



Cultural Dynamics in the Novel of Mamang Dai and Mitra Phukan: Comparative Analysis

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Abstract- This research paper explores the cultural dynamics in the novel of Mamang Dai and Mitra Phukan, Northeast Indian writers. Both Writers have presented different aspects of life of people from Northeast India. They have portrayed another side of the coin to reveal socio-cultural issues from that region. This research paper highlights the significance of culture, society and history in person's life which shapes the life of people. Both writers literary work showed comprehensive societal themes in Indian culture. Mamang Dai portrayed different side of nature of native tribals and their love for their culture. Beside of this, Mitra Phukan portrayed the societal influence on life. She played an important part in literature to reflect the circumstances faced by the people in politically struggled condition.

Key Words -Cultural dynamics, history, identity, tradition, modernization

I. Introduction

Northeast India is culturally rich region with complications of politics, history, cultures and society. This region's richness is delved in natural landscape, indigenous tribals, traditions, and culture. Mamang Dai and Mitra Phukan, both are versatile writers from this region gave their evocative and rightful voice for the people and society of Northeast India. Mamang Dai, a prolific writer from Arunachal Pradesh, employees the oral traditions, myth, history, and natural beauty in her writing. She has presented an extraordinary nature of people closely linked with natural landscape. Her endeavour to preserve the tribal language, greeting for Adi community and their traditions is remarkable. Dai's novel *The Legends of Pensam* and *The Black Hill* exposes the struggle between identities, history, and account of colonial incidents. Her work gives the sense of correlation between culture and modernity.

Mitra Phukan is a prominent contemporary writer, translator, columnist, and classical vocalist from Assam. Mitra Phukan's fictions reveal everyday realities of Assam, a region shaped by years of political unrest and insurgency. Phukan's novel *The Collector's Wife* expressed problems of Rukmini's life through which her personal life gets spoiled, also it gives record of political interventions disturbs common man's life in which he could not survive normally. Her nature of novel to bring forth the conflict of the state affects not just society at large, but the inner lives and relationships of ordinary people. *The Collector's Wife* reveals the restlessness of her character Rukmini who struggle for her identity gives different dimensions to the novel, especially from a female perspective. Her novel explores the call into questions of modernity in the Assamese middle class life.



II. Analysis of the text

The purpose of this research paper is to examine the cultural and societal issues in Northeast India. Mamang Dai and Mitra Phukan are prominent writers from Northeast India. Both writers are marked for their evocative subjects in their literary work and changes they brought in the society through their notable writing. Their work explores the morality of Indian society, contributions in the cultural identity, and harmony uniting modernity and culture. Mamang Dai's literary work is portrayal of culture and society reflects her responsibility towards Adi tribe. Her endeavor to preserves the traditions, which are deeply embedded in historical environment is noticeable. *Black Hill* is a historical-fiction about the native tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and European missionaries. The story is grounded on the real historic events. It is the journey and death of father Nicholas Krick and a French missionary who tried to spread Christianity. *The Legends of Pensam* is set of stories explore the history and memory represents the life of Adi tribe in Arunachal Pradesh. The word 'Pensam' indicates 'in between.' It suggests the middle and interpreted as a hidden space in the heart. The novel shows the life of different people is intergenerational. The main theme of the novel is it keeps alive and reevaluating the old myths and legends of the Adi community, keeps fore grounded the reality of the tradition in the lives of the people. Her characters like Domi and Nenem stays in a world where the supernatural isn't something far away or fictitious. It is blended in their normal lives. These stories are not just tales transmitted through generations; they guide people to understand who they are and hang around the memory of where they come from. "Nothing was ever permanent in Pensam. Even the mountains changed their shape with time."

The stories of the novel *The Legends of Pensam* reveals close relationship with the community, land and history. Here Dai has shown her strong female character like Nenem who represents her as an icon of strength and wisdom. In this novel Dai emphasizes strong relationships between human and nature. Contrastingly, Mitra Phukan's work often expressed the extraction of melodious relationship between culture and modernization. Impact of urban lifestyle reflects on her character; drag her character in expectations from her people. Phukan's novel doubtlessly deal with the problems faced by an individual's like the protagonists of her novels *Rukmini* and *Nomita*. Her novel *The Collector's Wife* forced out the struggle of *Rukmini*. *Rukmini*'s suffering for her identity and blame on her of not being able to give a birth to a child breaks her internally. The novel *A Monsoon of Music* investigates the cultural heritage, generational demand, and identity. The protagonist of the novel *Nomita Sharma* carrying emotional burden with her, struggling to navigate her identity and suppress her romantic feeling for her guru Sandhya Senapati.

The Collector's Wife and *A Monsoon of Music* both novels reveal Socio-political geography and struggle for identity affect the protagonists' life; lead them into relatively rebellion nature. Phukan's narratives investigate personal connections, tradition, and renunciation offers gateway into intricacy of modernization.



III. Conclusion

Mamang Dai and Mitra Phukan, both writers have different cultural context, nevertheless both have common train of thought in respect to the society, culture and tradition. Although, they have common concern with the people of Northeast India, still both writers have presented different aspects of life of regular folks. Mitra Phukan's novels presented civic Assam. Her characters of the novel have presented from socioeconomic group. Phukan has shown the impact of insurrection and socio-political uneasiness reveals the identity negotiating with modernness. Mamang Dai's novels presented the life of tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh. Dai's work is remarkable for preservation of cultural heritage; also she has portrayed the colonial impact on the society through her work. Tribals are more connected with the traditions, rituals and nature. So, natural geography becomes an indigenous part of their life.

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1. Ullah (2025) examines the ambivalence and postcolonial identity in Mamang Dai's *Pensam*
2. Rahman & Sofi (2024) emphasize oral folklore and cultural continuity in *Pensam*
3. Baburaj & Pannikot (2025) treat *The Collector's Wife* as satire of survival under necropolitical Assam
4. Deka & Choudhury (2025) frame Rukmini's journey against patriarchal and ecological oppression
5. Ahmed (2023) offers a postcolonial feminist lens on Phukan's depiction of ethnicity and dispossession