

**Representation Of Tribalism: A Comparative Study of *Paraja* And *Things Fall Apart*****Mantan Kumar Behera****Lecturer in English****Salipur Autonomous College****Salipur****Cuttack****(Received:16March2024/Revised:8April2024/Accepted:18April2024/Published:26April2024)****Abstract**

Chinua Achebe's English novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is a biography of the indigenous "Igbo" community of Nigeria (Africa). Similarly, Gopinath Mohanty's novel *Paraja* (1946) was a biography of the Paraja tribal of Odisha. Through the discussion and evaluation of several aspects of Achebe's and Gopinath's tribal philosophy in the two novels, an attempt has been made in this article to understand the tribal philosophy of the literate and educated people, especially some of the main aspects of this absurdity. A few simple questions are raised here regarding the style of depiction of tribal characters in contemporary culture.

**Keywords:-Tribal, Philosophy,Literate, Absurdity.****Introduction**

Gopinath Mohanty (20 April 1914 – 20 August 1991) was Odisha's first Jnanapith awardee. His works are on tribal life and the oppressive effects of modernity on it. His work has been translated and published in Odia and other languages. *Paraja*, *DadiBudha*, *Amrutara Santana*, and *ChaiaaluaGalap* are some of his most notable works. Gopinath Mohanty began teaching sociology at San Jose State University in America in 1986. His last days were spent there.

*Paraja*, *Danapani*, *LayaBilaya*, and *DadiBudha* are Gopinath's four works that have been translated into English. BikamKeshari Das translated the first three, while Arun Kumar Mohanty translated the last one. Faber & Faber (UK) and Oxford University Press (India) co-published *Paraja* in 1987. Many of his works have been translated into English and other languages. Translating Odia works might be challenging for non-Odia readers to understand.

As soon as we read *Paraja*, we see that Gopinath feels some difficulty in writing about the Parajas in the "Orthodox" language. Therefore Paraja/Tribal songs have been written in Odia

script and have felt the need to give their Odia translation and have sometimes expressed reluctance to translate. In the eyes of the novelist, this is an indication of the non-translational aspect of the basic genius of tribal life. So, while pushing the ownership of this tribal elemental talent before the orthodox reader, does Gopinath not construct an orthodox or non-tribal ideal of tribal character and culture? In the realm of ideals within which we literate, educated people see tribal, that Gopinath's tribal story is not a neutral narrative. It may not be possible to be material. In the context organization of the said ideology, why is the presence of the Jaipur king, the British ruler and the Christian clergy, so insignificantly compared to that of Sahukar Ramachandra Bishoi? Despite all the caricatures, the Jaipur Raja's Dasahara celebration seems like a government cultural fair these days - with gunfights and poetry contests! Along with this light description of the king, the writer also shows a slight attitude towards the entry of Christianity into the tribal life. Is it enough to say that the brothers are wicked and they are Christians? Isn't the sight of the Christian "Guru" easily ensconced in the forest of Koraput? Apart from this, British rule and colonialism have almost disappeared in Paraja. In 'courthouse', 'trial' is served as a simple math of roguish and Saint, iniquity and religion . Since all the eyes of the novelist have fallen on Sahukar, the extent and severity of exploitation and injustice has been reduced, in how many rupees of Sahukar. The native Jaipur king, the foreign English power and the German clergy—they are kept far away from the paraja tribal, only indirectly. This importance has narrowed the tribalism of 'Paraja' accordingly. Of course, by claiming this distance as a historical reality, it can be argued as a symptom of the author's realism. That's all I have to say; This is a sign of the writer's realism. That is, it is a sign of his realism that he does not serve this historical reality as a novelist and more realistically as a thoughtful writer. Describing history is not enough. Shouldn't we expect the best people to break history, turn it upside down, make it materially?

And why is Sahukar's exploitation and oppression portrayed as a public, natural act? A tiger looks for prey, a lizard looks for bird , a man looks for sweet potato, Ramachandra Bishoi looks for a man (page: 47). Although Gopinath was aware that exploitation was a man-made process, to portray the Sahukar as a natural menace in the Paraja mind is to treat the Paraja as slaves to a

stagnant mentality. MandiaJani and Jili have tried to get out of this slavery. But to the extent that they have tried to go out , they are called non-caste or non -tribal in the eyes of the novelist. On the other hand, Tikra and Billy (two minor characters) appear as relatively innocent characters. And going to describe the beautiful nature of Tikra, the writer was happy and wrote, "He is a wild animal" (page: 74). Isn't it an ancient practice of educated Ordinances to look upon the tribals as wild animals whether they love them or hate them?

One more thing. Gopinath took an old man like Sukrujani as the main representative of Paraja culture. Like Kara (Page: 406), the last milk seller of the old "Kara" house. Is Sukru also the last representative of his legacy? Parajas are presented as an embodied social group right from the beginning of the story. And Sharushupada is not even a symbol of a beautiful rural life. Even in ParajaSahi there are selfishness, treachery and other characteristics of the "civilized" world! There is not only tribal simplicity. The writer has not assimilated the relationship of the above-mentioned conditions and social narrowness with the joyous life of hilly country with dances, songs, clouds, rain etc. He himself mentioned that when the "officer" appears, all these dance songs will appear. In other words, in *Paraja*, we see more than a profound intellectual and emotional assimilation of the crisis and death faced by the tribal culture, we see a very credulous sentiment towards the so-called tribal soul-genius.

Let's see a sample , how Gopinath tries to whisk the voice of history in the following line: "Who asks who is sitting in the mosque of Delhi?" Darshvya mother Nishanmunda does not keep his account, Muslim Aurangzeb or MarhattaShivaji? - SirajUdaula or Warren Hestis? Paraja only knows - there is a head-headed person, - a head-headed person sits and folds his hands, whatever his identity is, Ram or Ravan(Page-201)". Despite the history, this complete separation of the subject from the genre of history is a key element of the tribalism of the novel. Contextually, we see this element even more straightforwardly in Bikram Das's English *Paraja* (1987). It is noteworthy that in this English *Paraja* the name of historical places and persons also appears in the said quotation and according to Bikram Das the ruler of Paraja is someone who is not exploited- everything, all sorrow has finally been transformed into "Cosmic laughter".

Against this backdrop, the dramatic killing of Sahukar by Paraja is not a sign of revolutionary social change, nor is Paraja's surrender at the police station a tribal act of simplicity. We must not forget that the 'red' sun that rises in the last page of the novel as a poem of a new age, is not really a symbol of a new direction. The color 'red' is associated with sexuality and youth in the novel (page-110). In this red rebellion, the blood rises, the young and the big deer are looking at the horn with my horn, the horn, the pink eyes look at the row. ” So the said red sun is not associated with bloody revolution or Marxian class struggle. In other words, this red color of Gopinath's sun has a kind of poetry and luxury, which seems incongruous with murder and revolution.

*Paraja* was written on 27 July 1943 and LaxmanNayak was hanged on 29 March 1943. By the time the novel was written, the participation of Odisha tribals in the Indian independence movement under the leadership of Gandhiji was not an incident. So, why can't its voice be heard in *Paraja*? Is this silence merely a literary exaggeration? What is it? At the end of this article we will consider this issue.

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Chinua Achebe, Africa's best-known author and the founding father of African literature, died at the age of 82. *Things Fall Apart*, his debut book, was published in 1958, and it questioned not just European myths about Africans but also established beliefs about the novel's structure and function. His invention of a hybrid that merged oral and literary techniques, as well as his refashioning of the English language to transmit Igbo voices and notions, served as a model and source of inspiration for other authors across Africa.

In *Things Fall Apart* Achebe felt the same problem as Gopinath - how to write the life of 'Igbo' in English? For whom? At the end of the novel he gives a list of English meanings of some of the 'Igbo' words he uses and tries to summarize 'Igbo' ideas, beliefs and proverbs in the English language (the language in which he wrote the novel) more skillfully than Gopinath. For example: Everyone knows a mosquito sitting near the ear or buzzing. But Achebe's quotation from the 'Igbo' story of the mosquito-eared wedding episode(page-72) is not merely a comical description, but an aspect of the main character of the story, Akonkon. At the same time, it also indicates the

author's awareness of the difference in female/male values in male-centric Igbo life. The story does not appear to be a mere tribal tale.

Yet, Achebe carefully keeps alive the dichotomy between the Igbo language and the English language. This is one of the highlights of *Things Fall Apart* in my opinion. English Sahib's "cutting out details" (page-191) and Igbo man's "skirting round the subject" (page-11) are not only two grammatical styles of composition - they are two ways of life. If the Englishman wants to cut corners and confine others and life within the confines of his goal, as much knowledge as he can in the pages and templates of his postulation (page - 191).The Igbo man doesn't express his intentions with such self-conscious concentration. He does not want to limit his reality. So it expresses its purpose skirting round the subject.

It is noteworthy that Achebe did not see the dichotomy between Igbo and English as a geometric dichotomy of simple/complex, good/evil, civilized/uncivilized. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe's English is mainly served in two styles. On the one hand, he has tried to master the English language by following the style of the Igbos, on the other hand, he has used the English language as a flexible language associated with political and colonial power and authority. As a result, there is a critical sympathy and empathy in the presentation of 'Igbo' life in English. It is appropriate to take a few words of Yeats's famous poem *The second coming* as the title of Achebe's novel (*Things Fall Apart*). The essence of this poem is that a new one is not born from the womb of an old society, but appears as the death of the old one. Achebe's novel speaks of the inevitable demise of Igbo life and religion and the terrible spread of White life and Christianity. The tragic perspective in which Achebe writes about Igbo-life is shaped by his historical situation as a writer. Achebe's awareness of this has strengthened and deepened his tribalism. He is the cruelty of Igbo life

As he vividly describes the brutality of Igbo life (eg: the killing of Ikemefuna), the brutality of white power is also demonstrated (eg: whites killing the 'Obama' community). In both cases there is an inevitable movement of man-made custom and tradition, a movement that Achebe blames both the White and the Igbo for the varying degrees.

Gopinath also mentions the difference between the "separate talk" of the tribal language in *Paraja* and the "wild argument as the edge of hoof" (page-199-200) of Sahukar as two ways of life. But what is the relation of the said tribal language and Wild argument with the orthodox language, that matter is not formed as an original biography of the novel. Tribal and non-tribal segmentation is easily accepted in the language in which *Paraja* is written. As a result, Gopinath's poetic depiction of the fascinating moments of tribal life, especially those related to nature, is seen as a special achievement. Because of this poetic depiction, the story of Jaani family's tragedy cannot come out with the logic of tribal simplicity.

Overall, there are two contradictory aspects of the author's tribalism in *Paraja*. One is the opposition to the economic exploitation of the tribals, which we have called Marxian, although it would not be wrong to say that Marxian consciousness is not present. For, the other aspect of this tribalism was a complete non-Marxian metaphysical disdain for life, especially the tribal life view. This kind of confusion is an effective element of Gopinath's compositional style. However, due to the lack of connection between this materialism and the said economic consciousness, the basic problems and problems of tribal life in *Paraja* could not be served with intellectual and emotional depth. For example, Achebe describes Noah's conversion to Christianity with particular vigor and restraint. But Jili's acceptance of the Sahukar as a husband is primarily seen as a "great impromptu" event. Through this, the tribal crisis and problem is not only seen as a social or economic phenomenon, but it also affects the reader as a fundamental, existential question.

In this context, let us take a sample of the pressure of poetic power in the tribalism of our learned Odiyans, which is still pressing upon us. The following quote recently published in Odisha daily news (31-1-96) aimed at the tribals of Sundargarh is noteworthy: "Due to industrialization, the social and economic life of the tribal people of the district has changed. But even in the process of this change, the great culture and traditions of the region are intact. Even if it is not intact, it is safe. Even after a whole day's hard work (children of nature), the hardworking tribal men and women return to their fields. In the evening light, they play the music and with it comes a wave of songs accompanied by tribal women. The rhythm of the Madala and the wave of the song

declares the status and existence of the tribal culture and tradition in thunderous voice. Here we are not only seeing journalistic scholarship, these lines are a relic of the tribal philosophy of most of our educated odian. Here the Odisha government's stamp of approval also appears to be tribal. Is Paraja's fundamentally opposed to this type of tribalism ?Whethertheyindirectly supported it ? Has Gopinath not given the epistemic respect to the above wonderful poem addressed to the children of nature in Sundargarh district? I am not saying that novel writing and newspaper writing are the same. Or whether Gopinath loved the tribals or not, nothing is said about that. But isn't Paraja's insistence on the poetry and timelessness of tribalism a cause of concern?

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47 years after *Paraja* was written and LaxmanNayak was hanged, NiharRanjanPatnaik's book *In Independence Movement, Odisha Adivasi and Martyr LaxmanNayak (1990)* is published by Odisha Government's "Tribal Language and Culture Academy". The complex personal and social process of transformation of the tribal LaxmanNayak into the Gandhian LaxmanNayak is easily taken up by Patnaik. He has not indicated the depth and breadth of the connection between tribalism and odian nationalism. The book does not even raise the question of whether 'country' is for the indigenous people of 'nature'. "Free as the wind and birds",how can a tribe become a 'martyr'? Is being a 'martyr' a tribal value? I think there is an emotional connection between Patnaik not bringing up these questions and the intense silence regarding the hanging of LaxmanNayak in *Paraja* ( even after almost fifty years had passed).

Patnaik passionately asserts that the tribals "have neither Ross nor Marx to teach them the lessons of freedom", and links their 'patriotism' with Gandhism and the freedom movement of the Indian National Congress easily. Are the Gandhian and freedom movements a natural evolution of the tribal way of life? Do Ross, Marx, Gandhi and tribal leaders talk about the same 'freedom'?

Gopinath also sees the surrender of Suzanne and her sons at the police station as a form of immutable tribal simplicity and sincerity, rather than the oppressive helplessness of a certain non-tribal political power. Therefore, the said surrender can be compared with the suicide of

Okonkwo , the main character of *Things Fall Apart*. Okonkwo's suicide is a clear protest not only against white supremacy, but also against the degradation of 'Igbo' life. But this contradiction is seen by Gora Sahib as a collector and student of tribal customs, which Achebe treats with extreme satire . The reaction of Sukru's surrendering to the police inspector shows how insignificant Achebe's comic is. The rising of the red sun on the last page of *Paraja* makes light of this mutual revolution and contradiction. Paraja's so-called Marxian consciousness is not ideologically connected to tribalism like Patnaik's Gandhianism. Because that kind of connection seems to be natural and common for both writers.

In this context, Chittaranjan Das's essay on Tribal Culture (Odisha and Odia, 1988) is also noteworthy. In a humanist interest, the tribals are anxious to see them as 'humans'. Although he rightly objected to the attitude of "urban people eating tribals", he did not explain how the tribals would "spontaneously" develop and evolve their culture. He is anxious to match, so his belief in the 'spontaneous' beauty and beauty of tribal leadership remains strong.

A key element of our current tribalism is the compartmentalization of cities and forests, which we have taken for granted. As a result, we could not be sufficiently aware of the national and foreign differences in the historical situation of the tribals. There have been some fundamental differences in the tribal status of Africa and India. Like the practice of 'Slavery' in the tribal history of Africa, the practice of 'Ashram' in the tribal history of India refers to a twofold fundamental position. (I am not comparing 'slavery' and 'ashram' practice here, nor am I suggesting that there was any kind of slave practice in India. However, in the ashram lifestyle, tribals and non-tribals were not only close, they respected each other's social customs. And the ashram, though was far from the city, served as a complement to it. In our tribal philosophy, the story of single finger of Eklavya is not the only truth. Shabari is also another truth. In fact, does not the arrogance of the argument of subjugation of tribals by non-tribals oversimplify the presence and coexistence of tribals in the said ashram tradition? Here, let's take a look at the evolution of the meaning of the word 'jungle'. What 'Jungle' means today, it did not mean in ancient times. For the Aryans, 'Jungle ' was an environment, which they created carefully. We can take the ashram as a symbol of this environment, an environment where life was larger than a



city. Now 'jungle' is the opposite of 'civilization'. It is an uncontrolled situation outside of human settlement. Hence the word jungle comes to mean uncivilized, barbaric. Two animals emerge, the city dweller and the forest dweller, and we either go to the forest or to the picnic. In another case it opens with "a visit to the forest" in Paraja language. Paraja's tribalism is inspired by this city/forest separation, which is largely silent on the aforementioned historical differences in tribal status. Especially, as an Indian writer, isn't the absence of 'ashram' in Gopinath's silence worrying? So why a Valmiki or Matang Muni did not appear in *Paraja* is not my question. My point is that the easy acceptance of the urban/forest divide in Paraja's tribalism does not allow for a thorough and deep exploration of our tribal heritage in the novel.

In short, we literate, educated-Orthodox people have not assimilated the tribal way of life in the evolution of history and political process, although tribals seem simple to us, in reality our tribal philosophy has remained simple. By reading *Paraja* and *Things Fall Apart* together, we had an opportunity to become aware of the said evolution and process. Achebe did not see the Igbos as primitive people. They are not accused of being 'humans' first and then 'tribals'. They are not unduly glorified as the children of nature and the children of elixir. It does not say that there is no individuality in their society. He has painted them as creatures of time and tradition. Therefore, his tribal philosophy seems to be relatively more authentic and relevant.

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