

Introduction

Nativism in a broad context has three different meanings. First one, is the xenophobic majority movement against the immigrants; second one, is the biological concept rather than acquired concept and third meaning is used in the field of literary criticism. Ralph Linton, an American cultural anthropologist identify nativism ‘as a strategic and symbolic mode of protest’ by inferior group from dominant segment of society. Linton had identified four primary type of nativism; revivalist magical, revivalist rational, perpetuative magical and perpetuative rational. In the revivalist mode ‘extinct or moribund elements of culture gain prominence’ while in perpetuative mode ‘current elements of native culture are projected vigorously.’ It is a result of cultural contact. According to *Oxford English Dictionary* nativism is ‘a return to or emphasis on indigenous customs, in opposition to the outside influences; and the theory that concepts, mental capacities and mental structure are innate rather than acquired by learning.’

Bhalchandra Nemade, G. N. Devy, Namvar Singh and A. K. Ramanujan are the four major exponents of nativism in Indian critical scene. Bhalchandra Vanaji Nemade was born (1938) in rural Maharashtra. He is considered as the founder of the nativism movement in Marathi literature. His seminal essay “*Sahiyateel Desiyata*” is considered as the founding text of *Desivad/ Nativism*. He is a Marathi writer, critic and professor of Linguistic, Comparative literature, English and Marathi. Apart from novels *Kosla*, and *Hindu*, he has authored several criticism texts like *Teekaswayamvar*, *Sahityachi Bhasha*, *The Influence of English on Marathi: A Sociolinguistic and Stylistic Study*, *Nativism (Desivad)* etc. He was chosen for Jnanapith Award for his contribution in Marathi writings in 2014. G N Devy is a renowned literary critic, professor, activists and founder of Bhasha Research and Publication centre and *Adavasi Academi*. He is the winner of Sahitya

Akademi Award in 1993 for his master piece *After Amnesia*. He has authored several books like, *After Amnesia*, *Of Many Heroes*, *In Another Tongue*, *Indian Literary Criticism: Theory and Interpretation*, *Countering Violence*, *Being of Bhasha* etc. He is working for preservation of the endangered languages. He is leading the People's Linguistic Survey of India.

Namvar Singh is a renowned Indian Marxist literary critic and academician. He has authored a number of books. His book *Dusari Parampar Ki Khoj* is a milestone in the field of nativistic writings in Hindi literature. He is the editor of renowned Hindi magazine *Alochna*. A K Ramanujan (1929-1993) was a poet, translator and folklorist. He has been recognised as a profound scholar of South Asian language and culture. He wrote both in Kannada and English. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award posthumously in 1999, for his poetry collection *The Collected Poems*. He has authored *Folktales from India* and several other essays. His work on Tamil poetics is an achievement in nativist movement.

Nemade and Devy gave initial push to the nativist movement in India. Both of them are rooted in our *bhasha* tradition and are dedicated to make Indian criticism free from the fetter of Western theories. Nativism in criticism they propose to make Indian criticism more responsible, self respecting and India centric rather Euro- American centric. Both of them have much awareness about the Indian tradition and culture. They are well aware about the hegemony of Euro-American/ *videsi* traditions as well counter hegemony of *Sanskritic* or *Brahminical* revivalism. They are cognizant about the oppressive structure of Indian society. They favour mass culture over the anglicized and Sanskritized elites. In their view, nativists emphasize on the primacy of language in the cultural productions. It reminds about the more serious loss of those who wanted education in native Indian languages or *bhashas*. Makrand Paranjape calls it 'an attitude, movement or an outlook.' It

helps to reveal cultural affiliations of a work of art situated in nativist backdrop. In his opinion, there are no certain evaluation criteria for it.

Nemade uses three terms as *deshivad*, *deshipana* and *deshiyata*. Paranjape translates them *deshivad* as nativism, *deshipana* as nativeness and *deshiyata* as nativity. *Deshivad*/ nativism is an assertive expression of that 'nativism' the establishment of one's right to exist as one is. *Deshipana*/ nativeness implies on the natural status of status quo. *Deshiyata*/ nativity, according to Nemade, includes both aggressive and benign dimensions of nativeness and nativism. Nemade's essay in 1983 marks the beginning of nativism in Indian literary tradition. The seminar on *Desivad* organized by Sahitya Akademi in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur further introduced it in the field of academia. It gave the push to the static literary movement. Academicians came out with their different version and definition of nativism. Indra Nath Choudhuri, for instance, attempts to reconcile three major sets of contradiction to the approach as past and present, tradition and modernity, east and west. He calls it 'new metaphor of the socio-cultural existence in India' searching for the development of its own modernity by absorbing its traditional cultural values and new innovations.

Nativism is not an obsession with roots; but it challenges globalism, internationalism and modernism. It seeks Modernist elements in our roots and traditions itself. It does not ignore foreign influence. It develops a sense of Indianness. Devy says the term 'native' has its sources in ancient European languages. It is equivalent to the Indian term '*desi*' rooted in ancient Indian practices. It is associated with the person who does not travel more, bound to soil and own land. Nativism also has its roots in medieval Spanish literature. In the nineteenth century, movement 'native' came to USA to safeguard the rights of native ones. Through this movement nativism acquired the ideological form. In Italy, it came in the form of nationalism and in Ireland it came in the form of Irish Literary

Renaissance, where people created ‘imagery homeland through the revival of Irish myths and legends.’ It also marks the turn of nativism to the revivalism. It has been used in the different contexts around the globe, dwelling in selfhood, self- recognition and cultural imposition from outsiders in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In Indian context, the term *desivad* is a synonym to nativism. In India *desi* has more affiliation to the descriptive linguistic rather than cultural anthropology. Dandin, an ancient Sanskrit scholar had described *desi* in his book *Kavyadarsha* as ‘dialect spoken in a specific geographical region.’ In the tenth century it was perceived as oppositional force to *margi*. During the fragmentation of Sanskrit language it was used for the regional languages. *Margi* was oppositional power to the *desi* but during the colonial period one more counter dimension *videsi* came to the discourse. We could notice the triangular relationship in Indian culture and literature. In contemporary context it makes new relationship between the *devabhasha*, (Sanskrit) the *rajyabhasha* (Hindi/ English) and the *lokbhasha* (Regional languages).

Nativism as it is rooted in traditional cultural practice, regional languages and specific geographical region has various dimensions of its own. It varies from culture to culture, language to language and region to region. The meaning of nativism keeps fluctuating. In the field of criticism it would be a milestone to have a theory of our own. Different critics have come out with the different definition and cultural practices of nativism. In Tamil epic *Tholkappiyam*, Dravidian poetics has its own version of nativism in the ‘Forms of Tamil poetry.’ Sangam poetry is also seen as a strong alternative to the *margi* traditions. In Hindi literature, *Bhakti* poetry institutionalises the alternative tradition in literary production. In Gujarati fiction it is *parishkruti*.

Nemade and Devy both of them are rooted in native culture. Nemade takes it against internationalism. Devy's nativism is deeply rooted in *bhashas* or modern Indian languages. Some critics characterises it in the self and other or different and oppositional. It rejects the norms of mainstream critical tools to unearth the critical survey. They are creating our own textual dynamics to deal with the western theories inherent to indigenous literatures. Devy has come out with cultural amnesia and colonial epistemology behind the crisis in Indian literary criticism. Nemade's *desivad* "believes that literature is a subsystem of culture and society that produces it; and therefore, it acquires serious meaning only when it reflects social reality in all aspects and areas of life" (Devy, *Of Many Heroes* 133). He considers local as universal in approach. He rejects international parameters to judge literary text. Primarily a great writer writes for own time and community; international recognition is secondary. Nemade says it evokes whole constellation of feelings, thought and enlightenment. It looks back into past by looking ahead to the future.

The study will also explore the objections to nativism. It derives its orientation from what it is pitted against fantasists, jingoists and chauvinists which may further misuse it. Though it claims it is rooted in 'Others,' it is very difficult to separate it from the *margi* and *videsi*. It represents linguistic variations. All three are interconnected; it is very difficult to set out the definition of what is native and what is non native. Paranjape explains its two positive perspectives; it is empowered movement like dalit and subaltern and it supports nationalist movement against foreign domination.

This dissertation explores the possibilities of nativism as a critical tool and multiple literary traditions apart from the major literary traditions in India. It inquires the cultural, linguistic, and social development around nativism in the beginning of 21st century with the little/ *desi* traditions and politics involved in the nativistic exercise by exploring the

various dimensions of the discourse. It also enquires the domination of elites/ great tradition and cultural hegemony over the small, marginalised ethnic communities and their literature(s). It also inquires the possibility of formulating an indigenous theory of criticism.

The first chapter, “Discourse on *Desiyata*” investigates different aspects of nativism and its interpretation by different practitioners. It explores the views of critics and their versions of nativism. Nemade takes it as opposition to the internationalism and English language. Devy explains it in the language specific phonocide and cultural amnesia during colonial times. He categorises it in *desi* and *margi*. Namvar Singh has own version in *bhakti* poetry or other tradition to the Hindi mainstream domination version. Ramanujan’s version of Tamil poetics as an alternative to the *margi* tradition shall also be given an adequate space. Views and variations of critics like K Satchidanandan, Wagish Shukla, Makrand Paranjape, Debjani Ganguly and Sudhir Kumar will also be documented.

The second chapter, “Politics of *Desiyata*” deals with the critical commentary on nativism and the identity politics involved in entire critical scene in contemporary India. It will also explore the dimension of cultural hegemony and domination of the West. It also inquires the intentional/ unintentional misuse of nativism for the sake of popularity and publicity. It explains Nemade’s politics of English language, Devy’s politics of endangered language or *bahsha* languages, Ramanujan’s multicultural identity and Namvar Singh’s politic of *doosari parampara* (other tradition) and politics of publication and prizes.

The third chapter, “Nativism and Practice” deals with the textual/ cultural politics through the selected poems of multicultural poets. It unearths the politics of *desiyata* in the poems of Aimee Nezhū, Sujata Bhatt, Meena Alexander, E V Ramakrishana and Nirmal Verma.

Chapter analyses the possibility where literary writers/ critics foreground *desiyata* to sell their literary products.

Concluding part sums up the arguments of previous chapters.