

Chapter – VI

Conclusion

In the concluding chapter, I would like to sum up my arguments for placing my research in a proper perspective. In Chapter-I in the first part of the introduction I have discussed the origin of the research in brief. Upto 1940s the tribes of India remained as a 'forgotten chapter' both in politics and society. It was Elwin who took the tribals into the fore and tribals appeared as an emerging issue/discourse in the domain of dominant discourse. Elwin became the single most influence through whom the people of the civilized discourse came to know about their tribal counterpart yet Elwin did not receive even a cursory mention in the critical discourse of New Literature in English, as remarked by G.N. Devy (2009, xxi), except by Mahasweta Devi, Ramachandra Guha and a very few others. Guha's book *Savaging the Civilized* (2000) has inspired me much and motivated me to work on Elwin. I was astonished to observe how a British evangelist coming to India became a typical product of India's National Movement, lived their lives, voiced their aspirations for freedom and rights of land and forest, advocated of their ways of life, documented their aesthetics of indigeneity, became an Indian citizen, helped Nehru Government to formulate policy-planning for Indian tribes for their sustainable development and to bring them into the mainstream discourse, which have been magnificently and critically examined by Guha in his book.

Verrier was awarded Sahitya Akademi Award in 1965, posthumously, for his book *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin* (1964). Here I wish to mention that Guha has not made any detailed literary discussion of the works of Verrier. As a student of English literature like Elwin, I thought my core area of study should be a detailed

analysis of the folk-songs and folk tales/myths of the tribal people. My detailed literary works on Elwin are concerned with his representation of indigeneity which has been reflected in the folk-songs, dances, myths collected in his voluminous monographs. In fact, I decided to deal with three major aspects of Elwin's work in the light of his anthologized folkloric materials. In this respect my work might be claimed as a new one.

Here I also have tried to locate the place of the aborigines or adivasis in the trajectory of history of mankind and their references in the ancient literatures. The very appearance and existence of man in the universe is a subject of study and research in all times. To know man, his socio-cultural aspect is to be studied along with his physical evolution. The prime condition to understand the livelihood of mankind is to know its origin, its diverse racial groups and its process of sustainable development since the primeval times. The progeny of man's socio-cultural background is understood from the livelihood of contemporary 'Adivasis' or 'tribes'. That is why the study of aborigines or adivasi life and society is so essential and pertinent. The 'adivasis' or the 'tribes' live in almost all parts of the world. Its habitation in India is also significant and 8.2 percent, according to census 2011, of Indian population is tribal. We have referred to Bailey, Haningman, Mahasweta Devi, G.N. Devy and Piliavasky for defining tribes/ primitives/ savages/ aboriginals/ and criminal tribes, where Mahasweta Devi has mentioned that they are in India from ancient times for thousands of years, yet the mainstream India has continually refused to recognise them. In Indian history they are seldom mentioned. So many mighty tribal peasant rebellions against the British in the 18th and 19th century, never got a mention in the history of the Indian freedom struggle. Devi iterated that the

leaders of the nation, like, Gandhiji, Phule or Ambedkar seldom mentioned the tribals whose very existence was threatened under mainstream onslaught.

In the second part of the introduction, I have described Elwin in India. Like Annie Besant, C.F. Andrews, Philip Spratt, Edward J. Thompson, J.T.Sanderland, Sister Nivedita (Margaret Noble) and Mirabehn (Madaline Slade), Verrier also contributed a lot towards the welfare of the people of India, in its struggle for freedom and in the process of ‘making of a nation’. Verrier came to India in 1927 as an evangelical person or an Oxford scholar with ‘pious and resolutely imperialist’ background, as quoted by Ramachandra Guha. He joined the Christa Seva Sangh (CSS), came in close contact with Gandhi and Shamrao Hivale, spent some years in Gandhi’s Sabarmati Ashram, travelled to various parts of India with the followers of Gandhi namely G.B. Pant, V.B. Patel, Jannalal Bajaj, A.V. Thakkar, became deeply associated with Acharya Kripalani, Subhas Chandra Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru and some eminent personalities of Indian National Congress. He also took part in India’s freedom struggle, and lastly shifted to tribal discourse, lived among the tribals practising their ways of life for near about three decades, learnt their languages, documented their oral traditions, prepared policy documents as an adviser to the Government of India in tribal affairs.

I have also discussed in brief on various departures of his life as narrated by himself in his autobiography and in other places, and by Ramachandra Guha. Moreover, the epoch-making and remarkable historical events in India and abroad which moved Elwin greatly have also been mentioned in this part.

In the literature review section of chapter-1, I have tried to examine the views of most representative critics, researchers, sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers, British officials and mainly of Ramachandra Guha. Guha’s book

Savaging the Civilized (2000) is a pioneering and comprehensive work on Verrier. *Savaging the Civilized* (2000) is about the life and works of Verrier Elwin in which Guha has portrayed Verrier as a priest, a social worker, an anthropologist, a scholar, a poet, a man, an administrator, a lover of mankind. The first chapter entitled 'Evangelical Ghetto' describes Verrier Elwin's family background, his academic career in school and colleges. In the second chapter of the book Guha has pictured Verrier as an 'Oxford Rebellion'. He has mentioned that the Oxford of twenties would be considered as the decade of the aesthete, the cultivated, fun-loving upper-class and homoerotic students. In chapters four and five, Guha has described Verrier's departure from CSS to Congress, his platonic-friendship with Mary Gillet of the CSS, bonding with Shamrao and A.V. Thakkar, whose own look among the 'Bhils' had been their early inspiration. Guha has given a vivid description of his every-day life when he got himself attached with Gond Seva Mondal, determined to dedicate himself (with Shamrao) to the cause of the tribals, started serving the Gonds and Baigas, resolved to prepare small monograph on the Baiga, translated and transcribed the poems and stories of tribals and published *Leaves from the Jungle* in 1936. The book provides, as remarked by Guha, revelations, through flashes of irony and wit, of Elwin's growing rejection of Gandhi and Christ (99). In the next chapters Guha has depicted Verrier as a defender of the aboriginal in respect to their economy and culture and described Verrier Elwin's embodiment with the tribals of the Central and North Eastern-India, his marriage to tribal girls, his literary talent and exposure through publications of tribal monographs and novels and his sojourn to the tribal world without a 'return ticket'. He has also shown that Verrier was a poet of high esteem, an anthropologist at large, an Englishman in India and for India. *Savaging the Civilized* (2000) may be considered

as the best one of all the works done so far by other scholars / researchers in all respects.

In Chapter-II the concept of Indigeneity has been considered in different theoretical presentations. The notion of 'Indigenous people' cannot be captured by any single definition. It has emerged as 'Indigenous' as a relational and legal concept. The indigenous people's debate has stirred up the theoretical and ideological sensitivities of the scholars and anthropologists of the western academy. Politics, in southern Africa, among various ethnic groups centres about identity. These ethnic groups, after age-long oppression by the apartheid states, have been fighting for establishing their rights – mainly the right of land and claiming to the 'first people' status. Mathias Guenther has referred to essentialism, primordialism, primitivism and residual colonialism.

Adam Kuper (2003) justifies that the notion of 'indigenous peoples' is a ideological makeover of the old idea of 'primitive people'. To define indigenous peoples Alan Barnard (2003) has referred to two key elements – a claim to a history of hunting and gathering, and a weak political position. George Manual and Michael Posluns in 1974 coined the term 'fourth world' for what they described as encapsulated minorities. This term focuses on the structural relationship between aboriginal groups and the dominant society. Patrick Maclem (2001) furthers that Canadian academics have been grappling with the idea of a 'fourth world' reality and are still struggling today with the salient structural distinctions of this reality.

The politics of indigeneity is, of course, first and foremost a politics of land. Indigenous people's self-ascription has an address: their colonizers who respond to it. Patrick Wolfe (1994, 1999) believes that 'indigeneity' is not just a matter of native self-ascription, though it is such a matter, it is also, among other things, a

matter of settler imposition. In the Australian context, he gave such an imposition a name, 'repressive authenticity.' Indigenous narratives are complex and vary from one country to another and the myth of homogeneous nation-states is being disrupted with the emerging indigenous textualities. As a result, various theories have emerged and occupied an important place among these narratives. Here in my thesis I have attempted to discuss in short about a few of those.

I have also added a few lines on indigenous identity. Indigenous identity constitutes truly a complex and controversial domain to discuss. The indigenous people live all over the world. More than 370 million of them are spread across seventy countries. In India, according to Census 2011, total Scheduled Tribe (ST) population is more than 104 million and there are more than seven hundred tribes spreading over thirty states of our country. They practice unique traditions, preserve distinct social, cultural, economic and political characteristics. So to discuss about their race, ethnicity, cultures, acculturation, their bi-cultural and multi cultural identities, is to invite an unending process.

In order to connect my argument to the global scenario I have made a brief survey of the indigenous movements for human rights. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is considered as an instrument of indigenous empowerment. After a long deliberation passing through many channels and committees with UN, the United Nations General Assembly passed the Declaration on September 13, 2007. It consists of forty six Articles, which I have discussed very briefly.

In this second chapter I have also attempted to add a few lines on Verrier's representation of indigeneity. Verrier lived an exemplary Christian life of Franciscan poverty, married tribal girls, immersed his life in the activities and the welfare of the

tribes for nearly more than three decades. Anthropology, to him was not merely a 'field-work' but his 'whole life'. He studied various ethnic and linguistic tribes contained in diverse cultural areas in the wide and complex geo-political domain. His approach was eclectic and he adopted syndicate method where translation of songs or collection of stories was the work of a 'syndicate' - a Gond magician, a Pradhan dancer or a Baiga woman etc. He did not adhere to any particular theory, rather used different techniques and different strategies in varied situations. He also used to collect new information in new circumstances to fit with new methodology or theory. He would lay emphasis on the context, text and texture of the ethnographic materials and synthesised both the approaches of rationalistic and empirical. Moreover, his study in theology in under graduate classes, his Oxford scholarships, influence of the Romantic-period poets chiefly Wordsworth on him, pantheism, essences of humanism, and above all love for man, zest for life led him to represent the indigeneity in a unique way.

He collected the works of W. V. Grigson, Russell and Hiralal and a few noted others from whom he derived the knowledge about the tribes and castes of the village folk. The indigeneity of the tribal people is reflected in their oral literatures or folk-lore such as myths, folk-tales, ballads, songs, dances, art, etc. The literary and non-literary works of Verrier present that indigeneity uniquely. He is a pioneer in this field.

Elwin's big size monograph *The Tribal Myths of Orissa* (1954) of 699 pages contains near about one thousand stories of tribes of Orissa viz. Bondos, Gadabas, Murias, Konds, Brinjhvars, Gonds, Bhatras, Jhorias, Pengus, Juangs, Kamars, Koyas, Parengas, Saoras etc. The stories possess both similarity and distinctiveness in regards to contexts and textures. A large number of stories connect myths and

rituals, where it will be noticed that ritual grows out of myth and that myth inspires ritual establishing a forward and backward reaction. The dress and ornaments such as the Juang leaf-dress, the Gadaba bustle and ear-rings, the Bondo women's haven-head play important role in the mythology of Orissa tribes. Verrier has called them 'functional myths' and these were very hard to change under any outside influence. The stories are non-didactic and are of homely quality constructed out of the simple events of everyday life.

The very characteristics of the identity of the Jhoria tribe that have been reflected in some of these stories are their love for the children and their casteless society and love for dance. In the Saora stories we observe that the Saoras are remarkable for their independence of their spirits. They hold permanent and substantial settlement and earn their living by cultivating the terraces and tilling their Swiddens in the remote forest. They do not suffer from caste feeling, mix freely within members of their own. Their social organisation is based on the family descended from a common male ancestor. Their religion is elaborate, male and female shamans as well as priests have great influences. They believe in the identity of Supreme Being.

The Myths of the North-East Frontier of India (1958) captures Verrier's anthropological thoughts. Indian folk-lore opens up a treasure house of many tales, and myths have been unfolded to him as much as like the *Ramayana* and the *Jataka* tales. In different ceremonies, all these are repeated with the touch of imagination. The beautiful life in the plethora of colours of variegated flowers is one of the sources of indigeneity in Verrier's works.

Language, religion and culture of the indigenous people have disappeared from the notice of the elite world. Verrier wants to bring into focus our identification

with them. Self-identification policies for indigenous nations have become an internationally accepted legal practice. In this context Verrier's search for indigeneity is obviously significant because the human beings cannot deny the characteristics of essentialism revealed in the indigenous people.

At the end of chapter-II, I have provided the glossary of terms such as Animal ballet, Agaria, Baiga, Bilma dance, Chelik and Motiari, Dadaria song, Ghotul, Gond, Gunia, Karma dance/songs, Madhuban, Muria, Nandanban and Serpent dance.

In Chapter-III Elwin's representation of indigeneity also assumes great significance with reference to natural life. It is undeniable that man is born in the heart of nature and dies there. The civilized people are gradually dissociated from natural life but the aboriginal people live in nature and love all the elements of nature. Verrier attaches great significance to these aspects – philosophy of living in the truth and beauty of nature. In the ecofeminism nature 'is symbolized as the embodiment of the feminine principle and at another, she is nurtured by the feminine to produce life and provide sustenance'. Verrier wants to show how nature has been exploited by the modern civilization whereas the aboriginals cling to natural life as one of the distinctiveness of Indian culture. Rabindranath Tagore argued in favour of the 'tapovan' life and he writes, 'the culture of the forest has fueled the culture of Indian society'. He thinks that life can be renewed in the diverse process of nature from season to season and he says, 'the unifying principle of life in diversity, of democratic pluralism thus becomes the principle of Indian civilization'. Nature is not merely associated with the life of man but also with the divine life.

The medieval perceptions and practices about natural world were based on the relationship between nature, humanity and divine, and that has been continuing

to resonate in complex and contradictory ways up to the present. Raymond Williams (2019) has argued that Nature is perhaps the most complex word in the language, and in this sense it is a cultural and, above all, a linguistic construct.

Nineteenth century American naturalists and British Romantic poets such as William Wordsworth, Coleridge, John Keats, Lord Byron, P. B. Shelley are credited with initiating conservation movement for their works focused more on scientific descriptions and speculations about nature, which have been described in a few words in this chapter. Wangari Mathaai, Vandana Shiva, Arundhati Roy, Maria Mies, Greta Gaard, Patrik D. Murphy and some noted others linked ecology with feminism. They see the oppression of women and nature as interconnected and argue that domination of women stems from the same ideologies that bring about the domination of environment.

Verrier is almost like Wordsworth in observing nature with its enormous possibilities of life. This aspect of nature has been manifested mostly in the life of the aboriginals. In the writings of the romantics like Blake, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron and Keats nature in its sensuous aspect has been a great consideration and their influence on Elwin has been mentioned in this chapter.

Wordsworth is the most representative example of nature poet who identified God and nature as one and looked into the life of nature permeated by an invisible spirit and nature appeared to him as the manifestation of the eternal spirit, as he says in the Prelude Book 1, 'wisdom and spirit of the universe'. Such devotion to nature paves the way for Elwin's wide participation in Nature and the natural life of the aboriginals. Such romantic principle may also be noted in Rabindranath Tagore's 'Raktakarabi' and 'Muktadhara'. Verrier also looked at the world through his innocent eyes of childhood, felt united with God by virtue of innocence and

gentleness, and he transported the readers to the world of nature echoing almost like ‘the still sad music of humanity.’ The Keatsean perception of the sensuous aspect of nature is also evident in his observations of primitive men, and aboriginals. All these things have been recorded in most of his poems and songs in *Songs of the Forest* (1935), *Folk Songs of Chhattisgarh* (1946), *The Baiga* (1939), *Folk-songs of Maikal Hills* (1944) and a few in *Leaves from the Jungle* (1958) and *The Phulmat of the Hills* (1937). The first three might be considered as commentaries and documents on the whole way of tribal life.

Verrier’s attitude to and overview of nature is a striking combination of various entities which have been reflected in his songs and narratives cited in the above-mentioned monographs. I have attempted close readings of tribal folklore to bring out the novelty in Elwin’s approach to the Indigenous attitude to Nature. His ardent love for sensuous beauty of nature is observed in the narratives of *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin* (1964) where Verrier utters ‘I found the people talking poetry’(143) and ‘If there is a Paradise in NEFA, this is it, this is it, this is it.’(258); in the description of the landscape in his novella *The Phulmat of the Hills*(1937) where ‘the children can not forsake these hills, however far away they wander, they desire to return to them before they die’(12) and also they wish to live at eternal rest in nature even after death (*Leaves from the Jungle* 12-13); in the poem ‘The Place for Happiness’ and ‘The Shiphherd’s Sweet Lot’ of *Songs of the Forest* (1935).

But this is not all about his attitude to nature. His tribal had to encounter with the darkside of the forest, where there was no happiness and joy; where the land was hard and treacherous and shaken by earthquakes; where man had to fight with nature all the time and where famine and poverty were their close companions; where nature did not seem to be human. It refused to live with their lives. On the

other hand, colonialism and capitalism have robbed his tribals of their means of livelihood, their land and everything. This disquieting and stimulating inhumanity was constantly present in tribals as well as in Verrier's outlook of nature which appear very finely in 'Songs of Poverty', 'Famine' and 'The Roadmender's Songs' of *Songs of the Forest* (1935). This philosophy of nature and exploitation by the people of the civilized discourse inspired him to write *A Philosophy for NEFA* (1957,1961), to fight till death to the cause of Indian tribes and made him the sole defender of Indian tribes. Yet Elwin's tribes are content with their golden treasures- their spirits, their starving cattle, dirty cloth, broken bed, plum black hair, shining teeth, sweet koel-music of their words which the people of the so-called civilized discourse lack in all respects, which is observed in his poem 'The True Treasure', quoted in G.N.Devy's *The Oxford India Elwin* (2009), where Verrier's tribes are free from the sense of 'possessiveness' or 'greed' (89-90).

Gond children's love of beautiful things has been nicely described by Verrier in the lines of *Leaves from the Jungle* (1958), where the beautiful things with which the children are satisfied and attracted are all the elements of nature ;to satisfy their hearts' desire they need not borrow anything from the outside world; the good and the evil spirits with which their lives are encircled from dawn to dusk all are alive in nature (19-20).

Findings:

In this chapter my observation is that Elwin was the only Britisher who was awarded Sahitya Akademi (1965) because of his discovery of tribal literary traditions and it was found during my research that his unique way of representing nature was evident in his collections and translations of tribal folk-tales, folk-myths, poems, songs, dances and artworks.

Elwin was influenced by the traditional British Romantic theory of poetry and at the same time, after he was introduced to the indigenous world view of nature, there was a unique amalgamation of both influences. So, the initiation into British Romanticism did not produce stereotypes rather he applied the notions of 'strangeness added to beauty' for the discovery of a new reality in the tribal world of India. On the one hand his works are imbued with the sensuous beauty of nature like the Romantics and the Western world view of nature, which I have found in 'The Place of Happiness' of *Leaves from the Jungle* (1958), 'The Shepherd's Sweet Lot' of *Songs of the Forest* (1935) and so many other poems which I've discussed in my thesis.

On the other, he also viewed the hard and cruel aspects of nature, the dark sides of civilization and capitalism through which it was very difficult for the indigenous people of India to survive. He had documented this negative side of nature through his poems like 'Songs of Poverty', 'Famine', 'The Roadmender's Songs' of *Songs of the Forest* (1935).

Elwin had seen nature not only through his own eyes but also through the eyes of the tribes or Indigenous people of India. That is why his Western Romanticised vision was deterritorialized and then reterritorialized with the Indian Indigenous philosophy of nature. So a transformation is observed from Wordsworthian attitude to nature to Indigenous attitude to nature - and here lies the uniqueness of Elwin.

My observation is that the nature, tribes, i.e., indigenous people and Verrier himself formed a trinity. They are joined together by an inseparable bond.

Verrier was influenced by the 'Return To Nature' doctrine which I have found in his works. In spite of all natural calamity and disasters and hardships the

indigenous people did not desert nature, i.e., the forest, their motherland; rather they have tried to return to the natural world. Like the tribal people Elwin himself had suffered loneliness for a longtime and became disappointed. But his journey to the tribal world of India 'without a return ticket' has proved that his attachment to the tribals is somehow synonymous with his attachment to nature.

In Chapter-IV, in the writings of Verrier Elwin, resonances of Third World Feminism and Dalit Feminism could be heard and I have added some lines about it in chapter-IV. What appears to be striking in Elwin's treatment of women in his writing is the consideration of the women living in the remote corners of the society. Elwin passed his life in the company of his mother, sister and brother. But his mother's influence made an impact on his life. His mother stood against the wrongs of the society, being a widowed woman she had to show her potentiality against fundamentalism and she was called 'the most powerful woman'. Living with his mother and grandmother in the family atmosphere as well as his Oxford life, he formed an attitude towards women, especially the tortured and exploited women. He came to India and joined the Christa Seva Sangh (CSS). He had his acquaintance with Gandhiji, Mahadev Desai, J. B. Kripalani and many other nationalists from whom he gathered informations about India as well as the Indian woman. His love affair with several women like Mirabehn, Mary Gilet etc. also oriented his attitude towards Indian women. In 1932 he married a beautiful Gond girl named Kosi, and indeed in Kosi, he loved not only a beautiful and accomplished individual but a whole tribe. Again he married Lila, a Pradhan girl of Patangarh and formed a strong feeling for Buddhism. Whatever the fact he formed a progressive outlook on love and sex in contact with the tribal girls. He observed the tribal women very simple and innocent bearing normal attitude to sex. Elwin was enormously struck by the

wild freedom in love and sexuality which he had never experienced before. The Baiga life also projected to him a life of love and exploitation. He was surprised by or attracted to erotic attractiveness and erotic approach and the Baiga women. Love without refinement, love without artificiality and love with enjoyment and freedom in the wide rural tribal life is to some extent a sign of their indigenous identity. All these unique characteristics of love and sexuality of Verrier's tribals are reflected in the narratives of *Leaves from the Jungle* (xxviii) and that in his seminal work *The Baiga* (xxvii-xxviii, 204, 245, 251). Baiga's love not only brings delight, but frustration as well, which are reflected in their 'Karma' dances as cited in *The Baiga* (254). Hence sexuality which is considered to be sin in the Lapserian period has been an integral part of the Baiga, Agaira, Muria, Maria, Gond etc. He entered in the Muria lives – its group marriage, group concubinage, pre-nuptial chastity, values of rules of exogamy, erotic attractiveness, life in the dormitories – all these appear to him something rare in the civilized world. Jealousy and possessiveness were almost absent among the boys and girls. Sexual congress among the young people was an important discipline in life. All these aesthetics of indigeneity in respect of love and sexuality have been nicely interwoven in his big size monograph *The Muria and their Ghotul* (1947) and *The Kingdom of the Young* (1968), abridged from the former, some of which have been discussed in chapter –iv of my thesis. Elwin also believed that sex is an essential part in the behaviours of man which is evident in his deep attachment with the Baiga and Gond girls. He extended love and sex to the world of romance – romance of the forest, romance of the songs and the romance of the tribal dances. In some of the feminist writings the women have been treated as the 'Other' noted by Simone de Beauvoir who thought that women have to take their destiny into their own hands. Rabindranath Tagore also said that 'no one is

willing to let woman to win her fortune'. The most important 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 for which Elwin's women did not have to fight, as if they had inherited all such things since their birth from the soil, which is observed in *The Baiga* (230-231,235-236), 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 Kingdom of the Young* (193-194,) and in *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin* (163,168-169,). 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. *Phulmat of the Hills*, a novel, published in 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. Phulmat is a symbol of continuity and change. She 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, is devoted to her husband, longs for her lover. All

these unique characteristics of Phulmat have been excellently interwoven in the pages of *Leaves from the Jungle* (23-24, 27). 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.

Findings:

In this Chapter my observation is that Elwin had celebrated the notion of tribal womanhood in a unique way. His concept of womanhood, love and sexuality is compatible with the writers of the feminist discourse, starting from the early feminism to that of 20th century.

Verrier's women would enjoy freedom at par with their male counterparts; participate equally in harvesting, gathering and gaiety of life, though they lived in patriarchal society. He did not observe any male-domination/exploitation/oppression which are the rudiments of a patrilineal order and against which the feminist writers (also victims of their society) are struggling for. So the most important and characteristic element which I have found in his representation of Indian tribal women is their honourable and highest position and their freedom. For example *The Baiga* (1939) and *Leaves from the Jungle* (1958) etc.

Here his celebration of love and sex is also unique. Though he was a Catholic missionary and attached to CSS, he attained a liberal and progressive outlook on love and sex contrasted with the then Puritan morality or Orthodox-ism. His 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. In his autobiography *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin* (1964) and *Leaves from the Jungle* (1958) he had represented this very artistically. His women's attitude to sex was based on reality. For Elwin's women there was nothing Platonic, 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 present. Love without refinements, artificiality and restriction is to some extent a sign of their indigenous identity. This aesthetic of Indigeneity has been nicely interwoven in *The Muria and their Ghotul* (1947), *The Kingdom of Young* (1968), *The Baiga* (1939) and *Phulmat of the Hills* (1937).

Elwin describes each of his tribal women as a feminist, an artist and also a symbol of continuity. His feminists do not cry out for freedom of spirit, for love, for honourable position in society and for crimes committed to such as child marriage, murder, rape, adulteration. They would enjoy all virtues as precious possessions of love and possession of independence of spirit. It was found through my analysis of folk-tales that Elwin has depicted the tribal women as free from the possession of greed.

In Chapter-V, I have discussed the tribes who are commonly known as indigenous people in many parts of the world. The United Nations also developed the modern understanding of the term 'tribe' which is distinct in social, economic and political system, culture, language and beliefs. Naik also holds the similar idea of the tribe because of the community beliefs, rituals and customs. In course of time the community life of tribes has been treated in Adivasi Literatures, Dalit Literatures and Subaltern Writings. Tribes are also treated metaphorically as dalits which has been justified in Gayatri Spivak's Epilogue to *Chotti Munda and His Arrow* (2003). Here Spivak compares Birsa Munda to a Dalit hero fighting against colonial regime. The Dalit movement has brought the tribals into the common fold of pain and suffering. Dalit literature emerged as a new literary movement in 1966 in Indian

literary scenario. This literature is the reflection of the agony of the oppressed people. *Joothan, an Untouchable's Life* (2003) is an instance of literal representation of the tussle of dalit woman Joothan. The question of self identity is also distinct in Omprakash Valmiki. Bama's *Karukku* (2000) and Sharan Kumar Limbale's *Outcaste* (2003) (*Akarmasi*: 1984) are also examples of the suffering of dalit community life. These people have been living in close contact with nature, its flora and fauna. The indigenous people learn to live together with the animals. Collective leadership, collective thinking, collective accomplishment are the main concerns of such communities. To them 'self' constitutes a solidarity, and underlying principle of togetherness. Self and community in Dalit literatures as well as tribal sense of self, community and solidarity as represented by Verrier in his writings have been discussed in details in chapter-v. The tribals have been fighting for self rule and regional autonomy. It is observed that the whole of tribal life is the aesthetic of tribal identity in their daily life, art and craft, pleasure and pain, war and conflict. The Adivasis are also within the context of tribal literature. Their co-existence with nature and fight against oppression led them towards self realisation and self assertion. Such marginalised people reflect in their lifestyle a sense of indigeneity as Mahasweta Devi also has shown in her novels and short stories. In her book *The Book of the Hunter* (2002), Kalya's views, perceptions and voices are the voices of Shabar community. He re-constructs his self within his community, for his community and by his community. In the contemporary writings of Rahul Sankirtayan such aspects have been treated and stated that these tribal people are not predators but protectors of the hills and forests because they consider all natural things as indigenous to their life style. In the story 'Nisha' from his *Volga Se Ganga* (1942,1947), the Mother, the head of a matrilineal family, is guided by the code of

the community - her boldness, courage, the spirit of fight - all are meant for the survival of her community. She enjoys with the members of her community, represents the community and bears no separate existence outside her community. Elwin's *The Baiga* (1939) represents cultural ecology in India. Different style of dance like Karma dances, Bilma dances, Dassera dances are essentially integrated to the community life of the Baigas. The dance, performed in a circle, is very rhythmic and disciplined followed by the strict dance-code. It is like a garland of beads, if a single bead is lost or torn out, the entire garland will be of no use. As each single bead is valued to a garland, every individual is respected and valued to the community. Here individual and community are inseparable, yet, at a glance, the whole dance team i.e. the community is visible to the common eye. Verrier, in most of his works, has prioritized the community acknowledging the inseparable role of the individual.

The 'bewar' cultivation is one of the indigenous art of the Baiga. The unity, solidarity and egalitarian spirit are also observed in Elwin's tribes' *bewar* or shifting cultivation especially in Baigas bewar cult.

Verrier describes the predicaments of his tribes through the *Karma* Songs in *Folk-Songs of Chhattisgarh* (1946), where the whole community cries or voices for the pains and sufferings caused by industrialisation and colonialism. The experience and feeling of an individual is expressed through those of the community he or she belongs to.

In his novella *The Phulmat of the Hills* (1937), Phulmat the protagonist, represents her community's values, poverty, hard struggle for existence, on the other, she has been able to place herself above the average standard of community's values.

The Tribal Art of Middle India (1951) and *The Art of the North-East Frontier of India* (1959) containing near about 230 and 240 photographs respectively, describe and portray artistry of Indian tribes and present the brilliant collective works of his tribes. Their unity and solidarity helped sustain and excel these indigenous art works. So Verrier's works representing the myths, stories, songs and dances in festivals, customary practices, indigenous arts of his tribes are embraced in a community guided by a co-operative and an egalitarian spirit.

The unity, solidarity and collective interests of community have been superbly described by Verrier in his *The Muria and their Ghotul* (1947), 'ghotul' being the central focus of Muria life. To the Muria tribal solidarity is the supreme good, and anything that breaks this precious unity and fellowship must be condemned.

Findings:

Here my finding is that Elwin's work regarding the Indian tribals' unity and solidarity is a pioneering one which later developed into a dalit like solidarity. The idea of "collectiveness" and the sense of "commonality" which Elwin had uniquely represented in the tribal/indigenous life is also reflected in Dalit literature. Most of the Dalit writings such as *Joothan* (2003), *Karukku* (2000), *Outcaste* (1984) (which I have discussed in my thesis) are the examples of the collective sufferings of dalit community life.

The tribal unity and solidarity is supreme that's why they troubled British Government throughout the second half of the 19th century - the remarkable Santal "Hul" and the Munda "Ulgulan" led by Birsa Munda were examples of collective leadership, collective thinking and collective accomplishment. The tribal people live together, work together, sing and dance together, maintain the essence of indigeneity

from generation to generation through their oral literatures. The shifting cultivation as described in *The Baiga* (1939), songs and dances as collected in *Songs of the Forest* (1935), *Folk-Songs of Maikal Hills* (1944), *Folk-Songs of Chhattisgarh* (1946) and the marriage between the myths and crafts as enunciated in *The Agaria* (1942) exemplify all these.

Unity, solidarity and collective interest of community is reflected in the ghotul life of the Muria in *The Muria and their Ghotul* (1947), *The Kingdom of the Young* (1968), the village guard room of the Nagas in *Nagaland* (1961) and boy's club of the Oraon tribe. Their social organisation is also developed and everything is organised by their village panchayats which have been superbly described by Verrier in his *A New Deal for Tribal India* (1963) and *Religion of an Indian Tribe* (1955).

Elwin in his description of Muria 'ghotul' was able to discover the essential unity and consensus among the tribal youth for upholding the noble values to the youth as well as the intellectuals and the academicians of the so-called civilized world that the youth must be served with all the tribal noble values such as freedom, gaiety of life, sex education etc.

I also observe that the core components of tribes' unity and solidarity, as represented by Elwin, have nice parallels to those that existed in the age of primitive socialism - which I have outlined in Rahula Sankrityayan's *Volga Se Ganga* (1942) and Engel's *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884).

Verrier's depiction of tribal unity and solidarity may also be considered as a precursor of dalit collective identity. Like the dalits his tribals were also voiceless. Elwin has retrieved the silenced oral traditions of those simple tribal people and took their sense of unity and solidarity in the light of dalit literature which has been

acknowledged by the Bhuria Committee where egalitarian spirit and communitarian habit have been considered as the core elements.

The most important observation is that the basis for this unity and solidarity, as depicted by Verrier, is 'love and respect' for one's ways of life (here tribal ways of life).

To conclude, what I found striking in Elwin is his committed attachment to and celebration of the tribal life which is something rare. 'Respect and love for the tribal ways of life' was the guiding principle of his representation of indigeneity. Such treatment of indigeneity is very relevant in modern times when nature, women and 'tribals as dalit' community face the common problems in most of the countries, especially in India, Australia and Africa. The recurrent postmodern issues such as environmentalism and green literature in his representation of nature, resemblance of basic tenets of Third World and Dalit Feminism in his representation of tribal woman, and his representation of tribal community's unity and solidarity reaffirm the core aspects of indigeneity. In this respect he is the pioneer and sole defender of Indian tribes.

Future scope of research:

Elwin voiced against deprivation of his tribals, advocated of their freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom from interference, voiced against their age-long silence, witnessed two World Wars and the Great October Revolution, was deeply associated with Nehru and worked in Nehru's Government as tribal adviser and formulated policy-planning for the sustainable development of Indian tribes. Nehru admitted openly that he viewed the tribal world in the eyes of Elwin. At the same time Elwin also was greatly inspired by Nehru's five fundamental principles, called panch-sheel for tribal development. Nehru was inclined to socialism and was

considered in the Congress as its left-wing leader. So there was every possibility for him to advocate for Socialism, but he did not utter a single word for socialism, leaving enough space for the researchers to concentrate on.

Most of the academicians, writers and critics have described him as an ‘evangelical’ person, though Elwin did not feel comfort in it. He called himself an ‘Oxford scholar’. He never preached Christian religion as the evangelical persons of that time had done. However he admitted that he came to India to serve its poor ‘as an act of reparation’, to atone for the sin committed by his forefathers. He became deeply closed with Gandhi, A.V. Thakkar and Shamarao Hivale, spent many days in Gandhi’s Sabarmati ashram and Christian Seva Sangh (CSS), carried out social works for the upliftment of Indian tribes in Central Provinces and Orissa. It is no denying that Theology had great impact on him. He voiced and worked against proselytisation, left CSS and inclined to Hinduism observing some cultural affinity of his tribes to the Hindus, later he departed from Hinduism. A series of departures took place in his life. Like Rabindranath he was a searcher of truth. Academicians claim that his deep association with Gandhi and his associates led him to choose tribal discourse. Was it all? Perhaps it is partly true. Gandhi himself had some sorts of reverence to Christianity. Whether the core elements/essence of Christianity he learnt in his theology classes or his career as an Oxford scholar or his deep attachment with Gandhi led him to choose tribal discourse amidst a series of departures is yet to be studied.

Verrier was a man of manifold talents – a poet, a novelist, an anthropologist and a folklorist – which we have attempted to establish through our works. Without knowing him personally it is impossible to do justice to him for one who has only worked with his folklore collections. As our thesis focuses only on his

representation of indigeneity, we are constrained to discuss on the man Elwin and his life work. Elwin worked in the laboratory of tribal minds of India. Elwin died on 22 Feb'1964. C. von Furer- Haimendorf (1964) on his death has remarked, "His death has deprived Indian anthropology of its most striking and colourful figure, and his loss will be felt not only by his friends and by his colleagues, but by the statesmen and administrators who for many years have relied on his wisdom and experience in dealing with the problems of India's tribal populations." (Haimendorf 114).

So alongside this works the 'man' Elwin deserves attention and needs to be studied.