

**TRIBAL CONCERNS IN LITERATURE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY  
OF *THINGS FALL APART* AND *THE ANCESTOR***

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For the award of  
**Master of Philosophy**  
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By  
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## CERTIFICATE

I declare that the dissertation entitled “ TRIBAL CONCERNS IN LITERATURE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF *THINGS FALL APART* AND *THE ANCESTOR* “ has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr. Rajinder Kumar, Assistant Professor, Centre for Comparative Literature, School of Languages, Literature and Culture, Central University of Punjab. No part of this dissertation has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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## ABSTRACT

### **Tribal Concerns in Literature: A Comparative Study of *Things Fall Apart* and *The Ancestor***

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‘Tribe’ means a group of people living at a particular place from times immemorial. Tribes are named differently at different places according to their geographical positioning, their social stratification in the society and so on which makes them distinctive from others. Tribes are rich in their culture, customs and folk tradition etc. There are few authors all over the world who writing tribal literature and their social life is rich in their creative works. The foremost objective of this research is to analyze the tribes issue in literature as a discourse in societal, customs, traditional, rituals within the reference of the writings of Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and Gopinath Mohanty’s *The Ancestor*. Chinua Achebe (African novelist) and Gopinath Mohanty (Indian novelist) are two significant novelists who have made a bold attempt in raising of Canon in tribal literature. Both Achebe and Mohanty represent to their traditional or historically transformed images, rituals and social structures of their own common, but diversified culture. A thematic approach from tribal concerns perspective has been adopted for this study.

(Name and signature of Student)

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## CHAPTER 1

### Tribal Literature: Thematic Understanding

Tribe is a group of people, are living at a particular place from ancient times. Tribal society is a system of the world and organisation, which includes various local groups, villages, and normally includes a common culture, common language, a common name, belief religion and education system. This society lives in isolated areas and their social life style is different from the main stream society. Its culture, customs, rituals and traditions are in heritage from the earlier generations and moves to the next generation.

The term 'tribe' is derived from the Latin word 'tribes' meaning the 'poor or the masses'. In English language the word 'tribe' appeared in the sixteenth century and denoted a community of persons claiming 'descent' from a common ancestor. The tribal society is a unique society with diversity of nature and people (Varghese 21).

*Reader's Digest Encyclopaedic Dictionary* defines the word 'tribe' as "group of primitive or barbarous clans under the recognised chiefs. The third volume of tribal history of central India makes an attempt to explain the term in a literary sense" (qtd. in Chaturvedi 12).

The word 'tribes' refers to a culture heritage and historical concept. It is used for the tribe as a separate group of persons having their own identity, and cultural traits. Tribal is studied as a application of discourse theory to specific empirical cases showing how this approach can be used to study different aspects of the tribal society, like their beliefs, customs, religious, practices myths and the way of life of people that has not changed for a long time. According to D.N. Majumdar the tribe is "a collection of families or common group bearing a common name, the members of which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos, regarding marriage, professions and have developed a well assured system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligations (Majumdar 367).

The term 'Adivasi' (Adi = original and Vasi = inhabitant) has become current among certain people. The International Labour Organization has classified such people as 'indigenous'. According to ILO conventions, the aboriginals or tribals have been defined as the "tribals or semi tribal groups of the independent countries deprived socially or economically and having their own customs, traditions and traits or they have their own special customary laws/ conventions" (qtd in Varghese 4).

According to the tenth volume of *Britanica Ready Reference Encyclopaedia* the term 'tribe' means "Any of a variety of social units including some defined by unilateral descent and some defined by ethnic origin" (qtd in Chaturvedi 13). According to L.P. Vidyarthi; the tribe is a social group with definite territory, common name, common district, common culture, behaviour of an endogamous group, common taboos, existence of distinctive social and political system, full faith in leaders and self-sufficiency in their distinct economy. (Vidyarthi 12-14)

P.G. Krishnan defines, "tribe is a social group of simple and kind, the members of which speak a common dialect, have a single government act together for common purposes and have a common name, a contiguous territory, a relatively uniform culture or way of life and a tradition of common descent" (qtd. in Varghese 2). Cultural anthropologists now usually apply the term 'tribe' to a unit of social organisation that is culturally homogeneous and consists of multiple kinship groups such as the family, lineage or clan that prohibits marriages within themselves but endorse or require marriages with persons of the other kinship groups. Most tribes are organised as unitary political entities within which people share a common language and culture. Tribals are spread across large territories as individual members who might never meet or know each other very well.

Another definition of the term 'tribe' rendered by *The Britanica Reference Encyclopaedia* relates to the political and demographic sub-divisions of the population. The groups divided into tribes were distinct by location, dialect and tradition, and they included the Ionians, Dorians, Achaeans and Aeolians. In Attic, Cleisthenes replaced the four Ionian tribes with ten new tribes each of which was named after a hero (qtd. in Chaturvedi 13-14).



Tribes are named differently at different places according to their customary, geographical positioning, their social stratification in the society and so on which makes them distinctive from others. The popular names given to them are Vanyajati (caste of forests), Vanvasi (inhabitants of forest), Pahari (hill-dwellers), Adimjati (original communities of primitive people), Adivasi (first settlers), Janjati (folk people), Anusujit Janjati (scheduled tribes) and so on. Among all these terms Adivasi is the most common term and Anusuchit Janjati is the constituent name covering all of them. (15)

Kamala Devi Chatopadhyay defines "a tribe ordinarily has an ancestor or a patron deity. The families or groups composing the larger units are linked through religions and socio-economic function"( qtd. in Varghese 3).

The word 'tribal' brings a picture to our mind that of people poor, and their living in isolation in rural as well as urban areas. It places the responsibility of locating poverty, simple economic and other related issues such as poor health and poor education status squarely on the tribes and the social, cultural and economic features of their societies. In contrast, indigenous people category focuses the overall discourse not on the distinctive features of the tribal society, but on the larger issue of colonisation and expropriation of tribal land, forest and other resources.

Tribals' social life is dependent on forest, hills, grotto and waterway for hunting and gathering food, clothing, drugs etc. But as long as tribes are in the centre of forests, in the sense of unrestricted use of forest and its produce, they have no difficulty in meeting up their needs. The issue of land alienation arising in literature in post-independence India such as the infrastructure development (road, railway, irrigation, power etc.) industrialisation and exploitation of mineral resources, has been merely specifically conceived as the problem of dislocation rather than one of land division. (Kunhaman 145)

Mostly tribes' literature and history are not written, they are uneducated because they are living in isolated areas from main stream society. They are untouched from urban areas, so tribal literature cannot provide them with bread

and butter. On the other side tribal folk tradition and literature are gradually falling into nothingness as the tribal villages are being uprooted and tribes are displaced from their environment. The tribal literature in the form of unwritten folksongs and folk-stories reflect in general the harmony between nature and man in peaceful social atmosphere. Their oral traditions have been recorded and documented by those who first came in contact with the tribals. The difference between the past and present tribal literature is that, in the past the narrative of nature, beauty, love and romance were fairly predominant, while in the present literature, reflection of social problems is emerging more prominently than ever. Lovely and romantic lyrics in tribal songs are slowly changing into strains of pensive and pathetic tones (Senier 109-110).

Tribal a unit of social organisation, but groups (surviving in some modern societies) consists of a group of people claiming a common ancestry, usually sharing a common culture and originally living together under chief or headman, speaking their own language, and observing their own customs, traditions and religious beliefs to a large extent.

150 million tribal people live in more than 60 countries across the world. Mostly major tribal communities are living in Africa and in Asia. Africa is home to a large number of Adivasis with 64.78% citizens belonging to Igbo tribal community. Africa, a 'Dark' continent of dense forest cannibals, and wild tribal life is no longer a gloomy continent. (qtd. in Burman 05)

Mostly major tribal communities are living in Africa. In Africa there are various major tribal communities, for example Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo etc. The Hausa for instance live in the North and Yoruba are occupying the south-western part of the country while the Igbo have their homes in the Southeast in Nigeria (Ohajiriogu 36). In other words, each tribe has a particular area of its own, big or small which sometimes does not even depend on the numerical strength of the tribe. This is the reason why some areas of the country are densely populated and others are not so densely populated. In most cases, rivers, lakes, mountain

ranges, thick forests and other natural characteristics may be used to demarcate the tribes.

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is based on Igbo tribal society. Achebe belonged to Nigeria country in Africa. According to African history, North Nigeria area is surrounded by Igbo tribal society. Igbo tribes' culture, customs, rituals taboos etc are different from other tribal societies. The socio-religious and political organisations differ from tribe to tribe but most often, they run along the same line and categories. Nigeria is divided into different tribal communities by their culture, customs, traditions and language for example, Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. Hausa is a term used to designate the people of northern Nigeria and also the language that is spoken in the northern part of Nigeria. The Hausa people are known all over Africa for their creativity in terms of business and also in handicraft. It is however, the most dominant ethnic group in Nigeria comprising of more than 30 million people and has the greatest number of states in the country. The Hausa lack cultural homogeneity as a result of which it may be misleading to speak of all the people of northern Nigeria as a Hausa or one ethnic group (28). It is just an agglomeration of different ethnic groups, with different languages and worldviews but having something in common among them.

There is one of the large Yoruba communities living in the western areas of Nigeria and form the second largest politically dominant ethnic group in Nigeria. They were the first to settle in these western areas called Nigeriast tribes in Nigeria today. There are different accounts regarding the origin of the people of this tribe. Some of these accounts are dependent mainly on oral tradition. The Igbo tribe has a common origin and the people have known themselves as coming from 'a common' stock. Prof. Nwala a Nigerian social anthropologist says that the Igbo tribes society are rich in their customs, rituals, tradition and myths. Their concept of the totality of the world is embodied in the expression *olu-na-Igbo*. The above expression embodies the concept of totality of the world and reflects no division in meaning and identity of the Igbo as one and undivided people and community (35).

The family in Igbo traditional life is the first natural society where human beings are called to develop themselves:

An Igbo tribal community comprises of two configurations namely the nuclear and the extended families. Various scholars interpret differently the activities of the missionaries in Nigeria. In the view of Balandier, Nigeria, just like every other colonial society is ethnically torn – by divisions which have their origin in native history (134-135).

Chinua Achebe's first English literary work in African literature, Igbo tribal people speak Igbo language, which includes various Igbo languages and dialects, a majority of them also speak Nigerian English. Igbo tribal people are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria. In rural areas of Nigeria, Igbo tribal people are mostly craftsmen, farmers and traders. The most important crop is the yam; celebrations are held annually to celebrate its harvesting. Before British colonialism, the Igbo tribes were a politically fragmented group. There were variations in culture such as in art styles, social and religious practices. Various subgroups were organised by clan, lineage, village affiliation, and dialect. It draws particular attention on Igbo migration by pointing out the major tribes of Nigeria and at the same time focussing on the Igbo tribe fully since it is the tribe under study in this work, "The origin of the tribe takes the greater part of the first part of the work where the Igbo religion and cosmology are extensively exposed" (20-21). This is very important because religion was the only determining factor in the life of the Igbo people during the ancient times.

The religious, practices, customs, and political system changed significantly under British colonialism in the 19th century. The Igbo became overwhelmingly Christian under colonisation. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is one of the most popular novels in World literature, to depict Igbo tribal culture and the upheavals they had to face under colonialism. Africa, made up of individual tribes, the boundaries of which were determined by language, culture and social life, led to practical decisions such as to prepare one Igbo Bible translation for the area and a shared curriculum for the mission schools. Catechists, school teachers and, later, preachers were posted all over the area, which helped to strengthen the notion that the mission was actually an Igbo mission. Christian education has changed

Igbo social and religious life. On the one hand, the form of Christianity that was introduced by the missionaries is personal, with emphasis upon individual responsibility and character change.

Finally, becoming a Christian indicated a whole new identity, part of which was the rejecting of the old life and everything it stood for as wrong. Often, the convert physically moved to the Christian community, thereby giving extra meaning to the new identity. To turn against the pagans was an expression of this new identity which contained two important new aspects: 'Christian' and 'Igbo people', in the local communities, as was mentioned before, the concept of being Igbo did not really exist in those days. However, in the mission context these people were not just Christians, but more specifically Igbo Christians, and they were to be the vanguard of a movement to convert the whole of Igbo people land. (Bersselaar 156)

India and Federal Republic of Nigeria are countries of two different continents but share many historical, social and economic similarities. Both the countries have had a colonial past. Nigeria won freedom from British rule on October 1, 1960. It is a country of ethnic diversity and plurality. There are about 250 ethnic groups, of which the Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, are the major tribes. Though the official language of Nigeria is English, the country like India, has a number of native languages that are spoken by different ethnic groups. Islam and Christianity are the two major religions of the country like India. The Hausas of Nigeria tend to be Muslims while the Igbo people are followers of Christianity.

India and Nigeria are the two countries with eminent literature and who have made a mark not just in their own country but the world over. Wole Soyinka, a writer of Nigerian origin became the first African in history to win the Noble prize for literature (1986). Chinua Achebe is one of the another contribution to post-colonial literature in English. No less significant are writers and poets such as John Pepper Clark, and Ben Okri the first Nigerian to win the Booker Prize in 1991. Next My research on the second text *The Ancestor* by Gopinath Mohanty is based on the social, political and historical life of Indian Paraja tribals society. This text was written in 1944 in Orissa language in India.

Literacy among the tribals in India even after 66 years of Indian independence is extremely poor and pathetic. "Among 78.33 per cent tribals of 67.39 millions tribal population are still illiterate" (Ratnagar 21). When one speak of unwritten literature of tribals, it is with reference of this huge majority of tribals who do not know how to read and write. However, they preserve their unwritten literature, and history orally from generation to generation in the form of traditional practices. In some way or the other the impact of modern industrial development has dislocation of tribal communities.

The tribal population is identified as the native inhabitants of our country. They are seen in almost every State of India. For centuries, they have been living a simple life based on the natural environment and have developed cultural patterns congenial to their physical and social environment. References of such tribal groups are found even in the literature of the ancient period, right from the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha periods.(Chaturvedi 9)

In case of India, it is the category 'tribe' and the ideas associated with it that have coloured the whole discourse on tribes since independence. Before independence (1947) Indian tribes were double margined by imperial (Western) power and Indian upper class power (education and economic). This set of argument is built around traditional socio-culture aspects of tribal life. That is if the tribe suffers low income and poor educational and health status as well as various kinds of disease, these are often attributed to their traditions and styles of life. India is a pluralist country, with rich diversity, reflected in the multitude of cultures, religions, language and racial stocks. The Indian population includes different castes, classes, communities and social groups. Our country has diverse features at geographical levels. It has large tracts of hinterland, hilly ground areas. Apart from a minuscule minority, the rest live in the rural areas of our country. Almost 70 percent of India's population live in rural areas.

Indian tribals areas are characterised by lack of infrastructural facilities. The case of scheduled tribes are settled in hilly, forest and mountain areas in different corners of the country. "Socially the tribal communities are very different from the main stream society. Their social deprivation is aptly reflected in their education backwardness. Tribes are one of the most marginalized communities in our country" (Rathnager 59-60). The tribal population not only faces several social-

economic problems, but is also under the threat of undermining of their distinctive culture and identity which in turn is rooted in their livelihood patterns. This is an argument which is applicable on the whole of the Indian society. However, this has been sharply problematised in the context of the tribal society which has already become modernised.

Out of the total Scheduled Tribal population of 67.76 million, about 49% of the Scheduled Tribe population lives in three states in our country viz., Madhya Pradesh (27.73%), Maharashtra (10.80%) and Orissa (10.3 8% while Haryana, Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi, Pondicherry have not a single Scheduled tribe. About 93 % of the Scheduled Tribal population is rural based. Out of the major 15 States, only three states, viz., Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Tamil Naidu 46 had more than 10% of the Scheduled Tribal population residing in rural areas, the respective percentages being 14.94, 12.47 and 12.01 (Kunhaman 43-44).

The percentage share of scheduled tribes population in the total population of the following states is Andhra Pradesh (7.6%), Assam (3.4%), Bihar (7.0%), Gujarat (8.1%), Kerala (3.5%), Madhya Pradesh (4.8%), Orissa (5.1%), Rajasthan (4.6%), Utter Pradesh (5.9%) and West Bengal (5.2%).<sup>4</sup> State wise ranking of Scheduled Tribes population and the size, proportion of Scheduled Tribe population in the total population of the various states in our country. Some of the States and in the Union Territories, the population is predominantly scheduled tribe viz., Mizoram 94.75%, Lakshadweep (93.15%), Nagaland (87.10%), Meghalaya (85.83%), Dadra Nagar Haveli (79.98%) and Arunachal Pradesh (63.66%). Major states, Madhya Pradesh has the largest proportion of scheduled tribe population (23.27%) followed by Orissa (22.2 1%). (Varghese 45-47)

India is a home of large number of Adivasis with the population of about 73.19 million. Mostly Indian tribal community have a rich in its own culture, folk tale, folk songs etc. In terms of geographical distribution about 56.33% of tribals lived in central India, 26.67% in west, 10.55% in North-East India, 5.40% in South India and 1.05% elsewhere. (48-49) Indian tribals are living in the following five territories:

- (1) The Himalayan belt: (Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, hills of Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh).
- (2) Central India: Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh. 56.33% of the total tribal population of India lives in this belt.
- (3) Western India: Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa, Dadra and Nagar Haveli.
- (4) The Dravidian region: Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- (5) Andaman, Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands. (Bayer)

Most of these tribes are marginalised and powerless. They are oppressed by upper classes. Some tribal communities are totally different from other mainstream societies. According to tribal literature, most tribal writers are writing about their social, political, economic and historical issues in literature.

Land Alienation: The history of land division among the tribes began during British colonialism in India when the British interfered in the tribal regions to exploit the tribal natural resources. Tribal issues and discourse references are available at historical places, in history books, and classic literature, "...Tribal lands were occupied by moneylenders, Zamindars and traders by advancing them loans etc. Opening of mines in the heart of tribal habitat and even a few factories provided wage labour as well as opportunities for factory employment. But this brought increasing destitution and displacement" (49 Burman). As the British power came by the Forest policy of the British Government, it was more inclined towards commercial considerations rather than human. Forest land and its resources provide the best means of livelihood for the tribal people and many tribes including the women engage in agriculture, food gathering and hunting. They are heavily dependent on the products of the forest.

Poverty and Indebtedness: Majority of tribes live under poverty line with simple economy. The tribes follow many simple occupations based on simple technology. "Most of the occupation falls into the primary occupations such as hunting, gathering, and agriculture. The technology they use for these purposes belong to the most primitive kind. There is no profit and surplus making in such



economy” (Debnath 219). Most of tribes live under abject poverty and are in debt in the hands of local moneylenders and zamindars. In order to repay the debt they often mortgage or sell their land to the moneylenders.

**Health and Nutrition:** In many parts of India tribal population suffers from never-ending infections and diseases out of which water borne diseases are life threatening. They also suffer from deficiency diseases, “...The Himalayan tribes suffer from Goiter due to lack of iodine. Leprosy and tuberculosis are also common among them. Infant mortality was found to be very high among some of the tribes” (Basu 6). Tribal societies have been ecologically imbalanced as the cutting of trees has increased the distances between villages and the forest areas thus forcing tribal women to walk longer distances in search of forest produce and firewood. They are living in healthy environment (Forest, Hills) but they are not familiar to health education.

**Education:** Regarding education the tribal population is at different levels of development but overall the formal education has made very little impact on tribal groups. Earlier government had no direct programme for their education. But in the subsequent years the reservation policy has made some changes. There are many reasons for low level of education among the tribal people. Formal education is not considered necessary to discharge their social obligations. Superstitions and myths play an important role in rejecting tribal education. Most tribes live in abject poverty (Lewis 6). It is not easy for them to send their children to schools, as they are considered extra helping hands. The formal schools do not hold any special interest for the children. Most of the tribes are located in interior and remote areas where teachers would not like to go from outside.

**Culture:** Culture is a way of life. Our culture is the main part of own social life. “. . . Due to contact with other cultures, the tribal culture is undergoing a revolutionary change. Due to the influence of Christian missionaries the problem of bilingualism has developed which led to indifference towards tribal language” (qtd. Sharma 168). According to western history and Indian history the tribal people are imitating western culture in different aspects of their social and historical life and leaving their own culture. But some tribal communities have become a part of multi ethnic and multi culture with the influence of West. It has led to degeneration of tribal life and tribal arts such as dance, music and different types of craft.

Tribal discourse is not only a part of social science but also a part of literature. According to Ramanika Gupta tribes have already started the struggle for identity and rights in different parts of the country. The tribes in world have their habitat usually in remote and isolated areas of the forests and the hilly areas away from the sophisticated and dominant society. They live in a compact community and have their distinct culture, customs, beliefs and languages which are unique in themselves. They have been described as the happiest people as long as they are left undisturbed by the external social forces.

Padmabhushan award winner Gopinath Mohanty, was one of the first tribal writers in Oriya language, even before Mahasweta Devi, to represent the voice of the tribal people in literature. Gopinath Mohanty's tribal novels and stories explore various aspects of the tribal discourse, inhabitants of the forests, mountain regions of Orissa, and various contours of the tribal life. Mohanty's *The Ancestor* and other literary texts offer an authentic account of the tribal life with its purple patches and dark pools. His best tribal novel *Ancestor* and *Parajas* is based on tribal forests of Orissa in Koraput district. They live in close harmony with nature, and their livelihood depends on cultivating a few patches of land, collecting honey and other forest products and occasionally hunting animals. As such they live in poverty, and without peace. Except for a few, most of the tribal people are very innocent, gullible and illiterate. For them a small official like a forest guard is demi-god. Such are the complimentary remarks often made by persons who have spent years with the tribal people and who have known them intimately. The folksongs of the tribals in characteristic lyrics are tuned to the mood and changing atmosphere of different seasons of the year and reveal the spontaneous expressions of their thinking and feelings.

Other Indian tribal novelist and essay writer Padmashree Award winner 2014 is Ganesh Devy, an active social reformer and a dominant activist in tribal community, of Gujarat. Ganesh Devy's latest published tribal book: *Vanprashta* (Marathi) gives his wide experience of active work at Tejgarh, in tribal area. But his way of target, balanced efforts lead him to success. At present, he is engrossed in the lives of tribal people and their empowerment, being in constant contact with them, he tries to understand and solve their problems. He proved that many of the schemes which are expected to benefit the tribes, to uplift their life and living

standard were robbed by officials. He is trying his level best to change government's attitude towards tribes. G.N. Devi has defined tribal life and location in different languages. Mahasweta Devi is a Bengali tribal writer, her tribal books have been translated by Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak. Her famous tribal books *Imaginary Maps* is based on West Bengal society.

Tribal life as depicted by Indian English novelist is in contrast with urban life. Arun Joshi in his novel *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* has contrasted the tribal world with the civilized world and thereby exposed the evils of urban life and highlighted the attractions of tribal life which draw the attention of rebels of the sophisticated society. Billy Biswas is the protagonist in the novel. Billy's migration from the civilised world to the tribal world underlines the beauty of the tribal life that attracts him by virtue of its humanitarian values which are conspicuous by their absence in the civilised world to which he belongs by birth. He is attracted to the civilised world towards a beautiful flower of tribal's garden. His association with tribal culture is symbolic of an unusual symbiosis of a rebel of the civilised society with tribal society that gifts him with the divine wealth of peace, happiness and contentment which he had been craving for since his childhood.

C.K. Janu is one of the tribal writers and leaders of the tribal people. She is committed to the cause of tribal rights in Kerala. Her fight is for the forest land of the Adivasis of the Waynad in Kerala. Her literary book *Mother Forest Unfinished* story is a personal narration. In her tribal epigraphy she says: "No one knows the forest like to do. The forest is the mother to us more than a mother, because she never abandons us" (qtd in Naik 104-105). Janu's concept of development is a different tribal discourse from that of civil society. She says that the tribal people do not need the development by the government and civil society. Other tribal writer is Kamala Markandaya's *The Coffer Dam* turns is a remarkable novel in tribes social life, novel character is represented to different issue of tribes in literature, such as Helen is heroine in the novel, tribal world when Helen fails to enjoy the fullness of life in grand bungalows. An English woman recently married to a self styled British engineer, Howard Clinton, Helen comes from England to India along with her husband who has to complete the construction of a dam on a south Indian River in accordance with the contract made with the Government of

India. Sometime after her coming to the tribal area of south India she develops predilection for tribal people and cannot help expressing it even before her husband who is full of hatred for everything that is primitive.

Ramnika Gupta has written about the tribals social, economic, geographical etc issues in Hindi tribal literature. Her literary works are related to tribal areas such as Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhitargarh, Andhra Pradesh etc. Her popular tribal book is *Who is Adivasi*, In this literary book she has defined the identity of tribes, tribal community, migrations in tribal history, private landed-property, social economic life, class, religion, etc. Commenting on the treatment of tribals in Gita Mehta's novel *A River Sutra*, Stella Sendahl remarks: "She (Mehta) does not, of course, entirely ignore the poor menaced tribals, but she mentions them only as a decorative element in a manner similar to their appearance in commercial Bombay films". (qtd. in Chaturvedi 79)

The novel *A River Sutra* presents the picture of a tribal village named Vano that attracts the narrator as well as the nephew of his ex-colleague. This novel is set at Amarkantak tribal area in Madhya Pradesh. The narrator of the novel is greatly impressed with the traditional way in which the tribal women of this village welcome him on his first visit to the village. Thus the depiction of tribal life does not find as much space in *A River Sutra* as in *The Strange Case of Billy Biawas* and *The Coffer Dam*. Arun Joshi, Kamala Markandaya and Gita Mehta have described the tribal world as more attractive and peaceful than the civilised world.

Africa's first English writer Chinua Achebe belonged to a Black tribal community in Nigeria. His novels are based on tribal social life such as Igbo tribes in Nigeria, for example *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *No longer at Ease* (1960). Both the novels are based on Igbo tribal nations in Africa. During his writing of the novel, African country was suffering under the colonial government power. As we say that many of the rural and tribal societies are barbaric in nature. Their history and cultural information are handed down through some of these means. This particular cult of tribes lived agreeably with the word of nature-migrating seasonally to follow the cycle of nature. Nature has been a great resource for their livelihood.

## **1.1 Review of Literature:**

Tribal literature, its rise in the second half of the 20th century, enables touring away from White Western supremacy in literature towards embracing new literatures with subaltern voices that have recently emerged. Tribal literature, folk literature, Dalit literature and Dalit Woman literature constitute the major part of the subaltern literature. These new forms are still endeavouring to create their own philosophical stand. The tribal literature that initially focussed on love for nature and their description of flowers, animals and natural resources have now shifted to the stories of oppression, exploitation and negligence in modern society. For centuries, tribal literature was confined to folk lore and folk songs, now new genres such as autobiography, play, short story and novel have emerged.

In this research work, I have used resources from primary sources as well as some secondary and unpublished works. I embarked on interviews mainly with experts like tribe leaders, head man of tribe and the co-ordinators of various tribals groups. Many books from the fields of tribal social life, history, cultural anthropology, philosophy, sociological, geographical location, and issue of tribals in literature were used. In this research title, point of view, these various fields of life are very necessary since the term, men, who are living in solitude and isolated areas from main stream society have been variously defined by different fields of academicians.

These different explanations and definitions of 'tribe' term and word include: tribes society, historical life, heritage, religious, cultural, customs, and rituals etcetera. All these definitions go to show how complex the being of the human is. That is why I chose to put together various fields of academic activities in the life of tribes in Africa and India. That is not all made use of various newspapers, journals, articles, interviews, more important are the experiences gathered during all these endeavours which tried to translate into words in this dissertation. Various official documents of the tribal history, and other collections have been chosen in reference to dissertation.

There have been many tribal studies in India and Nigeria based on tribal economy, land alienation socio-economic development, tribal culture, customs, rituals and tradition. It is highly imperative to have a look at these tribal studies by

various anthropologists, research scholars, projects etc. A new trend in ethno methodology which came during the British period was a theory propounded by Verrier Elwin, who suggested that tribals should be kept isolated in their hills and forests.

Since the topic is related to two tribal societies, one is African (Igbo tribal society) and other is Indian (Paraja tribal society) I allowed the works of many African intellectuals and Indian intellectuals to feature in the work as a way of using their own ideas in their understanding of African Igbo tribes culture, environment (*Things Fall Apart*) and Indian Paraja tribes (*The Ancestor*) culture, environment man to put across my own thoughts.

Some of such Indian intellectual literary long stories, whose works continue to feature in this research work, include Noble prize winner Rabindra Nath Tagore (a poet, novelist, dramatist and short story writer), Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, Mahasweta Devi (Sahitya Akademi Award in tribal literature), Gopinath Mohanty (Padma Bhushan Award in tribal literature), R.K. Narayan (Sahitya Akademi Award winner), Mulkraj Anand, Arun Joshi, Kamala Markandaya, GN Devi (Padmashree Award in tribal literature Jan.2014), Kiran Desai (Booker Prize Winner), M.H. Gavit, Gita Mehta, etc are popular writers in Indian English literature. On the other side African tribal literary writers are Chinua Achebe, (novelist, poet, professor and critic, born and bred in an Igbo village called Ogidi), Wole Soyinka (Noble Prize Winner), John Mbiti, (a Christian religious philosopher), Wangari Muta Maathai (Noble Laureate Winner), Ben Okri. Other authors whose works contributed in the making of this research work include Indian and a crowd of other European, American and African authors.

Sanjukta Das Gupta's *Adivasis and the Raj* focuses upon various tribal themes and concerns present in the critical book. It is said that the book is based on Adivasis under colonial rule. It is important to emphasise that the histories of Adivasis was shaped by the constantly evolving British policy towards them. K. K. Das's *Tribes of India: The Struggle for Survival*, brings back a focus on the colonial history of Adivasi and discusses the issue of their identity against this background. Tribal discourse is a new field in postcolonial literature. Both texts *Things Fall*

*Apart* and *The Ancestor* focus on the social, political and historical life of tribal people.

Dean Joros, in his study presents his views on the relationship between political socialisation of the tribal people and integration process or effect of tribal welfare programmes on their political socialisation. He reveals that by analysing the political socialisation process of tribes, a more complete evaluation of tribal welfare programmes can be ensured.

Jaganath Panday tries to analyse the class and class relations in three villages of Orissa and considers the particular mode of production operating system in the economy. The study covers predominantly a tribal village, a village mainly showing signs of capitalist development in social life.

Ramachandra Guha, says that the depletion of natural resource base leads to poverty. Tribal people, who were driven to hilltop by the in-migrants, denied their customary access to the forest. This alienation sometimes forced the people to degrade the surroundings he once lived in symbiosis with. So the result is an accelerated exploitation of the land and other natural resources by various out migrants (qtd in Haseena 44).

Geetha Menon reveals that the impact and the loss of common property resources is very severe on the tribal women. She shows that hardships of the tribal women are increasing. Thus tribal women are the major victims of the deprival of the traditional rights of the tribal communities in common property resources.

Another Indian tribal writer is Mahasweta Devi, a Bengali by origin. Her tribal books have been translated by Gayatri C. Spivak. Mahasweta Devi's novels also represent the voice of the tribal people and their conditions during colonial rule. Another Indian tribal novelist is Ganesh Devy, an active social reformer in tribal literature. His latest published tribal books include *Vanprashtha* (Marathi), which gives an account of his wide experience of active works of tribal area in our country. With the help of the works of these and other authors whose works are mentioned and quoted during the research work, I am able to put up my own ideas by establishing the point and target I have set for myself in this research work. The present study is based on tribal concerns in literature. This research is based on

the comparative studies of *Things Fall Apart* and *The Ancestor*. This research topic is a new dimension in postcolonial tribal studies, as a comparative perspective of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Gopinath Mohanty's *The Ancestor*.

This study will be completed by collecting secondary data and will be collected from various sources like published books, reports, research works, journals, newspapers internet browsing and interviews of tribal people and writers too. This will be done by collecting data from different Government project reports and criticism on tribal literature by different critics. Many issues such as crime and atrocities on tribals, poverty, lack of education, etc. raised in tribal literature will be verified by analysing the government reports and the literary depiction. Using this methodology this research will compare the narration of texts and find out the similarities and differences of the issues of tribal concerns.

Present research work will focus on the inadequacies and the prejudices let to tribal people. Tribal concerns in literature will take certain steps to make them aware about the contemporary issues. Both literary texts are based on tribal communities in India and Africa. The research work will focus on the idea of continuity of such beliefs, political, social, economic practices and traditional Eco-spiritual knowledge in spite of the intervention of colonial modernity in the Igbo and Paraja tribal communities. In this way the stratification and condition of tribes has been looked at and thought about, which provides us with an insight into the causes of their marginalisation and oppression. Some tribal communities are civilised and attractive, living in natural beauty, cover of the urban as well as rural mountains, hills and forests areas.

Tribal culture and literature are rich in its historical view. Gopinath Mohanty as well as Chinua Achebe both has contributed a lot in the canon of tribal literature and world literature. Achebe and Mohanty deal with the prominent issues of social, political, historical and geographical locations. The tribal literature that originally focused on love for nature and the description of flowers, animals and natural resources has now shifted to the stories, novels, drama and autobiography of oppression, exploitation in modern society.



The tribal society is a unique society with their customs, rituals, traditions, religious, beliefs with diversity of nature and people. Many tribes are concerned with hunting, gathering food with cultivation. Contemporary English tribal fiction writers are deeply concerned about the suppression of these marginalised classes and raise issues in their fiction to give them the position they deserve. The tribal fiction of Joseph Conrad, Chinua Achebe, Ben Okri, Gopinath Mohanty, Mahasweta Devi, Gita Mehta, Arun Joshi, GN. Devy etc. are embedded with tribal concerns, especially tackling the issues of tribal people who are suppressed since ancient times by patriarchy or upper hierarchy of the society.

Although, much research has been conducted from the perspective of tribal discourse, in human society but a comparison between *Things Fall Apart* and *The Ancestor* has not been done yet. So, in this dissertation an attempt has been made to compare both these novels by critiquing tribal concerns in *Things Fall Apart* and *The Ancestor*. To study these novels profoundly, viewpoints of significant scholars as well as critics like Ranjit Guha, Sumit Sarkar, Wole Soyinka, Joseph Conrad, GN Devi, C.K. Janu, Mahasweta Devi, Ben Okri, Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak etc. have been taken into concern.

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## CHAPTER 2

### Comparative Study of the Literary works of Chinua Achebe and Gopinath Mohanty

Of the many richly detailed fictionalised accounts of the texture of African and Indian communal life and the onset of European imperial encroachment into it, *Things Fall Apart* and *The Ancestor* are the most sparkling and most complex. In *Things Fall Apart* one of the classics of literary ethnography, indeed one of the novels that defines what traditional Africa is, author Achebe with a sensitive and thorough portrayal convey to reader a pre-colonial world of the Igbo's people of Nigeria, making scene after scene reveal spectacular information about the quotidian social life of two of their communities. On the other hand, Gopinath Mohanty is Oriyan language literary writer; his literary works are based on tribal social, political, geographical, economic and historical life. Achebe and Mohanty are not only postcolonial writers, but hold prestigious position in the postmodern era also. Achebe has often been referred to as the founding father of African English literature. Achebe was born in Nigeria in Africa, while Gopinath Mohanty was born in Oddisa in South India. Literary works of these writers deal with the tribal societies. Chinua Achebe belonged to Igbo tribal community and Gopinath Mohanty belonged to Paraja tribal community. Achebe wrote about the effects of colonialism and its aftermaths, as well as political corruption and attempts to introduce democratic reforms.

Chinua Achebe is an African novelist, poet, critic, proffers and story writer. He was born on 16 November 1930 in a middle class family in town of Ogidi in southeastern Nigeria. Achebe was a student in Christian school and won a scholarship for undergraduate studies from western government. Achebe became a great story writer and university scholar in Nigeria. Disintegration of South African indigenous cultures affected the literature of the country owing to racialism and dominance of the white settlements there. English has been used almost like an African language in Africa for utilitarian and literary purposes. In 1948 for the preparation of index independence, Nigerian first university opened. It was an associate college of the University of London. Chinua Achebe obtained high marks in the entrance and was admitted as a major scholar in the university.

While being a research scholar he worked for Nigerian Broadcasting service (NBC). In his university time Achebe wrote his first short story *In a village Church* which combines details of life in rural Nigeria with Christian institutions and a style which appears in many of his later works (Ogede 9).

Achebe's novels focus on the traditions of Igbo society, the effect of Christian influences, and the clash of Western and traditional African values during and after the colonial era. A visit to Nigeria by Queen Elizabeth II in 1956 brought issues of colonialism and politics to the surface and was a significant moment for Achebe. In 1956 Achebe was selected at the Staff School run by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). There he met a woman Christie Okoli, who had grown up in the area and joined the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) staff when he arrived. They first conversed when she brought to his attention a pay discrepancy; a friend of hers found that, although they had been hired simultaneously, Christie had been rated lower and offered a low fixed amount. (23-24)

Achebe and Okoli grew closer in the following years, and on 10 September 1961 they were married on the campus of the University of Ibadan. Christie Achebe has described their marriage as one of trust and mutual understanding. However, as their relationship matured, husband and wife made efforts to adapt to one another. Achebe was 26 years old when he wrote his first novel *Things Fall Apart*. It was published in 1958 and later went on to become one of the most important African literary texts in the world literature. Since publication, a total of nearly 12 million copies have been sold, with translations into more than fifty languages (Achebe, Cover Page). It is the first novel by an African writer to be set as a required text in schools across the continent's English-speaking countries and beyond. More than fifty years after publication, it is the most widely read work by the black African writer. Achebe's characters, events, dialogues, setting, and mood are represented the construction of the fictive persons is one of these areas about which questions could be raised, none more seriously in *Things Fall Apart* than that of the personality assigned to the protagonist hero Okonkwo.

This novel was released at the time of Africa fight for independence, self-assertion and nationalism, the book assured Achebe's place in the world of literature because it was a reaction to Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson* and Joseph

Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Achebe is one of Africa's influential and widely published writers. He is often called the father of modern African English Literature. Achebe was cited in the London *Sunday Times* as one of the "1,000 Makers of the Twentieth Century" for defining a modern African, Literature that was truly African a major contribution to world Literature (Showalter 26).

Gopinath Mohanty is Oriya Indian novelist, dramatist, poet, story writer, great autobiography writer and professor in Oriya tribal literature. He was born on April 20, 1914, in a middle class family in Cuttack district, Oddisa state in South India. Mohanty received high education at Ravenshaw College. He got his M.A. degree from Patna University in 1936. He joined Oddisa Administrative service in 1938. Most of his service career was spent among the poor tribals of the undivided Koraput district in Oddisa. Mohanty's appearance on the literary scene of Orissa was a crucial movement in history. In his fiction Gopinath Mohanty explored all aspects in the Orissan tribal life. Mohanty developed a unique prose style, lyric style, choosing words and phrases from the day to day speech of ordinary men and women. His most renowned literary works are based on tribal society. Mohanty retired from government service in 1969. In 1986, he joined San Jose State University in the United State of America as an Adjunct Professor of Social Sciences. Both Indian and Nigerian countries have withstood the colonial rule with fortitude and determination and extracted independence from imperial rule. They have done it with success. Nigerian literature has been at the forefront protesting against annoyance of western influence, power and knowledge over the country. Mohanty published 24 novels and 10 collections of short stories in addition to three plays, two biographies, two volumes of critical essays and five books on the languages of Kandh, Gadaba and Saora tribes (Mansinah181-182).

Both Indian and Nigerian literary writers are remarkable who have made a mark not just in their motherland but the world over. Wole Soyinka is a Nigerian who became the first African in history to win the Noble Prize (1984) for fiction (Prasad 6). Chinua Achebe is another name worldwide renowned. The two together have made valuable contribution to post-colonial literature in English. No less significant are writers and poets such as John Pepper Clark, Ben Okri who is the first Nigerian to win the Booker prize in 1991, Helen Habia, Chimamanda Ngugi Alichie and, Buchi Emecheta, Ken Saro Wiwas (2).

On the other side India is well known for producing literature, which has made a mark not only in our country but also the in world over literature. Rabindranath Tagore is an Indian who becomes the first Noble Prize where for literature in imperial power in 1913. Tagore's literary works were originally written in Bengali language, but mostly his literary works were rendered into English (Kumar 19). Gopinath Mohanty's original literary works are written in Oriya language, but his famous works have been translated in English language. His tribal novels *The Ancestor*, *Paraja*, *Amrutara Santana* and *Aphanca* are remarkable and are set in the areas of wooded hills and forests to the Eastern Ghats in Orissa. On the other hand, the *Kondhs* and *Paraja* are two colourful and proud tribal societies living in tiny clusters of villages in the southern parts of Orissa.

*Dadi Budha (The Ancestor)* is one of the shorter novels of Gopinath Mohanty. It was written in 1944 in Oriya language. It has the distinction of being his first novel based on tribal life in Oddisa India. This text was translated in English language by Arun Kumar Mohanty in 1997 and published by Sahitya Akademi in 1997. This novel is about the story of the breakdown of a tribal community under the impact of modern civilisation. Dadi Budha is an ancient date palm tree representing the eternal ancestor. It stands for the cultural heritage of the tribal people manifested in their rituals and costumes. The tree stands as a silent witness to the joys and sorrows of the tribal folk and dominates the drama of their existence. Close to Dadi Budha stands a termite mound called Hunka Budha, yet another symbol of the primitive and innocent faith of the tribal people. Thenga Jani, the son of Ram Chandra Muduli, the headman of Lulla village, elope with a beautiful girl, Saria Daan, the daughter of the same village. But he comes under the spell of Santosh Kumari, a Christian girl. Thenga and Santosh are deeply in love and reject the discipline of the tribal society. They decide to run away to Assam to work on a tea estate, they plan to build their dream home in a town where rules of the tribal society do not prevail anymore. Gopinath visualises tribal life against a cosmic background. The despair of Ram Muduli, the plight of Thenga mother after her only son leaves the village with the Domb girl, the declaration of the dishari that Thenga and Santosh were evil dumas, the terror caused by the tiger and the rise of a village at another site, all these signify the unbroken continuity of life.



*Paraja*: *Paraja* is the third novel of Mohanty, it was written in 1945 in Oriya language. *Paraja* is a big tribal community in Orissa. It's a big story of one's attachment to land, the soil of one's ancestor. Gopinath Mohanty's *Paraja* is one of the best novels written about the life of the tribals. In this novel he explores various aspects of the tribals inhabiting the forests and mountaneous regions of Orissa, and he very meticulously charts the various contours of the tribal life. Thus, the book offers an authentic account of the tribal life with its purple patches and dark pools. This literary text is translated from Oriya by Bikram K. Das. This translated version has been published by Oxford University Press in 1987.

This novel has taken its name from the aboriginal Paraja tribe which has its home among the rugged mountains and forests of Koraput in Orissa. Parajas are tribes which live in the forests of Orissa in Koraput district. They live in close harmony with nature, and depend on cultivating a few patches of land, collecting honey and other forests products and occasionally hunting animals. The tribes live in isolation areas as jungles, mountains, hills, away from main stream society. But they are living in peaceful and naturally beauty areas. Most of them are very innocent, gullible and illiterate. For them a small employee like a forest guard was demi-god:

In his dark, rich voice, Bagla was singing the Paraja song of the coming of rain....And this is what Bagla sang: O my darling Jayi flower! My sweet malli bud! Come with star-white flower in your dark hair; I wait. I know that you will come, beloved; For you are as unfailing as death is....For the new bride washes the feet of her elders In the custom of our tribe (Mohanty 135-136).

In *Paraja* novel the focus of the narrative is centrifugal. It is as much around on the fluctuating fortunes of the protagonist Sukru Jani, an inhabitant of the Paraja tribal village of Sarasupadar, as it is on the bewitching scenic beauty and variety of the mountain, hills and forests pass by which three different tribal communities live. Sukru Jani falls prey to the treacherous money lender of the village, Ramachandra Bisoi. For his machinations Bisoi eventually is axed to death by Mandia Jani, eldest son of Sukru Jani. *Danapani* is his great novel in Oriya literature, written in 1955. Mohanty in his novel described about the tribes struggling life for economic and identity reasons, because they are marginalised

from main stream society. *Laya Bilaya (High Tide, Ebb Tide)* is written in 1961. In this novel Mohanty describes and explores the psychological complexity of three members of a tribal family of Kolkata who went on a short trip to Puri. The story of *Laya Bilaya*, however moves from the plain classic realism to the spiritual and mystical plane. Although apparently it is structured in parts in the 'stream of consciousness' mould of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. Gopinath Mohanty's central concern in this novel is not with an original and clever technique of narration but it is with the "values" that has a creative artifact embodied in them. Tarun Roy, the protagonist of the *Laya Bilaya*, stands before us like a real life stature, "A feeble, humble middle class Kolkata householder of the heart's affections" (Mohanty 1). His short retreat in the company of his wife Kantimoyee and daughter Chhalana from the drab city of Kolkata to Puri, the celebrated abode of Lord Jagannath Lord of the Universe, is like Christian's journey from the city of destruction to the celestial city in John Bunyan's classic work *The Pilgrim's Progress*. There is a religious discourse and culture hegemony in Mohanty's literary works .It has been motivated by a faith in an ampler and noble sphere of existence on the earth.

Mohanty is a great Oriya playwright also. He has composed three major plays such are *Mukti Pathe* his first play, published in 1937, *Dinadipahare*, his second play deals with tribal social life during colonial power, and this play open in 1937 in Oriya theatre. His last play is *Mahapurusha*, published in 1985. Mohanty is not only proficient in writing biographies but also had a great deal in writing about the autobiography in Oriya literature. His biography deals with tribal social life. Mohanty's biographies are *Dipamyoti* printed in 1965, *Utkalamani* printed in 1967, and *Dhulimati Santha* (Gopabandhu Choudhury) printed in 1985. Mohanty has composed a great autobiography *Srota Swati*, which is divided into four parts and published in 1986. Mohanty possesses a gift of creative writing in literary field. He has contributed books to five languages and three Cultural books developed for Oriya language and literature during his life period. Mohanty's language and cultural books are *Gadaba Bhasa Parichaya* (1959), *Kubhi Kandha Bhasatatwa* (1956), *Kubhile Kutinehi Panatu* (1956), *Kandha Paraja Stotra O'Sangeet* (1957), and *Saura Bhasa* (1978) (Mansinah166-167).

*The bed of Arrows and other Stories: The bed and Arrows and other Stories* is a superb collection of thirteen short stories of Gopinath Mohanty, translated by Sitakant and published by Sahitya Akademi. Mahapatra himself is a major Indian poet. The stories reflect Mohanty's great love for the tribals, his deep sensitivity to their struggle for existence, the pride and predicament of the rustic women and the impact of the new waves of political transformation sweeping rural India.

Mohanty's literary works are remarkable in tribal literature. Mohanty has been trying to provide justice to the tribals the magistrate, educating them about their rights as their guardian, preparing them for expanding their horizons as a mentor preparing for expanding the horizons of Oryan literature and exposing the unknown characters who sung the songs in those mountainous areas:

. . . Upon the hill beyond our hill, dear, sweet winds blow, Upon the  
hill beyond our hill, dear Blow your flute slow, For the flowers are  
blooming there, The birds are singing. (Mohanty 1)

Besides this, a number of short stories of Gopinath Mohanty have been translated in different languages. It is very difficult to translate into English the nuances of Gopinath Mohanty's language. On the other hand, translators have attempted to convey the richness and complexity of the original texts to readers who are unfamiliar with Oryan language and culture. They have tried their best to reveal the richness and the power of the Oryan language by translating Mohanty's prestigious works which are embedded with the Oryan culture and their rituals.

On the other hand, Chinua Achebe, is the author, co-author and editor of almost 17 books and among them are five novels. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is one of his first novels that got worldwide recognition. The title aptly reflects the spirit of modernist. It is the first African English literary text. Heinemann published 2,000 hardcover copies of *Things Fall Apart* on 17 June 1958. According to Alan Hill, employed by the publisher at the time, the company did not "touch a word of it" in preparation for release which shows its over whelming standard. Chinua Achebe has edited several anthologies namely, *Morning yet on Creating Day* and *Hopes and Impediments*, and the collection of poetry *Beware Soul Brother*. His first and best-known postcolonial landmark novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1958) was

published by him when he was 27 years old, which proved its fame not only in African literature but throughout the literatures of the world.

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* got its title from Noble prize winner William Butler Yeats's *Second Coming*: "turning and turning into the widening gyre, falcon cannot hear the falconer, things fall apart, the centre can't hold" (Yeats 79). It was listed among Africa's best books of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both William B. Yeats's and T.S. Eliot are among Chinua Achebe's most writers in the literary field. The title of *Things Fall Apart* is adopted from William Butler Yeats' poem *The Second Coming* (1921). The poem foresees the end of the present age and the world's approach to another phase that is completely different. *Things Fall Apart* is centered on the life of the protagonist of the novel, Okonkwo. This novel develops Okonkwo accidentally kills a man and he and his family are exiled from Umuofia. During his exile white missionaries arrive in Umuofia and change the Igbo social life as culture hegemony in Umuofia village. When Okonkwo returns to his village he sees the major transformations that Umuofia has undergone during his exile. Unhappy with the change, Okonkwo and other villagers come together to drive the white missionaries out of their land. Okonkwo's hard works are unsuccessful as the missionaries send their messengers to abort the meeting. Okonkwo kills one of the messengers and in shock at his actions, the villagers let the other messengers escape. The messengers report back to the missionaries and they take off to bring Okonkwo to justice only to find him dead:

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* shows the chaos and confusion of Nigerian society due to the colonial impact. It is not only tears apart a culture which was truly democratic but also created a new set of attitude towards material possessions from where there were limited or meager chances for the Igbo community to turn back. The climax is provided when Umuofia decides to discuss the worsening situation. The existing realities make them acutely aware of the divisions in the Igbo society (qtd. in Pandey118).

Achebe has created a true picture of Nigerian Igbo tribal social environment along with its cultural past. His second novel is *No longer at Ease*

published in 1960 by British Publication House. It is a story of an Igbo society in South Nigeria. The title of the novel comes from the closing lines of T. S. Eliot's poem, *The Journey of the Magi*:

We returned to our places, these Kingdoms, but no longer at ease  
here, in the old dispensation, with an alien people clutching their  
gods. I should be glad of another death (qtd. 87).

Although set after several decades *Things Fall Apart, No Longer at Ease* continues many of the themes from Achebe's first novel. Before 1960 all African countries were suffering from imperial power (Parker John and Richard Rathbone 79 ). Here the clash between European culture and traditional culture has become enchanted during the long period of colonial rule. Igbo tribal society struggles to balance the demands of his family and village for economic support while at the same time keeping up with the strong desire of western culture. Furthermore, Achebe depicts a family continuity between Ogbuefi Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* and his grandson Obi Okonkwo in *No Longer at Ease*. Both men are confrontational, speak their minds, and have some self-destructive tendencies. However, this aggressive streak manifests itself in different ways. Where his grandfather was a man of action and violence, Obi is a man of words and thoughts to the exclusion of action. *Arrow of God* is a third popular novel of Chinua Achebe. It was published in 1964. The title of the novel represents the will of God. This text won the first Man Booker international prize for African writing. The setting of this novel is rural Nigeria during the 1920s, in southern part of the country where the Igbo people reside. The main character in this novel is Ezeulu, who is chief priest of the God Ulu of the village of Umuaro. Ezeulu comes into conflict with himself in a question held on the power in the face of his high age and the advance of the British Colonial administrators. Chinua Achebe's novel shows that men can't fight in Igbo societies.

Achebe's other novel *A Man of the People* was printed in 1966. This novel is a black satire set in an unnamed African state which has just attained independence. This text is based on a teacher named Odili Samalu from the Igbo village in Nigeria, who opposes a corrupt minister of culture named for his parliament seat. This novel had brought Achebe to the attention of military staff

who suspected him of having gained knowledge from achievement. After colonial war, Achebe started two magazines:

His first magazine is The Literary Journal Okike and second Magazine is A Forum of African art, Fiction and Poetry. Both Journals were internal publications of the university. When Chinua Achebe returned to the University of Kenya in 1976, he hoped to finish three goals: finish the novel he had been writing restore the native publication of Okike and further his study of Igbo tribal culture. (Pandey 19)

Achebe's book is wise, thrilling, critical and overwhelming. In addition to his writing career he has maintained himself as an active writer, as well as his teaching career. In 1992, he was appointed to a three year visiting professorship at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1975. Other short stories by Chinua Achebe are *Marriage is A Private Affair* (1952), *Dead Men's Path*(1953), *Engelful Creditor*(1972) The describes a wealthy woman who has recently lost her servants due to free education. These Achebe stories are based on African historical social, political and culture hegemony. Chinua Achebe is also a well-known children books writer in African literature. Achebe Children's stories books are very popular in Nigerian literature. His books are *Chike and the River* (1966), *How the Leopard Got His Claws* (1972), *The Flute* (1975), and *The Drum* (1978). These books are considered representative of contemporary Nigerian life. Chinua Achebe's *Beware Soul Brother and other Poems*, was published in 1971. His second famous poem is *Don't let him die: An anthology of memorial poem for Christopher Okigbo*(1996), *The novelist as teacher* (1965), *An image of Africa; Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness* (1975), *Morning yet on Creation Day* (1975), *The Trouble with Nigeria* (1984), *Home and Exile* (2000), *Education of a British Protected child* (2009), *There was a Country A Personal History of Biafra* (2012). Achebe has received many literary and non-literary awards during life period (Ogede3-4).

Gopinath Mohanty was proficient in all genres of literature. He was a renowned Oriyan literary writer. Since 1973 he has written more than 22 novels in his mother tongue, Oriya. Besides this Mohanty wrote some 200 stories which

were published in different Oriyan magazines and literary magazines. Mohanty has been awarded by various literary prizes during his whole life.

He wrote a lot besides fiction and also established himself as a leading expert on Orissa's tribal languages and cultures. His name is known throughout the country and his work is not unknown in English literature. Mohanty won several prizes including many literary awards in Oriyan literature and language. To him technique is a powerful medium for the expression of his humanistic vision. Mohanty believes that the function of the literature is to expose social evil with a view to solving problems and creating egalitarian social order. He is often dubbed as a communist and propagandist. He contradicts this opinion and asserts that he is primarily a novelist in Oriya tribal literature:

The seventy year old dishari (astrologer priest) tried to recollect all the beautiful shapes he had seen in his life; he felt as if all these radiated from Dadi Budha. He also felt as if Dadi Budha was standing beside his sick-bed saying: "you are my priest, aren't you? You are so close to me. If I do not cure you, whom shall I cure then?" (Mohanty 54).

Mohanty calls his vision imaginative realism and "comprehensive his topical humanism". He fashions his fictional technique to express his vision.

Plot characters, setting, style, and language in Mohanty novel-fiction together reveal his vision of man and society. Mohanty's fictional craftsmanship combines R.N. Tagore humanism, Bankim's romanticism, Premchand's sympathy for the poor and afflicted and Sarat Chandra's boundless human sympathy. All his novels are born of the union of experience and imagination. Mohanty exhibits remarkable imaginative and artists power which enables him to see more clearly and depict more convincingly a situation or a scene he has observed or experienced. His plots reveal his extraordinary power of imaginative realism. Due to his preoccupation with realism, he finds it difficult to attempt well-constructed complex or organic plots. His plots are loose or episodically. In his other novel *Paraja, Dana Pani* Mohanty adroitly maintains coherence and unity in the loose and inorganic plot. He admirably preserves the unities, as in a classical novel for it covers the events of one year in the life of Paraja tribal society in the Lulla Village

in Odessa. Mohanty's vision of humanism suffused in his plots is unfolded by his narrative devices. The most popular narrative device which Mohanty employs in *The Ancestor*, *Paraja*, *Dana Pani*, and *Purkha* are the direct methods in which the novelist is a historian narrating from the outside. He illuminates and interprets his material and makes it seem authentic. All Mohanty's major characters are remarkable for intimate touches of realism. Mohanty loves his characters dearly and represents a departure from the tradition of Indian fiction:

The distant is not so distant there. The view is limited to three quarters of a mile on either side, and within the confines of human sight, there is a beautiful rounded hill.... In that darkness four villagers from Lulla come down the hillside. Dense forest stood on both sides. This was the kingdom of the tiger. Four of them Ram Muduli, the village headman, Chancheri Domb, Hari Jani... (Mohanty1).

Setting or milieu which implies manners, customs and way of life from an integral element in Mohanty's fictional technique. The setting in most of his novels is related with poverty, exploitation, social and economic disparities and distinctions in convention ridden Lulla village in Odessa. Mohanty's *The Ancestor* is a remarkable picture of pre-independence Indian rustic life, drawn with understanding and objectivity.

On the other hand, Chinua Achebe is very successful in the art of characterisation. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* characters are the true children of Igbo tribal village. He presents a considerable section of Nigerian Igbo tribal society striving to live its daily life in definite historical situation. There are no 'good' and no 'bad' characters in Achebe's novels. Though his other novels characters are mostly simple, unsophisticated people of the tribal village, he has invested them with a poetic and dream like quality and symbolic significance. Achebe's characters are equally significant as individuals and possess their peculiar characteristics and idiosyncrasies. Chinua Achebe has evolved standardised English, the body of which is correct English usage in all respects. Achebe's linguistic and stylistic experiment comprises syntactical changes and a use of words from different African native language words with a view of maintaining the spirit of the thought and creating the desired atmosphere:



Agbala do-o-o-o! Agbala ekeneo-o-o-o-o,' came the voice like a sharp knife cutting through the night. 'Okonkwo! Agbala ekene gio-o-o-o! Agbala cholu ifu ada ya Ezinmao-o-o-o!' (Achebe 73).

Achebe has used various technical devices for making it a suitable medium for expressing African ethos. In *Things Fall Apart* he selects the vivid African style of narration in which episode follows episode and thought follows thought. It is the same method which Joseph Conrad follows in the *Heart of Darkness*. Achebe invests the speech of his characters with an idiom which corresponds to their social status. The language put in the mouth of the grandmother is beautifully picturesque, full of the flavour of the earth, the scent of the seasons and realistic dialogue style of the Nigerians in the Umuofia village. The Nigerian sensibility is best shown in the use of images and symbols which have already been discussed. Proverbs, phrases, idioms, pictures and expressions which are typically Nigerian have been translated in English abundantly. In *Things Fall Apart*, he frequently uses village proverbs, legends and concrete imagery in Igbo tribal people in African context.

In 1950, Gopinath Mohanty received Visual Milan citation. He won the central Sahitya Akademi Award in 1955 for his prose-epic, *Matimatala* (The Fertile Soil 1964). After six years Mohanty got awarded by the Soviet Land Nehru Award in 1970 for his Oriya Translation of Gorky's work, and Universities, the D. Litt. Degree by Sambalpur University in 1976 and a Fellowship for Creative Writing in Oriya by the U.G.C. in 1979. In 1981, the government of India conferred on him Padma Bhushan in recognition of his distinguished contribution to literature. He was an Emeritus Fellow of Government of India for creative writing (Msansinah 191).

Chinua Achebe has received many national and international awards from academic and cultural institutions around the world. In 1959, he won the Margaret Wong Memorial Prize for *Things Fall Apart*. The following year, after the publication of its sequel, *No Longer At Ease*, he was awarded the Nigerian National Trophy for Literature. His book of poetry, *Christmas in Biafra*, written during the Nigerian civil war, won the first Commonwealth Poetry Prize in 1972. Achebe was the recipient of almost 30 honorary degrees from various national and International Universities in the world, as in England, Scotland, Canada, South

Africa, Nigeria and the United States, including Dartmouth College, Harvard, and Brown University. Achebe has been awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the American Academy of Arts and Letters (1982), a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2002), the Nigerian National Order of Merit (Nigeria's highest honor for academic work), the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade (Sylvanus ).

In June 2007, when Achebe was awarded the Man Booker International Prize, Elaine Showalter said he “illuminated the path for writers around the world seeking new words and forms for new realities and societies”; and South African writer Nadine Gordimer (Noble Prize Winner in 1991), said Achebe has achieved: “what one of his characters brilliantly defines as the writer's purpose: ‘a new-found utterance’ for the capture of life's complexity” ( qtd in Showalter 1).

Author of *Things Fall Apart* has been selected to receive the 2010 Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize for his “unprecedented impact in literature.” The Gish prize will award Achebe approximately \$300,000 and a silver medallion for his “outstanding contribution to the beauty of the world and to mankind’s enjoyment and understanding of life.”(Ogede 39) Other Gish prize winners include Pete Seeger, Robert Redford and Bob Dylan. Achebe was honored on October 27, 2010 at the Hudson Theatre in New York City:

...Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe is known the world over for having played a seminal role in the founding and development of African literature. He continues to be considered among the most significant world writers. He is most well-known for the ground-breaking 1958 novel *Things Fall Apart*, a novel still considered to be required reading the world over. It has sold over twelve million copies and has been translated into more than fifty languages (Showalter 26-27).

He had been living in the US since 1990 after a car crash left him partially paralysed and then on a wheelchair returning to Nigeria frequently. Finally he was called the “grandfather of Nigerian Literature”, Achebe died after a short illness on 21 March 2013 in Boston, United States. The BBC News wrote, “Chinua Achebe: obituary of Nigerian’s renowned author” (Sylvanus).

Indian Oriyan language tribal writer and Jnanpith Award winner, Gopinath Mohanty died in August 20, 1991 in native has palace. Achebe and Mohanty are the best tribal writers in literary world. Indian and Nigerian writers have been conscious of their culture heritage and its preservation. As far as Indian approach's concerned in tribal literature, it has been highlighted from time to time by social thinkers, intellectuals, political leaders, literary writers, and the general people who have been conscious of their secondary status within the society and outside.

Tribal writers of India and Nigeria such as Achebe and Mohanty have been very conscious of their cultural heritage and its preservation. They have displayed a strong sense of social commitment in their literary creations. The social fallouts of colonial rule in both the countries have been depicted by almost all Indian and Nigerian literary personalities right from the initial years of development of English literature in their respective countries. Even though the early literary works of both the countries reflect the influence of western style of writing. Chinua Achebe is a constant and successful experimenter not only in the field of technique but in the field of language also. He has deftly exploited the plastic nature of English out of which he has fashioned out a language that fulfils the need of a creative artist like him to express the subtleties of Nigerian thought and tradition.

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### CHAPTER 3

#### Comparative Study of *Things Fall Apart* and *The Ancestor* From Tribal Perspective

Gopinath Mohanty as well as Chinua Achebe has contributed a lot in the canon of tribal literature and world literature. Both the writers deal with the prominent issues of social, political, historical and geographical location. Chinua Achebe's title, *Things Fall Apart*, is a quotation taken from the poem *The Second Coming* by William Butler Yeats. *The Ancestor* was originally written in Oriya language in 1944. The protagonists of both the chosen novels, *Things Fall Apart* and *The Ancestor* show how tribals crave for an identity; they may be black or brown, may be located in India or Africa. The main character Okonkwo is a great man who has achieved much in his life. He is a champion wrestler, a wealthy farmer, a husband of three wives and eight children, a title holder among his Igbo tribes society. On the other hand the main character Thenga Jani and Santosh Kumari, they fall deeply in love and reject the discipline of the Paraja tribal society and leave it.

The novel, *Things Fall Apart*, is not only in African literature, but also in postcolonial literary and cultural discourses. Chinua Achebe's novels *Things Fall Apart* is a classical study of traditional Igbo society undermined by colonialism. Achebe shows that Africans borrowed freely from the embedded narrative forms anecdotes, animals fables, ballads, folktales, song, tales, proverbs myths, rituals, customs, taboos etc. established in *Things Fall Apart* firmly as participating in the discourse of minimalist expression.

On the other hand Mohanty's *The Ancestor* visualises life in a tribal community against a cosmic background. The tree stands as a silent witness to the joys and sorrows of the tribal folk which dominate the drama of their existence.

Igbo tribal society had them a own culture and philosophy of which they were proud until Europeans told them that they were savages. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* has been set in Nigeria in Umuofia (A group of nine villages) in the hinterlands of the Igbo nation, is a stellar member and covers urban as well as rural area. Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* deftly grafts this method of extreme

simplicity onto the more extended novelistic genre to capture the rich vibrancy and texture of a traditional Igbo culture in a memorable way.

In *Things Fall Apart* the Igbo tribe is seen cracking under colonial pressure, psychologically and socially. *Things Fall Apart* is one of the undisputed masterpieces of world literature, although if there is any blemish at all it's a technical one having to do with the telling: the enigma of a story in which the narrator is not only a non-participant in the events narrated but is even unidentified. The elusive indeterminacy of the narrator's identity (in terms of background, gender, class, age, religion, political affiliation, social status, occupation, nationality or other categorical distinctions) is a ground for misgivings because it has been confirmed that the first point almost anyone in the field of narrative will agree on nowadays with regard to narrator is that they should not be confused with authors (Ogede 18).

Achebe uses the story of the novel's hero, Okonkwo, to demonstrate how British colonial Christianity shattered traditional Igbo tribal society in Nigeria at the turn of the twentieth century. The faithfulness of the religious beliefs of the Igbo tribal community are represented in Okonkwo, who stays true to his culture's values and has to give up his life for them.

On the other hand, Gopinath Mohanty is the first tribal writer in Oriya language and literature in India, even before Mahaswata Devi, to represent the voice of the tribals and their conditions during colonisation. Mohanty, in the novel visualises life in a tribal community against a cosmic background. The tree stands as a silent witness to the joys and sorrows of the tribal folk; it dominated the drama of their existence. Mohanty has interpreted the living story of the tribal community and the way of its disintegration in the civilising mission of modernity in Odisha. Mohanty's *The Ancestor* has been set in Odisha (Lulla village) state in India in natural beauty; it covers the urban as well as rural mountain, hills and forests areas. *The Ancestor*, Gopinath Mohanty's first novel, canvases tribal life, to examine the importance of traditional knowledge, belief, customs, rituals, rights, political system, religious and culture practices for bringing forth unity and integrity in the tribal world. Mohanty's, *The Ancestor*, *Paraja*, *Apahanca* and *Amrutara Santan* are remarkable for their portrayal of tribal life in the densely wooded hills and forests of the Eastern Ghats. The Kondhs and the Parajas are two colourful

parts of Orissa. Tribal people of these primitive communities have been exploited by moneylenders and petty government officials for ages. The novel tells the moving story of the disintegration of a tribal community under the impact of modern civilisation. English version of Mohanty's novel has documented the life, the customs, the culture, the festivals and the songs and dances of the Paraja tribe of the Koraput region of Orissa as well as their poverty, struggles, deprivation and exploitation by the non-tribals. In the introduction to the English translation of the novel, the translator Arun Kumar Mohanty says, Gopinath Mohanty 'spent a life time trying to understand these tribals of the mountains and forests,' and that he attempts to tell their story in several of his novels.

Mohanty uses the story of the novel's hero, Thenga Jani, the son of Ram Chandra Muduli, the headman of Lulla village, is betrothed to a beautiful girl Saria Daan, the only daughter of Hari Jani of the same village. They come under the spell of Santosh Kumari, a Christian Domb girl. Santosh Kumari marries Thenga Jani out of love, but Paraja tribes don't allow this custom. They fall deeply in love and reject the discipline of the tribal society and leave it. After marriage both reached Assam tea garden across the mountain from Lulla village. Both are unable to decide what to do, how to get out of this. This novel was originally written in Oriya language, the language of urban Oriya set in a rural as well as natural beauty (hills, mountain, rivers, and cave) in tribal areas. Mohanty has written enormous novels, and with even less concern for their popularity, he has taken as his subjects, not the popular romantic or less socio-political topics in his tribal literary works.

Achebe's novels can be profitably studied as an ordered record of the struggles of Igbo tribal society against colonial command. They highlight the struggles of the Igbo tribe in their progression from village to city life under the perpetual influence of the West's modernity. The narratives of Achebe's novels can be grouped into the narratives of the village and city lives of the tribes. The early two novels *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* are elaborate portrayals of the past history and pristine culture of the Igbo tribal society, before the point of contact with Western power. The Igbo tribal society presented in the village novels is a self-sustained community which has still retained their myths, beliefs, customs, religion, tradition, proverbs, tales and taboos with maximum sense of



duty. But all these undergo drastic changes with the intervention of the white man. Achebe's novels map the various contours of the tribal life in its struggle against the systematic encroachment of their cultural space.

On the other side Mohanty in the novel *The Ancestor* deals with the issues of Paraja society customs, and rituals, including family life in marriage relationship, marital frustration, domestic violence and sexual abuse in marital lives which are regarded by the victims as degrading, humiliating, painful and unwanted throughout life, "They were all human beings and they had to toil in the hope of a better tomorrow, although their tomorrow might turn out to be no better than their yesterday" (43).

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* creates a crystalline view of Igbo customs, including family life in the polygamous household, the patterns of falling in love and marriage, work and play in the public communal setting and the placement of women in this patriarchal society. For example Okonkwo's family consisted of his three wives and nine children "There was a wealthy man in Okonkwo's village who had three huge barns, nine wives and thirty children" (15). *Things Fall Apart* begins with the untouched glory of Igbo tribal community and ends with the death of their hero Okonkwo. This tribal novel is divided into three sections and each section deals with a milestone in the life of the community and in Okonkwo's career. The first section introduces the Igbo life in the of village Umuofia in all its glory and independence. The novel opens with the fiercest wrestling match ever witnessed among the nine tribal villages in which Okonkwo emerges as the winner over the seven years reigning champion, Amalinze the cat. Unlike his father Unoka, Okonkwo achieved greatness by dint of hard work and fearlessness, meeting perfectly the traditional standard by which greatness is measured in their community. Greatness is assessed solely on personal achievement, "Fortunately, among these people a man was judged according to his worth and not according to the worth of his father" (12). By pairing Okonkwo with his lazy and ease-loving father, the novelist puts emphasis on Okonkwo's "solid personal achievement" (13). Every challenge that he faced transformed him into a more accomplished person; for instance, the impending war with Mbaino over the murder of an Umuofian woman raised his stature within and outside his tribal village. The impetus, both for his success and tragedy spring largely from his fear to be found

weak like his father. For this reason, Okonkwo hardly expressed his feelings to others except that of anger. In the novel, Umuofia was idealised as one of the conglomerations of nine Igbo villages.

The far-reaching impact of European cultural invasion that comes through colonisation and Christian evangelisation of Africa disturbs the native culture, causing spiritual and cultural displacement. Igbo tribal history and culture are not in written form. African literature and history are written by westerners in their language. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Mohanty's *The Ancestor* are a witness of tribal life in literature.

The novel *The Ancestor* is about the unwritten tribal history, experiences and culture which are fast vanishing. The Paraja tribe community as well as the other tribes are being ejected from their land and cultural and economic invasion is taking place. That time they were double marginalised from Western modernity and Indian Upper economic class, Mohanty has gone back in history, to the oral tradition of the Paraja tribes and has created a novel which sheds light on their way of life and their thinking which is being corrupted by forces of a materialistic society:

The hamlet consists of two clusters of thatched huts huddled together under the shade of some trees. These are its two separate 'streets', in one of which live people of the Paraja tribe, while the Dombs live in other. (Paraja 1)

The positive contributions of British colonial powers, in terms of governance, Christian missions and trade, had enhanced the expressive dimensions of the tribes. But this colonial enhancement on the native tribes is at best paradoxical in nature. On the one hand, it developed new forms of expression while on the other it subjugated the indigenous identity through the colonial power relations. Under colonialism, the culture of the colonised began to break down and got degraded, till a new sub-culture emerged which was neither pure nor completely removed from the mother culture, but that which lived under the servility of the master culture.

According to S C Mohanty, The Paraja tribe community worship a number of gods and deities for their well-being. Dead ancestors receive routine worship and sacrifices at festive occasions. The Paraja tribes observe many seasonal festivals with pomp and ceremony around the year in order to propitiate their deities and ancestors as well as for their own enjoyment. The Dishari, the village astrologer, determines auspicious dates and moments for holding marriage ceremonies, communal festivals and rituals, and so on. In the novel the writer gives a detailed description of the functions of the Dishari. The Jani is the village head priest. Dishari acts as the astrologer. On the other hand Achebe novel represent to Igbo religious life, but after colonial power their rituals and customs have changed by new face of white persons.

As an insider who experiences the peak years of European colonialism in Nigeria, Achebe seeks to ameliorate his injured Igbo tribal community through his novels, essays, short stories and poems. Achebe got his inspiration largely from his deep concern for the African nations, specifically for his own Igbo tribal community. Chinua Achebe uses beautiful animal imagery in the novel. Achebe engages in a cultural appropriation of values of the West through a recasting of the traditional versus the modern, attempting to make sense of the anarchy and confusion left behind by colonial intervention:

The drums beat and the flutes sang and the spectators held their breath. Amalinze was a wily craftsman, but Okonkwo was a slippery as a fish in water. Every nerve and every muscle stood out on their arms, on their backs and their thighs, and one almost heard them stretching to breaking point. (Achebe 3)

On the other hand *The Ancestor*, is based on Paraja tribal life, examines the importance of traditional knowledge and their eco-cultural practices for bringing forth unity and integrity in the tribal world. This novel presents the tribal life in Odisha which is deeply rooted in their cultural past, and their history is implicated in the history of the natural world.

The distance is not so distant there. The view is limited to three quarters of a mile on either side, And within the confines of human sight, there is a beautiful rounded hill. (Mohanty 1)

Igbo tribal society has its myth of creation, especially the one narrating how human beings came into existence. The Igbo tribal society understanding of man maintains a balance between man's personal identity as a unique individual and his collective identity as a member of his society. In this text Okonkwo represents the social political and economic life style, of igbo tribal community. The meaning of his life will be found in his search for harmony and balance in his relationship with other:

. . . Okonkwo was not a cruel man. But his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness. It was deeper and more intimate than the fear of evil and capricious gods and of magic, than the fear of forest, and the forces of nature,...Okonkwo's prosperity was visible in his household. He had a large compound enclosed by a thick wall of red earth. His own hut, or obi, stood immediately behind the only gate in the walls. Each of his three wives had her own hut, . . . at the opposite end of the compound was a shed for the goats, and each wife built a small attachment to her hut for the hens. (11)

Okonkwo was feared by his wives and children but the needful respect for the father of the house seemed to be missing, largely because Okonkwo ruled his household by the threat of force or with a heavy hand. Okonkwo's family consisted of his three wives and nine children. His wives and children lived in constant fear of him. In a male prejudiced tribal world that he lived in, Okonkwo capitalised on his people's culture with the misguided emphasis on the inflated notion of manliness:

There was a wealthy man in Okonkwo's village who had three huge barns, nine wives and thirty children. His name was Nwakibie and he had taken the highest but one title which a man could take in the clan.... 'Obiako had always been a strange one,' said Nwakibie. I have heard that many years ago, when his father had not been dead very long, he had gone to consult the Oracle. (15-16)

*The Ancestor* represents a fantastic tribal world as a tiger wilderness society. The “ancestor” is an ancient date-palm tree representing the eternal ancestor; it stands for cultural heritage of the tribal people manifest in their rituals and customs. The kingdom of the tiger represents joys and sorrows of the tribal society.

Thenga Jani, the son of Ram Chandra Muduli, the headman of Lulla village, is betrothed to a beautiful girl, Saria Daan, the only daughter of Hari Jani of the same village. But he comes under the spell of Santosh Kumari, a Christian Domb girl. They fall deeply in love and reject the discipline of the Paraja tribal society and leave it. They decide to run away to Assam to work on the tea estates; they plan to build their dream home in a town where the rules of the tribal society do not prevail:

In that darkness four villagers from Lulla came down the hillside. Dense forest stood on both side. This was the kingdom of the tiger. Four of them- Ram Muduli, the village headman, Chancheri Domb, the barber, Hari Jain, an elderly man and Eleo Sunna, the old man from the Christian settlement- groped their way sticks and torches.  
(01)

All parents of Igbo tribal people neighbourhood in this scene of women’s shared work regularly recognize one important fact style, surface physical attractiveness, visual energy set the enabling mood for festivity, that height and majesty are the materials of the banquet. The women carried out body and wall painting, as well as decoration on religious occasions. Other attributes of the domestic setting within the closely knit traditional Igbo polygamous family circle make themselves known through women’s communal works. Applying the skills of the arts becomes a critical Igbo social responsibility that the women give out not just because of capacity of colours to connect in fixing a certain (positive and negative) image of Igbo tribes society, but, more importantly, because along with that it is the constitutive act of spiritual devotion.

It is the cheerful and rambunctious mood that the women of Okonkwo’s household team up as they step up to cook. Indeed, showing so much dexterity and enthusiasm and such a high level of kindness and sparkling over with *joie de vivre*, as if they were born to do this, they pond the children of the household into

an effective kitchen team; thus Ekwefi and Ezinma prepare the hen; Nwoye's mother (Okonkwo's first wife) peels the yams; Ikemefuna, Nwoye's his two younger brothers and his sister Obiageli get the water:

The festival was now only three days away. Okonkwo's wives had scrubbed the walls and huts with red earth until they reflected light. They had then drawn patterns on them in white, yellow wood and drawing beautiful black patterns on their stomachs and on their backs. The children were also decorated especially their hair, which was shaved in beautiful patterns. The three women talked excitedly about the relations who had been invited, and the children revelled in the thought of being spoilt by these visitors from mother- land. Ikemefuna was equally excited. The New Yam Festival seemed to him to be a much bigger event here than in his own village, a place which was already becoming remote and vague in his imagination. (27)

The novel *The Ancestor* is rich in ethnographic detail as Gopinath Mohanty minutely records the rituals, beliefs, ceremonies and tribal wisdom regarding the eco-system and the landscape. The novelist presents a pictorial and informative account of the hills and forests with deep valley of Koraput, a comprehensive account of the numerous activities of the Paraja tribes community starting from one winter to another winter spanning a full year. Translator Arun Kumar Mohanty has used various native words as used by Gopinath Mohanty's original text, for example *dadi*, *bhai*, *goti*, *gopis*, *naik*, *puja*, *Phaguna*, *Margashira*, *shasura*, *budha* etc.

One of the significant features of tribal culture is the worship of mountains and rivers as gods and goddesses. In Arun Joshi's *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, the Bhils of the Satpura hills traverse a long distance to see the mountains:

A ring of hills encircled the deep valley. And through it flowed the rocky, twisted, sickly-shaped Muran river. On the bank of river there were clusters of tiny hamlets. There was a small hillock and on its bald top stood the bare trunk of the date-palm tree, Dadi Budha. The tribal of Koraput do not call one's father brother, *dadi*; by it they

mean one's father's father and his father. Likewise for them *shasura* is not one's wife's father, but her brother. The language of Paraja and the Kondhs blend when the words *dadi* and *budha* combine. In the Kondh language *budha* means father's father. (06)

On the other side Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* reflects that the traditional ideas and beliefs of the Igbo are based on history and heritage, but after colonial intervention, religious and social customs changed. The whole village turned out on the ilo, men, women and children. They stood round in a huge circle leaving the centre of the playground free. The elders and grandees of the village sat on their own stools brought there by their young sons or slaves. Okonkwo was among them.... Behind them was the big and ancient silk-cotton tree which was sacred. Spirits of good children lived in that tree waiting to be born. On the ordinary days young women who desired children came to sit under its shade.

Gabriel Okara's poem *The Mystic Drum* represents the Igbo tribal festival and title of the poems is a symbol of Imperial force entering Africa. This poem shows the foundation of Igbo understanding of God, the principle of creation which shows man's origin and spiritual love to God, His absoluteness and man's utter dependence on God for existence and welfare. In Igbo people thinking also, this knowledge is necessary for proper evaluation of what the person expresses by words or actions. That is to say, every belief in gods or spirits influences the mind of the Igbo and is at the same time is related to the empirical issues of life. The expression of this relationship comes from the inner workings of the mind and from the seat of motivations. Mystic Drum means the God who creates, is the same who brings man into being, and at the same time, endows him with his nature and destiny:

The mystic drum beat in my inside and fishes danced in the rivers.  
and men and women danced on land to the rhythm of my drum. But  
standing behind a tree... Still my drum continued to beat, ripping the  
air with quickened tempo compelling the quick and the dead to  
dance and sing with their shadows...the sun and the moon and the  
river gods and the trees began to dance. . . (Olutola 7)

The narrator quotes the following song to introduce us to the tribal world where the mountains and rivers are worshipped as the gods and goddesses. Billy

is drawn to this world despite his birth and upbringing in sophisticated society of metropolitan city like Delhi. Arun Joshi's *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* represents the song of the Colonial which is very popular among the tribal people in hills, mountains, and forests:

I come a thousand miles to see your face O' mountain. A thousand miles did I come to see your face (qtd. in Joshi 7)

The following lines of Mohanty's *The Ancestor* represent the colonial multicultural and multiracial dimension in Paraja tribal community. Some Indian tribal societies have changed their religious and social life style as a result of Christian education (Knowledge) and economic stability(Power):

To the market walked both the Paraja girls and the Domb girls. The Christian girls in blouses and pieces of white or multi-coloured cloth with pattern of red, yellow and green went there. (Mohanty7)

On the other hand in *Things Fall Apart*, Old Igbo tribes had died, and new Igbo generations are also connected with old rituals and customs. All ancestral rituals have changed in the face of Christianity.

The missionaries spent their first four or five nights in the market place, and went into the village in the morning to preach the gospel. They asked who the king of the village was, but the villagers told them that there was no king. We have men of high title and the chief priests and the elders, they said. (109)

The faithfulness of the religious beliefs of the Igbo tribal community is represented in Okonkwo, who stays true to his culture's values and has to give up his life for them. Achebe in the paragraph on the concept of Chi explains vividly man's relationship with God in the view of Igbo tribal society. Chi is understood as emanating from God, and the Igbo tribes believe that God made them and placed the individual in their care in universal. Chi-na-eke, which means the God who creates, is the same who brings man into being, and at the same time, endows him with his nature and destiny. Each individual person according to Igbo thought has a relationship with god through this Chi or Uwa (Che and Uwa are symbol of Igbo religious gods and spiritual love for gods ) which is the destiny package, which can be good or bad. This understanding accounts for the unique creation of



every individual by God, man becomes what he must be or is denied what is not his fate. It is a presentation of the inter-relatedness between God, (the great one and creator of all things), the gods (his messengers and intermediaries) and man, the created being, and other created things in the universe of God, “Your chi is very much awake, my friend. And how is my daughter, Ezinma?... I pray she stays, said Ekwefi with a heavy sigh” (35-36).

According to western knowledge (Mr. Brown) God is one in the world. There are so many religious discourses; different tribal discourses have created different types of Gods.

you say that there is one supreme God who made heaven and earth,’ said Akunna on the Mr Brown’s visits. ‘We also believe in Him and call Him Chukwu. He made all the world and the others gods.’ ‘There are no other gods,’ said Mr Brown. ‘Chukwu is the only God and all others are false. (131)

On the other hand Mohanty’s *The Ancestor* is a soul. Soul is a eternal and the body is subject to death, the soul express itself in a different body after the end of one body; thus rebirth is the inevitable reality in the world: “...I am Dadi Budha, the greatest of all gods. I am the creator and the destroyer” (62-62). Before colonial power, Igbo tribals were spiritual. After colonial power, culture, customs, rituals, brought immense changes in the individual psyche and personality of tribal people. The communitarian way of life crumbled under the influence of a dominant western culture. The impacted tribal individual therefore found himself ‘empowered’ to rise above the will of the community. So, the tribal world of Chinua Achebe is recast through a tribal perspective which is also a postcolonial recovery of the Igbo people in a cultural sense. But a major conflict had emerged in the postcolonial Igbo community centring round tribal communitarian ethos of the past and individualism ushered in by the colonial modernity in Africa. The next chapter has concentrated on this aspect as a part of a larger conflict between tradition and modernity:

That was the kind of story that Nwoye loved. But he now knew that they were for foolish women and children, and he knew that his father wanted him to be a man. And so he feigned that he no longer cared for women’s stories. And when he did this he was that his

father was pleased, and no longer rebuked him or beat him. So Nwoye and Ikemefuna would listen to Okonkwo's stories about tribal wars or how, years ago, he had stalked his victim, overpowered him and obtained his first human head.(39)

An important event in the Mohanty novel *The Ancestor* is the hunt during the spring festival of Paraja tribes. All the able-bodied men of the village proceed on a hunting expedition which continues for two or three days. The men would go out into the jungle, prepared to face the taunts of their women if they should return empty-handed. In the traditional society of Paraja tribes the institution of the youth dormitory functioned in every tribal village. The unmarried boys and girls spend the night in their respective dormitories and enjoy the liberty of knowing one another more intimately. The boys and girls communicate their ideas and feelings through romantic love songs and wine party:

Paraja boys and girls danced.... During the dance at night the seven Domb girls, their hands around each others' waist waving a piece of cloth, jumping and shouting, would pass through the line of Paraja girls and surround Paraja boys and dance. The night grew darker as they drank and danced.... And of course varieties of sarees, coloured blouses-parrot prints, star prints, tiger prints. The air over there would be heavy with the smell of scented oil in the hair. And barrel after barrel wine. (19)

The novel *Things Fall Apart* reconstructs the various aspects of a woman's experience and attempts to give voice to 'muted' ideologies of females' world. The lives of Achebe's female characters go around the words of career, success and love. For example Okonkwo's wife is conscious about her career. Unlike other women who found satisfaction in begetting children and looking after the family, Okonkwo's wife found satisfaction in copying scores of quotations from different writers, which she constantly devoured.

Women of the Igbo tribe long for love, understanding and appreciation from their husbands after marriages. They linger, lacking confidence, worried and unloved throughout their lives. In order to provide peaceful atmosphere at their

homes, they suffer till the end in silence. The women are not able to express their own emotions, feelings etc. They continue to be mute till the end:

By the time Onwumbiko died Ekwefi had become a very bitter woman. Her husband's first wife had already had three sons, all strong and healthy. When she had born her children son in succession, Okonkwo had slaughtered a goat her, was the custom. Ekwefi had nothing but good wishes for her. But she had grown so bitter about her own *chi* that she could not rejoice with others over their good fortune. And so, on the day that Nwoye's mother celebrated the birth of her three sons with feasting and music, Ekwefi was the only person in the happy company who went about with a cloud on her brow. (58)

Mohanty's focus, in his fiction, is on the status of cultural hegemony in Paraja tribes society. The character of Eleo represents Western culture. Paraja tribal community has changed religions, customs and festivals, by western education and western economic power. In other words, the life is predominated by certain beliefs and practices concerning nature, tradition and culture, and oriented by the age old traditional values and indigenous knowledge system.

Such beliefs and practices render them with contentment, joy and strength, reinforce unity in life of tribal community at one level and constitute their cultural identity on the other. Celebration, festivities and practices concerning nature and culture, as the part of their belief system, seem to be the central aspects of the traditional paradigm of the tribal life:

Eleo was sitting on the verandah, preparing an account of the levy collected. He used to collect four annas per plough from every Christian farmed and give the amount to the pastor, who would send it to the missionary. It was the sahib who spent the money. The church had to be white-washed Festivals were celebrated. And of course there were the schools. Would this meagre amount suffice? But then it would certainly be of some help. Devout Christians ought to pay at least this much. (23)

Achebe, in the novel, tries to show the hypocrisy of tribal cultural values by considering society as an organisation. In *Things Fall Apart* Achebe assigns the

tender qualities to women who are the bloodline through which the life of their society flows. As indicated in the passage quoted above, the motive for action by the women emerges not only as deep sense of social obligation but also as a genuine labour of love. The women of Okonkwo's household take their social duty so seriously, they don't allow nothing to hinder it. A major theme of the novel is that while the Igbo's generally care very deeply about the quality of the devotion of love, affection appears to be a special priority for women to whom the tender instincts come more naturally than they do in the men-folk:

Okonkwo's family was astir like any other family in the night bourhood. Nwoye's mother and Okonkwo's youngest wife were ready to set out for Obierika's compound with all their children ...Nwoye's mother carried a basket of coco-yams, a cake of salt and smoked fish which she would present to Obierika's wife. Okonkwo's youngest wife, Ojiugo, also had a basket of plantains and coco-yams and a small pot of palm- wine. Their children carried pots of water. Ekwefi was tired and sleepy from the exhausting experience of the previous night. It was not very long since they had returned ... Ezinma was still sleeping when everyone else was astir, and Ekwefi asked Nwoye's mother and Ojiugo to explain to Obierika's wife that she would be late. She had got ready her basket of coco-yams and fish, but she must wait for Ezinma to wake. (81-82)

Santosh Kumari married with Thenga Jani by love relationship, but Paraja tribals don't approve of this custom. After marriage both go to Assam tea garden across the mountain from Lulla village and were unable to decide what to do , how to get out of this:

. . . We belong to different tribes. Society won't permit us to marry. It hasn't happened since our forefather's days. Now I have no one else except you. But you are the obedient son of your parents, very loyal to them. You'll forget the past and soon be settled in life with a family of your own. You may not even speak to me, even if I die. Santosh Kumari ran off, her eyes full of tears. Thenga sat down with a heavy heart. He was unable to decide what to do, how to get out of this.

(35)

Mohanty in the novel deals with the issues of marriage relationship, marital frustration, domestic violence and sexual abuse in marital lives which are regarded by the victims as degrading, humiliating, painful and unwanted throughout life:

The five Panchayat members sitting there murmured: "oh what a nice girl !" All of them embraced Saria Daan. Some cuddled her, stroked her head, patted her back and some hugged her. The headman embracing her said: "my little mother is pretty like a golden idol. I'll cherish you like a flower. My house, my door-everything is yours. Take care of us, old people. Serve us rice water at time. (39)

Old Igbo tribals have died, and new Igbo generations are also connected with old ritual and customs. All ancestral rituals have changed in the face of Christianity. Old Igbo people were close to the ancestor, but after the intervention of the imperial power and coming of modernity, almost all of the African and third world cultures changed their life style:

The land of the living was not far removed from the domain of the ancestors. There was coming and going between them, especially at festivals and also when an old man died, because an old man was very close to the ancestors. A man's life from birth to death was a series of transition rites which brought him nearer and nearer to his ancestors. (89)

The missionaries understand that to deny the Christians of the Igbo tribes any chance of acquiring at least some form of status and power in traditional society, hampered not only these Christians, but also the progress of the missions. This led to the interesting situation whereby a generally accepted image of Igbo tribes culture existed, which was recognised as the parallel at least theoretically of that adhered to by the very people who were prepared to call themselves Igbo tribes:

The missionaries spent their first four or five nights in the market place, and went into the village in the morning to preach the gospel. They asked who the king of the village was, but the villagers told them that there was no king. We have men of high title and the chief priests and elders they said. (109)

Helen's relationship with her husband suffers a jerk due to her growing intimacy with tribals. Led by her inner urge to associate herself with tribals, she leaves the bungalow without the permission of her husband and drifts into the jungle without worrying the least about what her husband will think on knowing that she values tribals over him. As regards her detachment to her husband resulting from her growing attachment to the tribals the narrator remarks:

Helen got on well with the tribesmen. He had seen groups of them gathered round her in their compound or accompanying her if she returned after sunset from her wandering. (Markandaya 25)

On the other hand Achebe novel represents history of missionaries, When Christians entered the communities of the tribes they were in a small group. Mr. Brown's character represents the Christian religion and white society. Missionaries of Christianity tended to perceive this non-Christian Igbo culture as static. In fact, the matters which the missionaries described as traditional Igbo culture did change. When this change amounted to what missionary Christianity perceived as 'modernity', this was no longer considered part of Igbo tribes culture when the result could be interpreted as primitive or pagan, the missionaries, concluded that it was a return to traditional Igbo tribes culture:

The Christians had grown in number and were now a small community of men, women and children, self-assured and confident. Mr. Brown, the missionary, paid regular visits to them. (117)

Gopinath Mohanty's *The Ancestor* highlights the incident of psychological and physical sufferings of Paraja tribal society. The Paraja tribal world is foregrounded on the physical domain of nature and the epistemological world of their religion and culture. Their knowledge system and cosmological vision are derived from their traditional beliefs and practices related to nature. Moreover, their religion is based on nature-worship, animism, anthropomorphism, ancestor-worship etc. They are not free from myth, God and ancient rituals in age of globalisation:

They tried to offer him bribes so that their future would be safe. They were all human beings and they had to toil in the hope of a better tomorrow, although their tomorrows might turn out to be no better than their yesterdays. Dadi budha was a god; his demands for rites and offerings had to be met without delay. (44)

Other aspects of pre-colonial society, described by missionaries and early converts, have been largely ignored by later Christians of the Igbo tribes. After imperial encroachment, Igbo tribes were powerless and voiceless. Later, people changed their own religion and social life by imperial power and knowledge. However, like the Christians of Igbo tribes, the colonial administration used the book, and missionary knowledge in general, in their own discourse about Igbo culture and society:

Perhaps I have been away too long; Okonkwo said, almost to himself. But I cannot understand these things you tell me. What is it that has happened to our people? Why have they lost the power to fight?... I have heard; said Okonkwo. 'But I have also heard that Abame no guns and matchets? We would be cowards to compare ourselves with the men of Abame. Their fathers had never dared to stand before our ancestors. We must fight these men and drive them from the land.' ... they have joined his religion and they help to uphold his government. If we should try to drive out the white men in Umuofia we should find it easy. There are only two of them. But what of our own people who are following their way and have been given power? (128).

The Parajas tribes of Lulla Village believe in the union of the eternal soul after death. To them the body is temporary and ethereal in which the heart is circumscribed till the end of the body. As the soul is eternal and the body is subject to death, the soul expresses itself in a different body after the end of one body; thus rebirth is the inevitable reality in the world. Such idea is the central concern of Hindu philosophy which finds echo in "The Eternal Reality of Soul's Immortality", Chapter-II of *The Bhagvat Gita*, where Lord Krishna has posited before Arjuna that the soul never takes birth, nor does it die, nor does it come in to being again at the time the creation of a body, no force can perish the soul; it is unchanging and is not destroyed with the total destruction of the body" (qtd. in Chaturvedi 8-9). The spirit transmigrates from one body to another, when the body is withered. In Paraja tribe's community belief the world is a place where every being gets purified

through rigors and penance; complexities and sufferings are the preconditions: "...I am Dadi Budha, the greatest of all gods. I am the creator and the destroyer." (Mohanty 62-62)

We must approach the tribal people with affection and friendship and not with contempt. We should not deprive them of their innocent joys, their songs and dances, their feasts and festivals. We should give up the big-brother complex. (qtd. in Nwabueze 169).

The use of a Christian conceptual scheme placed emphasis upon notions within Igbo culture that were especially important to Christians, but maybe less so to traditionalists. The concept of God, *Chukwu*, is an example. Twentieth-century missionaries and Igbo Christians have repeatedly stressed that, the diversity of local culture is not reflected in the Christians' discourse on Igbo society. According to western knowledge (Mr. Brown) God is one in the world. There are so many religious discourses; different tribal discourses have created different types of God. Each community in the Igbo-land has its own form and practice, especially places of worship and the things used in the worship differ from village to village; but the concepts are the same. However, Igbo world-view involves much more than religious expression even though religion for the Igbo explains in some unique manner some ideologies of philosophy:

. . . 'you say that there is one supreme God who made heaven and earth,' said Akunna on one of Mr. Brown's visits. 'We also believe in Him and call Him Chukwu. He made all the world and the other gods.' 'There are no other gods,' said Mr Brown. 'Chukwu is the only God and all others are false (131).

*Things Fall Apart* and *The Ancestor* are therefore a portrayal of male struggle for authority and respect as well as economic and political empowerment masks a more disturbing tale about a divided sense of self and how women achieve power and respect within a patriarchy. The story imbeds a narrative of dispossession that alter the meaning of life for an entire group of people who find themselves in an increasingly dichotomous world that begins to disconnect them from many of their vital native beliefs, norms, linguistic habits, and rituals. *Things Fall Apart* and *The Ancestor* as narrative nexus lay much stress on this drama of the collective dislocation of a society which walked a path that was derailed,



marked by discontinuity and arbitrary external control; but *Things Fall Apart* takes in the beginning stories of Europeans conquest, a mission that fed on the presumption that Europe was called upon to bring enlightenment to a people who largely prove unappreciative of the gifts of modern civilisation. Mainly because we witness a feast celebrating the pleasures of traditional communal life, the message that it is about to be destroyed completely comes with the ultimate stamp of irony.

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## CHAPTER 4

### Comparative Analysis and Conclusion

Chinua Achebe and Gopinath Mohanty both are significant writers in tribal fiction writing. Achebe is the first African English writer and Gopinath is also first Oriyan tribal writer in Oriyan literature, India. Achebe is distressed by the way in which the colonial writer Joseph Conrad in his work *Heart of Darkness* portrays the African continent and the African nation as devoid of language, but *Things Fall Apart* (1958) does not follow the traditional literary language of European fiction. The language of *Things Fall Apart* incorporates Achebe's Igbo tribes' vocabulary and proverbs. Achebe is able to demonstrate that the African Igbo people culture is rich with language and tradition. Achebe's literary works such as poems, songs, stories, literary speeches etc are marked with complexity of the dialogues that mark the African culture. In the novel, Chinua Achebe creates a protagonist named Okonkwo, who has three wives and nine children in the village of Umuofia. The story takes place in a village in the 1880s before and after European missionaries and other outsiders have arrived.

On the other hand Gopinath Mohanty is an excellent writer in Oriya language and literature in Indian contemporary Oriya tribal literature. Mohanty's literary works follow the traditional literary language of Oriya fiction and represent historical, geographical culture, religious, mythical and taboo issues of paraja tribes society. The original literary works of Mohanty are written in fiction, short stories, drama, and poetry. Although, there is much difference in the background, theme, position and style of the two writers, Achebe and Mohanty but both belong to the modern era of English writing. There is a wide gap of fourteenth years in the publication of *Things Fall Apart* and *The Ancestor*.

Chinua Achebe and Gopinath Mohanty are very successful in the art of representing characters as the tribal (uneducated) people of the village. Mohanty and Achebe have invested them with a poetic and dreamlike quality and symbolic significance. They are living men and women, not mere symbols.

Gopinath Mohanty and Chinua Achebe belong to different nations and historical phases. Gopinath Mohanty belongs to a well reputed educated Paraja tribal family and he was an IAS officer in his state Oddisa. On the other side,

Chinua Achebe belongs to the middle strata of the Igbo tribal society, caste wise as well as class wise (Black). Achebe was fully exposed to misery and deprivation. The empathy for his suffering was the chief stimulus for his fictional writing. In fact, Achebe's literary works are including of several autobiographical incidents of his personal experience.

Gopinath Mohanty adopts a different approach from Chinua Achebe to discover the tribal concerns in fiction. The novel *The Ancestor* (1944) is a series of short stories. All the stories are linked by the same themes of tribal social life, repentance and suffering. Each story portrays different customs and rituals and they are linked by sustained commentary from the narrator.

Gopinath Mohanty's unique style of writing and theme of living harmoniously in the lap of nature reveal him to be a person not only dedicated to the Indian cultural themes but also seems dedicated to discover nature through his writing.

The title of the novel *Things Fall Apart* is a quotation to *The Second Coming* poem by William Butler Yeats. This poem was published in 1922. In this poem, Yeats relates his vision of the apocalyptic end of one culture and the rise of another. *The Ancestor* was originally written in Oriya language in 1944. It was translated into English language by Arun Kumar Mohanty in 1997, published by Sahitya Akademi New Delhi. Despite their marked cultural and geographical differences, a close examination of the works of Achebe and Mohanty reveals a definite similarity between the two authors when their works are studied within the framework of tribal marginality. Chinua Achebe and Gopinath Mohanty belonged originally to the tribal community, Achebe belonged to Igbo tribal community and Mohanty belonged to Paraja tribal community in their countries.

Both these writers chart the unacknowledged private world of tribes in their fictional works. The protagonists of the chosen novels, *Things Fall Apart* and *The Ancestor* show how tribal society structure for an identity; they may be black or brown, may be located in Nigeria or India. *Things Fall Apart* recounts the life of the Umuofia village hero Okonkwo and describes the arrival of white missionaries in Nigeria and their impact on traditional Igbo tribal society during the late 1800s. Many of Achebe's novels, short stories and poems are based on Igbo tribal life in

Nigeria in the African continent. Many of his characters are members of the Igbo tribal society.

On the other hand *The Ancestor*, recounts the tribal life of the Lulla village the hero Thenga Jani represents Paraja tribes, and communicates the agony of the tribals as well as of marginalised people all over the world. Many of Mohanty's characters represent Paraja tribe community's social life. *Things Fall Apart* is based on Igbo tribal community in Nigeria, and *The Ancestor* is set on Paraja Tribes society in Oddisa state in India. There is no big difference in the social life of Igbo tribes and Paraja tribes. But there are some differences between Nigeria and India in geographical, historical, political, economic, multicultural and multiracial aspect his study uses the actual information of the tribe's area (geographical and climate conditions of the regions and their biodiversity). It has tried to forge a link between the literature and existing environmental issues. Both the writers have beautifully documented the environmental elements to unfold the stories of the novels. In this study i have tried to focus on the origin of the naturally beauty and tradition and myth which lies in the Indian mythology. On the other side Achebe's writing style is very attractive, the novel, *Things Fall Apart* presents Igbo tribal society preserving their myths, beliefs, customs, religion, tradition, tales and taboos with maximum sense of duty.

*Things Fall Apart* includes Western linguistic forms and literary traditions with Igbo's tribal words and phrases, proverbs, fables, tales, and other elements of African oral and communal story telling traditions. *The Ancestor* more than a sociological and anthropological document because it is a translated text and the characters are not merely primitive tribesmen ensnared by a predatory moneylender. Mohanty's protagonists are also typically men and women waging a heroic but futile war against the hostile universe. Mohanty visualises life in a tribal community against a cosmic background. Women, in both the novels, have been victimised by the male oriented society. Santosh Kumari in *The Ancestor* is the most oppressive woman. Santosh Kumari is married to Thenga Jani by love, but Paraja tribes don't allow this custom. So after marriage both reach Assam tea garden across the mountain from Lulla village.

On the other hand in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* creates a crystalline view of Igbo customs, including family life in the polygamous household, the patterns of

falling in love and marriage, work and play in the public society. A man earned status by keeping multiple wives. The main character Okonkwo is a great man who has achieved much in his life. He is a champion wrestler, a wealthy farmer, a husband of three wives and nine children, a title holder among his Igbo tribes society.

On the other side in Paraja tribal society the main characters Thenga Jani and Santosh Kumari fall deeply in love and reject the discipline of the Paraja tribal society and leave it. Mohanty in the novel deals with the issues of marriage relationship, marital frustration, domestic violence and sexual abuse in marital lives which is regarded by the victims as degrading, humiliating, painful and unwanted throughout life. Same thing happens with the Igbo tribal society women (first wife of Okonkwo's Ikemefuna) in the novel *Things Fall Apart*. The study finds the link between the traditional rituals in both the texts *Things Fall Apart* and *The Ancestor*.

Throughout the novel, Achebe uses third person narration of oral nature of African stories. Rather than have Okonkwo or one of the other tribesmen tell the story in its entirety, he creates a tale that seems to have been passed from generation to generation more like many of the literary works that are told within the narrative.

The basic difference between *Things Fall Apart* and *The Ancestor* are that for Achebe both race and community are the major elements of oppression of tribes while race does not appear as a matrix of oppression in Mohanty's fiction, because almost all his characters belong to the same race. Instead of race, the dominant patriarchal behaviour patterns and ideologies are inscribed more prominently in the interaction of tribes categories in his fiction located in beautiful forest, dark mountains and hilly areas in our country. Mohanty's *The Ancestor* represents hydride culture (Christian and Hindu), multicultural and multiracial in Paraja tribal society:

To the market walked both the Paraja girls and the Domb girls. The Christian girls in blouses and pieces of white or multi-coloured cloth with pattern of red, yellow and green went there. (Mohanty 7)

A number of common thematic concerns have been identified in the works of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Mohanty's *The Ancestor*, on the basis of which

the narratives as well as the characters may be grouped as evolving around the motifs of oppression, struggle and surfacing.

Both Achebe's and Mohanty's literary texts have characters representing different discourses in tribal society:

Near the barn was a small house, the 'medicine house' or shrine where Okonkwo kept the wooden symbols of his personal god and of his ancestral spirits (Achebe 11).

In Igbo tribal society 'Chi', 'Oracle', 'Udu' etc words represent God or Gods as a religious discourse in *Things Fall Apart*. The society's order is disrupted, however, with the appearance of the white man in Africa and with the introduction of his religion Christianity:

Your chi is very much awake, my friend. And how is my daughter, Ezinma?... pray she stays... (Achebe 36)

Mohanty's *Dadi Budha (The Ancestor)* is an ancient date palm tree as a eternal Ancestor), It stands for the cultured heritage of tribes rituals, customs and religious discourses in Paraja tribes society.

For thousands of years our tribals have worshipped it as the goddess... (Mohanty 44)

The conflict of *Things Fall Apart*, shown in Okonkwo, derives from the series of crushing blows which are leveled at traditional values by an alien and more powerful culture causing, in the end, the traditional society to fall apart. There are many ways to divide the terrain of literature written by African and Indian. These approaches reflect the fact that the continent is home to many difference people and cultural practices, political and physical geographies, local nonlocal languages. African tribal literature is also often categorised by a language of expression (Igbo, Hausa etc) or genre (narrative, proverb, poetry, drama, essay) or some combination of these. The main character Okonkwo is a great man who has achieved much in his life. He is a champion wrestler, a wealthy farmer, a husband of three wives and eight children, a title holder among his Igbo tribes society. His success is driven by the fear of becoming like his father (poor and cowardly). On the other hand the main character Thenga Jain and Santosh Kumari, they fall deeply in love and reject the discipline of the Paraja tribal society and leave it.



The tribes society visualised by Achebe and Mohanty in their novels challenge economic and political class-made rules and assumptions regarding the tribal society and the institutions that legitimise these.

A number of common thematic concerns have been identified in the works of Mohanty's *The Ancestor* and Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, on the basis of which the narratives as well as the characters may be grouped as evolving around the motifs of oppression resistance and emergence. The characters presented by both these writers question the authority of the established order, its assumptions of tribal life in an age of globalisation.

The literary works of both the writers are highly considerable, known for its language and aesthetics. Mohanty as well as Achebe have contributed a lot in the canon of tribal literature and world literature. Both the writers deal with the prominent issues of social, political, historical and geographical location. No doubt, both the works are very complex in the sense that they do not focus only on a single issue, but they focus on some other issues such as administrative corruption, issues based on gender differences, caste, religion, and race prejudices and various other socio political issues. The primary focus is on critiquing subaltern. It is important to bear in mind the remark made by David Carroll in his influential study of Achebe.

There are some common issues discussed in both the novels on different grounds. Both these novels are post colonial novels in the sense that they are set after colonialism is over, in independent counties. The setting of both the novels is woven on different grounds. As *Things Fall Apart* has been set in Nigeria in Umuofia (a group of nine villages, now is south-eastern Nigeria) in the hinterlands of the Igbo nation, is a stellar member and covers urban as well as rural area. Whereas *The Ancestor* has been set in Odisha (Lulla village) state in India, it covers the urban as well as rural mountains, hills and forests areas.

The social life comes alive in the novel *The Ancestor* in a very authentic manner. Through the character of Lulla Village, Mohanty exposes the hypocritical values of tribal society. Though there has been a progressive development in various fields over the years, the social system in the different countries of the world is yet to see any drastic changes with regard to the status of tribal. Mohanty's *The Ancestor* explores many aspects of the tribals inhabiting the

Jungles, hills, mountainous regions of Orissa and he very particularly charts the various contours of the tribal life.

Achebe uses literary devices like simile, metaphor, proverb, foreshadowing etc in *Things Fall Apart*.

When Achebe describes the lack of rain during the rainy season he writes: "The earth burned like hot coals and roasted all of the yams that had been sown."

The image shows how little rain the Igbo tribe community received and how damaging the heat was to the crops. Metaphors can be recognised by finding the two ideas that are being compared. For example, when the narrator is describing Okonkwo's physical prowess, he states:

"When he walked, his heels hardly touched the ground and he seemed to walk on springs, as if he was going to pounce on somebody. And he did pounce on people quite often."(Achebe 02)

Chinua Achebe in his novel *Things Fall Apart* uses animal imaginary to describe Okonkwo, Achebe compares Okonkwo to a powerful cat. Okonkwo moves in the way of a cat pounces on people. The image of pouncing, which is a verb normally reserved for animals, suggests that Okonkwo is as quick and powerful as a tiger or leopard or lion. Achebe uses this image to complement the idea of Okonkwo's masculinity: He was called the cat because his back would never touch the earth...but Okonkwo was as slippery as a fish in water. (03)

On the other hand Mohanty uses beautiful animal imaginary. "This was the kingdom of the tiger. Four of them Ram Muduli, Chancheri, Hari Jani, and Eleo Sunna..." (Mohanty 01). Again, to give his reader a sense of African language traditions, Achebe uses the "proverb" the pithy and memorable lesson in a well-turned phrase. For example: "He always said that whenever he saw a dead man's mouth he saw the folly of not eating what one had in one's lifetime" (Achebe139). This proverb, a favourite of Okonkwo's father Unoka, means that a person should not waste what he or she is given, but instead should eat and act as if there were no tomorrow. This is not a proverb that Okonkwo believed, but is one that Unoka used to support why he did not save and work for the future.

Mohanty in his novel *The Ancestor* has used the “proverb” the pithy and memorable lesson in a well turned phrase. “They were all human beings and they had to toil in the hope of a better tomorrow, although their tomorrow might turn out to be no better than their yesterday” (Mohanty 43).

Gopinath Mohanty has written, about many traditions and customs in Paraja tribal society. In Paraja tribal society, women are at margins and oppressed and they are not free from male dominant society. On the other hand Achebe has represented Igbo tribal women society, Igbo tribes are also male dominant society for example: “Okonkwo's nine wives and thirty children's” (Achebe15).

Chinua Achebe and Gopinath Mohanty have contributed to in the tribal literature, with certain similarities as well as differences in their literary works. Chinua Achebe and Gopinath Mohanty were both born in third world countries. Chinua Achebe and Gopinath Mohanty have an effective voice among the tribal writers.

*Things Fall Apart's* most influential characters, about whom readers have only a limited knowledge even though he is central to the plot's overall structure. It is one of the classics of literary ethnography indeed one of the novels that define what traditional Africa is author Achebe's sensitivity and thoroughness convey to readers a pre-colonial world of the Igbo people of Nigeria, making sense after scene reveal spectacular information about the quotidian social life of two of their communities.

Chinua Achebe and Gopinath Mohanty, both are the authors of tribal narratives and their narratives represent the colonial power. It is appropriate to say that Chinua Achebe and Gopinath Mohanty have successfully created a tribal discourse to bring the disorderly to the tribal society. Both the texts stand as a testimony to the powerful section of the tribal society and leave no scope of confusion due to the outermost clarity of language maintained all the way through the novel. According to Ms. Mahaswetha Devi, an eminent Bengali writer and Marxist activist, rightly commented that “tribals are the most civilized people”.

Chinua Achebe and Gopinath Mohanty have described the tribal world as more attractive and peaceful. On the basis of the analysis of these two texts, it is appropriate to say that the world in which tribal people live is self sufficient in its own way because they have rich wealth of their own traditions, values, and beliefs.

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Name of the author	Sayar Singh Chopra
Centre	Centre for Comparative Literature
Degree	Master of Philosophy
University	Central University of Punjab
Supervisor	Dr. Rajinder Kumar
Thesis title	Tribal Concerns in Literature: A Comparative Study of <i>Things Fall Apart</i> and <i>The Ancestor</i>
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## **Central University of Punjab, Bathinda**

### **Declaration**

I declare that all the changes suggested by the external examiner in the dissertation / thesis entitled "Tribal Concerns in Literature: A Comparative Study of Things Fall Apart and The Ancestor" by me for the award of degree of Master of Philosophy in the Centre for Comparative Literature has been incorporated in the dissertation/ thesis.

(Name and Signature of student)

Date:

Centre for Comparative Literature  
School of Languages, Literature and Culture

(Name and Signature of supervisor)

Date:

Centre for Comparative Literature  
School of Languages, Literature and Culture

COC

The Prof. In-Charge Examination,

Central University of Punjab,

Bathinda.

Subject: Regarding the Final Submission of M.Phil. Dissertation of Sayar Singh Chopra

Respected Sir,

It is certified that Sayar Singh Chopra (CUPB-MPH-PHD/SLLC/CPL/2012-13/10) has been working under my guidance for his M.Phil. Dissertation entitled "Tribal Concerns in Literature: A Comparative Study of Things Fall Apart and The Ancestor". He has successfully presented the Viva Voce / Submission Seminar on June 3, 2014 on aforesaid topic at Centre for Comparative Literature. All the suggestions have been incorporated in this dissertation. It has been prepared as per the guidelines for final submission.

Supervisor

Dr. Rajinder Kumar

Centre for Comparative Literature,

Central University of Punjab

Dated: June 17, 2014

COC