



# **Locating Tribal Women in India : Cultural, Social & Literary Perspectives**

**Dr. Deep Shikha Karthik     Dr. Baliram Pawar**

  
**Assistant Professor**  
Shivaji College, Hingoli.  
Tq. & Dist. Hingoli. (MS.)



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Dr. Baliram Pawar

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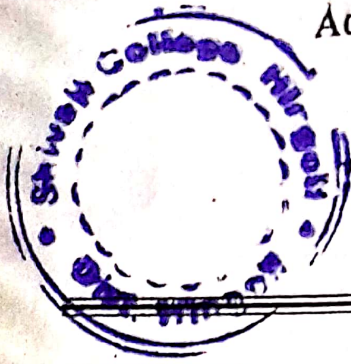
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Assistant Professor  
Shivaji College, Hingoli.  
Tq. & Dist. Hingoli. (MS.)



## Adivasi revolt that ushered in change for all



Dr. Gawali Manisha Baburao  
Dept. of English  
Shivaji Mahavidyalaya, Hingoli (MS)  
[awchargawali11@gmail.com](mailto:awchargawali11@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

The power of storytelling among Adivasis in the largely tribal areas of Talasari, Thane, Palghar and Dahanu, North of Mumbai is strong. It keeps alive the glory of events that happened 75 years ago. So strong is the Adivasis bond to that time that to this day they acknowledge their allegiance to the Left and bring it victory at elections in the Scheduled Tribe constituency in Dahanu, and for the last 58 years voters have consistently brought the CPI(M) candidate back in Talasari taluka.

The past is kept alive by sharing memories with the younger generation so that they donot forget that just seven decades ago rural landlords victimized their people. Bonded labour, rape and illegal acquisition of Adivasi land were common practices then. The present paper focuses on the Adivasi revolt that ushered changes for all.

**Key Words :** Constituency, victimized, acknowledge etc.

Adivasis were primarily indentured labour working in the fruit orchards or wadis, mainly of chikoos for which the area was famous. They brought the wadi owners huge profits, but little of this was transferred to the Adivasis, most of whom were caught in a vicious cycle of poverty and debts they were unable to pay back.

All this was noticed by an extraordinary woman named Godavari Parulekar, or Godutai as she was known who was a member of the CPI (M) and the Kisan Sabha. Her husband, Shamrao Parulekar, was the leader of the Maharashtra chapter of the All India Kisan Sabha. They decided to organize Maharashtra's peasantry starting with the Adivasis of Dahanu and Umbargaon. Inspired to take up the red flag, the adivasis asked the Parulekar to lead them.

Heading Godutai's call, about 5,000 Adivasis, largely from Thane, Dahanu and Palghar, gathered at zari village in Talasari taluka on May 23, 1945, when Godutai formally declared that bonded labour was at an end. It was a rousing moment and has been documented in a book by Shamrao. Ashok Dhawale, President of the All India Kisan Sabha, describes what was written. The Adivasis moved from village to village declaring they would not work without wages. People stopped work and marched out of landlords houses and fields. Within months this spread to Dahanu. Godutai gave the call for liberation with the slogan 'Take your pot and your loincloth and break free'. By October bonded labour had been buried." Even the barbaric practice of lagnagadi or marriage slave, ended. Landlords never marked loans given to Adivasis for their celebrations as paid off and they also thought it was their right to have sexual relations with a lagnagadi's wife.



Although bonded labour was cost off, the rage of the landlords had still to be death with. They thought up a diabolical plan in which they would spread a rumour in such a manner that no one would know that it had originated with them. Soon the 'news' was all about how Godutai had been captured, was being tortured by the landlords and had to be rescued. The 'news' also spread that all the Adivasis should carry arms and assemble at Talwada to rescue her. Obviously unaware that they were pawns in the landlord's game, about 30,000 Adivasis gathered on October 9 armed with sickles, knives and lathis. Seeing their devious plan had succeeded, the landlords alerted the police saying that an Adivasi attack was imminent. When the police arrived, the Adivasis refused to disperse, and the command to shoot was given. Parulekar says in his book that the shooting went on sporadically from morning to afternoon, killing 10 persons and injuring hundreds. The Adivasis were under the impression that the police wanted to capture their beloved red flag, so they kept on protecting it. It was only when a Kisan Sabha member from a nearby village, who heard of the tragedy, intervened that the Adivasis dispersed.

But the Warli Adivasi Revolt continued in 1946. The Adivasis asked for the proper wage of Rs. 2.50 per pound of grass cut and rice harvested. The landlords had to agree because the Adivasis refused to work, but then the state intervened. B.G. Kher was the Chief Minister and Morarji Desai was the Home Minister. Both refused to agree, saying they would not deal with communists. So, a three day march of 30,000 people was organized from Umbargaon to Dahanu. The Adivasis resistance to police action incensed Desai, who took the unbelievable decision of sending in the Army to defeat the movement.

Enraged, the Adivasis started burning landlord's homes and 600 Adivasis were arrested. But timely support came from the working classes of Bombay and Thane. They threatened an indefinite strike if the army acted. The government was forced to withdraw the Army. The labour wage was negotiated and the agreement reached was the precursor of the legislation that brought about the Minimum Wage Act.

For the region, 1945-46 must have been a heady time. After almost a century of injustices, there was unity, leadership and personal freedoms; it must have felt like a new dawn in the lives of the Adivasis. The Parulekars, the Kisan Sabha and the Adivasis kept up the tempo. The Warli Adivasi Revolt started out as a fight against bonded labour and lagnagadi and went on to become a fight for wages for work, land ownership and forest rights.

What began as a movement to liberate Adivasis blossomed in to a fight for basic democratic rights and laws for the general population. In 1948-49, the Maharashtra Govt. was forced to enact the first tenancy legislation in the State. Since the law came about because of the Adivasi struggle for ownership of land, it was only appropriate that it was first implemented in three taluhs of Thane district. The Tenancy Act was soon implemented all over the State. This was followed by legislation that prohibited Adivasi land from being sold to a non-Adivasi person. In 1960, Godutai led the first ever morcha (march) in India demanding forest land in the name of Adivasis; 46 years later, in 2006, the Forest Rights Act was enacted.

This year also marks 75 years of the martyrs of the Warli Adivasi Revolt. The Adivasi leader Jethva Gangad was shot dead in police firing on October 10, 1945, along with nine others. Dhawale says that from then to the present 61 Adivasis have given their lives for their cause. The latest was in 2012. A Woman Kisan Sabha worker was told by the Bhartiya Janta



Party (BJP) not to canvass for the CPI (M). She refused to listen and went ahead. The BJP candidate lost. The night after the results were declared her head was smashed in. Her Murderers were arrested and convicted.

The Adivasis may no longer need to revolt today, but their fight for justice continues...

Why do Adivasis lag behind on development indicators? Do government institutions evaluate the impact of their programmes? Do NGO's spare a thought about the impact of their interventions in these regions?

With the aim of finding answers to these burning questions, PRADAN brought out the status of Adivasis Livelihood Report 2021 (SAL) on PRADAN's Foundation Day that is April 18, 2022.

SAL was released by Shri. Arjun Munda, Union Minister of Tribal Affairs. The report attempts to develop a more nuanced understanding of Adivasi livelihoods and the socio-cultural setting that shapes these livelihoods, in order to evolve a better response to improve their plight.

The aim of this initiative is to create a space to initiate dialogues, discussions and debates among all those aspiring for inclusive development on matters concerning the Adivasis. The intention is to bring out periodic reports, beginning with the Adivasi areas of Jharkhand and Odisha and extending to other Adivasi-dominated regions to the country in due course.

For Adivasis pose questions about the kind of development the mainstream is propagating. For Adivasis the well-being development of other living beings, the environment and the surroundings are equally important as is the development of human beings convergence in social and environmental the justice when rolling out policies and programmes is the need of hour.

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*Shivaji*  
Assistant Professor  
Shivaji College, Hingoli.  
Tq. & Dist. Hingoli. (MS.)







is an Assistant Professor who obtained her M.A, M.Phil., and Ph. D degree in English from University of Lucknow, Lucknow (U.P), India. Presently, she is working as a faculty at F.A.A Govt. P.G. College Mahmudabad, Sitapur (U.P). Her area of specialization is First Nations in Canada and her areas of interest include Drama and Theatrical techniques, Translation Studies, New Literatures in English, Fourth World Literature, Folk Literature, Queer Studies, Linguistics and ELT.

She has presented her research papers in various Conferences/Seminars. Her research papers have also been published in various national and international journals and books. She is a counselor, mentor and an academician. She has also been honored with Shikshak Samman for her notable contribution in the field of the New Education Policy in September 2021.



is working as an Assistant Professor who has done his M.A in Sociology from Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad, Maharashtra and M. Phil from Madurai Kamaraj University Madurai, Tamil Nadu. He has also obtained his Ph.D. degree from Swami Ramanand Theertha Marathwada University, Nanded. Currently, he is working as Head of Department of Sociology, Mahatma Phule College, Kingaon, Latur, Maharashtra. He has over 20 years of teaching experience and has worked as a program officer for the National Service Scheme for many years. In addition, he has also been socially active in various fields, such as rural development, women empowerment, de-addiction environment conservation and has been honored with several national and international awards for his social work. He has also worked as a treasurer of Marathi Samajshastra Parishad Maharashtra.

However, he has presented his research papers in various conferences/seminars. His research papers have been published in various national and international journals and books. He is a counselor, mentor and educator.

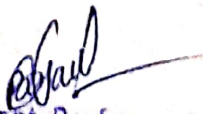


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Assistant Professor  
Shivaji College, Hingoli  
Tq. & Dist. Hingoli (MS.)

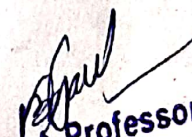




# Diaspora Writing

Critical Perspectives in  
Indian English Literature

Editor  
Rajesh S Gore

  
Assistant Professor  
Shivaji College, Hingoli.  
Tq. & Dist. Hingoli. (MS.)







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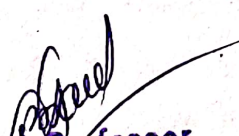
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Assistant Professor  
Shivaji College, Hingoli.  
Tq. & Dist. Hingoli. (MS.)



## 21. Multiculturalism: A General Perspective

Manisha Gawali

### Abstract

The term 'multiculturalism' refers to the cohabitation of different ethnic, racial, religious and language groups. In any culture, there are always differences in social backgrounds, religious affiliations, ethnicities and socio economic factors. These differences are what make a unique culture. The term 'Multiculturalism' has shifted in meaning over time. It was first used to describe the coexistence of different cultures within a society. Now it is used to describe government policies that support diversity among different ethnic and social groups. The present paper explores the various definitions, arguments for and against the multiculturalism. The present book chapter also looks at what multiculturalism means in its wider sense, how it has developed over time and its impact on the lives of people.

**Keywords:** cohabitation, multiculturalism, ethnic, racial, religious.

Multiculturalism has been a hotly debated topic in recent years. Some writers argue that it is the only way to live in the harmony, with one another. It also promotes positivity among groups of people because it creates opportunities for people of different backgrounds to be able to live and work together. The people belong to different cultures are living together even though they are multicultural in religion. Multiculturalism



promotes uniformity among the human beings in the era of globalization. They can live together without considering the caste, creed, race and religion. Multiculturalism deals with the behaviour and manner of the people living in a society. However, they possessed the cultural diversity in their lives. The cultural diversity is based on the underlying assumptions that unite people of different cultures who can live peacefully together. Multiculturalism expresses the view that society is enriched by preserving, respecting and even encouraging cultural diversity among the people of society. Cultural diversity is a key indicator of multiculturalism in which the society deals at the national and communal level. Sociologically, it believes that multiculturalism considers the society as a whole even though they have cultural fragmentations of diversity. We can come across the multiculturalism on a nationwide scale within a nation's communities. Multiculturalism can occur either naturally through immigration or when the diaspora people or writers are living in the different cultures. By birth, they are Indian but they are living in the foreign land as a diaspora. Multiculturalist should believe that the people should at least retain the some characteristics of their traditional cultures. Some critics says that multiculturalism threatens the social order by diminishing the identity and influence of the predominant culture.

Others may disagree with this notion of multiculturalism and believing that there is an influx of the people living in a society that has become more stratified and fragmented. The idea of a multiculturalism in the U.S. is not one that was established in the recent times. Rather it has its root in the founding of America when immigrants arrived to the U.S. from all over the world. They were speaking different languages and bringing with them different customs and traditions. Similarly, India is also a land of multiculturalism that celebrates holidays and festivals of



various religions. This can be attributed to the country's long and eventful history. It is worthwhile to quote the statement 'cultural diversity is necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature' uttered a universal declaration on cultural diversity in the General Conference of UNESCO held in 2001.

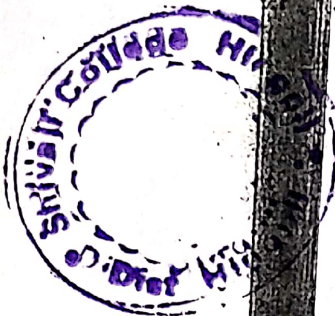
### Critique of a Multicultural Society

In a multicultural society, members of various cultures and ethnicities are able to live side by side and share their culture with one another. However, some say that multicultural society is a utopia and does not exist in reality. Moreover, a few pressing problems exist in multicultural interaction. One of the most notable problems in the consequence of the 'Melting pot effect'-where people from different cultures are randomly intermingled without any regard to their cultural needs or preferences. This can lead towards the resentment among minority groups, identify crisis and social unrest.

Another big problem is the "divide and conquer" phenomenon, which means that people are split according to their ethnic background without regard for equality among all the races. This divides people in to individual groups of the common race rather than forming a united society that can work together to solve a problem. The self-esteem of minority group members are often lower because of living in a society with a majority population due to certain oppressive norms of the society. For instance, where the minority group members are treated unfairly because of their race or gender can also lead to low self-esteem.

Minority groups are often discriminated in organization, school and business. The minorities are considered as an 'other' in the majoritarian community like Hindu. The cultural traditions of the minorities are differ from the tradition of majoritarian community. Minorities are less in number but their contribution in the development of the country is





remarkable. For instance, the Parsis are minority community who are less in number due to many causes like late marriages, low fertility, alienation, religion and many more. The contribution of Parsis are remarkable in different fields like industry, commerce, finance, sports, literature and other. Moreover, the average salaries among minority groups are lower in comparison to majority groups. For example, an African –American man in Georgia earns \$ 5400 less than a white man; while Native Americans earn \$ 3200 less than whites do. Minority groups may find it difficult to find employment. This is because many people are biased against minorities and typically only hire people that they see as “being like them.” To combat this, awareness about diversity in the workplace and other social institutions should be created.

Minority groups often lack the quality education and updated skills that are necessary for the job or employment. Minority group of people gets the job in the particular areas where they will get lower income as a salary. The number of less opportunity are provided to the minority group of people rather than majoritarian because they lack quality education and skills required for the employment in various sectors. Many of them cannot afford to take college classes or get vocational training because of their financial issues. These minorities feel insecure because of the social, political and cultural atmosphere created by the people in the power. The family are disrupted due to this kind of chaotic situation and they are struggling for the slice of middle class life. This is a significant issue, especially in the current economy where jobs are scarce.

How Multiculturalism affects others and ourselves in the world

We should be the more tolerant of the people who share our culture. We look for similarities and other commonalities displayed by the



people. In other words, it is easier to interact with someone like ourselves-or-individuals who share our ethnic values and background. Though this is wrong, we are less likely to see the difference in another person if they also come from our culture, and this has an impact on how we view them. The less we know about a person, the more we rely on our own culture to understand them. This tendency is called the bias group of people and how we see its influence on the other people in many ways. It can lead to people having inordinate expectations of how someone will behave, and if they can lead to cases of prejudice and discrimination.

### Cultural Diversity and its Importance

Cultural diversity is the difference in practices, traditions or other aspects of the culture of the people in a society. It can be found across the world. It is important because it gives the people different perspective to look at the world. Culture is a powerful idea-it is an ongoing process that has adapted to the ever-changing world. It's something that influences nearly every aspect of our lives. Culture is also the main force behind shaping people's identity. It helps people understand how they fit into society and provides them with the opportunity to explore their sense of belongingness. The most important aspect of culture that has its influence on the behaviour of the people. Due to globalization, cultures are now more intertwined which can lead to misunderstanding or conflict. For example, one culture may view the act of wearing, revealing and clothing as desirable and another may see it as inappropriate.

### Advantages of Multicultural Society

The benefits of a multiculturalism are numerous. It is believed that a society in which people from different cultures interact with each without any cultural discrimination. They will become more creative and innovative making use of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism also means





a better understanding of the world, and having the freedom to choose or express oneself without any cultural restrictions. Multiculturalism is the basic fundamental factor of every country. These countries were based on the principle that people with different cultures and backgrounds can coexist in a peaceful and democratic society. Cultural diversity is omnipresent in the multicultural society. One of the major advantages of multicultural society is to exchange the cultural idea, values and habits that would be helpful in the all-inclusive development of the people who are living in multicultural society. Multicultural communities feel to define their cultural identity while living multicultural society. They will aware about the similarities and difference between themselves and others with different backgrounds and cultures. They should proud on the heritage of their motherland even though they are living in the foreign land. These multiculturalist people feel generous about celebrating their traditions with others. Multiculturalism promotes tolerance and open mindedness among the people who have different cultural identities. In the country, where so many immigrants and minorities having mixed heritage, acceptance, tolerance and open-mindedness are the core values. The people who are living in the multicultural society means they have direct contact with the people having direct habits, ideas and lifestyles.

However, there are some negative perceptions of multiculturalism. For example, some people might not be happy with the way their country has changed and they may feel like their culture is under threat. Multicultural societies can also create tensions between two communities because different groups often live in the relative segregation from each other. However, all these can easily overcome by: recognizing different cultures exist and humans are being defined by their cultures, so it is crucial to recognize that there are so many different cultural identities. Being aware of cultural differences that will help one to build



relationships with the people from various backgrounds, which can lead to greater understanding. Sharing stories about other cultures and coming together as a community is one way of eliminating misconceptions and increasing understanding.

**Recognizing that different cultures have different values:**

The world is more diverse than ever, and the values of various cultures are different. It is important to be mindful of these differences when working or interacting with people of other cultures. While living in the multicultural society, the people having different kinds of culture which have different values of their communal tradition.

**Respecting the values of different cultures:**

As the world becomes more interconnected, it is important to be cognizant of different cultures and ways of life. This can be done by recognizing that each culture has unique norms and values. If these different cultures are respected, then people will not feel marginalized or isolated by policies enacted in their country.

It is no doubt that the multiculturalism will bring many advantages. The multiculturalism adds colours to the monotonous modern life and makes city vibrant and fascinating. People coming from different countries with various habits and cultural heritage will bring fresh exotic experience to local ones. In Auckland, there are dazzling festival and activities almost every week, besides Christmas, there are South Pacific Festival, Indian Diwali Festival, Irish St. Patrick's Day, and Chinese Spring Festival etc. The residents in Auckland would hardly feel bored, they are enjoying the food, music, and dance from different countries. All of these will give added weight to charming of city and attract number of tourists. Consequently, it will boost the tourism industry, increase employment and income, raise local government revenue, hence multiculturalism is good for economy. Many multicultural Cities such as



New York, Singapore, London, Sydney are perfect examples. Beyond this, the co-existence is beneficial to mutual understanding and learning among people from manifold ethnic groups, the better mutual understanding could be great helpful to eliminate deep-rooted prejudice and racist issues.

Further, when peoples live with diverse cultures, they might recognize that the existing elements in the world could be viewed by various different ways, it is eventually enhance openness and inspire creativity, they might blend different cultures together and creature new unique food, architecture, music and culture. The people's positive attitude is the best proof of advantages of multiculturalism.

Lastly, it is undeniable that multiculturalism has its advantages and makes the world colorful, demolish prejudice, enhance the social creativity and benefit to the economy of the country. However, the drawback should be mentioned such as the social conflict, marginalization etc. The multicultural societies should have more benefits than its disadvantages mentioned in literature. In general, the multiculturalism is a great opportunity with the challenge such as a trend is unavoidable all over the world. People are supposed to embrace it with a kind of positive comprehensive state of mind.

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The 'Diaspora' is an equally unique and complex term in Indian English Literature. There are many Indian writers who have been migrated to the foreign countries for the betterment of their future. Diaspora literature has given a new horizon and canon for the research in Indian English literature. Immigration is a prominent theme of diaspora literature because there are many family, people and writers who have been migrated to the foreign land for the settlement. The writers of Indian diaspora deals with their diasporic experiences as a common themes in their literary works like alienation, immigration, nostalgia, memory, identity, homelessness and belongingness, dislocation and displacement, socio-political atmosphere, cultural and others. The present edited book is an outcome the scholarly book chapters of researchers in English Literature.

Dr. Rajesh Sakham Gore (M. A., M.Phil. SET, NET, and Ph.D.) is an Associate Professor & Head, Dept. of English at Toshniwal Arts, Commerce and Science College, Sengaon, Dist-Hingoli (MS). He has fifteen years (15) years experience of teaching, learning, evaluation and research. He has completed his Ph. D. degree from SRTMU Nanded (MS). He has presented research papers in national and international conferences and seminars. He has published research papers in national and international journals. He also published his research articles as a book chapter in edited books. He edited a book entitled 'Insights: Trends in English Language and Literatures in English'. He is the chief editor of The Rubrics E-Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies. His area of Interest is Indian English Literature, Literary Theory, Language and Literature.

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