

# **ANTI-COLONIAL MOVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTION OF NORTH EAST INDIA IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE OF INDIA AS REFLECTED IN THE SELECTED ENGLISH NOVELS OF NE**

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**Abstract:** English novels from the North-East region are newly emerged ventures in the literary field. Very recently we see authors are trying to write on various topics and anti-colonial movements and contribution to the freedom struggle movements is one of the themes describe in such novels. In some English novels of NE region, we find the description of Japanese invasion, domination the British and how people of the north East India fought. In Nagaland there are some tombs, monuments of the World War II time which are mentioned in some novels. In another novel there is the mention of how local people had to suffer during the time of independence. We find the mention of hero like U Trirat Singh and others in some novel. In following six novels we find the description of Japanese invasion, domination the British and how people of the north East India fought; they are- 'A Naga Village Remembered', 'Mary', 'Bitter Wormwood', 'The Grasshopper's Run', 'Surface' and 'A Bowstring Winter'.

**Key Words** -Japanese Invasion, British Rule, U Trirat Singh, World War-II.

## **Main Paper:**

In some of the original English novels of the North East India we find the description of Japanese Invasion, the British rule, the fight of the people against the colonial rule and the struggle for independence. Here translated novels or novels written in any other languages are not taken. Only originally written in English are taken for writing the paper. The selected novels are Easterine Kire's 'A Naga Village Remembered'(2003), 'Mary'(2010), 'Bitter Wormwood'(2011), Siddarth Sarma's 'The Grasshopper's Run'(2009), Siddartha Dev's 'Surface'(2005) and in Dhruba Hazarika's 'A Bowstring Winter'(2006). To write the paper I use descriptive and analytical method. The paper

is related to the title mentioned as all analysis or descriptions are around the pre-independence period of North-East India. Let us see what we find in the novels.

In ANVR we find the name of village called Khanoma. It is written that there is a gate in remembrance of the fight of the local Naga people with the British. The author describes the plan, the fight against the British and how ultimately the local people had to surrender before the British. The warriors of the Naga were trained. He had respect in the society. There in a conversation a warrior named Levi with his uncle Kovi who told him about his worth and responsibility. There is an excerpt from the novel which will clearly show it-

"...You are a warrior of Khanoma- people will think twice when they hear your name." (ANVR, P-43)

Although at last the British won all the battles and ruled the land yet people did not accept the defeat easily. They fought hard to keep their motherland in their control. Yet at last they gave in.

In 'Mary' we find how one of the Naga girl, Mary eloped with a Japanese soldier and how subsequently she had to struggle for survive. There is a love story between a foreigner Sgt. Victor and a Naga girl named Mary-a war time love story. Victor was killed in the war. There is a description of human destruction in the war. Domestic animals were also killed in the war. Nature, buildings all were destroyed in the war. "Kohima, dear, dear Kohima, had changed so much" (Mary, P-93). It was changed so much after the war that they could not match it with their earlier memory.

In the 'Bitter Wormwood' also we find about the description of pre-independence period. In schools, in field people talked about the situation of the country. They listened to the radios. They came to about India's partition, Gandhiji's death by listening to the radios. During the World War II the schools were closed down. Village people of Nagaland were involved directly as there were battles between Naga and the British and with Japanese also. We find the references of war and can imagine what happened at that time. For example, we find about Japanese during the War time- "a friend of ours was taken away by the Japanese" (BW, p-53). However, after the Indian independence most of the Naga people were not satisfied when they did not get separate

independence Nagaland. Many of them did not regard this independence and formed underground organisation to make their land a free country.

In TGR also we find the time of colonial period. There was a fight between the Japanese and the Naga people. Also we find the mention of British rule at that time. While reading the novel we come to know how the Japanese lived in the Naga Hills by making secured dwellings, how they were equipped with arms like machine gun, mortar etc. Their clever planning is also described. However, the revenge spirit of the Naga people is also shown clearly. The grandson of a Naga chief was killed by a Japanese general. The Ao Naga Chief's grandson's name is Shiluti and his friend is Gajen Das, an Assamese boy. How the revenge is meted by Gajen and some Naga people is shown in the novel. But this is not simply about the revenge, while reading the novel we see how the Japanese and the British occupied and ruled the Naga Hills. In a meeting the Naga chief told, "The Japanese killed our people like animals" (TGHR, p-59). They had killed his grandson Shiluti or Uti." The Japanese had invaded India because of the oil fields of Burma to Assam. They invaded India, "for its oilfields and mineral reserve." (TGHR, P-65)

In 'Surface' also we find the description of the war memorial sites in the eye of a Calcutta based journalist and thus the author describes the whole place in front of the readers. The hero also reads a history book in the bus and he describes the place by this technique of reading. The British won the battle, the Japanese had to retreat. The Japanese could not find their dead soldiers bodies. As they were the defeated army so they did not get the chance of erecting memorial stones. "...Only the winners can afford memorial stones."(Surface, P-139)

In Dhruba Hazrika's ABSW we find the mention of the valour of the U Triort Singh. When the author describe one woman named Kong Nora then he writes that she is the true descendent of great Khasi hero U Tirot Singh. During the Anglo-Khasi war he was captured and eventually died. People recalled him with great reverence for his valour. Kong Nora, one of the relatives of a main character of the novel viz, Kharkhongor is described as " a true Khasi with the blood of U Tirot Singh.' (ABSW, P-321)

Thus we find the description of the colonial rule, Japanese invasion, and mention of leader like U Triort Singh. Although there is not mention of Assam's contribution to the freedom struggle in the

novels, the contribution of Assamese people is also not insignificant. We have many freedom fighters like Maniram Dewan, Kushal Konwar, Kanaklata Baruah, Mukunda Kakati, Bhogeswari Phukanani and many others. In 'Mrityunjay' of Dr Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya we find the incident of derail of railway track and the other atmospheres of freedom struggle movement. There are other Assamese novels and plays also on this topic but they are not discussed in the paper as the whole discourse is based on the original English novels of the North-East region. In the present novels we find about the situation of people at the time of coming of Japanese and the British especially in the state of Nagaland. The local people's bravery is shown although they had to give in. We have to know our past to move forward. In this regard the novels are successful but there are still many heroes, many plots which the upcoming authors of literature can take.

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