Chapter – II

Aesthetics of Indigeneity

Before elaborating on the definition and other allied concepts and history of indigeneity, theories on indigeneity and indigenous identity I think it relevant to add a few lines on the notion of 'cultural amnesia' which occupies a wide space in the critical theories such as deconstruction, structuralism, post structuralism, psychoanalysis and aesthetics. In fact, the idea of "cultural amnesia" has influenced the mode of representation(s) of the indigenous reality in the colonial and postcolonial times. Elwin's 'discovery' of Indian tribal heritage is a strong anti-thesis of this age-old politics of representation. Lampropoulos Apostolos and Markidou Vassiliki (2010), in their essay entitled, "Introduction: configuring cultural amnesia", published in the journal *Synthesis: An Anglophone Journal of Comparative Literary Studies*, O (2), quote,

> There is something both redundant and intriguing in any effort to address the issue of cultural amnesia. Any such attempt may be considered redundant since it is inextricably linked to the already delineated concept of memory, which over the last two decades has marked the humanities and has largely contributed to the establishment of various fields; these range from the theory of historiography to trauma studies and from translation to area studies, not to mention memory studies. On the other hand, focusing on the rather neglected issue of cultural amnesia may be intriguing: it would constitute by default a critique of the already existing scholarship as well as of the choices that it has made and, consequently, of the exclusions it has imposed. . . . Recent theorising on the question of forgetting dwells upon the

> compulsion, desire, effort or demand to erase, avoid, and ultimately obliterate from memory what has already happened. Such theorising calls to mind the paradox of making the subject declare that which s/he forgets as already forgotten and therefore leading him/her to remember it. (1)

Amnesia is a medical condition/state of mind in which one loses one's memory partly or completely; it is a disease, a state of forgetfulness. It is deeply embedded in the complicated characterization of the interface between past and present. Those, who do not suffer from amnesia, detect the symptoms and causes and try to help the patient to remedy that state, so amnesia builds a relationship with the future as well. Cultural amnesia argues for an unpremeditated loss of cultural memory. The concepts of prefabricated memory, the narcissistic overemphasis on the memory of the present obliterating the historical past and such others are responsible for cultural amnesia. This is precisely what the British colonizers attempted to impose on the Indian middle-class memory with regard to the tribals. Even during and after independence, mainstream congress leaders had also been practicing this policy of exclusion from public memory.

Cultural amnesia relates to those people who forget or are forced to forget about their roots, particularly the values, customs, mores, taboos and ideals which may have been celebrated by a group of people as a whole at one point of time but now have been forgotten and replaced by different customs, mores, taboos and ideals.

At present, amnesia appears as an object of complex configuration. Andreas Huyssen (1995) in his work *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*, Nancy J. Peterson (2001) in her book *Against Amnesia: Contemporary Women Writers and the Crisis of Historical Memory*, and Terry Eagleton in *After*

Theory have raised some pertinent questions on the discourses of amnesia specially on its status, underlined various functions of cultural amnesia, shedded light on its diversity and pervasiveness in both literature and culture.

It was a grand design of colonialism to create cultural amnesia particularly in respect of the indigenous communities. It was Elwin who actively contested this colonial conspiracy. He re-constructed and discovered the core identity of the indigenous people. In all his works, especially in *The Baiga* (1939), *The Agaria* (1942) and *A Philosophy for NEFA* (1957) Elwin has shown how the indigenous people were inflicted with this cultural amnesia, how they were robbed of their everything – their culture as well as means of livelihood, how their folk-lores - songs, dances, artworks were considered inferior to those of their so called civilized counterparts. He quotes in *The Baiga*, "I cannot think of anything more shameful, anything meaner, anything more disgraceful to an administration that claims to be enlightened than the way subordinates openly rob these poor people, some of the poorest in the world, of the few goods they have and of many hours of labour" (517).

In the book, *A Philosophy for NEFA*, Elwin (1957) has referred to Colin Simpson, who, in his book *Adam in Plumes* (1955), scrutinizes the effect of colonialism on indigenous communities and remarks, "Pride was going, pride in creation. And that I feel is the depression thing that always follows on foreign contact: the tribal feels that he and his works are, by comparison, second rate . . . we bring him an inferiority complex" (51).

Elwin marked it dangerous and destructive of art and culture, and it caused indigenous people to forget and despise their own ideas and customs and paves the way for his tribal people to be inflicted with cultural amnesia. He also adds, "The

inferiority complex is the knife that severs the link that binds the people to their past; it is sponge that wipes out a thousand years of history. . . it will lead to a whole sale collapse of tribal moral sanctions and of the social organization which at present holds the tribes together" (52).

And it is quite ironic that, despite being an Englishman, Elwin was able to resist this colonial conspiracy and to discover the real identity of the Indigenous people. His own racial identity merged with his adopted cultural affiliation. This transformation destined him to correct the historical wrong meted out to the Indian indigenous people. Elwin played the pioneering role in this context and became the sole public defender of Indian tribes. Let us examine the concept of indigeneity against the backdrop of this colonial politics of representation.

The Concept of Indigeneity:

The anthroprologists, social scientists and scholars all over the world are debating a lot over the concept of indigeneity in the post colonial and post modern period. 'Indigenous peoples' notion or concept 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 sensivities 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.

Alan Barnard (2000, 2007), Mathias Guenther (2002), Justin Kenrick (2005), Adam Kuper (2003), Evie Plaice (2010), James Clifford (1997), Lewis (2005), Nietzen (2003), Michael Asch (2004), Milton (2002), Robinson (2005), George Manuel and Michael Posluns (1974), Patrick Macklem (2001), Trond Thuen (1995),

and Patrick Wolfe (1994, 1999), Jose Martinez Cobo (1986), Brown and Sant (1999), Alfred and Corntassel (2005), Dowell (2006), Makka, Roger and Anderson (2006), Costa (2009), Driskill (2011), Sette (2013), Johnson (2012), Dunbar (2014) and some others have made significant contributions and critical examinations on the concept of indigeneity.

In *Social Anthropolgy* (2006), Guenther says, "Indigenous is a term applied to people and by the people to themselves-who are engaged in an often desperate struggle for political rights, for land, for a place and space within a modern nation's economy and society. Identity and self-representation are vital elements of the political platform of such peoples" (17). He has researched over the 'San' or 'Bushmen' tribe of S. Africa, who for many years has been struggling in various fronts for their identity-cultural identity and self-representation. Identity, along with land and rights, is considered as one of the core components of San politics. The San, for their recognition by the state and in larger society, use 'culture' as a device and strategy – it is a way of life. They believe that a nation is lost if it is void of culture. In the conceptualization of identity, Guenther has referred to essentialism, primordialism, primitivism and residual colonialism. Such notions, in James Clifford's words, written in his book *Routes, Travel and Translation*(1997), "Reproduce themselves historically by risking themselves in novel conditions….Being contemporary, reinvented and negotiated constructs, indigenous definitions of indigenousness are necessarily always 'hybrid constructions . .. both tribal and modern, local and worldly" (154, 157).

Eminent sociologist and anthropologist Justin Kenrick (2005) has tried to find out the commonality of ongoing hidden histories in the term 'indigenous peoples', basis of dominant states' legitimacy and dominant notions of human

identity. He has also raised questions why the marginalized groups prefer to place themselves as indigenous peoples. Kenrick and Lewis (2005) believe that as their long-standing neighbours are recognized as indigenous peoples, so also they call themselves indigenous. It is a relational or relative identification. Nietzen (2003) argues that those who share common histories of dispossession world ride may be termed as indigenous peoples. Michael Ash (2004) opines that since the rights of the indigenous peoples have become a core concern in the process of legal rationalization and development oriented assimilation in the colonial and post colonial periods, marginalized peoples prefer to identify themselves as indigenous peoples. Kenrick also claims that due to the increasing understanding and bonding among the indigenous groups and reclaim for rights and land that were robbed of by the dominant forces the highly marginalized groups prefer to present themselves as indigenous peoples. Alan Barnard (2002) has tried to seek a particular history for the term indigenous in the discourse of anthropology. Barnard considers this concept as an ethnographic illusion. His understanding of the concept, issues of definition, history - all relate to the aboriginal peoples of Canada who sometimes lived in abject poverty and now have a decade long history of committed struggle and academic activism on the question of social justice for aboriginals. The two key elements-a claim to a history of hunting and gathering, and a weak political position have been embraced in his notion of indigeneity. George Manuel and Michael Posluns first coined the term ‘fourth world’ in 1974 to denote the encapsulated minorities and to focus on the structural relationship between the aboriginal groups and the dominant society. Patrick Macklem (2001) furthers that Canadian academics have been struggling with this ‘fourth world’ reality and its salient structural distinctions.

Trond Thuen (2006), a renowned social anthropologist, opines in *Social Anthropology*, on "Discussion: The concept of indigeneity" that the concept or the definition of 'indigenous peoples' is not so complex as we know what it is when we see it an he explains:

> 'Indigeneity' is an image self-constructed by the subordinate under restrictions set by the superordinate discourse. Essentialised presentations of self tend to be a legal and political requirement within majority discourses of indigeneity, and it is a paradox that anthropological questioning may denigrate such presentations, it is also a problem that the paradigm of essentialism may overshadow aspects of indigenous culture that are not essentialised for political purposes, but are still part of the life worlds and the personhood of members of indigenous groups. (24-25)

The indigenous peoples' main claim is not the claim of 'special rights', but they claim for all the peoples the rights of self-determination, rights of enjoyment which have been robbed of through discrimination. Indigenousness has emerged as an intense political issue today. The politics of land is the core element of politics of indigeneity. Patrick Wolfe (1994, 1999) places indigeneity not only as a matter of self – ascription, but also as a matter of settler imposition. He also views that 'Indigeneous' and 'native' categories can no longer be reduced to the cognate categories such as 'primitive' and 'savage'.

Jose Martinez Cobo (1986), special rapporteur for the UN Sub-Commission, placed a report popularly known as Cobo's 1986 Report, on Prevention, Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in the thirty-fifth session, item no. 12 of the provisional agenda of United Nations Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights' Subcommission where he has mentioned indigenous

people, communities and nations as groups that have a "historical continuity with pre-colonial societies" within territories they have developed, and as communities that "consider themselves distinct from other sectors of societies" now in their territories. He has considered the indigenous people/ communities as minorities who have been struggling for preserving their ethnic identities and ancestral territories for their next generations. Colonization and genocidal policies have caused physical and cultural erosion and forced many descendents of indigenous peoples to hide their identities for their own safety. Many indigenous peoples groups and indigenous nations have been striving to come out of the impact of ethnic cleansing and fight to reclaim and revive their identities and cultural practices and to regain their land, heritage, human rights. Indigeneity now is being woven through diverse historic and experiences and is being regarded as a pan-political identity in post colonial period. 21st century indigenous experience has raised a global view of indigeneity producing a rich and diverse collection of literature on the subject. The review of colonial politics, policies and practices has become pertinent to discuss on indigeneity as these policies and practices have caused forced acculturation and erasure of indigenous identities and their ways of life.

Brown and Sant (1999) have presented fifteen essays in their works on indegeneity addressing racism as an ongoing and re-emergent legacy of colonization in Australia. Haris and Wasilewski (2004) have focused on indigenous knowledge and articulated the indigenous knowledge to wider domain. Alfred and Corntassel (2005) have argued that indigenous peoples are indigenous to their homelands and still strive to retain their distinctiveness and fight against the colonial states policy of assimilation. Dowell (2006) discusses the role of indigenous directors in strengthening social networks through interactions within and with the

representatives of film industries. Maaka, Roger and Anderson (2006) have presented twenty-one essays on views of indigenous colonial experiences in North America, United States, Latin America, Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, Oceania, Europe, Norway and Africa.

Wilson, Pamela and Stewart (2008) have discussed on scholars who have explored the new wave of indigenous media produced and created by indigenous peoples. Merlon, Greenhouse and Costa (2009) have described about rejection of UN declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by Australia, the United States, Canada and New Zealand. Driskill (2001) has concentrated on the indigeneity of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer lives and communities. Johnson (2012) has tried to draw a picture of and assimilating globalization along with indigenous stories and landscapes and their ways of knowing, being and doing. Settee (2013) has interrogated skillfully the dominant colonial system in contemporary education and furthered indigenous based struggles for declonization and social justice. Dunbar (2014) has emphasized on the 'past', which has been ignored by the mainstream history scholars, and discussed on the place of indigenous people in the present and on-going impacts of colonization.

Theories of Indigeneity:

Who are we? What are we? Where are we from? These are age old questions and of profound interest to humanity obviously. These questions are all about a person's identity which is defined not only by his name or surname only but also by the community in which he/she lives and where his/her personal and shared history is lying. As the history is involved, people's fascination with its beginnings, which is largely rooted in the convictions about their organic and biological growth, is a topic of interest and research today. This overview assumes an ancient uniform and shared

past and tries to examine the beginning of development in a genetically definable core from which the individual peoples evolved. The idea of forming a genealogical tree, according to which, all peoples emerged from the separation of ancient peoples, is based on the notions of the origin and development of individual languages. This notion is wide spread even today and considered as old as the Old Testament. This notion helped presenting the history of an individual people as old and as glorious as possible and to move its 'beginnings' back into an as distant as possible past.

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. Ultimately, cosmopolitan critics, writers and academic institutions all step towards provincialization throwing a challenge to the Western-centered knowledge producing machine. 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 theories.

Intersectionality Theory (Race and Gender):

The increasing understanding of multifactoral and multilevel complexities of health disparities and identifying of most effective strategies to reduce them have given birth to many approaches to understanding health inequities. Vulnerability is common to most indigenous communities and the existing frame works have divided it into distinct categories such as race-ethnicity, gender, geography, sexuality, socio-economic status, disease status, prioritization of one category over other. Intersectional perspective gives way to alternative research and policy frame works which enable to investigate the interaction of numerous characteristics of vulnerable communities, not only at individual level but also at structural levels capturing multiple contexts that shape individual lives and health statuses.

McCall (2005), Choo and Ferree (2010), Hancocx (2011), Bowleg (2008), Cole (2009), Hankivesky and Cormier (2009), Hankivsky (2011), Hankivsky et al. (2012) have discussed how to operationalize and advance the utility of intersectionality. Intersectionality brings about a new paradigm shift which enables civil society, public health professionals, researchers to understand social categories, their complex relationships and their interactions. Hankivsky (2012) has also set some questions to guide researchers, policy-makers and academics who want to apply effectively an intersectionality perspective to their day-to-day work. He (Hankivsky et al. 2012) has developed an Intersectionality Based Policy Analysis (IBPA) Frame work designed to improve upon and extend health impact assessments (HIA) tools. Eight guiding principles, twelve key questions (descriptive and transformative) and seven case studies demonstrating the implications of intersectionality in a wide range of policy sectors have been incorporated in this IBPA Frame Work.

Intersectionality embraces the complexities that are essential to understanding social inequities chiefly manifested in health inequities and necessitates significant changes in the policy-planning and researches.

Theory of Peoplehood:

Save the theories on nationalism and identity (primordial or circumstantial), the theory of 'Peoplehood' also helps in reconceptualizing indigenous identity from an interdisciplinary and self-identification framework.

This theory has its origin in Spicer's (1962) work on 'enduring peoples'. Anthropologist Edward H. Spicer's discussion was based on 'Indian sense of identity' which consists of three core elements such as indigenous peoples' relationship to land, their common spiritual bond and language used by them.

Peoplehood means a unique social category which survives with its sense of solidarity based on territory, religion and language from time immemorial. Robert K. Thomas (1996), while working on this concept, has added a fourth element namely sacred history and argued that all the four factors are dependent variables on one another (44-53). Holm, Pearson and Chavis (2003) have posited the peoplehood concept as a fundamental concept for the future indigenous nations studies (7-24).

Holm has attempted to show how a group's religion is inseparably linked to language, sacred history and above all its environment. He has replaced the factor 'religion' by 'Ceremonial cycles'. This model views 'identity' as dynamic and interlocking. He opined that each single element carries the same weightage i.e. no single element is less important than the others.

This model has yielded a great promise as an explanatory, interdisciplinary tool for understanding indigenous identity. This theory acts as a guiding policy in the current global indigenous rights discourse and has helped the IGO/NGO and ILO, No. 169 in conceptualizing their definitional approaches. Corntassel (2003) has elaborated the complex interrelationships of these four factors namely sacred history, ceremonial cycles, language and ancestral lands and included theses key elements in his indigenous definition. He has shown how the land tenure system in Nepal, known as 'Kipat', is viewed as the core of indigenous existence and deemed inseparable from culture, ceremonial life and sacred history. The Limbu community therein views any assault on Kipat as threat to their very existence as a separate community within the society (91-93).

Primordialist Theory:

There are differences in opinion how the nations came into existence. Two distinct lines of inquiry, termed as two schools of thoughts, have emerged towards formation

of nationalist groups. Clifford Geertz (1963), Harold R. Isaacs (1975), Pierre L. van den Berghe (1978), Anthony D. Smith (1987) and Walker Connor (1994) are said to belong to one of these two schools, known as Primordialist school. The works of this school regard ethnic identity as the essential component which leads to political and military separatism irrespective of any political, social and economic context operating on the groups. They argue that conditions of social, political and economic discontent may give birth to or accelerate separatist violence; on the other, only discontent rooted in their ethnically-driven symbols such as language, religion, origin myths, speeches, and cultural practices may precipitate separatist movements. Primordialists concentrate on the historical ties shared by the ethnic groups and how the affective symbols such as political speeches and language use may create deep and emotional responses within the individuals and collectivities. Paul R. Brass (1994) has viewed that ethnicity's shared belief in a common ancestory and ability to govern social relations is a historical artifact. The school suggests that kinship relations, religion, language and social practices provide the basis for 'easy affinity' with peoples from the same background. Primordialist Anthony D. Smith (2002) has theorized the ethno-nationalist groups as recurring entities which help in regrouping and adaptation throughout history. The very existence of the distinct cultural communities ensures applying of a primordial perspective to indigenous peoples. Smith has advocated of the following five features for the existence of a nation, as:

1. A collective proper name;
2. Myths and memories of cultural history;
3. A common public culture;
4. Common laws and customs;
5. A historic territory or homeland. (17)

Critics have described this approach as Euro-centric or non-indigenous construct as because in this definitional standard emphasis has been given on the importance of written literatures or legal codes while ignoring the importance of language and oral traditions.

Scott (1990) has argued that this approach can explain the persistence of ethnic identity over time, but fails to properly address the issue of 'why' such identity can, and often does, change or fluctuate in its intensity. The indigenous right claims intensified locally and globally during 1970 and 1980s are examples of this case.

The Instrumentalist or Constructivist Theory:

This is another nationalist group formation theory. It has emerged as a sharp reaction/response to primordialist shortcomings. While primordialists claim 'ethnicity as a given', instrumentalists view that ethno nationalist movements form in reaction to 'state dominance' of a particular group of people. This school does not consider ethnicity as a natural entity; rather it argues that ethnicity is capable of being invented. Fredrik Barth (1969), Michael Hechter (1975), Charles Tilly (1978), Benedict Anderson (1983), Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983) are the chief advocates of this school of thought. This approach has also been referred to as 'circumstantial approach' and 'modernist approach'. According to this approach, peoples' immediate needs and their relationships with others are the key components of formation of ethno nationalist groups, i.e. nationalist groups are social constructs. Social circumstances experienced by the group members result in Group solidarity. Scott (1990) claims that, "These circumstances, ranging from relative deprivation to state repression, enhance group solidarity as individuals rationally select an ethnic identity to attain desired political, economic and social goals" (148).

How an ‘invention of tradition’ takes place within host states is clearly articulated by Hobsbawm in his *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), while discussing on potential indigenous land claims as, “Students of peasant movements know that a village’s claim to some common land or right ‘by custom from time immemorial’ often expresses not a historical fact, but the balance of forces in the constant struggle of village against lords or against other villages” (2).

He has also argued that “all ‘invented traditions’, so far as possible, use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion” (12).

According to Benedict Anderson (1983), in a created history, these communities are often ‘imagined’, whose creation is facilitated by market forces and communication technologies (103).

For indigenous peoples, the nature of their political, economic and social relationship with the host state (s) may determine the duration and intensity of their claims for self-determination. Inspite of having merits in this approach, problem arises when the cases of those indigenous nations are considered who have existed for 10,000years or more and clearly these first nations do not fit the instrumentalist scheme of being the products of developments of the last two centuries, as remarked by Ozkirimli (2000).

Here I have also discussed the theory of ecocriticism and ecofeminism for the sake of my further study.

Theory of Ecocriticism:

Today the environmental degradation and crisis in respect to extinction, pollution, loss of species, global warming, toxicity and defloration have reached to an alarming condition. As all these are anthropogenic, the narratives concerning these aspects cover a wide field of study with an interdisciplinary approach leaving space for the

climatologists, life scientists, public policy makers, geographers, cultural anthropologists, environmental lawyers, environmental engineers, landscape artists and even applied mathematicians (Buell 5-6).

As the world ecosystem worsens too rapidly compared to any earlier period of human history, to find new ways of responding to this tragedy poses conceptual as well as representational challenge to humanistic scholarship. Since the late twentieth century, ecocriticism has emerged as one of the youngest, cutting-edge, revisions literary movements with a great influence on the teaching and scholarship in the humanities. The philosophers, historians, writers, literary critics – all contribute collaborately in this field. The foundation of ASLE (The Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment) is a landmark in the history of ecocriticism. The Centre for Environmental Arts and Humanities, housed at the University of Nevada, Reno, from 1995 to 2002, also marked significant influence on this field. ASLE's activities through its sister organisations spread over Japan, South Korea, U.K., Australlia, New Zealand, India, Bangladesh, Canada, Ireland, Taiwan, Brazil and South East Asia.

William Rueckert in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An experiment in Ecocriticism" (1970) used the term 'ecocriticism' first. William Howarth traces out the etymology of the term. The Greek words "oikos" means 'household' and 'kritis' means judge, "kritis" is the arbiter of taste who wants to keep the house in good order. Buell describes the first two waves of ecocriticism in his book, *The Future of Environmental Criticism* (2005), and Slovic extends it to the 'third' and 'fourth' waves.

The first wave starts in 1980s and defines nature as 'natural environment', urge for protection and preservation of natural environment, and focuses on the

representation of non-human nature and wilderness in British and American literature.

The second wave, started in the mid-1990s, embraces urban landscapes, multicultural voices and multiple genres in addition to rural scapes and wilderness.

The third wave starts in 2000. This movement explores all aspects of human experience in terms of environment, takes into account of a 'diversity of voices', and contributes to the understanding of the human relationship to the planet. Ecocriticism of this period, being an umbrella concept, consists of diverse themes such as eco-cosmopolitanism, neo-bioregionalism (as exemplified in Tom Lynch's X*erophilia,* 2008), eco-masculism, green quer theory, material ecofeminism, animality and posthumanism (Rangarajan 10).

The fourth wave, started in 2012, focuses on the fundamental materiality of environmental things, places, process, forces and experiences.

Timothy Clark (2011), Greg Garrard (2009), Ursula, K. Heise (2006), Serenella Iovino (2014), Richard Kerridge (1998). Jean-Francois Lyotard (2000), Bill McKibben (2010), Joseph Meeker (1972), Timothy Morton (2007), Patrik D. Murphy (1998), Scott Slovic (2010, 2015), Kate Soper (1995), Raymond Williams (1983) all have contributed and developed the theory and practice of ecocriticism.

Theory of Eco-feminism:

The theory of ecofeminism has developed in the 1970s and came into the fore after the publication of Rachel Carson's (1907-1964) *The Silent Spring* in 1962. It emerged alongside environmental and other political and resistance movements. The term 'ecofeminism' was first coined in Francoise d' Eaubonne's (1920-2005) *Le feminisme ou la mort* in 1974. The tenets of ecofeminism establish an affirmative and close relationship of women with nature. The ecofeminists believe that the

female reproductive role and mothering nature have placed the women closer to the rhythm of nature. Sexism and naturism are inseparable. Obviously oppression of women is directly linked with the oppression of nature. Arpita Mukhopadhyay puts it in her book *Feminisms* (2016) as,

> To understand the nature of women's oppression one needs to understand the oppression of nature. Since patriarchy is based on dualism-privileging the mind over body, the male over the female, culture over nature – it creates and discriminates against the 'other' of the dyad. Ecofeminism seeks to address this imbalance by connection nature with women. Ecofeminism insists that feminist theory needs to include the ecological perspective, and solutions to ecological problems must address the feminist perspective. (106)

Mary Mellor in *Feminism and Ecology* (1997) defines ecofeminism as,

> Eco-feminism brings together elements of the feminist and the green movement, while at the same time offering a challenge to both. It takes from the green movement the concern about the impact of human activities on the non-human world and from feminism the view of humanity as gendered in ways that subordinate, exploit and oppress women. (1)

Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, the most influential and eminent sociologists, ecofeminists and social activists of the day, condemn the capitalist and patriarchal tendency of imposing sameness and an alienating capitalist culture. They firmly establish that in daily life women share in more activities than men. Shiva and Mies have set examples where women put resistance and protest against the ecological devastation. Shiva refers to the Chipko Movement of 1974 where hundreds of Indian women of Himalayan region hugged or tied themselves with the trees to prevent the felling of the indigenous trees, as they considered those trees an

integral to their subsistence economy. The movement was a female-dominated environmental movement and put the Western model of development in question.

Indigenous Identity:

More than seven billion people live on earth today, but no two of them are alike in any respect. We live in small groups, we live in large and we live in many colours. We wear different clothes, possess different ideas, have different perceptions of life and gather variety of experiences. We differ in languages, in religions, in environments and climates, in wealth and status. At present the people of our country speak in more than twenty major languages, practise more than six religions and belong to a wide variety of racial groups. We practice different symbols, customs, rituals and learn different values. Inspite of all these differences, India has been maintaining its integrity since long before and after gaining independence from the British in 1947. 'Unity in Diversity', the cardinal point of Indian history above every thing else, is the only self-emanating binding force behind this coherence.

On the other, cultural differences, communal separatism, urge for jobs and political power, competition among the groups for social status etc. and above all the very survival of human beings have given birth to many bitter and violent struggles since long and continue even today in different parts of the country.

Anthropologists, social activists, academicians, and the rulers across the world have been working in this field as of their own and attempting to resolve the crisis in many ways as it is not a problem of India alone, it is the problem of the whole world.

Indigenous identity constitutes truly a complex and controversial domain to discuss. The indigenous people live all over the world. More than three hundred seventy million of them are spread across seventy countries. In India, according to

Census 2011, total Scheduled Tribe (S.T) population is more than one hundred four million and there are more than seven hundred tribes spreading over thirty states of our country. They practise 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.

The tribals live in forests, hilly and mountainous places and deep valleys. They are called by various names such as ‘primitives’, ‘animists’, ‘jungle people’, ‘adivasis’ and ‘aboriginals’. Ranganath (2014) has argued that tribals in India have originated from five language families such as Andamans, Austro-Asiatic, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman and Indo – Aryan. It is also important to point out that those tribals who belong to different language families live in distinct geographical regions. They are noticed to live in the following five territories.

1. The Himalayan belt which covers Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura, hills of U.P. and Himachal Pradesh.
2. Central India which contains Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh, 55% of total population lives in this area.
3. Western India which includes Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa, Dadra and Nagar Haveli.
4. The Dravidian region containing Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
5. Andaman, Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands.

Considering their racial or ethnic background, A. Kumar in his book *Tribal Development in India* (2002) has categorised the Indian tribes into three stocks

namely, the Negritos, the Mongoloids and the Mediterranean. Negritos, believed to be earliest inhabitants of Indian Pennisula, have almost disappeared. A very few of this category might be traced at present in the Andaman and Nicobar islands and Kerala where they are known as Onges, the Great Andamanese, the Jarwas, the Kadars, the Irulars and the Paniyans. Mongoloid race, subdivided into Palaeo Mongoloid and Tibeto Mongoloid, is found in the Sub-Himalayan region. Tribals of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland are Palaeo Mongoloid and those of Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh belong to Tibeto Mongoloid group. Most of the tribals of India fall under the category of Mediterranean race, who are generally called 'Dravidians'. Dravidian is also the name of the language spoken by the people of this category. They spread over the Chhotanagpur Plateau, the Rajmahal Hills region, the Aravali Ranges, the Central Vindhyachal, the Decan Plateau region and the Nilgiri Hills. The Dravidians are subdivided into two stocks – Kolarian and Dravidian proper. The Mundas, the Santhals, the Oraons and the other tribes inhabiting in Chhotanagpur region constitute the Kolarian race and they speak in Mundari dialect. The Dravidian proper includes the languages of Tamil, Telegu, Malayalam and Kannada. They live in the Central Vidhayanchal and the Decan Plateau. The Nordic people speaking in Aryan languages are generally called Aryan. They entered into the Indian Peninsula from the North-West. The two races and civilisations, the Dravidian and the Aryan, went on through fierce struggles over thousands and thousands of years. The Dravidians who were defeated were forced to accept the slavish conditions of the 'Sudras'. The 'Varna' system started. A few others who did not surrender to the Aryans flew to the forest and remote areas to live an independent life of their own. They are supposed to be the forerunners of different tribes in India. Then came the Persians, the Greeks, the Sakas, the Huns,

the Arabians, the Iranians and some other normadic stocks. Then Mughals invaders appeared in the eighth century and lastly the British. The history of India thus traversed a long path. The British rule lasted upto 1947, and through a long persistent struggle India obtained the status of a nation-state on 15th August 1947. During the whole period of struggle for independence, India was in the process of 'making of a nation'. Now we shall concentrate on the general overview of the academics, social and political, scientific, anthropological perspectives on indigenous identity (247-248).

We differ in religion, culture, gender, ethnicity, race, language, profession and nationality. At the same time each of us is rarely identified in a single category, rather is possessed with multiple identities. But to identify one as an 'indigenous' person is to add some additional layers which bring complexities and considerations as to which nation/class/ community/clan one belongs to, whether one is migrated to urban area or is a village dweller.

The indigenous communities themselves can best answer the question 'who is indigenous?' The World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) in 1977 passed a resolution in its second general assembly declaring that 'only indigenous peoples could define indigenous peoples'. Since then the 'self-identification' policies are in force in the indigenous nations. These peoples are provided with an unlimited right to 'self identification' by International Labour Organisation (ILO) also.

Nationalist scholar Anthony D. Smith in his article on "When is a Nation?", published in *Geopolitics* no.7 (2002) asserts that, "A crucial element in the formation of nations is the process of self-identification as distinct cultural populations through naming and self-definition".

The construction of indigenous identity is at a cross-road on the debate over establishing definitional standards versus and unlimited right of self-identification. The practitioners and academics could not reach to a consensus definition. Both the concepts have some genuine limitations. Imposition of strict requiring norms set by definitional stands might lead to exclusion of some indigenous groups from their very needs and most indigenous beliefs also, on the other, unlimited right of self-identification might indulge other ethnic groups to obtain 'indigenous' status in order to come under the preview of internal legal status and protections as advocated of by the 'Draft Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' and ILO treaty No. 169. In the thirteenth session of WGIP (21 June, 1995), it was noted that some participants claiming status as indigenous were not in fact so (e.g. the South African delegations who are actually the decendants of Dutch settlers and collonised the nation claim to be 'indigenous').

Frank Wilmer, in her pioneering work, *The Indigenous Voice in World Politics* (1993), in the field of social science, made critical examinations on the global historical process of moral exclusion undertaken by the Western colonial powers against the indigenous peoples, and has considered the indigenous peoples as 'peoples' in its broader sense and defined 'indigenous' as peoples,

> 1. With tradition-based cultures;
>
> 2. Who were politically autonomous before colonization?
>
> 3. Who, in the aftermath of colonization and/ or decolonization, continue to struggle for the preservation of their cultural integrity, economic self-reliance, and political independence by resisting the assimilationist policies of nation-states? (27)

Corntassel (2003) has claimed that the above three core components of indigenous identity provide maximum flexibility while identified with near about 5000 indigenous groups worldwide. But this definition has some limitations while asserting deference between the indigenous groups in terms of their cultural world views compared with other minority groups all over the world. This definition has been revised by the author himself with his co-author Alfred, laying emphasis on the importance of geographic homelands and evolving cultural traditions. In the book *Indigenous People, States and Conflict* (1997) they put the revised definition as,

> 1. They are decended from the original inhabitants of the geographic areas they continue to occupy; hence, they are aboriginal;
>
> 2. They wish to live in conformity with their continuously evolving cultural traditions;
>
> 3. They do not now control their political destiny, and consequently, are frequently subjected to policies arising from the cultural hegemony originally imposed by an 'outside' force.
>
> This definition also suffers from some drawbacks marked in part 3 where it is conceived that lack of 'control' is part of being indigenous. (Corntassel, Alfred 27)

S. James Anaya in her book *Indigenous Peoples in International Law* (1996) has advocated of a more inclusive definition of indigenous peoples as:

> The living decendants of pre-invasion inhabitants of lands now dominated by others.... They are *indigenous* because their ancestral roots are imbedded in the lands in which they live, or would like to live, much more deeply than the roots of more powerful sectors of society living on the same lands or in close proximity. Furthermore, they are *peoples* to the extent they comprise

distinct communities with a continuity of existence and identity that links them to communities, tribes or nations of their ancestral past. (3)

The continued colononial domination of indigenous homelands along with the ancestral roots of these 'pre-invasion inhabitants' has been emphasized in this definition.

Political scientist Fred Riggs, on the topic "Who is Indigenous? A Conceptual Inquiry", proceeded from panel discussion on ethnic nationalism at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Toronto, 18-21 March 1997, has included four variables to define indigenous peoples as:

1. Cultural level, ranging from primitive to more complex societies;
2. Historical sequence (age), who came first and who followed;
3. Political position (power), i.e. marginalized vs. dominant communities; and
4. Geographic area (place).

Though this definition has some similarities with those of Alfred, Wilmer and Anaya, these variables do not consider the changing community values and traditions.

The Inter Governmental Organizations (IGO) such as World Bank group, the WGIP and ILO have critically examined the essential features of indigenous identity to define indigenousness. According to World Bank's original directive (Sept 1999: OD4.20.), indigenous peoples are supposed to possess the following five characteristics:

A. A close attachment to ancestral territories and to the natural resources in these areas;

B. Self- identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group,

C. An indigenous language, often different from the national language;

D. Presence of customary social and political institutions; and

E. Primarily subsistence – oriented production.

This definition encompasses multi faceted aspects of indigenous identity, but the embodiment of the term 'An indigenous language' in Part C posseses some ambiguities as because the studies of Krauss (1992), Nettle and Romaine (2000) have revealed that more than 3000 languages currently spoken in the world may not survive the next century.

Indigenous Organisations, who have consultative status with the United Nations, such as the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) have also defined indigenousness as of their own.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP): This declaration is considered as an instrument of indigenous empowerment. Some critics view it as a sophisticated form of assimilation. The Declaration took more than thirty years in its making. Many indigenous international leaders, many tribal groups, activists, diplomats from around the world attended international conventions and meeting starting in the 1970, looked for international help for addressing and recognizing the indigenous issues as they felt that indigenous nations were not getting acceptable economic, political and cultural freedom from within most nation-states. All these issues were raised in the UN. After a long deliberation passing through many channels and committees with UN, the United nations General Assembly passed the Declaration on September 13, 2007. The Declaration

was passed not because all issues were solved; rather, it passed over the objections of four nation-states and the non-voting and absentee votes of other nation-states. It consists of forty six Articles, which I have discussed very briefly.

Article – 1: All human rights and fundamental freedoms should be enjoyed by the indigenous peoples at par with all other people.

Article – 2: No discrimination should be made in the practice of their rights.

Article – 3: All sorts of development such as economic, social and cultural should be based on their needs.

Article – 4: They are at liberty to form the self-government in matters relating to internal and local affairs and solving problems.

Article – 5: They have the right to maintain distinct economic, social, cultural, political and legal institutions.

Article – 6: Every indigenous person should possess a nationality.

Article – 7: They have the rights to their own life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security, and also have the collective right to live in peace, freedom. They shall not be subjected to any kind of violence, act of genocide etc.

Article – 8: They are not to be subjected to forced assimilation or alienation of their culture. States shall take effective machineries for the prevention of actions like – depriving them of their integrity, cultural values, ethnic identity: dispossessing them of their lands, resources; racial and ethnic discrimination etc.

Article – 9: They have the right to belong to an indigenous community or nation.

Article – 10: They shall not be removed from their lands and forest forcibly. Without their consent no relocation shall be arranged, fair and just compensation and agreement will take place in question of relocation.

Article – 11: To nurture and practice ones own culture, customs i.e. artifacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies, arts and literature is the right of each indigenous individual.

Article – 12: They have the right to cultivate their own religious and spiritual traditions.

Article – 13: They have the authority to retain their tradition, culture, histories, languages, philosophies, oral and writing systems, literatures etc. to their future generation. States shall take effective machineries for the protection of their own tradition and culture and help them to understand political, legal, administrative proceedings.

Article – 14: They have the authority to control their education system, own language and to follow their own method of teaching and learning. States must ensure their access to education.

Article – 15: Indigenous people have the right to maintain dignity and diversity of their traditions and cultures.

Article – 16: They have the right to their own media by their own language. State-owned medias also show indigenous cultural diversity.

Article – 17: They have the liberty to enjoy fully all rights under international and domestic labour law. States should take steps to protect indigenous children from economic exploitation and from any type of harmful acts which may affect their physical, mental, spiritual, moral health and social development.

Article – 18: They have the right to develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

Article – 19: States must co-operate and consult with them in order to obtain their free prior and informed consent before implementing legislative or administrative measures.

Article – 20: They have the authority to maintain and develop their social, economic and political institutions to engage freely in their traditional and economic activities.

Article – 21: They have the authority to improve their economic and social system in the domain of education, employment, housing, sanitation health and social security. States shall take needful steps to ensure their improvement in these areas.

Article – 22: Effective measures should be taken for particular attention to the rights and needs of the indigenous elders, children, women and disabled persons. States shall ensure the protection of women and children.

Article – 23: They have the rights of determining and developing strategies for nurturing their health, housing, economic and social programme.

Article – 24: Indigenous people are provided with the right of maintaining and developing their traditional medicines and health practices.

Article – 25: They have the authority to utilise and strengthen their lands, territories, waters, coastal seas, other resources along with their spiritual relationship.

Article – 26: They have the rights to control, occupy and won the lands, forests, territories where they live and to use the natural resources which they have accrued. Traditional status shall be given protection and legal recognition to these lands, forests, territories and resources.

Article – 27: States shall maintain a fair and free process in recognizing their laws, traditions, customs etc.

Article – 28: They must be given the proper compensation for their lands, forests, territories or resources in case of any kind of restitution or regress.

Article – 29: They have the right of protection and conservation of the productive capacity of their lands, forests, territories and resources. States shall take necessary steps for arranging the programs for monitoring the development and implementation of their conservation and protection.

Article – 30: States and country shall not indulge in any military activities in the areas and territories of the indigenous peoples.

Article – 31: They have the right to maintain their cultural and traditional heritage and knowledge.

Article – 32: They have the authority to determine and develop the priorities and strategies for the use of their land, territories and resources.

Article – 33: The indigenous peoples have the right of deterring their dentity along with their own procedures.

Article – 34: They have the authority to maintain their institutional structures, distinctive customs, traditions etc.

Article – 35: They have the right to determine the responsibilities of every individuals to their communities.

Article – 36: Indigenous peoples who are divided by international borders have the right to maintain contacts, relations and cooperation's with their own members as well as with others across borders.

Article – 37: They have the right to maintain observance of their land, territories resources.

Article – 38: States shall take necessary steps for the achievement of the Resolution with the consultation and co operation of the Indigenous peoples.

Article – 39: They have the right to enjoy the financial and technical assistance from the states for the successful utilization of their rights listed in this Resolution.

Article – 41: The mobilization of intergovernmental agencies and specialized agencies shall contribute to the realization of this Declaration. The involvement of the Indigenous peoples shall be ensured.

Article – 42: All states shall sustain the full respect for the application of the issues of the Declaration.

Article – 43: All the recognized rights of this Declaration build the minimum standards for survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the world.

Article – 44: In this Declaration all mentioned rights are equally applicable for both the male and female indigenous.

Article – 45: In this Declaration nothing may be interpreted in extinguishing the rights of the Indigenous peoples.

The UNDRIP has attempted to present the indigenous issues at international level and paved the way for a possible solution. Though this declaration is not supported by law, yet it has raised the moral standard of the indigenous peoples' organizations who are fighting for their issues. The declaration also acknowledges internationally the existence of indigeneity.

Indigenous People's Associations:

1. IWGIA – International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs.

Established in 1968 in Denmark as a non-profit organization which is based on global human rights and dedicated to promoting, protecting, endorsing and defending indigenous peoples' rights in particular. This organization has its head office in Copenhagen. The main concern of the IWGIA is redressing the theats imposed by the rapid development of industries and settlements to the indigenous groups inhabiting in the Amazon Basin.

IWGIA has arranged three regional programmes on Africa, Latin America and Asia. Its human rights programme voiced on the involvement of the indigenous peoples in international human rights mechanisms. IWGIA publishes its yearbook 'The Indigenous World' and so many reports, papers, manuals and videos.

2. FPcN – Friends of Peoples close to Nature.

Established in 1991 in Germany as a non-governmental organization it is working in the field of indigenous rights. It has documented several films on the struggles of the indigenous peoples of West Papua, New Guinea like Papua Merdeka, West Papua – The Secret war in Asia etc. fPcN shows that the sufferings of the indigenous peoples are lying in the imposition of the foreign interests.

3. MRG – Minority Rights Group International.

In over 60 (sixty) countries along with 130 (hundred and thirty) partners, this organization campaigns to ensure that the indigenous peoples and the disadvantaged minorities can make their voices heard.

It is an international human rights organization. Their headquarters are in London and have offices in Budapest and Kampala. With the United Nations Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc) it maintains a consultative status and with the African Commission on Human and people's Rights it maintains an observer status. It is working with the mission to secure rights for national, ethnic, linguistic, religious minorities and indigenous peoples.

4. FPP - Forest People Programme

It is a non-governmental global organization, founded in 1990 in UK. It has its headquarter in Moreton-in Marsh, UK. This organization focuses on indigenous peoples' rights, tropical forests and community-based forest management issues. It works with the aboriginal and forest peoples of South America, Africa and Asia.

The mission of this organization is to secure the rights of the indigenous peoples, who live in forests and depend on forest for livelihoods. It also helps them in buiding up their own organizations, negotiating with governments and companies, controlling their land and deciding their own futures. FPP works to realize indigenous and forest peoples' right to self-determination which is made explicitly clear in the UNDRIP in Articles 3 and 4. FPP also produces many publications, manuals, papers, reports, news articles etc.

5. ACT – Amazon Conservation Team

In 1996 ACT was founded as non-governmental and non-profit organization by an ethno botanist Dr. Mark Plotkin and a Costa-Rican conservationist Liliana Madrigal. It is working with the indigenous peoples of tropical South America in conserving the biodiversity of the Amazon rainforest. In recognition of their achievements ACT received the United Nations Environment Programme Global 500 Award in 2002. In partnership with the government and local tribal people ACT establishes two protected areas of reserve (Caqueta Department and Putumayo Department).

6. WRM – World Rainforest Movement

This is an international NGO which was founded in 1986. Its main executive office is located in Montevideo, Uruguay and its European Support office is based in and hosted by FERN (a Dutch organization of 1996, focuses on forests, climate change, indigenous rights etc.) and Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) in United Kingdom. This Indigenous People's Group network is involved in the work of defending the world's tropical forests against the external forces that destroy them. It also defends the rights of the forest-dwelling communities and tribes. This organization supports the indigenous people's efforts to save their forest from outside attacks like

commercial logging, mining, dams, shrimp farms, colonization and other threatening projects.

7. GFC – Global Forest Coalition

It is a union of 15-20 NGOs and Indigenous peoples organizations related to forest. This organization is established in 2000 by 19 groups. The mission of this coalition is to promote the rights of forest peoples along with the causes of deforestation and forest degradation. The United Nations Forum on forests, the Framework Convention on climate change and the convention on biological diversity – are the three principal targets of this coalition.

Apart from the above mentioned International Indigenous Peoples' Association there are also some other remarkable regional associations, one such is given below–

1. IPACC – The Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee

As a trans-national networking organization IPACC was founded in 1997. Though in 2008, it was made of ISO member organization in twenty one African countries. IPACC focuses on human rights standards which are noted in the UN Declaration and in the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP).

Markers/Demonstrations of indigenous identity:

Language is one of the most significant cultural markers of identification of indegenous people. It is the most efficient and powerful means of transmitting a culture. Ngugi (2005) in his article "Homecoming Address" published in *The Nairoby Journal of Literature* remarks,

> Language is power. Language has power to upset, uproot, and shackle ... which may explain why much post-colonial writing reveals the continuing struggle over the word. If you name the world, you own it. If you are

> dominated, you see the world through the eyes of conqueror, effectively burying your memory under the conqueror's memory. (41)

The history tied up in a language will go unrecorded and will be silenced forever. Topfer (1999) says, "Loss of a language is, therefore, a loss of the original ethnic and cultural identity."

Clothing or dressing is another marker of indigeneity. Eating, drinking, cooking and above all the food habits help in identifying the tribes and these are considered as the indubitable markers of indigeneity. Gerhard Stilz (2009) has considered the myths and historical beliefs, local customs and festival, music in the shape of dances and folk-song as tribal property and efficient demonstrations of indigenous identity (22-23).

Artworks of the individuals, of the races and their traditional architecture point to another important marker of cultural identity. One fine example may be cited here. 'Khajuraho', situated in Madhya Pradesh, is over thousand years old shrine carrying 'old traditions of the Chandelas' related to the tribes of Madha Pradesh namely the Bhars, the Gonds and the Baigas. The artistic works and expressions of the tribes exhibit something exquisitely unsophisticated or supremely sophisticated. According to Hugh and Colleen Gantzer ('The Beacon of Liberalism', the Speaking Tree, The Times of India, Kol, May 13, 2018) the murals carved on the walls resemble the Zoo Cave in the Stone Age Bhimbetka. The modern artists like Picasso and Brancusi had tried to replicate such wellsprings of art, but the tribal museum captured it in all its original vitality. They have iterated that Khajuraho showcases the most liberal culture that India, and possibly the world, has ever known. And here lies the aesthetics of tribal identity.

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. A team comprising of the local members amongst the tribals would work. 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. The process, techniques and the methodologies he used for the collection of folk-materials were based on the guiding principle – the principle of love for the tribals in particular and love for the people in general. 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.

In *The Aboriginals*, Verrier (1944) openly admitted that he had the opportunity to get copies of works of his predecessors in this field like W.V. Grigson's *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* (1938), Russel and Hiralal's *Tribe and Castes of the Central Provinces* (1916), Rev.S. Hislaps papers relating to aboriginal tribes of the Central Provinces edited by Sir Richard Temple in 1866, Miss Frere's *Old*

Decan Days, Dalton's *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* in 1883, Crooke's (probably the best folklorist) *North Indian Notes and Queries* in 1890, Rev. A. Campbell and Rev.J.H. Knowles' stories from among Santal and Kashmiris, R.S. Mukherjee's *Indian Folklore*, Rev. C. Swynnerton's *Romantic Tales from the Punjab*, C.H. Bompas's translation and publication in 1909 of admirable collection made from among the Santal by Rev.P.O. Bodding, M. Cullock's *Bengali Household Tales* and Parker's three-volume collection of *Village Folk-tales of Ceylon*, the most important work and indicating many parallels in the world during First World War, Penzer's ten-volume edition of Tawney's *Katha Sarit Sagara*, brilliant works of M.Bloomfield and Sarat Chandra Roy's books, and the various recensions of the *Vetalpancavincati*, of the *Vikramacharita*, didactic and parabolic fables of the 'Panchatantra - Jataka' type (ix-x).

F.Boas in his book *Race, Language and culture* (1948) has considered folktales primarily and fundamentally as works of 'primitive art' (400).

E.B. Taylor (1873) has suggested that myths were primitive ethnology expressed in poetic form. Verrier himself has considered myths as primitive philosophy or metaphysical thought.

The indigeneity of the tribal people is reflected in their oral literatures or folk-lores such as myths, folk-tales, ballads, songs, art, etc. The literary and non-literary works of Verrier present that indigeneity uniquely. He is the pioneer in this field. Prior to him neither any Indian nor any European thinker or academician has represented the indigeneity of the tribals so prodigiously, so profoundly, so honestly and so sincerely as he has portrayed. Folk-lores may be divided into material folklores and non-material folk-lores. Hunting, fishing, agriculture, pottery, carpentary, masonary, spinning, weaving etc. are included in material folk-lore. Non

material folk-lore consists of folk-poetry, folk- narratives, folk - science and folk arts. Folk-poetry consists of folk-song, ballad, epic, rhyme. By folk-narratives we mean folk-tales, legends, proverbs, beliefs, customs, riddles etc. Technology and medicine are included in folk science. Folk-arts cover material arts, recreational arts, ritualistic arts etc.

Folktales are the traditional beliefs, stories and customs of a community passed on by the word of mouth. These carry the past tradition and culture of a race. W.J. Thomas, in 1846, introduced first the term Folklore. It is said in general that Jacob Greem made scientific study and discussions on it. Different scholars have expressed different views on this subject. Maxmuller has explained the folktales as products of nature. J.J. Frezer has made comparative study of the primitive and popular tales and emphasised that these are interdependent and explanatory. Sir L.Gomer believed that folktale stands on historical perspectives. Malinouski and Radkliff Brown considered folk-tales as essential and indispensable part of a living culture. Everywhere in the world folktales have spread over from mouth to mouth of women. Folk tales, in general, are the stories of fairies, ghosts and animals. Grand fathers and Grand mothers tell these fairy tales to their grandsons and grand daughters for generation after generation. Though the stories have no base in reality, they are very touchy and humanistic and most of them end in emotional morality. K. Krishnamurthy has said, "It is obvious that *The Ramayana* of Valmiki and *The Mahabharata* by Vyasa are the two premier epics in Sanskrit coming under unwritten or oral category" (Hembram 19).

Elwin's big size monograph *The Tribal Myths of Orissa* (1954) of 699 pages contains nearabout thousand of stories of tribes of Orissa viz. Bondos, Gadabas, Murias, Konds, Brinjhwars, Gonds, Bhattras, Jhorias, Pengus, Juangs, Kamars,

Koyas, Parengas, Saoras etc. The stories possess both similarity and distinctiveness in regards to contexts and textures. The stories deal with the creation of man, its reproductive system, its diseases, its soul and dream and coming of deaths, social institutions of man covering marriage institutions, beginning of religion, self governments, magic and witchcraft, origin of caste and tribes, domestic life of man including discovery of fire, houses and furnitures, clothes, ornaments and tattooing, agriculture, hunting, fishing, dance and songs for recreation etc. 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 these stories are their love for the children and their casteless society. The Jhoria love of dancing has been reflected in a number of stories of Maidens dance into the sky and the cloud – god is so delighted that it will not allow them to return to the earth. According to Verrier, the dance is perhaps the fundamental element of Jhoria culture; it controls their everyday life in all respects. In the Saora stories no. 15 of chapter xxv (529) and nos. 9, 11, 13, and 15 of chapter xxvii (541-544) we observe the following features and aesthetics of Saora identity as examined by Verrier. 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 decended from a common male ancestor. Their religion is elaborate, male and female shamans as well as priests have great influences. The spirits of the ancestral deeds and the tutelaries are believed to live in the unseen world and enter into frequent and intimate relations with the living. They believe in the identity of Supreme Being.

Verrier's *Myths of the North-East Frontier of India* (1958) covers the stories of the creation of the world, creation of sun and moon, causes of thunder and lightning and earthquake, arising of first man, domestic life of men, discovery of fire, beginnings of religion, thread of disease and the coming of death. It also includes the story of the world of animals namely arthropodes, frogs, leeches and fishes, reptiles, birds and mammals.

Most of the tales are original and the common motifs of Indian folk-lore are seen to be absent. The external influence such as the echo of *The Ramayana* and that of Jataka Tales will be noticed in some of the myths. Generally the myths are told on a variety of occasions. Some are chanted during the dance, some are repeated in ceremonies, some at a funeral or to save the life of a child, some are told round the fire. Verrier viewed that the myths seemed to be the genuine products of tribal creativity and imagination and those relating to the creation of the world, the sky and the heavenly bodies bear an almost Miltonic grandeur of conception. Some stories express the strong sense of beauty and love and of bright colours of flowers of the people of NEFA. We shall cite some stories and try to show how uniquely Verrier has represented the aesthetics of tribal identity and its magnificent features reflected in these stories collected and reproduced by him.

The Hill Miri and Galong stories regarding the creation of the world manifest a motif that a world is made from a human sacrifice rather than from a divine transformation, and also a poetic imagination. Hrusso (Aka) Story (15) and Khamptis tale (17) speak of a cosmic egg where from Earth and sky were born. Sky made love to the Earth and every kind of tree, grass and all living creatures came into being. The Miltonic Love is manifested here. The stories have resemblance with the sayings of the Atharva Veda, which describes the earth as the base of the highest Bramha; the air is his belly, the sky his head, the sun and moon his eyes, fire his mouth and wind his breathing. The sayings of The Aitareya Upanishad describe how fire comes from the mouth of the war persons, from the nostrils the wind, from the eyes the sun, form the heart the moon, from his naval death, from his male generative organ water.

The Agaria, one of Verrier's noted monographs, deals with the origin of the Agaria tribe, character of the Agaria, division and totemism of the Agaria, their myths, magic and crafts, the economics and decay or collapse of an industry written in the light of intimate personal knowledge and deep sympathy of the author. According to author's own words, "The marriage of 'myth and craft' is the central theme of the book and gives *The Agaria* great significance. If this book lacks the intimate human touches of *The Baiga* that is due to the character of the people" (ii).

Though it is not possible to say exactly when iron was first produced and worked in India researchers and historians viewed that uses of iron started about 2000 B.C. in many parts of the World viz. Egypt, India, China, Arab, Abyssinia, Spain and Rome. They would produce iron from the native ore by using their primitive methods of smelting. The ancient smelting industry i.e. the clay furnaces have greatly declined but still may be found in many parts of India, in Bengal and

Bihar, in the Santal Parganas, Monghyr, Sambalpur and Orissa, in the Kumaon Hills; in Mysore, in the districts of Malabar, in Salem and Trichinopoly; in Hyderabad; in several states of central India and Rajputana; and above all in the Central Provinces, as described by Elwin.

The Baiga (1939) is one of the finest and voluminous monographs of Verrier containing five hundred fifty pages and twenty two chapters which cover the whole of the life of an indigenous tribe. The Baiga, distributed in the regions viz. Jubbulpore, Mandla, Senoi, Chhinduara, Nagpur, Balaghat, Raipur, Bilaspur, Bastar, Kanker, Raigarh, Udaipur, Korea and Durg with Mandla district as its centre. According to 1931 census, near about 40,000 Baiga people lived in India. Verrier has mentioned, in the preface of this book,

> The Baiga tribe is one of the few remaining in the Central Provinces of India that has not yet been greatly affected by civilization. Neither the propaganda of Christian missions nor the influence of Hindu culture has touched a people who may still be described, in Forsyth's words, as 'less raised above the condition of the mere hunting savage than any, and clinging to the most secluded solitudes.' No Indian tribe can be altogether unaffected by the prevailing Hindu civilization, yet on the whole it is astonishing what little effect this has had upon the Baiga's mind. (xxvii)

Here I have provided glossary because of the understanding of some important cultural registers which are incorporated in the core arguments of the works.

Glossary

Animal ballet:

It is a type or style of dancing where movements are well organised and expressed through a dramatic story. A group of ballet dancers perform this art work with the

help of a music set. The tribes use drums and other primitive music instruments where as the modern artists use pianos and such others; but talking and singing are restrained. It may be considered as a theatre work. Among the American Indians and tribes all over the world this type of dancing is in vogue. The speciality of this performance lies in the movements of the animals such as deer, pig, lion, bear, tortoise, hen, birds (owl, swan), elephant etc. That is why this type of ballet dance is called animal ballet. 'Swan Lake' is one of the great classical ballets. It is also 'carnival of the animals'. We may refer to Saint- Saens's 1886 suite and Christopher Wheeldon's 2003 ballets, which have won international fame in the field of animal ballets. French Romantic composer Camille Saint-Saens introduced this ballet in 1886, called 'The Carnival of the Animals' and performed the artwork with an assemble of two pianos, two violins, viola, cello, double brass, flute clarinet, glass harmonica and xylophone. It is a humorous musical suite of fourteen movements of animals such as hens and roosters, tortoises, elephants etc.

Agaria:

The Agaria are the iron-smelters and blacksmiths of the Central Provinces of India, They are mostly found in the Maikal Hills and Bilaspur. The Agaria tribes are known by different names and are other confused with Agaria cultivators and Lohar, the Hindu blacksmiths. Verrier suggested that though they were known by different names in different places, they were ultimately one tribe. The Agaria and the Asur were descendants of a tribe which was represented by the Asura of Sanskrit literature. Dr. Reuben, (1926) then professor of Sanskrit in the Ankara University, also expressed same views (147). Agaria myths are most interesting and lie at the root of social relations. The myths have great influences on the religious and economic structure of their society. The Agaria are a pleasant and mediocre race.

Colonel Ward (1867) (cited from *The Agaria*, 13) observed that they were the laziest and the most drunken of the Gonds, which Verrier has contradicted, as because the long tramp through the forest, the cutting of trees, tedious and smoky business of making charcoal were hard works. All over the world, primitive peoples regard the blacksmith with a mixture of fear and reverence. Their very power of making Virgin Iron is behind it. The people all over the world believed that the Virgin Iron had a magical power to resist ghost and evil spirits. The Agaria and their neighbours used iron at birth, during marriage ceremony and at times of death and mourning to get protection against the evil spirits. The preparation of Virgin Iron by the Agaria is very fascinating. First of all green trees are cut, fire and incense are offered to it and charcoal is prepared. Now the iron is dug from a Virgin pit. Before starting to dig, black virgin goat or pig is offered to the iron-god, a bottle of liquor, a 'dhitori'-basket and an axe are offered to the 'raksa' (the ghost of an unmarried man), a black hen to Dharti Mata (Mother Earth). Then wheat cakes cooked between two leaves are placed on the pit. After these offerings have been made, a virgin or an unmarried boy digs the pit. The ore is brought back to the smithy. A virgin girl breaks it up into small pieces, and she herself must pour the first lot of ore from the winnowing-fan into the furnace and must work the bellows. They preserve the Virgin very carefully and it has become a 'Reserved Sacrament' for these simple people. The theory and practice of Agaria magic and the Agaria myth of origin of witchcraft follow the Baiga pattern with some little variations. The aboriginal iron had brought the law of plenty to the jungle; on the contrary, the civilized iron is bringing the law of jungle to the lands of plenty.

Baiga:

The Baiga has been described as the wildest of the tribes. They live in the remotest forests and inaccessible hilly areas. They live on the small crops and forest produce which they yield with their bows and arrows. They wear small strip of clothes; they are very black and slim with coal-black hair. Forsyth (1871), Thomson (1867), Colonel Bloomfield (1885), Russel and Hiralal (1916) have given vivid descriptions about the Baigas covering many aspects. They are spread all over the Central Provinces such as Chhattisgarh, Mandla and Maikal range of Balaghat, Chota Nagpur , Baihar, Niwas, Rewa, etc. The Baigas are argued to be a branch of the great Bhuniya tribe, who are also called Bhumija. Bhuniya or Bhumija implies 'lords of the soil'. The name Baiga also means a sorcerer or medicine-man. At that time the priest would serve as medicine - man. Accordingly, the Baigas were called the priests of all other tribes. S.C. Roy (1935) has classified the Baiga as a Munda or Kolarian tribe. The Baiga is an endogamous tribe. Marriage with other tribes are accepted sometimes after performing appropriate rites. This tribe is divided into a number of more or less endogamous 'jāt'. Intermarriage within the members of some jāt are allowed and within some others are prohibited. Colonel Bloomfield has mentioned about three jāts or castes namely Binjhwar, Narotia and Bharotia. Russel pointed out to seven–Binjhwar, Bharotia, Narotia, Raibhania, Kathbhaina, Kondwan or Kundi, and Gondwaina. Verrier has extended the list with another three jats namely Kuraka Baiga, the Sawat Baiga and the Duhd-bhaina (5). Each jāt considers itself superior to all others. The most remarkable characteristic of Baiga endogamy is its caste-system which prevails in the Hindu society. J.H. Hutton in his preface to the book has claimed that this was not a loan from Hinduism, on the contrary, the reverse might had happened. Hypergamous practices were frequently found among

the sub castes (jāts) of the Baiga, where wives were take not given. After marriage the wife was to sever all connections with her own group. A comparative tolerance of incest is another important feature of Baiga sex relations. To marry within the exogamous group and intercourse with a mother, a step–mother or a parent-in-law were considered as a venial sin and was convicted in some horror, but at the sametime, that sin would be attoned for by a four-day-fast and liquor worth rupees five.

The most significant characteristic of the Baiga identity is its cult of *Beware* cultivation, or shifting cultivation. This shifting cultivation was practiced widely in the forests of South America, in Africa, in Mauritius, in Melanesia and the Atlantic Islands, in Assam, in Ceylon and in the forests of South and Central India. The 'dahi' and 'Koman' cultivation of the Bhuiya of Orissa, the 'Penda' of Bastar Maria, the 'jhum' of Assam hill tribes, the 'podu' of the Khond tribes of Jeypore, the 'taungya' of Burmal hill tribes – all are similar to shifting cultivation of the Baiga with some little variations. First of all the Baiga family would select a suitable site in the forest. Then all the trees, bushes and shrubs were cut and placed in heaps round the trees. After a month or two when they were dry, they were burnt to ashes. The ashes were spread over the piece of land. Land was dug up with only axe and small sickle and levelled. In the ashes they would sow seeds like kodon, koodke and some specimen of rice. At harvest they would make special offerings to their god and goddess, the same land would be used at the interval of two, three, four or even eight years.

The driving of plough was considered a great sin to them. They refused to plough-cultivation as they believed that to plough the land was to tear the breast of mother earth. The scenario changed after the settlement operations of 1867-1869.

After that they were forced to recourse to plough-cultivation. The rulers and some anthropologists believed that the bewar cultivation had caused extensive damage to the forest, eroded land and accelerated deforestation. Verrier criticized this view and supported the shifting cultivation to some extent.

Baiga's customs of hair-dressing and wearing of ornaments carries another distinguished feature which is absent in other tribes. No barber could touch a Baiga's head. They themselves cut their hair. Women did not cut; they had a special method of tying their hair. Baiga women were fond of their little wooden combs. They would never wear nose-ornaments which distinguished them from other tribes. The sexual life of Baiga children was interesting. They grew up free and unrestrained. They were underfed, often diseased, would suffer from itch, yet they had a happy life as because they were free. Their sexual consciousness was developed earlier though they had no children's dormitory (*ghotulghar*) to learn. The parents would not interfere on their pleasures. They considered their children as their gods of the house and they believed that the greatest love in the world was the love of children. The position of women in Baiga society was another distinguished feature of identity. The Baiga women enjoyed great freedom, they could move alone, choose their own husband and change them at will. They owned property, could drink and smoke in presence of their husbands. They would go fishing; cut woods with axe together with their male counterparts. Baiga's concept of the cause and cure of disease was based on supernatural beliefs. As their knowledge in physiology and anatomy was very little, they hardly had any conception of natural infection or contagion. They had no fear of contact with a leper nor they would hesitate to have intercourse with a woman suffering from an acute vaginal disease. Syphilis, gonorrhea and epididymitis were common to them. They believed that

those were the works of witches or evil spirits. Baigas' art of love, art of recreation and the knowledge of legendary past were exclusively of their own which have been reflected in their songs and dances especially in Karma dance, Jharpat dance, Dadariya songs, riddles and games.

Bilma dance:

It is a marriage dance, danced with the big drum called *nangāra*. It is very exciting like the marriage itself, and one of the favourite dances of the Baiga and some other tribes of central India, Orissa, Jharkhand and Bihar. Here the men and the women mix together and when they are sufficient in number they begin to cry "*Kiring, Kiring*", the drums start sounding, the dance is on.

Chelik and Motiari:

In the tribal organisations all over the world where the dormitory systems exist, it is compulsory for all the unmarried boys and girls to be members of these dormitories called ghotuls, morungs etc. In Baster ghotul, called Muria ghotul, as described by Verrier in his *The Muria and their Ghotul* (1947) or *The Kingdom of the Young* (1968), this membership is carefully organised. Unmarried boys and girls are to work in the ghotul as apprentice. After apprenticeship, they are given ghotul names and titles which they are to keep secret. This special title carries with it a graded rank and social duties. As the ghotuls are strictly disciplined, leaders of both the boys and girls are appointed to maintain the discipline. Elwin has mentioned in his books that boy members are known as 'chelik' and girl members are called 'motiari'. The boy's leader is called 'Sirdar' and the girls' leader the 'Belosa'. The relations between chelik and motiari are governed by the type of ghotul they belong to. Cheliks and motiaris are to perform important duties in all social occasions. The

cheliks work as acolytes at festivals and motiaris as bridesmaids at weddings. Verrier has described that both dance before the clan-god at the great fairs, they form a choir at the funerals of important people, their games and dances enliven village life and redeem it from the 'crushing monotony' that is normally present among the tribes of other parts of India. The life of chelik and motiari is strictly regulated and the inner life of chelik and motiary is manifested in ghotul discipline and the punishments given to the offenders.

Dadaria Songs:

The Dadaria or Salho are the true *ban-bhajan* or forest songs. 'Dadaria' is a 'Chhattisgarhi' word. In Chhattisgarh, the Baiga, Gonds and other hill tribes sing this song at work-while they harvest in the paddy fields, while they are on their way to the bazaar. Sometimes during leisure, these are sung round the fire by a group of boys or girls. Young lovers sing to each other, with proposals and elopements arranged in the verse. It is regarded as competitive song in the wedding ceremony and used sometimes as taunt-songs. It is fresh, thrilling and delight to hear as it comes from the the depth of the forest. It is joyous and exciting. Most of the Dadaria verses are short, sometimes many of these verses string together to make a long poem and then they are sung anti-phonally. The first line of the verse refers to familiar objects of countryside where as the second line is always near about love. The singers are more interested in getting a rhyme at the end of the first line, that is why second line of Dadaria has often very little connection with the first. In many Dadaria the last line ends with the word *dos* (friend). Sometimes this is also used as a question-answering song. Arthur Waley (1928), J.H. Hutton (1921), and Verrier have recorded so many Dadaria songs. Verrier has collected fifty Dadaria songs in

The Baiga and some one hundred and fifty eight in *Folk – Songs of the Maikal Hills* (1944).

Ghotul:

Ghotul is a village dormitory. It is a bachelor's hall which the German word calls *Junglingshaus*. Such type of institutions are found among the communities of Austro-Asiatic cultures.

In Hutton Webster's *Primitive Secret Societies* (1908), E.W. Smith and A.M Dale's *The Ila-speaking peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (1920), B. Malinowski's *The sexual life of Savages* (1932), S.E. Peal's *The Communal Barracks of Primitive Races* (1983), S.C. Roy's *The Oraons* (1915), R. Briffault's *The Mothers* (1927), T.C. Hodson's *The Naga Tribes of Manipur* (1911), C. Hose and W. Mc Dougall's *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo* (1912), J. P. Mills' *The Rengma Nagas* (1937), and C. von Fuer–Haimendorf's *The Morung System of the Konyak Nagas in Assam* (1938), we will find traces of village dormitories, ghotuls or morungs and some as men's club. Verrier in his books *The Muria and their Ghotul* (1947) and *The Kingdom of the Young* (1968) has given full account of ghotul and ghotul life of the Muria. Baster ghotul or Muria Ghotul in Madhya Pradesh is really a wonderful and highly developed social organisation in the world. The distinguished features of ghotuls, as outlined by Verrier, may be described as follows:

i) Everywhere in the tribal kingdom, except among the nomadic Australians, special and recognised building or buildings exist for the unmarried young men or lads to sleep in, at times for the women and in many cases for both the sexes together.

ii) Complete liberty between sexes prevail in these communal barracks.

iii) Invariably these barracks are taboo to the married women, whether the tribe or race is exogamic or endogamic.

iv) Conjugal fidelity or juvenile chastity is greater than that of the any more civilized races.

Anthropologists like J. Shakespeare (1912) opines that dormitory was to prevent 'incest' and to save the children from witnessing 'the primal scene'. S.C. Roy (1915) argues that Uraon dormitories of Orissa and some other tribal dormitories help the girls to find suitable husbands. The reasons for establishment of dormitories lie everywhere in the necessity of 'rest - house' for visitors in a village and a tradition of 'hospitality'. Where the society is organised on an age-grade basis, this universal urge leads to form special clubs for the younger people and the unmarried.

Out of two types of Muria ghotul, in the first type, each chelik is paired off with a motiari and he is formally married to her, and divorce is allowed there, though infidelity is punished. In the second type, which is a later development of the first, any kind of lasting attachment is prohibited, no chelik can claim any particular motiari of his own, everyone is everyone's property. To sleep with a particular girl for more than three days is a punishable offence. In respect to discipline, social duties, attitude to sex and love, routine and moral standard there is no difference between these two types of ghotul.

The entry to the ghotul is allowed when the boys and girls attain the stage of going about with other children, form gang and play with them instead of staying at home. After training by the elders, the children are offered ghotul membership. The cheliks and the motiaries are assigned with definite duties to perform in the ghotul. As ghotul is very literally a night-club, the real life of the ghotul starts in the

firelight, and in the day, except on festival days, it is deserted. Ghotul life is strictly disciplined, and is regulated by ghotul's own code of conduct. Sirdar, the boys leader and Belosa, the girls leader are there to maintain the law and order. Tribal solidarity, unity and fellowship are the core elements of ghotul life. Adultery, homicide, theft, jealousy and possessiveness are rare and individualism is considered a sin. Muria's attitude to sex is revealed in their ghotul life. Sex to them is a great fun, the best of ghotul games. They consider sex as healthy, beautiful and good. The best and most successful sex relations are maintained in the modern ghotuls where partners are often changed. The sexual side of the married life is not so important to a Muria, as, he marries because he wants to have children of his own, to have a home of his own, over whom he has an authority, and a right. The life of pre-nuptial freedom ends in a longing for security and permanence. Homosexuality, jealousy and bestality pose to be insoluble problems of modern civilization, which are absent in the tribal world.

Gond:

According to Census 2001, the Gond is the second largest tribal population in India after the Bhil. They are spread over Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. They will be found in the remote and Malaria striken areas of Chhindwāra, by the wooded rivers of Betul, in the lovely hills of Seoni, in the evergreen sāl forests of Balāghāt. They were also believed to live in their ancient kingdom of Chānda and in the Maikal Hills where the ancient saints Vyasa, Bhrigu and Agastya visited to search for God, as the myth goes on. They lived in little huts made of mud-plastered bamboo, used primitive implements to till the soil. They lived in roots and fruits of jungle and a thin gruel made of the poorest kind of rice. Starvation and poverty were

their whole life's companions. Verrier has described their physique as short dark and wiry with great powers of endurance. By nature they are shy, idle, with truant hearts but brave, loyal, humorous, patient and affectionate (Elwin and Hivalle 116).

They have little affinity to religion. Their religious works are entrusted with the Baiga priests. The majority of the Gonds are found in Madhya Pradesh, in the Mandla district, in the Satpura Plateau. The Murias, the Hill Marias and the Bisonhorn Marias are the three important Gond groups. Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh also contain substantial Gond population. They are called Raj Gonds. The rule of Gond Rajas of several princely States in Chhattisgarh lasted until 1947. After independence, those princely states merged with Madhya Pradesh, as mentioned by C. von Fuer–Haimendorf in *Tribes of India: The Struggle for Survival* (1982). More than half of Gond populations have adopted the local dialect of Hindi, the rest speak in their own language called Gondi. The Gonds are now settled farmers who cultivate their land with ploughs and bullocks. Both the vertical stratification and horizontal divisions exist in Gond society; the division of the society into exogamous patrilineal units has retained its importance. Now they are more civilized than other tribes of India. A significant percentage of them have adopted Hinduism in the process of assimilation or absorption. The Gond children, as described by Verrier in his *Leaves from the Jungle*, are the ardent lovers of beautiful things such as flowers, the sunlight on the streams, the broad sweet-smelling fields of the oil-seed, blossoms of 'palas' tree, evergreen sāl forests etc. (19). Music and dance is all of their culture. Their simplicity and freedom, the position of their women, their independence of spirit and their love for children are the distinctive ethos of the Gond (27).

Gunia:

The word "gunia" is mainly used in the tribal societies all over the country. Gunia is a magician called for diagnosis and treatment of a sick man. A Baiga or Gond gunia holds a respectable position in the society. In the Gond or any tribal society witchcraft plays an important role. When a Gond becomes sick, he/she believes that his/her illness is due to either one of the twenty one 'Mothers' or the malice of witchcraft. When the gunia or magician sees in his *sūpa* that illness is due to one of the twenty-one Mothers, he gives official and standardised offerings and the patient is cured. When the gunia does not see such in his *sūpa,* he confirms in it the additional malice of witchcraft, wherein no standardised prescription is followed, the magician is guided by his own judgement, and in such everything depends on his courage and decision. It is a hard task to perform as the gunia is to fight against the powers of evil. Verrier, in *The Baiga* (1939), has placed gunia as a noble and heroic figure who is able to fight an unseen enemy (376-77).

Karma dance/songs:

Karma dance is a traditional dance of Central and Eastern India. It is performed during the Karma festival, which is a famous festival and starts from the 11th day of the bright fortnight of the month of Bhadrab. The tribes residing in the states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, MadhyaPradesh, Orissa, Jharkhand and West Bengal observe this dance-song. To the Baiga, Karma is the central dance. The Gond, Pradhan, Kamar, Agaria and other tribes of this part of India celebrate Karma dance / song with a little variation. Their Karma songs are the songs of custom, love, marriage, romance, nature and social awareness (political songs) which they exhibit through their dances. This folk dance is performed during the worship of the god of fate who is known as Karma Devta. Elwin in his book *The Baiga* (1939) has detailed this

dance. The Karma dance is of two kinds-in both the varieties, a group of men singers and drummers centre round, two or three of them being tied with a drum, called *mandar*, on their neck. They begin to drum and others start singing. The girls stand in a line a few yards from the men. When a large or significant number of girls assemble, the men start singing, as soon as the first 'verse' of a song is finished, the girls begin to repeat the song, if they succeed, the drums begin and the dance is on. In the second formation, the women go round in a large circle, sometimes clockwise and sometimes anticlockwise. The boys and girls very rapidly round the circle in opposite direction with *tiski* in their hands, which they use in clapping loudly. According to the variations in their body postures and movements, Karma dance is subdivided into Khalla Karma, Lahaki Karma and Jharpat Karma.

Madhuban:

Madhuban is a Sanskrit compound word consisting of *Madhu* (honey) and *Vana* (Forest) and is synonymous to 'Madhukānan,' and is derived from the word 'Madhuvana', In the Vālmiki Rāmāyanan (Chapter 282, Vana Parva and Sundara Kānda), it has been referred to a forest-gerden owned by the great monkey-king Sugriva. When Sītā was found out, Hanūmān and Angada along with other monkeys entered this garden to rescue Sita, and drank honey (madhu) with their heart's content.

In other Puranic sayings, it is known as the region of Asura Madhu and his son Lavana; Satrughna killed Lavana and founded the city of Mathurā. Somewhere it has been mentioned as the forest of Sugrīvā, and somewhere as one of the seven forests on the western bank of the river, Yamunā.

Verrier's tribes call it the 'forest of sweet desire'. To them, it is the forest of romance. They are born in the forest, live on the forest and die in the forest. They

have been living there with their non-human companions since their very appearance in the earth. They have learnt a lot of their ways of life from their non-human partners. The loveliness and grandeur of the forest intoxicates and exhilarates them. As they drink honey to heart's content, so as they attain their physical love, enjoy sexual congress and intimate moments to fulfil their sweet desires in the forest.

Muria:

The Murias live in the north side of the great river Indravati which roughly bisected the Bastar District. The northern territory of Indravati is divided into three divisions – in the north-east Kondagaon Tahsil, in the north-west Narayanpur Tahsil and in the south Jagdalpur Tahsil. The Murias living in Jagdalpur Tahsil, called Raja Muria, have lost most of their characteristic beliefs and practices probably being exposed to the external influences. Murias living in Kondagaon and Narayanpur Tahsils have retained their own cultures. The word 'Muria' in Bastar generally means a tribesman. It has been derived from 'mur' which means a root or permanent. The Murias have permanent settlements and dwellings. The Murias of Bastar are also called Jhorias, derived from 'jhodi', a brook. The Murias speak in a dialect of Gondi; a large number of them can speak in Halbi, a Maratha dialect and in broken Hindi and corrupt Oriya. The Muria are divided into phratries and clans. To sustain their livelihood they practice both axe-cultivation and permanent cultivation with plough and bullocks. As good as some other tribes they also collect honey, extract oil, go for hunting and fishing and gather all sorts of forest produce.

The most striking features of Murias identity is their 'Ghotul'–the dormitory, the communal barracks of the primitive races. This system exists from Bhutan to New Zealand and from the Marques as to the Niger with variant features. The

married women have no place there. Adult marriages take place and conjugal fidelity seems greater than among the more civilized races, by whom juvenile chastity is valued.

The Ghotul, the central focus of Muria life, is believed to be founded by Lingo, their heroic ancestor. It is as beautiful as the horns of bison, as the throat of horse. It is found in Austro-Asiatic cultures, but Muria Ghotul is the most developed and organized in the world. Verrier's large size book of over 750 pages named *The Muria and Their Ghotul* (1947) describes the whole life of the tribe and then the life in Ghotul itself. He has written also a monograph *The Kingdom of the Young* (1968) of more than two hundred and fifty pages. It is abridged from the *Muria and their Ghotul* where origin of the ghotul, its types, it membership rules, its discipline, problem of Ghotul infertility, their religion – all have been elaborately described.

Nandanban:

The word 'Nandanvana' has references in Buddist scriptures. It is said that it was the kingdom of the *devas* (gods) and there was a Nandanvana in each *deva* world. In 'Theravada', major branch of Buddhism, it has been mentioned as the chief of the parks in Tavatimsa.The inhabitants of Tavatimsa, headed by Indra, would go there for amusement, and Nandanban was so called because it invoked delight and pleasure in the hearts of all who visited it. According to Mahāprajñapärŕamitāsāstrā, when the gods entered this garden, Nandanvana, their mind became soft and gentle, they would be joyful and content, no gross minds arose in them. Nandanban means when one enters it, one is joyful and happy.

Similarly, to the Verrier's tribes, Nandanban also is a place of happiness, 'a forest of joy'. Inspite of their abject poverty, starvation, exploitation by the money lenders and land-grabbers, they hunt in the forest, gather food grains in the forest,

cultivate therein, enjoy the beauty of nature, work for their community, sing and dance in the forest. Forest always and for all the time bears a sweet memory to them, so as they call it Nandaban.

Serpent dance:

This is a rare and dangerous tribal dance found especially among the Gond tribe. Here serpent means snake. The men clutch desperately at his fellow and make a line of nearabout hundred feet length, the huge body is writhed and twisted, they swing to and fro, the whole line or chain looks like a snake. If the man at the head of the snake can catch the man at the tail, his victim will die of the real snake bite within a year, as they believe so. Verrier describes it as,

> It is always a titanic struggle. The head of the snake, drunk with wine and drugs, filled with the dark serpent power, leaps forward with demonic energy, dragging the body with him. The men behind hold him back as they can, but the others put them forward; everyone is drunk, and it is hard to estimate the movements of the unwieldy line. As the head comes round, the tail dashes violently to and fro. The people of the village stand by, half entertained, half fearful. (Elwin 11)

After introducing the key concepts of indigenous identity and culture, I shall take up a detailed analysis of the literary texts in the light of my core research question in the subsequent chapters of my thesis. The concepts elaborated in the second chapter will recur in the following core chapters and help the readers to understand the inherent connection between the indigenous way of life and the literary representations thereof. Chapter Three will take up the first major concern in relation to the issue of indigeneity i.e. nature. I shall probe into Elwin's unique way of representing the indigenous worldview vis-à-vis the philosophy of nature.