

Conclusion

The North East literature is considered as one of the contemporary literatures in the postcolonial era. It has all the vital elements that should be present in a literary genre. The study of the classical oral literature was never done with that interest ever before. In the oral tradition, the tribes always try to make their culture and dogmas to be more sacred. The secrecy of thought makes an ambience of complex structures that may vary from person to person. The tribal communities like Khasis, Nagas, Aos, Idus, Mishmees and so on have their own universal idea of conceptual systems. As written in the essay of Sujata Miri 'Notes on Tribal World, Truth and Art' in Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta's book *Literatures and Oratures as Knowledge Systems* there is an absence of a "written intellectual tradition" which is a major lack for "complex system of rules of behaviour, of rights and duties." (12) The North East literature always tried to resituate the tribal norms and customs that were present in the oral tradition. The orality found in the classical or traditional folklore is speculated in the works of modern day literature. The North East literature has varied ways of interpretation about the myths and folklore that remain in the culture for so many years. They are not forgotten as it is passed from generation to generation. The myths and folklore are the indomitable part of their culture and tradition. It is certainly a matter of time that as the tribal history is not given so much importance, they sometimes lack scriptural manuscripts. As they do not have any written form so they face some problem of variegated ideas that are conveyed by many people. So, it can be an uncertain for the tribal people to have "originality" in oral tradition. However, the North East literature has always been a literary area which emphasized on the classics of the land.

In the North East literature, the authors used to bring out the problems of the region. The contemporariness is always evident in the case of North East literature. The writers

always seek to derive the truth of the region. The problems like terrorism, ethnicity, ethnic conflicts, migrations and so on are always the prime prospects of the region. In Sanjib Baruah's *Beyond Counter Insurgency: Breaking the Impasse in Northeast India* we can find what the problems of AFSPA in North East were:

“The irony is that the AFSPA was first imposed ostensibly to secure territories that were not fully integrated into the Indian Union; to bind the not- Indian that lay at India's peripheries into the Indian geo-national imaginary. But after being applied for half a century and with an ever-expanding scope, the AFSPA has only confirmed the rupture between what is and is not India.”

(38)

It is seen in the imposition of AFSPA that the rule only hindered the common people from using their freedom. The North East states and Jammu and Kashmir were the worst affected by terrorist groups. The imposition of AFSPA was for the common people to live a safe and peaceful life but it rather proved to be tyrannical. The civil activists were accusing the government of its treason. These actions were often reflected in various works by various writers. The writers who had seen the phase writes about it in their works. It could be best seen in Easterine Kire's *Bitter Wormwood*. In the “Introduction” itself, it is visible. In *Bitter Wormwood*, the very first Chapter is named as “2007”, when the terrorist attacks were at the height in the region. The chief character Mose sees a phase when the guns were taken by people not for their independence, but rather as their habit. Mose saw the incident of killings in the region. Kire in her fiction gives much more importance as it posits the mind of Mose. The novel has a very pitiable description of the condition of the people during the time of AFSPA. In the Chapter “The AFSPA” we came to know about the illegal killings by the Indian Army. This Chapter has all the details of the plight of the Naga people. The novel has the best descriptions of the sights and sounds of the region

during the imposition of the Armed Forces Act. Like Kire, Ao's *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone* also depicts the poor condition of people during the time of AFSPA. The stories written by Temsula Ao were focused on the socio-political situation of the period. The stories bring in the period of insurgency. In "The Curfew Man", we come across the main character Satemba, who acts as a spy for the police during the time of revolution. Same as Kire's novel, this story also has the importance of the AFSPA in the background. The stories usually involve the inhuman deeds, brutality; loss of home and keeping an individual's life at stake. Ao's detailing is not like Kire's. Both the writers belong to Nagaland and they had witnessed the situation in their places. Hence, in the writings, we could see the glimpse of their personal experience within the imaginative world of characters.

The air of turbulence is not only seen in Nagaland but also in parts of North East as well. The terror always was there in North East from the beginning. The imposition of the Armed Forces Special Power Act was not the only thing that was faced by the Northeastern people there were numerous occasions when the common people had to face the brutality of the waging war. The battles between different countries with India also took various turns in the lives of the common people from time to time. The battles were fought not only by the soldiers of the nation but also by the countrymen. The "fear" and "terror" that arises because of the wars and other laws literally takes away the peace and tranquillity of the place and its people. Unlike, the problem of Nagaland, in the contemporary period, North East faced the same situations, before the region was not given so much importance. As said in the following lines we can find it:

"The term 'Northeast' was formalized through the British colonial administration as a frontier region. It was subsequently endorsed and retained by the Indian state under the 'native'

vocabulary as 'Purvanchal'. Today, talk of the Northeast as a unique (more aptly a 'strange') ghettoized entity is cliché. The obvious implication is that anything goes in ascribing the region. The criticism is not intended to deprecate the term 'Northeast India', but rather to make it more meaningful and real than let it remain disjointed. The plea is to neither highlight the uniqueness nor propound unity, but to look out for a comprehensive understanding of the region. This can be done not by opposing the coinage of the term, but in shaping a reasonable meaning of the term." (171)

The North East region was rarely touched by any rulers and as a result of it, it remained pristine. But this pristine side was for the good of the region. As time went on, because of the aloofness, people recognized less about the North East region. And it was only after the terrorist actions that people came to know about the North East but in a rather negative and dreadful way. This image was created by the media. And till a definite period, many people were afraid of the region. All these images are seen in the fictions of the North East writers from time to time. Therefore, the North East region is always considered as a different nation by the nation itself.

Identity in all the novels has a very significant role to play. The Northeastern literary genre is confounded with the aspects of showing the inferiority that they face at the hands of the city people in India. Identity is considered as one of the major barriers of all the tribal people throughout India. These create a sense of disjointedness amongst the people. Quest for identity within the races play a significant role in making people aware of the fact that they are not part of the modern-day world. The identity of the Northeastern people is always contested by the people of other parts of India. Discrimination is seen more with the people of Meghalaya, Sikkim, Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and sometimes Assam and Tripura. The people of the metropolitan cities assume that the people of North East India are

from a foreign nation. They are treated like some foreign individual. Seen in Mamang Dai's novella, *Stupid Cupid* where the incident of the clash of ideology and thinking is there with the metropolitan people. Not only in Dai's fictions but it is also found in many other writers where the tribal people have to face too many discriminations. The act of deprivation is seen in the case of the people of North East as they give more focus on modern culture. In Nongbri's book *Migration, Identity and Conflict*, we see how the Northeasterners are treated by the people of Delhi. They had a strong belief that the people of the North East do not belong to India. The cause of it remains with racial differences which can be asserted as one of the main aspects.

Despite the fact of identity, the Northeasterners also face the problem of ethnicity. Ethnicity in the North East region is diverse and is seen in Dai's fictions to the fullest. The commonest factor of ethnicity lies in the conflict of ideas and aspect of "subaltern". In both *Stupid Cupid* and *The Black Hill* it could be seen that ethnicity play a major role in professing the ideologies of the different groups of people. In both the works, Dai employs the battle of different norms that are being followed by different people of different ethnic groups. In the two stories, the ethnic classes and their differences are seen. As for example, *The Black Hill* which is set in the background of Pre-Independence yet it is a story which is based on the similar themes of modern day world. Because of the ethnic differences, sometimes it seems to diverge from expressing the aspect of love in the story. Dai's view of the differences of ethnic groups makes it possible to look into the matter of identity crisis. The feeling of inferiority is also seen in the case of distinguishing the ethnic groups from that of the British people. The influence of the British people over the ethnic culture is visible in Gimur and Nago, as they like to read and write the English alphabets with the pencils. It is the dress, culture and habit of the British people that makes the Adi and other tribal people think that the British

were more developed and cultured than them. This flaw made an implication towards the view of attaining the philosophies of the British people. This whole affair is being illustrated with great skill in the story. Introduction to missionary attitudes with the character of Krick is well explained in the text. Therefore, from all these assertions it can be assumed that the fictions of Mamang Dai have an important correlation with the philosophies of ethnicity.

Apart from the aspect of ethnicity and identity in a myth, Dai makes an elusive statement in her *Stupid Cupid* that the problem of ethnicity and identity is not a problem of distant past but as well as the present. And she is true in saying so as it is visible in both *The Black Hill* and *Stupid Cupid*. The fictions have all the implications that are needed in denouncing the key features of identity and ethnicity. Both the fictions readily see on the aspect of love, but this feature becomes subsidiary to the feature of ethnicity when the story progresses. The basic criteria rest with the dichotomy between ethnic values and modernity. The clash between modernity and tradition is visible in the two fictions. Dai clears the idea of philosophical bending of mind in the two fictions. Both the stories are set in a different background but they represent the present situation. It is certainly seen that identity and ethnicity plays a very significant role in modelling the structure of society. It is by the dint of ethnicity that we are able to know about the divergent cultures that are there in the society.

Dai's view is not just on the features of ethnicity or identity but also has its implication towards the factor of how North East literature could be shown in a global platform. The minimalistic philosophies are always seen in the fictions. When the characters of British origin and metropolitan people in *The Black Hill* and *Stupid Cupid* respectively are shown it makes the tribal people feel inferior to them. The tribal people wanted to admire the facts of modernity, but in doing so sometimes they dissociate themselves from their own roots.

In the same way, when they admire religion, they usually forsake their own religion. As a matter of fact, their religion, such as Donyi-Polo is losing its place from the society of the Arunachali people. However, it could be shown by judging over the aspect of identity and ethnicity of the tribal groups who use to admire the modernity by forsaking their own customs. And this becomes the main cause of their identity crisis. Therefore, the fictions of Dai have all the important ideas of ethnicity and identity.

Except for the feature of ethnicity and identity, the feature of acculturation is also imbibed in *Stupid Cupid*. The novella by Dai has a trans-cultural and cross-cultural element that makes it more important and contemporary. The condition of the migrated people in Delhi from North East is deliberately seen in the characters of Adna, Jia, TD, Temjen, Green and others as well. All these characters are from different background and cultures which make them much more diverse in their appeal. It is certainly an asset for the characters that they can have a hybridized outlook on all the aspects. Acculturation plays a significant role in professing the ideology of how the people from various parts of the nation try to come and settle in search of greater opportunities in the metropolitan cities. Adna is the person who came from Arunachal Pradesh so that he can start up a hotel in Delhi. His motive was to set up a beautiful hotel which will be a paradise for the lovers. The intention of Adna was to give best facilities to the couples whoever would come to his hotel. It sounds weird but when the people came from various parts of India, they neglect the interest of the owner and want to enjoy their time. They are not interested in the motive of the owner for which it was started. But unknowingly they perform the things which the owner desired. Adna is always clung to his own culture and thinks about the outcome of the clandestine affairs or scandals that might go on in his hotel. He is a little bit bothered but when the matter comes for his business he usually forsakes those matters and just

concentrates on his business. Therefore, the novella posits the characteristics of acculturation in its fullest form.

Apart from ethnicity, there is another element in the fictions, i.e. ecology. Ecology, as stated in Chapter 2 and 3, is the study of the environment and the surroundings of nature. From this concept, the study of ecocriticism emerges out which has the chief trait of both environment and literature. Often called as “Green studies” by many critics, it is a contemporary issue that brings in all the features that study the element of environment and ecology. The importance of the fictions of Dai plays a very significant role. Ecocriticism in any novel brings in an element of romanticism. As the theory was propounded by the critics after seeing the massive employment of the ideologies of Transcendentalism and Romanticism, it paved the way for the modern poets and novelists who tried to bring the reverence of the element in their fictions or other literary art. The branch of ecocriticism in the fictions accessed towards the other theories of pastoral, wilderness, apocalypse and pollution. In *The Black Hill*, we can observe the features of pastoral and eco-feminism. These two features blend in the novel in such a manner that it seems to be an indomitable part of the novel. The description of the landscape in Chapter 2 reveals the gothic influence and the sense of dark imagery present in the novel. The romantic effects in the novel are fully visible in the novel. Dai also differentiates with the idea of romanticism that is used in European or British literature. It is revealed that how the Occidentals conceive their ideology about the Orientals. The fiction *The Black Hill* surpasses with the main idea of love-affair between Gimur and Kajinsha, but this whole affair is described from a different angle with the blend of certain elements of ecology. The turning point in the story is the amalgamation of ecology with feministic philosophies. The ecocriticism in the novel *The Black Hill* actually modulates the specific features of religion as well. The importance of Donyi-Polo among the

tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh acts to be a major platform for bending towards the naturalistic philosophies. As per the stated remark about Donyi-Polo, it is found that it is a belief system that is followed by the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh. It shows how religion plays a significant role in the evolution of paganism. The ecocriticism is also attached to the performing rituals that are practised in the tribal society. The rituals that are performed are always intended towards the well-being of the tribal society. As seen in Verrier Elwin's essays and travelogues it is conceived as a real place with no artificiality in it. The fictional tale of *The Black Hill* clears the idea of the myth that is found in the tribal community for many years. But the ecology was not given so much importance beforehand. It is only in the post-colonial era that the idea of ecocriticism becomes significant in the fictions. As the myth only concentrates on the love-affair of Kajinsha and Gimur and the events of the missionaries but above all these things, there are certain important features which clearly implicate the philosophy of ecocriticism. However, the fiction *Stupid Cupid* blends a different form of ecocritical study.

Dai's main idea of creating the novella *Stupid Cupid* was to bring in a separate cultural form that was not known by the people of the metropolitan cities. The growing negligence and racist philosophy sprouted out in the minds of the people of North India. This kind of ideology is seen in the fiction from the very beginning and with the incident; with Jia and TD it becomes validated. Asserting to the feeling of the loss of 'home' is seen in the fiction. It is same as that of Rita Chowdhury's fiction *The Chinatown Days*, where it is shown that how people would have to migrate from one place to another as for some odious situations aroused because of some clash between powerful agencies called "nations". 'Home' for them not only becomes an agency of livelihood but also happens to be a space of their own identity. All these features convey the idea of identity and ethnicity. But as the concept of 'home' comes it

also brings in the images of terrain and vegetation of the beautiful landscapes of North East. All these features are the important aspects of ecology in the North East. The hills, valleys, rivers etc. are indomitable part of the North East region. The study of ecology is elucidated by the use of various sources of nature. On the other hand, the tale also has a discussion over the ecology of Delhi or North India. The images of Delhi in the story show the realistic elements that are present in the very place. Ecology in the novella has a very significant part to play. The whole affair of landscape, pastoral images, apocalypse, pollution and wilderness show the insights of Delhi and Northeastern states in a distinguishing manner. It is certainly a mere understanding of the environment of the place and how people usually suffer. The thinking of the prominent characters of the novella asserts the idea of 'home' that is always attached to them. Hence, the novella has an ecocritical perspective that is always connected with the place.

North East India, however, is a place for exploration. And in the whole analysis about the various texts written by different women writers of North East, it is certain that how in a matriarchal society also the women had been subjected and oppressed. From the study of the two fictions of Dai, it is certain that apart from the feministic philosophies the factors of ethnicity and ecology are also important in order to differentiate the features of North East region. The ideas of most of the women writers are concerned with the contemporary issues, but in Dai, she not only gives emphasis to the traditional issues but also gives equal relevance to the recent problems as well. She is certainly a skilful writer who decides to write about the ecology of not only the North East but also the metropolitan city as well. The distinction between the two makes it clear that how ethnicity and ecology serves as an important theme in the fictions.

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