

# A Portrait of Ruined and Devastated Tribal Life in Rajam Krishnan's *When the Kurinji Blooms*

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**Abstract---** *The paper entitled "A Portrait of Ruined and Devastated Tribal Life in Rajam Krishnan's When the Kurinji Blooms" gives a clear picture of the lost ethnical value of a tribal group who lived in Tamil Nadu. It clearly explains about the uniqueness in behaviour and how they stand apart from civilized society. The ritual practice, dressing style, family setup and caste are mainly focused in this paper. The tribal people lived in the forest peacefully along with nature. Due to the advancement of technology, these people are forced to practice modernity in the name of civilization. The advancement in science leads human to ruin the mother earth for luxury and money. The wealth and the place of tribes were exploited for industrial development. This paper gives voice for the tribes against the greedy civilized society which ruins their ethnical value in the name of science and technology. The paper ends with a message to the modern society about the importance of tribes and their ethnical values.*

**Keywords---** *Ethnical values, Ethnical Group, Technology, Modernity, Tribes, and Civilization.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the early part of the twenty first century the term indigenous gets its prominence for indicating the natives of the earth. In world literature this term is used to mention the aboriginals, natives, tribes and marginalized people of the society. In Indian context tribes and natives of mountain region are classified as indigenous. Indigenous literature gives importance for the past or the lost glory of mother earth because of advanced development and greedy mind set of human beings. Tribes are focused more in indigenous literature as they lived with nature and protected natural vegetation for the survivability of earth. Tribes are notable for peculiar life style and ethnical values. Chaturvedi in 2008, mention how tribes are portrayed in literature and beautifully explain about tribal style of living according to the landscape where they belong. India is the country where resides so many sections of tribes from the past (Devy Ganesh, 2002). In this paper the idea of tradition versus modernity and the change of tribal life is portrayed. The paper enlightens the readers about the ruination of ethical values of Badaga tribe of Tamil Nadu with reference to Rajam Krishnan's *When the Kurinji Blooms*.

## II. RAJAM KRISHNAN'S CONTRIBUTION THROUGH LITERATURE

Rajam Krishnan is a famous women indigenous writer of Tamil Nadu. In India she is known as fourth world writer. She is a social activist who supports tribal people and their

living. She has written so many short stories, novels and essays in Tamil and English. She brings out the hidden facts about the tribes through literature. She mainly focuses upon tribes who are living in the mountains of Tamil Nadu. She jots down how the ethnical value of tribes have been degraded from generation to generation. She uses literature as a tool to explain how the earth loose its native people. Devi Mahasweta in an interview in 1998, plots the sufferings of the tribal people in the modern society. Rajam Krishnan too brings out the suffering of tribes by using literature as a medium. She brings generation gap as an important concept with the change of ethnicity and living style from one generation to the other. She is against the destructive nature of modern technology in the name of development.

The novel *When the Kurinji Blooms* is written in Tamil as *Kurinjithaen* and later it was translated in English. In this novel she plots about the Bagada community of Nilgris. She keenly illustrates the life of the tribe and how their ethnical values get devastated because of the influence of modernism. She uses the life of three generation members of the same family to show how the transition has happened. She too explains about the field of education and medicine, which directs people in wrong way (Krishnan Rajam, 2002).

## III. GLOBALIZATION A LEAD FOR CULTURAL RUINATION

Globalization is an era which threatens all the native people of the earth. It wants all the people to be under one umbrella. It focuses upon vast development in medicine, education, engineering and science. The path of Globalization is seeming to be constructive but the present situation shows the real destructive nature of Globalization. It equips the society with all scientific inventions but all lead to a vague environment. All the modern elements gradually eliminate the values which are saved by our ancestors for years.

Modern inventions play an important role in the devastation of culture and tradition. Modern inventions make the life luxurious and easy but on the other hand it ruins the real life of native people. The landscape of tribes is transformed to tourist spots and the people who visits those places dumb lot of waste over there. Construction of dams helps people to save water but conflict for water is a great threat in the present society. After constructing the dam, there is no water in river which destructs the life of many villagers and tribes. The fertile lands have to lose its wealth and turns to a desert.

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Money is one of the major inventions of modern society. Money is more valued than ethnical values and uniqueness. The civilized man in order to get more money demolishes all the wealth and land saved by tribes for centuries. In the novel *When the Kurinji Blooms*, it is a clear evident that to gain more money the civilized men destroy all the land to plant tea and coffee. The speciality of the land is Kurinji flower but now it is rare to see those flowers. Tea and coffee is common now but the flower once flourished in the land has exiled totally. People have started to move towards money without understanding about their real needs. The loss of Kurinji flower is the symbol and a note to human race that the glory once lost cannot be regained by modern technology and science.

In this present era roadways are constructed between city and tribal village. People are allowed to visit tribal villages as tourist, this attitude eradicates dressing style and food style of the tribes. The modern man teaches the tribes to follow modern food which belongs to European countries. The tribes live in forest peacefully but the link between the city makes their home land polluted and it causes various diseases. In the novel the Badaga tribes live happily in the mountain region of Ooty but when the roads are constructed they falls as the victims of diseases like plague. It is clear evident that there is no such disease before the linkage with the city people. The life style of modern era is like digging grave for themselves. They even pollute the forest and ethnic life of the native or tribal people.

The tribes follow their ancestral way of medical practice. They get medicine from valuable herbs which are found in the forest (Hasnain, Nadeem. 2007). The advancement in medical field destructs the medicinal value of herbs and force all the people to tent in the hospital for treatment. The tribal community considers hospitals as hell and they believed that if a person visits hospital death is the only outcome. The novel supports this idea by stating a women admitted in a hospital who died during labor. The tribes are forced to get vaccination for some diseases, after that many people have died because of that vaccine. The tribal people haven't witnessed such incidents before. Rajam Krishnan blames these attitude of medical field and she directly attacks the modern medical practice.

#### IV. EDUCATION AND EMPTY LIFE STYLE

The advanced development sowed seeds for education among the tribal people. It is evident that most of the tribal people take up the top position in most of the civil services and in other corporate sector. Even education is questioned whether it teaches good moral to the youngsters or not. The modern youths are well equipped with modern technology and they are the pioneers of Nano-technology. Education teaches them about the money, property and possession but fails in showing the right moral behaviour. Even in tribal community after education the youngsters fail to understand the real meaning of life and how to live in this society. Education shows an illusion about the life instead of showing the reality of life.

In the novel the first generation people respect each other as their own blood. They take care of a family if there is any problem. All the kids of the community are considered as the own kids by all the members. There is no caste issues

and women are given equal rights like men. Women is considered as the lamb of the community and she gains respect in the community. In the second generation there starts a link between the tribal village and city. The tribes start to live the life of the city and there starts greediness, selfishness and vengeance on others. The link between the tribal village and city transplanted the position of women as a secondary being.

The third generation individuals are well educated. The novel has witnessed a business man, an engineer, a lawyer and a doctor. They are well educated but don't know anything about their real identity. They fall as the prey of modern illusion towards money and fame. They fail to give respect to women and consider woman as secondary being in the society. The adjustment in the family and in the society has been shifted towards selfishness. The love for all the children have disappeared and all the people start to compare their children with the other.

Education has taught more to the youngster but it is a bitter truth that it fails to explain the reality of life and society. Education system is the main reason for the abolishment of ethnical values of tribes. Education teaches that the life of tribes is barbaric. It is evident that there is no morality in modern education which teaches to construct dams, electrical instruments and so on. All the technologies ruin the ethnical value of the native tribes instead of making a better communal set up.

Tribal community considers nature as their mother and worships mother nature as God. After the influence of modernism and education their attitude towards nature has been changed. The modern members of the tribal community help the smugglers to cut down valuable trees. Instead of nature they shifted their attitude towards money and consider money as God which gives everything for them. Chandrasekhar in 2002, states that the mining part has become as a worst part. The profit gained from it leads to illegal activity towards nature. Money is used in exchange of valuable treasures which are looted from the native land of tribes. In the novel some characters support the ruining of forest for constructing buildings and tea plantation. Education system fails to teach the young about the real necessity of life.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The paper clearly explains how the transition has happened in the life of tribal community. The above points are clear to state that the modern technology and advancement in science leads to destruction for the native people of the world. In the name of development natural resources are looted and the landscape of tribal communities are destroyed. Education directs the people in a way where morality is not seen. The modern society should understand the life and ethnical values of the tribes. The tribes save nature not only for them but also for all the living beings in this world. Science and technology are the boons for constructing the world and it should not lead human race to destruction.



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