

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Rabindranath Tagore has been a poet and prophet of all the times and through his poetic monuments has united Nature, God and Soul. He has been a bard of realities, mysticism, mellifluous melodies and soulful lyricism and his works have glorified the virtues of the Almighty. His poetry depicts soul's eternal quest for a glorious fulfillment. His poetic voices all the time speak the eternal truth and reality what is most desired in human life as a whole. The feminine virtues of nature in its myriad ways have been explored as ecofeminist and ecomystic and the secret laws of life and nature have been very mellifluously depicted. In *Gitanjali* when the poet's persona says, "I am here to sing thee songs", that epitomizes very motto of human life. He has seen life as essentially devotional, meant for glorifying the Almighty who has made this world a huge arrangement for all our needs. Similarly all his poems divinely motivated sing the songs of God's and life's glories.

India's Northeast, comprising of eight different states having huge cultural, linguistic, ethnic, or religious differences among them is a mega biodiversity and prominent seat of literary and cultural diversity. Sharing with the international borders of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, China and Nepal, it is linked to the rest of the country by a narrow corridor which is referred to as the Chicken's Neck. With the tradition and culture of different tribes and ethnic groups, it is a rich storehouse of different languages and dialects of its indigenous multi-ethnic people. There are tribes still following the traditional animistic faith along with multiple other religious faiths.

In spite of having all these diversities, these states have many things in common. They share common political, economic or social problems such as the

problem of insurgency, separatist movements or the issue of rampant corruption in the bureaucracy. Apart from this, all the states share almost the same natural landscape. They have hills, mountains, lush green forests with rare flora and fauna, rivers, valleys and multi-ethnic people with vibrant culture and tradition. With such bounties of nature, these eight states, as a whole, are blessed with a unique ecology. The significant commonality in the core issues and the common ecosystem bind these eight states in one single entity as the Northeast India- the multi-pronged resourceful, vibrant, colourful and rich Northeast.

All the 225 tribes of Northeast have rich oral and cultural traditions. The oral history of these tribes tells of ancestors from the shadowy past, from mountains steeped in mist and romance, from lands far away, of snake gods and princesses, epic battles and great warriors. Besides having rich oral literatures, some provinces like Assam, Manipur and Tripura have literary histories that date back to many centuries where royal dynasties established strong literary traditions. Writing in English from Northeast India is an emerging or new literature moulded of native elements and realities shaping the nascent soulscape of the budding writers. This corpus of writing is a recent phenomenon compared to the literatures in English from other parts of India.

While Indian provincial writing in English began in Bengal much before the Independence or the partition of India, the writing in English from Northeast started only about three decades ago. Writing in English from Northeast India, as a discourse of myriad realities of self-expression, mystical exuberance and ecological explorations started only in the 80s of the 20th century.

But in this relatively short span of time it seems to attain a legitimate and powerful voice by articulating their senses and sentiments and focusing on some of the core issues of the region. It is a distinctive voice in the realm of Indian Writing in

English. Although it has already achieved a remarkable stature, it seems to be deprived of the critical attention it really deserves in the national/ international scenario. This naturally limits the corpus of Indian Writing in English narrowing the varied world of this literature. The writer from the Northeast differs from his counterpart in the mainland in a significant way. While it may not make him a better writer, living with the menace of the gun he cannot merely indulge in verbal wizardry and wooly aesthetics but must perforce master the art of witness.

Apart from having different sensibilities, it's the political nature of these writings which make them different. The fraught relationship most of the North-eastern states have with the centre often gets reflected in the literature, be it in English, Assamese or Bodo. The fact that literary circles have been discussing 'literature from NE' as a different body of work, attests that it is in developing in opposition to Indian-English writing, which probably mirrors the fraught relationship NE has with Delhi. Tilottama Misra says about the nature of writing in English from Northeast India that an intense sense of awareness of the cultural loss and recovery that came with thenegotiation with 'other' cultures is a recurrent feature of the seven north-eastern states. Each small community or linguistic group has responded through its oral or written communication to the encounters with the majoritarian cultures from either mainland India or from outside the borders of the country, in its own distinctive manner. (Misra 2011: 3)

Since the eight states of the region hugely vary from each other in tradition, culture, language, and religion, it might seem to be an injustice to homogenize literatures from this region. But in spite of this diversity, it is possible to locate some common grounds, some shared values and concerns of these writers. Identity crisis and a sense of alienation are some of the dominant features of contemporary politics in the Northeast. Racial autonomy, cultural and linguistic conflicts and the problem of insurgency have been ravaging the region. These are some of the recurrent themes in these writers that bind them in one single thread. Besides issues like identity crisis,

search for roots, self-assertion, or claims for a political space, it is the ecology of the region, and an ecological concern that predominantly seem to unite these multi-ethnic writers in a common platform. The works of the writers in English from India's Northeast have many different aspects of the entire ecosystem of the region.

The writers celebrate the ecological glory of Northeast with a keen ecological awareness. Although ethnicity is their chief concern as they hail from various ethnic groups, mountains, hills, valleys, people, myths legends, tribal rites, mystic as well aesthetic sensibilities, communal violence, insurgency are also some of the dominant and recurring themes in their works. They seem to use ecology, in a conscious way, as a tool for acquiring an identity. It is felt that the unique ecology of the region has been pivotal in shaping an aesthetic sensibility of these writers. The present work has engaged itself in a multi-pronged study of contemporary writing in English from India's Northeast from an ecological standpoint in canonical perspectives.

Ecological concern is one of the dominant features of the writing in English from Northeast India. Even in the vernacular literatures nature occupies a significant place. The oral narratives, the myths and legends, the folktales, and the rites and rituals of different tribes of this region reflect the intangible heritage and the age-old bond they share with nature. The basic Indian ethos teaches to be compassionate to nature and to live in harmony with it. In Indian culture there has been a tradition of living with nature with mutual respect, understanding and dependence. The tribal communities of Northeast India too have been worshipping, nurturing and preserving nature since the long past. Writing from Northeast India celebrates this human-nature relationship exploring the tradition, culture and heritage of the multi-ethnic communities of this region.

In contemporary writings in English from India's Northeast India present before us a myriad, mesmerizing world of nature that also echoes a conscious voice of resistance as well as of assertion. It is a voice of resistance against the neo-colonial

powers and also a voice of assertion for a distinct identity. It attempts to create a 'space' and a 'place' for itself amidst political and cultural hegemony negotiating different issues simultaneously. Their writings, besides talking about contemporary socio-political problems, seriously raise ecological issues. There is glorification of nature, and also deep concerns for ecological degradation. Their works form a strong voice of protest against colonial/neo-colonial eco-degradation and exploitation of nature. Because they seem to believe that it is a threat not only to the environment alone, but also to the very identity of the indigenous tribes. It has been seen through this study that the ecology of the region has been consciously used by the contemporary writers in negotiating these issues. This consciousness makes this immensely rich corpus of writing from India's Northeast canonical. This canonical writing plays a pivotal role in understanding the region as a whole.

Contemporary Poetry in English from India's Northeast has multi – faceted voices. It is an expression of an individual poetic self, and at the same time, it is the saga of the people of the region in general. It presents a vista of images of the mountains, hills, rivers, myths and legends, tradition and culture, and multi – ethnic people of the region. The subject matters it deals with ranges from geography to politics, myths and legends to ecology. Ecological concern is a notable characteristic of poetry from this part of the country. Identity crisis or a sense of alienation is one of the dominant features of contemporary politics in the Northeast.

There has been a conscious use of ecology as a means for an assertion of identity in the works of the poets of this region. Ecology seems to play a pivotal role in their search for identity, root, traditional values and culture, which are lost in the din and bustle of modernization and urbanization as Northeast India is one of South Asia's last land frontiers and through much of the twentieth century these sparsely populated areas have attracted large-scale migration from the rest of the subcontinent. The protective discrimination regime arose partly as a response to these demographic trends. Many of these tribal societies have been going through a process of transition

from shifting cultivation to settled agriculture, from clan control of land to commodification of land, urbanization, and cultural change associated with the process of modernization.

That ecology plays a vital role to provide a common ground to these poets, or to bound them together can be seen in the overwhelming presence of nature in the works of almost all of these poets, sometimes imaginatively, sometimes romantically, but most of the time consciously. Their works also reflect their serious concerns of various ecological issues such as large-scale deforestation, coal and uranium mining, ethnic violence, insurgency and counter-insurgency operations — all that ultimately lead to the degradation of ecology. Their poetry strongly advocates preservation of ecology of the region as, they believe, it would be the way of preserving their land, their native tradition and culture, and above all, their identity.

These writers are writing with a strong ecological sensibility and consciousness to present the greatness of their culture and habitat as their identity. Their works present before us a myriad, mesmerizing world of nature, and, at the same time, echo a conscious voice of resistance as well as assertion. Contemporary writing in English from India's Northeast negotiates varied issues simultaneously. It is quite interesting to note that the ecology of the region is one of their strongest weapons for all such negotiations. The writings in English from this region, having serious ecological concerns, can be seen as essentially a postcolonial and postcolonial discourse. It presents a critique of the colonial perspective of, and the colonial attitude towards, the environment. It is seen that contemporary writing in English from India's Northeast is also a literature of resistance against what can be termed as neo-colonialism. Because of this consciousness of the ecological degradation and sincere efforts of propagating ecological preservation in writing, this body of ecological writing can very well be said canonical.

It is seen from this study of both the creative and critical works of the contemporary the poets from Northeast India and Rabindranath Tagore that writing in English from this region has a world of possibilities. From this study of this writing it seems that it has all the power to go on in its creative journey with all vigour and vitality. It has greatly contributed to the corpus of Indian writing in English. It is hoped that it will be more enriched both with quality and quantity and will go on infusing newer ideas, themes, technique and style. This study shows that this immensely rich body of writing has the potential of creating a tradition of its own. Contemporary writing in English from India's Northeast will always be relevant and will remain of great significance in re/inventing the Northeast India as well as India as a whole.

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