have gone through different stages of filtration, alternation, manipulation and even obliteration. Hence it may be inferred that the act of representation is detrimental to the perception of the authentic identity of a certain entity that has been subjected to travel through a long process of gradual metamorphosis, facilitating further contestation and discursive reading of representational text.

Post-colonial reading of representational texts calls for examination of the apparent connotations of the texts produced during the colonial period. The nineteenth century anthropological writings and travel writings by the colonial authors are precisely surmised as the corpora of colonial texts in which the 'self/other' dichotomy was radically maintained and perpetuated with a view to uphold the supremacy of the colonizers and grant an absolute position of authority as well as universal acceptance of their authority. It has been discussed in the previous chapter that anthropology as a branch of study was highly inspired by Darwinian Theory of evolution and it gained popularity during the expansion of British and French colonies in the non-European continents. The authors of colonial ethnographic writings were aware of the taste of their

audience back in the mother country and in order to cater to their apparent taste, such writings were meticulously designed to offer a feeling of superiority by emphasizing on the racial difference. European audience subscribed to ethnographic writings mainly for "amusement, curiosity, or moral broadening, plus, in colonial situations, for administrative convenience" (Geertz, 5). Most of the ethnographic writings concentrated on the construction of the stereotype of racial inferiority by depiction of the colonized race as an equivalent to savagery and the primitive opposite to the civilized European self. Ethnographic writings were also instrumental in concealing the covert political motive of imperial design of colonialism by shrouding it under the pretext of civilizing the heathen culture for "the object of representation- the native – does not have access to these texts (because of linguistic barriers) and since the European audience has no direct contact with the native, imperialist fiction tends to be unconcerned with the truth-value of its representation" (JanMohamed, 63).

Abdul R, JanMohamed in his essay "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonial Literature" (1985) contends that there are many factors in colonial discourse that determines its true motive. Taking cue from Frantz Fanon's "Manichean world" (*Wretched*, 2001), he looks at colonialism as a site of imbalance in terms of power relations. But political and cultural analysis of colonialism limits the scope of further exploration of the true nature of power relations in colonial condition. He argues that Apart from the political and cultural angles of colonial enterprise, economic interest plays a major role in the construction and representation of the 'other'. Focusing on the covert and overt purpose of the imperial design of colonialism he further argues,

> While the covert purpose is to exploit the colony's natural resources thoroughly and ruthlessly through the various imperialist material practices, the overt aim, as articulated by colonist discourses, is to "civilize" the savage, to introduce him to all the benefits of "western culture".(Economy, 62)

JanMohamed further points out that colonial takeover of certain territory passes through a series of two consecutive phases – 'dominant' and 'hegemonic'. In the 'dominant' phase, colonial military power takes control of the occupied territory with exertion of force. This phase may be understood as the coercive domination of the colonized which is replaced by a much subtler exercise of power in the second phase that he identifies as 'hegemonic'. In the 'hegemonic' phase, the colonized section starts accepting their subjugation as something very natural and befitting to their condition. In this phase the political economy of the colony is totally taken under control by the colonizer. On the other hand, the colonized race having been severed from their roots with ideological shift and cultural loss follows the new mode of production introduced by the colonizer conforming to the economic exploitation. JanMohamed contends that along with the control of political, cultural and economic system of the colonies, manipulation of the public mind also takes place in colonial condition and the natives unknowingly participate in their own exploitation.

One of the primary concerns of the colonizers during the colonial period was to study and classify the colonized body with a view to straighten the paths of administration that seemingly helped in materializing their purpose of expansion and perpetuation of colonial enterprise. Having this in mind Homi K. Bhabha in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994) argues,

> The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction. (70)

Apart from administering the process of colonial expansion, the colonizers also engaged in record keeping of their findings as colonial texts on the basis of their contacts with the 'natives'. Colonized natives are reproduced in these texts as perceived from racial gaze without much emphasis on the accuracy of the perceived facts. Colonial texts seldom provide any details on distinctive characteristics of the colonized body in terms

of cultural, ethnic and historical background belonging to different races, tribes and ethnic genealogy. The colonized body is identified with a racially constructed imaginary reality that may be held responsible for the vilification of the colonized as a group of degenerate population bereft of certain tenets of civilized culture. The colonizers devise a systematic design for the perpetuation of the colonial construct of native identity keeping in view of their putative political interest. This systematic design further facilitates the production of certain racial stereotypes that eventually become the essential part of a colonial reality. Bhabha further comments that this constructed racial 'otherness' which is assigned to the colonized body is incorporated into the colonial system in such a manner that it takes the shape of 'social reality' for the colonized section (Bhabha, 1994). It is argued under the postcolonial rubrics that the colonized body during colonial period was subjected to certain misleading representation pertaining to the 'self/other' dichotomy that largely guided the colonial narrative.

Anthropological texts produced during the colonial period were instrumental in propagating and giving currency to Eurocentric view of the world which eventually situated the West at the centre while its peripheral colonies were assigned with a subordinate position as Tilottoma Misra rightly argues in her introduction to the book *The Oxford Anthology of Writings from North-East India* (2011) that, "colonialism, however, superimposed a Eurocentric concept of modernity derived from the enlightenment" (xiv). Here she emphasizes on the issue of introduction of the concept of modernity in the colonies. Modernity is a nuanced expression for it entails a range of subtexts such as modern state, modern culture, modern political economy etc. In colonial context, European concept of modernity and its application to colonial countries call for further examination though perfunctory study of the concept usually advocates its introduction as a positive gesture to a rather undeveloped condition of the colonies. Modernity may be understood as another form of domination, for it engenders subtle power relations. Foucault suggests that power permeates in a discourse with a capillary

movement reconfirming its relation to other forms of power exercise. For example, establishment of European colonialism facilitated the introduction of the concept of modern state in India with the installation of other subsidiary institutions of power such as judiciary, police and revenue. Enforcement of colonial order through such legal institutions caused rejection of the existent indigenous system of administration in India. It is pertinent to mention that tribal societies in India flourished under distinctive autonomous systems of chiefdom before the enforcement of colonial administration. Negation of tribal chiefdom ensued strong resistance from different tribal communities during colonial expansion resulting in violence. Unsurprisingly enough, resistance by the tribal communities in colonial India was dominated with advanced military power and tribal autonomy over their territory was systematically subdued. Loss of autonomy ensued cultural loss on the part of the tribal communities. Representation of the tribal in ethnographic texts further executed the task of construction and dissemination of the imaginary idea of the tribal as uncivilized race by omission of their distinctive cultural identities.

Pramod K. Nayar in his book *Colonial Voices: The Discourses of Empire* (2012) maintains, "Colonial discourse masks the power relations between races, cultures and nations. It makes the relations seem natural, scientific and objective. Colonial discourse therefore produces stereotypes from within European prejudices, beliefs and myths" (3). Nayar's argument points at the politics involved in the process of 'othering' of the non-west or in the construction of what Edward Said defined as the 'Orient' in his book *Orientalism* (1995). Colonial takeover of a certain geographical area entails the power politics involved in the establishment of the administrative control that radiates from the dichotomous relation of the colonizer and the colonized. The construction of 'self/other' binary on the basis of racial difference also demarcates the cultural and social disparity. In Nayar's words colonial discourse acts as a 'mask' that appropriates the power relations involved in the regimentation of the colonized body simultaneously hiding the

political interest behind such undertakings. Colonial texts further add to the entire design of reduction of the 'other' by the construction of certain stereotypes on the colonized society that inversely justifies colonial intervention under the rhetoric of civilizing of the heathen natives. Colonial representation of the natives in the colonial texts is thus guided by racial prejudice that further devalues and erases the entire socio-cultural ethos from the subconscious of the native as well as the entire human epistemology.

Colonial narratives facilitate the continuation of colonial power by legitimization of its authority under the rhetoric of employing scientific and objective methodology in the study of the native despite the fact that this process is primarily grounded on racial differences. In this context Frantz Fanon in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* (2001) argues,

> The colonial world is a Manichaean world…As if to show the totalitarian character of colonial exploitation the settler paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil. Native society is not simply described as a society lacking in values…he represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values. (31-32)

Fanon's observation primarily corroborates to the false representation of the native in a colonial discourse, a discourse in which meaning or knowledge is constructed not in relation to the cultural historicity of the colonized but by the colonial power that controls the discourse. The regime of truth in a colonial discourse is the regime of the colonial power that constructs the identity of the colonized body as an inferior and deformed entity accentuating on the physical and cultural attributes that do not have any resemblance to a European man. The colonized body becomes the site of objectification as the 'other' of Europe on the basis of racial difference. Fanon however accentuates the epistemic violence meted out to the colonized body in the colonial discourse that identifies the native as a manifestation of evil rejecting all attributes of its cultural civility. Denigration of the native culture as the embodiment of evil designates the

colonizer's culture as the exact opposite of the profane i.e. the embodiment of piety and benevolence. Furthermore, negation of native values inversely served the purpose of strengthening the robust foundation of colonial enterprise and justifying the apparent exploitation of the colonial wealth. Fanon nonetheless argues that the very substance of the colonizer owes much to the colonial system, for the vitality of colonial economy is subject to the flow of wealth to the mother country in the form of colonial exploits. He further maintains that "the settler owes the fact of his very existence, that is to say his property, to the colonial system" (*Wretched,* 28) for the 'self/other' binary also validates the cognition of the colonizer 'self' accentuating the same spatial and temporal historicity that colonial discourse tends to conceal.

Colonial ethnographic narratives represent the colonial body as the 'other' of the west by establishing a relation of binary opposition of 'civilized' and 'primitive'. The ethnographic texts are the means of articulating and reiterating this fundamental difference which was constructed at the beginning of colonialism. Commenting on the inadequacy of anthropology and its byproduct- ethnographic narratives in the authentic representation of the colonial body, Paul Rabinow in his book *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (1977) argues,

> This is the ground of Anthropology; there is no privileged position…no valid way to eliminate consciousness from our activities or those of others…we can pretend that we are neutral scientists collecting unambiguous data and that the people we are studying are living amid various unconscious systems of determining forces of which they have no clue and to which only we have the key. But it is only pretense. (151-152)

Paul Rabinow's deliberation on the role of an anthropologist in the production of knowledge focuses on the rudimentary problem of working in the field. He argues that anthropologists are invariably burdened with the consciousness of being an outsider during their field work. The influence of innate consciousness is so strong and

inescapable that it leads to a politically conditioned and prejudiced substantiation of the subject of study despite conscious attempt at objectivity. Anthropology emerged as an essential component of colonial enterprise during the Enlightenment period of 18th Century Europe with an aim of gathering knowledge on the 'other' of Europe situated in the 'other' locations of the world. Anthropological texts as the product of European quest to know its 'other' validates the rationale that it is a branch of study that subscribe to the 'self/other' dichotomy of colonial design. Anthropological representation often comes under criticism on the ground of having contents that are inventive in nature. The writer in anthropological representation assumes authoritative position at the subconscious level being conscious of racial hierarchy which leads to a simultaneous subordination of the represented race. Rabinow argues that the neutrality in ethnographic texts can never be achieved, for neutrality in fact is a mere "pretense" on the part of the anthropologist considering the employment of his/her subjective imagination in the production of the text. As stated earlier, representation cannot be simply understood as a process of someone/something making the presentation on behalf of someone/something, for the moment an agency carries out the act of representation, that particular agency situates itself at the centre of the representational discourse. The agency eventually regulates the power dynamics in the discourse of the representation and the act of representation ceases to remain objective making room for subjectivity and its supplementary prejudices. Representation thus remains skewed in the problem of indeterminacy with regard to the authenticity of the represented body. Commenting on the negotiation that takes place in the process of representation, W.J.T. Mitchell in his essay "Representation" (1995) argues, "Every representation exacts some cost, in the form of lost immediacy, presence, or truth, in the form of a gap between intention and realization, original and copy…sometimes the tax imposed by representation is so slight that we scarcely notice" (21). He contends that the original identity or truth of the represented substance is invariably lost due to the political undertone of representation.

Representational negotiation functions with such subtlety that the blurred difference between original and copy is not easy to decipher. Eventually, the copied version is made to look like the original through representation and the distorted truth becomes the grand narrative.

On the basis of the discussions so far on the nature and political undercurrents of anthropology and ethnographic narratives, it may be surmised that ethnographic representation suffers from certain limitations pertaining to racial connotations and subjective rigidity. The limitations of ethnographic texts in representing the authentic identity of the colonized body may be further extended to the representation of tribal reality in India. It is pertinent to mention here that very less work has been done so far for the proper understanding of the reality of tribal life-world in India and elsewhere which again draws our attention to the question - if tribal life-world is still being represented under the aegis of colonial approach.

In this context, referring to a moving story titled 'Shishu' by Mahasweta Devi, Ania Loomba maintains,

> National 'development' has no space for tribal cultures or beliefs, and the attitude of even the well-meaning government officer, Mr. Singh, towards the tribal people replicates colonialist views of non-Western peoples-- to him, they are mysterious, superstitious, uncivilized, backward. In other words, they are like children who need to be brought into line with the rest of the country. (*Colonialism*, 14-15)

Through this immensely loaded and rather blatant statement, what Loomba tries to indicate at is the generalized notion of the Indian mainstream society about the tribal population who dwell in the fringes or outside of the mainstream society even after the independence of India. It is pertinent to mention that the freedom movement of India took momentum in the pre-independence era with the promise of ascertaining equal status to every citizen in the imagined nation state. However, much to the disappointment

of the marginalized groups like the tribals and dalits, Indian nation state failed to stand up to its many promises including equal importance to all in the post-independence milieu. It has been mentioned earlier how the racial discrimination of tribal population continue to surface recurrently mocking the democratic identity of India. Here, Mr. Singh is not a British official nor is he a negative character. Mr. Singh represents the educated and elitist mainstream society of India. Loomba clearly mentions that he is a "well meaning Government officer". However, what is interesting in this statement is that even a well meaning person like Mr. Singh is incompetent of understanding certain problems concerning the tribal population dwelling under the jurisdiction of his administration. He is incapable of comprehending the simple fact that the tribal life-world is not a homogenous entity. Heterogeneous tribal society of India is crammed with different layers of problems and discontentment. A government agency visiting the tribal areas to assess the existential problems of tribal society is supposed to attend to the methodological requirements of the study that would eventually lead to a productive solution, possibly through a healthy dialogue. But Mr. Singh fails to gauge the gravity of the problem and goes unequipped with a casual approach, for apparently he is also a product of the same colonial system that subscribes to the 'self/other' binary. It is pertinent to mention that, certain racial stereotypes on tribal identity are perpetuated without being contested. The notion of tribal being an outsider of the mainstream may be understood as the reiteration of the same colonial design of 'self/other' dichotomy. Loomba's statement also points out the treatment of the tribal population as "children" or perhaps a grown up man with no or comparatively less intellect and therefore it is the duty of the likes of Mr. Singh to bring them "into line with the rest of the country" as if the tribal population is incapable of uplifting themselves without the assistance of mainstream agency. In this story Mr. Singh is depicted as a government officer, who holds the power by virtue of being a member of the mainstream society. On the contrary, the entire tribal population is devoid of any realization of the power structure due to their

subordinate position in the power relations. Loomba's statement also accentuates the statutory power bestowed upon Mr. Singh with the sanction of legitimate authority to choose every possible means to redecorate and modernize the seemingly primitive tribal society so that they can be brought up to the level of acceptance/approval of the mainstream society. The range of choices available at the disposal of Mr. Singh as referred in the statement may imply the exercise of various forms of power ranging from what Althusser calls repressive coercive power to the use of ideololgical state apparatuses such as providing medical facilities, education or even relief materials and food to the malnourished tribals.

Commenting on certain political undercurrent in the colonial representation, Ania Loomba further maintains, "right from its earliest years it deployed diverse strategies and methods of control and of representation" (*Colonialism/Postcolonialism,* 19). Of the many hidden agendas that the colonialists had in the roadmap of their expedition, as they called it, into the land of many fortunes; the most important was the method of controlling the natives. It is quite pertinent to mention here that along with the perfect design and execution of the mechanism of control, what was held equally important was the representation of the natives to the rest of the world as something very distant and obscure not being a part of their culture. It was not the political takeover of the colonial power that caused much damage to the natives in India. Historical records say that in India political and military invasion has remained a recurrent phenomenon in the past considering a long history of raids and plunders carried out by outsiders much before colonization. However, what makes the western colonial enterprise largely impactful and distinguishable from other martial invasions is their employment of a meticulous design of stereotyped representation of the colonial subjects that imprinted an irreparable scar on the consciousness of the natives. It helped the colonial power in gaining legitimate ground for continuing their expedition/exploitation incessantly in a foreign land as if the

inhabitants of the colonized lands were desperately in need of their intervention. Having this in mind, Frantz Fanon maintains,

> The settler makes history; his life is an epoch, an Odyssey. He is the absolute beginning: 'This land was created by us'; he is the unceasing cause: 'If we leave, all is lost, and the country will go back to the Middle Ages'. (*Wretched*, 39-40)

Fanon focuses on psychoanalytic criticism of radical racism and exploitation of the natives that ensued due to colonialism. He contends that the impact of colonialism on the natives is so overarching that it ceases to lose relevance even after formal termination of colonial occupation, for during the process of colonization it implants its traces in the psychological domain through representation of the 'self' and the 'other'. It has been discussed earlier in this chapter that colonial representation served to the purpose of reification of the superiority of the colonial 'self' by placing it in contrast to the denigrated 'other'. Institutionalization of racial inferiority further led to the psychological servitude with acceptance of colonial knowledge as the absolute truth.

Lack of scientific and empirical approach with adequate sensitivity at understanding the inner dynamics of tribal life-world has resulted in the failure of addressing certain issues concerning tribal society in India. It is pertinent to mention that ethnographic texts produced during colonial period were considered to be the only source for accessing information on tribal life-world till recently. Tribal representation of colonial ethnographic texts continued to hold relevance in spite of the apparent intricacies of racial undertone. After independence the Indian government adopted many policies for the uplift of the tribal areas at the initiative of the first Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru and Verrier Elwin. However, rather unfortunately such attempts did not meet the targeted population at the grassroots seemingly due to the continuation of racial prejudice instilled by the colonial ethnographic representations and the expected development did not get materialized. Espousal of various wrong policies to deal with the problems of tribal in colonial India without proper understanding of their life-world

resulted in political and administrative failure. For example, Verrier Elwin in his book *A Philosophy for NEFA* (2009) argues that the policy of detribalization by facilitating cultural assimilation with the mainstream society would make the tribes loathe their own indigenous culture causing loss of their distinctive socio-cultural identities.

Autonomous territories of various tribes especially along the frontiers of Northeast India, excepting the plains of Assam, were almost unexplored and undocumented due to isolationist policy adopted by the British. Ethnographic details on such tribes were based on observatory approach of British administrators and Christian missionaries that largely added to the construction of tribal stereotype as primitive. When Christian missionary works started in the tribal areas of India, they made it clear that their mode of work would be completely on different plane unlike the administrative aggression of the colonial authority. However, it is to be noted that many tribal societies seemingly underwent massive transformation owing to the cultural loss occasioned by religious conversion. Missionary works unquestionably helped tribal societies with education and health during colonial period, but their contribution to the realization of the colonial project of cultural conquest cannot be totally denied. Ethnographic texts, when read under the theoretical premise of narrativity suggested by Hayden White, not only fail to draw a conclusive representation of the colonized body but also poses question on the system of production of knowledge on the colonized natives. White's observation of the historical text as narrative can also be applied to the ethnographic texts as there are ample possibilities of it having been guided by individual ideological prejudices of the ethnographer. Ethnographic texts may be understood as romantic imaginary construction of 'reality' or 'knowledge' with certain individual prejudices for "even purely 'aesthetic' representation of fictional persons and events, can never be completely divorced from political and ideological questions" (Mitchell, 15).

It is pertinent to mention that the fabricated truth concerning tribal identity in colonial ethnography is largely responsible for the internalization and continuation of

racial prejudice in the treatment of the tribal population in postcolonial India. Secondly, the elitist upper caste hegemony, especially after the independence of India, with its rigid caste system and also informed by colonial stereotypes further perpetuated the racial discrimination of tribals. G. N. Devy in his introduction to the book *The Oxford India Elwin: Selected Writings* (2009) mentions "it was natural, therefore, that by the time Elwin made his first trip to a tribal area, the tribals were already a forgotten issue in Indian politics and society" (xvii). Colonial practice of social exclusion of tribal population from the mainstream and stigmatization of their cultural practices as primitive was reproduced in the political spheres as well. Larger portion of state fund was allocated to the development of the urban areas largely populated by the upper caste while the remote tribal areas remained almost untouched by the ongoing changes. Development of infrastructure and communication in tribal dominated areas was not adequately executed. Tribal areas were also deprived from education due to half hearted effort on establishment of educational institution with no educator willing to work in remote areas. Expressing concern over the issue of fallacious representation and discrimination of the tribals in India, Devy maintains,

> …a branch of Orientalism in Europe had emerged in the form of Anthropology, which could perhaps more appropriately be termed 'savageology'. The tenets of savageology were applied to Indian 'tribes', and tribes came to be seen as necessarily primitive…The communities that colonial scholarship had designated primitive continued to be seen as primitive. (xvi)

Devy focuses on the conditions of tribals in India keeping in view of the formation of certain stereotype with the rise of the European colonization and continuation of the same even after the independence of Indian. Tribal population in India was branded as primitive and placed on the fringes of dominant discourse by negation of their cultural value. The exclusion of the tribals as the 'other' of dominant society in India led to further discrimination and exploitation. Socio-economic condition

in the larger portion of tribal society remained untouched by developmental projects due to the continuance of colonial attitude and lack of sensitivity in dealing with the problems of tribal life. The gap between tribal and non-tribal society further widened with the educated elite class taking control of Indian politics and eventually led to certain ethnic movements demanding indigenous rights for autonomy in post-independence period.

Tribal movements in India invariably focus on their demand for tribal autonomy. It may be understood as a strategy developed for reclaiming legitimacy for their traditional system of self-rule which was abolished with successive colonial military expeditions and enforcement of colonial laws in tribal areas. Tribal resistance in Indian context is not a new phenomenon considering a long list of protracted tribal revolts during colonial period. Assertion of the self or one's identity seemingly holds diverse implications not necessarily limiting to political and territorial autonomy. In addition to the apparent motive of self-governance, self-assertion may be understood as an attempt at safeguarding socio-cultural and linguistic identity of the tribals from further corruption. A parallel may be drawn between self assertion and self representation as both share a common goal of empowering a particular community by affirmation of its unique identity.

Autochthonous representation by writers belonging to ethnic communities is a recent phenomenon in Indian literary writing. Given the political undertone of representation, self-representation is not free from the nuances of subjective prejudice. However, reliability of the representation made by an insider enhances, for in this case, the representing agency is not fraught with the consciousness of his/her position in the representational power relations. Instead, self-representation may be understood as an attempt at articulation of resistance by the subaltern communities against socio-economic exploitation and racial discrimination. Assertion of linguistic and cultural identities by the tribals in various forms invariably attend to their distinctive identities that did not get

reflected in the elitist discourse of India. Self-representation by the tribals in India also focuses on the distinguishing factors of their socio-cultural practices from other communities emphasizing the political and sociological blunder of representing them as homogenized group.

In the premise of the above discussion, a conclusive idea can be drawn that representation, as a discourse, is invariably a political phenomenon that involves power relations. It acts as an apparatus of regimentation of power and perpetuation of dominance under the control of the representing authority. Subjective ideological inclination of the representing authority plays an important role in directing the narrative of representation enhancing its incapacity in doing justice to the reality. Analysis of representational texts in terms of its spatial and temporal historicity helps unfold the nuanced ideological implications of representation and the apparent effects it engenders. Postcolonial reading of colonial representation of natives and tribes in India accentuates the realization of political intent of racial subjugation by construction of racial stereotypes through representation. It has also been found that colonial representation involves cultural conquest permanently capturing the ideological domain of the colonized. Perpetuation of colonial construct on tribal life-world in mainstream discourse of India is found to be the result of ideological infusion of tribal stereotypes as the 'other'. Self-representation by the tribals may be seen as an equivalent counter force to the fallacious representations made by an outsider as far as the question of addressing certain issues related to tribal society is concerned.

This argument will be carried forward in the following chapter which would lay special focus on the representation of the tribal in Indian fiction and other narrative.

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CHAPTER-III

INDIAN FICTION AND REPRESENTATION

In this chapter an attempt is made to analyze the pattern of representation in Indian fictional narrative in the premise of the theoretical interpolations on representation as discussed in the previous chapter. The focal point of the discussion will be on the representation of the tribal in fiction written in India from colonial period to the present. It has been observed that representation is not an innocent practice but involves power relation that induces subjugation of the represented substance by the representing agency. Representation is invariably a political undertaking where the 'real' undergoes stages of censorship, very often culminating in fallacious representation by complete distortion of the 'real'. In the similar vein, postcolonial studies of representation provides that colonial representation was instrumental largely in the confirmation of a distinguishing line of difference between the 'self' and the 'other' on the basis of misrepresentation of the 'other' of Europe. Representation of the colonized served the purposes of establishing racial superiority of the Europeans and construction of colonial stereotypes on the native as racially inferior type who needed to be civilized and enlightened with the ideals of European rationalism. Edward Said's book *Orientalism* (1995) offers that imperialist anthropological texts essentially worked on construction of a negative image of the East accentuating its less organized socio-political condition which concurrently legitimized colonial intervention for the establishment of a stable administration. In doing so, the Europeans exacted their position as the emissary of civilization who came to save the colonized race from the immediate crisis of annihilation. It is needless to mention that implicit purpose of the ostensible civilizing mission was shrouded with apparent political and economic interest of the European colonizers.

Redefining the identity of the colonized race, Postcolonial studies provides that representation of the colonized 'other' in colonial narratives without accommodating

their voice involves epistemic violence of denigration of the entire race to sub-human level by negation of their value system. Colonial representation invariably manifests power relations founded on the premise of racial difference. In the context of India, it is observed that the construction of tribal identity relied much on the inputs available in colonial history and ethnographic texts with little consideration of the inner dynamics of tribal society. However, that history is fact and ethnographic texts are products of empirical research is not always a valid claim. In postcolonial studies, the authority of colonial history and ethnography are contested in that they involved subjective racial prejudice and fictionalization of the facts in the representation of the subaltern 'other'.

Examination of literary representation of tribals in colonial India under the theoretical premises of subaltern studies and sociology provides that it often subscribed to the knowledge produced by colonial history and ethnography. Colonial representation in various forms thus contributed to the construction and perpetuation of tribal stereotypes. Nevertheless, field work based modern approach of Marxist historiography and social anthropology facilitated comprehensive understanding of the tribal reality in postcolonial India by way of contesting the colonial concept of Indian tribe. In this premise, an inter-disciplinary discursive approach is highly desirable for the examination of the pattern of tribal representation, for in India, it is largely enmeshed in the precarious practice of radicalization of tribal identity as primitive and racial 'other'. Both literary and non-literary texts concerning tribal representation shall be consulted in this chapter for this purpose.

Post-structuralist reading of narratology postulates that both historiography and fiction have narrative qualities and hence may be perceived as having traces of imagination in their production. Historical narrative construes reality leaning on the faculty of imagination by merger of factual objectivity with individual subjectivity in the similar plane of fictional narrative. Gayatri C. Spivak in her essay "Literary Representation of the Subaltern: Mahasweta Devi's *Stanadayini*" (1987) contests the

myth of disciplinary disparity between history and literary texts in the representation of the subaltern. She foregrounds her argument with a statement that "what is called history will always seem more real to us than what is called literature" (224) drawing upon the theoretical claim of accuracy in the representation of fact in historical writing over literature. She contends that both history and literature involve the common faculty of imagination, especially while representing the subaltern. Political agenda of the narrator intersects with the representation of the subaltern groups in any form of narrative. Both historian and literary writer have to rely on imaginary production of knowledge about the subaltern, for the subaltern cannot articulate its voice having no access to the mode of articulation. Imagination of the narrator or representing agency is fixed to his/her subjectivity. In the case of non-articulate groups, such as tribals, representation has to filter through the subjectivity of the representing agency irrespective of disciplinary approach of history and literature. Authorial subjectivity plays a vital role in both these disciplines owing to the narrative technique involved in the representation of the represented substance. She rather contends that both historians and literary writers work on the similar plane while representing the subaltern society as she maintains,

> Those who read or write literature can claim as little of subaltern status as those who read or write history. The difference is that the subaltern as subject is supposed to be imagined in one case and real in another. I am suggesting that it is a bit of both cases. The writer acknowledges this by claiming to do research (my fiction is also history). The historian might acknowledge this by working at the mechanics of representation (my history is also fictive). (224)

Meenakshi Mukherjee, in her book *Realism and Reality: The Novel and Society in India* (1985), commenting on the lexical meaning of the term *Itihasa* contends that in ancient Indian tradition of history writing presentation of facts was never accorded with utmost preference. Instead, *Itihasa* writing was a composition of *Kavya* (poetry) and *Natya* (drama) as *Ramayan* stands as a *Kavya* while *Mahabharata* is considered as

Itihasa in Sanskrit tradition of Indian literature. The concept of *Itihasa* writing was rather an amalgamation of factual details and imaginary fiction with amplification of the facts to super human level. Pre-colonial history writing did not emphasize on the accurate representation of facts. Till the colonial period, India did not have the tradition of history writing in the modern sense. It was after the introduction of English education in India that the English educated urban centers started exploring the discipline of historiography with the awakening of nationalist consciousness and an immediate urge to learn about the past of India as well as Britain. With the rising consciousness of nationalism, especially in Bengal, Indian writers of the late nineteenth century developed keen interest in the writing of historical novels with a view to glorify the collective Indian identity to further promote nationalistic agenda. Indian writers thus indulged in the reiteration of the ancient tradition of fictionalizing the facts to cater to their purpose. Mukherjee's argument contends that both historical and literary narratives have a common agenda of serving the intended purpose of the narrator.

In colonial India, ethnographic details were often considered to be the only reliable source of accessing knowledge on certain tribal communities owing to the apparent difficulty of penetrating the inaccessible geographical terrains of tribal habitats. Even in the present context, ethnographic details serve the purpose of re-tracing the past of certain tribal communities of India due to the absence of writing culture in tribal society. However, it is pertinent to mention that representation of tribal in ethnographic texts were largely impacted by colonial racial prejudice and hence it comes under the radar of scrutiny in the postcolonial studies despite anthropology's claim of employment of empirical approach. Legitimacy of nineteenth century European anthropology is often contested in postcolonial reading on the ground that it gained momentum during the colonial period under the premise of evolutionist theory of exploring the primitive condition of mankind assuming Europe as the archetype of civilization. In India, colonial anthropology served the European purpose of studying the nature of 'other' races with

empirical evidence. Identification of the tribals as primitive, animist, forest dwellers, born criminals, nomadic, backward tribes, adivasis, vanajatis etc. may be understood as identity markers coined and assigned to certain group of people due to the apparent cultural and racial difference from the mainstream Indian society. Ethnographic representation, with legitimization conferred by the ostensible empirical evidence collected by the colonial ethnographers, constructed colonial stereotypes on the identities of tribal communities.

India, having been under British rule for almost two centuries has a long experience of protracted racial subjugation and socio-politico-economic exploitation of colonial regime. It has been discussed in the previous chapter that colonialism occasions seizure of the mind of colonized race along with other forms of exploitation. Colonization of mind leaves an indelible impression of inferiority at ideological level that continues to resonate even in postcolonial condition. It is pertinent to mention that certain sections of a society with colonial past do not succeed in dismantling the stereotyped colonial construct even after the proliferation of decolonization process. End of colonial rule does little change to the deplorable socio-economic condition of such sections of postcolonial society despite remedial measures such as various developmental schemes for their welfare. In India, consequences of colonization at psychological level can be seen in the ubiquitous maintenance of difference between the SC/ST communities and the mainstream. A sharp disparity is rather easily noticeable in terms of socio-economic conditions of the SC/ST communities and the upper caste mainstream society of India long after independence. SC/ST communities comprising the tribals and dalits constitute the most neglected and exploited section of Indian society despite framing of many constitutional safeguards for ensuring protection of their cultural identities. It is observed that government schemes devised for socio-economic advancement of the tribals and dalits seldom reach the grassroots. Corruption as well as

racial and caste prejudice at the administrative level are mostly the major causes of such incongruity.

The origin of such incongruity may be traced in the age old tradition of classification of Indian society in accordance with the norms of caste system. Indian society is divided into four major castes viz. Brahman, Kshatriya, Baishya and Sudra as prescribed by the *Manusmriti* or the Laws of Manu. Sudras are positioned at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. Traditionally, menial works were attributed to the Sudras and they were not allowed to climb the ladder of social mobility despite aspiration and ability to improve their condition. Sudras were deprived of education since the construction of the caste system and any attempt at improving their socio-economic condition was vehemently opposed by the authoritative upper caste society of pre-colonial period. Sudras constitute the SC communities as per the constitution of India. During colonial period, British government cultivated the already graded social structure of Indian society to the convenience of its administration, for caste system was clearly a deterrent factor in the consolidation of Indian mass against colonial subjugation. British government maintained a neutral stance despite the socio-economic exploitation and discrimination of the lower caste by the higher caste Indians during colonial period. Instead, they adhered to the caste hierarchy while appointing Indians in government jobs and other important position, for the caste induced social imbalance inversely benefited colonial interest.

Tribal population of India, on the other hand, was not included within the jurisdiction of caste system owing to their isolated habitat as well as socio-cultural and linguistic dissimilarity with the mainstream. Tribal population of India was rather treated as an outsider of the mainstream society and notable attempt was yet to be made for consolidating them within the greater paradigm of Indian society. With the growing intensity of colonial expeditions for expansion of colonial territory, hitherto unexplored autonomous tribal areas were gradually brought under the purview of colonial

administration. It is pertinent to mention that colonial expedition into the autonomous territories of the tribals ensued several protracted resistance from the tribal people resulting in violent clash and bloodshed as "there were several revolts including Birsa Munda Revolt of 1895 for protection of tribal rights in land and forest as also tribal culture" (Verma, 24). British government enacted separate juridical measures for the administration of the tribal areas considering the apparent difference in the socio-linguistic structure of the tribals from the mainstream societies. British administration envisaged that the tribals of India must be administered separately for any attempt at their assimilation with the mainstream would cause harm to their distinctive socio-cultural identity. However, in reality, institutionalization of a new administration and imposition of a specific judicial code in tribal areas subverted their autonomous political system. British administration put restriction on their access to forest produce and imposed taxation on land use. Agrarian and forest gatherer tribal communities of India were brought under the purview of monetary economy with colonial control of tribal areas compelling them to look for an alternative means of economic sustenance for the British levied tax in cash. It is pertinent to mention that tribal economy was traditionally based on barter system. Introduction of monetary economy created a rupture in tribal life-world for it was totally an alien system for them. Moreover, tribal communities were not well versed in the calculation and management of money owing to illiteracy and lack of experience of directly interacting with the mainstream society. Having been robbed of their freedom and traditional mode of economic sustenance, the tribals of India were forced to move out from their original habitat in search of employment. The ill-equipped tribals with their characteristic innocence and ignorance were further exploited by the mainstream society when they came in contact. Unabated exploitation and discrimination of the tribals has engendered severe discontentment further leading to many tribal movements demanding justice in India since colonial period.

In the premise of the above discussion, the present study seeks to undertake a detailed examination of the nature of tribal representation in Indian fiction and the political undertone of such representations at the backdrop of protracted discrimination and socio-politico-economic inequality. It is crucial to have a brief outline of the concept of 'tribe' in the context of India before arriving at the representation of tribals in fiction.

It is pertinent to mention that India is the leading country in the entire world in terms of tribal population. India arguably has the largest tribal population with 10.43 crores of population as per Census record of 2011. They constitute 8.60% of the total population of the country occupying about 15% of the total land mass. Varieties of terms are used in India to denote tribal communities such as Adivasis, Adimjatis, Vanajatis, Mlecchas, Janajatis, hill and forest tribes, backward Hindus and more recently as indigenous people but in constitutional terms they are known as Scheduled Tribes (S.T.). There are a total of 705 notified Scheduled Tribes in various states and Union Territories of India as per Census, 2011 with highest concentration in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and the Northeastern region comprising of eight states viz. Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura, Manipur and Sikkim. The major portion of tribal population in India is constituted by Gonds, Bhils, Santhals, Oraons and Minas. Tribals are considered to be the indigenous people of India and their existence in the country dates back to the pre-Vedic period. However, indigenity of all the notified Scheduled Tribes of India is a much debated topic of present times considering the histories of migration of many of them at different period and settlement along the hills, forests as well as river valleys. The term Adivasi means early settlers of the country indicating their pre-historic settlement that also corroborate to the claim of the tribals having the earliest civilization on this land. It is often argued that the tribals of India had a glorious past in the pre-historic period but due to lack of written records and supporting evidence such claims cannot be firmly substantiated.

Etymological origin of the term 'tribe' may be traced in the Latin term 'Tribus'. The term 'Tribus' was used to denote the three divisions of indigenous people of Rome namely Tintienses, Ramnenses and Luceres. The term was basically used to divide the Roman citizens for administrative purpose without any apparent derogatory connotations as of today. In the subsequent period the term tribe was invariably used to signify political unit of several clans occupying a specific geographical territory over which they held their control. The name of the particular tribe was synonymously used as the name of the geographical area within their administration. It is argued that the name Bharat originated from the tribe 'Bharata'. Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura, Santhal pargana, Bodoland etc. are some examples of naming a particular region in the similar fashion. However, it is pertinent to mention that the connotation of the term tribe has undergone significant transformation with the term being used predominantly by the European anthropologists and racial inferiorization of the people classified as tribes. Colonial anthropologists used the term pejoratively as backward, uncivilized and most importantly as the 'other' of European 'self' to identify certain races with distinctive socio-cultural identity living in isolation from the mainstream Indian society. In this premise, it is pertinent to mention that a satisfactory and accurate definition of the term 'tribe' has not been arrived at till date despite several attempts at defining the term in Indian context. Having this in mind Virginius Xaxa in his essay "Transformation of Tribes in India" (1999) argues,

> When the British began to write on Indian society, the term 'tribe' was used in general parlance in more than one sense: in reference to a group of people claiming descent from a common ancestor, and in reference to a group living in a primitive or barbarous condition. The former usage has a longer history than the one which became prevalent after the colonial encounter. Yet it is the sense that developed later (the primitive stage of living) that the term tribe' has come to be

mainly conceptualized in anthropological writing. The term has thus undergone changes in the concept in the course of history. (1519)

With the expansion of European colonialism in the nineteenth Century triggered by industrial revolution and sudden rise in Europe's population, anthropology gained momentum as an organized discipline of empirical study. Social anthropology uses the term tribe to denote a particular race occupying certain territory following the Roman model. However, in India, the European anthropologists used the term to denote certain people with the racial traits designated as primitive, lacking in civilization. With colonial definition of 'tribe' emphasizing primitiveness, tribals of India were reduced to a stereotyped entity by negation of the significance of their socio-cultural value system. The constitutional term 'Scheduled Tribe' was primarily a colonial creation which was adopted for the purpose of identification and administration of a specific group of people. In the initial census report of colonial government the terms 'tribe' and 'caste' were used synonymously for the purpose of identification and classification of the native population. In the Census report of 1891 for the first time a sub-heading of 'Forest Tribes' was added under the category of 'Agricultural and Pastoral castes' of India. In the Census report of 1931 they were called the 'Primitive Tribes' after several changes in between. Later the Government of India Act, 1935 described them as 'Backward Tribes' of India owing to the location of their habitats in the less developed areas of forests and hilly terrains. However, in the Census report of 1941, they were simply called as 'Tribes'. In 1950, after independence, the Indian constitution described the tribal population as 'Scheduled Tribes' for the first time ensuring safeguard to their cultural and linguistic identity. In 1950 as per the order issued by the constitution of India a list of 212 tribes were declared as 'Scheduled Tribes'. The list of ST population has witnessed considerable growth over times as new tribes are being added to the existing list. As per the Census report of 2011 a total of 705 tribes have been enlisted as Scheduled Tribes.

Colonial anthropologists classified Indian tribes into three major stocks such as the Negritos, the Mongoloids and the Mediterranean without much consideration of the heterogeneity in terms of socio-cultural and linguistic identity of different sub groups within the overarching term of Indian tribe. Colonial administration further followed the similar design of identification and classification of tribal communities for the apparent purpose of administration. The Negritos constitute the earliest settlers of Indian continent but their existence is scarce in the present day India. However, their traces can be found in the genetics of certain tribal communities inhabiting in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and some parts of Kerala. Tribal population scattered in the Northeastern states are the representatives of the Mongoloid stock. The Mediterranean stock of tribal population is represented by the Dravidian linguistic family. The Mediterranean stock constitutes the largest portion of tribal population of India and is largely concentrated in the tribal belts of Southern and Central India.

India, after independence, became the largest democracy in the world embracing secular democratic political system with a pledge to safeguard its demographic diversity and to ensure equality to all the citizens in terms of representation. Nevertheless, majority of tribal population of India continues to struggle for equality in term of socio-economic condition and representations in government jobs and policy making. After more than seventy years of independence, tribal condition in India has not undergone remarkable transformation due to the treatment of tribal society as the 'other' of the mainstream. The term 'tribe' is used in India rather pejoratively owing to the apparent socio-cultural and racial difference of tribal society from the mainstream. It is observed that tribal society runs on egalitarian system unlike the mainstream society which is graded with caste hierarchy. Culturally tribal society do not have any affinity with the mainstream society for "until the modern times of the British era, most of them had not become an organic part of the mainstream Hindu society" (Shah and Bara, 3). Virginius Xaxa in his book *State, Society, and Tribes: Issues in Post-Colonial India* (2008) argues

that situating Indian tribes under the category of caste would lead to fallacious construction of the concept of tribal. Criticizing the perspectives adopted by the sociological and anthropological writings, he warns that studying tribal society in relation to caste would result in the danger of disavowal of their distinctive cultural identities. Therefore, he suggests that each tribe should be viewed as a distinctive group of people with its distinctive life-world and area of concentration by shifting from the colonial perspective of tribal studies. He contends that a tribal society should not be pigeonholed merely on the basis of its socio-cultural identity in colonial model but treated as a proper society with its own set of cosmology comprising of individual language, territory, culture and value system.

Commenting on the representation of tribals in Indian popular culture as the 'other' of the mainstream society with reiteration of the colonial model of emphasizing racial difference, Mahasweta Devi in her essay "The Jharkhand Movement and Separatism" (2010) argues,

> Tribals on the screen or the stage inevitably wear feathered head-dresses if they are males and flowers if they are women, wear scanty clothing – near-nakedness is compulsory – just to emphasize their innocence. And lastly, the typical dance and music. Not that these are not part of tribal life, but certainly not in the way they are shown. This synthetic image still exists even in the minds of the educated people (145)

Devi's comment draws on the fallacy of continuing with the representation of stereotyped image of tribals by the educated mainstream society of India. She contends that Indian society is largely dominated by the caste Hindu groups and their hegemonic social structure has not been able to liberate itself from the rigid discriminatory practices towards weaker sections despite assurance of equality to all by the Constitution of India. She further maintains that economic exploitation and social-political discrimination of

the subaltern tribal communities are facilitated by a concerted effort of the state and the dominant groups in post-independent India.

It is inferred that the apparent lack of improvement in the living condition of the tribals is the result of such effort at subjugation and discrimination. The condition of subalterneity in the context of tribal communities of India is rather a systematic imposition leveraged by not allowing any space for the articulation of their voices in an elitist mainstream discourse. Owing to their subaltern condition, historical and ethnographic details on the lived realities of the tribals remain shrouded under the ambivalence of nonconformity. A.A. Macdonell in his book *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (1899) argues that no serious attempt was made on history writing in India as he maintains, "history is the weak spot of Indian literature. In fact, it is non-existent." (8). He further comments that no reliable history can be found on ancient India for the tradition of writing history using scientific methodology was rather unknown to the Indians.

In this premise, it is rather easily comprehensible that retracing the knowledge of tribal past is not possible in the elitist historiography of India. The new generation of history writers in nineteenth century India made attempts at chronicling the events but it was largely centered on the urban areas that largely subscribed to the realities of the mainstream society. The nineteenth century Indian history writing committed the methodological error of not being inclusive of all the sections of the society. Tribals, having been located on the margins of the society, both conceptually and physically, were seldom a part of historical narrative in India. Furthermore, representation of tribals as the 'other' of the mainstream in the colonial ethnography largely affected the pattern of tribal representation in historical texts. The English educated generation of Indian historians of nineteenth century was constituted by upper caste/class Indians who naturally subscribed to the knowledge derived from the colonial ethnographic texts due to the acute dearth of resources on tribal representation. As a consequence, the definition

of 'tribe' in Indian context still remains incomplete with no consistent coherence to their reality. Jaganath Pathy in his essay titled "The Idea of Tribe and the Indian Scene" (1989) draws on the missing coherence of theory and praxis in the context of defining a tribe as he argues, "…uncritical acceptance of the administrative category has contributed to the perpetuation of certain stereotyped images of such communities that were popularized by colonial rule" (346). Here, he indicates the erroneous tradition of following colonial records and stereotyped notions in terms of dealing with the matters of certain groups of people such as tribals after the independence of India. Administrators as well as historians of independent India adopted an apathetic approach in addressing the issues of tribals that resulted in further deterioration of tribal condition. Colonial construct on tribal identity further gave currency to the image of inferiority with the racial tag of primitiveness lacking in civilizational standards. The perpetuation of such colonial construct in post-independent India has further fueled the discriminatory practice of the mainstream society.

In the recent times, the discipline of tribal studies has acquired multi-dimensional approaches of examining tribal life-world. Their study of tribal tradition and their distinctive features have provided that it is incorrect to perceive tribals as inferior race as represented by the colonial ethnography. Tribal communities, especially from the northeast Indian states, do not subscribe to the colonial definition of 'tribe' as backward and uncivilized race. Instead, they take pride in their unique tradition, distinctive life-world and self dignity. They have a rich cultural heritage of oral folk narratives, songs, customs, value systems and food habits. Tribal life-world is replete with a plethora of cultural diversity and intimate internalization of ecological importance. Traditionally, tribal communities have a symbiotic relationship with forest areas. Forest areas are considered to be the life support system of the tribal communities, for they have been dependent on forest resources for their socio-economic sustenance. Owing to their belief

in animism, forest also forms the locus of tribal pantheon. Tribal art and oral culture of myths and folk tales are also largely related to the forest.

However, it is pertinent to mention that with the enforcement of Indian Forest Act, 1927 by the British government in the tribal areas, their age-old relation with forest had been badly affected. During colonial period, forest became the readily available source of commercial gain and revenue collection. Forest Acts primarily detached the tribals from the source of their economic and cultural sustenance as "this reduced the access to forest areas and forest products for the forest dwellers, forcing them to make imprudent use to the forest which they have been nurturing for generations" (Roy Burman, 125). Forest dwelling tribal communities often fell on the wrong side of the law due their ignorance about the new Forest Act and were subjected to heavy fine and sometimes even imprisonment. It is rather an irony that notwithstanding the enactment of policies for the protection of forest areas and wild life, a large scale depletion of Indian forest took place during the colonial period. Colonial authority engaged in the felling of trees to procure timber largely for ship building and other construction works such as building of bridges, railway tracks etc. Ramachandra Guha in his article titles "An Early Environmental Debate: The Making of the 1878 Forest Act" (1990) argues,

> The early years of the expansion of the railway network, 1853 onwards, led to tremendous deforestation in peninsular India owing to the railways' requirements of fuel wood and construction timber. Huge quantities of durable timber were also needed for use as sleepers across the newly laid tracks. (66)

In 1952 India's total forest cover was estimated at 22% of the total land mass in comparison to 40% as estimated in the year 1854. Large areas of forest cover were also cleared for the purpose of setting up tea estates in Assam that affected the wild life as well as the indigenous population. A huge number of tribal communities from Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh were hired by the colonial authority as labourers for clearing the forest areas and to work in the tea

gardens. Tribal youths were lured by the recruiting agencies with promises of better living conditions and handsome salary at the workplace. It is needless to mention that those promises were never maintained and many of the workers fled to escape the torturous labour and unhealthy living condition. Those tribes who disappeared from their place of employment were declared as 'criminal tribes' by the colonial regime, and most of them are still stigmatized as denotified tribes of India.

In the post-independence period, Indian government further reiterated the arbitrary tone of Indian Forest Act, 1927 framed by the British government. The forest policy of 1952 formulated by Indian government aimed at expansion of forest areas to 33% of the total land mass of India that further solicited inclusion of tribal habitats under the proposed forest areas. R.C Verma report provides that "…77,661 acres of land in the 'reserve forest' of Andhra Pradesh was under cultivation by tribal prior to enactment of the Forest Conservation Act (FCA) in 1980" (*Indian*, 76). With the expansion of forest areas in India, tribal areas were officially declared as under the jurisdiction of department of forestry that invalidated their traditional claim. Verma further contends that forest policies in India have rendered the tribal communities economically poor and unsustainable primarily by separating them from their traditional source of livelihood and secondarily by converting them into encroachers in the lands they traditionally owned since pre-historic period (*Indian*, 76).

In the post-independence period, modern India started various mega projects such as hydroelectric power plant, industrialization, mining etc. to boost national economy under the aegis of nation building process. It is needless to mention that owing to the fact of having the highest reserve of water, mineral and forest resources; tribal areas were the most affected by such mega projects, especially by mining and mega dam projects. Mismanagement of industrial waste has been identified as one of the major causes of pollution in tribal habitat affecting both humans and nature. Migration of other communities to the tribal areas following industrialization has added further threat to the

distinctive cultural identity of tribals while economic exploitation by the outsiders has been rampant since colonial period. Tribal population living in their traditional habitat since pre-historic times arguably did not require any land holding documents till the enforcement of revenue system by the state. Ignorance of the idiom of administrative system may also be understood as one of the causes for tribals not having land holding documents. Lacking in government record of land holding, tribals could not defend their authority over their traditional habitat when the state order for land acquisition was passed for developmental projects. Present statistics provides that a large number of tribal populations have been evacuated and displaced from their original habitat in the wake of mega dam projects, mining and construction of industrial areas in India. R.C Verma maintains,

> It is estimated that between 1951-2000, about 21.5 million persons were displaced. Of these, about 17 million were displaced by dams, 2.1 million by mines, 1.3 million by industries and about 1.1 million by other projects. Out of these, about 5.6 million persons could be rehabilitated, leaving a backlog of about 15.9 million displaced persons. (64-65)

Displacement and deprivation from forest resources rendered the tribals economically poor for the measures for "the quality and durability of rehabilitation effort are poor all over India and more so in the tribal area" (Chaudhury and Patnaik, 13). It has been noticed that pertaining to the powerlessness in the premise of inability to produce valid document for land holding and lacking in resisting voice, tribals often get into negotiation with the authority. However, such negotiations of rehabilitation and compensation seldom go in favour of the tribals. In the present context, majority of the cases concerning rehabilitation and compensation against the loss incurred due to displacement remain unsettled owing to corruption and apathy at the bureaucratic level. Displaced tribal communities further face the problem of unemployment owing to lack of modern education and vocational training.

Having been totally separated from forest resources and displaced from their traditional habitat, some tribal communities took to farming for their sustenance shifting to other locations but majority of them remained unskilled and unemployed having been accustomed to their traditional habit of sustaining through hunting and gathering. In this context Mahasweta Devi while interviewed by Gayatri C. Spivak contends, "as long as the forests were there, the hunting tribes did not suffer so much, because the forests used to provide them with food, shelter, timber, hunting. But now that the forests are gone, the tribals are in dire distress" (Author, x).

Industrialization and development of urban centers surrounding the industrial areas cause the influx of outsiders such as businessmen and industrial workers into the adjacent tribal areas. Migration of new population triggers a large scale demographic change in tribal areas jeopardizing their distinctive socio-cultural identity. Tribal identity in Assam and Tripura in northeast India has been under greater threat due to massive cross-border migration of non-tribals from neighboring Bangladesh. In several districts of these two states tribal population has turned into minorities and gradually losing socio-political dominance. There have also been instances of non-tribal businessmen taking advantage of the innocence and ignorance of the tribals. Money lenders from the mainstream non-tribal societies started their business at an astonishingly high interest rate with incomprehensible calculation of the interest since colonial period. Illiterate tribal population got easily entrapped in the evil design of the non-tribal money lenders and gradually lost possession of their lands eventually becoming victims of the system of bonded labour. In india the system of bonded labour is prevalently found in Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Gujarat, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. The total number of bonded labour in these thirteen states is estimated at 16.17 lakhs. The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 of Indian Constitution has abolished the system of bonded labour in India. The Act also provides release of bonded labourers from their debts.

However, the system of economic exploitation of tribals as labourers continues in industrial establishments and construction sites.

Government schemes formulated for the development of tribal areas rarely reach the grassroots owing to the apathetic effort at the bureaucratic level for it is a known fact that Indian Bureaucracy is largely dominated by the upper caste society. According to Verma the representation of SC/ST and OBC people in class-1 government services is 8% in spite of them constituting 68% of total population of the country whereas representation of Brahmins is 70.2 %. The apparent disparity in terms of representation of ST population in government sectors is due to the unequal distribution of government schemes for empowerment of the marginalized groups. Government schemes are formulated for the development of the tribal people but owing to the wide communication gap and lack of awareness about the importance of education, tribal participation in such schemes are not satisfactory. Moreover, the remote and rural tribal areas rarely have better facilities for formal and vocational education should they wish to qualify themselves for organized sector of employment as skilled labourer.

According to the Census report of 2011, literacy rate among the ST population is 59%, which is much lower than the average literacy rate of all India level. One of the major causes of low literacy rate among the tribals is the medium of instruction in school level. It is often observed that tribal children find it difficult to follow the instructions of their teachers due to linguistic barrier. Unfamiliar medium of instruction causes disinterest among the tribal children lowering the efficacy of education. Article 350 (A) of Indian Constitution ensures the use of mother tongue of minority groups as the medium of instruction at primary level but it has been observed that concerned government has not implemented any convincing scheme to provide such facilities at large scale. It is still continuing on experimental basis not catering to the needs of the tribal children. Hence, it may be contended that poverty and lack of development in tribal areas is the result of the concerted effort of the state and other non-tribal

communities. In the premise of acute poverty and lack of development at the ground level, tribal population started migrating towards urban areas where they are largely employed in the unorganized sectors such as labourers in the construction sites without healthy working environment. In most of the cases labourers engaged in the unorganized sectors face exploitation as they are not paid wages according to national standard. Deplorable condition of health facility and proper sanitation are other alarming concerns of the tribal areas that need to be addressed by the concerned authority. It is rather unfortunate that tribals have not been benefited by the implementation of developmental projects by the government with the justification of uplifting the socio-economic condition of the country. Rural areas inhabited by the tribals are yet to be connected with electrification. Most of the tribal areas suffer from draught during dry season due to lack of proper irrigation. Scarcity of potable water in rural areas inhabited by tribal communities is a common sight in the present context. In spite of simultaneous expansion of urban areas taking place with industrialization, it is observed that considerably less tribal population is found in the urban set up as they are often compelled to retreat to the rural areas being unable to sustain the exploitation of much advanced mainstream population that migrate to the tribal areas with urbanization. It may therefore be argued that developmental projects have invariably benefitted the outsiders at the cost of further deterioration of tribal society and ecological harm. In this context Chaudhury and Patnaik argues,

> The planned development programmes have almost completed half a decade, but their outcome has been frustrating…The tribal who gets the programme, feels cheated due to lack of a follow up programme, feudal mentality of the implementing officials besides corruption for a better share in the developmental programmes. This has led to revolts, movements in tribal areas. (*Indian*, 11)

It is also pertinent to focus on the connotations of the terms of 'denotified tribes', 'nomadic tribes' and 'semi-nomadic tribes' for a fair understanding of the concept of

Indian tribes in this discussion. Certain tribal communities of India were notified as 'in born criminals' by the British administrators under the Criminal Tribal Act, 1871 especially after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. These tribes are now known as denotified tribes after the repeal of the Act by Government of India after independence. It has already been mentioned above that during many expeditions into the autonomous tribal areas, with the apparent purpose of expanding their territory, colonial authority faced strong resistance from the tribal communities. Resistance by the tribal communities may be understood as a natural reaction on their part, for the presence of foreign power in their land posed threat to their autonomy. They rebelled against the British power for the protection of their autonomy and right over forest lands and traditional habitat. Tribal rebellions also sharpened the issue of non-payment of taxes against the backdrop of exploitation by the imperial forces that led to the conflict of interests. However, in the unequal conflict between traditional weapon of bows and arrows against well organized troops and artilleries, the tribal uprisings were rather easily subdued. Some of the important resistances by the tribes of India are Halba rebellion (1774), Bhil revolt (1818), Kol Mutiny (1831), Santhal Rebellion (1855), Birsa Movement (1895), Kandh Rising (1837-1856), Anglo-Kuki War (1917-1919), Zeliangrong Movement (1920-1930) etc. The colonial administration sensed a potential threat to their authority from these tribes and hence identified them as communities having hereditary criminal tendency. Under the Criminal Tribal Act, 1871; these tribes were kept under continuous surveillance and subjected to breach on freedom of movement. The Act also involved construction of stereotype for it criminalized the entire community. In the year 1952, after independence, the Criminal Tribal Act, 1871 was repealed and the tribal communities earlier notified as criminals became 'denotified tribes'. Some of these tribes were nomadic in nature as they moved from one place to the other for their sustenance through gathering food from the readily available sources in the forest. These tribes are presently known as 'nomadic' and 'semi-nomadic' tribes respectively depending on the

frequency and distance covered during their movement. However, the racially prejudiced Indian mainstream society was apprehensive of setting these tribal communities completely free from the stigma of criminality imposed upon them by the British government. Therefore, the Habitual Offenders Act, 1952 was enacted by Indian government with a view to keep surveillance over the movements and activities of these tribes. With this new Act, Indian government continued with the colonial design of derogation and racial subjugation soliciting double discrimination of violating their freedom at bureaucratic level as well as keeping the racial stereotype alive in general perception. Tamil Nadu has the highest number of denotified tribes with 71 tribal communities still carrying the burden of racial stigmatization. Members of denotified tribes, including the new born, are classified as criminals under this controversial Act, which is a pure case of human rights violation and racial discrimination. Several Indian tribes such as the Pardhis, Kanjars, Ramoshis and Vanjaris are often subjected to police atrocities and arrested without warrant pertaining to the 'criminal' tag imposed and retained by the state. Most of these tribes are deprived of the constitutional safe guards provided to the ST communities by the Constitution of India as they are yet to be officially enlisted as Scheduled Tribes. The Renke Commission Report states,

> In India roughly 10 percent of the population is Denotified and Nomadic. While the number of Denotified Tribes is about 150, the population of Nomadic Tribes consists of about 500 different communities. While the Denotified Tribes have almost settled in various States of the country, the Nomadic Communities continue to be largely nomadic in pursuit of their traditional professions. (42)

Historians and social anthropologists are of the opinion that the Indo-Aryan migration during 1800-1500 BCE solicited a large scale migration of nomadic Aryan race into India from the North-West. Their settlement in the Indus Valley and Ganges Plain resulted in a rupture of the existent civilization of the tribal chiefs. It is believed that the arrival of Aryan race challenged the tribal authority of the Dravidians that led to

protracted clash between these two races. The Dravidians eventually lost their ground and their areas of dominance were conquered by the Aryans. R.C. Verma opines that the subjugated Dravidians were made to serve as menial labourers under the Aryan race and eventually constituted the present day Sudras (*Indian Tribes*, 4). A large portion of the Dravidian population retreated to the forest areas of southern part of the continent and established a new settlement to avoid contact with the Aryans. These forest dwelling Dravidian stocks are believed to the ancestors of Indian tribes. The Dravidians were also called the Dashyus or the enemy of the Aryan kingdom owing to occurrences of sporadic clashes between these two warring races. These hypothetical claims are not completely beyond the scope of contestation due to the lack of supporting empirical evidence and written history on ancient India. It has however been established that the Dravidian race did flourish within the present day geographical map of India before the advent of the Aryan race.

D.D. Kosambi in his book *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline* (1975) argues that "the process of Aryanisation of the tribals and tribalization of the Aryans was on (27). Kosambi accentuates the process of assimilation of tribals with the Aryan race during the later Vedic period (1000 to 600 BCE) when cultural exchange between these two neighbouring races started. Historical and anthropological details on the migration of Aryan race reveal that they were nomadic in character and sustained largely through pastoral set up. They did not know the art of agriculture before their settlement in the Ganges Plain. It is believed that they learnt farming from the existent civilization of India and adopted a new pattern of permanent settlement by abandoning nomadic life. Their settlement in India also solicited cultural exchange between the Aryans and the indigenous population of India which is largely reflected in the ancient Indian literature.

The *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, two epics of Indian ancient literature, contains the mention of tribals as 'Sudras', 'Darvidas', 'Sabaras', 'Ahiras' and 'Pulindas'. For

example, mention may be made of the characters of *Vanaras* as represented in the *Ramayana*, who helped *Rama* in retrieving his wife *Sita* who was abducted by *Ravana*. It is believed that the indigenous tribal population of southern India who engaged in cultural exchange with the Aryans was depicted as the *Vanaras*. The *Mahabharata* contains the character of *Ekalavya*, a tribal boy, who learnt the knowledge of archery and war from the *raj guru* (royal teacher) *Dronacharya* secretly watching him from distance when the later was teaching the royal princes. *Ekalavya* was asked by *Dronacharya* to cut his thumb as *guru dakshina* (tuition fees of teacher) for secretly learning from his teaching. It is often argued that *Dronacharya* being an upper caste Hindu did not approve of the fact that a tribal boy should learn the art of war which is strictly a domain of the Kshatriyas. *Mahabharata* also has the mention of *Ghatotkoch*, identified as *Rakshasa* but arguably a tribal, who fought in the *Kurukshetra* war from the *Pandava*'s side. He is said to be the son of *Bhima* and *Hidimbi*. *Hidimbi* fell in love with *Bhima*, the second son of *Pandavas*, during the period of their exile and with the consent of *Bhima*'s mother *Kunti* they got married. However, *Hidimbi* was not conferred with the rights and privileges of a royal wife arguably due to her racial difference and rigid caste system.

A. K. Chaturvedi in his book *Tribals in Indian English Novel* (2008) contends that till the period of *Ramayana*, tribals in ancient Indian literature was modeled on Rousseau's philosophical concept of 'noble savage' emphasizing the innocence and inherent goodness of the indigene. Notwithstanding the apparent racial differences, the Aryans developed a sense of tolerance and co-existence with the indigenous tribes as can be inferred from the depiction of the *Vanaras* as an ally of *Rama* in the *Ramayana*. However, by the era of *Mahabharata*, Indian society became graded strictly on the basis of the rigid system of caste. It has been mentioned above that the terms 'tribe' and 'caste' were used interchangeably in ancient India owing to lack of accurate definition of tribes. However, it is believed that indigenous population that accepted caste system was placed in the lowest strata of caste hierarchy as Sudras, while those who chose to remain outside

the jurisdiction of caste dominated society were subjected to racial derogation as *Rakshasas*, *Asuras*, *Danavas* and *Daityas*.

From the above discussion it may be inferred that tribals in India were not completely isolated entity. Instead, there was a gradual process of assimilation of the tribals into the mainstream society that largely gained momentum during the feudal period (400-1000 AD). Many historians and anthropologists in India are of the opinion that assimilation of the tribals into mainstream is a continuous process. Tribals are gradually being transformed into caste through the process of Hinduization and Sanskritization as they invariably tend to imbibe the belief system and practices of neighbouring Hindu society. M.N. Srinivas in his book *The Cohesive Role of Sanskritization and other Essays* (1989) mentions,

> Sanskritization may be briefly defined as the process by which a low caste or tribe or other group takes over the customs, rituals, beliefs, ideology and style of life of a high and, in particular, a twice born (dwija) caste. The Sanskritization of a group has usually the effect of improving its position in the local caste hierarchy. (56)

Srinivas' definition of *Sanskritization* is based on the evolutionist theory of nineteenth century anthropology for it emphasizes on the transition of the social status of a particular group of people towards civilization, in this case through assimilation into the caste hierarchy. However, Virginius Xaxa strongly opposes the notion of Indian tribals becoming caste for "even after undergoing Hinduization, tribes by and large remain outside the hierarchical structure of Hindu society" (*State*, 18). He contends that tribals of India have not abandoned their cultural practices even after being declared as Hindus officially. Instead, they maintain closer affinity with the fellow tribal communities than with the caste Hindu non-tribal communities for "they are all tribes because they all stood more or less outside of Hindu civilization and not because they were all at exactly the same stage of evolution" (The Concept, 76). Moreover it is not

possible to classify tribal communities within the caste hierarchy of the Hindu society in accurate manner given the fact that tribal societies still follow an egalitarian pattern unlike the caste system. Xaxa further maintains that, "tribes, however, do not identify and designate themselves as belonging to different castes in the sense used and understood by outsiders and social scientists" (State, 20). Andre Beteille in his essay "The Concept of Tribe with Special Reference to India" (2020) emphasizes on the problem of defining Indian tribes as *Janajati* as a derivative of *Jati* or caste owing to the ambivalence in the term as he argues,

> it is not easy to determine the exact connotation of the term *jana*, and the distinction between *jana* and *jati* must have been even less clear in ancient times than the corresponding distinction today between tribe and caste. Each category was heterogeneous and there was always some overlap between the two. (67)

During the Mughal period, autonomous areas of the tribal chiefs came under direct rule of Mughal Empire. Tribal chiefs ruling over small pockets were defeated by the mighty army of the Mughals and a large number of tribal populations were converted into Islam during this period by force, while some retained their traditional belief system of animism. There were sporadic attempts by tribal communities for uniting themselves for reclaiming their territorial autonomy but such attempts were iron handedly dominated by the Mughal power. Tribal areas were also attacked by the regional rulers like the Marathas, Rajputs and Sikhs during this period. In the present day northeastern part of India, tribal areas of Assam was invaded for several times by Islamic rulers like Muhamad-bin-Bakhtiyar Khalji, Sikandar Shah, Nusrat Shah, Turbak and Mir Jumla.

Under British colonialism, tribal lands and forests came under the direct administration of the colonial authority. Colonialism also started anthropological surveys in the tribal areas that produced ethnographic texts involving in the production of imaginary knowledge on tribal identity. Despite its claim on legitimacy as empirical

study of subject races, colonial ethnography writing was largely affected by European racial prejudice. Colonial administration relied largely on the ethnographic definition of the tribes for their identification and classification for census. It is to be noted that colonial ethnographers seldom followed the scientific approach of present day social anthropology with adequate emphasis on the critical faculties of taking into account of social, cultural, linguistic and archeological evidences for the purpose of defining the characteristics of a particular race. Instead, colonial anthropology largely relied on the evolutionist theory with emphasis on racial difference while defining the tribes of India. Commenting on the apathetic nature of research involved in the colonial anthropology concerning the definition of Indian tribes, Andre Beteille argues, "the problem in India was to identify rather than define tribes, and scientific or theoretical considerations were never allowed to displace administrative or political ones" (*Society*, 59). As discussed above in this chapter, colonial period may be understood as the darkest period of tribal subjugation and exploitation, for they were not only socio-economically and physically harassed but racially denigrated to sub-human level. Tribal communities of India still carry the stigma of colonial stereotype of racial derogation as the 'other'.

Indian historical writings on tribals were also largely influenced by the colonial ethnography and documentation of tribal history was not encouraged. It is observed that tribals were largely marginalized in historical representations in spite of their co-operation to the nationalist interest of Indian freedom movement during imperial subjugation. According to Indian historical narratives, Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 is considered to be the first rebellion by Indians for freedom from British rule. However, it is worth mentioning that a series of tribal uprisings against colonial rule took place in different tribal areas of India prior to Sepoy Mutiny such as Halba rebellion (1774), Bhil revolt (1818), Kol Mutiny (1831), Santhal Rebellion (1855) and Kandh Uprising (1837-1856). In these revolts the tribal communities of India fought against the oppression of colonial authority and other exploiting forces like landlords, moneylenders and police to

safe guard their rights over their land. These tribal uprisings are hardly ever marked as important incidents in the mainstream historical narratives of India for "the leadership of the Indian freedom movement showed no interest in recognizing tribal rights or the historical contributions that tribal communities had made during the nineteenth century" (Devy, xvi).

Halba Rebellion (1774-1779) took place in the Bastar region of the present day state of Chhattisgarh when the tribal area inhabited by the Halba tribe was attacked by the Marathas and the British. Halba Rebellion was initiated with a view to form an independent state for the tribal communities. One of the prime reasons of the rebellion was scarcity of food in the tribal region after a draught induced famine like situation in that region. Draught affected tribals could not pay taxes and the ruling power of Marathas and British intensified atrocities on the poor tribals for forceful collection of tax, which eventually led to the uprising. Suppression of Halba Rebellion involved massacre of a large number of tribals by the British and the Marathas.

Bhil revolt (1818) took place in Khandesh region of Maharashtra under the leadership of Sewaram against the British policy of taxation on agricultural produce. Bhils were notified as 'criminal tribe' under the Criminal Tribal Act, 1871 by the colonial authority after their protracted rebellion against the foreign power.

Kol Mutiny (1831) was the revolt undertaken by the Ho tribes of Singhbhum area of Chhotanagpur plateau of the present day Jharkhand. Ho tribes are also known as Larka Kols. The Kol Mutiny was started owing to massive discontentment among the tribal communities at the backdrop of acquisition of tribal lands by the colonial government and imposition of tax.

Santhal Rebellion (1855) was started due to the exploitation of the tribal communities by the colonial government as well as landlords and moneylenders, whom the colonial government introduced to the tribal areas. The rebellion took place in the

tribal areas of Santhal Parganas of present day Jharkhand. It is considered to be one of the major uprisings by the Santhal tribe in the history of British colonialism.

Kandh Uprising (1837-1856) was a revolt by the Kandh community concentrated in the state of Orissa. The tribals revolted against the colonial government when the later tried to bring reform in tribal society by abolishing the religious practice of human sacrifice called 'Mariah'. Exploitation of tribal society by the colonial government was also the other cause of this revolt.

One of the common features of these rebellions is that they were undertaken by the tribals against the exploitative policies such as administrative intervention, taxation, imposition of land acquisition laws, revenue system, excise duty and forest Acts. Landlords, moneylenders, petty businessmen and the likes were allowed an upper hand under colonialism and they tried to marginalize the tribals in their native lands. These agencies from the mainstream society participated in the exploitation of tribal economy converting them into perennial debtors and bonded labourers. Tribals naturally suffered from insecurity at the hands of these agencies and fought for the protection of their indigenous lands with a view of establishing self-rule. In this premise, Ramachandra Guha argues,

> The establishment of individual property rights in land, the creation of a land market, stringent forest laws, and an exploitative excise policy had all worked to impoverish tribals, pushing them into the clutches of landlords, moneylenders, and liquor contractors." (*Savaging*, 158)

Colonial administration and British government found it difficult to come to terms with these rebelling tribal communities at the backdrop of continuous failure in their attempts at bringing them under administrative control. Love for self-rule and their ignorance of the idiom of British law were considered to be the major causes of such revolts. Eventually these tribal communities were pigeonholed under the overarching concept of Indian tribes as primitive in characteristics and distinctively different from the

mainstream society. Colonial government framed separate laws for the administration of tribal areas by declaring them as scheduled areas under the Scheduled District Act, 1874. Prevention on transfer of land to non-tribal communities was one of the main concerns of this Act. However, as stated above, tribals were dispossessed of their lands by the moneylenders and also under the provision of Forest Act.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the colonial concept of tribes being primitive was largely subscribed by the Indian writers and the Indian scholarship maintained an attitude of reticence on the matter of tribals and "it was natural, therefore, that by the time Elwin made his first trip to a tribal area, the tribals were already a forgotten issue in Indian politics and society" (Devy, xvii). Oxford alumni missionary turned anthropologist Verrier Elwin's (1902-1964) presence in the study of tribal life-world of India solicited massive transformation in terms of attitude and approach. Elwin made his first visit to Karanjia region of present day Orissa dominated by Gond tribe in 1932 along with his lifelong associate Shamrao Hivale. Since then, he started writing on the socio-cultural aspects of different tribes of India with an empathetic approach unlike the colonial ethnographers. His writings mainly concentrated on the depiction of tribal life-world in the most authentic manner by demystifying the colonial notion of primitivity. His love and dedication for tribal society went beyond the typical anthropological interest of defining them as primitive race. On the contrary, he was much concerned with the issue of preservation of the distinctive cultural traits of tribal society which was apparently at stake at the backdrop of increasing flow of outsiders into the tribal areas. He suggested that tribal society must be treated carefully with intensified sensitivity of looking at the tribal society from tribal's perspective and not from the colonial point of view. He also advised that tribal areas be kept in isolation for some time for any hasty and forceful imposition of state laws would lead to disastrous consequences. Elwin was vehemently criticized by the nationalist scholarship of his contemporary times and also accused of trying "to divide Mother India on communal

lines, their 'Pakistan' to be matched by his 'Aboriginalisthan,' a special protectorate to be ruled by ethnographers like himself" (*Savaging*, 155). His area of interest had been the tribal areas of central India till 1950. He moved to the northeastern part of India in 1953 with the establishment of a special branch of Civil Services for the frontier states of northeast. Here he worked extensively on the tribes of North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) and settled in Shillong, Meghalaya. He was conferred with the honour of Padma Bhusan in 1961 and Sahitya Akademi Award in 1965.

His ethnographic writings continue to command relevance even in the present context owing to the painstaking research involved in the writing and firsthand knowledge collected by the author himself. Having been a graduate in English literature, Elwin has a tendency of employing literary faculties of fiction and romanticism in his writing deviating largely from the theoretical rigidity of anthropology. He wrote two novels that represent the tribal society of India- *Phulmat of the Hills* (1937) and *A Cloud That's Dragonish* (1938). Both these novels depict tribal societies as distinctively different from the mainstream India with their unique cultural practices but what distinguishes Elwin's representation is that he does not emphasize the difference as a mark of disgrace to human civilization. Instead, he accentuates that tribal culture is exceptional and beautiful in itself, which needs to be understood from the tribal's point of view and preserved before further contamination takes place.

The story of *Phulmat of the Hills* narrates the life of a girl named Phulmat from Pradhan tribe, who loses her beauty after being infected by leprosy. She leaves the village out of misery after being abandoned by her beloved and starts living in a distant location totally isolated from her previous life. In the novel Elwin glorifies the beauty of a tribal girl unlike the colonial ethnographers who did not notice anything so enchanting in the race identified as savages. In this premise, mention may be made of Captain J. Forsyth's comment on tribal woman as he writes, "in the interior, again, babies of Gond women may be seen who are like monkeys than human beings. The features of all are

generally strongly marked and coarse" (*Highlands*, 156). Forsyth's ethnographic details on the physical features of Gond women clearly indicate the reiteration of racial stereotype on tribal society. On the contrary, Elwin's representation tries to capitalize on the cultural aesthetics of the tribal society by romanticizing the female body of Phulamt. While describing Phulmat, Elwin writes, "Phulmat's face was demure, so demure it seemed that surely it was a virtue to gaze at it, it was almost Madonna-like till her smile lit it., and then it shone with the bright spirit of mischief and allurement" (Phulmat, 13). Elwin represent Phulmat as beautiful and sensuous as she would be perceived by the tribal society. However, what problematizes the description is making comparison of the face of a tribal woman to that of Madonna, who is apparently a European woman, signifying the writer's idea of beauty largely rooted in European cultural context. Elwin's representation of tribal society is empathetic but even he is not completely free from the cultural baggage of being a European. Elwin further makes comments on the sexual life of the tribal communities in this novel that may be understood as a display of nineteenth century anthropological inquisitiveness of knowing the 'other'. He also makes elaborate description of the cultural practices and rituals performed by the tribal communities as observed from a certain distance by an outsider. The elaborate description of tribal culture, at times, seems to reflect the author's shock and excitement on discovering something completely alien and strange. Ramachndra Guha in his book *Savaging the Civilized* (2016) contends that "*Phulmat* is a tale of some ethnographic interest" (112). However, Guha defends Elwin from the allegation of fetishizing tribal society as he writes "the author's treatment of sex is in fact highly coded and discreet. Love-making is mentioned but never described, the beauty of the female form alluded to but never anatomized" (ibid).

The other novel by Elwin, *A Cloud That's Dragonish* was published in 1938. The novel explores the themes of witchcraft, revenge, murder and suicide which were largely identical to tribal culture during the colonial period of India. The story is set in the tribal

village called Sitalpani where strange occurrences of death of humans and livestock take place. The inhabitants of the village initially assume witchcraft as the cause of death but later they are informed by a tribal shaman that a person named Lamu is behind those deaths. Elwin deliberately starts each chapter of the novel with an epigram on witch hunting in vogue in medieval Europe with a view to remind the civilized readers that their past was not either free from superstition. It is pertinent to mention that tribal cultural practice was largely stigmatized on the issue of practicing witchcraft and other superstitions and criminalized for occurrence of murder owing to witch hunting during colonial period. Elwin does not follow the colonial mode of looking at certain cultural practices of tribal society as taboos but he assumes a superior position of representing agency while describing the tribal life-world.

Nonetheless, Elwin is highly revered for his contribution towards the transformation of tribal society in terms of socio-economic condition by drawing out the roadmap for the development of tribal areas of India. He was often in touch with the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, for framing government schemes on tribal development. Elwin is largely known for his ethnographic works such as *The Aboriginals* (1943), *Tribal Myths of Orissa* (1954), *Baiga* (1986), *The Muria and Their Ghotul* (1947), *Leaves from the Jungle* (1936), *The Agaria* (1942), *Bondo Highlanders* (1950), *A Philosophy for NEFA* (1960), *The Tribal Worlds of Verrier Elwin: An Autobiography* (1964), *The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century* (1969) etc.

Tribal representation is also witnessed in some of the stories of Joseph Rudyard Kipling. Kipling was born in Malabar Hills, Bombay Presidency of British India in 1865, and at the age of six he was sent to England for education. He came back to India in 1882 in the capacity of Indian correspondent for the *Civil and Military Gazette* and *The Pioneer*. He is arguably the youngest writer to have been honoured with the prestigious Nobel Prize in literature which was awarded to him in 1907. Kipling's writings are largely known for his apparent glorification of British Empire and maintaining racial

prejudice in the representation of the colonized race. Postcolonial analysis of Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894) reveals that it narrates the story of man taking control of the forest that alludes to the colonization of natives who are seen as animal like savages. The appearance of the protagonist Mowgli, a human who is an outsider to the wild animals, creates a rupture in the existing power relations of the forest and eventually he becomes the master of the entire animal kingdom replicating the process of colonization. He is also criticized for his poem titled *White Man's Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands* (1899) for ostensibly encouraging colonialism and legitimizing colonial subjugation as an act of civilizing the savage.

Kipling's "The Tomb of His Ancestors" (1994) unfolds the representation of Bhil tribe from a colonizer's perspective. The story narrates the life of an English Army officer John Chinn, the second who has just joined the regiment stationed at Satpura region in Central India. The Satpura region is inhabited by the Bhil tribes and many of them work under the British in different capacities such as servants and also soldiers. Kipling describes the Bhils as "the strangest of the many strange races in India. They were, and at heart are wild men, furtive, shy, full of untold superstitions" (The Tomb, 110). Kipling's introduction of the Bhils contributes to the construction of tribal stereotype primarily emphasizing on the racial difference by calling them strange and then capitalizes on the nature of the tribe as primitive and largely superstitious. He also mentions on the administrative intervention of the Englishmen contributing in liberating the Bhils from "centuries of oppression and massacre" (ibid) by the Rajputs that had turned them "cruel and half-crazy thief and cattle-stealer" (ibid). Kipling deliberately stresses on the oppression of the tribes by other Indian communities in order to legitimize socio-political intervention of the British Empire in India. He in fact glorifies the Empire as the rescuer of the tribes by reiterating the rhetoric of civilizing the primitive tribes. Kipling also mentions how John Chinn, the first brought the unruly Bhils under control. It is mentioned that John Chinn, the first hanged a Bhil accused with

committing murder in front of his own tribe proving himself as the guardian of justice. In the story the readers come across a Bhil character named Bukta who worked as a servant in the house of John Chinn, the first and was also appointed with the responsibility of looking after infant John Chinn, the second. Bukta comes to meet John Chinn, the second and requests his nephew to be kept as a servant as he introduces his nephew "that that yonder is my nephew. If he is not a good servant, beat him and send him to me, and I will surely kill him…" (The Tomb, 114). Kipling establishes the master-slave relationship between the colonizers and colonized symbolically through the relation of John Chinn and Bukta that is to be further continued with Bukta's next generation being hired as servant. Kipling further accentuates the civilizing mission of the colonizer through the metaphor of John Chinn, the second succeeding in persuading the Bhils in getting vaccinated. It is mentioned that the Bhils were apprehensive of getting the vaccine owing to their apparent superstitious belief that their enemy had come to kill them with needles and knife. However, John Chinn makes good use of the superstition prevalent among the tribes and finally succeeds in the vaccination drive and saving them from the eminent danger of smallpox. John Chinn, the second maintains his ancestral reputation by killing a tiger at the Bhil village once again confirming his position of superiority as the savior of the Bhils.

John Masters is another Anglo-Indian writer who was born in Calcutta in 1914 and served for British Empire as an Army officer. He is largely known for his historical novels and autobiography. He has more than fifteen novels to his credit. In his two novels – *The Venus of Konpara* (1960) and *To the Coral Strand* (1962), Masters represents Indian tribes as witnessed during the colonial period. The tribals do not form the main characters in these novels but their societies are used as the background of the stories. It is observed that Masters' depiction of the tribals is largely ethnographic in nature with anthropological fascination for the strange much to the similarity to the representations made by other Anglo-Indian writers. In his representation, Gond society

is exoticized as primitive in nature, that he calls pre-historic, with the practice of some strange rituals and customary rules based on superstitious belief. One very common feature in these two novels is the author's fascination with the body of tribal woman and their sexual practices. Gond women, Kunti and Devi in *To the Coral Strand* and Rukmini in *The Venus of Konpara*, are depicted as sensuous, lustful and more open to love-making in comparison to the European women. He also emphasizes on the strangeness of their dressing pattern by calling them half naked and equally stresses on their complexion as black. Masters shows the identical inquisitiveness of an anthropologist to study the 'other' race by focusing on the physical features, colour and cultural practices trying to locate the Darwinian missing link between man and primates. His investigation surpasses the ethical boundary of humanity and delves much deeper into the private space of sexuality of Gond women reducing them to mere objects of carnal desire.

The European male gaze of Masters fails to understand that tribal society is not ruled by the European notion of morality, which is rigid and highly conservative in terms of expressing one's feelings. Owing to his apparent racial prejudice, Masters represents a coarse image of the tribals overlooking the fact that they have their own sense of beauty and social norms which do not necessarily need to correlate with other culture. Instead, he accentuates the backwardness of tribal society by focusing on their poor condition overlooking the cause of the poverty. In *To the Coral Strand* Masters highlights the poverty in Gond society in a sympathetic note by expressing his shock and discomfort when he sees an eight year old Gond girl starving to death. However, it is pertinent to mention that poverty sneaked into tribal society after they were debarred from getting access to forest produce with the enforcement of Forest Act by the colonial government. Masters' representation of poverty in tribal society may be seen as an attempt to legitimize colonialism indirectly alluding to the unprogressive disorganized land with little administrative control and welfare of the mass that needs intervention to save them from the existential crisis of scarcity of basic amenities like food, shelter and healthcare.

His sympathy for the poor tribal girl may be understood as a trope to justify British Empire for "the discourse of reform, rescue, native savagery, and Christian virtue constructed the contexts, justification, and ideological foundation, for the moment of interventionist legislation, political decisions and other colonial acts" (*Colonial*, 61-62). In doing so, Masters reiterates the similar discourse of racial difference and production of colonial stereotype as the primitive 'other' when it comes to the representation of Indian tribes in literature.

It is mentioned earlier that the perception of tribal identity in India was largely influenced by the colonial representation in literature and ethnography which was to be further reflected in the writings of Indian mainstream authors. It is needless to say that during the colonial as well as postcolonial phases of mainstream Indian literature the writing community was largely dominated by the elite section of the society who rarely took the trouble of visiting tribal society to understand their life-world. Dominant theme of Indian literature was specifically centered on the representation of mainstream society while tribal society was yet to be explored in literary representation given the fact that little was known about the issues concerning tribal society. However, with growing popularity of Indian English novels and its range widened in the latter half of twentieth century, many Indian writers started focusing on the representation of tribal society in literature. Gopinath Mohanty's *Paraja* was published in 1945 before the independence of India in Oriya language focusing on the exploitation of tribal society by both state agencies as well as moneylenders. Mohanty deviates from the romantic representation of the tribal as noble savage living in idyllic primitive society unruffled by corrupting forces. His tribal reality is dark and unforgiving. He narrates the story of how Paraja tribe is subjected to exploitation and discrimination in every possible way finally being reduced to bonded labourers having been dispossessed of their land and property. The novel will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Pratibha Ray's *The Primal Land* (2009) is another Oriya novel translated into English that narrates the life-world of Bonda tribe of Orissa from feminist perspective. Ray's narrative approach in the novel has been ethnographic as she is an outsider to the tribal society that is represented. However, her empathetic understanding of the condition of tribal woman and representation of the Bonda society from a woman's point of view makes the novel an important contribution to the genre of tribal representation in Indian literature. A detailed discussion on this novel will be done in the next chapter.

The Strange Case of Billy Biswas (1971) by Arun Joshi is yet another significant novel that attempts to represent the tribal society of India. The novel unfolds the obsession of Bimal Biswas or Billy for a tribal woman. Billy studies anthropology instead of engineering in the United States and conducts many expeditions into the tribal areas with a view to study tribal culture. Billy disappears in one of such expeditions and nobody succeeds in locating his status despite many search operations. Later he is discovered by the narrator of the novel Ramesh Sahai. Ramesh comes to know that Billy has renounced the civilized world and presently living with the tribals in Maikala range of Madhya Pradesh after marrying a tribal girl named Bilasia. Later a police operation is carried out to bring Billy back to his parental home but he succumbs to bullet injury during the operation. This novel may be read as a romantic depiction of tribal reality, for Billy's perception of tribal society is based on the knowledge he received from the anthropological texts. Furthermore, he decides to live with the tribals owing to his love for the idyllic environment and the sensuous nature of Bilasia. In Joshi's representation the beauty and sensuality of tribal woman finds importance rather than the socio-political problems of his contemporary times like exploitation, discrimination and poverty. What Joshi, as a literary writer, totally misses out is that during the time of publication of this novel, many tribal movements had already started in India demanding autonomy over their areas owing to lack of development and ignorance by the mainstream society.

Joshi's representation largely rests on the similar plane of colonial representation of tribals as primitive yet untouched by the callousness of city life.

Kamala Markandaya's novel *The Coffer Dam* (1969) deals with the issue of infrastructure development by Indian government after independence as a significant step towards the process of nation building. Unlike Arun Joshi, Markandaya is more vigilant towards the ongoing changes in tribal society in the postcolonial condition. Markandaya goes beyond the colonial representation of primitivity in tribal society and compels her readers to face a much darker reality at the backdrop of construction of a dam under hydro-power project at a tribal area named Malnad in the state of Karnataka. It is said that many tribal households were evacuated from the construction site and displaced to other location. A British engineering firm led by Clinton gets the contract of the construction, which seems to be a farce on the idea of freedom as Indian government has to depend on Britain for its development even after independence. Youths from the local tribal communities are lured to work at the construction site as labourers. One tribal named Bashiam is engaged in the construction work as an engineer owing to his self-acquired knowledge in handling the machineries. Clinton appears to be unaffected by racial prejudice when he hires an Indian tribal man as engineer. However, things turn ugly when about forty of the tribal workers are killed in an accident at the construction site. Despite demands from the tribal workers, Clinton refuses to conduct search operation to retrieve the drowned bodies of the workers as it would mean wastage of time and cause unnecessary expenses. Time and money becomes more important for Clinton than the human bodies stuck underwater. It is said that in an earlier accident a rescue operation was conducted to save the life of a British worker jeopardizing the safety of the rescuers. Bashiam volunteers to retrieve the bodies of the tribal workers by using a crane. Clinton's hypocrisy and racial prejudice comes to the front more evidently when he deliberately turns off the safety load indicator of the crane resulting in another

accident when the crane breaks and crushes down Bashiam. In his report, Clinton surreptitiously avoids his responsibility for the tragic incident.

The novel may not be the best example of tribal representation but it certainly strikes a chord by taking up the issue of exploitation and discrimination meted out to the tribal communities in modern India. Construction of a big dam would definitely contribute to the economy of the state and largely benefit the elite section. It is pertinent to mention that behind the façade of industrialization and economic development there are horrifying stories of exploiting the poor and innocent tribal communities in India. It is mentioned in the novel that the big dam would channelize the river to irrigate the plains and directly benefit the farmers. However, the novelist is skeptic about justifying development at the cost of workers' lives and displacement of the tribal communities from their original habitat. Displacement also entails further exploitation of the tribal communities at the hands of the middlemen involved in the process of distribution of compensation and relief materials. The novel also focuses on the impact of modernity on tribal society and how they would respond to the rapid changes in their society at the backdrop of migration of other communities to the construction site as businessmen, imported workers, contractors and moneylenders. Markandaya's sensibility touches upon a wide range of issues concerning tribal society caught in the conflict of modernity and tradition.

Gita Mehta's third novel *A River Sutra* (1993) contains six stories narrated by a superannuated government officer who decides to live as the manager of a rest house by the bank of Narmada river after the demise of his wife. In "The Executive's Story" the narrator tells the story of a young man named Nitin Bose who worked as the manager of a tea estate in Assam. The narrator learns from the diary of Nitin that during one of his official visits to the tea plantation, he felt attracted to a tribal woman named Rima. Nitin mentions about the intimate relationship he developed with that woman during his short stay in Assam. On his return to Calcutta, his permanent residence, he becomes sexually

obsessed with Rima, who happens to be the wife of a coolie in the tea estate. Nitin represses his psychological restlessness caused by the obsession and almost turns insane. He decides to commit suicide by drowning in the river near the rest house when he is recovered by the police. Mehta's novel focuses on the perception of tribal woman in mainstream discourse as exotic, voluptuous, full of sensuality and easily achievable. Nitin's passion for Rima is purely carnal with little emotional craving. When he learns that Rima is the wife of a worker in the tea plantation, he suffers from the guilt of indulging in an immoral relationship. He represses his guilt for he knows that he has committed something immoral and undesirable to his status and social background. Nitin cannot transgress the social boundary despite his intense desire to establish a permanent relationship with Rima. The novel metaphorically explores the issue of perpetuation of a thin line of difference between the mainstream and tribal society on racial ground in post independence India.

Mahasweta Devi is one of the most important figures in Indian literature, whose writings have stirred the readers and critics across global academia. Both her fiction and non-fiction writings invariably deal with the issues of the marginalized section of Indian society. Complementing her personal life to activist and literary writings, she blends fiction, fact, memory and oral culture of the subaltern society with an apparent intention of authentic documentation of exploitation and marginalization. For Devi, Indian society is split into two distinctive sections – one is the privileged, educated and empowered mainstream while the other is the underprivileged, neglected and poverty stricken society of the voiceless. Devi , in her writings, not only intends to represent the downtrodden but largely conjures up a space for letting them tell their stories of suffering as Maitreya Ghatak in the introduction to Devi's *Dust on the Road* (2010)observes "(her writings) become a forum where small peasants, agricultural labourers, tribals, workers in factories, rickshaw pullers could write about their life and problems" (xiv). Devi's writings poses question on the nature of mainstream historiography in that it invariably

has kept the facts of certain communities at bay by not granting adequate importance. For example, tribal resistance movements against colonial expeditions and enforcement of British law rarely made it to the global academic discussion with contemporary rigour before the publication of Devi's writings. Under this theoretical postulation and contestation of mainstream historiography, she deals with the representation of tribal communities such as the Mundas, the Kols and the Santhals of Chhotanagpur region in her historical novels *Sal Girar Dake* (1984), *Aranyer Adhikar* (1977), *Bashai Tudu* (1990), *Chotti Munda and His Arrow* (1980) etc. She explores the theme of tribals' struggle for survival as they have consistently been subjected to exploitation and discrimination under colonial as well as Indian government.

Sal Girar Dake published in Bangla narrates the revolt of the Paharias and Santhals of Chotanagpur area against the colonial rule in the eighteenth century India. Santhals and Paharias, led by Tilka Majhi, revolt against economic exploitation through the colonial system of taxation, and construction of railway tracks causing harm to tribal habitats. In 1772 British force led by Captain Brook is defeated by the concerted armed resistance of the tribal warriors. However, in the second expedition of the British Army the tribals are defeated but the British force incurs heavy loss of both men and assets. Tilka Majhi is killed but the resistance shown by the tribals remains an inspiration for the next generation uniting them with much stronger bond and determination.

Aranyer Adhikar narrates the story of historical figure Birsa Munda's rise to fame among the tribal communities of Chotanagpur region as social reformer through agrarian movement in British India. Mahasweta Devi has tried to recreate the historical facts concerning Birsa Munda and the nature of his movement for tribal emancipation by intertwining it with fiction. She redefines the personality of Birsa Munda as a historically important tribal hero who singlehandedly leveraged resurgence of the tribal communities to fight against the oppression of colonial power, landlords, moneylenders and other exploitative agencies. Devi, in her novel, accentuates the poverty of tribal communities

as one of the primary reasons of the revolution as hunger becomes the prominent theme in her narration. In the novel, it is said that steamed rice, a tiny piece of cloth and a thatched roof became a distant luxury for the Mundas at the backdrop of enforcement of the Permanent Land Settlement Act, 1793 as the traditional lands of the tribals came under the jurisdiction of Zamindari system. Moreover, enactment of Forest law had already placed restriction on the access of forest resources. Devi also talks about the role of moneylenders and businessmen from the mainstream society, whom the Mundas call the Dikus, in the exploitation of the tribals.

In the premise of such trying condition of tribal society, Birsa Munda proclaims himself a prophet based on a vision that he claims to have received from god. He primarily starts reforming tribal society by asking them to abandon superstition, animal sacrifice and alcohol. With an aim of uniting different tribal communities of that region, he asks them to worship one god. He also asks his followers to refuse paying taxes for the lands belong to them since the time of their ancestors. Devi represents Birsa Munda as a revolutionary leader who had the vision of radicalizing tribal society for a classless socio-economic-cultural regeneration and reinstating tribal autonomy in the Chotanagpur area. However, Birsa Munda Movement has failed to gain its due importance in the mainstream historical discourse pertaining to the colonial nature of representation.

Chotti Munda and His Arrow and *Bashai Tudu* narrate the condition of tribal society after India's independence. Devi in her satirical representation of Indian democracy critically examines the role of hegemonic state mechanism in dealing with the issues of tribal rights and how in the negotiation of power relations Indian tribes are reduced to subaltern position. In *Choti Munda and His Arrow* she contends that the struggle of Birsa Munda to unite the tribal communities under one fold and fight for their rights has not been over. Instead, Devi indirectly says that discrimination and subjugation of the tribals continue unabated even after independence and therefore the Mundas of Chotanagpur region take up arms demanding their rights. The novel also

argues that government schemes framed for tribal emancipation has not generated desired results due to the continuation of feudal system of land holding and apparent nexus of the capitalists with the state mechanism.

Devi's another novel *Bashai Tudu* narrates the story of a tribal hero who fights against the oppression of landlords and economic exploitation of the moneylenders in post independence period of India at the backdrop of agrarian revolution of the landless farmers in Naxalbari region in North Bengal from 1967 to 1977. Devi's nuanced representation of Indian society intersects with multiple issues concerning caste system, racial subjugation of the tribals, atrocities by state machineries and government's negligence in solving the problems of the subaltern section. In her deliberation, Devi accentuates that the revolts of the tribals are often hijacked by dominant groups notwithstanding the fact that their fight against the powerful is a way of giving expression to self-assertion and self-determination. In this novel Bashai Tudu's revolution is taken control by Naxalite leaders branding it as a part of their movement, which in Devi's contention is a sheer case of discrimination and devaluation of a tribal's contribution to the cause.

Mahasweta Devi's writings may also be read as literature of resistance as she transparently documents the deprivation of fundamental human rights like potable water, roads, shelter, health and education among the tribal population of India. She is critical of the nation building projects like big dams and industrialization undertaken by the state, for such projects ensures better living condition of the urban elites at the cost of displacement and exploitation of the poor tribal population. Four stories by Devi translated into English by Ipsita Chanda and published in the short story collection *Bitter Soil* (2002) narrates the horrifying details of poverty and exploitation of the tribals in the Palamau region. The title of the collection indicates that the land and life of the tribals have turned bitter against the backdrop of hunger, poverty, exploitation and endless struggle for survival. In these stories Devi contends that the poor socio-economic

condition and deprivation of basic necessities in tribal areas are largely a handiwork of the mainstream society and apathetic approach of the government to solve the problems.

The first story "Little Ones" (Shishu) ridicules the romantic perception of the tribals among the educated mainstream society as half-naked primitive and noble savages living in the midst of jungle without civilization. When Mr. Singh goes to the tribal area to deliver relief materials at the backdrop of famine, the BDO warns him that the tribals have criminal tendency by mentioning about the Agaria uprising when they attacked the workers of a mining project in the forest. At night Mr. Singh wakes up to find the relief materials being stolen by some children. Later he discovers that they are not children but malnourished men and women of Kubha tribe who could not grow physically due to generations of starvation. The story is a scathing attack on the government policy of sending relief materials to the tribal areas, for such act of farcical sympathy has not been able to solve the long-standing problem of backwardness in tribal areas. Devi's ironic language in the story generates an exasperating sense of guilt and shame, not only in the representative of mainstream society Mr. Singh, but also among the readers with the realization that the concept of modern welfare state is an illusion as it has failed miserably in establishing a just order in society.

The second story "Seeds" narrates the how tribals are tied to the machinery of exploitation at multiple levels using poverty as the weapon by the landlords in the northern and western part of West Bengal. Devi hints that the only possible way out of the bondage of exploitation and poverty for the tribals is resistance through violence. The story narrates the tale of long muted anger, suffering and putting an end to the suffocating resentment by resorting to violence through the killing of the landlord by the protagonist. The story also ridicules the myopic government schemes of providing paddy seeds to the tribals expecting them to grow it in the barren land with no irrigation facility. The tribals, on the contrary, eat the seeds as food to relieve their immediate hunger for they know that sowing those seeds in dry and barren land would mean mere wastage.

The third story "The Witch" (Daini) provides a feminist reading of the position of woman in the patriarchal setup of tribal society where they are subjected to physical violence and painful death on the allegation of practicing witchcraft. Here Devi indicates the necessity of introspection on the tribal's part in order to bring a change in the social order, for superstitious beliefs like witchcraft has been one of the many causes confining tribal society within the closet of backwardness.

In the story "Salt" Devi again underscores the issue of political and economic exploitation of the tribals by the moneylender Uttamchand Bania. Uttamchand uses salt as a weapon to continue his exploitation of the tribal population of Jhujhar village of Palamau region. The landlord manipulates the vote bank of the tribal population as they have no awareness about their voting rights. The tribals of the village work as bonded labourers in the agricultural farms owned by the moneylender without any payment for generations. However, under the leadership of an educated tribal youth named Purti Munda, the tribal population become aware of their rights and demand equal share of the harvest. This enrages Uttamchand and he decides to stop supplying salt to the tribal areas to deprive them of necessary nutrients. Scarcity of salt in food compels them to search for alternative and the tribals go to the forest to collect rock salt where three people including Purti Munda are killed by a rogue elephant. However, ironically no enquiry is done to find the reason of the death by the concerned administration. Instead it is simply inferred that the tribal youths might have been drunk. The story uses salt as a symbol to tell the reality of tribal society that is deprived of the basic needs in a nation that boasts of ensuring equal rights to its citizens.

In another collection titled *Imaginary Maps* (1995), three stories of Mahasweta Devi were translated into English by Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak. The first story, "The Hunt" is about a tribal girl Mary Oraon who works as a maid at Tehsildar Singh's house to support her family. Tehsildar Singh is fascinated by Mary's beauty and tries to sexually exploit her when his wife is not around. Mary resorts to violence as a means of

resistance against social, economic and sexual exploitation as she severs the head of Tehsildar at opportune moment. Mary does not feel any remorse after killing the man. Instead, she collects the money from the man's purse and leaves the body for the scavengers.

In the second story "Douloti, the Bountiful" Devi narrates the trials and tribulations of a tribal girl, Douloti. She belongs to the Nagesia tribe of Palamau region, who is brought to the town by a human trafficker with a fake promise of marriage and by paying a meager amount of three hundred rupees to the father. Though unconvinced by the promise of marriage and unwilling to send Douloti, her father has to consent to the offer as he needs the money. Douloti is first gang raped and then turned into a prostitute in the town. In the conclusion she collapses near the bamboo pole meant for raising the Indian flag unable to sustain physical, economic and psychological exploitation on the 15th August satirically mocking the idea of freedom for tribals as well as woman in India as Devi writes "Douloti is all over India" (Imaginary, 93).

In the third story "Pterodactyl, Puran Sahay, and Pirtha" Devi narrates the visit of Puran Sahay, a journalist to a tribal village named Pirtha that has been suffering from years of draught and starvation. Harisharan, a friend of Puran tells him that Pirtha has been suffering from famine and many has died of starvation but the government has not yet recognized the gravity of the situation as official data does not show the actual number of death. Puran also obverses that due to the inactivity of the government, vested interest groups have made their entry into the tribal areas under the pretext of relief distribution who actually want to displace the tribals to a new settlement so that the hilly areas can be transformed into a picnic spot. During his stay at the village, Puran confronts a pre-historic creature, a Pterodactyl that symbolically represents the true self of the tribals that is incommunicable to the modern man like Puran. The story brings many characters representing journalism, academia, administration, social work, planning department etc. into discussion who try to contribute to the development of the

tribals. However, ironically their analysis fails to address the existing problem of Pirtha for nobody tries to understand what the tribals want. Devi, in her identical satirical tone, tells how government schemes for the development of tribal areas have turned into a big farce due to apparent communication gap and insensitive approach in dealing with their problems.

In another story titled "Draupadi" published in the book *In Other Worlds* (1998), Devi narrates the story of a tribal woman named Dopdi Mejhen (Draupadi) who is apprehended by Government security forces during a search operation on the suspicion of being a member of Naxalite movement in the year 1972. During the process of night long interrogation at the military camp, she is subjected to extreme physical torture and gang rape by the security forces as "her breasts are bitten raw, the nipples torn. How many? Four-five-six-seven – then Draupadi had passed out" (269). On the next day when she is asked to be presented before the Senanayak, she tears down her clothes and shows her ravaged body to the Senanayak in protest of the sexual harassment and atrocities in the hands of the security forces. The story probes into the cases of sexual harassment and torture of tribal woman by the security forces in the name of interrogation and restoring peace.

Mahasweta Devi thus invariably accentuates the issue of socio-economic exploitation and violation of fundamental rights of the tribals as humans by the mainstream society, state machineries, military, moneylenders, revenue department and law. She also highlights that the idea of freedom is unclear for the tribal population even after the independence of India as their struggle for survival continues without any remarkable transformation taking place the grassroots despite many ambitious government projects. Devi's representation of tribal reality is not burdened with the archetypal anthropological fascination with the body and sexuality of the tribal. She strictly abstains from romanticization of tribal life-world in her writings that we often see in other mainstream narratives. Instead, in her representation tribal body becomes a site

of protest and evidential proof against the atrocities meted out to them. She invariably tries to show the reality in tribal society in present day India by focusing on different issues such as the lack of basic needs and awareness about their rights as citizens. She questions the mainstream discourse and its silence on the issues of exploitation and subjugation of the marginalized groups obliquely challenging the idea of freedom in India where more than half of its population lives under abject poverty with no dignity.

Narayan's *Kocharethi: The Araya Woman* (2011) is another important novel that centers on the representation of tribal life-world in Indian literature. First published in 1998 in Malayalam language, the novel was later translated into English by Catherine Thankamma and published in 2011. The novel tells the story of trials and tribulations of the Malayarayar tribe of Kerala at the backdrop of exploitation and subjugation at the hands of outsiders and state machineries since pre-independence period. The novel provides the representation of tribal society from the insider's perspective as Narayan himself is a member of Malayarayar community. In this novel Narayan points out that the causes of backwardness in tribal society is lack of education and their unpreparedness to cope up with the rapidly changing world. He shows that the tribals lacking in literacy and empowerment easily succumb to the exploitation of the outsiders such as non-tribal businessmen, moneylenders, landlords and government agencies that further leads to the deterioration of their socio-economic condition. He also brings into discussion the issue of religious conversion of tribal population and stresses on the necessity of retaining their cultural identity by resisting the phenomenon of acculturation. He rather expresses his discontent on excessive and insensitive intervention by the outsiders for it has caused more damage than benefit to their society. This novel will be analyzed in detail in the next chapter.

Writing in English from the Northeast of India is a recent phenomenon since it began acquiring visibility in the Indian mainstream discourse from the year 2000 onwards. With the publication of literary writings from the Northeast region as well as

translation of the vernacular literature into English, literature from the Northeast has carved a niche in the realm of Indian writing in English. Needless to mention that the northeastern states of India have been making it to the headlines of national media since independence, rather frequently in both print and electronic, particularly for insurgency and counter insurgency measures taken by the Indian security forces. Decades of violence and their representation as terrorist infested area in the national media has been largely instrumental in the shaping and representation of the stereotyped identity of the Northeast as a detached entity in the mainstream perception. However, it is a daunting fact that hardly any serious attempt has been made to grasp the factors that led to the present day turbulence in the once peaceful areas. Marginalization of the Northeast on various grounds has been one of the major areas of strife that further contributed to the heightened feeling of alienation and discontentment on the part of the inhabitants of this region. Moreover, other factors such as racial, linguistic, geographical and cultural difference of the inhabitants of this region when compared to the mainland India may also be held responsible for the apparent sense of disengagement from the mainland India. Literary writings from the Northeast have been able to break this stereotype and reshape a new identity by way of reflection of the lived reality as well as perennial problems of the common people. Literature from the Northeast is often perceived as alternative cultural history of the region in the absence of authentic histories of most of the communities inhabiting the region. It is pertinent to mention that the eight states of Northeast India are replete with numbers of diverse tribal communities with their distinctive cultural and linguistic identities. Representation of the heterogeneous cultural and ethnic identities of the inhabitants of these eight states with the colonial term of 'northeast' has been highly debated in the recent times by scholars and critics, for such representation noticeably limits the vast extent of diversity that continues to survive till date. Each of these tribal communities has their own tradition of orality passed on from generations in the form of folk tales, legends, myths, riddles and songs that has been a

major part of their cultural identity. The oral narratives of various tribal communities reflect their life-worlds to a large extent and hence, more often than not, read as alternative cultural history. Literature from the Northeast collectively tries to attend to the various issues of the region such as marginalization, underdevelopment, traumatic experiences of violence, lived reality of the tribal society, folk literature and ecological concern against the backdrop of massive modernization among others.

Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya's novel *Love in the Time of Insurgency* (2005) deals with the issue of political awakening among the tribal population of Nagaland and Manipur at the backdrop of changing political scenario when India was on the threshold of becoming an independent nation state. This novel will be discussed in the next chapter with special focus of the representation of Naga tribe by an Assamese writer.

Temsula Ao's two short story collections *These Hills Called Home: Stories From A War Zone* (2006) and *Laburnum For My Head* (2009) are considered as major breakthrough in the English writing from the Northeast. *These Hills Called Home: Stories From A War Zone* has ten short stories and *Laburnum For My Head* has eight short stories respectively that focus on various issues concerning the state of Nagaland, her home state and largely concentrates on the representation of their life-world. Ao's narratives bring to life the traumatic experiences of local inhabitants, especially the villagers who found themselves caught in uncertainty and terror, during the decade long violence after the secessionist movement gained momentum in Nagaland. In her true to life details of the incidences of killings, atrocities, rape, arsoning of the granaries and grouping of the villagers by the security forces in the name of counter insurgency measures and apparent indifference of the state as well as national media to such injustices, she attempts to show how the peaceful and simple life of her state has suddenly transformed to that of terror. In her introspective writings she also focuses on the issues of corruption and socio-political changes affecting the lives of the tribal communities leading to further uncertainty. Unlike the exoticization of tribal society in

colonial ethnography, she employs the technique of social realism to do justice to the authentic representation of tribal life-world by reflection of certain customary practices prevalent among them.

Easterine Kire's *When the River Sleeps* (2014) is another novel from Nagaland that focuses on the representation of tribal life-world by relying on the folk belief on supernatural elements. The story of the novel centers on the life of a hunter who turns into a weretiger under mysterious circumstances and his quest for salvation from the demonic power. The narrative of the novel is rather simplistic when compared to other writings form this region but what distinguishes it as one of the important literary piece is the representation of the nuances of tribal society and their cultural belief system. Kire tries to introduce her readers to the other side of the Northeast, for it is not always about violence and gory details of the killings and atrocities as represented in the mainstream narrative. The traditional belief system, colourful cultural practices and ecological understanding of the environment in tribal society are aptly reflected in Kire's narrative and it served as a counter narrative to mainstream tribal stereotype.

Mamang Dai's *The Legends of Pensam* (2006) is another English novel from the Northeast that centers on the narration of myths and legends prevalent among the Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh by placing them against the onslaught of modernity in the present times. *The Legends of Pensam* will be discussed in the next chapter in detail. Her third novel *The Black Hill* (2014) tries to explore the less discussed historical past of Arunachal Pradesh concerning the execution of a tribal man from the Mishmee tribe on the allegation of the murder of a Jesuit priest in the nineteenth century. The missionary expedition into the mountains of Arunachal Pradesh during colonial period was perceived by the indigenous inhabitants as an attempt to end tribal autonomy by the British administration during the nineteenth century that resulted in strong resistance from the tribals. The novel provides an alternative reading of the colonial history of Arunachal Pradesh for the resistance shown by the tribals may be understood as an

attempt to protect their indigenous cultural and religious identity. The novel also focuses on the problem of binding the inhabitants of the Northeast India as a culturally and racially homogenized entity through the relationship of Gimur, an Abor girl and Kajinsha, a Mishmee boy. Gimur and Kajinsha have no other option but to elope, for a marriage between two different tribes is not acceptable in spite of their neighbouring existence. The novel obliquely tells that each tribe in the Northeast has its own socio-cultural practices that do not necessarily have any resemblance to the other tribe though they may share racial similarities and therefore a humanitarian approach with acute sensitivity is essential for the understanding of their life-world.

It has been observed that representation of tribals and their life-world in Indian fiction has undergone massive transformation in the recent times with the emergence of writings from the insider's perspective as more tribal writers have started articulating their lived reality with the rise in literacy and awareness about their rights. These articulations by tribal writers may also be seen as literature of resistance against the long history of exploitation, denigration, marginalization and injustice meted out to them. It is pertinent to mention that the act of resisting does not necessarily mean taking an antagonistic stance against the authority or a particular race. On the contrary, it may be seen as a means of raising voice against injustice and inequality in the society which is of utmost necessity for the purpose of restoring balance in the power relations. Literature of resistance simply does the job of providing a platform for the marginalized groups such as tribals and dalits to narrate their share of reality which is often silenced, censored or not communicated. It is also worth mentioning that writers like Gopinath Mohanty, Pratibha Ray, Kamala Markandaya, Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya and Mahasweta Devi among others from the mainstream society have contributed massively to authentic representation of tribal life-world by employing acute sensitivity and humanitarian approach. With specific focus on certain gray areas of tribal reality that continue to pose

threat to an overall growth of society, these writers try to address multiple issues of the 'other' from different positions and angles.

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CHAPTER IV

REPRESENTING THE TRIBE IN INDIAN FICTION:

STUDY OF SELECT NOVELS

This chapter undertakes the evaluation of the nature and implications of representation of tribals in five selected novels of Indian English writing in view of the theoretical interpolations inaugurated in the previous chapters. The five novels on which the proposed discussion would be based are Gopinath Mohanty's *Paraja* (first published in Oriya in 1945, translated into English in 1987*)*, Pratibha Ray's *The Primal Land* (translated into English in 2001 from *Adibhumi* published in Oriya in 1993)*,* Birendra Kumar Bhattachrya's *Love in the Time of Insurgency* (translated into English in 2005 from the Assamese novel *Yaruingam* first published in 1960), Mamang Dai's *The Legends of Pensam* (2006) and Narayan's Kocharethi:The Araya Woman (first published in Malayalam in 1998, translated into English in 2011). English versions of the four translated novels will be used for referential purpose in this work.

It has been discussed in the preceding chapters that the concept of the term 'tribe' in India is a colonial construct that bears apparent racial connotation. To concede to the feasibility of framing of a standard as well as an inclusive definition of 'tribe' in Indian context may be seen as an injudicious conclusion, for to accommodate the huge diversity pervading the life-worlds of different indigenous communities within a single term is seemingly inappropriate. The term 'tribe' was rather loosely used by the colonial administration to identify and classify certain groups of people for census and smooth administration given the fact that commerce and expansion of territory were the primary concerns of colonial power. It is also argued that the term "tribal is a colonial designation that often carries derogatory connotations of "uncivilized" or "primitive"" (Karlsson and Subba, 4) due to the obvious reason of their racial and cultural dissimilarity with the mainstream elite society of India. It has been observed that colonial ethnographic writings have largely contributed to the construction and dissemination of the concept of

stereotyped tribal identity in the mainstream narrative of India since colonial period. Notwithstanding the fact that tribal population constitutes about 8.6 % of the total population of India as per 2011 census, they have been often subjected to misrepresentation in national discourse owing to the stigmatized identity and apparent socio-cultural difference. It is pertinent to mention that alienation of tribal communities by the mainstream society pertaining to the distinct socio-cultural difference has been in practice since prehistoric times in India. Numerous factors such as differences in culture, language, social structure, belief system, geographical locations of habitat etc. may be identified as the reasons of isolated existence of tribal society till their autonomous territories were forcefully brought under the uniform jurisdiction of colonial administration during colonial period and later under the map of India in the post-independence period. Whether tribal communities gained or lost in the negotiation with colonial India and later with independent nation state is a matter that demands further probing keeping in view of the fact that majority of the tribals in India still reel below poverty line having been displaced by numerous nation building projects such as big dams and industrial establishments with little concern for their rehabilitation and protection of socio-cultural identities.

While pushing colonial territory into the heartland of the subcontinent, Europeans comprising of colonial administrators, military officers, writers, missionaries and their family members undertook a coterminous journey into the life-worlds of a population strewn with diverse identities that was perceived as racially alien and culturally strange to European value system. The punitive expeditions followed by permanent establishment of colonial administration facilitated knowledge production on the socio-cultural traits of the colonized race on the basis of the conflict of two different cultures – European versus native. Colonial knowledge production simultaneously sought to cautiously emphasize on the cultural and racial difference for "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient" (Said, 3). Thus, colonial

knowledge production must not be understood as the result of a chance encounter between two different cultures but an "enormously systematic discipline" (ibid) that amounted to the maintenance of the supremacy of the colonizing power. Colonial knowledge on the natives was subsequently recorded in the form of administrative documents, census data, travel writing, memoir, fiction, ethnography etc. that contributed immediately to young and aspiring colonial administrators of the mother country in the form of important empirical data. The knowledge thus constructed was widely diffused in the apparent interest of the colonial authority and eventually became the only source of information on certain groups of people in colonial India. It is to be noted that nineteenth century colonial writing was largely influenced by the rise of evolutionist anthropology as a recognized discipline in Europe. Nineteenth century anthropology focused on the study of races other than Europeans inhabiting different parts of the world emphasizing more on their physical appearances and cultural practices. As a consequence, a tendency of highlighting the colour, physical features and socio-cultural aspects of the colonized race as the 'other' of European 'self' gained currency among the colonial writers and ethnographers. During their study of the colonized races in India under the theoretical premise of nineteenth century anthropology, they came across certain groups of people living in isolation largely in forest and hilly terrains. It was also observed that most of these groups shared little racial semblance with the dominant group of Indian population. Furthermore, their socio-cultural practices appeared to be completely different from the customary practices of mainstream Hindu society. Accordingly, a separate category was enumerated to denote these groups for the purpose of census as "the 1921 census report described them as hill and forest tribes, and in 1931, when Hutton was the Census Commissioner, tribes were also referred to as primitive tribes" (*State*, 3). The intriguing fact in the classification of Indian tribes in the census report of 1931 is that the term was prefixed with the word 'primitive' signifying the life-world of tribal population. It is to be noted that the moment a society is identified as

primitive; it is reduced to a non-entity by denial of all its socio-cultural habits as obsolete, as if not meeting the standards of culturally civilized society. Furthermore, colonial intent of presenting the colonized races as inferior and uncivilized to the entire world may be traced in the lexical connotation of the terms devised to represent the tribal communities in administrative, travel and ethnographic discourses. Needless to mention that such representation of tribal communities by the nineteenth century European writers made an indelible impression in the perception of tribal life-world among India's educated elite class and further solidified the pre-existent difference between the mainstream and tribal society. The stereotyped perception on tribals was further preserved and institutionalized in the mainstream discourse after the independence of India which also led to the inferiorization of the tribals on racial term. Mention may be made of the refurbishing of the infamous Criminal Tribal Act, 1871 as the Habitual Offenders Act, 1952 by the Indian government reiterating the same colonial intent of keeping the denotified tribes deprived of certain rights admissible to Indian citizen. In this context, Rycroft and Dasgupta historicize the process of construction and legitimization of the term 'tribe' in India, taking into consideration of all the nuances, as they observe,

> What is significant, however, is that 'the tribe' was inevitably understood within the vocabulary of contrast. The nature of 'otherness' varied according to changing binaries: hill- and forest-dwellers versus plains-people; *mlecchas* versus *suds* (ritually purified); aboriginals versus Hindus; animists versus polytheists; tribes versus castes. Unlike the close interface between Hindu society and colonial modernity, the 'tribe' typified geographical, cultural and economic separateness, and hence resonated with notions of 'the primitive'. (Indigenous, 4)

It has been further observed that during colonial period dominant groups of Indian population equally participated in the exploitation and subjugation of the tribal communities in the capacity of different administrative positions under the colonial

government such as landlords, clerks, forest guards, lawyers, police etc. With the introduction of monetary economy and facilitation of an open market for Europe's commercial goods in colonial India, petty businessmen and moneylenders also made their inroads into the remote tribal areas. Concerted effort of government agencies, moneylenders and businessmen gradually destroyed the traditional economy of the tribals based on barter system rendering them landless and poor. With the forest policy of 1952 formulated by Indian government that aimed at expansion of forest areas to 33% of the total land mass of India coming into effect, many tribal families became unauthorized dwellers of forest land and subsequently lost their right over indigenous land. R.C Verma report provides that "…77,661 acres of land in the 'reserve forest' of Andhra Pradesh was under cultivation by tribal prior to enactment of the Forest Conservation Act (FCA) in 1980" (Indian, 76). Construction of big dams, industrial areas and mining projects after independence caused further displacement of approximately 21.5 million persons during 1951-2000 (ibid, 64-65) of which majority were tribals. Furthermore, petty moneylenders and businessmen exploited the vulnerability of tribal society and captured most of their indigenous lands. Displacement of tribal population from their indigenous habitat and subsequent land alienation resulted in massive cultural loss, for it severed the cord of symbiotic relationship of man and ecology which is core to tribal cosmology. In the post-independence period, many constitutional measures have been framed to safe-guard the interest of tribal communities but it is an unpleasant fact that tribal societies in India still continue to suffer from the problems of poverty, land alienation and starvation without the provisions for basic necessities of food, shelter and health. Corruption in Indian bureaucracy and lack of empathetic understanding of the inner dynamics of tribal society may be marked as the prime cause of the present state of socio-economic backwardness and ethnic unrest brewing in the tribal dominated areas of India. In this premise an analogy may be drawn between Indian mainstream perceptions on tribal society with that of colonial stereotype as in both the cases racial difference is invariably

emphasized. The apparent racial difference has been one of the prime deterrent factors disallowing fruitful dialogue between the tribal society and dominant mainstream society of India further widening the pre-existent communication gap. As a consequence, fundamental problems leading to discontentment at the grassroots level of tribal society seldom get addressed by government policies and developmental schemes. However, quite contrary to the colonial attitude of dominant discourse towards tribal life-world, a number of literary writers and social activists have responded to the issues of exploitation and segregation of tribal communities by way of employing adequate sensibility in understanding the inner dynamics of tribal society especially since the latter half of twentieth century. The narratives of these literary writers emanating from the margins may be read as representative counter narrative to the hitherto unchallenged authority of "colonialist elitism and bourgeois- nationalist elitism" (Guha, 1) of India.

These writers primarily accentuate tribal identity in their literature with a clear agenda of assertion and confirmation of a separate discourse facilitating a close reading of their life-worlds. Much emphasis is laid on the familiarization of tribal society as an entity composite of its own set of rules that needs to be understood and analyzed from the perspective of ideologue objectivity. It is pertinent to mention that tribal life-world has been largely subjected to misrepresentation owing to the voguish colonial practice of looking at it from a superior vantage point. One cannot however postulate that mere rejection of colonial method and embracing of literary objectivity ensures authentic representation of the tribals, for very often such representations tend to sympathize with tribal condition reiterating the same old philanthropic commitment of the colonial Christian missionaries. Mahasweta Devi points out the inadequacy of philanthropy in addressing the problems of tribal society as she maintains that distribution of relief materials is not a solution to the perennial problem of starvation in drought affected tribal areas. She further observes, "they do not want money; they want facilities; they want to live the life of an honorable poor Indian" (The Author, x). Familiarization

process involved in these writings separates these writers from the traditional method of both colonial and sympathetic representation by close association with tribal reality. One of the important features among others that these writings radically anchor in is the vociferous demand of rights of the tribal communities that has been long denied with the imposition of the European model of hegemonic civil codes and repressive state apparatuses. Apart from contributing to the assertion of tribal identity in literature and academia, these writers also focus on certain grey areas of tribal reality hitherto ignored and unexplored in the representations of colonial ethnography.

It is pertinent to mention that literary realism attempts to do justice to the lived reality by capturing images of everyday life as the mirror of the society. However, for a socially conscious writer it is also important to do justice to his/her responsibility as social vigilante, should there be discrimination and unjust exercise of power in the society. In theory, it would be wrong to draw a parallel between aesthetic fervor of literary narrative and journalistic rigor of activist writing, for each employs different approaches of addressing the core issue. Nevertheless, it is also undesirable of a literary writer to remain completely unruffled by social injustice, for by doing so he/she steers clear of his/her social responsibility as a writer.

Literary writing that highlights the issue of injustice on socially, economically and racially marginalized groups is often identified as literature of resistance. These literatures are also often misread as having radical anti-establishment sentiments vouching for violence and nihilism. However, it is to be noted that resistance literature does not necessarily mean defiance to the authority, for the implicit purpose of this genre is to bridge a communication between the authority and the dissenting group by contributing to the restoration of social equilibrium. Resistance literature seeks to stimulate and channelize the power of saying no to injustice and inequality as a democratic weapon at the backdrop of marginalization and silencing of weaker section by the dominant. It largely focuses on exposing the loopholes in the system of

governance that is responsible for apparent social imbalance. Apart from its primary agenda of producing a counter narrative, resistance literature also seeks to ensure a dignified space long denied to the marginalized groups.

In *The Rebel* (1991) Albert Camus contends that the precondition to both civilization and art is resistance. Chronological development of human civilization testifies that society is invariably divided into two principal groups - the weak and the powerful. The weak negotiates its allegiance as subjects to the powerful for a false sense of protection and peaceful existence while on the other hand the authority in power rules and exploits its subjects. Antonio Gramsci calls it cultural hegemony, which is precisely an ideological agreement between the state and its subjects by way of which the subordinate class deliberately consents to its own exploitation and violation of rights (*Selections,* 1971). Hence it is power that is central to the discourse of human civilization. However, in Foucaultian sense, discourse is not constant as it is subject to changes due to the discursive capillary movement of power. Similar theory may be derived from *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1906) as it provides that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (12). The contention of Marx and Engels on class struggle refers to the discrete yet eternally volatile power struggle in the discourse of human society that corresponds to the inevitability of shift in the existing power relations. Thus, in human civilization the equation of power keeps on undergoing changes owing to discursive practices of power struggle, sometimes open and mostly in discreet and inconspicuous manner. Camus provides that resistance in art or literature, as counter narrative, works in the similar plane of discursive process that can contribute to the transformation of the discourse of power. He further opines that literary resistance intervenes with the real by virtue of the faculty of imagination and transmits the power generated through resistance in positive direction to establish a new and just order by reconfiguration of the social imbalance. Literary resistance therefore may be understood as subtle expression of power that works on ethical stratum by

empowering the subaltern and allowing them a space to articulate their perception of reality that further contributes to the formation of a progressive, cosmopolitan and inclusive society.

Subaltern studies may be identified as one area that accentuates the idea of resistance by focusing on the issue of continued marginality and Subalterneity of the weaker section in the post-independence period of a once colonized country. In Indian context tribals and Dalits are considered to be the most marginalized groups owing to the long history of exploitation on the basis of racial difference and a rigid caste system. These marginalized groups of Indian society failed to grab attention of the nationalist intelligentsia till the late twentieth century having little literary representation, for Indian literature was more or less dominated by the educated elites mostly preoccupied with the representation of mainstream reality. Ranajit Guha in his seminal essay "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India" (1982) argues, "The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism – colonialist elitism and bourgeois- nationalist elitism" (1). In his biting criticism on the apparent upper class/caste chauvinism and biased representation of Indian mass in this purportedly "un-historical historiography", Guha further maintains,

> "…parallel to the domain of elite politics there existed throughout the colonial period another domain of Indian politics in which the principal actors were not the dominant groups of the indigenous society of the colonial authority but the subaltern classes and groups consisting the mass of the laboring population of the intermediate strata in town and country – that is, the people" (4).

Guha's contention confirms that honest effort was rarely shown by the elitist writers on the exploration and representation of the heterogeneous realities concerning marginalized communities of Indian society. However, especially after the independence of India, the monotony of Indian literature was broken as a few writers expanded their

literary enquiries into the areas untrodden and cleverly steered clear by the elitist literary writers of colonial times. With the emergence of this new school of writers, the issue of marginality of Dalits and tribals gradually started occupying the central stage of Indian literary writing. As a precondition to authentic representation, these writers made sincere efforts at understanding and internalizing the realities of marginalized groups through accumulation of firsthand knowledge. Literature produced in this theoretical supposition focuses on critical examination of the conditions under which fundamental rights of the marginalized groups are subjected to epistemic violence. Stark injustices meted out to these groups in the form of racial and caste based discrimination, economic exploitation, socio-political deprivation, cultural subjugation and coercive suppression etc. surface in these writings as a living testimony of the unrepresented experiences of being marginalized and oppressed. These writers also focus on the depiction of the life-worlds of marginalized communities employing acute sensitivity and humanitarian approach for the understanding of the inner dynamics of such societies. Underlining the agenda of creation and retention of a social environment that upholds the idea of equality as the key thrust area, these writers acknowledge and value the cultural practices of these communities shunning all racial or caste inhibitions.

The late twentieth century Indian literature also witnessed a new batch of writers emerge from the newly educated section of the marginalized societies emphasizing largely on the articulation of their self identity and lived experiences. It has been observed that some of the writers belonging to the marginalized groups move far beyond the issue of injustice and exploitation largely witnessed in resistance literature. As an alternative, these writers dwell upon the celebration of their socio-cultural identity with deliberate emphasis on exact depiction of their life-worlds, as often seen in Dalit literature and autochthonous writings. Similar to the vein of the 1970s Dalit Panthers movement inspired Dalit writers' self-representation and celebration of identity, tribal writers too began representing their specific cultural milieu and taking pride in their

individual cultural identity which had been subjected to racial slur in pan Indian context. For instance, authors from the Northeast India like Easterine Kire, Temsula Ao and Mamang Dai among others have been found to focus more on the representation of tribal myths, legends and customary practices in literature as a means of celebrating tribal culture which was stigmatized as primitive in the colonial writings and perpetuated by the mainstream society. These writers largely emphasize on the recovery of their socio-cultural practices through the depiction of their realities from their own ideological standpoint with the employment and churning of collective memory.

Under the polemics of the theoretical postulations arrived at in the previous chapters, the present chapter limits its area of study to the examination of representation of tribal life-world in the aforementioned five select novels. It is pertinent to mention that three of the novels selected for the study i.e. *Paraja, The Primal Land* and *Love in the Time of Insurgency* are written by authors form outside of tribal society while *The Legends of Pensam* and *Kocharethi* are autochthonous writings as the authors narrate the stories of their respective communities. During the examination of the nature of tribal representation, a conscious effort shall be laid on the assessment of the socio-cultural backgrounds of Mohanty, Ray and Bhattacharya keeping in view of their elitist background. Their position as representing agency of tribal life-world calls for scrutiny at the backdrop of incongruent power relations across the manifestly fragmented Indian society. It is often argued that writers belonging to the mainstream society usually adopt a sympathetic standpoint while making representation of marginalized section. Conversely, it has also been observed that certain writers have moved beyond the class/caste prejudices by internalizing the cultural dynamics of marginalized society and represented it from an insider's point of view. However, considering the exigency of examining the dynamics of power relations in the process of representation, this chapter will also focus on the nature of representations undertaken by writers from both these two categories of insider and outsider of tribal society.

Representations by the outsiders:

Jnanpith awarded Oriya novelist, Gopinath Mohanty's *Paraja* was first published in 1945 in Oriya language. It was translated into English in 1987, after thirty two years, by Bikram K. Das. The English translation of the novel will be used for the purpose of analysis and reference in this thesis. The novel primarily focuses on the exploitation of Paraja tribe by different external agencies that make inroad into their society with certain economic and political interest. Parajas are the indigenous inhabitants of undivided Koraput district in the southern part of the state of Orissa. The setting of the novel under discussion is a small village named Sarsupadar in the Koraput region that falls under the tribal belts of the Eastern Ghats in Orissa. The novel is often considered as one of the earliest works on the life-world of the Parajas that offers literary representation entwined with ethnographic details on the tribe, for it represents the socio-cultural characteristics of the tribe during pre-independence period of India. However, it is to be noted that unlike the colonial ethnographers and elitist Indian literary writers of his contemporary times, Mohanty does not simply limit his narrative to photographic representation of tribal society. Instead, the focal point of his novel is the socio-economic exploitation of tribals by outsiders such as moneylenders, landlords and different government agencies. Much to align with the ideology of Verrier Elwin, who called himself "a 'protectionist' who wished to protect the aboriginals from aggressive and insensitive outsiders" (*Savaging*, 155), Mohanty portrays tribal society as ill-equipped to cope up with the impending changes in the political economy of India during colonial period extensively focusing on the vulnerability of tribal society and their cultural practices having been exposed to modernity. Pertinent to mention that the term modernity is brought under close scrutiny emphasizing on the basic question of who is to be benefited by such undertakings, for modernity also marks the extension of repressive power driven by capitalist force. With the introduction of modernity in their society, as depicted in the novel, the Paraja village gets a road which is indeed a good initiative on the part of the

state when seen as a step towards emancipation by eliminating the problem of inaccessibility and remoteness of tribal habitat under the rhetoric of nation building and social transformation. However, the same road also facilitates exploitation, corruption and hierarchisation of a society that thrived on mutual co-operation in an autonomous and much egalitarian social system. Thus the route and intent of modernity is questioned and critically examined by Mohanty, for the road inaugurates twofold oppression of the tribals - first with the termination of their autonomy and secondly through socio-economic exploitation. Mohanty draws upon the irony of introducing modernity and state control in tribal society with no provisions for basic needs, formal education and necessary infrastructural development. In his narrative, modernity and administrative control become the instruments of exercising state power designed to exploit and subjugate tribal society depriving them of their fundamental rights of leading a free and dignified life. Self-appropriation of the forceful annexation of tribal autonomous area and its inclusion within colonial administrative jurisdiction is put to scrutiny by Mohanty as a case of violation of traditional rights over tribal lands. His novel hints at the lack of goodwill on the part of colonial administration in the real empowerment of tribal society, for it is their disempowered condition that makes exploitation easier for the colonial state mechanism. He, however, does not limit the rigor of his attack only to the colonial administration, for he rather holds Indian mainstream society more responsible for the inhuman treatment of the tribals by focusing specifically on economic exploitation through the institutions of unregulated money lending and bonded labour system. The system of Goti (bonded labourer) and usury by the money lender Sahukar surface as the recurrent theme and the apparent cause leading to the predicament of tribals in this novel. Apart from focusing on the exploitation of tribals in the novel, Mohanty also tries to do justice to the depiction of the socio-cultural aspects of Paraja society by authentic representation of certain socio-cultural practices prevalent among the tribe like their specific belief system, marriage, festivals, food habits etc.

Gopinath Mohanty was born on April 20, 1914 in Nagbali, near Cuttack. He received his higher education from Patna University with honours in English literature and made a great contribution to Oriya literature with the publication of twenty novels and eight volumes of short stories in Oriya language. In his professional life he served in the State Administrative Services from 1938 to 1969, in the capacity of Special Assistant Agent, combining the power of S.D.O. and Sub-judge in the Agency rule. During his service period, he was mostly posted in the tribal inhabited undivided Koraput district of Orissa. He gained a firsthand knowledge of the exploitation and subjugation of the tribal population of that area in the hands of the moneylenders and government machineries during his service period. His exposure to the concerted effort of both government and private agencies in the exploitation and discrimination of tribal population in the territory that traditionally belonged to them is presumably the reason that prompted Mohanty to empathetically represent the reality of tribal life-world in literature. Though he was an outsider to tribal society, both in terms of class and caste, it is observed that he consciously avoided the typical colonial ethnographic style of exoticizing tribal life-world. Unlike the corrupt administrative officers of his time, Mohanty's intense humanitarian concern for ensuring a better life to the tribals of Koraput region is easily discernible from the fact that he often found himself in conflict with the economically and politically powerful elite section of the society comprising of landlords and moneylenders during his service period. Mohanty's sincere engagement with the mission of stopping socio-economic and political exploitation of the tribals came in direct conflict with the capitalist interest and pride of the dominant elite society under his administrative jurisdiction. It is pertinent to mention that a petition was filed against him by the upper caste elites and sent to the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in January, 1951 stating, "To our great calamity and disaster Sri Gopinath Mohanty is posted here as the Special Assistant Agent at Rayagada. He is always fond of hill-men

and behaves like hill-men himself. He very little respects other classes of people before them. He behaves as if only born for Adivasis" (*Intensity*, 142).

Among his novels, *Dadi Budha* (1944)*, Paraja* (1945)*, Amrutara Santana* (1947)*, Sibu Bhai* (1955) and *Apahancha* (1961) are remarkable for the apparent social consciousness and authentic representation of tribal life-world that thrived in the hills and densely forested areas of Orissa. For example in *Dadi Budha*, he focuses on the representation of tribal population inhabiting a small village called Lulla. The novel relies on a simple storyline and explores tribal faith in their traditional belief system on the deity of Dadi Budha. The novel is considered as one of the earliest examples of literary representations of tribal society by melding social consciousness with literary sensitivity. In *Amrutara Santana* he deals with the society of the Kondhs, which is one of the indigenous tribes inhabiting Orissa. The plot of the novel revolves around the life of a female protagonist named Puyu who sacrifices her life for the sake of her family. In this novel Mohanty delves deeper into the complex areas of tribal philosophy that is much different from that of mainstream society. Thus the dominant theme in the earlier phase of Mohanty's literary writing has been found to be largely centered on the representation of tribal life-world informed by his first hand exposure to tribal society during his service period.

Mention may also be made of another remarkable novel titled *Harijan* (1948) that focuses on the society of Dalits. In this novel Mohanty explores the issue of exploitation of the lower caste focusing on the societal and economic differences between the underprivileged Dalit society and the privileged and powerful society of the upper caste. As a humanist writer, his preoccupation has always been to highlight the predicament of the have-nots and expose the underlying circumstances responsible for their deplorable condition. Cultural conflicts emanating from social transformation inaugurated by exposure to modernity with rapid change in political economy of the state and its resultant social tension in different spheres of human society is another theme of his

novels. In 1986, he joined San Jose State University in the U.S.A. as an Adjunct Professor of Social Sciences. He died at San Jose, California on August 20, 1991. He was conferred with the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1955 for his novel *Amrutara Santana*, the Jnanpith Award in 1974 for *Mati Matala* (1946) and Padmabhushan in 1981 as an acknowledgement to his literary contributions to Indian literature.

Paraja is one of the important Scheduled Tribes among the sixty two distinct tribes of Orissa. Etymological meaning of the term Paraja can be traced in the Sanskrit term 'Praja' that means subjects or common people under the ruler 'Raja' or the king. Another theory on the etymology of the term Paraja in Oriya language provides that it means tenants of agricultural lands or 'Royat'. Their mother tongue 'Parji' belongs to the Dravidian family of language. A sizable population of the Parajas is also found scattered in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Assam. However, Orissa has the largest concentration of Paraja tribe with 3.89% of total ST population of the state as per 2001 census. Traditionally they depend on agriculture for livelihood practicing both wet and shifting cultivation in the hilly regions of Koraput, Nabrangpur, Malkangiri, Kalahandi and Rayagada districts. Apart from cultivation, they also engage in seasonal food gathering from the nearby forest, hunting, fishing and livestock rearing for their livelihood. Both men and women of the family equally participate in agricultural activities but household chores are largely performed by the female. Their dietary habits largely include non-vegetarian food and locally brewed country liquor is an integral part of their society as it holds certain cultural importance of offering to their ancestral spirits and consuming during the observance of rituals and festivals.

Paraja tribe is broadly divided into two major divisions i.e. Bada Paraja and Sana Paraja. These two divisions are further subdivided into several other clans depending on their belief systems. Paraja people observe many festivals round the year marking their distinctive cultural identity. Some of the important festivals observed by them are

Asadha Parab, Nuakhia, Diali Parab, Push Parab, Chaita Parab etc. Each Paraja village has separate dormitories meant for boys and girls known as Dhangra Basa and Dhangri Basa. After a certain age the young boys and girls of the tribe go to live in their respective dormitories in order to socialize with other members of the society and also to choose their partners. It might seem a little queer, when seen under the lens of moral codes of mainstream elite society, to facilitate the introduction of sexuality at a young age with societal sanction. However, it is to be noted that the function of dormitories in their society is not limited only to the facilitation of a meeting ground for the young males and females, for it is also the institution which is largely instrumental in the learning of traditional socio-cultural practices, especially for the young generation. Regular mode of marriage system in Paraja society involves payment of bride price to the family of the bride in cash, rice, goat or fowl and country liquor. Widow re-marriage and divorce are permitted in their society with sanction from the village council. Village council headed by the Naik is considered to be the highest authority in Paraja society for the settlement of all kinds of disputes. Though their belief system has undergone massive transformation due to the influence of Hinduism, traditionally they have been believers of animism. Traditionally Paraja society is known to be autonomous with the strong organization of village council and its absolute authority in decision making. However, with colonial takeover of their territories, the village council gradually lost its autonomy and discretionary power. Moreover, prohibition on free access to forest produce with the imposition of Forest Acts had badly affected their economy. Moneylenders and petty businessmen from the external society had been a constant threat to the socio-economic sustenance of the tribe since the colonial period, for a large portion of tribal lands had been captured by them. Having no other option left for subsistence and livelihood at the backdrop of economic exploitation, a large number of Paraja people became victims of the system of bonded labour. Some of them were also displaced to other states like West Bengal and Assam as tea garden labourers under fraudulent and discriminatory

arrangement. Mohanty's novel may be seen as the first Oriya novel to inaugurate literary resistance in Oriya literature on behalf of the Paraja tribe as it recounts the undocumented history of exploitation and oppression during colonial period in Orissa coterminously focusing largely on the significance of their indigenous socio-cultural practices.

The novel starts with the introduction of Sukru Jani and his family members comprising of two sons and two daughters. A passing reference is made about Sukru's wife Sombari, who was killed by a tiger in the forest. Sukru and his children lead a hard but content and peaceful life in a remote village in the lap of nature without much material needs and completely oblivious of the contemporary changes taking place in India under the rule of colonial power. Sukru and his family's needs, like all the members of his community, are the minimal basic amenities for survival, i.e. food, cloth and a roof for shelter abundantly available in the forest adjacent to their village. Pertaining to the symbiotic relationship with the forest, much similar to mother-child relationship, they consider it as their life saver as well as life giver. The forest provides them boundless resources for sustenance from food to traditional medicines and from fuel to clothes. The forest is also the abode of their deities whom they worship and seek spiritual guidance in the time of difficulty. However, conflict comes into their lives as their idyllic society is disrupted and completely fragmented with the entry of external agencies such as the moneylenders, forest guards, police and excise officers. Sukru's daughter Jili catches the greedy eyes of the touring forest guard who wants to establish illicit relationship with her. When Jili disagrees to comply, the forest guard employs a pimp Kau Paraja to approach Sukru, the father and persuade him to send his daughter to the forest guard. Like any honourable man, Sukru takes this proposal as a grave insult and responds with a sound beating of the pimp. Having been embarrassed and enraged at his unholy scheme being thwarted by an insignificant tribal man, the forest guard maneuvers his power to teach Sukru a lesson by framing a false case of unauthorized

felling of trees in the forest. Sukru is fined with Four score (Eighty) of rupees that he must pay failing which he would be subjected to incarceration. Unable to find any other means of procuring the huge amount of fine, Sukru gets a loan of Fifty rupees from the moneylender Sahukar Ramachandra Bisoi trading his freedom by consenting to serve as bonded labourer along with his younger son Tikra for five years. His elder son Mandia is caught and penalized by the sub-inspector of excise department while distilling country liquor in an attempt to raise money for bride price to marry Kajodi. Having no other option at his disposal to pay the fine, Mandia has to follow the path of his father and succumb to the system of bonded labour in order to borrow the money from the Sahukar. In the absence of male members of the family, both Jili and Bili have to earn their living by working as construction workers under the non-tribal supervisor of road construction and ends up becoming the victims of sexual exploitation. After seizing the lands of Sukru, the Sahukar's greed extends to the body of Jili and eventually ends up making her a mistress without granting the rights of a legal wife. Sukru with his two sons kills the Sahukar at the conclusion of the novel out of anger and frustration as an act of resistance.

Despite his seemingly upper caste family background, Gopinath Mohanty's unprejudiced exploration of certain issues concerning the tribal society situates the novel in the list of very few novels that are reckoned with the repute of doing justice to authentic representation of tribal life-world as B. K. Das rightly contends that, "Paraja, like all his other novels, is born out of passionate social awareness, verging on anger" (Das, v). In this novel Mohanty makes his point clear at the very beginning under his theoretical interpolation that by virtue of an unwritten constitution of tribal society, the forest is rightly considered their ancestral property and therefore they are traditionally entitled to extract anything from the forest when demand arises subject to the village headman's permission. By emphasizing on the supreme authority of the village council, Mohanty's narrative manifestly points at the traditional system of justice and egalitarianism prevalent among the tribals. He discursively raises the issue of ecological

understanding embedded in tribal wisdom by facilitating an alternative reading of primitivism as Guha contends, "cultural primitivism was not wholly an invention. For one thing the Gond, the Baiga and the Agaria all believed that the past had been better than the present, that there had truly once been a Golden Age when their kings ruled, when their power of magic and healing were unimpaired" (*Savaging*, 123). Mohanty also draws on to the theme of community ownership of land prevalent in tribal society by deliberate projection of traditional system of chiefdom in the novel and recognition of the supreme authority of the 'Naik'. By doing so, he conversely contends that the concept of individual ownership of land and property is a new addition to their political economy, largely facilitated by gradual acculturation. In the novel the Sahukar is presented as the agency instilling the system of individual ownership of property in Paraja society by building his capitalist empire through voracious accumulation of wealth. The new system of individual ownership spawns distrust and antagonism among the members of the once egalitarian society of the tribals breaking the bond of ancient communal solidarity. Imposition of the statutory power of revenue department in tribal areas also may be understood as negation of tribal rights over their lands, for with the extension of state control in tribal lands the authority of tribal chiefdom is rendered insignificant and redundant.

Mohanty's narrative largely focuses on the freedom that the tribals of India enjoyed in the access to forest before the introduction of Forest Laws, which was enacted for the regimentation of forest resources by the colonial power. It is pertinent to note that the necessity of preservation of forest arose due to the commercialization of forest produce. Indiscriminate felling of trees under the rhetoric of development during British occupation in India was a phenomenon inaugurated by the colonial power itself. On the contrary, as mentioned in the novel, Sukru Jani and his fellow tribal people clears a very small portion of the forest for the purpose of sowing rice and other crops with prior permission of the village council, for the village council is the supreme authority

according to tribal law. It is much easier a conjecture to make that compared to the massive destruction of forest areas caused by commercial felling of trees under the aegis of colonial administration, Sukru Jani's small land clearing is an insignificant damage to the forest resource. However, quite ironically, Sukru Jani's felling of trees in the forest is seen as a major offence and he is penalized and fined amounting to the existential turmoil that robs him of his freedom and individual dignity. Negation of tribal rights to forest resources with the introduction of Forest Act in colonial India may only be compared to the violent action of regulated rationing of mother's milk to the child. Sukru Jani trades his freedom to procure the fine amount and is made to serve as a 'goti' or bonded labourer in the house of the moneylender for repayment of debt. He works hard in the hope of repaying the debt with his physical labour and reclaiming the mortgaged land along with his son but unfortunately he never gets rid of the debt. Instead, he loses his elder daughter Jili to the moneylender, as the Sahukar makes her a mistress taking advantage of their poverty and helplessness in the absence of male members of the family.

Construction of road is depicted in the novel as a part of the larger colonial scheme of introducing modernity considering the immediate prospects of better communication and infrastructural uplift in the underdeveloped tribal region. But Mohanty's narrative does not settle for the romantic view of modernity nor does it seem to agree with the rhetoric of development. Mohanty's narrative remains skewed in skepticism regarding the true nature of modernity and compels us to re-read the position of tribals and their share in the developmental narrative, for the road does not travel alone. As shown in the novel, the road enters the Paraja territory with its corrupting elements like the road contractors and businessmen from other social milieu facilitating systematic exploitation of the tribal population. The first blow of modernity manifests starkly in the novel with the introduction of monetary economy, as the greed for money corrodes the characteristic innocence of Paraja people breaking the bond of their

community life making them more vulnerable to exploitative agencies. Both Jili and Bili succumb to the allurement of the male non-tribal road contractor that culminates in their sexual exploitation maneuvered by some extra money. Money induced greed also corrupts the sense of morality and social bond of community life among the tribals and they participate in their own exploitations by acting to the tune of the more powerful and insidious elements operating under the garb of the common rhetoric of development.

Mohanty, with his extensive awareness of the condition of his contemporary tribal society and much to align with the ideological stand taken by postcolonial theorists, takes an oppositional position while presenting the impact of colonization on Paraja society. His take on the feasibility of imposing a new pattern of governance without any debate by technically reducing tribal autonomy to redundancy is critical, as "(Sukru) cannot comprehend why a man should be arrested and fined for cutting down trees in the jungle" (Das, vii). It is pertinent to note that in Mohanty's narrative on the condition of Paraja tribe during colonial period largely focuses on the exploitation induced by the exercise of coercive power by repressive government agencies of law and administration. Little details are to be found in the novel on some of the social reforms like introduction of English education, women's rights, abolition of caste discrimination etc. undertaken during colonial period in other parts of the India. In fact, lack of literacy among the Paraja tribe has been identified by Mohanty as the main barrier in their road to empowerment, for illiteracy leads to lack of awareness about the new order of governance restricting exposure to the idioms of external world. In the novel the unlettered Sukru awaits in terror maintaining a considerable physical distance as if trying to ostracize himself while his fate was nonchalantly being decided by a group of touring government officials as Mohanty writes,

> Sukru Jani stood like a criminal in the dock and when he saw the officials
>
> writing, he felt as if the point of knife was being dragged across his heart; for he
>
> had the tribesman's instinctive dread of writings made on paper. He also heard

them speak to each other in some dialect which no tribesman could understand, and this added to his terror." (35)

Mohanty's exclusion of the important social reforms in his narrative, which were taking place especially in the metropole of his contemporary times, is not a chance occurrence but deliberate, for inclusion of tribal areas within the parameter of such reforms was rare in colonial India. It is needless to mention that social reforms were initiated by nationalist intelligentsia and largely aimed at restructuring the mainstream elite society, while tribal people remained totally uninformed of such developments. It is therefore, that Mohanty's narrative emphasizes largely on the negativity of modernity and undertakes to introduce us exclusively to the epistemic violence inflicted upon tribal society by the forceful imposition of a new set of normativity. Keeping his narrative centered on the vulnerability and ignorance of the tribals about the harshness of the new situation, which is under way with the introduction of modern civil society and its norms, Mohanty expresses his concern for the preservation of tribal cultural identity. He accentuates tribal simplicity in his representation of Paraja life-world to let his audience internalize the fact - how naïve and ill-equipped the tribals are to tackle the external forces of both coercive and ideological domination.

As a critique of colonialism and its resultant exploitation, the novel focuses on the representation of the horror of British colonialism from the perspectives of tribal society which is very rarely witnessed in the representations of his contemporary writers. With territorial expansion of British India, autonomous tribal areas were brought under the jurisdiction of revenue department which also required extension of penal system for smooth revenue collection. It is pertinent to mention that the British government collected revenue in cash that solicited the introduction of monetary economy. Introduction of monetary economy tarnished the agrarian economy of the tribals mainly based on barter system which also facilitated the entry of non-tribal moneylenders into the tribal regions as Raj Kumar argues,

The emergence of the money-lending class can be traced back to the British rule in India. The new British Revenue system of eighteenth century turned land into private property and in the process a new type of society evolved in our country…the introduction of money as the only medium of exchange led the peasants to abject poverty." (Kumar, 8-9)

In the novel the money-lending class has been represented by the Sahukar, a non-tribal who "was eager to extend his possessions" (253) of wealth and property purportedly for the purpose of establishing and strengthening his colony. However, he could not proceed to establish his colonial empire without making a proper survey of the territory and estimating profit from his investment, so he goes into the village "…aksing: 'Does anyone have any land for sale?' " (253). Furthermore, like a true colonialist he tries to justify his colonial enterprise as he brazenly declares,

I shall set up my warehouse here and give loans of paddy and mandia to the villagers to help them in their need. And I shall also give them loans and engage many labourers. I shall lay roads inside the village and engage many labourers to dig a tank so that there will be enough drinking water for everybody. You will see how I change the face of the village. (253)

The Sahukar enters the Paraja territory with this narrative of a benevolent colonial master and establishes a permanent settlement taking advantage of their innocence and ignorance with his system of usury in compound interest rate. He captures almost the entire cultivable lands belonging to the tribals dispossessing them of their ancestral property and drives them into abject poverty as "On either side of the Sahukar's empire lay two small miserable villages where the tribesmen lived, or rather existed" (120). It is further stated in the novel that the family of the Sahukar first entered the tribal areas through the illegal business of country liquor keeping in view of its high demand among the tribal people. It is a known fact that locally distilled liquor is considered an integral part of ritualistic celebration in tribal society. The Sahukar's investment in the

distilleries yielded two fold profits, for it not only helped him capturing tribal economy but also to manipulate their society for his personal benefit. It is also stated that initially in order to grow business, the Sahukar offered liquor on credit maintaining the accounts in his own system of calculation. Later, when the credit amount soared higher than the tribals' capacity of payment; the Sahukar seized their only remaining property, the tribal land.

It is pertinent to mention that most of the traditionally occupied lands of tribal people did not have official land holding records as the lands were under their possession before the introduction of revenue system. It is stated in the novel, "there were no records of ownership, and the headman could transfer any land from one tenant to another without question" (196). Traditional lands of the tribals were considered to be the collective property of the entire community and hence the question of procuring individual ownership document did not arise. In the absence of the concept of individual ownership, the chief of the tribe was considered to be the competent authority to make any arrangement regarding the distribution of lands among the members of the community. However, with revenue system coming into effect under colonial rule, tribal right on their lands got exposed to vulnerability as it implicitly opened opportunities to external agencies in capturing the land by manipulation of official documents. Mohanty describes how the Sahukar snatches the traditional lands of the Kondhs by manipulating the revenue records with the help of the revenue inspector. As an administrative officer, Mohanty is well aware of the constitutional provisions framed for the protection of tribal rights but he is skeptic of its effectiveness in view of the corrupt practices in the administration and powerlessness of the tribals.

In this novel he accentuates the fact that there are many factors that work together to rob the tribals of their rights and these factors stand on the common ground of colonial self/other dichotomy which by extension leads to the understanding that colonization of the tribals was not undertaken by the Europeans alone, for the Indian elite class

participated equally in their exploitation. The capitalist force of colonial enterprise makes its inroad into the tribal land with a single agenda of making maximum profit regardless of any ethical obligation and Indian bourgeois class was highly instrumental in the oppression of nearly inaccessible tribal areas acting as the reliable henchman of their European masters. The Sahukar personally makes it sure that all the demands of the visiting government officials are met with utmost care, for it is very important to maintain them in good humour to continue his business of money lending and exploitation in the tribal area as the novel provides "…the Sahukar had many friends in officialdom; all the 'great lords' and 'masters' camped in his house when they went on tour" (121). His investment in maintaining a good relationship with the bureaucrats bears many fruits as he was able to pile up his property even after the excise department closed down the shops of country liquor declaring it illegal. The Sahukar started a new business of lending food grains to the needy tribals and collecting it with interest during the season of harvest. The illiterate tribals complied with the method of the Sahukar for they did not know the complex mathematics of calculating compound interest and ended up paying more grains during the time of repayment. Mohanty mentions about a popular gossip that spread across the region on the tactics used by the Sahukar in order to familiarize the readers to the nature of swindle involved in the system. The rumor goes that when a borrower goes to collect one putti of mandia at the house of the Sahukar, he has to inform the Sahukar, the clerk, the servant and the wife of the Sahukar. When the borrower comes back to repay the grains with the interest of half putti added to the capital, he is asked to pay four puttis of grains with the interest of two more puttis, for while borrowing the grains he had made entry at four different accounts respectively maintained by the Sahukar, the clerk, the servant and the wife (121-122). Harvesting season is considered to be the time of celebration among the tribals as their granaries are filled with grains but due to the exploitative tactics employed by the moneylender they lose all their agricultural produce and to make matters worse, they turn into bonded

labourer unable to repay the loan amount. Having been dispossessed of their agricultural lands, the tribals suffer from starvation while "the Sahukar's house swallowed everything up, and nothing that entered ever came out again; and the house grew and bulged" (123).

Mohanty provides the Indian elite society a cautionary note that resistance is inevitable and it would emanate from within the battered self of tribal society as a reaction to continuous exploitation, injustice and interference by the external agencies. Mohanty harks on the steadily rising tension brewing in the once autonomous society of the Parajas at the backdrop of new social order introduced by the colonial power in the form of various restrictive policies. But Mohanty is skeptic about the success of tribal resistance to a more organized system of oppression devised by modern state mechanism as they break the morale of the entire community inch by inch with its slow but steady progression. As mentioned in the novel, it is not that there was no resistance from the tribals' side against exploitation and treachery as sometimes poor and hungry tribals stole unguarded crops from the Sahukar's farmlands. But the Sahukar dominated such acts of rebellion with utmost brutality. Sania Paraja was not only beaten by the musclemen on the payroll of the Sahukar but also handed to the police on the allegation of theft. The unholy nexus of the Sahukar and the law enforcement agencies of colonial government like the police officer and the forest guard has been rightly pointed out by Mohanty in the case of Sania Paraja's physical humiliation and arrest. Mohanty lays bare the issues of organized corruption and administrative indifference to the injustices meted out to the tribals in the novel and shows how they contribute to the evil design of exploitation further leading to perennial backwardness in tribal areas. For Mohnaty court of law is a mere gimmick considering the lack of awareness among the tribal population about their constitutional rights as citizen. It is shown in the novel that the tribals are afraid of going to the court of law to seek for justice even when they know that the moneylender has tricked them with deceit and dispossessed of their indigenous

ownership over lands. Moreover, the previous case histories testify that the court had never been in their favour should there be a dispute with the Sahukar. On the contrary, the privileged and powerful non-tribal Sahukar knows how to manage the administrative officers bribing money. He is also skilled in fabricating court cases and manipulating the judgment in his favour, for he knows that everything is on sale when the system is corrupt. Mohanty's observation on the issue of lack of confidence on government agencies among the tribals also draws relevance in the present context, for the communication gap between the tribals and the mainstream that was created during the colonial period is yet to be bridged. For example, it may be mentioned that the principal cause of several ethnic movements demanding autonomy and self-rule in the recent times happens to be tribals' lack of confidence over the administrative system regulated largely by the mainstream elite society.

Mohanty probes deeper in his exploration of the fundamental problem of exploitation as the initial resistance shown by Sukru and Jili to the aggression of the forest guard is subdued by manipulation of the law, which is supposed to protect the weak. Other members of Paraja community join hands with the forest guard for they are aware of the consequences of going against the authority despite knowing the fact that the ground of Sukru's resistance was just. Instead the Naika, Dhepu Chalan and the Barika, who take the responsibility of negotiating the amount of Sukru's penalty, indulge in further exploitation of Sukru taking advantage of his helplessness. During the negotiation the Naika settles the amount at Fifteen rupees but keeps Sukru in dark about the rest of the amount that he borrowed from the Sahukar in exchange of his freedom. Sukru's attempt at resisting the injustice and exploitation further deteriorates his condition as he loses land, freedom and finally his daughter Jili, who loses her chastity first to the road contractor's supervisor and later becomes the Sahukar's concubine. Sukru's every attempt at protecting his family goes in vain. At the conclusion Sukru has no option left but to take to arms and kill the Sahukar out of uncontrollable anger which

may be seen as an impulsive reaction than a pre-planned cold blooded act of butchery. In Mohanty's narration extreme form of resistance on the part of the tribals becomes an expression of the mute anger suppressed within every tribal's subconscious due to the unabated exploitation and dehumanizing treatment meted out to them for generations.

The novelist's purpose is to create social awareness about the oppression and abuse of the Paraja by the money lenders in the earlier days and now by the various Government offices, that does not seem to have any possible solution when it comes to compensating the cultural loss and traumatic experiences of exploitation unless the inner dynamics of tribal condition is internalized and re-examined. The novel *Paraja* communicates to the agony and predicament of the marginalized and subaltern section of Indian society. It is about the men and women who are waging an endless and futile war against a hostile universe of inequality fuelled with greed. In his introduction to the novel, the translator B. K. Das says, Mohanty "spent a life time trying to understand these tribals of the mountains and forests" and he "attempts to tell their story in several of his major novels" (Das, v). As one of the pioneers of resistance literature of India, apart from highlighting the socio-economic exploitation, denial of rights, poverty and struggle of survival among the Paraja tribe of Orissa, Mohanty also tries to throw light on the undocumented oral cultural practices of the tribe that are fast vanishing as they are being displaced from their homeland with massive cultural and economic invasion.

The second novel chosen for discussion in this thesis is *The Primal Land* written by another prolific Oriya writer Dr. Pratibha Ray. *The Primal Land* was first published in Oriya language under the title *Adi Bhumi* in 1993 and translated into English by Bikram K. Das in 2001. Set in the remote and densely forested mountains of Malakngiri region of Koraput district of Southwestern Orissa, the story of the novel focuses on the representation of the life-world of the Bonda tribe in independent India. Ray's novel is a critical reading of the socio-economic condition of Bonda tribe in the post-independence

period that is reeling under the similar system of exploitation and discriminatory practices of the colonial times as narrated in Gopinath Mohanty's *Paraja*. Ray's narrative is a testimony that nothing has really changed for the tribals of India despite independence from foreign rule and formation of a sovereign nation state, which also compels us to critically re-examine the question – who actually gained from India's independence? The novel focuses on the conflict of socio-cultural values in which the contemporary Bonda society is trapped with the imposition of a new set of regulatory norms by the Indian state conterminously posing permanent threat to the survival of their cultural and linguistic identity. Extension of state hegemony into the tribal villages under the rhetoric of development has been portrayed by Ray as a systematic negation of their traditional system of self-governance. The novel also tells the myriad incidents of tribal resistance in modern India and coercive domination of such indigenous revolts with utmost brutality. Ray's skepticism concerning the fate of tribal society surfaces starkly in the novel as their discrimination and exploitation goes unabated despite many political promises and government schemes sloganeering constitutional safeguard to tribal interest. She locates the fundamental cause of the problem within the state mechanism that traces its roots to the colonial discourse of self/other binary. Through her true to life narrative style added with irony, Ray shows that the contemporary condition of tribal society with its major problems of illiteracy, lack of development and exploitation by outsiders is a living testimony that the hegemonic nature of contemporary Indian state thrives on reproducing and invoking of the same power structure that it believes of successfully uprooting with independence of the country. For Ray, the power structure and its attitude towards the marginalized tribals have undergone no remarkable change excepting the change of identity - earlier it was the British and now Indian bureaucrats, which is indeed unfortunate considering the high promises made to all marginalized groups during the escalation of Indian freedom struggle.

Dr. Pratibha Ray was born on January 21, 1943 at a remote village named Alabol in Balikuda region of Jagatsinghpur district of Orissa. She completed her masters degree with honours in Education and the area of her Ph. D. was Educational psychology. After completion of her academic pursuit she started her professional career as the Headmistress in a tribal girls' school and later joined various government colleges as lecturer. She later joined Public Service Commission of Orissa as a Member taking voluntary retirement from teaching profession in 1998. She was able to draw the attention of literary circle of Orrisa at an early age with the publication of her first poem in 1955. Her first novel *Barsha Basanta Baishakha* published in 1974 made her a familiar name in the Oriya Lliterary Society. She became an established writer during the Eighties with her literary excellence in poems, short stories and novels. She has twenty one novels, twenty six short story collections, ten travelogues, two collections of essays and an autobiography titled *Padma Patra re Jiban* (2015) to her credit. Some of her remarkable novels are *Parichaya* (1978), *Punyatoya* (1979), *Asabari* (1980), *Nilatrushna* (1981), *Sila Padma* (1983), *Yajnaseni* (1985), *Uttarmarga* (1988) and *Adibhumi* (The Primal Land- 1993), *Mahamoh* (1997), *Magnamati* (2003), *Maharaniputra* (2008) and *Sesha Iswar* (2015) among others. Her first short story collection *Samanya Kathan* was published in 1978. She was conferred with the prestigious Padma Bhushan on January 25, 2022 for her remarkable contribution to Oriya and Indian literature and education. Her other awards include Orissa Sahitya Akademi award (1990), Sarala Award (1990), Moorti Devi Award (1991), Katha Prize (1994 and 1999), Sahitya Akademi Award (2000), Katha Bharati Title (2000), Amrita Keerti Award (2006), Padmashree (2007), Jnanpith Award (2011), Orissa Living Legend Award (2013) and Kalinga Ratna Award (2014) among others. Raising voice for equal rights of the weaker sections of society boldly foregrounding the idea of humanism and social activism has remained to be the core area of her literary writing.

Ray completed her post doctoral research on the topic "Tribalism and Criminology of Bondo Highlander". During her research on the Bonda life-world she had to stay in the Malkangiri region for a prolonged period amidst the Bonda tribe as B.K. Das (translator of *Adibhuim*) in translator's preface mentions, "The project involved extended periods of stay in the Bonda country and close interaction with members of the tribe, who are traditionally hostile to *Khangars* (outsiders)" (vi-vii). Her interaction with the Bonda people and the unique experience of observing and understanding the essence of Bonda socio-cultural practices during the said project resulted in the novel Adibhumi (The Primal Land).

The Bonda tribe is one of the "62 'Scheduled Tribes'" of Orissa (Das, vi). Since pre-historic times the mountainous regions of Malkangiri covering an approximate geographical area of "two hundred square kilometers" (Das, vi) are the ancestral home to the Bondas. Racially they belong to the Austro-Asiatic stock that is believed to have migrated to the present location in the past. The thirty two villages in which the Bondas reside are collectively known as "Bondaghati" covering the areas of "Mudulipara, Kadamguda, Podaghat, Andarhall, Rasabeda and Badadural" (Chitra and Tenzin, 35). According to the Census Report of 2011 the total population of Upper Bondas is approximately Six thousand Seven hundred while the Lower Bondas' population is a little higher with twelve thousand two hundred and thirty one (*Census,* 2011). The contemporary Bonda tribe is divided into two distinctive groups known as the Upper Bondas and the Lower Bondas depending on the degree of their assimilation to the mainstream society of the plains. The Upper Bondas have a unique reputation of being excessively reticent and hostile towards outsiders and this attribute of theirs have been one of the prime areas of "special fascination for anthropologists" since the colonial period (Das, vi). Their assimilation to the mainstream society has been extremely minimal as Bonda social system considers adoption of external ideologies by the insiders an offense to their tradition. Transgression of social norms by its members, especially by

women, is highly condemned and mostly results in excommunication of the offender. Bondas are classified under the category of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) due to the vulnerability of their existence as a very low rate of population increase has been witnessed among them over the years, which adds to the danger of total extinction of their vibrant cultural identity. The Government of Orissa formed the Bonda Development Agency (BDA) in 1977 with an aim of facilitating assimilation of Bondas to the mainstream society by introducing education and developmental projects but due to the pre-existent racial and cultural discrimination the projects undertaken by the BDA have failed to show desired outcome. Manipadma Jena reports, "Lietracy among Upper Bonda men is a miserable 12 percent, while female literacy is only 6 percent, according to a 2010 SCSTRI baseline survey, compared to India's national male literacy rate of 74 percent and female literacy rate of 65 percent" (Para15). Instead, imprudent manner of introducing state sponsored developmental projects by imposition of a new set of coercive regulations has resulted in socio-political conflict further deteriorating the condition of Bonda region. Pratibha Ray grapples with of the long standing massive under-development witnessed in Bonda society as the core issue of her novel and brings to light certain subsidiary causes responsible for the same that largely remain unnoticed by the competent authorities as well as the intellectual class.

Verrier Elwin in his book *Bondo Highlander* (1950) mentions,

"Indeed by plainsmen and officials the Bondos are regarded as entirely savage, almost as the classic savage type: the strange dress and appearance of their women, their violent homicidal ways, their unfamiliar tongue – they speak a difficult Austro-asiatic language – the inaccessibility of their abode, separate them from the rest of the Orissa." (1)

Elwin's observation made during the 1950s on the antagonistic attitude of the mainstream society towards Bonda society is still relevant to the contemporary times, which is largely the cause of their socio-economic backwardness. Exploitation and

discrimination of the tribals emanate from the racial difference and hostility that is embedded in the subconscious realm of the dominant culture of the mainstream India that continue to pose a constant threat to the survival of the highly endangered tribe. Mention may be made of the incident of sexual harassment afflicted upon two Bonda women when they were returning from the market as "the Khangars surrounded the dhangris and stripped them naked" (274). But when the Bondas go to the police station to lodge complaint, the Contractor whose associates were involved in the crime says, "They walk about half naked anyway. And they're ready to take off their ringas at the slightest excuse. You Bondas have no shame. I don't know why the sarkar is wasting so much money over you. You will always remain uncivilized!" (277). Enraged at such provocative verbal slur and disappointed at police inaction, the Bondas plan for an organized attack on the plainsmen armed with their traditional weapon. But before they could execute their plan into action, they are surrounded and subjected to police atrocity and "there were no calls for revenge. The Bondas had been tamed" (277). What concerns to the present study in this incident is that collective dignity of tribal society is devalued by the perpetuation of certain colonial stereotypes even in postcolonial India and their every attempt at resistance demanding fundamental rights is made to face with dire consequences of state violence. Furthermore, the novel shows that their characteristic reluctance to adapt to the impending changes and welcome modern elements, including education and healthcare facilities, contribute to their vulnerability as well as continuation of the colonial stereotype of primitivity.

In Ray's representation, Bonda society is not the romanticized idyllic Garden of Eden, a stereotyped identity attached to every tribal society by an outsider nor is it the monolithic repository of eternal happiness and innocence of mankind, for she makes an honest effort in telling manifestly about the problems of internal feuds, excessive alcoholism and gender inequality that continue to remain in practice within tribal society. *The Primal Land* is often labeled as an ethnographic novel considering its narrative

emphasis on the depiction of cultural practices and socio-economic condition of the tribe but it would be a grave disservice to the author to situate the novel at par with colonial ethnographic texts, for her method of representation radically differs from that of colonial ethnographers. Most importantly, Ray employed a different methodological approach in finding the truth, for she did not rely on hearsay knowledge while collecting materials for the novel. Her long stay in that region visiting all the thirty two villages inhabited by Bonda tribe seemingly involved observation and internalization of tribal customs and lived realities from close quarter which made it possible for her to represent Bonda society convincingly with its internal pros and cons. Unlike a myopic observer, she does not limit her novel to mere depiction of the Bondas as the victims of a coercive regime but extends the horizon of her exploration to the internal matters within the tribe that obliquely contribute to their own exploitation and backwardness.

The novel tells about a well meaning and energetic government officer named Sitanath Sahu who comes all the way from the state capital city of Bhubneswar completing an arduous journey with a firm determination of facilitating a change in the Bonda land despite having been warned by his colleagues that "the Bondas are a wild tribe, barely civilized! You won't be able to achieve anything!" (127). He knew about the reality in advance that his stay in the remote hilly terrain would not be easy and he would not get a warm reception from the tribal society that has always shown reluctance to accept new changes in their land. Yet he comes and works diligently for the development of the Bondas with a single resolution of serving humanity. The highly educated Sitanath comes out of his comfort zone and tries to set up a good rapport with the villagers, for he thinks that it is important to understand the life-world of the Bondas to inaugurate social transformation. Initially he is more than satisfied with the official statistics that shows a total of eight primary schools functioning with a satisfactory number of students. But soon his illusion is broken by Khara Babu, a school teacher, as he informs that the schools are running "but only on paper" (131). Despite the early

setback, Sitanath concentrates on devising innovative plans for the implementation of the project and convinces the conservative patriarchal Bonda society to permit the female volunteers of the project to wear sari and grow hair which is otherwise considered a grievous offence to their customary rules. But to allude to the statement that says "the British had gone but their successors had proved to be no more understanding or sympathetic" (138), the sari clad Adibari Toki, a Bonda women, end up becoming "the project's showpiece" (187), a perfect trope for the state mechanism to parade its success as even the elitist intellectual class seems to subscribe to such propaganda. However, what leaves us perplexed is that everyone including the woman M.L.A. seems to forget about the key issue of women empowerment and grassroots development in the hullabaloo of the propagandist narrative, as the success of the project gains more importance than the development of the Bondas. Despite many lapses in the overall system and half-hearted effort on the part of the policy makers, Sitanath manages to create considerable transformation in Bonda land but due to his unconditional dedication for the welfare of the tribals he unknowingly upsets the entire system, as due to his strict measures taken for strengthening the base of the project "there was suppressed resentment in many quarters against the Bonda Project and its leader" (193). He is transferred immediately from the Bonda region to other post for his failure in convincing the Bondas to cast their votes during election which also implies that the state mechanism is not much interested in converting their developmental slogans into reality but solely concerned with the vote counts. What concerns us here is that the entire system is so rotten from inside that even honest efforts may not be sufficient to make the desired transformation if an ideological makeover is not initiated in the mainstream attitude towards the tribals on priority basis. Much to allude to Elwin's observation as he says, "Let us teach them that their (tribals) own culture, their own arts are the precious things, that we respect and need. When they feel that they can make a contribution to their country, they will feel part of it" (75), Sitanath too realizes that it would be wrong

to transform the tribal way of life in a faster pace without providing them enough time for internalization of the idiom of modernity. However, his suggestions are not taken seriously by the goal oriented project office run by the civilized elites only to add to further disintegration of tribal society.

Though she disapproves defining her ideological stand as a radical feminist writer under the rationale that she is more concerned with humanity and largely vouch for equality in the society irrespective of caste, race, class, creed and gender; it is true that the focal point of her novels generally centers on alternative reading of women characters as evidenced in the feminist reading of the mythological character of Draupadi in her novel *Yagnaseni* (1984). In the similar vein, in *The Primal Land* she accommodates a considerable space for the representation of Bonda women and depiction of the true nature of their condition within the patriarchal power structure of tribal society by subversion of the much hyped romanticized perception that women are treated equally in the comparatively egalitarian setup of tribal life-world. Through her novel, she brings the much debated issues of Bonda marriage system and criminal tendency of Bonda men to discussion and informs the audience that it is always the woman who has to bear the brunt of the problem caused by the relational outcome of their customary practices. The novel tells that a Bonda woman has to grow up performing multiple gender roles of a care taker to her younger siblings and helping hand in household chores as a child, wife and caretaker of her newly married young husband after marriage, a widow of a Bonda man who is bound to get killed in a fight with other man when drunk or a lonely wife awaiting her incarcerated husband after the completion of prison sentence if the man is fortunate enough to stay alive murdering his opponent. On the contrary, a Bonda man, who is usually much younger to his wife in age, does not partake in household works and nonchalantly "spend their time consuming liquor while the women do most of the work" (Das, vi). When Bagha Bindhu kills Mangla Madra with his arrow and goes to jail for about fourteen years, virtually "it was the wives that

were punished", for when "Sukri Toki looked at Budei, the wife of her husband's killer. There was no hatred in her – nothing except numbing sorrow. The two women were united in their grief" (Ray, 76). In Bonda society murder is recurrent and it is largely considered a matter so trivial that the men folks tend to overlook its consequent damage to the concerned families, as in the absence of the husband, the entire responsibility of looking after the family comes solely to the wife. Like many Bonda women, both Sukri and Budei are the victims of the irrational feud that Bonda patriarchal society keeps alive for the glorification of their pride and masculinity.

Ray further examines the political undertone of patriarchal system intersecting certain customary practices of Bonda society and tells us how their society maneuvers certain cultural myths to maintain patriarchal dominance. For example she narrates the myth of Sita Takrani, who, out of her displeasure on being laughed at by some Bonda women, curses them to remain bald headed and naked for eternity failing which they would be held responsible for the devastation of the entire tribe. However, after being pleaded by the Bonda women, Sita Takrani tears a small piece of her sari and lets them use it as 'ringa' to cover the lower part of their body. What concerns us here is the manner in which the Bonda patriarchal society guards the custom vehemently objecting to slightest negotiation despite realization that it is unreasonable to maintain such stringency in the present condition of inevitable societal change. However, it would be wrong to interpret Ray's narrative as blatant advocacy of globalization, for here she is not vouching for capitalist aggression but as a writer with social awareness she cannot deny the ever evolving nature of human society. She rather advocates for the freedom of Bonda women from the age old customary practices that restricts them from the road to excellence. When Adibari Toki, Sombari Toki and Mangli Toki come to the Project Officer and volunteers to work for the project taking the risk of offending the norms of Bonda society and losing their social status, Ray provides that all of them have been the victims of abject poverty in an explanatory note. Having been burdened with family

responsibilities and bonded labour system, they are in search for an escape route which they find in the government project. However, their journey from traditional 'ringa' to mainstream Sari is not so easy, as they have to get the sanction of the village council at the 'Sindbore' (stone platform on which the village council assembles), which is an absolute male domain. The village council finally grants them the permission to wear sari and grow hair but when the unmarried Adibari becomes pregnant and throws her new born child, apparently to avoid social scorn, the male ego of Bonda society sardonically preaches, "it was plain that sin and guilt had entered the Bonda Mountain when Adibari shed her ringa for a sari" (195). Having no choice left, Adibari leaves the village never to return and ironically her loss is not mourned by the villagers nor do they report it to the police. In the plains she becomes the victim of sexual exploitation and leads the miserable life of a poor and lone dish washer. A Bonda woman's attempt at social transgression by wearing sari and joining the project office for employment is held responsible for the inauspicious occurrence of infanticide in the Bonda society but ironically it is not considered a threat to their culture when a jail-returned Bonda man wears shirt and dhoti trying to emulate the plainsman's fashion. Instead, such Bonda men are revered as they think that "the Bondas returned from jail educated, wise in the ways of the world" (87). Adibari's case serves as an example of how Bonda women are doubly victimized by a failed government project and pre-existent patriarchal system of Bonda society.

Her take on the issue of modernity is not blatantly negative unless modern elements like education and other state sponsored developmental schemes are introduced to the tribal society with proper planning. However, it is not to be construed that she is a believer of the utopian concept of modernity, for she rightly points out the reality which is enmeshed in massive corruption. Her narrative reflects that all attempts at proper implementation of government schemes in tribal areas meet with failure leading to no concrete solution, especially in the matter of confronting the basic problem of poverty

among the Bondas. The brazen conjunction of political leaders and bureaucrats surface as yet another reason of their backwardness and exploitation. The Bonda region, like many other tribal areas, becomes a common ground of sacking easy money through corruption and deceit for outsiders capitalizing on the lack of awareness among the tribe about their own constitutional rights. Like Gopinath Mohanty, Ray too locates the root cause of the problem in the casual approach taken by the state for the empowerment of the tribals and forceful replacement of traditional autonomous system with a centralized system of governance. Drawing our attention to the magnitude of corruption, the novel shows that the system is so blighted that it is almost impossible to correct even if a couple of well meaning government agents like Sitanath Sahu take initiative for making positive change. Ray ends her novel in a pessimistic note signaling the newly emerged conflict of ideas between the old and the new generations within the tribe contributing to the continuity of further internal feuds as Somra Sisa kills the old Soma Muduli with his arrow "Before anyone could stop him" (297). But what concerns us more at the concluding chapter is the manner in which justice is dispensed by the powerful state agency as "even before the ancient body came to rest a gulang babu had emptied the magazine of his rifle in Somra's body" (297), signifying the extension of the state's coercive regime in subduing the tribal society with force. The fate of the entire tribe remains entangled in uncertainty with no apparent solution to their predicament in the wake of gradual increase in power exercise by the hegemonic state. The poignant story of the Bonda tribe is identical to the conditions of every tribal and other marginalized groups of India which justifies the selection of this novel for the purpose of examining the nature of tribal representation in this project.

The third novel selected for the present study is Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya's *Love in the Time of Insurgency* (2005). The novel was first published in Assamese language under the title *Yaruingam* in 1960 and translated into English by the author himself. English translation of the novel was posthumously published in the year 2005

under the title *Love in the Time of Insurgency* by Katha Books. Set in the Tangkhul dominated area of present day northeastern state of Manipur, the novel retells the historical events of World War-II during the late 1940s and early 1950s. The novel explores the physical, psychological and ideological impact of the war and post war socio-political developments on the ethnic community inhabiting the mountainous terrain that served as the important strategic location during the clash between the Japanese soldiers and Allied Forces. The theme of political upheaval and emergence of self consciousness is found to be recurrent in Bhattacharya's novels as he attempts to explore social realism under this thematic concern especially focusing on the post-independence period of India. The word *Yaruingam* means "People's rule" in the language of the Tangkhuls (Bhattacharya, 241). In the novel the author provides an in-depth study of the political tension that started brewing in the society of the Naga tribes of Manipur and Nagaland since the pre-independence period of India. This was arguably the first novel by any writer that addressed the aspiration of the Nagas for self-governance and a sovereign state. The novel focuses on the traumatic experience of the war with its apparent physical damage to the surrounding ecology. It also addresses the discomfort and resentment of the ethnic communities due to the hegemonic presence of foreign soldiers during colonial period and especially Indian Army after independence as, "These villages had no roads, no modern means of communication. Welfare agencies were still to reach them" (225). The faction of Naga sentiment represented by Rishang in this novel hoped that a better future awaits them with the much anticipated development and war compensation that was promised to arrive after independence. However, much to their dismay, no such gesture was visible from the central government for a long period, which engendered an atmosphere of sheer distrust among the general public. To add to their existing discontentment, the Central government of India deployed contingents of security personnel to suppress separatist sentiments with force and the once peaceful area of autonomous tribes was declared a disturbed area as "the

government was represented only by the police which was seen by many only as a negative force interested only in enforcing law" (225).

The war symbolically represents the uncertainty of political aspirations of the indigenous population residing in that particular location since pre-historic times with an autonomous territory ruled according to their traditional system of law. However, with the arrival of British imperialism and subsequently having been integrated into the sovereign nation state of India after independence without taking the consent of its inhabitants much into consideration, political autonomy of the Nagas and their share in the national political domain came under question. Trapped in political uncertainty, the collectivist society of the Nagas suffered disintegration with conflicting ideas not only between the old and the new but largely within the educated section of Naga youths. The novel also explores the impact of war on the lives of tribal women, which is largely ignored in traditional patriarchal domain of war-narratives that solely concentrates on the glorification of masculine side of war. Being a writer representing the Northeast India, that has suffered massive discrimination and subjugation even after independence, Bhattacharya's narrative tackles the issue of inequality with utmost subtlety and brings the issues of political aspirations of the tribal groups juxtaposing against the idea of nationalism which is largely a discourse dominated by the mainstream elites. Using the war as a trope this novel tries to explore the psychological and ideological conflict that the Northeast of India has been struggling to overcome and simultaneously trying to fit into the imaginary nationalism of India. Unlike the previous two novels, Bhattacharya's *Love in the Time of Insurgency* does not depict the direct discrimination and exploitation of the tribals by the mainstream society but it chronicles the step-motherly treatment of India's Northeast since the pre-independence period. The status of the aspirations and expectations of the Naga population in the imagined nation state and realization of their self-identity during the turbulent period of war and the failure of the Indian state mechanism in understanding and addressing their dreams of living in a free country as

stated in the novel obliquely indicate the rather lethargic approach in solving the problems of the Northeast by the mainland. Here the author largely tries to highlight the political sluggishness of the mainland India, if not direct discrimination, towards the Northeast during the early period of independence which was enough for realization of betrayal that led to the formation of Naga separatist organization that still continues to remain unresolved. Following this common feeling of discontentment, several extremist groups emerged in the Northeastern parts of India demanding secession from the Indian state which were tried to suppress with military power by the state. India's Northeast continues to witness gruesome realities of series of atrocities and violence in the name of establishing normalcy which resonates throughout the literary expressions of the writers from this part of the country. One of the earliest Naga writers writing in English language from the Northeast, Temsula Ao narrates such experiences of horror and statelessness in her short stories and poems.

The first Jnanpith awarded Assamese novelist Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya's contributions with seventeen novels, two short story collections, two plays, two travelogues, one biography and many thought provoking essays have immensely enriched Assamese literature. His first novel *Rajpathe Ringiay* was published in 1957. This novel was based on the events of a day and was put to political and social analysis of contemporary Assam. One of the pioneers of modern Assamese novels, Bhattacharya won the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award in 1961 for *Yaruingam* and became an important figure of Indian literature for his contribution to the genre of political novels in Assamese literature. His 1964 novel *Satagni* was based on Chinese attack on India in 1962. His most influential novel *Mrityunjay* (1979) depicts a clear picture of the struggle of Assamese society during the freedom struggle in 1942 in pre-independence period. In *Mrityunjoy*, the colonial Assam is represented to explore the predicament of Assamese people at the peak hours of Indian freedom movement and their uncertainty in making a choice between non-violence and extremist ideology. In 1979, Bhattacharya was

awarded the most prestigious literary award Jnanpith for his literary contributions to Indian literature. He was also the President of Asom Sahitya Sabha (Assam Literary Society) during the session 1983-1985. He was conferred with the honourable chair of the President of the Sahitya Akademi in 1988. *Aai (1960), Pratipaad (1970), Ranga Megha* (1976)*, Ballari* (1973) and *Daaini* (1976) among others are some of his other novels that have enriched Assamese literature to a great extent. Kolong Aajiu Boi (1962) and Satsori (1963) are his two short story collections. Many of his novels have been translated into English and other Indian languages.

Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya was born in 1925 and died on August 6, 1997. He worked as a Science teacher in the Venture Christian Missionary High School situated at the Tangkhul dominated district of Ukhrul, Manipur for two years after the independence of India from 1950 to 1952. During his stay, he could avail the opportunity of gathering firsthand knowledge on the life-world of the tribe which was mostly inaccessible to outsiders considering the geographical location and poor communication during the first decade of independence. Though an outsider to the Tangkhul society, his sensitive deliberation on tribal life-world is reflected in his narration and it adds to the authentic representation of the tribe in addition to his explorations on the response of the tribe to the socio-political transformation taking place at the backdrop of the war. The novel initiated immense national attention and importance for the Naga community in the literary domain of India.

Tangkhuls are one of the major Naga tribes of Manipur with demographic concentration mostly in Ukhrul and Kamjong districts of Manipur. Their population is about 2 lakhs and linguistically they belong to Tibeto-Burman family (Singh and Shimray, 275). Like other tribes, the Tangkhuls too have their own traditional system of governance and they have been living an independent life since pre-historic times, for "Every village had an unwritten constitution made up of age-old conventions and traditions. The Tangkhul villages were self sufficient except for salt and self-governing

units ruled by hereditary or elected chief assisted by a Council of Elders. The Chief was a judge, administrator and commander rolled into one" (History, para 7). They are also known for their unique linguistic and cultural identity that they have been guarding for generations. Almost the entire Tangkhul tribe got themselves converted to Christianity during the late nineteenth century at the initiative of Baptist missionaries but apart from the religious conversion, assimilation into the mainstream Indian society is almost non-existent seemingly due to the geographical isolation of their habitat.

Love in the Time of Insurgency is a novel that centers on the story of three friends namely Rishang, Khating and Phanitphang who belong to the Tangkhul tribe. The novel tries to explore the historical events that lead these three friends in three different ideological directions under the impact of the socio-political changes on the lives of the Nagas with the declaration of Indian independence. The protagonist of the novel, Rishang, inspired by Gandhian philosophy takes the path of Indian nationalist ideology and hopes to uphold Naga identity and self-governance within the constitutional ambit of Indian nation state. At times he is apprehensive of Indian nationalist political ideology but supports the imaginary idea of Indian nation state in the hope of receiving adequate response and importance to Naga aspirations at national level, for "…the Nagas were inspired by the new vision of self-rule. They wanted to be a constituent unit of the Indian nation, with legitimate powers to rule and work for their own progress at the district and village level" (219). Inspired by Gandhian ideology and democracy, when he was pursuing higher education at Calcutta, Rishang believes that the path of armed revolution for asserting their rights as envisioned by Videsselie and his followers is not at all feasible looking at the contemporary condition of Naga society which was marred with many problems such as illiteracy, lack of awareness and inter tribal feuds. To consolidate the varied political interests of different Naga tribes within a single whole at that moment was almost impossible due to their different linguistic and cultural identities. But "Rishang did not know what shape Indian democracy would take" (220) after witnessing

the horrors of partition in which his friend Amulya was murdered in front of him and especially after the assassination of his ideological icon, Gandhi. Like many of the tribal intellectuals of early independence period, Rishang too is trapped in a political gamble trying to negotiate the collective cultural identity and political aspirations of his tribe in the newly emerged political economy. Rishang is aware of the risk that his tribe must take, for "unless bureaucratic rule *is* replaced by a democratically elected administration with people's full participation, there would always be conflict" (220, emphasis added).

Rishang's associate Khating envisions a far broader concept of Indian nationalism as he tells his father, "Why should the Nagas not unite with the Meiteis, the Assamese and other Indians? If freedom comes, it can only come through collective effort" (35). However, Khating's imagination on Indian nationalism and its supposed inclusivity stands at the opposite end of the reality as the contemporary Indian society was largely reeling under the shadow of casteism and racial discrimination. Khating's high sense of nationalism and national unity irrespective of caste, race, religion, gender and creed in free India is a flawed sense of self-contentment which may be read as the result of his lack of awareness about the rest of Indian society. Jivan's self isolation in the hills and reluctance to meet his own family members from Assam hints at the existing anti-thesis of Khating's imagined reality. Jivan says, "they [his family] might be disappointed to see *him*, for marrying out of caste" when Rishang asks the reason of his isolation (176, emphasis added). Jivan's mention about the caste hostility prevalent in Indian society signals the immanent threat that lurks beneath the surface of the rhetoric of an inclusive nationalism. Rishang unknowingly appropriates and parades this false sense of nationalism under the brand value of freedom from the Imperial power of Britain.

Highly influenced by the idea of an independent sovereign state for the Nagas envisioned by Videsselie, Rishang's friend Phanitphang joins the extremist group led by armed rebels of the Naga community. Videsselie, an Angami tribe from Khonoma and a

former member of Indian National Army (INA) is the anti-thesis to the Indian nationalist idea of Rishang. Videsselie's political awareness can be gauged from his choice to side with the Subhas Chandra Bose led INA embracing extremist ideology during the freedom movement of India when the popular tide was more towards the Gandhian ideology of non-violence as shown in the novel. The prime reason of Videsselie's decision behind joining the INA was to ensure a sovereign state for the Nagas through direct negotiation with Bose. However, when things did not work according to his plan with the defeat of Japanese Army in the battle of Kohima, he comes with the idea of marketing his extremist ideology packaged with the idea of a sovereign state for the Nagas where they would be able to exercise the absolute power of autonomy. Videsselie's idea of independent Nagaland aligned with the revivalist ideology of the older generation represented by Ngazek and Ngathingkhui who vouch for the protection of their cultural and political autonomy at any cost. Ngazek opposes the integration of Naga territories into the Indian Nation State under the rationale that thought a few areas like Khonoma were occupied by the British government, majority of the Naga inhabited areas never came under the political map of British India as he maintains, "The British never subjugated us, never fully" (35). Ngazek's contention on the autonomous existence of the Nagas is not an imaginary construct as Udayon Misra in his book *The Periphery Strikes Back* (2013) argues, "this proud race of people who had been leading an independent existence, except for some seventy odd years of halfhearted British control, at the periphery of what today constitutes the Indian nation-state" (16). However, what concerns us is that Videsselie himself was not sure about the future of the Naga sovereignty. His idea of independent Naga state was rather constructed on a rickety ground as he could not answer convincingly when confronted by Rishang at the terrorist camp regarding the immediate gain of the Nagas from the armed movement against Indian nation state. Videsselie simply steers clear the burning issues of under-development, illiteracy and recurrent inter tribal feud by saying that, "I have nothing to

give the people at this moment except freedom" (Bhattacharya, 203). He seems to overlook the subsidiary essential requirements of a sovereign state which also reflects his lack of preparedness if the Nagas were to get their much desired freedom. On the contrary, at that juncture, Rishang's move to join the nationalist movement by integration of all the Naga dominated areas to the newly emerged Indian state and demand for an autonomous area to ensure ethno-cultural protection by consenting to remain a part of the greater Indian Nation State through political dialogue was a much wiser decision. The clash of ideas between moderate and extremist groups within the tribe ends in medias res leading to no immediate solution to their problems. However, historical records of the later period informs that the secessionist idea of formation of a sovereign state exclusively for the Naga people represented in the novel by Videsselie gathered momentum in the areas covered under the projected map of Greater Nagalim as Misra states, "Under Phizo's leadership the NNC was turned from an amorphous middle-class organization into a militant outfit wedded to the idea of a sovereign Naga homeland" (*Periphery*, 37).

The novel seems to deviate immensely from the political wave that swept across the Naga territories during the post-independence period of India and loses coherence with historical details on political development among the Nagas since colonial period. Bhattacharya's claim on a huge number of Nagas participating in the freedom movement following Gandhian ideology of non-violence has no evidential truth, for Mishra maintains that the Nagas were "almost totally cut off from the national struggle against British rule, unexposed to the winds of social change sweeping across the rest of the country and unacquainted with the ideology and belief of the new leaders of India" (*Periphery*, 28). Traditionally, the Nagas had their own autonomous political system and even during the colonial period most of the territories of the present day Nagaland remained independent of foreign rule. The educated class of the Nagas vehemently opposed the idea of integration of Naga autonomous territories into the nation state of

India after British left. Much to contradict to Bhattacharya's claim, the separatist sentiment was not only limited to a few educated section of the Nagas but spread across the entire population as Kaka D. Iralu writes, "when India accused the Naga national movement as being instigated by Phizo and a few extremists, a plebiscite was held in May 1951 in which 99.9% Nagas gave their thumb impressions declaring to the world that they were not Indians and would not join the Indian Union" (Naga, 27). Bhattacharya's novel seems to appropriate the nationalistic discourse of Indian nation state by omission and sometimes alteration of certain historical facts of Naga resistance manifested during his contemporary time. His narrative mentions the military operation conducted by the Indian government to quell the separatist sentiment but does not bring this issue to detailed discussion and steers clear by simply holding the separatist groups responsible for the political unrest during post-independence period. As an advocate of Indian nationalism evidenced by his preoccupation with the theme of Indian freedom movement in most of his other novels, Bhattacharya seems to weave his narrative in this novel from the similar ideological perspective. He attempts to propagate his individual political ideology through the character of Rishang and also appropriates it by juxtaposing with the promises of development, by discarding the mass movement of the Nagas as impractical. Through the character of Rishang, he prescribes a safer exist for the Nagas from their political perplexity by integration into India and to raise the issue of Naga autonomy in the later period through dialogue. He however remains silent on the issue if the government of India would act promptly with required seriousness in this regard. Bhattacharya's novel fumbles a bit in the authentic representation of the political development among the Nagas in post-independence India, for his narrative fails to establish a convincing analogy with the historical details. Instead, he appears to commit the error of mis-representation by adhering to the exclusionist elitist historiography of Indian mainstream.

The novel however underlines the dilemma of choosing between traditional societal norms in practice among the tribe represented by Ngazek and modern ideology introduced and propagated by a globalized world. Like other tribal societies, the Tangkhuls too have their characteristic reluctance to accept new ideas and foreign system of governance which is under way with the integration of their territory under the political map of India and hence suffer from the simultaneous uncertainty concerning the survival of their cultural identity at the onslaught of modernity. Through the portrayal of the predicament of Tangkhul tribe, Bhattacharya corresponds to the problems of identity crisis faced by every tribal society and their varied response to it. The war symbolically presents the tension of the Nagas at the backdrop of the socio-political transformation in the newly formed nation state of India that indicates far greater loss on the part of the tribe which is underway and would totally break the morale of the tribe in the near future. The war introduces the tribal not only to the horror of material and physical loss but also to a much greater threat which would eventually cause the loss of their autonomy over their own land. Modernity is represented as the conveyor of negativity into the lives of tribals in the northeastern part of India for it introduces a new set of codes of evaluation and perception of their life-world. The novel tells how Naga society is torn apart being caught in the uncertainty of taking a definite direction as for many like Ngazek and Videsselie in the novel, consent and submission to Indian nationalist ideology would simply mean abandoning their rich cultural heritage and history as Ngazek tells his son Khating, "We want to live life our way. Not be ruled by foreign ideas" (35). Discarding the idea of modernity he further maintains, "Christianity and modern education are taking us on the wrong path…The Nagas were happier when they were naked. We had no food problems. Our needs were few and we were able to satisfy them" (35). According to Ngazek modernity means "aping" the "master", for by accepting modern ideas the Nagas would lose their originality which would bring a greater disaster to the entire tribe (36). Ngazek's son, Khating, an educated Naga youth

and a close associate of Rishang who later joins Indian Army, confronts his father mentioning about the necessity of modern ideas for the development of their people. Khating maintains, "Look, we can be better Nagas only by giving up our ways" (36). Bhattacharya shows us that change is inevitable in any social set up and Naga society is not an exception with modern ideas seeping through every nooks and corners. For example, ironically Ngazek's own son Khating is about to marry a Christian Khasi girl from Shillong, signifying a major challenge to all his attempts at guarding traditional values by not getting converted to Christianity and rejecting the power of modernity.

The novel also focuses on the position of woman in Naga society through the character of Sharengla, who is captivated by Japanese Army during the war. Sharengla is made the concubine of a Japanese soldier Ishewara in the Japanese camp "after she had been abducted" (20) but she is abandoned by her captor when the Allied Forces make their aggression. When released, she goes back to her society but she is not accepted by her own community. Bhattacharya subverts the romantic idea of tribal egalitarian social system and contends that even in tribal societies women are subjected to gender discrimination and most importantly, their acceptability within the society depends on their chastity. Chastity of a woman becomes the index of estimating purity. Sharengla's body becomes a site of textualization under the patriarchal gaze of the society as her own society raises question on her acceptability after being deserted by the Japanese soldier. Having been deserted and wounded due to the bombing, she is brought to the village but her society prohibits her entry into the village and made to live in the Ngalalong, girl's dormitory, where she is treated almost like an untouchable as the novel recounts, "The girls in the ngalalong barely tolerated Sharengla's presence" (23). When Khathingla comes to know about what happened to Sharengla, she says, "It was a disgraceful life. Had I been in your place, I would have killed myself" (24). But what Khathingla, herself being a woman, fails to observe is that Sharengla did not go to the Japanese camp

willingly. She did not have a choice and therefore she had to submit to the sexual oppression.

Later Sharengla is provided shelter at the house of Ngathingkhui but what surprises us is that she is subjected to sexual oppression even within the safer space of her tribal society. She does not only lose her virginity by being abducted by the Japanese soldiers but she also loses her dignity. Ngathingkhui makes his advance and proposes for marriage reminding that her consent to his proposal comes with the guarantee of social sanction for their "customs allow adoption and polygamy" and a safer status in the society as her "position in the family would be next to Varamla". He further legitimizes his move emphasizing the need of a new wife considering that he is "childless" and he "needs someone to inherit" his property (115). Thus by combining his proposal with a guaranteed social status, which Sharengla lost when she was abducted, a permanent house, property, protection and a safer place for the yet to be born baby, he wraps the offer with the complementary cover of "you are still beautiful" (115) implicitly letting her know that she would not be taken for granted in future. However, Sharengla handles the situation cleverly and departs from the house to live in the "deserted cottage" of Phanitphang for Ngathingkhui is "a man *of* her father's age" (115, emphasis added). The novel shows that sexual exploitation of tribal women is not only perpetrated by the outsiders of tribal society as witnessed in the novels of Mohanty and Ray. Bhattacharya contends that gender inequality is present in every society irrespective of their ideological differences. He draws on the exploitation of women and gender inequality within the Tangkhul society much to align with Jivan's discovery that, "the Nagas too were subject to human frailties, they were as good or bad as other men, just as prone to jealousy, cruelty and vindictiveness" (235).

With his characteristic emphasis on the political development within a society, Bhattacharya explores the factors leading to the proliferation of political awareness among the Nagas during the pre-independence period and its expression during

postcolonial period with mixed response to the idea of Indian Nation State. The novel also subverts of the pre-existent idea of gender equality with focus on the women characters affected by the World War-II. However, it may not be denied that Bhattacharya's narrative suffers to a large extent from his individual prejudices as it fails to establish credible coherence with historical truth.

Representations by the insiders:

The fourth novel selected for the present study is *The Legends of Pensam* (2006) by Mamang Dai. *The Legends of Pensam*, is an attempt at the representation of Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh by an insider. The word Pensam is derived from Adi language that means "in between space'. The use of the word Pensam suggests an array of nuances attached to Adi tribe in particular and the entire Northeast India in general. The novel is a subtle narration of the condition of Adi tribe against the backdrop of colonial invasion in 19th century and integration of Arunachal Pradesh, earlier known as NEFA (North East Frontier Agency), within the map of Indian nation state on the basis of an imaginary line drawn by a British administrative officer. Dai's novel is an attempt at the articulation of inner dynamics of the tribal population of Arunachal Pradesh drawing a parallel with the condition of being entangled in an in-between space incapable of locating its own position in the negotiation with advancing globalization and modernity. India's northeast has been subjected to multiple levels of marginalization and exploitation owing to its distant geographical location and distinct racial differences with the rest of the country's population. It is no exaggeration that the vast linguistic and cultural diversity of the Northeast India seldom get recognition in the exclusionist pan-Indian discourse. Instead, the Northeast India is often superficially reduced to a homogenized entity bringing a closure to the need of further exploration into its cultural and linguistic diversity. The Northeast India is rather exoticized with little attention to the nuanced socio-politico-economic problems and aspirations of its diverse population. It is the realization of such

discrimination and marginality that suspends the entire Northeast India in the condition of in-betweenness as suggested by the title of the novel.

Mamang Dai was born on February 23, 1957 at Pasighat, East Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. She became an IAS officer in 1979 but later she left that post and concentrated on her literary and journalistic writing. She worked as local correspondent to various news dailies like *Sentinel, The Telegraph* and *The Hindustan Times* and contributed to Indian literature with four novels *The Sky Queen* (2003), *The Legends of Pensam* (2006), *Stupid Cupid* (2008) and *The Black Hill* (2014). *Arunachal Pradesh: The Hidden Land and River Poems* (2004) is a non-fiction by her that documented the customs and culture of Arunachal Pradesh. She also authored one more non-fiction *Mountain Harvest: The Food of Arunachal* (2004). Her three published poetry collections are *River Poems* (2004*), The Balm of Time* (2008) and *Midsummer: Survival Lyrics* (2014). She has also published two children literature based on folktales *Sky Queen* (2005) and *Once Upon a Moon Time* (2005). Mamand Dai was conferred with the Padma Shri Award in the year 2011 and Annual Verrier Elwin Prize in 2013 for her literary contribution and journalistic writing. She was awarded with Sahitya Akademi in 2017 for her novel *The Black Hill*.

Writing from and about the Northeast India is comparatively a new phenomenon in Indian literary representation since indigenous writings in English started surfacing only during the late twentieth century onwards. With the articulations of the writers belonging to this culturally and geographically isolated space, a new dimension was added to the Indian literary discourse. This also facilitated the inauguration of a new discursive approach to address the subtle nuances of the life-worlds of this region replete with individual cultural and linguistic identities as in an interview by Jaydeep Sarangi, Mamang Dai says, "Lierature from the Northeast is as diverse as the writers with their different expressions" (Dai, 6). The valleys and hilly terrains of the Northeast have been home to many ethnic communities since pre-historic times with archeological sites

evidencing the existence of many glorious ancient civilizations. However, the socio-cultural plurality with its diverse ethnic identities and their dissimilarity to the mainland Indian cultural identity has also been the reason of its turbulent political condition, especially since the colonial period. Commenting on its geographical location Sanjoy Hazarika in his book *Strangers of the Mist* (1995) writes, "India's Northeast is a misshapen strip of land, linked to the rest of the country by a narrow corridor just twenty kilometers wide at its slimmest which is referred to as the Chicken's Neck" (xvi). In his other book *Strangers No More* (2018), he further specifies the region as "a triangular shape of land wedged between Myanmar, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Tibet" that stands as an isolated entity while only its "4 percent of the border is connected to the rest of India" (xvi). Its geographic location has always been an important area of contention both for policy makers of the Indian nation state and diverse ethno-political stakeholders asserting their right over homeland. The common rationale of dispute and assertion of self-rule by the representatives of different ethnic groups of this region is that during the handing over of power to the newly formed Indian nation state at the time of declaration of India's independence, the demands of these groups were not taken into consideration. They also contend that their integration into the new nation state of India without taking their consent simply on the basis of being a part of British India during colonial period is a violation of their rights to make choice. This ideological strife and half-hearted effort by the central government for resolving the long standing dispute entailed extremist secessionist movement and retaliatory action by the state engulfing the entire area in an atmosphere of distrust and violence. Furthermore, the stark racial and cultural difference of the inhabitants of the Northeast from that of the rest of the Indian population has also been one of the crucial areas of debate as it has largely been identified as the ground of racial and political marginality. Having been crammed with all these socio-politico-cultural disputes, the Northeast has also been an area that has been subjected to forced silencing and censure for an extended period resulting in massive discontentment among

the residents. Causes of discontentment are many but the centre often turns deaf ear to the issues from the margin. On the contrary, cases of human rights violation have been recurrent in the recent past under the rhetorical facade of safeguarding the national security and internal affairs. The identity of Northeast is largely a colonial construct keeping in view of its geographical location as Manjeet Baruah in his book Frontier Cultures (2012) argues, "…'north-east India' was a term used by the British in the 19th century because the region was north-east to Calcutta or Bengal, the seat of colonial power during the period" (20). It is argued that the colonial construct of the Northeast India has been largely in place in the mainstream national discourse of the contemporary times as it is understood as a composite homogenous entity disregarding the linguistic and cultural diversity of its population.

Writers from the Northeast India respond to these issues in an attempt of breaking the stereotype of an idyllic landscape inhabited by people of mongoloid origin who are clubbed together as the members of a common homogenous culture. However, it is pertinent to mention that the struggle to get national recognition for the literary writings from the Northeast India being produced from the margin still persists due to the overwhelming dominance of metropolitan literary canons in Indian literary discourse. It is argued that to allude to the perpetuation of colonial stereotyped identity on the Northeast in post-independence period, literary writing from the Northeast too was invariably subjected to imposition of a stereotyped identity- a genre of literature that largely look back to its violent past. Contesting this stereotype, Aruni Kashyap questions, "Should stories from a violent land only have violence in them? Can a writer from Assam write a folktale or a story that is completely unrelated when people are getting killed in the neighborhood? Is that an act of resistance?" (x). To correspond to Kashyap's contention, it is pertinent to mention that tribal writing is no more an exclusivist expression of the sufferings and discrimination, for in the recent writings from the Northeast, writers are largely found to be celebrating their ethnicity through the

portrayal of tribal life-world as an isolated entity deliberately avoiding textualization of violence. Here the celebration of tribal self may be understood as an expression of literary resistance against all the atrocious experiences of living under a constant threat in spite of being citizens of a democratic nation state and at the same time self realization through literary idiom. Mamang Dai in her essay "On Creation Myths and Oral Narrative" expresses the similar view necessitating the exploration of the rich and vibrant oral culture of the Northeast, for in the absence of writing culture, memory and orality have served as the repository of their undiluted cultural expression. *The Legends of Pensam* is an attempt to do justice to the manifestation of the richness and importance of oral culture while on political sense it also serves the purpose of resisting the cultural ostracization and homogenization by celebration of individuality of their cultural identity.

Mamang Dai, in this novel, primarily focuses on the representation of Adi life-world along with its traditional belief systems, myths, legends and oral histories coterminously giving subtle expression to the discontentment and angst of the indigenous population in the wake of the apparent discrimination and marginality. She attempts to address the perennial skepticism in which the entire Northeastern tribal population is trapped having been subjected to political and cultural 'othering' due to the apparent racial and geographical difference. With representation of the physical environment of Arunachal Pradesh under eco-critical lens, her take on the issue of rapidly advancing modernity into the biodiversity hotspot is apprehensive of the adverse effects on the ecology of the region and cultural identity of the tribals. Construction of road is seen as a symbol of modern agency that promises infrastructural uplift but at the same time poses threat to the ecological balance and symbiotic relationship between man and nature. The road that proceeds "like a giant serpent" (Legends, 40) is represented as a means of expansion of power and surveillance since British colonial period under the trope of playing the role of benefactor. Dai contends that even after India's independence the

condition of the remote hills has not undergone remarkable transformation as the colonial evils of marginalization and discrimination continue to persist under an organized structure of hegemonic state mechanism in the post-independence milieu.

The Legends of Pensam is divided into four sections connecting nineteen stories with a thin line of continuity that focuses on the tribes negotiation with the changes induced by the contact with the outsiders – first the British colonizers and later the administrative control by the Indian nation state. However, it does not necessarily rely on the theme of discrimination alone, for it chronicles the journey of the tribe from its co-existence with its physical environment and cultural ecological consciousness towards a new and alien value system introduced by modernity. She tries to locate the tribal ethos and worldview by revisiting the realm of the tribal occult that facilitates the confluence of the real and unreal placing it in contrast to the excessive rationalism of the modern society. The narrative neither has an overarching plot nor revolves around a single protagonist unlike the traditional narrative style of a novel. Instead, it tells the stories of Adi tribe from their perspective employing a unique style of narrative focusing on the lived reality of the community which delicately combines the four sections of the novel. The novel accentuates the maintenance of balance between two contradictory worlds of real and unreal as an integral part of tribal life-world with recurrent mention of tribal gods and demigods in the narrative. She employs the technique of magic realism for the purpose of doing justice to the representation of tribal reality, for the inclusion of the sylvan entities of shamans, demigods and paranormal occurrences contributes largely to the completeness of tribal belief system in animism as she mentions in the author's note,

> "Like the majority of tribes inhabiting the central belt of Arunachal, the Adis practice an animistic faith that is woven around forest ecology and co-existence with the natural world." (xi)

Her comparatively short author's note comprises of some important thrust areas like "one of the largest states of the country", "greenest", "homeland of twenty-six

tribes", "over one hundred and ten sub-clans", "each with a different language or dialect", "forest ecology", "high mountain passes", "beautiful landscape", "isolation" and "protection for the pristine forest and rich bio-diversity" (x-xi). By making mention of these crucial authorial concerns, she emphasizes her intention rather blatantly in the note that the novel has a political agenda of telling the stories of a land largely shrouded under the mist of mystery pertaining to its isolated existence. She also draws our attention to the ecological concerns of the text by emphasizing on the greenery of the land and the necessity of the protection of its bio-diversity which is rich in flora and fauna. She also indicates about the isolationist policy adopted by the Indian government with the aim of protecting the bio-diversity and cultural identities of the inhabitants that in a way served right for the sustenance of the tribal value system and its relation to the physical environment, though it was a colonial policy of accentuating the primitivity of the region.

Her choice of magic realism in narrating the stories of her tribe is apparently deliberate for the reality of the tribe from the easternmost frontier of Indian nation state may not be considered analogous to the reality of mainland India and as such the techniques employed by the mainstream writers in the depiction of reality may not do justice to the reality of her community. Tribal gods and demigods are recurrently mentioned in the narrative and made a part of the tribal life-world by way of drawing a parallel between the two contradictory worlds of real and unreal. The intended purpose of the technique employed by the writer may be understood as a statement of disapproval of the homogenization of the tribal or the Northeast as a singular entity. The cultural loss and negotiation that occurred in the context of Northeastern tribal communities of India under the rubrics of colonial representation and encounter with the majoritarian cultures of the mainland India in the post-independence period calls for a new pattern of representation. Colonial representation based on empirical knowledge of the anthropological study seemingly finds itself at loss to comprehend the significance of

certain socio-cultural practices of the tribals due to the approach espoused on the dichotomous relation of the 'self' and the 'other'. One cannot agree more that the colonial 'self/other' binary still holds relevance in the representations of the tribal in India given that the ethnic and linguistic minority seldom finds any room for proper representation in the mainstream discourse.

Here, modernity is presented through the symbols of road as the machinery of institutionalization of the structure of power of the state in tribal areas. She offers a critique of rapid modernization making its inroad with the construction of a concrete road and the seemingly disastrous consequences it causes to the pristine natural environment and contented life of the tribal. The road is not considered as a good omen as Larik, son of Togla gives vent to the frustration of the tribal as he puts it, "This one terrible road is all they have managed for us in fifty years! And what does it bring us? Outsiders. Thieves. Disease. Will this road bring us good health? A new school?" (156). The words of Larik reverberate in a cacophonic note in the narration of the serenity that pervades the hilly terrain but serves the purpose of breaking the slumber and to face the reality with a much clearer insight. The construction of road rightly represents the milestone of development and administrative presence for the state but it inversely may also be understood as the extension of hegemonic power structure coterminously facilitating intrusion of external elements that swarm the tribal lands for potential exploits. A road opens new opportunities for trade and commerce but proportionate economic benefit of both the sides is seldom ensured. Political activism, public awareness, better health services and prospects of better education among the general public is hardly visible in spite of the easy access of the remote mountains of Arunachal Pradesh. The new generation of Arunachal Pradesh like Larik find themselves caught in delusional uncertainty at the backdrop of disproportionate distribution of power. The road that promises development fails to address the expectations of the indigenous population and instead turns out to be the channel of extraction. The road in her narration

symbolizes the intrusion of external forces with gradual enforcement of power and economic takeover through the negotiation between tribal life-worlds and modern agencies. In this negotiation, tribal right to its land and forest is exposed to a greater risk for the idiom of modern administration and development is completely alien to the tribal. Dai tries to explore the condition of marginality and exploitation meted out to the tribal against the backdrop of massive corruption and propagandist developmental rhetoric of the state.

Mamang Dai delivers an eco-critical reading of tribal reality and digs deeper into the fundamental problem of structural failure of the design of introducing modernity to a society that is based on the bedrock of coexistence with nature. In a story narrated by the character named Hoxo, in the chapter titled "Small Histories Recalled in the Season of Rain", he mentions the oral narrative of the harmonious co-existence of man and spirits in "a green and virgin land under a gracious and just rule" (42). It was a society based on mutual understanding and respect of the symbiotic relation that humans established with nature and spirits in the ancient times. But humans started felling the trees out of greed causing damage to the balance of the two parallel worlds and the delicate thread of relation was broken resulting in a massive change in the ancient order of the society and its relation to the celestial entity. Hoxo further laments that "the canopy of shelter and tradition had fallen" with the destruction of the forest (42) which is ostensibly irreparable in the present condition. The story narrated by Hoxo insinuates that the knowledge of ecological balance was a part of the tribal tradition but this knowledge became irrelevant in the greed induced rat-race of growth and development of human civilization. Apart from telling the unpleasant truth of marginalization of the tribals, Mamang Dai also narrates the myths and cultural beliefs of the tribe by reinforcing the shared experiences of her people where the supernatural elements command certain importance and thereby become an integral part. For Mamang Dai the shamans, demigods and paranormal occurrences are not constructs of fictional romanticism or parts of the colonial occult but

the very reality that the tribal inhabits and therefore cannot be left out of the representation. Accentuating the human relation to the intangible dimension of tribal belief system she mentions,

> "Every winter, men from the surrounding villages perched on the highest ridges set out on a journey to the snow-mountains to harvest a precious root. This is the deadly aconitum that is collected for the preparation of poison arrow. No one remembers for how long this annual trek has been a ritual. But there are many stories associated with the excursion, most of them narrated with disbelief by the travelers themselves who say they were lucky to return alive, back from the realm of silent waste and hallucination." (58)

Here, Dai emphasizes on the ritualistic importance of the "excursion" which is undertaken by the tribe annually on specific season of the year as the much sought "precious root" is available on the "snow-mountains" only during that specific time. However, this "excursion" involves danger and those who come back consider themselves "lucky to return alive" indicating the existence of an ethereal universe invested in the very essence of nature that is apparently more overwhelming than the tangible universe. Her strategy in narrating the myth like story of the tribals is to create awareness on the importance of the power of nature as if trying to remind the human race about the necessity of slowing down their craving for material gain. However, the novel also tells that the "precious root" does not come for free as it is also an important part of the ritualistic excursion to appease the spirit named Dimi-tayang who apparently guard the area that provides them with their need. Therefore, the travelers, with promises to maintain the bond forever, depart by saying, "We will travel again to your beautiful land. Let us leave in peace now. Do not pine for us. Do not call us back. We will travel this way again bearing more gifts next time" (59). This ritualistic excursion of man into the mysterious realm of wilderness contribute to their understanding of "a nebulous zone that divided the worlds of spirits and men" also confirming their belief that "at one time

men and spirits had been brothers" (31). Emphasizing on the significance of the non-human entities like Birbik (the water serpent), tiger spirit, miti-mili (small and quiet mysterious people) etc. in tribal belief system, Dai attempts to accentuate the Adi tribe's reverence towards nature, which is the essence of the theoretical premise of eco-criticism that necessitates the creation of awareness on the importance and protection of the ecosystem. By indication of the eco-critical significance of tribal belief system, Dai implicitly reconfirms the essentiality of re-reading tribal culture by critical examination of the legitimacy of colonial stereotypes as Choudhury and Chakraborty in their article "The Representation of the Ethnic Life-World of the Adis in Mamang Dai's The Legends of Pensam: An Ecocritical Reading" rightly points out that, "The pristine society of the Adis seem to an ideal space, an "ecotopia", which is a vision of a society in which the human and the non-human would sustain and interact with ease and flamboyance – a fragment of what ecocritics across space and time have been aspiring to achieve" (51). However, she is not completely oblivious of the advancing transformation that is sweeping across the serenity of the mountains with modernity seeping in surreptitiously which is reflected in the sharp contrast in the description of the landscape from the beginning to the conclusion of the novel. She introduces us to a new settlement called Gurdum carved out of the mountain as,

> "The town was permanently awash in debris. Plastic floated across the hills, clung to riverbanks, perched on trees. Broken glass and discarded packaging scarred the bald slopes closest to the town. Workmen sucked on wet bidis and chipped away at the mountainside. Their women stood by and looked askance with dark, savage eyes. A row of labour shed hung on to the hillside and here they lived, loved, bathed naked on the roadside, fought bitterly, and sometimes murdered each other." (*Legends*, 164)

Here, she draws our attention to the cost of modernity and development which is often overlooked and most often deliberately silenced in the rhetoric of progress. The

cost that she indicates here is the waste products of modern life that pollutes the physical environment with plastics and other non-disposable materials. However, she is not only indicating the pollution of the physical environment alone, as her concern extends to the psychological realm of the individuals who are also affected equally or even more by the deterioration of the physical environment. The impact of modernity further extends to the lives of the indigenous population as well, for with the establishment of the new town, a new sub culture emerges among them with gambling and "more drink and cigerrettes" (165). They seem to lose their innocence and a sudden grip of bestiality sway over their lives. They cause harm to their surroundings without any concern to their traditional relation to the forest as the novel mentions that, "The men trampled the forest and shouted at the wind. They cut into the earth, removed the trees, ravaged the soft soil and wept in their dreams, not knowing for what or whom they mourned" (168). Even the tranquility of the night was not left undisturbed as it "started at the sound of the late-night lorries" (168). It is in such circumstances that the entire tribal society of Arunachal Pradesh in particular and the entire Northeast in general find themselves caught in the in-between space of uncertainty.

Dai also provides an alternative reading of history by narrating certain historical events from the perspective of the tribals. Narrating the massacre of a British political officer named Noel Williamson and his associates by the Adi tribe in the village of Komsing which subsequently created ground for the demonization of the tribals and their representation as barbarous; she tries to provide an insight of the events that led to the violence. Mentioning about the early decades of the twentieth century, she poignantly writes that, "even our remote hills were opened up to the world" (47) indicating the displeasure of the tribals at coming in contact with alien races of the "migluns" or "Bee-ree-tiss" who intruded their autonomous territories without the permission of the tribals. In the chapter titled "small histories recalled in the season of rain" she goes further back to the 1800s when "the first white priests, surveyors and soldiers had begun arriving"

(37). She narrates how the presence of the colonial power started disrupting the serene life on the hills by tampering with the nature as well as the tribal society as "the thunder of cargo trucks and bulldozers, the shouts of men" made "the jungles burst into flames as the mountain tops were blown off and the labour force struggled to claw their way through the rubble and dragged the wretched road across the mutilated hills" (40). By narrating the environmental depletion with the intrusion of outsiders into the tribal areas, she foregrounds the causes that led to the massacre of white men by the tribals. In her narrative the massacre may be understood as an event of armed resistance shown by the autonomous tribal society to the intrusion of outsiders as she entices the readers to examine the inherent problematics of the mainstream historiography posing certain questions as she asks, "why should anybody insult a man who was not looking for sympathy? Why should anybody look at a man with disgust when he was a man of the land and the other was a visitor trying to conquer the villages with lies and bags of gifts?" (51). Her deliberation on the historical events is an attempt at relocating and representing the silenced reality from an insider's perspective relying on the retrieval of collective memory of the community which had been so far excluded from the mainstream representation.

The fifth novel selected for the present study is *Kocharethi: The Araya Woman* by Narayan. This is the first novel published by Narayan. The novel was first published in Malayalam in 1998. It was later translated into English in 2011 by Catherine Thankamma. The novel is regarded as the first novel by a tribal writer representing the Malayarayar tribe of Kerala. Set in the tribal villages along the slopes of Western Ghats on the border areas of Central Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the novel is a sincere effort by Narayan at the representation of the life-world of his own tribe and as such it rightly falls into the category of autochthonous writing. Apart from representation of ethnographic details of the tribe by focusing on the customary practices and belief system, the novel also highlights the issue of exploitation and discrimination of the tribe by the outsiders.

The novel chronicles the transition in the societal condition of the tribe covering a long period from the pre-independence period to the post-independence period as the novel mentions about the transfer of power from the British to the Congress party. It also makes a passing reference to the creation of Pakistan and the subsequent violence of partition indicating the inevitability of change in tribal society with the transformation of power structure. Almost the entire first half of the novel narrates the indigenous practices of healing, marriage system, social taboos and societal norms of Malayarayar community. It also introduces us to the different deities worshipped by the tribe and the ecological import of certain customary practices prevalent in their society. The second half of the novel emphasizes on the narration of exploitation of the tribe by the outsiders. It also gives us a glimpse of the constantly rising reactionary tension among the tribe due to the ongoing exploitation and their awareness of the same. The Malayarayar people is at loss in the negotiation with the advancing modernity as they are unable to resist their exploitation in spite of knowing that they are being cheated and reduced to no end. Their autonomy over indigenous land is threatened by the imposition of Forest Act as they are prohibited from cutting the trees and also having access to other forest produce for their daily use during the colonial period. However, ironically the same colonial power comes to their village and starts exploiting the forest reserve for their own benefit. The Malayarayar's predicament increases double fold when they are also forced to pay taxes for inhabiting and cultivating in the forest areas owned by the royal family as "the shadowy presence of an ineffectual monarchy" makes its appearance "in the form of bureaucratic greed" (Thankamma, ix). In such a trying circumstance the Malayarayars feel the need for empowerment and welcome a teacher to educate their young generation. However, the issue of collective empowerment gets disoriented with the educated young generation heading towards urban areas abandoning their indigenous habitat having been totally detached from cultural roots. The novel shows that transition in human society is not voluntary but largely imposed by the power structure, especially in the case of

marginalized and disempowered groups like the tribals. Having little requisite competence to blend in the transitory process, these groups are deprived from availing the benefits of societal change. It this novel the change in the power structure inaugurated by India's independence fails to guarantee the end of exploitation and a safer future to the tribal communities, for their position continues to remain on the margins of the national discourse of India. As a cultural insider, Narayan's representation of his community does not suffer from the looming presence of colonial prejudice as witnessed in the elitist Indian literary expression, for he "manages to avoid the pitfalls of both romanticization and the now-classic postcolonial move of making the misery of the marginalized the sole literary theme" (Nayar, Para 1).

Narayan was born on 26th September, 1940 in the Kadayathoor Hills of Idukki district of Kerala. As a student belonging to poor economic background, he could not have access to higher education and therefore joined a government job in the postal service right after the completion of his schooling. He started his writing career with the publication of a few short stories in vernacular periodicals and was able to draw critical attention. However, he did not get much recognition as a literary figure till the publication of his first novel *Kocharethi* in 1998. Narayan completed the manuscript of the novel in the year 1988 but its publication had to wait another ten years, for the novel got its printed form only in 1998 after a long wait of ten years. The novel was able to win the prestigious Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award in 1999 right after its publication. The English translation of the novel won the Economist Crossword Book Award in 2011. The novel has been translated into many other Indian languages including Hindi translation titled *Pahadin*. Other honours conferred to Narayan include Thoppil Ravi Foundation Award (1999), Abudabi Shakthi Award (1999) and Swami Ananda Theertha Award (2011) for his contribution to Malayalam literature. His other published novels are *Ooralikuddi* (1999), *Chengarum Kuttalum* (2001), *Vandanam* (2003), *Aaranu Tholkkunnavar* (2006), *Ee Vazhiyil Aalere Illa* (2006), *Thiraskrutharude Nalea* (2010)

and *Manasum Dhehavum Kondu Nijan Ninnea* (2010). He also published five short story collections which are *Nissahayante Nilavili* (2006), *Pela Marutha* (2006), *Kadhakal Narayan* (2011), *Narayante Theranjedutha Kadhakal* (2012) and *Narayante Kadhakal* (2013).

The Malayarayars are one of the thirty two different tribal communities of Kerala with their demographic concentration in certain parts of Kottayam, Idukki and Pattanamtitta districts. The term Malayarayar is a combination of two words 'Mala' and 'Arayar' meaning Hill and ruler respectively (Jayasree, xix). Thus the term Malayarayar means the rulers of the hills. The Malayarayar tribe is divided into four clans such as Valayillam, Poothaniyillam, Modalakkattillam and Nellippullillam. They practice endogamy as marriage outside their tribe is not granted social sanction. Cross-cousin marriage is highly encouraged and they maintain strict set of rules in terms of marriage. Violation of the endogamous marriage system by the members of the tribe leads to social excommunication. Social outcasts of Malayarayar clan members are grouped as the Chokkayillakar clan (Narayan, 16). Traditionally the Malayarayar tribe was believers of animism as their ancestral belief system was embedded in nature worship. However, due to poverty and illiteracy the tribe was highly vulnerable to exploitation and external influences. Their traditional belief system had a major setback as other organized religions from the plains made inroads into their society converting almost the entire population. In the contemporary times majority of the Malayarayar population follows Hinduism though certain percentage of their population was converted to Christianity during the colonial period. Christian converts could avail better facilities of education and social empowerment during the colonial period and as such Christian Malayarayars are socially and economically more advanced than the rest of the population.

The novel narrates the trials and tribulations of the Malayarayar tribe focusing on the lives of three generations of one family. The first generation is represented by Varikkamakal Ittyadi Arayan who is the father of Kunjadichan and Kunjipennu.

Kunjipennu is married to an orphan Kochuraman representing the second generation in the novel. Kochuraman and Kunjipennu's daughter Parvati represents the third generation. Ittyadi is the 'velichapad' or a shaman of his village and he has inherited this traditional knowledge from his father Valiyamundan who was "both a mantravadi and a velichapad" when he was alive (Narayan, 1). However, Ittyadi's son Kunjadichan does not inherit the traditional knowledge from his father and as such the tradition of velichapad becomes almost obsolete for the second generation of the tribe. Ittyadi's son in law Kochuraman is an expert 'vaidyan' (traditional medicine man) who learns the knowledge from his uncle. Kochuraman becomes famous with his knowledge and ability to cure many physical ailments using herbal medicine. However, his traditional knowledge of herbal medicine too becomes obsolete towards the end of the novel as he has to get admitted to a modernized hospital for the treatment of his stomach ulcer. Their traditional value system gradually loses importance in their lives with modernity sweeping across the entire region and educated young generation showing less concern towards traditional knowledge system. Narayan maintains utmost subtlety in his narration of the transition of Malayarayar society starting from the pre-independence period of colonial dominance to the declaration of freedom of India. His take on the issue of advancing modernity in the lives of tribal communities and its adverse effects is not loud nor is it militantly antagonistic. Instead, he simply narrates the impact of modernity and the resultant transformation from an insider's perspective as they confront and negotiate with it. As a writer, he does not prescribe any remedy to the contemporary condition of the tribals in the novel as if to indicate that there is no ready solution to the long standing problem of cultural erosion and exploitation at their disposal. Through the gradually receding relevance of velichapads and vaidyans in their practical life, Narayan symbolically expresses his concern for the need of adaptability among his community to cope up with the rapid societal and ideological transformation. For Narayan, marginality of the tribals will increase further if they do not adapt themselves according to the

changing conditions. Narayan is well aware that their community cannot resist the power of modernity by choosing to remain isolated forever, for modernity is bound to mould their society to suit its interest at a certain point of time. Thus the novel does not ignore or discard modernity but critiques the questionable route taken by modernity and its associate - hegemonic power structure controlled by capitalist interest.

Narayan initiates the representation of the life-world of his community by providing ethnographic details on certain customary practices and societal norms set by their ancestors. However, what differentiates his representation from that of the colonial ethnographic representation is that he essentialises the convergence of nature and culture as the core concept of tribal worldview. Pertinent to mention that, inspired by the Cartesian ideals colonial anthropology locates man at the center of the universe and this anthropocentric view privileges culture over nature. Culture is thus equated with civilization while nature stands for primitivity. Anthropocentrism also advocates exploitation of nature and its resources in the interest of development and material progress in human society. Colonial ethnography further perpetuates this attitude of maintaining a conceptual difference between nature and culture by wittingly or unwittingly ignoring the importance of nature in human life. Similar analogy may be found in the colonial anthropologists' representation of tribal worldview as their value system is largely reduced to primitivity with no trace of civilization and rational explanation. Tribal cultural practices are further subjected to romanticization in colonial narratives. Narayan subverts the colonial anthropocentric view of tribal society and tries to show the ecological importance of their customary practices, for "Narayan's tale refuses to romanticize tribal ways of life – the pure, noble savage, Narayan shows, does not exist except as myth" (Nayar, Para 5). The novel shows that in tribal worldview nature and culture co-exist and their mutual understanding and respect towards this symbiotic relationship is what made their sustenance possible despite having little technological knowledge for ages. The novel mentions, "Arayar get their family names

from some tree or rock - Koombangalil, Varikkamakal, Murikkathani – these are the family names" (85) indicating the relationship of man and nature which is very delicate yet strongly ingrained in tribal worldview.

It is their close association with different elements of nature that tribal myths and customs are entwined with. Their belief system is not limited only to the cognitive space but largely corresponds to the transcendental realms of spirits and fairies necessitating a balanced existence of every entity by keeping mutual understanding and respect unperturbed. The narrative of the novel is strewn with the observance of numbers of customary practices to propitiate different spirits by offering their favourite items, animal sacrifices, observing of various social taboos etc. which may be understood as an attempt in maintaining that balance, for in their worldview "Man and God were integral to each other" (P. and Kumar, 107). Mention may also be made of the traditional pattern of cultivation practiced by the Malayarayars that largely followed the system of crop rotation which was more practical keeping in view of the dietary requirements of the tribe and ecological sustainability of the hilly slopes. However, a new system of cultivation was imposed on them with the introduction of cash crops, which apparently benefited the middlemen and non-tribal businessmen. The novel tells that the transition from the traditional mode of cultivation to commercial mono cropping was systematically devised by the unholy network of the traders and state mechanism. Initially their free access to forest produce and indigenous farmlands was suddenly brought under the regulatory system of the colonial power as the forest guard declared "you should not cut down many trees. Do not kill animals. You should collect the forest produce and bring them to the range office regularly. We are the ones who have been deputed by the maharaja to safeguard the forest" (Narayan, 87). He further warns "we have orders to capture them. We will burn their houses and beat them up" (88) should there be offenders of his orders. Malayarayar tribes are also engaged in the making of boundary wall of forest areas as forced labourers without any arrangements for wages. It

is pertinent to mention here that many forest areas, traditionally owned by the tribals, were cleared during the colonial period as "large quantities of teak were required for shipbuilding and the laying of railways lines" (Jayasree, xxv). After the felling of the endemic species of trees, the colonial administration introduced mono cropping of commercial plants in the tribal areas with a view to extract more profit from the colonies. Mono cropping not only affected the ecology but also caused climate change resulting in untimely torrential rain and prolonged drought in once lush green hilly areas of the Western Ghats.

In the novel the entire tribal area is badly affected by drought making the forest dry with no trace of vegetation. The dry grass of the forest is caught by wild fire that spreads further to the tribal settlement damaging many houses. The protagonist, Kochuraman's house succumbs to the wild fire. He also loses his child in that incident. The entire villagers suffer from poverty and scarcity of food due to the drought. To add to the pre-existent predicament, their area is further hit by torrential rain causing landslides and further poverty among the tribal population. External forces like the traders and money lenders take the advantage of the Malayarayar's vulnerability and helplessness. They initially provide the needy tribals with provisions at high interest rate and later indulge in massive exploitation capitalizing on their illiteracy and lack of awareness. Having no other choice at their disposal, some of the tribals also sale their ancestral lands at some meager amount. Thus the tribals not only suffer from poverty but also alienated from their traditional lands. The novel shows how external intervention and modernity causes misery in the lives of the tribals. The novel mentions "the rain water swept over the burnt hill side, bringing down the ash-covered top soil of the slopes to make the plains fertile" (62) symbolically indicating the extraction of resources from the possession of the tribals leaving them impoverished. The rain water not only destroys their crops but also causes damage to the rich bio-diversity by washing away the fertility of soil. Kunjadichan has to take the last resort – "the sure path to perdition" (63) in order

to procure money to buy food and medicine for his ailing father. He negotiates with the traders for some cash that he hopes to repay with pepper during the time of harvest but he is cheated at the time of settlement of the loan. The trader Hassan takes advantage of Kunjadichan's illiteracy and extracts more money from the latter than he actually owed making him a permanent debtor. Heavily burdened with debts, Kunjadichan retires to alcoholism only to multiply his troubles. At last he has no other option but to sell his ancestral land to another trader named Kunja Muthalali in exchange of "One hundred rupees, ten idangazhi of rice, some tobacco and dried fish" (69). Like other members of his society, Kunjadichan is too naïve to understand the consequences of having been alienated from his ancestral land, for by consenting to sell the land he is dispossessing the entire community from its autonomous political authority over indigenous lands. In this context, it is pertinent to mention that in tribal society individual land holding is subject to the sanction of the village council, implicitly suggesting collective ownership of the entire community. However, with poverty creeping into the tribal society induced by modernity and cash economy, tribals are under compulsion to violate traditional value system by breaking the ties of community life.

It has been mentioned earlier that introduction of monetary economy totally destroyed the economic sustenance of the tribals as the new economic system cast an organized breach on their indigenous system of bartering of necessary goods within their society. In the traditional barter system they did not have to venture out of their society to fulfill their needs, as the community members consumed whatever was produced or collected in their traditional way of cultivation, hunting and gathering. They did not have to rely on the middlemen or outsiders to trade their produce. But cash economy brought in a paradigmatic shift in their traditional system of trade as it reduced the value of the commodities to mere saleable products. The new system established money at the center of all things, as the commodities could only be exchanged with it. This new system also facilitated the entry of middlemen and opportunists from other cultural backgrounds

whose principal aim was to make maximum profit from business. Well versed in the idiom of cash economy, this new class of businessmen and moneylenders made quick success taking advantage of the naivety of the illiterate tribal population. Having no exposure to modern education and contemporary societal developments, the tribals did not know the simple calculations of addition and subtraction making them highly vulnerable to exploitation by the external agencies. Narayan does not directly condemn the colonial administration for the introduction of cash economy without making the necessary arrangements for making the tribals literate and capable to fit into the new idiom of economy. But his narrative becomes self-explanatory about the root cause of the problem.

Money also facilitates transformation of value system as the new generation of the tribal society comes under the evil influence of excessive greed and class consciousness. For example, after getting a government job and settling down in the urban areas, Kochuraman's daughter Parvati is reluctant to come and mingle with her community. Stark difference is easily discernible in her behavior after she comes back from Ernakulam as it is mentioned that, "Parvati talked to them with an English accent and urban mannerisms" (188). When questioned by her mother for the reason of sending lesser amount of money to the family, the city returned Parvati replies in annoyance saying, "I've to pay for board and lodging at the hostel. Then there's the bus fare to and from the office, money for the noon meal, to buy things – oil, soap, powder, paste, laundry, …a cinema once in a while…I've to buy clothes" (188). Parvati's increased class conscious results in the abandonment of her village forever. She also defies the societal norms of her tribe by marrying Padmanabhan, the man of her choice. It is not that the impacts of modernity is visible in the city returned Parvati alone, for Kochuraman's youngest child Shekaran is also equally under the grasp of the evil influences of modernity as "the boy wanted money to visit the cinema hall and to have good time" (185). It is also mentioned that "Shekaran often sold coconut or areca nut on

the sly to go to the cinema" (186) suggesting massive depletion of value system in the lives of the new generation of the tribals. Thus modernity is not only seen as the cause of cultural erosion but an impending threat to the very existence of tribal life-world in the narratives of both the autochthonous writers, Narayan and Mamang Dai.

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CHAPTER-V

CONCLUSION

This research project has been undertaken to examine the nature of tribal representation in Indian fiction and its inherent political undertone. The thrust area of this project is centered on the argument that tribal communities of India have been subjected to fallacious representation especially since colonial period that resulted in the production of many stereotypes on their identity. India is not populated by a culturally and linguistically homogenous group of people. Its population is diverse and each of the communities has their distinctive identities. Tribal communities form a large portion of the total population of India. According to R.C Verma, "The Scheduled Tribe population, as per Census, 2011, was reported to be 10.43 crores constituting 8.6 % of the total population of the country" (Verma, 12). Tribals of India too have their distinctive linguistic and cultural identities like other cultural and linguistic groups of Indian population. In the pre-colonial period tribal communities lived within their own territories with a self-sufficient and autonomous political economy. Excepting some sporadic incidents of cultural encounter and clash of political interests, tribals of India remained largely detached from the mainstream society and as such no specific attempt was made to bring them under the common concept of unified national identity. Their indigenous political autonomy and cultural identity thrived unaffected by external influences. However, with colonial occupation of the Indian subcontinent by the British, tribal communities were also subdued and forcefully brought under colonial administration by negation of their political autonomy. They were further classified under the problematic term of 'tribe' on the basis of their racial and cultural dissimilarities with the mainstream population of India. It is pertinent to mention that the concept of 'tribe' in Indian context is not inclusive in nature and to accommodate the vast cultural and linguistic diversity of Indian tribal communities within this singular term is theoretically inappropriate. Nevertheless, Indian tribes were classified as a

homogenous entity primarily for the purpose of census and smooth colonial administration. Indigenous cultural identities of these tribal communities were not kept under consideration during their classification by the British administrators which eventually contributed to the loss of their distinctive cultural identities.

Coterminous to the expansion of colonial territory, the British administration was also involved in the production of knowledge on the indigenous communities of India through their representation in the ethnographic texts. Ethnography is the byproduct of colonial anthropological studies conducted on the natives with the intent of producing knowledge on their physical and cultural features to establish the racial difference of the native 'other' from the colonizer 'self'. It is pertinent to mention that colonial anthropological studies were largely guided by the political intent of representing the native 'other' as of inferior and primitive type to support the narrative of the superiority of colonizer 'self'. Moreover, it was necessary to produce imaginary knowledge on the natives to legitimize their political occupation on foreign territory.

Ethnographic representation of the tribal communities eventually became the master narrative and the only source of information on their indigenous socio-cultural identities. However, what concerns us is that ideological objectivity was not maintained during the production of the master narrative on tribal communities, for colonial narratives were largely affected by individual cultural prejudices of European writers. The 'self/other' binary was extended further to the colonial narratives even in the cases of certain well meaning anthropologists of colonial times. The racial difference worked largely on the subconscious plane and thus conscious attempt at maintenance of narrative objectivity was not effectively accomplished. Colonial representation of tribal communities failed to reflect authenticity as a consequence of this subconscious ideological prejudice on the part of the representing agency, which in Indian context is the colonial ethnographic writer.

It is pertinent to mention that the racial prejudice of the colonial ethnography was further carried forward to the fictional representations of the tribal communities as they were treated as the 'other' in colonial fictions without much emphasis on the internalization of the inner dynamics of tribal life-worlds. Instead, colonial fiction commented on the cultural practices and physical appearances of the tribal communities as 'strange' and 'primitive' much to allude to the voyeuristic reading of the 'other' races in European anthropology. It is needless to mention that British colonialism and its initiative at formal education in India facilitated the emergence of an elite class from within Indian native population ostensibly to assist in the smooth maintenance of colonial administration. Indian bourgeoisie elite class largely imitated the ideals of colonial master and contributed to the dissemination of colonial narratives by creating a race/class divide in the similar fashion of colonial 'self/other' dichotomy, especially while representing tribal communities. This race/class divide is evidently reflected in the representation of tribals and other marginalized groups in Indian historiography, as it has been observed that these groups are not given adequate space in historical representations. In this context Ranajit Guha's comment is relevant as he argues, "The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism – colonialist elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism" (1). He contends that Indian bourgeois historiography is the perpetuation of the colonial elite historiography and as such they serve the similar purpose of representing partial and on many occasions no details on historical events concerning the subaltern class. Guha further condemns Indian historical writing as "un-historical historiography" (1), for the resistances shown by the Indian tribal communities and peasants to protect their autonomous territories and indigenous rights during the colonial expansion and even in the subsequent period seldom made it to the pages of historical books.

Gyanendra Pandey in his essay "Encounters and Calamities: The History of a North Indian Qasba in the Nineteenth Century" (1988) mentions that, "The history of

colonial India has generally been written on the basis of British official records for the simple reason that non-official sources are neither quite so abundant nor so easily accessible" (89). Furthermore, citing the inherent problematics of the methods employed in Indian historiography, he maintains, "In the past it has generally been the anthropologists rather than the historian who has undertaken this task" (90). Following Pandey's contention on Indian historiography, it may be surmised that colonial Indian history was primarily the product of the writers who lacked in the adequate training for the "task" as they were mostly written by anthropologists or even administrative officers. On the other hand, these historians of colonial times largely relied on the British official records that were collected by colonial administrators and anthropologists. Furthermore, the contents of these elitist historical writings were granted legitimacy under the assumption of being too obvious without proper review due to the lack of alternative historical narrative emanating from the margins. Thus dynamics of representation and knowledge feed in India since colonial times have been continuing in a one-way traffic from the dominant elites with the legitimate circulation of the unsettled didacticism of colonial narratives till recently. However, the elitist representation of the marginalized groups such as the tribals of India has faced major confrontation, especially with the rise of post-colonial subaltern studies and writers belonging to indigenous communities starting to articulate their socio-politico-cultural concerns both in fiction as well as non-fiction writings.

The project argues that fiction writing has certain privileges over the non-fiction writing and as such literary representation of the marginalized section is comparatively more authentic and engaging to their lived realities. However, in a colonized country like India, even fiction writing is not free from the influences of colonial ideology of 'self/other' binary, for colonialism does not only involve political subjugation of the natives. What makes colonialism more impactful is the psychological subjugation by circulation of the stereotyped image on native identity as uncivilized and primitive. In

the context of the tribal communities of India, such stereotypes gained wider currency during the colonial period and the similar narrative was continued further by the elitist representation of tribals even after independence ostensibly due to the racial difference that traces its roots back to the pre-colonial period. It is needless to mention that the per-existent racial and caste hierarchy had already left Indian society disintegrated to a large extent and the colonial power reinforced its foothold in Indian subcontinent by capitalizing on the apparent disunity that prevailed in india. However, during the present study it has been found that despite the many problematics of representation, select literary writings of the post-independence period have shown resistance to the pre-conceived colonial idea of tribal identity and successfully undertaken authentic representation of tribal life-worlds. Authentic representation of the tribal life-world has also received significant impetus with the emergence of autochthonous writing in Indian literature.

The project proceeded with a critical overview of representational theory in the second chapter, in which it was observed that the process of representation is not as innocent as it is assumed to be, for it is not simply transference of knowledge from one domain to the other. Representation is invariably a political undertaking and it involves the conflict of opposite axes of unequal power dynamics in which the representing agency takes the dominant position. On the other hand, the represented section is by default assigned with subordinate position without any cognizant authority in the power relations. It is pertinent to mention that in the process of representation the authentic voice of the represented section undergoes a meticulous and conscious scrutiny under the watchful eyes of the representing agency. During the period of the scrutiny the dominant agency ensures that the narrative of the representation reflects only those portions of the represented body that the dominant consider appropriate for representation. The dominant agency also uses representational texts to perpetuate its cultural supremacy over the subordinate section by production of knowledge. The relation of representation

and knowledge production is a testimony that the entire process of representation is guided by the political interest of the dominant.

In the study it has also been found that representation as a medium of expression involves re-writing of the text going beyond the general perception of simply presenting the substance of the represented object. During the process of re-writing the text, the representing agency indulges in the political act of manipulation of the facts concerning the represented body. The represented body loses its coherence with the represented substance due to the putative political act of manipulation. It is needless to mention that the representing agency maneuvers the facts to suit its political purpose. What concerns to this study is that the original identity of the represented body undergoes an irrevocable metamorphosis due to the manipulation of the facts and an imaginary knowledge on the represented body is established for familiarization. Familiarization of the represented knowledge requires power for its legitimization, which is made possible by virtue of the dominant position and authority of the representing agency in the discourse of representation.

Representation relies largely on sign system for the familiarization of the represented substance. Sign system or language is arbitrary by nature, for sign system never leads to a conclusive meaning. According to post-structuralist analysis of sign system conclusive meaning or 'absolute signified' is a myth and it is never hooked by the signifier. In the similar fashion, representation as a meaning making process never leads to a conclusive and absolute meaning. Thus, representational texts may lead to multiple meanings or truths with every interpretation under different conditions. For example, postcolonial analysis of a colonial anthropological text on tribal cultural practices may lead to a totally different truth subverting the previously conceived truth as invalid.

The third chapter of the present study undertook the examination of the concept of 'tribe' and its colonial implications by juxtaposing it with the representation of Indian tribes in Indian literature by focusing specifically on fiction writings of colonial as well

as post-independence period. During the study it was found that the concept of 'tribe' is an arbitrary term employed by the British administrators for classification of certain indigenous groups of India for the purpose of census. In the subsequent times the term 'tribe' was also used as a pejorative term, as certain racial stereotypes were attached to it. It was also found that 'tribe' is an incomplete concept as it does not incorporate to the vastness of socio-cultural diversity of tribal society and their individual life-worlds. It is argued in the study that to club diverse indigenous communities within a singular and indeterminate term by sanction of its legitimate use in administrative records in spite of its apparent inadequacy is a sheer example of epistemic violence that further facilitates other forms of violence in colonial condition. As a follow up action of the scheme of both political and cultural domination initiated by the legitimization of the term 'tribe' and its apparent racial connotation, colonial power expanded further into the autonomous territories occupied by the tribal communities that resulted in the negation of their traditional system of political governance and cultural practices. Self sufficient traditional political economy of the tribal communities was completely destroyed with the forceful imposition of an alien system of law, administration and revenue system during the colonial period. Imposition of certain regulatory systems like the Indian Forest Act and introduction of monetary economy left the tribal communities under acute poverty and complete disorientation regarding their future. Indian Forest Act ruined the self-sufficient economic system of the tribals by putting a restriction on their access to forest produce while introduction of money contributed to the disintegration of the strong bond of community life that thrived on the system of bartering of goods amongst themselves. Thus traditional tribal value system was subjected to systematic obliteration and the void thus created was filled with the colonial concept of modern civil society. This transition of value system in colonial period was maneuvered through the colonial representation of the tribal communities as inferior races who must not object to their

subjugation and cultural loss, for it was a necessary step on their march towards civilization.

A wider circulation of the colonial rhetoric of civilizing the heathen culture of tribal communities was necessary for sustained subjugation of tribals and literary writing was considered as one of the complimentary area for the purpose. A wide range of literary writings was promoted by colonial power to contribute to their political agenda which inaugurated the representation of tribal societies in colonial fictional narratives. It has been found that colonial fiction writings by English authors like Rudyard Kipling, John Masters and even Verrier Elwin largely replicate anthropological approach of addressing the life-world of tribals. One common feature in these fictional representations is that they invariably emphasize on the description of the physical features of tribal communities as if to introduce their target audience to an alien race that practice a strange culture. Anthropological voyeurism is manifestly found in their romantic representation of tribal women as the epitome of unfettered sensuousness and delightful nonchalance. It is argued that such representations of tribal characteristics implicitly contributed to the anthropological intent of telling their European audience about the possibility of discovering the mythical noble savage in the colony. On the other hand projection of tribal cultural practices as strange and primitive also aligned with the racial 'self/other' binary by establishing the easygoing and impulsive nature of tribals as the identical opposite of the genteel mannerism of civilized European. Furthermore, colonial fiction also contributed to the validation of Imperial project of ruling the natives as for example Rudyard Kipling was "certain that to be ruled by the British was India's right: to rule India was Britain's duty" (Nandy, 64). However, what concerns us more is that similar approach of representing the tribal communities is witnessed in the fiction writings of mainstream Indian writers of post-independence period, which is a testimony that colonial design of 'self/other' binary was further perpetuated by the bourgeois elitist representing agencies. Indian origin novelist Arun Joshi's representation of tribal woman

may be mentioned here as he replicates the romantic approach of emphasizing the sensuous nature of Bilasia, a tribal woman in his novel *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971). Lacking in details of contemporary political situation and its effect on tribal condition, the novel fails to inform its audience about many immediate problems that tribal societies were going through.

However, with the publication of novels by Indian writers like Gopinath Mohanty, Pratibha Ray, Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya, Kamala Markandya, Gita Mehta and Mahasweta Devi, a disjunction from the colonial mode of representation was witnessed in the representation of tribal life-world. Radically shifting their attention from the romantic view of the physical features and cultural practices of tribal communities, these writers emphasized more on the authentic representation by focusing on the issues of violation of tribal rights, state violence on tribals, criminalization of the entire community, poverty, adverse effect of modernity, political uncertainty, cultural loss, racial discrimination, economic exploitation by outsiders, effect of state sponsored developmental projects on tribal political economy etc. For example, Gita Mehta's *A River Sutra* (1993) explores the subtle issue of racial difference between Indian mainstream society and tribal society, while on the other hand, Kamala Markandya's *The Coffer Dam* (1969) narrativizes the predicament of tribal communities at the onset of modernity and impending threat to tribal ecology following the nation building projects of big dam. Mahasweta Devi's short stories explore the issue of racial discrimination of tribals by the mainstream society and exploitation of tribal communities by the state agencies. As a postcolonial writer, she engages in the re-examination of Indian elitist historiography through fictional representation of the tribal society and exposes the inadequacy of Indian history books in reflecting the historical events of many tribal and peasant uprisings in India. Her short stories stand out as alternative historiography on the subaltern groups of Indian society, whose voices are not allowed sufficient space for articulation.

Another significant addition to the genre of tribal representation in fiction is the emergence of autochthonous writings from the very midst of the indigenous communities that largely emphasize on the assertion of self-identity and representation of the lived experiences of being marginalized. Narayan's *Kocharethi, the Araya Woman* (2011) is one example of autochthonous writing from Kerala. He belongs to the Malayarayar tribe of Central Kerala and the novel is his attempt at the representation of the life-world of the tribe at the backdrop of exploitation and subjugation at the hands of outsiders and state machineries since pre-independence period. His attempt at self-representation underlines the exposure to the inner dynamics of certain indigenous cultural practices and its importance in tribal life-world. It is observed that the effect of estrangement and cultural shock often witnessed in the representation of an outsider is invariably absent in his narrative and self-articulation of the collective experiences of his community serves the purpose of political resistance to discrimination and exploitation through literature.

During the study, it was also observed that literary writings from the Northeast India have been largely marginalized in the pan Indian context, for Indian literary writing had been largely dominated by the writers from the metropole areas till recently. However, since the last decade of the twentieth century, English writing from the Northeast India started making their presence felt in the field of literature as well as academia. It is argued that the tribal communities of the Northeast India have remained largely alienated and marginalized due to the apparent reason of racial and cultural difference from the rest of the Indian population. Geographical location of the Northeast region may also be understood as one of the prominent factor contributing to the alienation. Political and racial marginalization of the region by the center, especially during the post-independence period, caused massive discontentment among the tribal communities that engendered secessionist ideology and state violence. However, the mainstream narrative on the violence that paralyzed this region for decades without any developmental activities was largely biased and even Indian mainstream literature failed

to address the traumatic experiences of living as a layman under the constant threat of state sponsored violence. In such a premise some writers from this region started articulating their voice in English language. The choice of English language as a medium of literary expression by these writers may be understood as a political motif as it ensured wider circulation of their voice with larger readership. Temsula Ao from Nagaland is one such writer who started representing the live reality of this region and contributed immensely in drawing worldwide attention to the injustices done to the region by the hegemonic state mechanism in post-independence period. Other two prominent Northeastern writers representing tribal life-world in Indian literature are Easterine Kire and Mamang Dai, who deviate a little from the ideological standpoint of Temsula Ao, as it is argued that to stereotype the literary writings from the Northeast as mere narrative of violence is a disservice to the authentic representation of the region that is replete with diverse ethnic identities and abundantly rich biodiversity. Kire and Dai instead emphasize on the representation of tribal life-world in its true colour by narrativizing tribal folk literature and the importance of myths and legends in their respective societies. Their motif behind the celebration of indigenous oral literature and cultural practices through literary representation may be understood as a political act of subtle resistance to the colonial stereotype on tribal culture as of primitive type.

In the fourth chapter a detailed discussion of four select novels was undertaken to examine the nature of tribal representation in Indian literature. The novels discussed were *Paraja* (first published in Oriya in 1945, translated into English in 1987*), The Primal Land* (translated into English in 2001 from *Adibhumi* first published in Oriya in 1993), *Love in the Time of Insurgency* (translated into English in 2005 from *Yaruingam* first published in Assamese in 1960) and *The Legends of Pensam* (2006). During the discussion of these novels under the rubrics of representational theory, it was found that each of these novels represent the tribal conditions at different time lines in the historical concept of linearity. However, what puts them into the similar ideological category is

that all of these novels represent tribals as the victims of exploitation and discrimination at different levels. The narratives of these novels arrive at the common conclusion that Indian mainstream society has not been able to free itself from the colonial consciousness of racial difference as the same is still being perpetuated in the treatment of tribal communities both in political as well as sociological spheres.

Oriya novelist Gopinath Mohanty's *Paraja* was published in 1945 two years prior to the independence of India and as such it is quite obvious that he represents the condition of tribal society during colonial period. His novel narrates the bewilderment and predicament of Paraja tribe at the backdrop of imposition of colonial administration into the autonomous territories of the tribals. The novel also tells us how expansion of colonial modernity facilitated the intrusion of non-tribal traders and moneylender class into the tribal areas culminating in the complete seizure of both land and freedom of the Parajas. The novel concludes with no concrete resolution as it was too early to predict if the much awaited independence of India would bring some change in tribal condition.

The second novel *The Primal Land*, written by another Oriya writer Pratibha Ray, was published in 1993 much later than Mohanty's *Paraja*. This novel is Ray's honest effort at the representation of the contemporary condition of Bonda tribe of Orissa as it is claimed by the writer herself that she lived among the tribe for a prolonged period with a view to understand the inner dynamics of their life-world. She represents the cultural practices of the Bonda tribes with ethnographic details and also focuses on the exploitation and discrimination of the tribe both by the state agencies and plainsmen. However, what differentiates her narrative from that of Mohanty is that Ray in a much subtler manner tends to prioritize modern ideals over tribal customary practices and implicitly supports the introduction of modernity in tribal society as the only panacea of their survival in the rapidly changing world.

An objective comparative study of these two novels reveals that though Mohanty was writing his novel at the heydays of freedom movement and nationalistic dynamism,

he did not subscribe to the nationalistic project of unifying the entire Indian population with a single thread. Instead, he is more concerned with the condition of the tribe as a totally separate entity in that their condition has no similarity to the rest of the population due to the apparent lack of privileges. He expresses his skepticism regarding the change in tribal condition as long as the mentality of Indian mainstream does not undergo a paradigmatic transformation. Mohanty does not prescribe any solution for the improvement of tribal condition as he is at loss after experiencing the corrupt system of government administration and persistent racial antagonism among the non-tribals against the tribals. On the other hand, though she focuses on the authentic representation of Bonda society with ethnographic rigor and scathing remarks on the issue of exploitation; Ray's narrative comes with a prescription for tribal society. In the novel she identifies the characteristic indolence and reticence of tribal society to modernity as one of the prime causes of their underdeveloped condition even after the independence of India. In that premise, she is reiterating the same narrative of elitist nationalistic project that vouches for assimilation of tribal society into the mainstream with introduction of modern education. However, her novel seems to overlook the fact that expeditious introduction of modernity in any form may be contradictory to the issue of protection of the indigenous socio-cultural identity of the tribals. Her narrative does not provide any detail on what kind of method should be employed for educating tribal children, for to educate them under a uniform curriculum framed by the state may not be appropriate keeping under consideration that they are accustomed with a different world-view.

The third novel discussed here is *Love in the Time of Insurgency* by an Assamese writer Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya. The novel was published after Indian independence in 1960 and it focuses on the political awakening of Naga tribe after the World War-II and intensification of their political awareness at the crossroads of transfer of power to Indian government from the British. The novel introduces us to the growing tension among the tribal communities due to the apparent political uncertainty cast on them by

the declaration of a new nation and integration of their autonomous territories into the projected national map of India without proper dialogue with the political stakeholders representing the tribals. The novel tells us about the emergence of contradictory political ideologies from within the tribal society that elicits fratricidal violence with no concrete solution to their strife. However, what concerns us is that Bhattacharya appears to side with nationalistic political ideology inspired by Mahatma Gandhi as the protagonist of the novel represents this ideology. On the other hand, the followers of extremist ideology demanding an independent sovereign state for the Nagas are depicted as the perpetrators of violent activities trying to make a strong foothold by terrorizing the common public. It is also stated in the novel that the support base of the extremist ideology is sporadic while the nationalistic ideology has a steady growth among the tribal communities. However, when compared with historical data, the novel seems to lose coherence as demand for a sovereign state for the Nagas has a historical and cultural root that dates back to the colonial period. Historical records ascertain that during the colonial period there were several armed uprisings against British occupation in the present day Nagaland to liberate the British occupied areas and reinstall Naga autonomy. Furthermore there is no record of direct participation of the Naga population in nationalistic freedom movement during colonial period. Instead, it is argued that when the British government arrived at an agreement with the Congress leadership for integration of the Naga Hills into the Indian map, the educated middleclass of Nagas reacted vehemently for "almost totally cut off from the national struggle against British rule, unexposed to the winds of social change sweeping across the rest of the country and unacquainted with the ideology and belief of the new leaders of India" (Misra, 28), they were apprehensive of adequate protection to their indigenous rights and political economy. Like Ray, Bhattacharya too seems to be implicitly supporting the cause of nationalistic rhetoric of integration of tribal territories into the nation state. However, he

is skeptic about the protection of Naga rights and their political interest in the mainstream elitist discourse of Indian politics.

The fourth novel *The Legends of Pensam* by an Arunachali writer Mamang Dai was published in 2006 and as such it may be considered as the modern rendition on tribal representation. Dai's representation of tribal society stands completely different from the above discussed three novels in that it is written by an insider. In her narrative we hardly find the sympathetic deliberation on the pitiable condition of tribal society at the backdrop of racial discrimination and economic exploitation, nor is she lamenting for the loss of political rights over their autonomous territories. Instead, she as an insider and victim of the system seems to accept the reality as it is and continue her life in normalcy. The mention of tribal myths and legends and her celebration of tribal way of life in a rather nonchalant manner is a subtle example of political statement, for she deliberately disagrees to view her society through the prism of alien ideological standpoint. Instead, she narrates the transition of Arunachal Pradesh since colonial period till the present and lets us know how tribal society is undergoing a slow and steady transformation. However, it would not be appropriate to say that she is totally indifferent to the adversities that are sweeping across the tribal areas with the introduction of modernity, for she is well aware of the harm caused by modernity to the ecology and psychological spaces of her land. She is also aware of the escalating discontentment among the tribals and their anxiety over the increasing intrusion of outsiders to their territory. It is pertinent to mention that her choice of Adi word "Pensam" in the title is deliberately chosen for the purpose of suggesting the in-between space that she finds herself trapped as a tribal in the contemporary condition of violence and unending political unrest.

The fifth novel *Kocharethi: The Araya Woman* by Narayan is yet another novel that explores the issue of marginalization of tribal communities from an insider's perspective. Like Dai, Narayan tries to represent his community and its life-world in the light of his lived experiences of belonging to a marginalized community from Kerala.

The novel largely focuses on the exploration of the transition of tribal ethos against the backdrop of advancing modernity. Offering an ethnographic detour on the tribal belief system, the novel raises the issue of ecological concern which is largely under the threat of rapid depletion. Narayan unfolds the dilemmatic condition of the Malayarayar community in making a choice between traditional values and modernity that finally culminates in the helpless surrender of the tribals to the unholy forces of modernity. The novel may also be seen as a political statement by the author underlining collective discontentment and grief at being treated as the 'other' by negation of their indigenous value system as obsolete and primitive as Narayan poignantly asserts in an interview "no one was really interested in us as a people" (Kocharethi, 212). His skepticism about the rhetoric of development and refinement of tribal condition with the advent of modernity inaugurated by the British colonizers and subsequent assimilatory projects undertaken by the Indian mainstream society and the realization of being marzinalized menifests as the identical reality of every tribal society across the country.

At the conclusion, it may be surmised that the discourse of representation of tribal society and their life-world is painstakingly nuanced considering the political undertone hidden between the lines much to allude to what Mamang Dai's novel's title suggests. There is a stark difference between the representations facilitated by writers from other socio-cultural background and the representational narratives undertaken by an insider of tribal society. The representations of Mohanty, Ray and Bhattacharya rightly focus on the issues of exploitation and inhuman treatment of tribals by the privileged class of Indian society. Their narratives also subvert certain stereotypes on tribal cultural practices by emphasizing on the cultural importance of such practices. Ray and Bhattacharya also focus on the issue of women's position in tribal society and counter the romantic idea of equal status of women in tribal social setup by delivering a clearer insight. However, these narratives fail to make an objective representation of tribal condition, for their pervasive ideological prejudices and 'otherness' loom over the

narratives and make its presence felt in the ostensible in-between spaces of representational narrative. On the other hand autochthonous writing facilitates an authentic representation of tribal life-world by accentuating certain minute details that may not come under the scanner of a writer from alien cultural milieu. It is hoped that this project will facilitate new avenues in the field of research on the representation of tribal communities in the subsequent period and help address the long standing issue of marginality with much clearer indulgence.

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