Chapter – IV

Women and Indigeneity

The term 'feminism' can be traced back to 1871. Alexandre Dumas, in 1872, used the word 'femme' in a pamphlet titled *l' homme femme* to women who behaved in a masculine way. The term is made up of two components – 'femme', which means 'woman' in French and '-esme', which refers to a social movement or a political ideology. In the history of 'feminism', the paradigm of 'waves' appeared in. The 'First wave feminism' relates to the movements of the late 19th and the early 20th centuries which were aimed at acquiring equal rights for women. 'Second wave feminism' signifies the movements of 1960s and 70s which addressed the issues of women such as their employments, their role in the family and sexuality along with their political rights. Apart from the historical approach, there are different theoretical perspectives put under three categories viz., Liberal, Marxist or Socialist and Radical feminism. There are several other categories also such as psychoanalytic, postmodern, black, postcolonial, cyber feminism[7] and so on. Liberal feminism advocates women's equality in professional, political and public life. It starts with Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1996), a pioneering text in this field debating on women's role in politics and society. John Stuart Mill's *Subjection of Women* (1869) is an impassioned plea for equality and inclusion of women in social and political life, Lucy Stone (1818-93), Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) were leading figures of 19th century women's movement in America. Elizabath C. Stanton, a passionate abolitionist, published *The Woman's Bible* (in two parts, 1895&1898) which shook the society by challenging the church's interpretation of the Bible underscoring their

hypocrisy and arrogance that deprived women of the dignity and equality. Virginia Woolf, as an 'early feminist', published A *Room of One's Own* (1929*)* and *Three Guineas* (1938). She identifies inequality among men and women in every level of social, political, economic and literary life. Her work *A Room of One's Own* (1929) is on gender, sexuality and feminist criticism. The second wave was far-reaching with women not only demanding political and legal equality but also control over their reproductive and sexual roles. This also insisted upon the acknowledgement of the 'difference' between men and women and the predominant use of the term 'gender' instead of 'sex'. Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) provided intellectual momentum to the 'second wave' feminism. It focuses on a number of issues that are responsible in this male dominated society to consider women as 'other'. A master-slave attitude and domination-subordination axes control the lives of men and women. Radical feminism is a part of second wave feminism which identified women's oppression due to male supremacy. 'Radical' means 'root'. That is why; the Radical feminists were interested in getting to the roots of the problem in society. According to them, sexism is so deeply rooted in every sphere of society that the equality and justice can be achieved only by the adoption of radical measures. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963)*,* Juliet Mitchell's *Women's Estate* (1971) Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1970), Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970) - all are important texts of second-wave feminism. Gynocriticism, another branch of second-wave feminism, focuses on women's art rather than women's poetics. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, in *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979*)* and *No Man's Land* (1989, 1991, 1994), dwell on the marginalization, exclusion and the control of women in literary representation. Marxist feminists indicated that women's oppression is a result of capitalism. To

achieve gender equality, both capitalism and patriarchy should be dismantled. Marxist feminists such as Clara Zetkin (1872-1952) defended the liberation of women by extirpating the class distinctions. Michele Barrett's *Women's Oppression Today: The Marxist / Feminist Encounter* (1988) is a valuable work of Marxist feminism. While Marxist Feminism highlights 'class' as the central factor for women's oppression in social and economic sphere, Socialist Feminism shows both 'class' and 'gender' as valuable factors. Psychoanalytical feminists tried to analyse the forms and structures of oppression as domestic and expressed in the psyche. The French theorists like Julia Kristeva, Helene *Cixous (The Laugh of the Medusa* (1975), Luce Irigaray's *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974*)* and *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* (1982) are deeply rooted in the tradition of philosophy and psychoanalysis.

The third wave and postmodern feminism attack the gender bias of patriarchal structures. The third wave feminism affirms positively the importance of difference in looking, speaking, thinking and writing about women and for women. The idea of 'post feminism' started its footing with its diverse implications in the 1980s. In this respect, 'post feminism' is itself an ambiguous term. This wave of feminism does not restrict to the white, the middle-class or within the educated women. The post-modern and post-colonial feminism analyses the differences and varieties of the 'other' women against the Western feminists' view in universalising women's oppression. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her *French Feminism in an International-Frame* (1981) and *Feminism and Critical Theory* (1986) critically analyses the French feminists such as Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous. Spivak incorporates a strategic 'essentialism' to imitate the negative stereotyped representation of women and switching on its focus from sexual

differences to cultural difference. Spivak, herself a practical Marxist-feminist-deconstructionist, is concerned for the space occupied by women especially subaltern women in discursive practices and in institutions of Western cultures. Spivak noted that 'native women' are oppressed and caught between the native patriarchy and the colonial masculinist-imperialist ideology. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, another noted third-wave, postcolonial, transnational feminist, has argued for incorporating transnationalistic approach to explore women's experiences. She represents the 'Third World' woman as 'silent object' along with their voicelessness and otherness. Mohanty raises the questions on the inclinations of the Western feminist discourse in her *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses* (1986). She is agnostic about the single notion of patriarchy showed by Western feminists. Mohanty, in the global capitalist context, examines women's condition in *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (2003*).* She proposes a feminist framework which underlines racial, economic and political inequalities in the neo-colonial universe. In the colonial and the post-colonial context Rajeswari Sunder Rajan emphasizes that the postcolonial female subjectivity and femininity are engraved in ways which reflect the debates over national identity. Both Rajan and Lata Mani have focused on the abolition of 'Sati' to establish female subjectivity in the colonial India. In *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (1992), Leila Ahmed has discussed the position of women in Muslim cultures. Taslima Nasrin, a Bangladeshi writer, with her radical feminist views came into the light under the label of 'Third World' Feminists with some of her noted writings like *Nirbachito Column* (1992), *Lajja* (1993*), Amar Meyebela* (2002). Trint T. Minh-ha, a Vietnamese writer and filmmaker, reexamines the categories of women. In *Woman, Native, Other: Writing*

Postcoloniality and Feminism (1989), she critically analyses the relationship between the First World feminists and their marginal counterparts in the Third World. She argues that the First World feminists have overlooked the concerns of the Third World females. In her book she has embraced some renowned female voices such as Toni Morrison, Nellie Wong, Audre Lorde, Gloria Anzaldua, Leslie Marmon Silko.

In the discussion on the Third-World Feminism, the Dalit feminism[8] in Indian context, also played a vital role along with other trends of third-wave feminism such as post-modern, post-colonial, black feminism, ecofeminism, and lesbian feminism. 'Dalit' actually is an umbrella term under which the tribals and the tribal women are included. By questioning the role of caste and gender in Dalit discourse Dalit feminism raised its voice. Dalit women are oppressed and marginalized by their own dalit men along with the outsiders. Dalit male writers also overlook the subordinated condition of dalit women. According to Dalit feminists, Indian feminism overlooks the caste-based marginalisation and oppression of women. While discussing feminist theory on race, Kum-Kum Bhavnani and Meg Coulson argue that there are kinds of inequalities, determinations and differences prevailing between and within classes and castes which include women in particular. So the basic arguments which the Dalit feminists point out are:

1. A staunch protest against caste based marginalisation.
2. A protest against the projection of 'women' as a homogeneous category.
3. Dalit feminism as a 'politics of difference' termed by Gopal Guru, shows a strong denial to the so called Brahminical patriarchal structure along with their own patriarchal exploitation negotiated by Dalit men.

4. A kind of oppression faced by the subaltern people of India and right of speaking for their own against this patriarchal class-based system.
5. They protest against the three-kinds of oppression like caste oppression, master-labour class oppression, patriarchal oppression at the hands of men both of their own caste and other castes.
6. Identity politics becomes an emerging issue to them.
7. Dalit feminism tries to switch on from 'women' as category to an awareness and incorporation of 'women' in feminist theory.

The contribution of the Dalit women to the Phule-Ambedkar Movement is recorded in *We also Made History* (1989) by Meenakshi Moon and Urmila Pawar. Another major text is *Writing Caste / Writing Gender: Narrating Dalit Women's Testimonios* (2006*)* by Sharmila Rege.

Elwin's life and experience with women:

Elwin's first relationships grew with women. His father E. H. Elwin being a bishop would have to spend most of his days in evangelical works outside England and far away from his family members. The most part of Elwin's infancy passed in a fatherless household consisting of Verrier, his sister Eldyth, brother Basil who were one and a half year and four years younger respectively, and his mother Minnie Elwin, a renowned beauty at the centre. Another important member of the family was Minnie's mother, Flora Holman. He spent his childhood days playing with his brother and sister and hearing tales from his grandmother. Minnie was devoted to her bishop husband and his Christian religion and was also a forceful character. Guha in his book *Savaging the Civilized* (2000) states that out of Elwin's friends, one described her as 'the most powerful woman', another as 'strongly Protestant and Fundamentalist', and other portrayed her as 'a rather dominating and possessive

woman, but gracious in a distant missionary way' (5). In *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin* (1964) Elwin himself has remarked**:** "My mother was a beautiful, intelligent and imaginative woman. Witty and well-read, she liked all the right things, poetry, music and art, but unfortunately her fundamental interest was in a form of religion that was the negation of all of them" (2).

On the other, his grandmother Flora Holman was a renegade. She never read *The Bible*. This was the atmosphere in which he was brought up. But his father's sudden demise changed the entire scenario and left a gap which Mrs. Elwin filled partly by a passionate devotion to her religion and partly by an equally passionate devotion to her children. There was hardly any money. The family had to move continually from one place to another to live in tiny rented quarters, thereby getting his school education in various towns such as Reigate, Eastbourne and London. Being the eldest child and a boy of superb intelligence, Verrier was the centre of his mother's affections and ambitions.

After completing his school education at Dean Close, he entered into the university, got admitted in Merton College, where he enjoyed freedom of all kinds – social, intellectual, temporal and spatial; freedom to do what he wanted; freedom to move where he wished; freedom of thinking and reading; freedom to possess heterogeneous belief. This was a time which literary historians, in the Oxford of twenties, marked as the decade of the aesthete, and the cultivated. This very atmosphere of his family as well as his Oxford life helped in building his attitude towards women to a greater extent. One incident stirred Verrier too much when one young pretty woman, named Bella Wright, of twenty-one, engaged to be married to a stoker, was murdered. Verrier was then seventeen years old and he never had seen her. Beyond his family members, he had little acquaintance with women. On the

other, his tribes were well conversant with the women from their childhood. Elwin describes it as,

> Until I was twenty-one I knew nothing about women and certainly never could have anticipated that one day I would be mentioned half-a-dozen times as an authority on the sexual behaviour of the human female in the Kinsey Report. Tribal children know all about a woman's anatomy, the rules of menstruation and–whatever Malinowski may have said–how babies come, before they are five years old. I knew nothing when I was four times that age. Most tribal children have had exciting and ecstatic experiences by twelve or thirteen. All I had were timid glances. The first I exchanged, when I was about seven, was with my cousin Joan, a gloriously pretty child of six; the second, when I was twelve, with a girl of my own age called Robina whom I still remember as the most sexually exciting creature I have ever encountered. Except, however, for carrying her pick-a-back in the CSSM sports at Eastbourne, I made no advances and so never arrived. (16)

Verrier came to India in November 1927 and joined the Christa Seva Sangh (CSS), founded by J. C. Winslow in 1920. The C.S.S. was devoted to the cause of preaching Christian religion as well as to the service of the poor and marginalized Indians, and was governed by the rules of Franciscan poverty and simplicity. In 1928, Verrier got the opportunity to meet Gandhi at a meeting of an International Fellowship of Religions held at Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram, and in the later years he came in close contact with Gandhi's associates, such as Mahadev Desai, V. B. Patel, A. V. Thakkar, Jamnalal Bajaj, J.B. Kripalani, Mirabehn and many other Nationalists. Mirabehn, the short name of Madeleine Slade, was daughter of a British Admiral. She spent a couple of years in Gandhi's Ashram. Gandhi regarded

Mirabehn as his daughter, and by virtue of Verrier's frequent movement to Sabarmati Ashram, he adopted Gandhi as his father maintaining Indian interpretation of father–son relationship. Elwin fell in love with Mirabehn, proposed to marry her and appealed to Gandhi for his blessings. Though Gandhi was upset at first, he approved of his proposal. But none of them dared to go beyond the ideals of the Ashram and failed to settle. Mirabehn left India to seek out the spirit of Beethoven in Austria.

Another woman, Mary Gillet, a teacher trained in Roehampton, whom Verrier first met in England in 1929, came to Poona to join the CSS. She was a socialist of strong convictions and believed that very personal application of religion by most Christians has quickened the 'landslide of Western Civilization towards a catastrophe', as quoted by Guha. As soon as Mary visited the CSS Karanjia ashram in 1933 January, she was perplexed with natural beauty of the ashram – its hills, valleys, blue skies, and peasants singing and wished to stay in the ashram. Mary was not only attracted to the beauty of ashram, but also was deeply attracted to Verrier. At the beginning Verrier opposed, but Mary joined there as 'Brother Mary' to live with Elwin and Shamrao, as Mirabehn lived in Sabarmati ashram with Gandhi and his brothers with a bond of Platonic friendship. After a fortnight, Verrier and Mary decided to marry. Shamrao did not agree to it and he took them to Gandhi's ashram. While Gandhi was hearing of them, a young doctor of his ashram, named Ala Pocha, appeared in the scene and claimed that Verrier, some time ago, promised to marry her. After long deliberations with Gandhi and Elwin's honest confession in the name of God, his union with neither Mary nor Ala did materialize. Ala remained in Sabarmati ashram and dedicated herself to the cause of the poor and untouchables and Mary left India for England to look for work in Austria amongst her old friends.

Afterwards Verrier made his journey to the tribal world of India without a return ticket accompanied by his life-long friend Shamrao Hivale by a bullock-cart and through the jungle of the Maikal Hills[9] with only a couple of hundred rupees between them and reached Karanjia village on 28th January 1932. There they lived among the tribals for more than four years and settled in Patangarh. He married a very beautiful Gond girl named Kosi who hailed from a village near Karanjia. Kosi gifted him a son named Jawharlal. The name was given partly after the Gond Raja, Jawher Sing of Sarangarh, one of his dearest friends, and partly after Jawaharlal Nehru. They generally called their son by Kumar. Kosi was a very intelligent and witty Gond girl. She herself would claim that she was a 'Raj' Gond and had kinship with the Gond monarchs of medieval Chattisgarh. Elwin in his letter to Archer, has described Kosi as "effervescent, a gifted singer and dancer, 'a mine of poetry and ideas', 'a raging, roaring girl not in the least in awe of her husband.'" (1940, 3rd April). Also in another letter to Hyde, Verrier admitted that 'indeed in Kosi, he loved not only a beautiful and accomplished individual but a whole tribe', as quoted by Guha in *Savaging the Civilized* (132-33). It was very unfortunate that his marriage with Kosi did not last long. After some years he got a divorce from Kosi. Throughout his whole life he bore in his mind a deep sense of pain and failure for the separation which he could hardly bear to write about.

Before coming in contact with Kosi, Verrier's first grand passion was a Gond girl Singharo of Sanrhwachhappar with a long face, rather coarse features and a sweet expression, as described by him in his *Leaves from the Jungle* (146), where her appearance was very transient. Verrier came close to Singharo in the celebration of a Phag festival. During the festival, the girl doused Verrier in coloured water to make a direct way of love. Both of them were absorbed in love and romance. Soon

after Sigharo disappeared and went to a tea-garden for her livelihood. There she developed an affair with a clerk and later returned to Elwin with syphilis. Verrier confessed that he could not marry her not because she was suffering from syphilis but he was not prepared for that.

Later Elwin married Lila, a Pradhan girl of Patangarh itself. This marriage lasted upto his last breath. Lila could adjust to changing situations. She had a very firm mind and she was an expert knitter. She was very kind hearted, never took her food until she fed someone who was hungry. She indulged in her rustic simplicity and spent time by tending plants or rearing pet aminals. Always tribal children flocked to Elwin's house at Patangarh. Kumar would join them in play. Elwin's other three sons were Vasantha, Nakula and Ashoka. The children practised different religions. Kumar became a Roman Catholic when he was seventeen; Vasantha claimed to be a Hindu and Nakula declared himself a Pagan. Ashoka was a Buddhist. Lila and Verrier had no particular religion, though in later years Verrier had developed a strong feeling for Buddhism.

Elwin's concept of love and sexuality:

Verrier's concept of love and sexuality was partly developed in his Oxford days during which he studied English Literature and Theology and was greatly influenced by the early English Romantics. There he attained a liberal and progressive outlook on love and sex contrasted with the then Puritan morality or Orthodoxism, which had influenced his personal life too. His concept of love and sexuality attained its maturity when Verrier entered the tribal kingdom, became one of them, married tribal girls, lived their life till death. The attitude of the Indian tribes especially of the Baiga, the Gond, the Muria towards love and sex was complementary to it. Both these united together and shaped his attitude to love and sex in a unique way.

Elwin's break with the Church earlier and his separation with Gandhi later was partly because of his difference in attitude to love and sex with them. His departure from the church brought him freedom which was as much sexual as intellectual, which he himself quotes in *Leaves from the Jungle* (1958) as: "a hitherto undreamt of intellectual freedom; it adjusted many complexes and inhibitions; it was a kind of conversion in reverse, integrating me and filling me with new life" (xxviii).

Elwin's tribes were simple and innocent and bore normal attitude towards sex. They believed that sexual congress was good, healthy and beautiful. Sex, to them, was great fun and game. It was like a joking relationship to each other and the dance of enraptured bodies. Absence of any sense of guilty-consciousness and that of external interference are noticed in his tribes attitude to sex. To understand his concept of love and sexuality in few words we may start with some of his famous lines of *Songs of the Forest* (1935) as, "Here is a poetry free of all literary convention and allusions: a poetry of earth and sky, of forest, hill and river, of the changing seasons and the varied passions of men: a poetry of love, naked and unashamed, unchecked by any inhibition or restraint" (33).

Love and sexuality in respect to freedom, equality and women's rights have been described in many of his writings especially in *The Baiga* (1939), *The Muria and their Ghotul* (1947) or *The Kingdom of the Young* (1968), *The Phulmat of the Hills* (1937), *Leaves from the Jungle* (1958) *Songs of the Forest* (1935), *The Folk - Songs of Chhattishgarh* (1946), and *The Folk -Songs of Maikalhills* (1944).

The Baiga (1939) consisting of five hundred fifty five pages gives a full account of tribal social organization, Baiga jurisprudence, Baiga livelihood and 'bewar'[10] cultivation, the development of sexual consciousness, marriage, death, causes and cure of diseases, various dances and songs, mythologies, riddles and

games; practice of sex and history of shifting cultivation lying at the foci. J.H. Hutton in his foreword to the book remarks: "Anthropology has waited a hundred years for a full account of the Baiga, but Mr. Elwin has paid the debt as fully as any single author could who had to work on a tribe after its tribal life and organization had largely gone (xxi).

In his own words Verrier goes on:

> This is, I think, one of the first books in which the sexual life of an Indian tribe is discussed with any kind of intimacy. For though India is rich in sexological literature, its ethnographers have generally been too much under the influence of the prevailing Puritan conventions to treat the subject freely. Yet it is essential that we should do so. Our picture of tribal life will be devoid of all contact with reality if we omit what is to the Baiga the most important and most enthralling thing in life… My own book has been written out of deep admiration and affection for the Baiga in the hope of stimulating similar emotions in others. I do not hold up their sexual philosophy or practice to imitation, but their simplicity and frankness, their goodness and fundamental decency has much to commend it. (xxvii-xxviii)

Chapter fourth of this book presents life stories of fifteen typical Baigas, constituting the most valuable part of his book. The characters appear frequently with individual memories which cluster round the common themes such as wives and lovers, official penetration and exploitation, erotic approach of love, disease and death. Phulmat, a 'gunia', is a motherly, rather sweet-looking woman of sixty. She enjoyed as large a practice as any of her male rivals, and a strong and dominating character. Baihar, an old woman, was a famous beauty in her youth and wept over by six men. Lahakat, and elderly man wrapped in a torn blanket, has seduced not

less than fifty girls before he attained twenty five. Pachlu, an old Bharotia Baiga, claims to be 140 years old, a fascinating and humorous talker, an acute and vigorous critic of both the Congress and the British Raj, married a girl older than him when he was fifteen and lastly married to his grand-daughter; Yogi Dewar, a centenarian, remembers in minute details the 1857 Mutiny.[11] He had six wives and twenty-five children, the last wife being his grand-daughter. Rawan, a celebrated hunter, would direct the girls to the river, break their earthen water pots, made love to them on the spot.

The sexual consciousness of Elwin's tribes is developed from their very childhood. The parents insist their children on doing manual work and on going to the field for food, but seldom interfere with their pleasures. They regard their children as the gods of the house and consider 'love of children' as the 'greatest love in the world'. Verrier quotes:

> Sujii of Kawardha told me that that "if I catch my young daughter with a boy I let her alone. I don't beat her or abuse her; otherwise the neighbours may say,' 'Is she your wife or your daughter that you are so jealous? Why are you making trouble, you impotent old man? Let her do what she likes". … The child simply picks up its knowledge in the ordinary casual way. 'The penis and the vagina are our two teachers.' Sometimes, I was told in Kawardha, 'an old woman gets a boy; she teaches him.' I have been astonished by the number of people whose first sex experience was with old and unattractive women who seduced them. Unlike the Gond, who have a tradition that every married couple must have a separate house to sleep in, the Baiga only have one house to a family, and the child has every opportunity of watching the 'primal scene' ... Children are also often used as go-betweens and

> chaperones in intrigues. A woman going to meet her lover in the jungle or by a stream often takes a child with her, the convention being that no one would do anything improper in its presence. The child has to sit behind a tree or bush, but often watches what is going on. In this way children get accustomed not only to married love, but to more romantic adventures in the jungle. (230-231)

On the development of their sexual consciousness, their idea of erotic attractiveness and erotic approach to intercourse play an integral part. Baiga women, differing from their Gond and Pradhan counterparts, are not in general attractive to the Western eyes, but are beautiful and romantic in the eyes of their own men folk, where as the Baiga men are completely charming and strikingly handsome. The Baigas seldom consider the impression of a thing as a whole, they analyze it providing credit to each of its features, and from the aggregate marks thus obtained they can say whether it is beautiful or not. Verrier has referred to Malinowski's *The Sexual Life of Savages* (1927), where Malinowski has given pictures of two women, one a Melanesian beauty[12]. The Baiga's concept of beauty embraces this Melanesian beauty where the primary sexual characters are genitals, revealed to the eyes of intimacy; the secondary sexual characters mainly breasts and then hair-have distinguished role to play. The Baiga and the Muria, during their 'Karma dance', express the beauty of breasts in songs as,

> A man cannot forget what he has seen,
> When a cow dies, the kites circle in the sky above it,
> I have seen your breasts and my mind is fixed upon them (244).

Verrier also adds, “When she wears a many-coloured necklace, and has firm young breasts, and you hold them in your hands, how happy you feel! You want to live there, between her breasts, for ever and ever” (244).

Hair has a very strong erotic attraction for the Baiga. Mahatu, Elwin’s one of the typical characters, says, in *The Baiga* (1939),

> A girl whose hair falls to the waist! When she is combing it, with a gleaming dhar in her ears, and a bright phundara in her hand, how lovely she looks!
>
> The girl whose beauty captures the mind
>
> Stands beneath the tree.
>
> Her hair is all about her shoulders,
>
> She glances down the forest-path to see who comes. (245)

Verrier in his book *The Baiga* (1939) has given vivid and minute descriptions of the Baiga’s approach to sexual act as he had got the opportunity to meet two Baigas at their intimate moments. He viewed that in Baiga’s approach to sexual act there was nothing refine, it was direct and immediate. They would discuss the sexual act very simply and naturally without any added excitement or embarrassment, their method of intercourse has been compared by Verrier to that of the Trobriand Islanders (264).

Marriage of the Baiga and the Gond is based on love. Men and women live with their partners as they desire before marriage. It is treated as the door to romance, once a girl is married she is elevated to a respectable position. Romance starts thereafter. Sooner or later she conjugates with her real lover. Verrier encountered with so many girls who on their wedding nights fled not because they were forced to marry against their wills, but because they sincerely urged for the ceremony for their respectable position. In *The Baiga* (1939) he also adds:

> Very often, I think, the Baiga marry the girl who has captured the fancy of their youth. Thus Dasseru married the girl whom he had loved from his childhood, whom he first seduced by the bank of a stream while she was drawing water. Dunda caught a young virgin girl in the great forest that lies beyond Chauradadar, and seduced her. They were only ten years old, and prima coitio est acerrima. But afterwards it was different, and in the end they married. (251)

But this is not all. Their early initiations into the mysteries of love, large freedom of their women in respect to sextual act, and gratification of desire with anyone they wish-all these do not obliterate the keen edge of passion and do not turn love into a mere lust for physical gratification. There are many songs cited in this book which breathe the very breath of love, one such may be mentioned from *The Baiga* (1939) as:

> O my love; when I see your beauty,
>
> I laugh aloud for joy. (253)

Baiga's love not only brings delight, but frustration as well, which are reflected in their 'Karma', 'Bilma' and 'Dadaria' songs. The following two Karma dance-songs will exemplify those. The first describes how a girl invites/attracts a man to adventure by creeping across the room at night and spraying water on the sleeping man. The second illustrates the utter frustration and real suffering from unfulfillment of her desires.

(I)

> Softly, softly the rain is falling.
>
> The yard is full of mud and slush.
>
> Beloved, here is water; wash your feet,

And softly creep into my bed.

(2)

I begged you to come to me last night.

All my body was hungry for you.

But you never came.

My heart is breaking to pieces for your sake, my love.

But you never come. (254)

On the other, Muria's love and attitude to sex was something different compared to that of the Baiga and the Gond. For the Baiga, the forest, the *madhuban*, the sweet forest, the *nandanban*, the forest of delight was their natural home and trysting – place of lovers. On a striking contrast, Muria's sexual act, pre-nuptial love affairs were accomplished not in the open place (forest), but in a decorated village-dormitory, called *Ghotul*, which Elwin finely describes in *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin* (1964) as:

> The first ghotul is described as beautiful as the horns of bison, beautiful as a horse's throat. Its central pillar was a python, its poles were cobras. The frame of the roof was made of kraits tied together with vipers and covered with the tails of peacocks. The roof of the veranda was made of bulbul feathers. The walls were of fish-bones, the door was fashioned of crimson flowers, the door-frames were the bones of ogres. The floor was plastered with pulse. The seats were crocodiles. (162)

The ghotul was like a night club, where the boys and girls would assemble in the evening after their day's works to come to a meaningful life. During the day it was deserted. All the unmarried boys and girls had to be the members of the ghotul. The membership was elaborately organised. After a probation period they were

elevated to different ranks and were to perform some social duties. The ghotul discipline was very strict and was maintained by boys' leader, called 'Sirdar' and girls' leader called 'Belosa'. The boys and girls were known as '*cheliks*' and *'motiaris'*. The first type of ghotul was concerned with the fidelity to a single partner during the whole of the premarital period. Each chelik was paired off with a motiari whom he was formally married to and she took the feminine form and his title as her own. Though divorce was allowed, infidelity was punished in this ghotul. The second type of ghotul, probably a later development of the classic model, completely restricted any kind of lasting attachment between chelik and motiari and the very close intimacy was confined to three days at a time. It was a 'dear nurse of arts' and it should, as Elwin continues, "foster every kind of art, for here the boys and girls were all the time on their toes to attract one another and to make life what they believed it should be, beautiful, lively and interesting...But this is common to many other cultures. What gave the ghotul its unique interest was the approved and recognized relationship between the boys and girls" (163).

Verrier's seven hundred fifty pages large size monograph, *The Muria and their Ghotul* (1947) enunciates first the whole life of a tribe and describes in great detail the life in the ghotul itself and in a nutshell in *The Kingdom of Young*, (1968) abridged from *The Muria and their Ghotul* (1947). In his contemporary period, B. Malinowski's *The Sexual Life of Savages* (1932), C. Von Fiirer-Haimendorf's work on Konyak Naga, S.C. Roy's *The Oraons* (1915), Leakey's study on African tribe Masai, Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage* (1891), Briffault and Frazer's works on the primitives, Unwin's study of pre-nupital chastity in *Sex and Culture* (1934), Hambly's *Origins of Education among Primitive People*, Havelock Ellis's *Psychology of Sex* (1933) and a few others give some glimpses on the lives of tribes

of India and abroad. But Verrier was the pioneer. *The Muria and their Ghotul* (1947) gives in minute details with great caution and human touch the whole of Muria lives- its group marriage, group-concubinage, pre-nupital chastity, pre-nupital infertility, values of rules of exogamy, erotic attractiveness, life in the dormitories and moral standards in a unique way reaching to its peak. Verrier spent over a hundred nights in different ghotuls. His wife Kosi, as a member of the greater Gond family and having kinship with the Muria helped him a lot in his field work and in fact Kosi was 'instrumental in winning over the Muria women-folk'. The Book has been translated in many languages. Ramachandra Guha quotes W.G. Archer's saying as, "*The Muria and their Ghotul* was an encyclopedic work written 'with incisiveness and charm', an 'unforgettable picture of an Indian tribe at work and love' " (142). Guha also states that this book, while published, prompted one of his Bombay friends, Evelyn Wood, to write a 'Trislet on the Union of Anthropology with Psychotherapy' as:

> Ellis to Elwin: Shades of Sex:
> Waves in one human spectogram
> In whose green heart may love annex
> Ellis to Elwin.
> Shades of sex,
> Long may your bonds and lusts perplex
> Those who hate fact-love holy sham
> Waves in one human spectrogram. (Guha 143)

The chief characteristics which Elwin and his Murias inherited in, insisted on, and cherished for in their ghotul days, may be sequenced from *The Kingdom of the Young* (1968) as:

1. Sexual congress among the young people would take place in the ambit of strict discipline and restraint in the ghotul village.
2. A strong sense of domestic morality and conjugal fidelity would prevail therein, adultery was very rare and if happened was punished severely.
3. The ghotul system discouraged the custom of child-marriage to avoid inevitable domestic infidelity. In many ghotuls, where boys and girls were married, they were taught the necessity of fidelity to their partners, divorce was rare there.
4. Prostitution was unknown and unthinkable in the ghotul. No motiari would ever give her body for money.
5. In the ghotul tradition a chelik must not rush to girl. The boy must approach a girl carefully and with respect, and must ensure that she is emotionally prepared for him. Unless the girl is ready, to have intercourse with her is considered as a sin. Verrier has exclaimed how many civilized people led their lives with this wisdom.
6. Jealousy and possessiveness were almost absent among the ghotul boys and girls. The young were alerted early to the impropriety of jealousy. There were no ghotul marriages and no ghotul partners. If a boy showed any signs of sexual possessiveness for a particular girl, he would be punished. Every one belonged to everyone else.
7. As soon as the ghotul life is over, the youth enters into the married life. Though not individualistic, some kind of possessiveness appears in. The life of pre-nuptial freedom ends in a longing for security and permanence. The youth marries a girl because he wants to have his own children, to have his own home and to have a partner whom he can regard as his own and over whom he has

authority and a right. Both husband and wife respect this right and they become each other's property.

8. On the other, sexual relationships of chelik and motiari give rise to some serious problems, one such is clan-incest. Though the dormitories have the strictest rules against clan-incest, those do not work well always. But the interesting point is that if a son is born out of the congress between two opposite members of the same clan, the son will not be regarded as outcast. His parents will be cut off from all sorts of social relationships with other members of the clan, but the child will have all the tribal privileges denied to his parents, because he was tied up in the bundle, he knew nothing about what was done.
9. Another important feature of the ghotul is–it is a training-ground of the domestic virtues such as instilling the habit of hard work and cleanliness.
10. The most important is that ghotul introduces its members to the sexual arts and virtues. Verrier puts it firmly as:

> The agony of defloration is divorced from marriage, the hymen casts no shadow across its consummation. The husband is not likely to be repelled by frigidity or shocked by disparennia–an experience which might later make him impotent. Not a little of serenity and stability of Muria marriage is due to the fact that when husband and wife cross its threshold they are both prepared. (193-194)

All these may be summed up in Elwin's own words from *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin* (1964) as:

> The message of the ghotul – that youth must be served, that freedom and happiness are more to be treasured than any material gain, that friendliness and sympathy, hospitality and unity are of the first importance, and above all

> that human love – and its physical expression- is beautiful, clean and precious, is typically Indian. The ghotul is no Austro-Asiatic alien in the Indian sense. Here was the atmosphere of the best old India; here was something of life (though on a humble scale) portrayed at Ajanta; here was something (though now altogether human) of the Krishna legend and its ultimate significance; this was the same life, the same tradition that inspired the Pahari paintings. (168-169)

The most valuable and characteristic element which we find in his study of Indian tribes and for which the feminists are striving to, is the honourable and highest position of the women, and their freedom which Elwin places in *The Baiga* (1939) as,

> In Baiga society women enjoy an excellent position. Theoretically, in so patriarchal and priestly a tribe, men should be in the ascendant: actually women have great freedom and no little authority. The Baiga woman may go about alone; she generally chooses her own husband and changes him at will; she may dance in public; she may take her own wares to the bazaar and open her own shop there; she may own property; she may drink and smoke in her husband's presence; she often eats in the company... There is not so clear a division of labour between men and women as in other tribes. Both men and women cook-the husband, of course, often has to see to the dinner during his wife's period. Both men and women fetch water and go fishing. Only men, however, go out hunting and take part in a beat. Women may cut wood and are almost as expert as men in the use of the axe. With a few exceptions, in fact, women may do everything men can do. (235-236)

Like G. Evelyn Hutchinson, a great ecologist, Verrier also believed that sex was a part of living behaviour in man which was largely on the side of love. His joyful celebration of sex, started with his marriage to Kosi till the end of his life with Lila, was identified largely with love. His deep attachment with the Baiga and the Gond helped him believe that 'the physical must express and interpret the desires of the mind and the heart', as quoted by Nandini Sundar (1998).

Verrier's as well his tribes' concept of love and sexuality was not confined to phallic consciousness or physical gratification, it reached beyond, though not Platonic or transcendental, but touched the world of romance with a splendid height. *The Phulmat of the Hills* (1937) expresses the romantic love of his tribes – love at work, love in poverty and love in disease. The narrative of the novel is full of poems, riddles and stories which its characters recited or used with straight dialogue. It recounts the tribal's storehouse filled in the artful telling of stories, good music and fine dancing. Gamira, Tutta, Bhutta, Singara, Phulmat and Panda Baba are the chief characters. Phulmat, the tragic heroine, excels in all respects. Gamira is the true lover of Phulmat. Panda Baba a Gond 'gunia' had enjoyed a lucrative and distinguished position in the village. Both Bhutta and Tutta had longed for Phulmat, Butta was jealous of others, while Tutta was shy of it because of his utter poverty. Phulmat never dared Bhutta in any respect. Panda Baba appears in the novel often as a reliever, befriended Phulmat and made forest honeymoon with her. But Phulmat's deep love was with Gamia, who died a tragic death in consequence of a great 'Serpent Dance'. Phulmat possessed extraordinary sweetness, and was a gifted dancer. Struck by leprosy, she was abandoned by her lover, came to the street, opened a small shop in a distant village selling cigarettes and betel nut thinking of

her lost lover. In this novel Verrier has expressed magnificently his tribal people's envy for love and the ardent romanticism which engulfs his women-folk.

The Folk Songsof Maikal Hills (1944) contains six hundred nineteen songs and *Folk Songs of Chhattisgarh* (1946) contains four hundred ninety seven songs, a large number of which are the songs of love, marriage, romance and a wide range of dances exhibiting love and romance. Likewise his tribal girls, Elwin himself was no less romantic. He loved Kosi, so he married her. He also loved Lila; that is why he married Lila. He viewed the tribal world partly through the eyes of Kosi and Lila. His letter to Lila reveals his ardent romanticism excellently as:

TO LILA, ON BEING BORED AT MON

Great hills lie lonely broadening down
To desolate valleys cut by angry streams
And the shadows of the clouds pass over them,
But there is no one, no one but in my dreams.

No one at all to whom I can open my heart.
Yet there is everyone, a world of beauty around
Beauty delicate, stirring, abiding yet quickly passing,
As lovely, as elusive as I have ever found.

The laughter, excitement, wonder passes me by,
For without you to share it, what is the gain?
The lonely heart turns only in on itself,
And joy in solitude is three parts pain.

When will you come to me, breaking out of my dream?
Tangibly come with your quiet and tender heart?

Or, must I hasten to you, forgetting adventure,

Crossing the cruel hills, all that hold us apart? (Guha 241)

Not only his Baiga women, in another place (in *The Aboriginal*, 1943) he has mentioned that in most tribal societies-

> In field and forest she labours in happy companionship with her husband. She is not subjected to early child-bearing, she is married when she is mature, and if her marriage is a failure (which it seldom is) she has the right of divorce. The lamentable restrictions of widowhood do not await her: should her husband die, she is allowed, even enjoined, to remarry: and in many tribes she may inherit property. Her free and open life fills her mind with poetry and sharpens her tongue with wit. As a companion she is humorous and interesting; as a wife devoted; as a mother, heroic in the service of her children. (18-19)

Now we shall observe how Verrier's concept of love and sexuality is compatible with those of the writers of the feminist discourse, starting from the early feminism to that of 20th century, and how he has represented his tribal women, placed in a unique model which the modern civilization has yet to learn from.

Seventeenth century's renowned feminist writer, Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, married to Marquess, later the Duke, of Newcastle, was fortunate enough to exploit her rank and file to write to the cause of women, as because the secular writers of that time in Europe had had a hard time. In her 1655 *Philosophical and Physical Opinions*, she complained that,

> We are kept like birds in cages to hop up and down in our houses, not suffered to fly abroad . . . we are shut out of all power and authority, by reason we are never employed either in civil or martial affairs, our counsels

> are despised and laughed at, the best of our actions are trodden down with scorn, by the overweening conceit men have of themselves and through despisement of us. (Walters 21)

Verrier's tribal women enjoyed respect and freedom in equal terms and would go to the field, work with their men-folk in equal rates and skills, which we have noticed in *The Baiga* (1939) and *The Muria and their Ghotul* (1947). His Baiga, Gond and Muria women were not any cage-inhabitants, rather were free to move in the forest as well as in their houses in all circumstances as they wished.

The 18th century produced so many eminent feminist writers, called 'Amazons of the pen', such as Mary Astell, Catherine Macaulay, Mary Wollstonecraft, Olympe de Gouges, and some others. Wollstonecraft was the greatest of them. Her *Mary, A Fiction* (1788) draws a minute sketch of a society which provides its girls little support and few prospects. Though Wollstonecraft was very intelligent and sensible, she herself was the victim of that society. Her heroine voiced strongly against the masculine dominance and violence, but dreamt of protective fatherly love. On the other, Verrier's Baigas and Gonds did not experience any such male dominance and violence. We have earlier mentioned that Gond's love for their children is an important characteristic of their identity, where their children aspired for protective 'motherly' love. She argued that a woman would be considered as the most 'feminine' who could best satisfy the male fantasies. She put femininity as a class-based construct. In her society, girls 'learnt' how to be women from their very infancies. Margaret Walters (2005) quotes Wollstonecraft as, "In the Vindication she claimed, dismissively that most women remain obsessed by love, dreaming of happiness with some ideal and truly loving man, simply because their lives are so empty" (36).

For Elwin's women, his wives Kosi and Lila as well as his Baiga, Muria and Gond women, there was no vacuum, no obsessed love. Their love and sexuality was based on their love at work, love at poverty, love at disease, as well as love at happiness. In this context, Elwin's concept of love and sexuality presents a unique enviable model to us and to the feminists of the past and the present.

Simone de Beauvoir, perhaps the most influential of all 20th century Western feminists, in her great piece of feminist theory, *The Second Sex* (1949), has insisted that one is not born as a woman, rather she is made a woman. Beauvoir scornfully places man as a creator of new instruments, inventor of new ideas, rebuilder of the future, on the other, her woman is seen by and for men, always the object and never the subject. She remains always the 'Other'. She hoped that socialism would offer women their actual position, but confessed painfully that even in socialist countries, this equality has not been obtained, and concludes women must therefore take their destiny into their own hands, which Rabindranath Tagore has resounded in his poem "Sabala" (The voiced women) as ' no one is willing to let woman to win her fortune'."Nareeke apan bhagya joy karibare/ keha nahi dibe adhikar." (lines 1-2) Tagore in this poem raises the question of the self identification of women through her own voice. The woman is very much inquisitive of her deprivation for not allowed by the society to recognise herself. She wants to know how long she would wait for that fulfillment of her rights and priviledges. She is confident that one day she would seize conquest with her own strength. She prays to God to endow her with the force of eloqution to assert herself.

In most of the societies, dominance, violence and oppression on and rape of women, child marriage, denial of right to divorce and abort still continue and cross their threshold limits sometimes. Feminist writers, social and political workers,

philosophers, thinkers have been fighting since long to obliterate these vices from society. Interestingly, on the other, Elwin' women did not have to fight for their freedom, respect, love and all rights - right to land and forest, as because these were there in their society as inherent properties of it. The colonial as well post colonial policies of our country have robbed women of all these freedoms and rights and have put their 'free and happy women in purda'. 'This collective deprivation', as described by Guha (2005, 151), 'had resulted in a psychological trauma, a loss of nerve'. Elwin himself has forwarded it very nicely in his poem 'ADIBASI 1952' as:

ADIBASI 1952

How tired they are, and what a sombre grace
Time has drawn on the wise old faces, grey
With the death of children, and no release
From want that rules day after anxious day.

There was life there once, and joy in recreation,
Dancing and laughter, love among the trees,
But little now save sullen speculation.
Of what the future has and where it leads.

Old rules are broken, boys go to the town;
Children are married in a loveless tie;
The ancient forest is no more their own;
The women lose their treasured liberty.

New customs which are little understood –
Drive out the old, leave nothing in their place.
The old men suck their wooden pipes and brood,

And tremble for the future of their race. (Guha 206)

Some of the most important characteristic features of Elwin's ideas of love and sexuality may be found in the following narrative from *Leaves from the Jungle* (1958):

Well, well, well. Now let me show you Phulmat coming from the river, on her head a polished brass vessel that shines with all the glory of the morning, and in her bearing the grace and dignity of a princess. Her face oval and light in colour, her smooth dark hair breaking into curls about her temples, round her throat bright vari-coloured beads, and coloured ribbons tying back her hair, she will give you a sensation of light and life, but above all of colour, a girl of furious gold.

Then see her dance. It is, as the Gonds say, like the wind moving in the branches of a great tree: it is the kingfisher flying above sparkling waters. In her the forest has come to fruit and flower. And not only Phulmat is beautiful, but there are hundreds of Gond girls who have more in them of Tess than of Audrey. If the Gonds were once kings, their women are still princesses. And they still rule. There is none of this subjugation of woman in a Gond village. The wife is the real ruler of the house: she is independent, free and therefore happy. Phulmat indeed is a strong feminist. She tells with great pleasure the story of the Stiria Raj, or Regiment of Women, which was once established in a neighbouring district. Crowds of women gathered together and declared that they were soldiers and would rule. They marched from place to place, sending a goat's head before them in token of their coming. With hair unbound and flying in the breeze, spears and axes in their hands, they reduced all men of their villages to a very proper humility. Phulmat threatens us with a recurrence of this Raj after a few years. In the meantime the Gond women enjoy a foretaste of it at the Phag Festival, when they go round the villages in bands

and are privileged to beat any man they can capture till he buys his freedom with a present. Personally I always go into purdah for this Feast.

But Phulmat is a leper. She was the younger wife of a famous Don Juan of our district, a grand figure of a man, in his latter years terribly disfigured by leprosy. His senior wife did not contract the disease, but Phulmat who loved him and tended him with an amazing devotion, did, not badly, but the marks dread and unmistakable are there, turning that lovely body into a thing of terror. At last the husband died, his end hastened because his family made him swallow a rupee (grim Last Sacrament of the wilds) though he fought for life to the end, and Phulamt stayed on in our Leper Refuge.

If Tutta is a symbol of Gond poverty, Phulmat represents the romance of the forest. To the Gond, music and the dance is the beginning and the end of culture. How Phulmat's face lights up when the first crash of the drums calls the village to the dance.

O my beloved, they are beating the drums far away in the beautiful forest.

The echo of that drumming resounds among the hills.

…Has the primitive any message for the modern world, or should we try to bring him, as soon as possible, into the main streams of civilization? There are many elements in the Gond ethos which should be conserved – their simplicity and freedom, their love of children, the position of their women, their independence of spirit (no silly ducking observants these!), their freedom from many of the usual oriental inhibitions. I think that the primitive has a real message for our sophisticated modern world which is once again threatened with disintegration as a result of its passion for possessions and its lack of love. Panda Baba and Phulmat and their

neighbours have had to work out a philosophy of life than can face poverty and disease, frustration and disaster with unwearied courage.

This mud-hut philosophy bids us not to demand too much from life, not to set too much store on things, not even to expect too much from the immortal gods, but to love most where love will be returned, in the charmed family circle, in the friends who will stand by you till death. A gay freedom of spirit is the most precious of possessions, and simplicity of heart the greatest treasure man or woman knows (23-24, 27).

In this narrative Phulmat is a symbol of continuity and change. Phulmat comes from the river which flows to its destination, the sea, which is unbounded. Elwin considers the mythology, culture, songs and dances of the tribes as continuous entities, the resonance of which is found in the conversation between Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Mahasweta Devi in 'Telling History: An Interview with Mahasweta Devi,' an introductory part of the book *Chotti Munda and His Arrow* (2002), English translation of Mahaseweta Devi's book "*Chotti Munda ebang Tar Tir*" (1980). At the very outset, Devi points out that Tribal History is not seen as a continuity in Indian historiography (ix). While Spivak wanted Devi to talk about the relationship between what is called history and fiction, Devi answers,

> These people do not find anyone writing about them, and they do not have script. They compose the stream of events into song. By being made into song, into words, they become something ... a continuity. Their history is like a big flowing river going somewhere, not without a destination. Not without. These phases come like small streams joining into it, making their history. I wrote in *Pterodactyl* that the tribal world is like a continent handed over to us, and we never tried to explore it, know its mysteries, we only destroyed it.

> It's very difficult to reknit that entire experience without knowing what their potentiality was, how much they had to give. We did not respect them. About *Chotti Munda*, I find that Birsa's uprising did not die with Birsa. And so through the figure of Dhani, I wanted to say that there had to be a magic arrow, not magic in the narrow sense, but an arrow that Dhani Munda wants to hand over. This arrow is a symbol for the person who will carry on that continuity. Chotti is an emblem of that. (x)

Phulmat started her life with glory, grace and dignity of a princess; married to a handsome man who was later struck by leprosy and his senior wife did not take care of him but Phulmat did not leave him and cared and loved the diseased husband with an amazing devotion; also very soon she herself was caught by leprosy and in the last years of her life she had to face poverty in its crude form. She is free, she is simple, she loves her children devoted to her husband, longs for her lover. Like Phulmat all the Gond women enjoy independence, freedom and honourable position in their society and are heroic in the care and love for their children. Elwin presents all his Gond women as feminists. Elwin's feminists do not cry out for freedom of spirit, for love, for honourable position in the society, and for crimes committed to such as child marriage, murder, rape adulteration, as they enjoy all the virtues as precious possessions of love and possession of independence of spirit. Their women are free from the possession of greed which has threatened to the integrity of the modern civilization.This is the message which Elwin wants to convey to us, the people of the modern civilized world.

On the other, Elwin's Phulmat becomes exhilarated when she hears the sound of drums, her face lights up, she calls all the village girls and women to dance. The readers may think she is exhilarated in the love of her lover or of her

husband or of her child or she might have been amused by the sweet music or she might have been absorbed in the beauty of the nature. In this context we may refer to Betty Friedan's (1963) argument where Friedan insisted that each woman at least asks what she really wants, then only she will come to realize that 'neither her husband nor her children nor the things in her house, nor sex nor being like all the other women, can give her a self.' Elwin's Phulmat and his tribal women want everything i.e. husband, sex, children, romance, nature, but all imbibed with infinite and unbounded love, which Rabindranath cherished for throughout his life. Phulmat's love was realistic. There was nothing transcendental and supernatural in it. Phulmat and her neighbours had got to work out a philosophy of life that can face poverty and disease, frustration and disaster with unwearied courage and it is the infinite love only which unites all these. Unlike Beauvoir, Elwin's realization of 'self' is not an alienable concept; 'self' of each individual is constructed in the ambit of freedom, independence of spirit, hardships, sex, material possession and nature- all bound up and united with infinite love. Verrier might have dreamt of an 'universal self' constituted of these individual selves to build a world of new social order, where virtues of his tribal universe would rule and vices of the so called civilized world could be wiped off.

The third most significant determinant of indigeneity is the notion of community identity. In the next chapter, I shall attempt to analyse the spirit of communitarian bond in the indigenous communities vis-à-vis its representation in Elwin's literary works. In my estimate, it will be crucial to understand the uniqueness of indigenous identity in the Indian context.