

## Chapter – I

### Introduction

Upto 1940s the tribes of India remained as a ‘forgotten chapter’ both in politics and society. It was Elwin who took the tribals into the fore and tribals appeared as an emerging discourse in the domain of dominant discourse. Elwin became the singlemost influence through whom the people of the civilized discourse came to know about their tribal counterpart, but it is unfortunate to note that even today Elwin is almost a forgotten name. Subaltern writers, Dalit and tribal writers, poets, novelists, autobiographers have found a respectable position in the new body of literature, called New Literature in English, which has established itself as a matured discipline; yet Elwin did not receive even a cursory mention in this critical discourse, as remarked by G.N. Devy (2009, xxi), except by Mahasweta Devi, Ramachandra Guha and a very few others. Bhabagrahi Mishra (1999) has discussed the field methods adopted by Elwin; G.S. Ghurye (1980), V.Xaxa (2001), Indra Munshi (2005), A.K. Danda (2005), P.K. Mishra (2005), A.C. Sinha (2005), B.K. Roy Burman (2005), Nandini Sundar (2005), A.N.M Irshad Ali (2005), and Sajal Nag (2015) have discussed and debated over the burning tribal issues raised during his period from the historical, anthropological and sociological standpoint; Archana Prasad (2003) describes Elwin as a romantic ecologist and judges Verrier’s monograph *The Baiga* (1939) from the view point of sociology; K.C. Baral (2009) considers and compares autobiographies of Gandhi, Nehru and Elwin from socio-literary aspect. None of these academicians has produced any literary works on Elwin. Mahasweta Devi possessed ardent love and reverence for Verrier, translated some of his books in Bengali; G.N. Devy, who has devoted himself fully into

documenting tribal culture and languages, arranged Elwin Memorial Lectures at Tejgadh in Gujarat, which continued for ten years attended by the speakers from different professions - judges, artists, writers, sociologists, and brought Elwin's contribution towards Indian tribes into the notice of the nation. Mahasweta Devi and Ramachandra Guha were also among the eminent speakers. During that time Guha was writing Elwin's biography *Savaging the Civilized* which came out in 2000. This book is an extensive, analytical and pioneering work on the life and writings of Verrier covering all aspects of his struggling, colourful and eventful life.

I was deeply moved and inspired by Guha's book *Savaging the Civilized* (2000). I was astonished to observe how a British evangelist coming to India became a typical product of India's National Movement, entered the tribal kingdom of India, lived their lives, voiced their aspirations for freedom and rights of land and forest, advocated their ways of life, documented their aesthetics of indigeneity, became an Indian citizen, helped Nehru Government to formulate policy-planning for Indian tribes for their sustainable development and to bring them into the mainstream discourse and thereby became the premier and sole defender of Indian tribes-all of which have been magnificently and critically examined by Guha in this book. This book alone opened the door of my research work on Verrier. Verrier was awarded Sahitya Akademi Award in 1965, posthumously, for his book *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin* (1964). At the same time, I wish to mention that Guha has not made any detailed literary discussions of the works of Verrier, though in his epilogue of the book he has marked Elwin's book *Motley* (1954) 'as one of the best and scarcest books of literary criticism' (334). As a student of English literature like Elwin, I thought my core area of study should be a detailed analysis of the folk songs and folk tales / myths of the tribal people, through which the primitive poets shaped out

all those endless analogies of man and nature which are the soul of all poetry. My detailed literary works on Elwin are concerned with his representation of indogeneity which has been reflected in the folk songs, dances, myths collected in his voluminous monographs. In fact, I decided to deal with three major aspects of Elwin's works in the light of his anthologized folkloric materials. In this respect my work might be claimed as a new and a premier one.

The introduction starts with the place of the aborigines in the history of mankind and Elwin in India.

### **1. The aborigines in the trajectory of history of mankind:**

The very appearance and existence of man in the universe is a subject of study and research in all the times. To know man, his socio-cultural aspect is to be studied along with its physical evolution. The prime condition to understand the livelihood of mankind is to know its origin, its diverse racial groups and its process of sustainable development since the primeval times. Some Historians and Anthropologists believe that man appeared first in Africa and spread over the world gradually from therein. Others opine that today's man appeared in different regions of the world even in the primeval times. It is said that on the continuous trajectory of evolution man has been transformed into its present shape of 'Homo-Sapiens-Sapiens.' Based on different physical characteristics mankind has been divided into three main racial groups namely 'Negroid', 'Europoid' and 'Mongoloid'. In Indian context, human race has been divided into five groups such as 'Proto-Australoid', 'Dravida', 'Alpaniyo', 'Nordic' and 'Proto- Mongoloid'. Ninety-nine percent period of the existence of man passed by in hunting and food-gathering. Even today the process of hunting and gathering, to some extent, is the livelihood of the 'aboriginals' or 'adivasis' which are seen in some parts of the world. The

appearance of 'language' is another pivotal achievement and plays a similar role in the history of mankind. As a whole, the history of man's existence since earlier times is colourful and interesting. The progeny of man's socio-cultural background is understood from the livelihood of contemporary 'Adivasi' people or 'tribes'. That is why the study of aborigine or adivasi life and society is so essential and pertinent. The 'adivasis' or the 'tribes' live in almost all parts of the world. Its habitation in India is also significant and 8.2 percent, according to Census 2011, of Indian population is tribal. Vedic Literatures, two great epics, Puranas, data collected from ancient and medieval periods and anthropological surveys establish the fact that the aboriginals of India have been residing in the vast areas of forest, plateau, hills and plains spread all over the country from earlier times and have been maintaining their separate identity and independence, to some extent even today, interacting with the people of larger social domain burdened with their daily needs, problems and adversities.

The problem of defining the 'races' and 'tribes' is very difficult and complex in nature. To arrange the people and cultures of India in a chronological order is a herculean task. The historians and anthropologists find it hard to reach to a definite conclusion about the racial history of India in pre-historic times as the stone-implements and skeletal finds of pre-historic men found in various sites dating back to the 'Lower-Paeleolithic' period and human fossils finds of the later period are very few and insignificant. Since the tribes entered in Indian sub-continent from various directions and regions of Asia, they do not form a uniform race. Though the insufficiency of archaeological and palaeo-ontological data constraint our knowledge to speak much of the origin and subsequent history of the numerous aboriginal tribes in India, yet a story of their glory and fall may be arranged as far as

the historic period is concerned. The invention of scripts and commencement of written reports have revolutionised the system of data collection.

The rise and fall of Indus Valley Civilization and the advent of Aryans on the Indian soil has added a new dimension to the lives of the aborigines of India. A. Kumar in his book *Tribal Development in India* (2002) states that the racial immigration that took place in the last phase of pre-historic stages, sometimes in the second millennium B.C., has caused a radical change in the socio-cultural history of India. In RigVedic period (2000-1000 B.C.) the Aryan tribes pouring into the North-Western parts of the country were seen fighting not only among themselves but also with the non-Aryan tribes. The degradation of tribal mass, its ethnicity and culture and its absorption in the dominant society is an ongoing process even today. The fusion of Aryan and Non-Aryan tribe continued. The twin process of emerging Hinduism namely Aryanisation of the tribals and the tribalisation of the Aryans were noticed in the period of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. We see references of the tribals such as Saoras, Sudras, Abhiras, Dravidas, Kulidas in these epics. Of these, Saoras are most familiar and exist even today. Their existence could be traced to 'Aitareyo Brahman'. 'Sabari', a Saora girl, offered fruits to Rama there. Verrier Elwin appreciated the phenomenon with utter sensibility and remarked that it has become a symbol of the contributions the tribes can and will make to the life of India. Eklavya, a Bhil, offered his thumb to Dronacharya as an ideal disciple of his guru. Munda and Naga claimed to have fought on the side of the Kurus against the five 'Pandava' brothers. Bhima's tribal wife 'Hirimba' gave birth Ghatotkacha. Chitrangada, a Naga-princess was married to Arjuna. Historical and mythical Nagas have been absorbed so completely into the Hindu society that no trace of their is left today. The concept of mixed caste arised. A few of these were Nishadas who lost

during these periods their earlier position and lived by hunting; Medas, Andhras, Madgas and Chenchus hunted wild animals; Ayogavas worked in wood; Dhigvana and Karauras in leather, Margavas were boatmen. Veras played on drums and Sarendhas acted as servants. The Chandals, a tribe, were absorbed in Hindu society and assigned the task of removing dead bodies of animals and human beings, whipping and chopping off the limbs of criminals. The process of down grading of tribal continued. The impact of epic Heroes like, Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Bhima, Ravana etc. on some of the tribes in Central India is observed in their myths. Gond called themselves children of Ravana. Kumar (2002) has mentioned that in the Feudal Period (400-100 A.D.) the Brahmin priests prepared suitable Puranic genealogies for them and the ruling Brahmin class spearheaded the process of Sanskritization and Brahminization of tribals. In the Muslim Period (12<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> C.), in the Central India and Bihar, the Turko-Afgan and Mughal rulers dominated the tribal chiefs or the Hindu-rulers in tribal areas. The tribal areas of Assam were also subjugated by another Muslim general. Vaishnavism, spread by the 'Chaitanya Mahaprabhu', also attracted some tribals towards Hinduism. The British Colonialists with their modern technologies and new approaches appeared in the tribal areas as merchants, money lenders and land-grabbers. The ruthless exploitation and oppressions of zamindars crossed all limits. Those severe unendurable conditions forced the tribal to resort to the revolts one after another since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A remarkable few of them are the Paharia Uprising towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Munda Uprising (1789-1901), the Santhal Insurrection (1811-1856), the Bhil Rebellion (1879-80), the Bastar Uprising (1901-11), and the Gond Rebellion (1940) (1-6).

According to *Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary* (1948), the term 'tribe' generally connotes a group of people of the same race and with the same customs, language, religion etc. living in a particular area and often led by a chief. In *Oxford Encyclopaedia Dictionary* (1983), it is defined as a group of primitive or barbaric clans under recognized chiefs. The European Colonial Administration described them as 'natives', and sometimes as 'savages', 'aboriginals' and 'primitives'.

Anthropologists worldwide, over the years, have defined the term 'tribe' in various ways. F. G. Bailey (1960) has described that the tribes are a relatively large portion of the total population in the area having direct command over the resources and access to the products of economy independent of others. J.J.Honingman (1964) argues that the criteria by which a tribe may be described are common territory with a common descent, common linguistic background, common cultural identity and a common name (153).

In Indian context, the scenario is different. It is difficult to find a single tribal group which possesses all the characteristics of the aforesaid definitions. Mahasweta Devi, in many places of her writings, has strongly affirmed that Indian society never gave any importance to the word 'tribe'. The tribes got little mention in India's socio-politico-literary domain. They were denied everything - rights of land, proper housing, right to education, drinking water and communication. Since the ancient times they have been residing in India for thousands of years, yet the people of the mainstream discourse paid little interest to recognize them, rather the exploiters encashed their poverty as a big capital. Many tribal peasant upsurges or rebellions against the British that took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth century received rare mention in the history of Indian freedom movement. National leaders like,

Gandhiji, Ambedkar or Phule also gave little thought of these tribals whose very existence have continually been threatened under mainstream onslaught.

Ganesh N. Devy also remarked in *The Oxford India Elwin* (2009),

The term 'tribal' had been in use among European merchants and travellers in India from the seventeenth century, but it was used in a very generic sense. It was brought into use in a specific sense for only certain communities after a series of conflicts ensued between them and the colonial rulers... Throughout the nineteenth century, thugs and thuggee became a consuming obsession of the colonial imagination, ultimately leading to a legislation formulated in order to isolate and reform the communities imagined to be associated with the thuggee. This profoundly misguided piece of legislation was called the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871. It covered itinerant entertainers, singers, performers, coin-makers, snake-charmers, acrobats and such other wandering groups that were semi-peasant and given to seasonal migration. (xv)

Anastasia Piliavsky (2015) has remarked that colonial sources described criminal tribes as guilds of felons committed by upbringing and blood to the robber's trade; they had their own morality, modus operandi, and divine sanction.

There is no definition of Scheduled Castes and Tribes in the Constitution itself. But the President is empowered to draw up a list in consultation with the Governor of each state, subject to revision by Parliament (Act 341-342). The President has made orders, specifying the Scheduled Castes and Tribes in different states in India, which have since been amended by the Acts of Parliament.

Till the recent past, we were accustomed to know and analyse our past history through the eyes of the Europeans. The earlier generation historians and

economists have focused on those parts of our colonial experiences which were visible and public. There were common masses, peasants and tribals who voiced and offered stringent resistances against the British Raj over the years. But their names, their role in the struggle were either undermined or remained unnoticed. The present day subalternists are trying to throw light on these inspite of having some colour bars.

Similarly there were men and women who remained either unnoticed or were paid little attention by the British scholars as well as the Indian nationalists. Noted sociologist Shiv Visvanathan has called them 'The other side of the Raj'. They are Verrier Elwin, Annie Besant, C.F. Andrews, Philip Spratt, Edward J. Thompson, J.T.Sanderland, Sister Nivedita (Margaret Noble), Mira Ben (Madaline Slade), William Jones, Maxmuller, Jim Corbett, E.M. Forster, and a noted few others. They contributed a lot towards the welfare of the people of India, in its struggle for freedom and in the process of 'making of a nation'.

Upto 1947, the tribal discourse was a neglected and forgotten chapter. It was Verrier only who took the tribal question into the fore and became the father figure of Indian tribes. We may quote from S.C. Dube (1964) as: "By 1940 or thereabouts, Elwin had become 'most important single influence' through whom urban Indians came to know of their tribal countrymen, their culture, their way of life, their poverty and their vulnerability" (134-136).

Guha in his article "Savaging the Civilized: Verrier Elwin and the Tribal Question in Late Colonial India", published in *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1996, similarly opines that the predicament of the tribals which was ignored by the social workers and politicians alike was brought to the centre stage of the controversies of the 1940s. He also found no reference to tribals in the records of the

All India Congress Committee kept in the Nehru Memorial Museum in New Delhi, contrastingly Guha obtained ample records therein showing interests of the Committee paid to women, untouchables and religious minorities (2376).

Ganesh N. Devy (2009) firmly puts it as:

The leadership of the Indian freedom movement showed no interest in recognizing tribal rights or the historical contribution that tribal communities had made during the nineteenth century... The 'tribal' was essentially a political premise and the colonial government had managed to seal off from the twentieth-century intellectual thinking about Indian society. It was natural, therefore, that by the time Elwin made his first trip to a tribal area, the tribals were already a forgotten issue in Indian politics and society. It was Elwin's historic burden to re-examine the category, turn it upside down, and gain sympathy, if not respectability, for the tribes. He carried out this seemingly impossible task with unparalleled dedication. (xvi-xvii)

## **2. Elwin in India:**

Elwin came to India in November 1927 when he was twenty five years old. At the very outset, it will be relevant to add a few lines about his family background and career in school and colleges at London.

He was born at Dover in Kent, in England, in 1902 on 29<sup>th</sup> August in an Anglo – Saxon family of six, his father E.H. Elwin, mother Minnie, grandmother Grannie Holman, brother Basil, elder sister Eldyth and he himself. Father Elwin, an Anglican bishop, would spend most of his times in touring to West Africa and some countries in Asia. Verrier got rare chances to meet him in his life. His father's premature death at the age of thirty eight pushed Elwin's family into a severe economic condition and Elwins had to move to different places for their livelihood

and school education. Mother Minnie, though devoted to her husband and his religion and faith, was a beautiful, intelligent and imaginative woman. She was interested in art, music and poetry but all were rooted in religion. At the sametime Evangelical Anglicanism, considered to be 'Low Church' and one of the dullest types of religion in the world, could not satisfy Minnie, rather she sought consolation in revivalism; wished to speak with tongues, to fall into trance and to dance in ecstasy before the Holly Table, which she never achieved. In *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin* (1964) it is stated that like his mother, Verrier also read Bible to get a 'message' that "Jesus would come again in clouds of glory,... would destroy the bad old world and create a better one" (3).

He believed that there was a lot of Scottish blood in his mother's family and this Scottish and, desirably Irish element in their ancestry and his mother herself, gave the Holmons, a witty, humanistic and enthusiastic attitude to life (5). His grandmother, on the opposite, was a cathartic, sensible and delightful person with having little respects for the Holy order. Most of the male members of his mother's family occupied higher positions in Army up to the rank of Colonel. His father's family, the Elwins, were comparatively a little dull, most of them were solicitors, officials and later clergymen, two of his uncles were in the I.C.S. Eldyth was an exquisitely pretty girl, devoted to religion and was his life lasting friend. This was his family atmosphere where he grew up. Religion played an important role in his childhood and continued to persist in his school days also.

When he was thirteen, he joined Dean Close School at Cheltenham which used to teach mainly theology and religion and to some extent poetry, classics, and music. In his school days he was naughty, shy and terribly priggish in nature and was filled in with the conventional ideas by his uncles and on the other, with the

belief by his mother, that nothing in this material world could be compared to the joy of leading souls to Jesus.

When he turned sixteen, he became attracted to English literature. His college at Merton and its learned tutors acquainted him with the works of Keats, Wordsworth, Tennyson, T.S. Eliot, A. C. Bradley, Levi, H.W. Garrod, D. H. Lawrence and some other Victorians. He stood first in English Finals in 1924. Then he opted for Theology and spent two years at St. Peter's College and obtained first class, though later he repented on the lot of years he had spent during his undergraduate studies on religion (28). Being appointed Vice-Principal of Wycliffe Hall and ordained in Christ Church Cathedral, Elwin developed his studies in 'mysticism' and began to practice religion in its true sense, which is expressed in *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin* (1964) as, "I was in love with the beauty ever-ancient, ever-new that centuries ago had stirred the passionate heart of Augustine. 'The love that moves the sun and other stars' possessed me. In God's will was my peace, and I cried in the solitude of my room 'Thou hast made me for Thyself, and my heart is restless until it can rest in Thee'" (32-33).

Elwin refused to teach theology from the angle the Church of Rome designed. He left the job of Vice-Principal and Green, his former tutor, advised him to leave Oxford and to go to a parish in the slums of London or one of the industrial cities end to live among the poor and ordinary people. He had loved Oxford in those days much than anything in the world, Oxford offered the search for truth and dignity at interest of a life of scholarship, yet Oxford could not satisfy him fully.

During his later years in Oxford a new wave of thought appeared to him. He thought that his family as well as countrymen had gone to India to exploit it and rule it. A sense of reparation arised in him. By this time, he happened to meet Bernard

Aluwihare who came from Ceylon and was an ardent supporter of Indian National Movement. Aluwihare introduced Verrier with the opinions of Gandhi and writings of Tagore and lent him some books on Indian philosophy. All these helped change his outlook. He was deeply moved by the ideals Indian nationalism, Hindu mysticism, Gandhi's opinions and Tagore's internationalism and humanism.

Verrier decided to set for India and to work there, which was accelerated by Father Jack Winslaw, the founder of an Ashram settlement called 'Christ Seva Sangh' (C.S.S.). Elwin came to India in 1927 along with his two friends, reached the Christ Seva Sangh Ashram and started a new disciplined life therein. He abided by the Ashram code, would sleep on the floor, would eat Indian food with no spoons, would clean hands before eating and would keep slippers outside the room. Winslaw being himself a linguist inspired Verrier in learning Marathi and Sanskrit. Verrier attended an annual religious Conference held at Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram, met Gandhi and hundreds of devoted Congressmen, spent a few days in the Ashram at a time while the national movement had risen to a pitch of sincerity and devotion. Verrier realised that many of ideas inspiring India's national movement had originated from the West and noticed profound influence of Tolstoy and Ruskin on Gandhi.

Elwin did not want to be a 'missionary' in the ordinary sense of the word, but was interested in the monastic life of the Ashram as it was founded on liberal Christian lines which was more interested in scholarship than in proselytising and considered both Indian and European members in terms of equality. Meanwhile Winslaw went to England on leave, Verrier took the charge of C.S.S., intimacy with Gandhi became deeper, met Subhas Chandra Bose and Sardar Vallab Bhai Patel, the later invited him to visit over sixty villages in five 'taluk' of Gujarat to make an

inquiry into police repression of the No-Tax campaign that had started therein, submitted the report which appeared in 'Bombay Chronicle' and later as a small booklet 'In the Deserted villages at Gujarat', urged the British Government to follow Christian principles which apply equally to both public and private life. He also urged the members of the Ashram to take part in national movement for freedom as it was based on such essentially Christian ideals as Truth and Non-violence. All these angered British officials as well as most of the European members of the Ashram. He cut off his ties with C.S.S., decided to stay at Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram, befriended a number of remarkable Indians, got Shamrao Hivale, a man of extraordinary warmth and humanity, as his long friend and ally.

During 1928-1932, unprecedented upsurges of peasants and industrial workers were witnessed. Demand for complete independence abandoned that for dominion status. Nehru's proclamation on his views on socialism, Patel's anti-government campaign in Gujarat, Lala Lajpat Rai's death by police atrocities, violent activities in Punjab and Bengal, country-wide civil disobedience movement, Lahore Congress with Nehru as President, Gandhi-Irwin Pact, Motilal's death, Round Table conference – all these stirred the nation and at the same time brought Verrier very nearer to Gandhi and his Sabarmati Ashram. Verrier himself was a typical product of India's National Movement. The voice he raised against the repression of British officials and exploitation by the agents of colonial rulers could not be heard even of many national leaders of that time. His book *Truth About India* (1932) gives a glimpse of his participation in the national upsurge and active support to the cause of the common mass.

His experiences during those days in the Ashram shaped his direction for future life. The very prayer in the Ashram 'Lead me from the unreal to real' carried

a new meaning to him and he decided to go to Gujarat to serve the ‘untouchables’, Gandhi’s Harijans, and to live with them. Sardar Patel intercepted and told him, “The untouchables are not your problem. They are the sins of the Hindus and it is the Hindus who must make reparation to them” (58). Patel advised him to go to the land of aboriginals, to live with them and to serve them. Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, a close associate of Gandhi, wished Verrier should work for the welfare of the tribe, called ‘Gond’ in the Central Provinces. Elwin agreed, wrote to Shamrao Hivale, who was in England then, about his plan. Gandhi’s blessings were on them. He cut off all of his official links with CSS, though not from heart. It was, in his words, an amicable retirement from an institution, not a drastic reversal of ideas. Elwin was penniless then. Jamnalal helped a lot. Being impressed by Jamnalal, he promised that he would travel barefoot, with an exception to visit town with sandals, until India won independence. He kept his vow for about fifteen years and admitted that this vow had helped him save a lot of money on socks, shoes and polish. He met A.V. Thakkar (Thakkar Bapa) the most prominent social worker of those days, went Bombay to work within the untouchables. He went to Dohad, the centre of Thakkar Bapa’s work among the ‘Bhils’. He had visited a number of Gond-villages and ‘Korku’ habitats by bullock-cart. J.B. Kripalani accompanied him in this tour to United Provinces such as Muthura, Brindaban, Haridwar, Hrishikesh, Ajoydhya etc. By this time Shamrao joined them. Gradually Verrier entered into the kingdom of Adivasi, made their kingdom his home and lived a dedicated life for them till death.

Verrier heard the call of the aborigines. The beautiful scenery of the hills, the most ignorant and poor but simple and charming people attracted Verrier. All these appeared to him as ‘Dear as the Moon’. From 1931 to 1953 he spent his times in

houses of mud and thatch, where he would feel comfort in summer and in rainy season.

Verrier built up an ashram at Karanjia on Sabarmati model to help the poor or exploited and their way of life was based on a mixture of Franciscan and Gandhian ideas. He and Shamrao organized a society called Gond Seva Mondal and in 1949 they organized themselves the Tribal Welfare and Research Unit (TWARU). Shamrao established himself as 'Chhota Bhai', the little brother of the village people. Whenever the tribesmen were on trouble, they used to go to Chhota Bhai for help. Within the Ashram they opened a Dispensary well equipped with medicines and the villagers used to come there from a radius of forty miles. Then they established a school and a hostel. The school was co-education, a very fair numbers of girls attended. A carpenter's shop and tailoring department were also there. In the midst of forest, there were eight branch Ashrams within a radius of as many miles. Each of these branches had its resident worker, school, Hindi library and small dispensary.

At that time, venereal disease was almost endemic among the tribes, in Central India. The tribal people used to suffer from malaria, syphilis and gonorrhoea as the tribal young men and women enjoyed sexual freedom before marriage. The tribal people believed that God has made them poor, so it was of no use of good trying to be anything else. Elwin and his team mates had to fight against this attitude. To work for the health of the community, to see that there was enough food, to help the people getting and saving more money, to provide them sufficient knowledge to enable them to resist their exploiters and to widen their vision of the world. Verrier and Shamrao adopted many health programmes and health

propaganda through dispensaries, used to train them in domestic arts and sciences for the improvement of agriculture and women education.

They stayed at Sanrhwachhapar, at Mandla district for four years and then moved again to their final home at Patangarh. At Patangarh they opened dispensary, school, shop, guest house and the Leper home. Verrier lived in Central India all through the Second World War. During the latter years at Sanrhwachhapar he was appointed Honorary Magistrate and during the period he stayed at Patangarh and worked in the Department of Anthropology. All these helped him escape of police surveillance, contact with good Englishmen and accelerate his works for the betterment of tribal people on the one hand and hindered him to take part in active politics being bound by his undertaking to the India House on the other as the government officials refused to permit him to return to India. Elwin was forced to turn 'from politics to poetry', made wide-ranging studies of the aboriginal communities, whereas Shamrao concentrated on social work. His seminal work *The Baiga* (1939) was published during this period.

In 1940, Verrier went to Bastar as a census officer there. Shamrao accompanied him. They built a little house of stone opposite to the stupendous and beautiful Falls of Chitrakot and made small huts. Elwin has mentioned that tribal people there were poor but they were free and happy. He and Shamrao had travelled all over the state and collected a lot of notes and photographs of the Hill Marias, Koyas, Bhatras, Dorlas and other tribal people. He took great interest in two of the tribes – Bison-Horn Marias of the south and the Murias of the north. He wrote a book on Marias called *Maria Murder and Suicide* (1943), to discover the causes or motives which drove those simple people to homicide, and another book on the Murias called *The Muria and their Ghotul* (1947), to study the ghotul, the unique

dormitory-club of Muria boys and girls, where the Murias enjoyed full freedom, lived their own life unhampered, though unimproved but lived it well.

In December 1942 he paid his first visit to Orissa at the invitation of Norval Mitchell, the then in-charge of the Eastern States Agency. He visited the Derbars of the Bonai, Keonjhar and Pal Lahara states and was asked to make inquiry into the life and habits of the people and make recommendations towards the solution of the shifting-cultivation, the burning problem of that time. The poverty and beauty and grace as displayed in their 'animal ballet' stirred Verrier very deeply. Out of his Orissa exploration he wrote three books – *Bondo Highlander* (1950), *The Religion of an Indian Tribe* (1955) (about the Shoras) and *Tribal Myths of Orissa* (1954). He confessed that the Baigas introduced him to the wilder forest, the Kuttia Konds and the Marias kindled and educated his sense of beauty, and they had played an important part of his life and without them his story would be incomplete.

Soon after settling in Patangarh, he married a very beautiful Gond girl named Kosi who hailed from a village near Karanjia. Kosi gifted him a son named Jawaharlal. They generally called his son by Kumar. It was very unfortunate that his marriage with Kosi did not last long. After some years he got a divorce from Kosi. Throughout his whole life he bore in his mind a deep sense of pain and failure for the separation which he could hardly bear to write about. Later Elwin married Lila, a Pradhan girl of Patangarh itself. This married life lasted upto his last breath. Lila could adjust changing situation. She had a very firm mind and she was an expert knitter. She was very kind hearted, never took her food until she fed someone who was hungry. She indulged in her rustic simplicity and spent time by tending plants or rearing pet animals. Always tribal children flocked to Elwin's house at Patangarh. Kumar would join them in play. Elwin's other three sons were Vasantha, Nakula

and Ashoka. The children practised different religions. Kumar became a Roman Catholic when he was seventeen, Vasantha claimed to be a Hindu, Nakula declared himself a Pagan, Ashoka was a Buddhist. Lila and Verrier had no particular religion, though in later years Verrier had developed a strong feeling for Buddhism.

By that time Elwin's relation with Gandhi began to shiver on some key issues such as Khadi, Gandhi's attitude to sex and question of tribal development, and largely on the question of assimilation in which the Hindu Puritans were trying to reform the tribal society in their ascetic mode.

In 1952 at the invitation of Mr. Jairam Daulatram, the then Governor of Assam, Verrier and Shamrao reached Shillong. They met the Governor and called on N.K. Rustomji, the then adviser for Tribal Areas including NEFA. He was made Anthropological Consultant but after one year he was appointed Advisor for Tribal Affairs. Here he got the opportunity to have close association with Nari Rustomji who was very much conscious of the tribal problems since a couple of years and his ideas were put into practice on the frontier. He submitted a secret report with the Prime Minister after a seven weeks tour in Tuessang which he termed as his first contribution to a philosophy of tribal change and development in NEFA. He spent in the NEFA Secretariat for three years, thought out in great detail all sorts of problems and policies. His own policy was expressed exhaustively in his book *A Philosophy for NEFA* (1957). His policies also appeared in two other works. The first was contained in the "Report of the Committee for Multipurpose Tribal Blocks", of which he was the Chairman. Another was embodied in the Report of the Scheduled Tribes Commission, known as Dhebar Commission, of which he was a member. This report was published by more than seven hundred fifty pages in the form of a book named *A New Deal for Tribal India* (1963), which attracted criticism from academic

as well as political spheres. His book *A Philosophy for NEFA* (1957) dealt with tribal problems under the heading of material needs, psychological adaptation, and social, religious and cultural problems and emphasized that 'tribal rights on land and forests should be respected' first. Verrier also strongly viewed that nothing was to be forced or imposed on the people; rather they should be encouraged to develop along the path of their own traditions.

Verrier's life was full of struggles and events. The Battle of Plassey of 1757, the revolts of 1857, called 'Sepoy Mutiny' and considered as the 'India's first struggle for Independence', waves of slogan of 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity' reverberated in the historic French Revolution, shoots of bourgeois nationalism, emergence of Indian National Congress (INC) and its two-fold character, advocacy for 'Swadeshi' and 'Swaraj' by the extremist leaders of INC, known as Lal-Bal-Pal triumvirate, inroads of revolutionary terrorism in Bengal and Maharashtra, the Amritsar Congress and the beginning of Gandhi Raj, his path of non-violence and critical role in the nationalist movement, outbreak of World War-I and The October Revolution of 1917, the Second World War, emergence of Jawaharlal Nehru and his affinity towards socialism, formation of All India Muslim League, Hindu-Muslim conflict, Netaji's Azad Hind Fouz, the peasants and working class movements, tribal movements and partitioned freedom—all these historic events had moved Elwin. His living among the tribals for near about three decades with ardent love and respect for their ways of life and culture led him to produce mighty works amounting to nearabout thirty nine monographs, some being voluminous, a few pamphlets and more than one hundred articles on tribal issues—each of which represents the 'indigeneity' uniquely.

Various factors such as his family atmosphere, career at Oxford, Anglican Evangelism, Gandhi's pacifism, Indian mysticism, Nehru's concept of democracy and pluralism and above all the exotic world of the tribes of India have shaped his life and brought a series of departures—from Christianity to Hinduism, from Hinduism to Buddhism – all leading towards his 'search for truth' and his 'journey from the unreal to real'. His studies in theology developed his interest in 'man'. The science of God led him to the science of human beings.

Elwin achieved the citizenship of India in 1954 which was a unique honour to him. He was conferred on the title 'Padmabhusana' in 1961. He also received Welcome Medals for his research work in 1943, the S.C. Roy Medal in 1945, Rivers Memorial Medal in 1948, The Annandale Medal in 1952 and Dadabhai Naroji Award in 1961, though these were very little in comparison to his works and his life with the Aborigines.

Guha (1999) has described him as 'an English man in India' and 'an English man for India'. He lived two lives—one of a Christian-British-European and another of an Indian. His very living in a world afflicted with exploitation, oppression, poverty, squalor and disease mark his basic difference with Gandhi and Nehru. He always holds a liminal space which complicated his intention, action and identity. His position of liminality, on the one hand, enabled him to draw the attention and support of Nehru, the then Prime Minister, for framing the policy-planning of the tribal development of the country, and on the other, helped figure the world of exploitation and marginalisation in the political discourse of the time. Kailash C. Baral (2009) remarked in his article "Reading Autobiographies and (Re) Imaging the Nation" published in *Revista Literature em Debate*, 2009 that "It is clear that no other Indian leader except Nehru who knows the conditions of tribes of India has

understood their ways of life better than Elwin. He spoke for the marginal communities and sought their accommodation in the emerging discourse of Indian nation State” (14).

The attitude of both Nehru and Elwin towards the tribes was not static; rather it was changing and developing. Both were romantic, liberal and humanitarian with solid literary backgrounds which have been reflected in their humanist attitude to the tribes, termed as ‘philanthropy’. Anthropology to Elwin was not any dull academic study of the tribals but a concern to uplift the lot of the marginalised and downtrodden from the socio-economic, cultural and political degradation by the colonial rulers and the agents of modernisation.

### **His Publications:**

#### **Monographs:**

- 1) *The Baiga* (Murray, 1939)
- 2) *The Agaria* (OUP, 1942)
- 3) *Maria Murder and Suicide* (OUP, 1943, second edition, 1950)
- 4) *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (OUP, 1944)
- 5) *Folk-Songs of Chhattisgarh* (OUP, 1946)
- 6) *The Muria and their Ghotul* (OUP, 1947)
- 7) *Myths of Middle India* (OUP, 1949)
- 8) *Bondo Highlander* ( OUP, 1950)
- 9) *The Tribal Art of Middle India* ( OUP, 1951)
- 10) *Tribal Myths of Orissa* (OUP, 1954)
- 11) *The Religion of an Indian Tribe* (OUP, 1955 )

- 12) *Myths of the North-East Frontier of India* (NEFA Administration, 1958)
- 13) *The Art of the North-East Frontier of India* (NEFA Administration, 1959)
- 14) *Maisons des Jeunes chez les Muria* (Gallimard, 1959)
- 15) *Nagaland* ( Adviser's Secretariat, Shillong, 1961)
- 16) *I Costumi Sessuali dei Muria* (Lerici, 1963)
- 17) *Democracy in NEFA* (NEFA Administration, 1966)
- 18) *The Kingdom of the Young* (Abridged from *The Muria and their Ghotul*, OUP, 1968)

**General:**

- 1) *The Dawn of Indian Freedom* (1930 )
- 2) *Mahatma Gandhi* (1931 )
- 3) *The Truth about India* (1932 )
- 4) *Loss of Nerve* (1941)
- 5) *The Aborigines* (OUP, 1943, second edition,1944)
- 6) *Motley* (Orient Longmans,1954)
- 7) *A Philosophy for NEFA* (NEFA Administration, 1957, third edition, 1961)
- 8) *Leaves from the Jungle* (Murray, second edition, OUP,1958)
- 9) *India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century* (OUP,1959, reprinted, 1962 )
- 10) *When the World was Young* (National Book Trust, 1961)
- 11) *A Philosophy of Love* (Publications Division,1962)

12) *A New Deal for Tribal India* ( Ministry of Home Affairs New Dilli, 1963)

13) *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin : An Autobiography* (OUP, 1964)

**Novels:**

1) *The Phulmat of the Hills* (Murray, 1937)

2) *A Cloud that's Dragonish* (Murray, 1938)

**With Shamrao Hivale:**

1) *Songs of the Forest* (Allen & Unwin, 1935)

2) *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills* (OUP, 1944)

A significant number of articles/papers related to the issues of the Indian tribes prevalent at that time were published in the journal of *Man in India* during the years 1943-1948 edited jointly with W.G. Archer.

## Literature Review

Eminent sociologist and philosopher, George Devereux (1946) in his review work on Elwin's book *The Agaria* (1942) has admitted that Verrier has carefully examined the lives of the Agaria—their social organization, customs, myths, magic etc, all of which revolved round the cultural theme of iron. As good as Elwin, Devereux also viewed that the Agaria were the possible decent of the pre-Aryan Asura, but expressed doubt over Elwin's designation of all the non-Hindu iron-makers of that region as the Agaria. Devereux has mentioned of two types of ethnographic reporting. The first type of organizing data must be exemplified by canned, streamlined, standardized and packaged monographs of university presses containing detailed tables of content. The other way should be based on systematic conceptual analysis, on the internal and external order of induction and deduction process. According to him, Verrier has adopted the second way but very poorly. Devereux opines in "The Agaria: Verrier Elwin" in *American Anthropologist* v.48 (1946) as,

He flits back and forth between the card-index pattern, Frazerian comparisons, functionalism, psychiatry, etc., with the result that the book has neither internal nor external order, and is hard to read. The data are there, rich, detailed, authoritative; the insight is there, fresh, often subtle, and broad enough,... yet the Agaria never quite come to life—an incomprehensible thing in a book by the author of 'The Baiga'. (110)

David G. Mandelbaum (1965) in his article on "The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin: An Autobiography" in *American Arthropologist*, vol. 67, 1965, has discussed in short, on Verrier's many-sided talents, literary excellency, services to the Indian

tribes jointly with Hivale, acting as adviser to the Nehru Government in tribal affairs, close contact with Gandhi and India's freedom movement, persuasion of J. B. Pant and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patal on him to choose the tribal discourse, and Nehru's influence on him to prepare policy-planning on tribal affairs.

Mandelbaum notes that Verrier wrote twenty six books, mostly on tribes of India and spent better part of his life, more than three decades, doing anthropological studies of Indian tribes, and living their lives. What exactly Elwin wanted to do for the Indian tribes, has been nicely described by Mandelbaum as,

The evangelism of his church training came forth most strongly in his evangelical advocacy of the cause of the tribal people of India. There are some 25 million of them, far more in numbers than the population of a good many nations in the world, yet in India they have been relatively invisible, socially submerged, geographically isolated, generally unknown. Those who had business dealings with them often exploited them. Those who came to help sometimes made their condition even worse than it had been before.

Elwin worked unceasingly to make the tribal peoples known to the leaders of the country and to make them known as worthy of respect and of special welfare attention. First through his books, pamphlets, newspapers and magazine articles and latterly as a member of high level governmental committees he helped mould official policy into a far more useful instrument for tribal welfare than anything which had previously been done. (450)

Mandelbaum also highly appreciates Elwin's living the life with Franciscan poverty, his vow to go barefoot until India won independence, which he maintained for about fifteen years.

Nari K. Rustomji, a very good friend of Elwin and an I.C.S. officer during Elwin's time published his works in two books. The First book *Verrier Elwin and India's North-Eastern Border Lands* (1988) is a collection of four Elwin Memorial Lectures delivered by Nari K. Rustomji during 1986 in North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU). In this book (lecture series), Rustomji has established Elwin as a philosopher and his philosophy was essentially a 'philosophy of love and compassion' and mentioned that Elwin had received deep respect from Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, yet he was much misunderstood and much maligned by many contemporary intellectuals and anthropologists. Rustomji expressed utter surprise that still there were people who believed that Elwin had wished to keep the tribal people in a vast Zoological Game Reserve! But he (Rustomji) argued that Elwin advocated of 'Protection', not the protection of prison bars, but the protection he was seeking for tribal people was the assurance that would come to them from an awareness of their rights as human beings, from respect for their culture and way of life from their fellow citizens, from inbuilt safeguards in the constitution of the country. Rustomji mentioned in his lectures that somebody believed / criticized that Elwin's path / policy of safeguarding the land rights of the tribal people had opened the path for Chinese aggression in 1962.

Rustomji strongly opposed this belief and defended tribal's right for land by saying,

They little realize that land is the life-blood of the tribal people, their most precious possession in the world, and that, if they had been robbed of their land, the country would never have been forgiven nor ever again trusted. The loyalty of the tribal people of NEFA (now Arunachal Pradesh) both during and after the Chinese invasion is the most shining indication of Elwin's policy of respect for tribal land and tribal institutions. (2)

In the 4<sup>th</sup> lecture of this book, Rustomji has portrayed Elwin as a very poetic and romantic anthropologist who has explored the beauty of nature, fresh sunlight, free and spontaneous laughter and songs and dances of the simple hill people.

The second book, edited and written by Rustomji, *Verrier Elwin, Philanthropologist: Selected Writings* (1989), contains 16 chapters each being enriched with very sharp and objective analysis of Verrier's works. Rustomji has quoted from Christopher von Furer-Haimendorf's assessment on Elwin as, "No other anthropologist, neither British or Indian, has made as massive a contribution to our knowledge of Indian tribal societies, and books such as *The Muria and Their Ghotul* (1947) and *The Religion of an Indian Tribe* (1955) are sure of a place among classics of anthropology and the most inspired chronicler of India's tribal people."

Elwin's writings as an 'anthropologist' and as a 'sociologist' have been incorporated in this anthology. Rustomji has attempted to show Elwin's many-sidedness, as a poet, essayist, art-connoisseur, photographer, scholar-administrator and political worker.

Carol Upadhyia (1996) in his paper "Anthropology, Adivasi Movements, and the Politics of Indigenusness", presented at the conference of Indian Sociological Society, Dec' 1996, discusses the role of the anthropologists and sociologists of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries on the subject. Alongwith Risley, Beteille, Skaria, Bates, K. Shivaramkrishnan, Sumit Guha, V.Xaxa, Pathy, Nandini Sundar, Devalle, G. S. Ghurye, Corbridge, R. Guha, L.P. Vidyarthi, Lalit Kurza, W.V. Grigson, and J. H. Hutton, he discusses Elwin's contribution very critically. Upadhyia describes that like most of the British officials Elwin also favoured the policy of isolation and the Indian Nationalists believed it an attempt to 'divide and rule'. He also mentions

Elwin's advocacy of forming 'a sort of National Park' to defend and preserve 'tribal ways of life' in his seminal work *The Baiga* (1939).

However he did not forget to mention that Verrier's aboriginals were characterized by their simplicity, social equality, freedom of their women, cultural richness reflected in their folklores, songs and dances and sexual freedom, and also puts forward Verrier's findings that the aboriginals are the real 'Swadeshi', all others are foreign (8-9). Upadhyaya also states what a Christian Adivasi leader refers to as five chief qualities of aboriginals such as dignity of labour, equality, common ownership of means of productions, songs and dances and community solidarity (Devalle 1992) has been echoed in Elwin's writings as harmony with nature, high status of women, collectivism, and zest for life.

B. N. Sahay (1998) in his article "Approach to Tribal Welfare in Post Independence Era", published in *Indian Anthropologist*, vol. 28, no.1, June 1998, (73-81), has mentioned some of the Articles of the Constitution of India which safeguard the cause of the weaker sections of the people and that of the Indian tribes. He puts chronologically the Christian missionaries, Mahatma Gandhi, A.V. Thakkar, S. C. Roy and lastly Verrier, who made significant contributions to the welfare of the tribals. He narrates that Verrier carried out research works among various tribes especially in Madhya Pradesh, from 1931 to 1955, promoted welfare activities through treatment of diseases, agriculture, literacy, poultry-keeping etc. Sahay demands that Elwin's sincerity, wisdom and devotion gained recognition, and even after Independence Elwin's policy got recognition as the then Prime Minister Nehru implemented it which yielded good result. The policy laid emphasis on planned, controlled and limited assimilation and on preserving the tribal ways of life.

Ramachandra Guha's book *Savaging the Civilized* (2000) is a well researched and well-written biography of Verrier Elwin. Guha collected the materials of his book from the books of Elwin and those written about Elwin, letters, government documents. He spared a lot of time and made serious efforts, travelled to Elwin's school and university and to all the places with which Elwin was associated in India to collect information. Sunil Janah in his *Shadowing a Philanthropologist* (1999), places *Savaging the Civilized* (2000) as a very readable and interesting narrative and remarks that the materials Guha obtained from archival records and documents, and the communications Guha made with the people were used very skillfully by him.

*Savaging the Civilized* (2000) is about the life and works of Verrier Elwin in which Guha has portrayed Verrier as a priest, a social worker, an anthropologist, a scholar, a poet, a man, an administrator, and a lover of mankind.

This book contains fifteen chapters with one annexed chapter. The first chapter entitled 'Evangelical Ghetto' describes Elwin's family background, his academic career in school and colleges. Elwin's father E.H. Elwin, born in 1871 and ordained in 1894, was appointed curator of the Oxford parish of St. Peter-le-Bailey to take the gospel over seas. When Verrier was born in August, his bishop father E.H. Elwin was back at his post in West Africa. Growing up in a fatherless household, Verrier's first important relationships grew with women. The family consisted of Verrier, his sister Eldyth, who was a year-and-a-half younger, and their brother Basil, who was four years younger still and his mother Minnie Elwin who was unquestionably the central figure of his life. Minnie was devoted to the Bishop (her husband) and his religion. She was very beautiful to look at, though possessed a dominating powerful character. Guha also mentioned that God was the unseen

member of the Elwin Home, a more-than-adequate substitute for the father away in Africa. The renegade in the family, as described by Guha, was Minnie's mother, Flora Holman. She didn't go to Church, never opened her Bible, and took regular swings from a bottle of brandy hidden underneath her dress. Verrier and Eldyth knew that his grandma Holman to be marked for Hell, but meanwhile she was the source of stories more fanciful than any to be found in Bible. Bishop Elwin's sudden death in April, 1909, left a gap which Minnie Elwin filled with renewed devotion to her religion and her family. Distressed pecuniary condition forced the Elwin family to wander from one town to another and Verrier had to attend different schools in Reigate, Eastbourne and London. Guha narrated, "As the eldest child, a boy of precocious intelligent to boot, Verrier was the centre of his mother's affections and ambitions" (7). In 1919, he spoke on Hebrew poetry and on Thackeray; the next year on Swinburne and Tennyson, and more controversially on Wordsworth.

In the second chapter of the book Guha has pictured Verrier as an 'Oxford Rebellion'. He has mentioned that the Oxford of twenties would be considered as the decade of the aesthete, the cultivated, fun-loving upper-class and homoerotic students. His studies, his friends, his inner life and his social life-all revolved around religion, yet he recalled in his memories what a lot of time he had wasted during his undergraduate years on religion. He at first resisted the radicalism of F.W. Green and Alston Dix, members of Merton College Church Society. In 1922 (June) when a guest speaker urged on ultimate reunion of the Church of England with Rome, Verrier defended the Evangelical position against its detractors. He proposed to the College Church Society that cigarettes and coffee no longer be provided at its meetings, and the money saved be sent to slums in London. Elwin liked mysticism, called the mystic as one who 'had a knowledge of the hidden unity of the Universe.'

Guha in his work noted that Verrier meanwhile came in contact of J.C. Winslaw, who founded the Christ Seva Sangh (CSS). Guha pointed out that at the time he met Winslaw, Verrier also came close to Aluwihare, a fervent anti-colonialist and later Law Minister of independent Ceylon, who guided him to the writings of Tagore and the work of Gandhiji. In summer of 1926, Verrier got acquainted with Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Spalding Professor of Eastern Religion at Oxford and the philosopher who discussed with Verrier and Bernard on many contemporary topics especially on three discussing comparative religions.

In the third chapter, entitled 'Between the Christ and the Congress', Guha has explicitly described how the CSS (Christa Seva Sangh) and Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram came close to each other, having some similarities in some respects; how Verrier became a part and parcel of the CSS and got the opportunity to meet the visitors like Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahadev Desai, Subhas Ch. Bose, Vallabhbhai Patel, A.V. Thakkar, Mirabehn, J.B. Kripalani and his English counterparts having soft corners for India's freedom movement. The ashrama of CSS under the leadership of Winslaw was built on the outskirts of Poona in 1927, its members worked side by side with the coolies carrying baskets of earth to the building site. Guha describes, "The priests of the Poona ashram lived in modest rooms shared with their brown brethren, eating, sleeping and praying on the floor. Aspects of Indian tradition were incorporated in the building of their chapel, in its representations of Christ and its forms of worship. Life was truly Franciscan" (34-35).

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay told, "This ashram had something of the flavour of the ancient hermits of the early Christian church". Another visitor Nehru, also marked the CSS as an exception to a 'conservative and reactionary' and noted that it

contained some fine Englishmen whose religion had led them to understand and serve and not to patronize. In this chapter Guha has drawn a complete picture how boldly Verrier attempted to 'reconcile' Western Christianity with Indian nationalism.

In chapters four and five, Guha has described Verrier's departure from CSS to Congress, his platonic-friendship with Mary Gillet of the CSS, bonding with Shamrao and A.V. Thakkar, whose own look among the 'Bhils' had been their early inspiration. Guha has given a vivid description of his everyday's life when he got himself attached with Gond Seva Mondal, determined to dedicate himself (with Shamrao) to the cause of the tribals, started serving the Gonds and Baigas, resolved to prepare small monograph on the Baiga, translated and transcribed the poems and stories of tribals, published *Leaves from the Jungle* in 1936. The book provides, as remarked by Guha, revelations, through flashes of irony and wit, of Elwin's growing rejection of Gandhi and Christ (99).

In the next chapters Guha has depicted Verrier as a defender of the aboriginal in respect to their economy and culture and described Elwin's embodiment with the Gonds, Baiga, Saora, Maria etc. in the Central and North Eastern-India, his marriage to tribal girls, his literary talent and exposure through publications of tribal monographs and novels. He has also shown that Verrier was a poet of high esteem, an anthropologist at large, an Englishman in India and for India, collecting numerous source materials and adopting analytical approach and unbiased criticism. *Savaging the Civilized* (2000) may be considered as the best one of all the works done so far by other scholars / researchers in all respects.

Bhabagrahi Misra (1999), of the Hartford Seminary Foundation, Hartford, U.S.A., has made a pioneering work on Verrier's field methods and field works

which is entitled “Verrier Elwin’s Field Methods and Field-Works in India : An Appraisal.” The work exhaustively analyses the various field methods adopted by Elwin in different places and in different point of time. Misra has referred to John Bennett’s observations about ‘individual perspective in field work’ and his small-scale hypothesis. Misra has pointed out that these observations might be applied to Elwin as from the beginning Verrier started to identify himself with the general welfare of the community where he settled, collected their folklore and other data to achieve further understanding of them and their culture. After accumulating enough data, Verrier posed a particular theoretical problem which was important to that culture, when he moved to a different geographical area, he did not use the same theory but collected again data and offered relevant theories based on those new data. Mishra says that Elwin’s study embraced diverse ‘culture-areas’, each consisting of various ethnic and linguistic tribes living in complex geo-political conditions. According to Misra, Elwin would consider the time he spent with different tribes and the knowledge of the complex situations as the pre-requisites for examining his field methods. In the field of folk-loreship, he adopted and advocated of two types of approaches—eclecticism and syndical method.

Misra argues that it was not mere academic inquisitiveness but love and respect for the people only which inspired Elwin to document their oral literatures. ‘Adaptation of himself’ was more important to him than ‘adaptation of techniques’ and Elwin celebrated tribal ways and culture, and researched on them for more than twenty three years to gain full comprehension. Elwin divided the Gonds, for the purpose of research, into three distinct classes i.e. Old Gond aristocracy, Hinduised Gond, and those resisting alien culture but not completely out of its influences. The results of Madhya Pradesh researches, as mentioned by Misra, were two-fold: the

ethnographic monographs *The Baiga* (1939) *The Agaria* (1942), *Maria Murder and Suicide* (1945) and *The Muria and their Ghotul* (1947); and a general introductory book about the attitude of the anthropologist towards tribal administration called *Loss of Nerve* (1944). Misra also remarks that Elwin's approach to understand the field situation was both rationalistic and empirical. Elwin learnt 'Hindi' and a few of the native languages and earned a fine communication skill. In Madhya Pradesh study he took the help of his Gond wife Kosi for translating the folklores and in Orissa and NEFA researches Elwin depended on bilinguals and multiple interpreters. Elwin used the aesthetic-poetic method where emphasis was laid on the expressive factor of the materials translated. In translating songs, Elwin depended upon the models of 'Waley' and 'Archer'. Elwin was liberal and open-minded without having any bias to any particular theory as he was a searcher of 'truth'.

Virginus Xaxa (2001), in course of his review work on the book, *Savaging the Civilized* (2000) by Ramachandra Guha, has critically examined the role of Verrier on the tribal question of India. In most of the cases, Xaxa has expressed different and contrasting views with Guha in analyzing Elwin's contribution. Only at one point he agreed with Guha and admitted that Elwin was a man of extraordinary personality and went through several departures. He argued that Elwin was confronted at different points of time between the loyalties to ideals / vocation / mission on the one hand and to the family, tradition and organizations on the other. Xaxa has raised some questions such as what were his considerations in selecting the tribes for his study, whether he was well versed in the language of the 'Baiga' or the 'Muria' or the 'Saora', whether his tribes had adequate knowledge of 'Chhattisgarhi'. Xaxa is also critical of his shifting from the active role to the service of the poor to his role as an anthropologist and as a policy maker. He also tries to

establish that Elwin loved books and career more than his tribals referring to Kosi's assessment. He also puts Elwin's love and respect for tribal ways of life in question.

Xaxa comments that Elwin was forced to adopt the middle path, the path of integration, but did not exclusively point out how integration with the modern world and preservation of tradition simultaneously would be possible. Xaxa also points out that Elwin lacked a vision for the tribe, he could not foresee an ideal as well as plausible life for tribes in future; Elwin has considered the tribe invariably as the alien and as an 'other' to be studied, preserved and protected. Xaxa opines that Elwin's indulgence in sex through the description of his tribes' attitude to sex was mere a kind of misuse or exploitation. Xaxa did not approve of Elwin's conception of discontinuity of the tribal society with the Indian larger community, rather accepts the concept of continuity as envisaged by G.S. Ghurye and like minded anthropologists.

Peter J. Durrans (2001) in his review article, published in 'English Historical Review', Feb, 2001, on *Savaging the Civilized* (2000), by Ramachandra Guha, admits of Elwin's many departures starting from his pious and resolutely background, to the sojourn to the tribal world without a return ticket. Durrans describes Elwin as a 'rebel priest', who left contemplative life to align himself with Gandhi and India's National Movement, and mentions that Elwin went 'native', initially with an act of reparation, but finally with utmost love and respect to the tribes and their ways of life, which, in the backdrop of continuing predicament of India's tribals in the twentieth-century, has established Elwin as a defender of Indian tribes. Durrans also notes that to bring the fruits of modern civilization to the tribes of India, Verrier lastly adopted the path of integration, the middle path between isolation and assimilation.

Archana Prasad in her book *Against Ecological Romanticism: Verrier Elwin and the Making of an Anti-Modern Tribal Identity* (2003), has examined the ‘contemporary relevance’ of Verrier, reinterpreted Verrier Elwin’s cultural ecology in Central India with reference to the Adivasis like Gonds, Baiga and Agaria and described the tragic tale of the transformation of romanticism towards paving the way for Hindutva and pictured the tribal women as more marginal than the marginalized.

In the Introductory chapter, Archana Prasad has tried to establish the contemporary relevance of Verrier and quotes Guha saying as,

Essentially speaking, Elwin’s celebration of tribal culture was grounded in ecological romanticism that had its roots in the English opposition to the industrial revolution. Indeed, English romantics like William Wordsworth, John Ruskin or Edward Carpenter lamented the loss of nature as a result of the industrial revolution, but the romanticism of Elwin, his contemporaries and followers was different. (5-6)

Prasad adds that this romanticism of Elwin was grounded in the defence of custom and tradition, and Elwin saw these as alternatives to a modern way of life. She shared with Elwin that tribal people had been living in harmony with nature since ancient times. Prasad has echoed Elwin’s ‘Forest of joy’ as Elwin’s dreamland - “a place where people tended the deed, were devoted to the soil, staged magnificent and colourful tribal festivals and were infused with the spirit of sharing” (6). She argued that cultural primitivism was not a new idea, but the Gond, the Baiga and the Agaria all believed that they had been better than the present. She also mentioned that Elwin’s own advocacy of tribal rights was embedded into the protectionist policy of the Imperialist government under the Act of 1935.

In the second chapter, Prasad has defined 'Adivasis' as 'Swadeshis' and has found out a linkage between the history of the Baiga and the Gond people imbibed with their life styles, role of pre-Maratha and Maratha Kingdom and that of Mughal Period in dealing with these adivasis.

The third chapter of the Book covers Prasad's essay on 'the Baiga and its Eco-Logic'. In this essay, the author has expressed her indebtedness to Elwin by quoting, "Even today, Elwin's *The Baiga* (1939) is perhaps one of the most celebrated texts of cultural ecology in India" (47). She has examined the pros and cons of shifting cultivation of the Baiga and referred to many distinguished Anthropologists' views in favour and against this bevar cultivation. Archana Prasad has re-interpreted Verrier's cultural ecology in Central India.

In the fourth chapter, Prasad has quoted Elwin's one significant statement, made at a time when the Hindu Right has consolidated its base in the tribal areas and the state politics of 'Shuddhi' or reconversion from Christianity and Islam to Hinduism assisted that reconversion, as, "When I first settled in aboriginal company 13 years ago, I was under the impression that hillmen were not Hindus. Eight years of hard study and research have convinced me that I was wrong...Aboriginals of Peninsular India ... should be classed as Hindus in the Census" (81).

Prasad argued that by the 1940s, the Congress nationalists including A.V. Thakkar, a Gandhian and Elwin's friend, influential defenders of tribal rights like Verrier Elwin intensified attack on Christian missionaries alleging that missionaries were using the poverty of the tribals to conversion to Christianity, and were doing nothing towards their upliftment, but with an aim to oppress them through the imposition of an alien culture. Prasad has described in details how this significant statement of Verrier Elwin and his the then views on tribals added momentum to

'Hindutva' preachers who believed that the tribals had had contact and exchange with the Hindu caste societies since the ancient times. She has also referred to the ghostly murder of an Australian Missionary, the assault and rape on Christian missionaries in 1998 and onwards by Hindutva forces.

In the fifth chapter, Prasad has portrayed the role of tribal women in Baiga community. She has referred to Verrier Elwin who argued forcefully that the Baiga society and indeed all tribal societies were morally and socially superior to modern ones because of the freedom it provided its women (113). She has detailed the life style of Baiga men and women, mode of production and its economy shared by men and women and today's transformation where the marginalised Baiga women have been more marginalised.

Prasad has concluded that the romanticized communitarian model can no longer counter the destruction of tribal local economics and productive systems in the age of corporate capitalism and emphasized on developing a 'sustainable modernity' that would help to rejuvenate and upgrade local practices (138), and quoted noted historian D.D. Kosambi's saying as, "The Golden Age lies not in the past, but in the future" (139).

The Book *Between Ethnography and Fiction* edited by T.B. Subba and Sujit Som was published by Orient Longman in 2005. This edited volume contains the lectures of sixteen scholars of various discipline, to re examine the works of Verrier, who attended the centenary celebration cum seminar on Verrier Elwin held at NEHU during August 29 to August 31, 2003. T.B. Subba and Sujit Som in their introduction to the first chapter have mentioned that, "Elwin has become a myth, a kind of emblem in the world of anthropological scholarship" (1).

The second chapter of this book entitled “Ethnography and Fiction: Verrier Elwin’s World,” is written by K.C. Baral. He expressed with utter surprise how Verrier managed two apparently contradictory writings into one as an ethnographer and other as a fiction-writer. Baral has valued his versatile career with deep respect and compared his devotion to tribal life to Annie Besant. Baral has critically examined his fictional works *The Phulmat of the Hills* (1937) and *A Cloud That’s Dragonish* (1938). The first one is a love story of a Pradhan girl and the second is a tribal crime-story in which the detectives are Gonds and Baigas.

Indra Munshi, in the third chapter, has written about ‘Verrier Elwin and Tribal Development’. She has noted that many of Elwin’s observations on tribes are relevant till today, for most of the tribal communities independence did not bring emancipation from poverty and exploitation even after fifty years of Elwin’s death. Munshi quotes as,

the spirit of understanding and appreciation pervaded through all his writings. It often led him to question, ridicule and reject the conventional ways of the ‘modern’ and the ‘civilized’. He often questioned his own values and ideas. He was convinced that the modern world had much to learn from them. He found that some tribals were beautiful, others not, some more skilled than the others, some more creative than the others, but all had dignity, a pride which made them special. There was a lot of colour, beauty, simplicity, innocence and joy in their lives. He was fascinated by their lust for life, the spirit of freedom and independence, which reflected in everything, their music and dance, dress, sexual behavior, myths, songs, institutions etc. (29)

Munshi admired Elwin's commitment to protect the tribes against external disturbing forces, on the other; she highlighted Elwin's weakness mentioning that he paid no attention to the issues of social inequalities, power relations, particularly gender issues in tribal societies (34). She has urged upon more qualitative research on this field and concluded by saying, "Considering how little of that quality of research is being done now, one can only value Elwin's contribution more, and hold it up as inspiration for present day students" (39).

The fourth chapter of this book contains Ajit K. Danda's work on Elwin entitled 'Verrier Elwin, Tribal Development and Indian Anthropology'. Danda started his writing by mentioning that Verrier served as Deputy Director of A.S.I., presided over the Anthropology and Archaeology Section of the Indian Science Congress in 1944, became the Anthropological advisor for NEFA to the Governor of the undivided Assam, served as a member of the Commission of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Areas (Dhebar Commission) etc. Yet he did not receive full recognition due to him from professional anthropologists. Danda has referred to Ralph Linton's notion of change-a process whereby a homogeneous entity gets transformed into a heterogeneous one over a period of time. Three related concepts such as (i) universal, (ii) specialities and (iii) alternatives, had wider impact on Elwin's writing especially on *The Baiga* and his mind. Danda has critically examined Verrier's role on tribal development and raised some questions such as (i) whether Elwin had adequate information regarding ground realities of tribal India before he plunged into the job of bringing about tribal development, (ii) whether Elwin endorsed the views of local leadership including local scholars, on the subject, (iii) whether he was scientifically aware of the diversities of tribal India, (iv) whether he depended on the scientific information as well as reasoning or only on

emotion in his desire to do something for the tribes. Danda admitted that Elwin was an extraordinary gifted scholar and writer, but this alone was not sufficient to entitle him (Elwin) to speak on the tribes.

P.K. Mishra's article on 'Some Thoughts on Elwin and Tribe-Non-tribe Relationship in Indian Civilization' published in the fifth chapter of the book gives a description about 'concept of tribes', relation between 'Tribes and Civilisation' and 'Tribe-Non-tribe Relations' as was visualized by Elwin. According to Mishra, "The problems began for the indigenous peoples of the world when Coloumbus, in search of India, landed in the New World in 1495" (53). He has referred to N.K. Bose, B.K. Roy Burman to describe tribals' role in peasant economy and Bose's 'Hindu method of tribal absorption'. He pointed out that as soon as the 'adivasi' hinterland was opened up to locate resources such as coal, iron and other minerals, a steadily increasing flow of migrants to the areas inhabited by 'tribes' was noticed and over a period of time, this gave rise to confrontations between tribes, immigrant peasants and other interest groups. Tribes' economy was rampaged. Before going to describe how Elwin visualized relationship between tribes and non-tribes, Mishra has highlighted some of the chief characteristics of Elwin which may be mentioned as follows: (i) Elwin was not a trained anthropologist, he learnt anthropology by doing it, (ii) He had an overwhelming urge to work among the downtrodden and the weaker sections of Indian society; (iii) In order to stayback in India, Elwin gave an undertaking to the British Govt. that he would not take part in any political activity, (iv) His works received wide recognition in the academic, administrative and decision-making circles in India and abroad, etc. Mr. Mishra has chosen two of Elwin's writings viz. *The Aborigines* and *A New Deal for Tribal India* published in 1943 and 1963 respectively to establish relationship between Tribes and Non-tribes.

At the same time, Misra has criticized Elwin's idea of 'isolating adivasis' from the general population itself. He also told that Verrier did not take into account the dynamics of historical process and the movement of the populations from one region to another and their adaptation to the local conditions. At the same time Misra quoted that those criticism did not in anyway undermine the great works Elwin produced on the tribes of India (69).

Chapter six of the book is written on A.C. Sinha's "Colonial Anthropology vs. Indological Sociology: Elwin and Ghurye on Tribal Policy in India." Sinha has noted that 'the Burning cauldron of India' published by Govind Sadashiv Ghurye in 1980 at age of eighty seven was more eccentric book than his predecessor Elwin's work. Sinha outlined a comparison between Elwin and Ghurye on the basis of their personal background, academic orientation and approach. He also has shown how Elwin and Ghurye differed sharply on tribal policy and vision for India. He mentioned that, "While Elwin was an intensive field worker, adopted a micro-view from the grass-roots, Ghurye had an over-arching historical and indological approach to the question of tribes in India" (78). He also remarks that while Elwin represented the composite, liberal, secular, plural and tolerant tradition of India, Ghurye like Savarkar and Hedgewar advocated of revivalism, authoritarianism, conservatism, and Hindu-nationalism, which are ushered in the ideological mooring of VHP, RSS, Bajrang Dal and other units of Sangh Parivar. Sinha also observed the pattern of Malinowskian structural-functional works in Verrier's famous monographs. He mentions that Elwin was awarded the degree of D.Sc. by Oxford University for his monograph on the Baigas.

The article on “Verrier Elwin and the 1940s Missionary Debate in Central India” written by Nandini Sundar has been included in the seventh chapter of this book. In this work, Nandini Sundar has started as,

In 1944 Elwin unleashed a ferocious polemic against the Dutch Roman Catholic missionary in Mandala District in Madhya Pradesh accusing them of conversion by force and allurements, exploitation of tribes, and destruction of their cultural and political unity. He ended his diatribe with a call to arms that would have made the Vishwa Hindu Parishad proud today. (86)

Elwin changed sides. Sundar has briefly explained how Elwin’s frequent change of positions on tribal religion came from E.A.Hyde, former administrator of Bastar State and a long-time friend of Elwin. Nandini has noted that his struggle with missionaries allowed him to patch up with Thakkar. Sundar also pointed out that “Elwin, was in principle, opposed to both ‘Catholic priests’ and ‘Congress-minded Hindus’” (87). Nandini believes that Elwin was correct to attack the missionaries for forcible proselytizing and using their money and power to lure and terrify adivasis. At the same time he (Elwin) was wrong to choose his alliances and his adoption of the Hindu nationalist perspective which viewed all non-Hindus as threats to the body politic, though the Hindu-Mahasabha and the RSS did not derive their views from him. Nandini lamented if Elwin were alive today, he would have directed his anger against the RSS and what they were doing to adivasi culture by making adivasis into killers, as was witnessed in Gujarat in 2002 (108). She also does not believe that conversion of Hindus or Tribes into Christianity is either a threat or really an issue of India today.

B.K. Roy Burman’s work entitled “Elwin and Issues of Tribal Policy in North-East India” is included in the eighth chapter. Roy Burman has made a subtle

distinction between humanism and humanitarianism. He has pictured Elwin as a 'Social Inquirer.' Roy Burman critically examined the geopolitical context of North East India and its implications on tribal policy. He has very elaborately described the two concepts and their impacts on land ownership and control viz. 'terra nullius' and 'res nullius'. He has added that the currently discarded concept of 'terra nullius' in all ex-colonial countries was introduced in NEFA in 1958 vide D.O. No. 24/58 of 26 April 1958 with Elwin's acquiescence if not active collaboration. After this the formal adoption of the concept of 'res nullius' was only a matter of time. Roy Burman argued that Elwin might not have been able to anticipate the negative fallout of some of the state action that he acquiesced to.

A.N.M. Irshad Ali and Bapukan Chowdhury published their seminal work entitled, "Verrier Elwin on Opium Addiction in Arunachal Pradesh", which has been included in the fourteenth chapter of this book. In their works Irshad Ali and B. Chowdhury have mentioned that Elwin wrote on almost all conceivable aspects of tribal life, from adornment to xenophobia. He was as much concerned about tribal health and folk medicine as he was concerned about other aspects of tribal life. The authors narrated that it was an astonishing experience to them to travel along the Patkoi Range from Raho to Havi and see the fields of poppy-usurping food-crops in the 'jhums' and the little opium-gardens behind every house. They have explained how opium would be used by the tribals in various ways and forms in their livelihood.

The authors made a comprehensive study about the increasing trend in the consumption of opium and addiction among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh today (between Nov. 2000 and Feb. 2001). The authors have referred to Elwin, who opined that the cold and gloomy climate of the region accelerated poppy cultivation

and the higher incidence of opium smoking occurred among those tribal groups whose culture was in the greatest state of decay. In order to bring such a malpractice to an end in the frontier region, Verrier believed that a determined and comprehensive programme was a must. Elwin also expressed fear that vigorous action might have political repercussions and stated that repercussions took place when 'head-hunting' was stopped. Irshad Ali and B.Chawdhuri have mentioned that according to Elwin, opium-addiction was a greater evil even than head-hunting, which in practice did not take so many lives. Head-hunting fostered material virtues, it maintained a high degree of discipline and it was the inspiration of carving and weaving of dance and song. But opium was the destruction of all these. Elwin viewed,

No art can flourish, no virtue or discipline can be maintained, no plans for development will be successful in the areas where this problem remains unsolved. The Noctes, Tangsas, Singphos and Mishmis addicted to opium are poor, thin, caught in a vicious circle so that the poorer they grow the more they turn to opium for relief, and the more they smoke the poorer they become. (208)

The authors also remarked that Elwin suggested government intervention in this matter to bring an end to the habit of taking opium.

Kailash C. Baral (2009), in his article "Reading Autobiographies and (Re) Imaging the Nation" published in *Revista Literature em Debate*, (01-17), 2009, urges to offer a new insight in the discourse of the Indian nation reading through the autobiographies of Gandhi, Nehru and Elwin. Baral starts his argument as,

Gandhi and Nehru, the two most important figures at the helm of India's struggle for independence view the Indian nation from their own

perspectives while Elwin's autobiography as an outsider-insider's account offers a critique of the dominant cultural construct of the nation advocated by Gandhi and Nehru in espousing the cause of the tribes of India, a marginal constituency, thereby unpacking a counter discourse on the Indian nation that the country's diverse communities and their aspirations need to be accommodated in the evolving national discourse. (1)

He argues that Gandhi's autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (*The Story of My life*) (1925), and that of Nehru's *An Autobiography* (1936) use one's lived experience to imagine nation, describing its mythologies, sufferings, strengths, its cultural ethos, traditions, beliefs, values and these underscore their anxieties, apprehensions and ambivalences of/about the nation. Elwin's autobiography *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin* (1964) is a complex document, which problematises and integrates his life stories in relation to other's lives. Baral remarks that like Gandhi and Nehru, Elwin had not got the opportunity to be internalized, yet he became an Indian discovering himself in the infinite bonding relationship with Indian tribes and their ways of life. He also argues, "Elwin's autobiography is the perfect example of what Foucault calls Western mode of self-experience that gets subsumed in Bilgrami's understanding of truth-telling" (8). Baral has mentioned Elwin as the 'rebel son' of Gandhi and has expressed difference with Gandhi on some key concepts of the latter such as khadi, prohibition and sex-relations in the context of his experiences with the tribes. Baral concludes as, "If we have to reconstruct an inclusive national discourse, the starting point certainly has to be Elwin and his works on the tribes of India including his autobiography *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin*" (15).

A. N. M Irshad Ali (2011) describes Elwin as one of the *dramatis personae* of Indian Anthropology in his article “Dr. Verrier Elwin and Assam”, published in *The NEHU Journal*, vol. ix, no. 2, July 2011. Ali narrates that Verrier was first invited in 1947 by W.G. Archer, a high ranking British official, who became a good friend of Elwin during their stay in Orissa, to visit Northeast India where Elwin spent from the 1950s until his death on 22 Feb’ 1964. Elwin again visited Northeast India and went to the tribal villages in Dimapur, Kohima and Imphal and returned to Shillong. At the advice of the then Governor of Assam, Joyramdas Daulat Ram, Elwin prepared and submitted a report on tribal affairs to the Governor in which he wrote, “I may kindly be considered as an individual for whom it would be matter of great pleasure if I could be of some use for the tribals of this region”(16). Ali also remarks that his approach to tribal issues and activities concerning the tribals attracted severe criticism from a large number of Assamese intellectuals, socially conscious citizens and politicians across the country creating a fear in the mind of the Assamese and they alleged that Elwin had prepared a blue print of creating an ‘anthropological museum’ in NEFA and the Assamese would be separated from it. The criticism was even echoed in the Parliament after the Chinese aggression in 1962, where Hem Barua referred to him as a “British Philosopher-Anthropologist”, though Verrier became an Indian citizen in 1954. This falsification was challenged by Oxford educated parliamentarian and tribal leader Jaipal Singh who quoted, “Dr. Elwin is more Indian now than Hem Barua. He is more tribal than Jaipal Sing” (Guha 277). Ali also describes that a drama group of Kolkata, called the “Little Theatre”, headed by famous comedian Utpal Datta, staged a drama in memory of Elwin which was published in the ‘Amrita Bazar Patrka’ in the caption “In memory of Dr. Verrier Elwin, the best of Indians” (Datta 2007). Ali speaks of a documentary

film in English made on Elwin and his tribes. The title of the film was “Angel of the Aborigines: Dr. Verrier Elwin”. Biswajeet Bora, hailing from Assam, made the film which recounts the works and life of Elwin. It was produced by Maya Kholie under the banner of Kholie Enterprises from Arunachal Pradesh, and was screened in 2010 in Mumbai and in International Film Festival in Germany held during 21-26 July, 2010. According to Ali, the film was a colourful and large canvas like the variegated culture of the tribes, replete with traditional song and dances. The forty-five minute film has been shot in many places in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra, and scripted by Prasenjit Das Gupta, music composed and rendered by Utpal Sharma and edited by Shivaji Chowdhuri.

Sajal Nag (2015) in his article, “Nehru, Elwin and the Sixth Schedule: the Making of Tribal Policy in Post Colonial India”, published in the *International Journal of Tribal Literature and Cultural Study*, marked the 1960s as one of ‘the most turbulent’ and ‘most dangerous’ decades in the career of Indian nationhood. He has referred to the first turbulence in Kashmir, trouble in Andhra leading to the formation of Andhra Pradesh, upheaval in the whole country over the issue of national language, secessionist threat in Tamil Nadu, insurgency in Naga Hills and a war with Pakistan. But the Chinese invasion in 1962 shadowed all the phenomena of the sixties and ‘shattered the morale of the country’ as quoted by Nag. He has also pointed out that Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister, and his advisor on tribal policies Verrier were criticized severely and were held responsible for Chinese aggression as if the invasion occurred due to policies adopted by the Government in the north-east for tribals. He noted that the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution was the centre of criticism. Thinkers of one school argued the keeping up the tribals

isolated and the devices like Inner Line Regulation were responsible for leaving the vast border with China remote and inaccessible which made the Chinese invasion easy and unstoppable. They targeted Verrier and alleged that Verrier has misguided the Prime Minister into believing that there should be no interference in the 'tribal' way of life and their development in terms of communications, schools, industries etc. and he (Elwin) tried to keep the tribals as 'museum specimens'. He mentioned that Ram Manohar Lohia accused Verrier of treating the tribals as 'domestic cattle'.

Nag has strongly refuted these charges against Nehru and Elwin and established in his writings that neither Nehru nor Elwin were the makers of Sixth Schedule and the Inner Line Regulation. He admitted that Nehru had faith on his policy towards, China, but its attack betrayed his trust and he (Nehru) succumbed to the shock in May 1964.

Nag has critically examined the role of Nehru and Elwin in understanding the tribals of India, in making tribal policy and admitted that both Nehru and Elwin had dynamic and progressive outlook towards the policy making of the tribals. Nag argued that Nehru rejected the approaches, one approach by the assimilationist group headed by Ghurye and other approach of isolation led by Verrier. Nehru urged for an approach in which people would progress in their own way, where there would be no imposition or compulsions from outside. Nag has elaborately discussed about different concerned articles of the Constitution along with Fifth and Sixth Schedule of the Constitution where adequate safeguards have been provided for the minorities, backward and tribals, maintaining the territorial integrity of the country. Nag has mentioned that Anthropologists of Elwin's period like B.S. Guha and Nabendu Dutta Majumdar also had stressed the need of preservation of culture and saving them from the disastrous contact with agents of modern civilization, to give

enough time to cope with it before they were exposed to such agents. He viewed that Elwin had been criticized wrongly without understanding him properly and without reading his *A Philosophy for NEFA* (1957) thoroughly.

Tara Purnima Douglas (2016) has reviewed Elwin's approach to the tribal cultures of India to illuminate his role as a presenter of the 'Tales of the Tribes Films' in her article "Verrier Elwin as the presenter of the Tales of the Tribes Films" published in *The South Asianist* vol. 4, no.2, (143-185), 2016. In the author's words, 'the Tales of the Tribes' is a collection of animated films that have been developed from oral narratives from North-East and Central India. Based on her combined understanding of India's tribal cultures, anthropological and ethnographic writings, and her background as an animation artist, she decided to introduce these five films by creating an animated 'Master-of-Ceremonies' character. Tara Purnima, the artist, has placed Verrier in that role of 'Master-of-ceremonies' in her animated films. The animation artist Tara Purnima, deeply inspired by tribal art and storytelling, has tried to help very honestly and sensitively the local artists and story tellers re-present their (tribals) rich traditions in a new medium that reached broader audiences. She has produced a series of animated tribal folktales from Central India entitled 'The Tallest Story Competition (2006)' in Scotland and decided to work in India to develop a new collection of short films. She wished to remain attentive to critical academic debate in the sphere that questions the notion of 'being tribal' and referred to the works of Ghurye (1943), Devalle (1992), Rycroft and Dasgupta (2011), Mc Duie Ra (2012) and Guha (2013). Her 'Tales of the Tribes' collection includes 'Man Tiger Spirit', an Angami folktale from Nagaland, 'Nye Mayel Kyon' from Sikkim, 'Abotani' from the Tani tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, 'Tapta' from Manipur, and 'Mayoor Jhati', a story from the Pradhan Gonds of Central India. The author has

given a short but very precise description of Elwin's career starting from reading theology to interest in mysticism, turning from Evangelical Anglicanism to Anglo Catholicism, from Crista Seva Mandal to Gandhi's Ashram, from committed support for India's independence to serving with the tribal people of India and becoming a prolific author of the ethnographic publications on the Indian tribes. She has taken the side of Verrier on the question of preservation of the tribes and sharply criticized Ghurye comparing the academic career of both of them with utmost honesty and sincerity and respect for both.

Tara Purnima has pointed out that in the 'Tales of the Tribes' series, that the reanimated Elwin character started his journey in a forest setting illustrated by Pradhan Gond artists from the same region where he lived for so long. This sample series of short films could only provide a brief introduction to him and the dialogues for the animation script for his role as the presenter revealed fragmentary details (156).

I, myself, also have attempted to review a very few of his noted works in some lines.

The *Songs of the Forest* (1935) has been jointly composed by Elwin and his lifelong friend Shamrao Hivale in 1935, published by George Allen and Unwin Ltd. with a foreword by Sir Francis Younghusband. The book is a collection and translation of the very primitive Baigas' and the hardly less primitive Gonds' folk-songs and dances during the period they lived with those tribes in their remote forests at Central India. Elwin describes his tribes as,

The Gonds live in little villages, in tiny thatched huts of mud-plastered bamboo, gaining a precarious living by scratching the soil with primitive implements, or by working for a starvation wage on the roads or in the forest. Their staple food is a thin gruel made from the poorest kind of rice,

supplemented by roots and fruits from the jungle, and occasionally a little meat. In physique, they are short, dark, wiry, with great powers of endurance, sometimes strikingly handsome. Their attitude to life is characterised by a magnificent and regal leisureliness. Shy, wayward, idle, with traunt hearts and timid slow-moving minds, but brave, loyal, humorous, patient, affectionate, they triumph over their poverty with a heroic merriness of spirit. (16)

All these characteristic features of their lives have been expressed in their songs and dances like Karma songs, Saila songs, Stick dances, Dadaria songs, Sajani songs etc. The technique of the songs and dances has been described in the introduction. Verrier has mentioned that the tribes called the forest *Nandanban*, the forest of joy and *Madhuban*, the forest of sweet desire. In the love songs, Verrier has emphasised on physical love and describes that a house without a girl is no house or a life without a girl is meaningless. He has referred to Sundarlal Panka, S.L. Srikant, M. Patial, Sundar Wairagaker, Munda Agaria, Kartik Gond, Indarlal Pandit, Panda Baba, and some others who have helped them a lot in collecting and translating the songs and dances.

*The Baiga* (1939) is one the finest and big size monographs consisting of 550 pages and twenty two chapters. It covers all aspects of the Indian tribe the Baigas—their livelihood, rituals, marriages and customs; gaiety of their lives—songs, dances, riddles and games; bevar cultivation—the basis of their cultural identity; social organisation and jurisprudence; sexual consciousness, place of women, love of children; functional myths, magic and its effect; the cause and cure of diseases; dreams; and lastly the future of the Baiga tribe.

The book is a complete monograph in respect to representation of indigeneity of an Indian tribe. Archana Prasad (2011) has described the book as ‘perhaps one of the most celebrated texts of cultural ecology in India’ (47). Ramchandra Guha (1999) describes it, “Richly suggestive, massively documented, written with verve, and passion, *The Baiga* ran into five hundred fifty closely printed pages, the most complete account of the Indian tribe” (113). Guha also argues that this seminal book on Indian tribe placed Verrier as a ‘premier defender of the aboriginals’ in our country (185).

The bewar cultivation or shifting cultivation occupies the central position in the book where Elwin, going against the arguments of British officials, has tried to establish the ecological and economic viability of bewar, and a relation between culture and ecology. Bewar, as being practised since time immemorial, provided material basis and psychological security to Baiga life. Elwin’s *The Baiga* (1939) might help the researchers reconstruct the lifestyles of the Baiga in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The freedom enjoyed by the Baiga women, their attitude to sex and love for the children have been nicely examined and portrayed in the book. Elwin (1940) argues that ‘tribal values’ are more humane and more superior to the exploitative values of modern ‘civilized society’. In the last chapter named ‘future’, Elwin has argued in favour of ‘animal hunt’, ‘fishing’ and ‘bewar cultivation’ of the Baigas and urged for putting an end to the dictatorship of the subordinate officials. In *The Baiga* (1939) Elwin has voiced for the restoration of forest as the prime necessity of the Baigas, as forest was their first settlements. According to Verrier, the Baigas believed that they were the true ‘Pashupatis’—the masters of the wild beasts, the lords of the forest; and now those once proud lion like tribes are living like slaves at the hands of forest—guards (516).

*Maria Murder and Suicide* (1943) is another remarkable monograph of Elwin. It was published with a foreword by Sir W.V. Grigson, a British official, writer and good friend of Elwin. It consists of two hundred fifty five pages, and seventeen chapters. The book portrays the psychology of murders committed by the Maria tribe and socio-economic background of the people which led them to suicide. This book is the first fruits of his Bastar researches carried out in the field directly with the help of Hivale and his Gond wife Kosi, and also supplemented by government files in this regard. W.V. Grigson and his monograph *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* (1938) have inspired Elwin to accept this challenging and hard study on the Marias—their homicides, murder, and other crimes. The first thirty-five pages of the book give a vivid summary of Maria life. Between 1935 and 1942 Elwin made many tours in the Maria villages, encountered with the accused or their kins, met the accused in jails and tried to discover the general attitude of a village towards crime. Collection of data/records regarding murder and suicide was a difficult task as most of the records were either distributed in different police stations or lost, nothing was available in the state headquarters. Verrier carried out this job with utmost devotion and expressed their sorry state of affairs by stating that the great sadness of their life deeply impressed him, and most of them were the victims of an inexplicable tragedy, and a capricious fortune has destroyed their everything, though in the jail they were given kind treatments (xxiv-xxv).

In the fourth chapter of the book, Elwin has divided the crimes under some distinct heads such as robbery or accusation of robbery, quarrels over property, suspicion of magic or witchcraft, insanity, resentment at abuse or ‘word-magic’, revenge, family quarrels, sex motives, and alcohol. He has presented statistics of causes of homicides of one hundred fifty Maria cases (51, 58). The book contains

near about twenty statistical tables which present suicide cases in respect of years, months, methods applied, implements used, causes, etc. He has referred to F. Tennyson Jesse, who in his book *Murder and its Motives* (1924) has opined that each murder falls under the following six classes:

I. Murder for gain. II. Murder for revenge. III. Murder for elimination. IV. Murder from jealousy. V. Murder from lust of killing. VI. Murder from conviction (13).

Elwin enquired of the cases whether the crime was premeditated or whether it was due to insult and provocation which put the Sessions Judges in difficult position. At the same time, he has described the outlook of the eminent anthropologists, sociologists like J.H. Hutton, Thurston, Forsyth, Majumdar, Colonel Tickell, R. H. Campbell, P.O. Bodding, C.S. Venkatachar, C. von. Haimendorf, who have portrayed the tribes as 'truthful' and 'honest'. Like them he also views that the tribes are truthful and honest unless spoilt by being 'civilised', and so long as they speak their own tongue, but they lie and commit crimes when they are taught at school other languages except their own (3-7).

Elwin also argues that the subject has been almost entirely neglected for aboriginal India, whereas religious or ceremonial suicides such as 'Sati', 'Traga', 'aweful rite of Johur', where thousands of Rajput women died together than face captivity, are given much importance by the scholars. Grigson in his foreword to the book has rightly remarked as,

I should have been saved many moments of anxiety as to the justice of my decisions and as to the whole trend of criminal justice in the State had I had at my command so full a study of murder and suicide as Mr. Elwin's book, which not only analyses so many actual cases but also links up the results

with the conclusions of standard works on crime, penology, psychology and ethnology. (ix)

*The Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills*, published in 1944 by OUP, London, is a collection of songs of the tribes such as Baiga and Gond, Agaria and Dhoba, Pradhan and Bharia living in the mountains of the extreme eastern end of Satpura Range, in both sides of the Narmada river and in the forests of Balaghat, whose natural beauty haunt everybody. The poems collected in this book are very beautiful both in form and content, in image and symbol as the songs represent the natural beauty of the countryside, the charm of the climate and above all friendliness of the aboriginal people. At the advent of colonization and modernization, the oral literatures and the tribes themselves pass or decay from the world rapidly. In that respect, Elwin's collection is a valuable document. Verrier has claimed this book as a supplementary to *The Baiga* (1939), *The Agaria* (1942), and *Songs of the Forest* (1935). Collection has been made in order to avoid repetition. However to make the collection representative, Verrier has reprinted twenty-two songs from his *The Baiga* (1939), nine from *Songs of the Forest* (1935) and one from *The Phulmat of the Hills* (1937) (xxix). In translating the songs Elwin has followed the example of Arthur Waley and principles of W. G. Archer, who (Archer) says, "A poem is a combination of certain images, certain rhythms and certain effects of music, and only if a translation could provide an exact parallel for each of these elements could it be perfect" (xxi).

Like Archer, Elwin translated the songs with great caution, adding no new images, keeping the form of the original intact, representing the original meaning as literally as possible. Most of the songs cited in this book have been sung in different occasions and festivals. So this book might be considered as a collection of songs

rather than of poems. He has expressed his indebtedness to Sunderlal Baghal, Sunderlal Narbada, Sonu Pradhan and his wife Phula—both of them poets, for collection of songs. In this volume, Elwin has collected Karma songs, Rina and Sua songs, Saila songs, Dadaria songs, love songs, marriage songs, cradle songs, songs of married life, mourning songs, songs of the craft and labours, songs of social and political affairs, and lastly a Pradhan epic song. That Elwin was always worried of the rapid destruction of tribal oral literature is also reflected in this work. Elwin was inspired by Devendra Satyarthi who out of his devotion to Indian folk literature believed that the importance of India's folk songs had not yet been realized in the discourse of its struggle for freedom. Satyarthi also referred to Freda Bedi who defined folk songs as 'songs of the people' and opined that in the post-war period folk-songs (songs of the people) have coincided with the new-nationalism and radical trends in the world today (xx).

*The Tribal Art of Middle India*, published in 1951 by Oxford University Press, is a documentary work of Elwin. It contains thirty two chapters and two hundred thirty photographs. Elwin was not an artist in the strictest sense of the term, but was an ardent lover of tribal art and its patron. The brilliant artistry of the tribes of middle India has been presented in this book.

'Decoration of the body' followed by tattooing in festivals, wearing of leaf-flower-feather dress, use of actual ornaments such as silver, brass and iron ear-rings, bangles, necklaces, dressing of hair exhibit interesting features of aboriginal arts. Dongria Kond's hair-pin of brass, Bison-horn Maria women's brass fillet, Baiga hair-ornament, Muria ear-ring and their necklace - all have been excellently presented in this book (6, 9, 10, 12, 17).

‘The Art of tribal dress and comb’ draws special attention. They use clothes woven and coloured by themselves. The colours were prepared by them matched with space and time. The ‘cowrie’ stitched in their clothes is really artistic. The bison-horn Maria attach their ‘cowrie’ in front of their horned head-gear and others place it in different positions of the dresses in different fashions. The carved paintings of comb are found in the doors of Muria Ghotuls. The decoration of comb and its use in the Muria tribes take a high place in the antiquities of India (45-54).

‘The Head dresses’ of Bison-horn Muria, of Kond’s and of Dorla-Maria of Southern Bastar, exhibit their profound skill and keen interest in arts and crafts.

‘The tobacco-cases, the containers’, used by the tribes find esteemed position and honour in their art-galleries. These are made of a single node of bamboo and ornamented with the fine point of knife. Different motifs come into play behind their decoration and forms. The knowledge of Geometry of the primitive people will simply perplex the modern artists (67-70).

‘The ‘fantasy’ and use of ‘funeral pillars’ throughout the Middle India manifest their tremendous potentialities in arts. Funeral pillar is erected in memory of the dead. Saora funeral pillar called ‘Karja’ is made of a special kind of teak, decorated with a carving of the deceased on horseback, weapons in his hand and the sun and the moon above. Sometimes motifs of jungle fowl, spider are also added. Kond’s attraction and love for the grotesque the fantastic Anga Pen, The clan-god of Murias, Marias and Halbas in Bastar, the excellent figures of Pradhan mythology all are a few amongst the brilliant imprints of indigenous arts of tribal India (81-89).

‘The Tribal Art of Mask’ found among the Gonds, Baigas, Pradhans and Murias is another important marker of their identity which they mostly use in dancing festivals. The Baiga Masks, the Muria Masks are worth mentioning.

The Carving of peacock, elephant on the walls or doors are the magnificent art-works of India's tribals having influences on today's art and crafts.

*The Religion of an Indian Tribe*, a voluminous monograph, was published in 1955 by OUP, London. It consists of seventeen chapters covering five hundred ninety seven pages. The book deals with the tribe 'Saoras' (Savaras, Sabaras), who are said to have synonymous words for the names such as Matangas, Kiratas, Pulindas and Bhilas. A. Cunningham has said that the Savaras covered all different great Kolarian family (1). In the west they are called Kurkus and Bhils and in the east they are known as Santals, Mundas, Bhuiyas, Hos, Bhumij and Juangs. Elwin has accepted this division and the views of other eminent anthropologists such as S.C. Roy, H. H. Risley, B. C. Majumdar, J. H. Hutton. Elwin says that the Saoras have references in ancient literatures and history such as *Aitareya Brahmana*, *Vishnu Purana*, *Mahabharata*, *Matsya Purana*, *Brihad Sanhita*, *Natya - Sutra*, *Kadambari* etc. (2-3). He also refers to many traditions of Orissa, mainly connected with the temple of Jagannath at Puri where the legend goes that the image was originally in charge of Vasu or Basu Saora. In chapter two, Elwin describes Saoras' belief in 'soul', which says that soul is immortal and leaves the body at death and becomes a shade and then an ancestor. The soul goes to the Under-World where the tutelaries (gods of the Under World) govern the company of the dead and at the same time maintain relations with the living world. Chapter three of the book is dealt with the Saora pantheon. In the fourth and fifth chapters, Elwin describes different Saora gods and priests-their role and functionalities and women priests (Shamanins) and male priests (Shamans), their marriage with the tutelaries. The sixth chapter describes how Saora rituals are observed, how materials such as wine, blood, crab and fish are offered as sacrifices. The cause and cure of disease is discussed in the

seventh chapter where Elwin has mentioned Malaria first and then Leprosy as the major diseases in Koraput district and describes Saoras' beliefs in the causes of diseases by gods, by dead and by sorcery, and their treatment by appeasing the gods, by animal sacrifices etc. Elwin has pointed out that religion is the most fruitful cause of Saora indebtedness (445), the cost of religion is discussed in chapter eleven. In chapter ten Elwin notes that one important characteristic feature of Saora religion is that the Saoras make drawings on the walls of houses to honour their dead, to promote fertility and to observe festivals. Chapter sixteen is dealt with Saora ethic and regard for human life. Elwin has shown that the Saoras regard human life first. When somebody becomes sick all surrounding the sick extend their cooperative habits to cure the sick, forgetting previous deeds of violence. Elwin also notes the high moral standard of Saora life as,

Prostitution is unknown among the Hill Saoras. Incest is taboo and is regarded as dangerous as well as reprehensible. Sodomy and bestiality are not even a joke. The Saora attitude to sex is frank and simple. They have few repressions or inhibitions. Their open and natural delight in the beauty of the human form, the absence of futile and tedious taboos, the freedom of their speech, a certain lightness of touch, helps them to approach this beautiful thing without shame or guilt; it enables them to fulfil their lives with happiness. (567)

Elwin also points out that the most of the beliefs, customs, rituals, concept of Supreme Being or gods or souls of the Saoras are akin to those of the Hindus.

The book *A Philosophy for NEFA* was published in 1957 with a foreword by Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India. It was written to formulate the policy and a philosophy for the NEFA (now Arunachal Pradesh) people and

administration. It was a philosophy of love and respect for the tribal ways of life and culture. The first inner page of the book intelligently starts with Nehru's remarkable lines "I am alarmed when I see-not only in this country but in other great countries too-how anxious people are to shape others according to their own image or likeness, and to impose on them their particular way of living. We are welcome to our way of living, but why impose it on others? There is no point in trying to make of them a second-rate copy of ourselves.", Julian Huxley's valuable sayings "On the top of all this variety of nature and man in Africa there impinge western civilization and western industrialism. Will their impact level down the variety, reducing the proud diversity of tribes and races to a muddy mixture, their various culture to a single inferior copy of our own?", and Lord Tweedsmuir's observation "An open and flexible mind, which recognizes the need of transformation and faithfully sets itself to apprehend new condition, is a prerequisite of man's usefulness." Verrier has also reviewed and examined the thoughts and opinions of some of the great thinkers regarding native peoples like Spenser, Shakespeare, Rousseau, Captain Cook, Samuel Johnson, John Ruskin, Darwin and Dickens.

Before going to categorise the problems of indigenous peoples, Elwin has pointed out some rare qualities of the tribals, such as, they did not run after the unseemly greed of material possessions inspite of their constant poverty and indignation; they had a strong hold and hope for a corporate way of life; they possessed an enriched and self-potent culture which drew its freshness and vitality from its people exclusively and advanced through refinement in a continuous process; they were very simple, trusting, frank, tough and hardy and not that much rigid or obstinate in adherence to their beliefs, as they were thought of, and also they were willing to change if they could be convinced rationally that change was

necessary; the severity of the climate could not abandon their way of life, centuries after centuries they had been living in the hills and forests with all of their forms—cruelty, ugliness, hardships, beauty and happiness.

In part one of the book, Elwin has discussed two fundamental policies or issues named ‘the policy of Leave Them Alone’ and ‘the policy of Detribalization’ which attracted severe criticism of the day.

Verrier has mentioned that the British Raj formulated and favoured this ‘Leave them alone’ policy partly because of lack of administrators to work in the wild and inaccessible border areas and partly because of opinion, possessed by a number of administrators, that the tribes were living happy lives therein. He has not credited the British Government with adopting this policy but referred to its derivation from the very old pastoral tradition of classical Europe. He went back to the ‘Noble Savage’ of Rousseau, the ‘beatus vir’ of Horace and referred to the modern thinkers like R.L. Stevenson, Pierre Loti and Gauguin etc. All of them believed that the untutored and unlettered simple tribes were better than the urban and civilised peoples. This policy was faced with severe criticism. Verrier opposed to this policy of isolation as it was impossible to accept in the twentieth century in the wake of industrialisation and at the advancement of science and technology. He claimed that mere isolation could not save the tribes from poverty and exploitation in the hands of money-lenders, land-grabbers and outsiders.

The ‘policy of detribalisation or assimilation’ is diametrically opposite to the first policy. This second policy gained popularity among the religious organisations. The Christian Missionaries as well as the Hindu religious organisations, social activists, reformers and uplifters got the advantage of this policy. Proselytisation got inroads. The believers of this policy wanted to remove the vices, superstitions and

social organisation of the tribal society, and to replace their traditional dresses by shorts and skirts, blouses and frocks. Elwin pointed out that their dresses, customs, rituals, practices were marked as inferior to the impediments of civilisation, though a 'gifted few' among them assimilated themselves in the new way of life. He observed that the civilisation had badly affected the solidarity and moorings of the younger generation by damaging their aesthetics in arts, crafts, songs, dances as well as their independence and self reliance. They lost the virtues of truth and honesty. The society broke up. He also observed that during that period the tribals were seen to be transformed into the Hindu 'caste' lying at the bottom of the social structure. Economic exploitation sharpened.

He has referred to Dr. Buchi, the Swiss biologist, who has pointed out that the pygmy 'Onges' of little Andaman, had adapted to the tropical Sun and dense forests of their environment, though they are in the way of extinction inspite of adopting so many measures for their survival. On the other, he did not forget to refer to Jens Bjerre (8), the Danish explorer, and his famous book *The Last Cannibals* (1956) where the 'Kukukukus', one tribe of New Guinea, till today survive with their own modes of feeling and reasoning; live in dangerous places and are violently absorbed in primitive desires leading to cannibalism. Verrier also mentioned that Bjerre has accused the 'civilised' peoples of being 'spiritual cannibals' as because we, the civilized, have either absorbed or obliterated their culture, behaviour, their riddles of living, their beauty and ugliness, their meanings of life-all of which they got infused in their hearts through thousands of years.

Verrier has also rightly placed the views of Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, Shri Jairamdas Daulatram, former Governor of Assam and Shri Fazl Ali, the then

Governor of Assam and G.B.Pant, the then Union Home Minister, in this serious and debated problem. Jawaharlal, as recalled by Verrier, told,

We are agreed that people of NEFA cannot be left in their age-long isolation. We are equally agreed that we can leave no political vacuum along our frontier; that we must bring to an end the destructive practices of inter-tribal war and head – hunting and the morally repugnant practices of slavery, kidnapping of children, imposition of cruel punishments and opium-addiction, none of which are fundamental to tribal culture. We wish to see that the people are well-fed, that they are healthy and enjoy a longer span of life, that fewer babies die, that they have houses, a higher yield for their labour in the fields, improved techniques for their home industries. We should like them to be able to move freely about their own hill and have easy access to the greater India of which at present they know little. (Elwin 8-9)

The major problems arising out of these two conceptual problems have been discussed in the book. He has mentioned the problems as ‘aims in NEFA’ where some five aims viz. material aims, psychological aims, religious aims, sociological aims and cultural aims have been enunciated.

In the material aims, Elwin has visualised the problem of land, problem of forest, problem of communication and food, problem of clothes and dresses.

‘The Problem of Land and Forest’ was considered as the most major problem. The possession of land which they did till, was the very powerful motif played in the minds of the tribes. The tribes believed that the land belonged to them as they have cleared the jungles and it would ensure the right of their ancestors. Land was a part of their spiritual as well as economic heritage. Most of the tribal uprisings took place mainly due to loss of it and to regain the same. Forests were

solely their property as the tribes had been dwelling there since time immemorial. They earned their means of livelihood from forests by hunting, fishing, jhum-cultivation, terraced-cultivation and forest produce. Verrier claimed and observed that they were restricted to move into the forests and to collect forest produce and some regulations supported those ban. They were displaced or driven out of the forests due to the industrial scheme viz. dams, mines etc. The compensation given was very meagre. Constitutional provisions were made under section 49 (3), 49 (4) in 1952 to establish their rights over land and forests. Verrier rendered suggestions and recommendations on the rehabilitation and use of land and forests, and some of which came into force during Nehru Government yielding good results. Land reforms in some states have been done uniquely, but in most of the states it has happened in paper only where bulk amount of land lies under the possession of merchants and land-grabbers. The tribals as a whole have been suffering from destitution and exploitation.

The problem of communications and food was marked as another important problem the tribals faced long. The problem of inaccessibility, problem of getting raw materials from outsiders, exchange/ selling of their produce, problem of dialects and language could be solved only through better communications by roads, paths, bridges etc. It would help in expanding inter-village amity, trade with outsiders and establishing a linkage with the rest of India to know them well.

The problem of dress was also given a vital place. The tribes had and still have their own distinctive way of clothing themselves. They would consider the dresses as symbol of their social status. Verrier critically and vividly examined socio-political aspects, aesthetic and moral importance of dress. He has referred to Rabindranath and Vidyasagar and discussed how these two noble Indians along with

other great Bramhin pundits preferred 'native' dresses. The tribal dresses were economic also. The promotion of the hand-loom industry helped the people to save money. Elwin remarks, "Swadeshi is as important for NEFA today as it once was for the whole of India" (Elwin 43).

In the psychological aims in NEFA, 'the danger of creation of an inferiority complex' has been given the topmost priority. He viewed that 'inferiority complex' was dangerous and destructive of tribal art, culture and religion. In the wake of civilisation the tribals began to consider themselves and their works as second rate. They were compelled to think that anything tribal was inferior to that of the civilised one. He has narrated some of the bitter encounters the Adi and ApaTani men had faced with a political person in New Delhi and government officials elsewhere who made them (tribe) feel that they were like monkeys of hills (51). This was one the worst fruits of Detribalisation. The educated tribals and those who came in contact with the administrators and outsiders were the first victims. Elwin goes on, "the inferiority complex is the knife that severs the link that binds the people to their past; it is the sponge that wipes out a thousand years of history... and it will lead to wholesale collapse of tribal moral sanctions and of the social organisation which at present holds the tribes together" (52).

The social problems relating to the tribal law, practice of head-hunting, sacrifice of mithun, economic exploitation, intermarriage, slavery, addiction to opium and alcohol and disposal of the dead, as mentioned by Verrier, have given births to many inter-tribal and inter-village conflicts and wars. Verrier has recommended strict ban on those ill-practices. Now a day those are rarely to be seen amongst the tribes of India.

His suggestions for tribal upliftment honoured and accommodated Nehru's *panchsheel* of tribal development, and which may be summarised as,

1. All sorts of development works, welfare schemes and projects should be executed through Tribal Development Blocks/ Councils, members of which must be skilled, well trained and should possess 'human touch' while implementing the schemes.
2. Reverence and respect should be shown to their cultures, rituals and religious practices.
3. The tribals should be developed along the lines of their own genius and not to impose anything on them.
4. Their very rights on land including land grants, land reforms, tenancy rights must be protected through legislations and its proper implementation.
5. Protection of rights in forests including grant of land in horticulture and cultivation and collection of forest produce for their livelihoods should be ensured by law and in practice.
6. To protect the tribals from exploitation by the money-lenders, waiving of all past debts, arrangement of alternative credits, sanctioning of loans, banning of bonded labour system should be enforced.

*The Art of North-East Frontier of India* is another important publication of Verrier on tribal arts and crafts. It was published in 1959 by Sachin Roy on behalf of NEFA, Shillong. At the very outset Verrier laid down several causes of disappearing of tribal arts which may be sequenced as

- 1) Mosts of the tribal habitats were poverty-stricken, their artistic material earned less in comparison to materials which they bought from the

outsiders in the market; they entered into the ambit of frustration and found gradually lesser interests in their crafts and handworks.

- 2) The seed of an 'inferiority complex' was sown in their mind. Their arts and crafts were looked down upon and they were made to believe that their artefacts were inferior to those of the civilized persons. They became ashamed of their produce. To work in brass, in iron, in pottery etc. were taboos to them.
- 3) Acute scarcity in the supply of raw materials (cotton etc.) also discouraged their artistic achievements.
- 4) The very climate and geographical conditions, viz. house-burning, flood, earthquake, unstable walls of the houses, feeble communities among the tribes-all accelerated their decline in handicrafts. Most of the houses of the tribals of North-East Frontier being made of bamboos and covered with mud or cow dung could not support to any wall-paintings for long.
- 5) The practice of burying the possessions of a dead person also destroyed the tribals' artistic belongings.

The arts of North-East-Frontier tribes are different in respect of text, context and texture compared to those of the Middle India. In spite of having commonalities, they have distinct beliefs, faiths, religions, customs, rituals, geographical positions and obviously distinct artistry. Their arts and crafts are mainly famous for their 'design and symbolism in textiles', 'weaving', 'wood-carving' and 'cane-works'. Verrier has figured some two hundred and four photographs in this book, all of which represent the characteristic features of their arts.

Cotton is produced in small scale, so a bulk amount of cotton is imported from the plains. Wool comes from the North and Tibet. The tribal women

themselves spin the yarn, use natural dyes such as black, dark-blue, yellow, green, madder and scarlet derived from the herbs and plants. They have expertise knowledge in colour contrasts and combination as well as in geometry. The bands they use are sometimes horizontal and sometimes vertical, and some are typical and intricate mixing of the two. The lines and band motifs are simplest for easy weaving. Each tribe is famous for its unique and distinct textile design. The pictures of 'Pantomimes' found in the Buddhist temples in Tawang exhibit the wonderful artistic works of the Monpas, Sherdukpens, Khamptis, Singphos and Kamang. They are also known for their art of paper-making, ornate dresses, natural masks, paintings on wooden cups and bowls.

The wood-carving is another brilliant artistic work of the NEFA tribes, who are associated with head-hunting, decoration of their dormitories or morungs and erection of funerary images. Wanchos, Konyaks, Phoms, Angamis, Lhotas, Nocte all are expertise in wood-carvings.

I have made the literature review keeping in mind Elwin's literary and non-literary works. I have also included critics and historians who have explored various facets of Elwin's life and writings. Now I propose to focus on the core area of my research. For that matter, I would like to outline the main research questions which will guide my research to a destination.

**Research Questions:**

In course of my study of various monographs of Elwin and some other reference books while reviewing literatures the following questions raised in my mind-

1. How does Elwin's representation of indigenous attitude to nature become the first of its kind in the Indian context? or does Elwin's representation of indigenous view of nature really offer a new outlook/perspective?
2. How does Elwin represent tribal women in the Central Indian and North East Indian context?
3. Popular representation of Santals and other Austric tribe women is to depict them as foolish. How does Elwin break this negative delineation?
4. How could Elwin's representation of indigenous self and community resemble Dalit view of self and community? How does Elwin echo Spivak who also described the tribal leader Birsa Munda as "Dalit"?

**Thesis Design:**

With regard to the issues mentioned above in my observation, and study on the works of Verrier's representation of indigeneity, I have arranged, for the sake of convenience and sequence, my thesis in six chapters. They are as follows.

Chapter I is the Introduction. Chapter II is the theoretical approaches regarding the study. The substantive middle chapters, i.e., Chapter III, Chapter IV and Chapter V are the core chapters of the research work. Chapter VI is the conclusion.

## **Chapter I: Introduction**

Chapter I is an introduction to the study.

Section I explores the origin of the research, analyses the places of the aborigines in the trajectory of history of mankind, introduces Elwin, from his earlier days at Oxford in the nineteenth century to coming to India at 1927, then coming close to Mahatma Gandhi and some noted Nationalist Congress leaders, the service for the downtrodden people of India and his final shifting to tribal discourse, the recognitions and honours received by Elwin with a list of publication of his works.

Section II reviews some works on Elwin and by Elwin.

Section III outlines the main research questions which will guide the research to a destination.

Section IV explains the research objectives, the need for the study, the primary and secondary texts selected and the chapter planning.

## **Chapter II: Aesthetics of Indigeneity**

Section I discusses the concept of indigeneity, critical views of the academicians, researchers, social activists and politicians regarding indigenous people's rights, nativity and primitivism which now have emerged as a challenging discourse all over the world as well as India where they (indigenous people) have been fighting against marginalization and displacement.

In order to connect my argument to the global scenario I have made a brief survey of the indigenous movement for the human rights in Section II. It explains what UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) is and which is considered as the instrument of Indigenous empowerment. United Nations General Assembly passed the declaration on September 13, 2007 after a long deliberation passing through many channels and committees with UN. This

section also discusses the forty six articles of the UNDRIP very briefly. It also introduces some Indigenous People's Associations who have been striving to regain their rights of land and forest, means of livelihood and values of life.

Section III focuses on the markers of indigeneity and the aesthetics of indigenous identity which Verrier has described in his works.

Section IV provides the glossary of terms.

### **Chapter III: Nature and Indigeneity**

Elwin's representation of indigeneity also assumes great significance with reference to nature and natural life which have been enunciated in Chapter III.

Section I discusses Nature and Indigeneity, relationship between environment and literature, ecocriticism and ecofeminism.

Section II represents the influences of the earlier Romantic poets specially Wordsworth on Elwin.

Section III is on Verrier's attitude to nature and his representation of indigeneity (including the applicability of eco-critical and eco-feminist perspectives) through his works such as *Songs of the Forest* (1935), *The Phulmat of the Hills* (1937), *The Baiga* (1939), *Folk songs of Maikal Hills* (1944), *Folk songs of Chhattisgarh* (1946) and *Leaves from the Jungle* (1958).

### **Chapter IV: Women and Indigeneity**

Section I deals with the rise and development of Feminism, Third World Feminism and Dalit Feminism under the rubric of women and indigeneity. The views of the Liberals, Socialists, Marxists and Radicals on this subject have also been discussed in short.

In Section II Elwin's experience with women in his personal life and place of women in his tribal kingdom have been narrated. Section III presents Elwin's concept of love and sexuality which occupies the central position of this chapter. This section also observes how that concept challenges that of the writers of the feminist discourse, and the civilised world is yet to learn a lot about Verrier's tribal women in respect to their attitude to love, sex and position in the society.

### **Chapter V: Community and Indigeneity**

Section I of the fifth Chapter starts with defining of 'tribes' which emphasizes on the concept of 'group' or 'community' perspectives as an expression of collective enunciation comparable to Elwin's representation of the indigenous communitarian identity.

Section II observes how 'self and community' emerge in Dalit autobiographies and Dalit literatures such as Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan: an Untouchable's Life* (1993, 2003), Bama's *Karukku* (1992, 2000) and Sharan Kumar Limbale's *Akarmasi* (1984).

Section III discusses how tribal sense of unity and solidarity has been represented in the works of the anthropologists, sociologists of now and then and authors of marginalized literatures such as Friedrich Engel's *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884, 1891), Laxman Gaikwad's *Uchalya*, Rahula Sankrityayan's *Volga Se Ganga* (1942) and Mahasweta Devi's *The Book of the Hunter* (1994).

Section IV tries to establish how Verrier has represented the self and the community, its unity and solidarity, in his works, i.e., *The Baiga* (1939), *Folk Songs of Chhattisgarh* (1946), *The Phulmat of the Hills* (1937), *The Agaria* (1942), *The*

*Tribal Myths of Orissa* (1954), *The Tribal Art of Middle India* (1951), *The Art of the North-East Frontier of India* (1959), and *The Muria and Their Ghotul* (1947).

#### **Chapter VI: Conclusion and Future scope of research**

In this chapter I shall sum up the arguments I have placed in the previous chapters which I have tried to produce in the form of a synopsis. Future scope of research will also be discussed in this chapter.