


Research Paper in English	Nativism and Post 1980 Marathi Novel	
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Abstract Bhalchandra Nemade's literary practice established him as a Jnanpeeth Awardee author along with popularity and recognition. In addition to this he set out his own geo-civilised track of criticism nomenclature as <i>desivad</i> roughly translated into English as 'Nativism'. His theoretical foundation of Nativism and literary synchronise with each other and influenced the post 1980 Indian writers especially the Marathi writers. The present paper is an attempt to view the post 1980 development of Marathi novel in the light of Nemade's theory of Nativism.		
Keywords Nativism, Desi, Marathi Novel, Nemade, Values.		

Writers and artists cannot flower out of the conditioning soil. They themselves and their creativity is always an outcome of the time and the contemporary geo-civilized aspects as well as socio-economic facets. On the contrary the development through adopt, adapt and adept phases can also be noticed in the history of the renaissance of humanism. The scholarly traditions are always welcomed for the progress of humanity. These various traditions when confront with each other they modify themselves towards more progressive perspective. However, on Indian subcontinent two distinct traditions *Margi* and *desi* as contemplated by Prof. Bhalchandra Nemade can be clearly distinguished from each other. After colonization of India by British the third current is separately represented as *Videsi* tradition on the horizon of Indian literary scenario. Nemade has attempted to establish a separate *desi* tradition through his propounding of the notion of Nativism and his own literary practices.

Bhalchandra Nemade's indelible contribution in Marathi literature is not only because of the appeal and popularity of his novels but also because of the height of critical discipline he taught to Marathi literature. Three major shifts

are noticed in his literary career. 1. Publication of his first novel *Kosala* (1963) which transformed the whole scenario of Marathi literature altogether. 2. His presentation of two papers - '*Marathi Kadambari: Prerana va Swarup*' (1980) and '*The concept of Nativism in Literature*' (1983) in two separate academic seminars. These essays implied the theoretical foundation of his mission which subsequently emerged as *desivad*. And 3. The publication of the first part of his long-awaited Hindu Quartet in 2010. '*Hindu Jaganyachi Samrudh Adagal*', suggestive of his mega project of cultural excavation of the whole of the Hindu civilization, which he regards as a geographical entity rather than religious connotation. This shift of focus from the Marathi culture to the civilization of the whole of the continent suggests a very wide panorama of his thought. It is observed that his thought of nativism which is the backbone of his creative as well as critical writing have had a great impact on Marathi literature in the last fifty years or so.

Keeping aside the impact of *desivad* on the whole of Marathi literature, the present discussion is limited only to the direct or indirect influence of Nemade's nativism on the Marathi novel written after 1980s, that is after Nemade's theoretical

declaration of the strain of nativism in his focal essays. It is not assumed here that the novelists and novels discussed right with the avowed stance of nativism in their novels. The focus is on the influence of Nemade's concept of novel and the *desi* views clearly discernible in post 1980 novels in Marathi.

In his essay 'Marathi Kadambari: Prerana va Swarup 1857-1975' Nemade clearly states his concept of novel- "The novel can be said to be a form of literature which has a large verbal space, multi-layered and complex theme, and, which, therefore, offers scope for a complex structure, characters and situations that incline more towards completeness than towards incompleteness. Owing to such characteristics it becomes possible for the novel to present a significant action in its fullness. It can contain and present a large-as-life social meaning, the life of a sub-culture or sub-group in detail, an entire cross section of a particular period or society, and can handle a social problem with all its entanglements. Its themes are self-sufficient and characters consistent and capable of existing on their own."(Nemade, 2009 A: 104)

Furthermore, the help of the critical essays published in 'Teekaswayamwara' (1990) and in his later elaborate deliberations in Nativism (2009), the nature of nativism can be summarised briefly as follows- Being *desi* (native) means being attached to our own land or soil. The attachment to our own land intuitively strengthens our relations with the language, traditions, art forms, literature, music and the whole of the socio-cultural activities going on, on that land. In fact our very existence is dignified on the background of our geo-civilised heritage. Our geo-cultural space provides the material, values, forms and stylistic principles to our expression. Every human society develops its own culture with such bondage of land. Every such culture is unique and autonomous. This culture is always conscious about the *desiyata* (nativicity) inherent in it. But if the attempts would be made to impose some values, language or systems on such

a culture, this culture becomes nativistic. It becomes aggressive and insisting. Such insisting form of nativity is called nativism. Otherwise nativity statically exists in every culture, which operates the internal structures of that culture. It does not mean that a certain culture is perfect in all the spheres of life and does not need anything from the alien cultures. Nativism advocates the borrowing as well as absorption of the necessary elements from the alien cultures. Rather it automatically happens in the acculturation. This process of borrowing and absorbing is called nativisation. If the nativisation is done by fair means and on the terms of the borrower culture's terms then it can nurture the borrower culture.

Viewed in the light of the above theorisation, Nemade's insisting views on language, social reality, neo morality, rational truth-seeking, caste system and orality are not only reflected in his own novels but also have had a great impact on the novels written in Marathi after 1980s. The novelists like Ranganath Pathare, Rajan Gavas, Babarao Musale, Sadanand Deshmukh, Sheshrao Mohite, Krishna Khot, G. K. Enapure have prominently expressed Nemade's *desi* conscience in their novels. Depiction of social reality is a marked tendency seen in the Marathi novel after 1980s. The novelists such as Babarao Musale, Ganesh Awate, Sheshrao Mohite, Sadanand Deshmukh, Krishnat Khot, Mahenda kadam are the prominent Marathi novelists whose novels reflect various facets of *desi* social realism related to the agricultural and rural societies in Maharashtra.

Ranganath Pathare's earlier novels 'Haran', 'Dive Gelele Divas', 'Rath', 'Chakravayuh', are the 'stories' in the Nemadean sense, but his 'Tamrapat' (1994) is the most important portrait of the post-independence political scenario. Written against the background of the Maratha community in Ahamadnagar district of Maharashtra, it covers wide range of issues in a comprehensive time and space. The power politics between the old and the new generation, the gradual sidelining of the old

unselfish, devoted idealistic politicians and the emergence of the new corrupt, crafty and tactful ones, the cooperative movements constantly keeping alive the political spirit, the use of educational institutions for political mileage, Dalit issue, election-oriented tricks and tracks, the awakening in the various strata of society and the complications arose thereby etc. are the multiple themes the novelist has handled with minute details. Though the novel is a representative of the western Maharashtra kind of politics, it is a very serious comment on the overall post-independent Indian politics.

Babarao Musale's novels of rural vidarbha background present the pathetic but truthful portraits of farmers and the *Balutedars*. His '*Halya Halya Dudh De*' (1985), *Pakhal* (1995), *Varul* (2004) and *Patilki* (2005) are the prominent novels which show how the life of rural people is torn between personal expectations and traditional beliefs and the force of upcoming modernism. His strength from nativistic point of view lies in his elaborate portraits of rural characters and the use of various forms of folk language- the vidarbha dialect of Marathi.

Another two novelists belonging to the Marathwada region Ganesh Awate and Sheshrao Mohite express *desi* ethos of agricultural societies in rural Maharashtra. Awate's *Gangot* (1984) depicts the effects of dowry system and the suffocation of rural women in the male-dominated society. His *Pansal* (1994) is the story of a restless and an unemployed young man Sudam, which is representative to the problem of unemployment in the post-Independent India. The depictions of grim realities of life, sincerity of the vocation of writing, use of folk-language are the strengths of this author. Sheshrao Mohite's *Asa Jagan Tolacha* (1994) and *Dhulperani* (2001) are related to the upheavals in the life of farmers caused by money-lending and uncertainty in farmers' profession. In *Dhulperani*, master Gopal's efforts to dissuade his nephew from adopting the farming profession as a means of

living prove futile and his nephew Shriram, an agriculture graduate has to despair in the end.

Sadanand Deshmukh's novels *Tahan* (1998), *Baromas* (2002), and *Charimera* (2010) are the most significant nativistic novels because of realistic themes, abundance of events and situations, the use of rural dialect and folk-elements, the moral standpoint of the author and the prose style that relates to orality. *Tahan* with its background of draught in the village is the tragedy of a person, Baban who is ignorant of the *desi* values of compassion towards creatures and the 'dharma of water' in our civilisation. *Baromas* is a family saga of Ekanath, a learned but unemployed young man. This novel vividly points out the causes of suicides of farmers in Maharashtra- unemployment, tension between urban class sophistication and the elemental simplicities of rural ones, the harassment from money-lenders, the rotted and unfruitful education system and the apathy of the governmental systems.

Krishna Khot is one of the contemporary novelists remarkable whose novels express *desi* consciousness with concrete details of reality and the picturesque narration. His *Gavthan*, *Raundala* and *Zad-Zimbad* narrate the transformation of the village's dependant on the agricultural economy. The elemental simplicities of their life are changed because of the change in political and social life. Though Khot's novel is woven around a particular theme, the graphic details of reality in it connote plurality of themes. The language of his novel is so radically regional and dialectical that it seems both the excavation and revival of the folk language at the same time. Rajan Gavas summarises the essence of Khot's novels:

"In '*Gavthan*' the agricultural system, rain fed and irrigated farming, the status of a woman's life before and after the marriage, come through the first person narration. In '*Raundala*' there is a remarkable intermingling of events and through them the novelist shows the changing systems, beliefs, customs, traditions, the politics, and

various traits and tendencies of people in villages. In 'Zad-Zimbad' the author portrays the deadly torrential rain and the restless cold in the human life. The language of the author is his own" (Gavas, 2014: Issue12: 56)

A recent novel 'B-Balicha'(2012) of Gavas analyses the conflict between the fast urbanizing rural society and the age-old cherished values of the individual. The novel is a restless picture of the self-centred, fragmented, corrupt and commercializing rural life. The multi-dimensional experimental structure of the novel with its records, diary, plots, use of local dialect imparts *desi* grandeur to the novel.

Besides these novelists there are many other Marathi novelists whose novels depict the social realism of the rural and agriculture life of various regions in Maharashtra. Among them are Bharat Kale (*Aise Kunabi Bhupal*), Mahendra Kadam (*Dhulpawal, Agal*), Pravin Bandekar (*Chalegat*) Anand Wingkar (*Awakali Pavsachya Darmyanchi Gost*) Sitaram Sawant (*Deshodhali, Bhui Bhui Thav De*), Vijay Jawale (*Bhauband and Charkhani*), Ashok Kautik Koli (*Pada and Kundha*).

The caste system in India is actually a very controversial issue and a pain in difficult place for the Indian society. One needs great courage to analyse and talk about it factually. Since the colonial period the reformative zeal has always perceived it from the negative point of view. It was true that the caste system had the greatest hurdle in the progress of Indian society. But when Nemade realized that in the caste hierarchies was the boon of the *marga* tradition which destroyed the horizontal set up of our caste system based on the division of labour, he begins to express his positive outlook about the radical issues involved in the caste system. In the tussle between the progressive and conservative views of the caste system, Nemade has shown courage to present his factual and rational attitude towards looking at the caste system. The novelists like Rajan Gavas, G. K.

Enapure, Ganesh Awate have implied rationalistic interpretation of this system in their novels.

'Tankat' (1998) of Rajan Gavas is a more comprehensive picture of social reality and technically more akin to Nemade's concept of novel as compared to his earlier novels.' The caste reality in 'Tankat' is manifested in the struggle between the Dalit and upper classes. As the selfish and utilitarian elements in both the segments of the society have upper hand over the others, the theme of exploitation of common people dominates the novel. Dr. Ashok Babar analyses this novel in detail as a nativistic text. One of his observations is worth citing:

"In 'Tankat' Gavas uses the mixture of various dialects; Akkaba Rane's sophisticated language, Patil's arrogant dialect, Shedbale's hybrid dialect, agent's dialect, village women's sensitive dialect, Mahar and Mang dialect etc. His careful use of these dialects makes 'Tankat' a remarkable socio-linguistic achievement." (Trans. Babar, 2005:232)

Rajan Gavas's novels are remarkable from nativistic point of view as they are written from a particular, concrete and stable point of view and seem to have written with full social responsibility. His novels also adhere to Nemade's dictum of neo-morality to the great extent.

Though G. K. Enapure has five novels in all to his credit, his 'Abhisaran' (2002) is the most significant one from the present point of view. It is a comment on the changing interpretation of the caste system and the severe flaws in the Dalit politics. The novel has thematic complexity in its implications of various issues like the sub-caste politics, women and their problems, the issues of organizational unity of Dalit politicians and the split in their leadership etc. Rational analysis through the eye of a detached observer, the firm and neo-moral view of looking at the caste system in the changing perspective is the achievement of G. K. Enapure in this respect. Moreover, Ganesh Awate's 'Bhirud' (2007) rationally and neutrally throws light on various caste organizations

established in rural areas, communal tensions between the Dalits and the upper castes, the reality of the conflict between the exploiters and exploited and the influence of the castism in the educated new generation.

Nemade's nativism is regarded as an ideology of laities, subaltern, deprived and the exploited sections of the society. The post 1980 novelists such as Rajan Gavas, Balwant Kambale, Ashok Vhatkar, Uttam Bandu Tupe, Namdeo Kambale, Sardar Jadhav, Ashok Pawar are seen engaged in raising the peripheral issue in their novels.

The first two novels of Rajan Gavas 'Chaudak' (1985) and 'Bhandarbhog' (1988) which are concerned with the Devdasi custom prevalent in the contemporary south Maharashtra and north of Karnataka, depict the stark social reality. The novels are the contorting stories of the protagonists Suli and Tayappa respectively, but through their individual suffering, the novelist puts forth a large picture of south Maharashtra torn by the unwanted customs and traditions. His next novel *Kalap* is the story of by heart participation and struggle of Raghu Chilami in the progressive social and literary movements and his subsequent detachment. The selfish and unreasonable interests of the shallow-minded people make the reality unbearable to him. So he consciously decides to withdraw from the movements.

Ashok Vhatkar's autobiographical novel *Melela Pani* (1982) exposes the injustice and atrocities on the 'Dhor' community by the upper castes villagers. Through the metaphor of 'dead water' the author shows how the upper-class people (the centre) move to shelter with the lower-class 'Dhor' tribe (periphery) when a dam breaks.

Balwant Kambale's *Napat* (1984) is the confrontation between the feudal system and mindless suffering of a devdasi Paru, who in the end dares to exhort the feudal lord who denies the parentage of her son by him. Kambale's 'Jogvyache Divas' (1993) is also a significant novel which

shows how the women in Mahar community beg for the ale (Jogava) in the name of Goddess Ellamma and become the easy targets of exploitation by the upper caste people.

Uttam Bandu Tupe is an important novelist who has brought the peripheral issues to the forefront in his novels. His *Zulava* (1986) on devdasi girl, *Kalasi* (1988) on sugar-cane plantation worker, *Khuli* (1991) the effects of immorality between devdasi and bhagat on a young woman, *Chipal* (1989) the story of an unemployed educated young man Sant, are the novels exposes the lower strata of the society.

G. K. Enapure's 'Ribot'(2008) puts forth the problems of the spinning-mill-workers in Mumbai. The spinning-mill workers have been the backbone of Indian economy especially in the post-independent period. But the new liberalization in the economy after 1990 has created havoc in their hitherto peaceful and smooth life. G. K. Enapure has pinpointed very minutely the life of this working class. Randhir Shinde interpretes this novel as- "The upheaval in the working class people in Mumbai is at the centre of the novel. The closed or lockout spinning mills, strikes of workers, split in union leaders, the tussle between the mill owners and the workers, the colony-culture of these workers, their rough but serene lifestyle -all these things are depicted in this novel." (Shinde, 2014 issue 12 Evaji, p. 32)

Ashok Pawar's '*Birad*', '*Ilanmal*' and '*Dar Kos Dar Mukkam*' expose the pathetic aspect of gypsy *Pardhi* community. The autobiographical novels of Ashok Pawar are more authentic and having touch of grim reality than the earlier novels written on the life of the same community. Besides the above discussed novelists there are many Marathi novelists who have brought the peripheral issues to the notice. They are Purushottam Borkar's '*Made in India*'(1987) Madhukar Wakole's *Zelzapat* (1988) Namdeo Kambale's *Raghavvel*(1994), Sardar Jadhav's *Koyta* (1994), Nagnath Patil's *Lambandi* (1995) and *Kondannyatil Jina* (1995), Rajan Khan's

Sat na Gat (1999), Rajendra Malose's *Gatha Saptshati*(2002) etc.

Thus, the above glance at the Marathi novel reveals how the theory of desivad has influenced the post- 1980s Marathi novelists in one way or another. It is significantly noticed that most of the novelists, in their early writings have woven their novels around a particular story. Very few are the exceptions and most of the novels seem the stretched stories. But the scene is changing with Pathare's '*Tamrpat*', Rajan Gavas's '*Tankat*', Sadanand Deshmukh's '*Baromas*' and Enapure's '*Ribot*', Bandekar's '*Chalegat*' which are *desi* novels in the Nemadean terms.

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