



Chapter 19

Recognizing Contemporary Tribal Women's Writings: A Study on Select Literary Narrators of North East India

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ABSTRACT

Northeast India is known for its diverse ethnic traits, natural landscapes, and regional and political conflicts. These factors were brought to light through diverse literary narratives. Women's contribution to English writing plays a prominent role in protecting the complex multi-ethnic and multi-cultural issues of their regions and captures the multicoloured historical and collective spaces. Their writing primarily focuses on the issues of nature, landscape, culture, oppression, conflict, turmoil, insurgency, and identity. Women's writings from these regions have attained visibility and acclaim across the nation. They are deeply concerned about the brutal violence happening in their society, which acts as a barrier to achieving progress. This chapter attempts to analyse the select contemporary tribal women's writings and their unique contribution to the betterment of their native land. This study also explores the struggle of indigenous identity and psychosocial experiences undergone by tribal communities of Northeast India through select tribal writers in English.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-6572-1.ch019

INTRODUCTION

Humankind is defined by language; but civilization is defined by writing

– *Peter T. Daniels*

The North-Eastern region of India is always found isolated from the rest of the country. This is mainly because of the factors like marginalization, economic crisis, political instability and poor infrastructure. Apart from this, their voices were not taken into consideration at times. The geographical location of this region covers eight states that include Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. All these states maintain diverse linguistic and social cultures. According to Thonkholal Haokip (2011), the northeast region is “diverse in almost every aspect; it is inhabited by a mosaic of societies characterized by diversity in ethnicity, language, culture, religion, social organization, economic pursuits, productive relations and participation in political process” (pp.109-10). The hidden factors of their livelihood, their ethical traits, and the cultural landscape were brought to light through writings in various forms of literary narrations. In each state, the writers incorporate their historical identity, cultural practice, and lifestyle through various forms of literary narrations and their traits were transmitted to the next generations. As it is widely known that literature reflects society, the social values and cultural traits of these extinct communities are being documented through writers and anthropologists. It also helps to offer beneficial schemes to resolve the flaws that are happening in their society. The common thematic factors represented in these regions include ethnic culture, violence, insurgency, isolation, oppression, nature, myths, etc. The writings in English seek global attention, and dignity along with native identity was attained. Literary writing is used as a weapon to defend the cultural imposition of colonial suppression. Similarly, this article attempts to bring out the proficiency of emerging English women tribal writers Temsula Ao, Mamang Dai and Easterine Kire, who tries to bring out the livelihood of inhabitants of Northeast India.

Indian Writing in English

Indian English writers focussed on almost all genres starting from poetry and prose and focusing on fiction and short stories. Indian writing in English has gained prominence both within and outside the nation. In the present-day scenario, Indian writers have heard their voices through artistic ways of expressing ideas. Themes like nationalism, spiritualism, aesthetic experience, idealism, humanism and even romanticism are dominant during various points in time. Moreover, modern

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