

Geo Centrism and Spirituality in Indigenous Literature

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Geo-centrism and spirituality are structural qualities of Indigenous cultures that outline their worldviews, practices, and literature. Geo-centrism, in this context, refers to the crucial value of explicit geographical locations, landscapes, and natural elements in Indigenous communities' cultural and spiritual life. Geography is deeply connected to spirituality as it deals with places that are not merely physical spaces but mean something more to humankind. The latter is a set of beliefs, rituals, and practices that tie individuals or a community to God, their ancestors, or other people. In the context of Indigenous cultures, geography is central to their spirituality. This is the case for the listed cultures; spirituality was embedded in the locations and land. The assignment question helps reflect upon the relationship between the geo-literacy and spirituality of the indicated cultures as they are intertwined topics and common themes running through many pieces of Indigenous literature. The Indigenous writers described land and geography as the main characters in their works. The land, for them, was not static but a living creature with its spirit and mind. It was considered a natural provider in connection to the very sun from having gifts. For the Indigenous peoples, the topic of spirituality was heavily and most obviously connected with the landscapes so familiar to their lives and works.

Indigenous literature has many stories in which the physical and spiritual worlds are inseparable. The land is not just a background to the action; it is a character with its own personality. To pick an example from the reading, in Indigenous Indian stories, the land in the Ganges River. This is not just a stretch of water - it is a goddess, the holiest place in India, the axis of the Hindu world. Like ritual objects and traditions, the land in

this literature is often used to impart power and knowledge. It is a place where one can communicate with the ancestors and gods and is how the world is managed – in these texts, rituals carried out ‘on the land’ are essential to repairing its balance. The land is also often represented as an aspect of the divine and as the source of power and knowledge. In many legends, powerfully spiritual places are lands where humanity and deity intersect—the land itself is the place where the two touch realities and humanity communicates with the gods on the soil of the land. These legends are stories of how human beings are indeed a part of their natural surroundings at times and the ‘objective’ ethical issues that come out of this truth. Hence, this paper will explore the intertwining of geo-centrism and spirituality in Indigenous literature, how it is manifested, and what it tells about several Indigenous cultural and spiritual expressions. The questions that the present research seeks to answer are as follows:

1. How are relationships between the land and spirituality depicted in Indigenous literature?
2. What natural features in which specific places are identified as sacred, and why?
3. In what ways do Indigenous stories, myths & poems depict the relationship between physical and spiritual dimensions of existence?
4. How do colonialism and modernity inform the representation of geo-centrism and spirituality in Indigenous literature?
5. What do contemporary Indigenous authors have to say about these themes in their literature?

This paper aims to provide a theoretical analysis that intersects both geo-centrism and spirituality in Indigenous literature; it focuses on the cultural and spiritual significance of landscapes within these narratives—providing an overview as well as situating this connecting theme into broader themes surrounding contemporary Native Identity, resilience, resistance. In analysing a diversity of texts from various Indigenous traditions, this study hopes to provide some insights which might lead toward further understanding and valuing the multiple ways in which

challenges/contests are articulated by/in Indigenist literature as they powerfully express land/spirit interconnectedness.

Literary Understanding of Geo-centrism and Spirituality from Theoretical Perspectives

Reading geo-centrism and spirituality in these Indigenous literatures will reveal a level of interpretation that demands multiple theoretical lenses from literary studies to cultural anthropology, but most especially the knowledge embedded within organic memories like the examples cited above. Framework comprehension Theoretical frameworks Key conceptual frameworks

Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is the learning of the connection between literature and the physical environment. It looks at the text's representations of nature, environmental problems, and the relationships between humanity and nature. The latter, Lawrence Buell maintains high among what might be called the defining features of ecocriticism when he identifies it as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment," concerned with "environmental justice, ecological sustainability... and participation in nonhuman" (Buell 2). This framework analyses how Indigenous literatures represent landscapes as spiritually alive beings.

Indigenous Literary Theory

Indigenous literary Theory emphasises the importance of Indigenous perspectives, knowledge systems, and cultural contexts in analysing texts. It challenges Western literary paradigms and prioritises Indigenous voices and methodologies. As Daniel Heath Justice argues, Indigenous literary Theory seeks to "affirm the centrality of Native intellectual traditions and knowledge" and "underscore the relationality and responsibility inherent in Indigenous storytelling" (Justice 19). This approach is crucial for understanding the spiritual dimensions of geo-centrism in Indigenous narratives.

Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial Theory examines the effects of colonialism on various cultures and literatures. It often uses themes of resistance, identity, and reclamation. In the case of Indigenous literature, it investigates how histories of colonisation have affected the representation of land and spirituality. Edward Said's "imagined geographies" theory also applies to such a study. It refers to how the colonising narratives devised over time construct and dictate the image of a given piece of land in discourses regarding the area (Said 54). Such a conceptual approach may be used in analysing how texts of Indigenous resistance counter the post-colonial narrative and reclaim their sacred landscape.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology investigates the structures of experience and consciousness. Literary studies explore how texts represent human experiences of place and spirituality. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notion of "embodied experience" emphasises the importance of sensory and lived experiences in understanding the world (Merleau-Ponty 12). This theoretical method is valuable for studying how Indigenous literatures convey the "embodied experience" of sacred landscapes. Indigenous Indian stories featuring the Ganges River, for instance, are chosen because they highlight the river's spiritual significance in Hindu beliefs.

The research aims to include diverse Indigenous perspectives from different geographical regions and cultural contexts. This diversity enriches the analysis and highlights the varied ways in which geo-centrism and spirituality manifest in Indigenous literature. Texts from Native American, Aboriginal Australian, and Māori literature are included to provide a comparative perspective. The analysis consists of historical and contemporary works to examine how representations of geo-centrism and spirituality have evolved. Through this, one can explore how Indigenous authors respond to historical changes, such as colonisation and modernity, in their depictions of sacred landscapes.

Historical Background and Cultural Context of Indigenous Groups in India

Indigenous communities in India, often termed Adivasis, possess a diverse and intricate history extending millennia. These groups, such as the Santhal, Gond, Bhil, and numerous tribes of Northeastern states, have cultivated unique cultures, languages, and social structures profoundly intertwined with natural surroundings. The Adivasis' mode of living stems profoundly from their habitat, and their ancestral narratives overflow with mentions of the earth, woodlands, streams, and highlands sustaining them.

The historical context of these Indigenous peoples denotes periods of self-sufficiency, colonial disruption, and post-colonial difficulties. Before European colonisers' arrival, Adivasis maintained a symbiotic bond with their environment, practising sustainable farming, searching, and gathering. Their social and spiritual lives interconnected deeply with the land, which they revered as sacred. Colonial rule brought substantial shifts, such as land dispossession, exploitation of natural resources, and compelled assimilation policies. These disruptions influenced their economic basis and tried to sever their spiritual link to the land. During the post-colonial period, they brought continued hardships to Adivasi communities, such as losing access to ancestral lands and forests and facing widespread impoverishment and social exile. Despite these relentless adversities, many tribal groups have remained steadfast in sustaining their unique cultural roots and spiritual customs, often using oral folklore, ceremonial rites, and written works. "The ongoing struggle of Adivasis to reclaim their land and cultural identity is a testament to their resilience and the enduring importance of their connection to the natural world" (Xaxa 24).

Importance of Specific Landscapes and Natural Elements in Spiritual Beliefs and Practices

The spiritual ways and rituals of Indigenous tribes across India are profoundly founded in the natural landscape surrounding them. Certain geological formations and organic entities are considered holy and

essential to their worldview and religious practices. The woods, streams, elevated grounds, and even particular vegetation are imbued with profound spiritual consequences, frequently perceived as abodes for deities, spirits, and predecessors.

For many Adivasis, the dense growth is a consecrated place where they carry out ceremonies and look for the blessings of their gods. The Santhals, for example, revere the Sal tree (*Shorea robusta*) as sacred and utilise its leaves on various spiritual occasions. “The Sal tree is not merely a source of material resources for the Santhals but a living symbol of their spiritual world” (Mukherjee 78). Similarly, the Gonds revere the Mahua tree (*Madhuca indica*), which is central to their cultural and spiritual life and provides both physical sustenance and spiritual nourishment.

Rivers have long held sacred status for indigenous peoples and remain integral to spiritual traditions. For communities dwelling along the bountiful Ganges’ shore, its waters presented vital sustenance while serving as a symbolic font of purity. However, the Ganges hold broad religious importance in the Hindu faith; tribal folk, depending on its life-giving flow, experience a particularly profound spiritual connection. To these groups, the mighty river acts not merely as an indispensable source of fresh water and nutrition but also as a channel for ritual purification. “The Ganges is worshipped as a mother and a goddess, symbolising purity and life, and is central to the spiritual practices of the people living along its course” (Narayanan 45).

The mist-wreathed mountains had long stood as revered sentinels, where holy guardians watched over the Khasi realm. Within the towering Khasi Hills, the tribe’s gods and unseen spirits made their lofty abodes. These peaked sanctuaries had formed the heart of Khasi mythology across uncounted generations, playing host to festivals and rites that sanctified the hills’ spiritual potency. “The Khasi Hills are not just geographical features but sacred landscapes that embody the spiritual essence of the Khasi people” (Sen 112). Beyond mountains, certain beasts also played pivotal parts in Indigenous faiths. The Bhil tribe held the tiger in the highest esteem, seeing its striped hide as both a symbol of sturdiness

and a sentinel to ward away malicious spirits. “The tiger is revered in Bhil culture, and various rituals are performed to honour this powerful animal, which is believed to guard the community against evil spirits” (Shah 67).

For Indigenous groups across India, a profound communion with the land and its creatures comprised not only religion but a way of living. Their worldviews and daily observances are intricately connected to the natural order, reflecting profound respect for the environment and comprehension of life’s interconnected whole. Such relationships resonated clearly in their lore, where tales, myths and songs ever celebrated Nature’s sanctity and humankind’s spiritual bonds with the earth.

Case Study: The Connection Between the Ganges River and Hindu Beliefs in Indigenous Indian Stories

The Ganges River, also known as Ganga in India, is one of the rivers that form the spiritual and cultural background of the Indian subcontinent. Most of the Indigenous Indian stories, myths, legends, and literary texts depict the river as divine, one of the characters with the highest spiritual power and significance. The Ganges are often personified as the good spirit, and Indians worship their powers to purify, give life, and save humanity. This crucial religious point of view makes it possible to speak about great respect and adoration for nature and its elements among the Indigenous Indians.

As a matter of fact, one of the brightest and most significant stories is Mahabharata, in which the Ganges river is treated as a goddess sent down from Heaven to purify the lands on Earth. This interpretation better characterises the Ganges: it is not only the stream of water, but at the same time, it is the divine goddess who has the power to save humanity through purifying and giving life. Moreover, to prove such a point of view, the origin of the river being described in different Puranic stories will help better understand the significance of the Ganges in the lives of familiar Indigenous Indians believing in many goddesses and

gods. The Skanda Purana, for example, narrates the legend of the river's descent from the heavens to the earth, a journey facilitated by Lord Shiva, who caught her in his matted locks to temper her descent. This story not only reinforces the divine origin of the river but also underscores its spiritual potency and role as a mediator between the heavens and the earth. Such narratives are pivotal in establishing the Ganges as a sacred entity in the cultural consciousness of the Indian people.

The River's Spiritual Significance in Hinduism

The Ganges River is regarded as the holiest river in Hinduism. It is considered to be the physical manifestation of the goddess Ganga and her magical power to cleanse one's sins and free you from your repeated lives on earth. However, this notion has prevailed among the centuries-old Hindu religious practices and rituals (including pilgrimage), where the river is an epicentre of multitudinous spiritual undertakings over its elongated reach. An essential aspect of Hindu worship and devotion is the pilgrimage to The Ganges. The Hindus believe that taking a dip in the waters of this holy river atonements their sins and unites them to god; thus, millions gather on its shores, making it one of the world's largest fair gatherings. Varanasi is a northern Indian city located on the banks of River Ganga in Uttar Pradesh. Its other name is Banaras, one of the holiest Hindu places for religious pilgrims. Varanasi was deemed as the place to die and be cremated on its ghats so that one may end up attaining Mukti (freedom from rebirth), thus lending credence to the Sanatan belief of finally being absorbed in God. There are specific texts highlighting the river Ganges as a sacred entity. We may check out some notable references along with their English translations:

Rigveda:

इमं मे गङ्गे यमुने सरस्वति शुतुद्रि स्तोमं सचता परुष्या ।
असिक्न्या मरुद्वृधे वितस्तया सरयूणि भजता सिन्धुभिः ॥

Transliteration:

Imam me gangeyamunesarasvaticeutudristomacsacatâparusnyâ |
AsiknyâmarudvrdhevitastayâsarayûGibhajatasindhuhhih ||

English Translation:

“O Ganga, Yamuna, Sarasvati, Shutudri, be pleased with this hymn. O Parushni, Asikni, Marudvridhe, Vitasta, Sarayu, hear our praise along with the Sindhu.” (Rigveda. 10.75.5.)

Manusmriti:

गङ्गायमुनयोश्चैव गोदावरि सरस्वत्योः ।
नर्मदायाश्च सिन्धोश्च तीरेषु च महानदः ॥

Transliteration:

Gangâ-yamunayosì caivagodâvarisarasvatyoh|
Narmadâyâû ca sindhou ca tîrecu ca mahâ-nadah||

English Translation:

“On the banks of the Ganga and Yamuna, and also on the banks of the Godavari, Sarasvati, Narmada, and Sindhu, and other great rivers.” (Manusmriti 2.21).

Mahabharata

आपगा गङ्गा देवी स्वर्गमार्गप्रकाशिनी ।
अहल्याशापशमनी पुनाति भुवमित्यपि ॥

Transliteration:

ÂpagagaEgâdevîsvarga-mârga-prakâûinî |
Ahalyâ-ûâpa-ûamanîpunâtibhuvamityapi ||

English Translation:

“The river goddess Ganga, the illuminator of the path to heaven, the remover of Ahalya’s curse, purifies the earth.” (Mahabharata. 3.82.22.)

Bhagavata Purana

पतितानां पावनी गङ्गा विष्णुपादाभिवन्दिता ।
भगीरथो महाराजः प्रापयामास सागरे ॥

Transliteration:

PatitânâCpâvanîgaEgâvicGu-pâdâbhi-vanditâ |
Bhagîrathomahârâja%prâpayâmâsasâgare ||

English Translation:

“The Ganga, the purifier of the fallen, worshipped at Vishnu’s feet, was brought down to the ocean by King Bhagiratha.” (Bhagavata Purana 9.9.9)

These texts highlight the sacred nature of the Ganges and its importance in Hindu mythology and religious practices. The spiritual significance of the Ganges depends on its ritual immersions in which ashes (the last physical remnants to say adieu) are soaked-soaked-sleeping. The practice is rooted in the belief that taking a dip in this river could lead to moksha, which liberates one from the cycle of death and rebirth. It not only purifies the living beings but also makes it an essential place of spiritual importance, especially for the dead. That is why the Ganges has been taken as a continuum in life and death, representing divine worshipping continuation. Many texts in the Hindu literature canon recite how sacred the Ganges are and how they influence spiritual nature. This is detailed as early as in the “Ramayana”, wherein the Ganges appears to be a river of life and also purification. In the epic, Lord Rama, along with Sita and Lakshmana, spend time on the river Ganges’ banks during their exile, performing rituals to seek blessings from it. The clip illustrates it as an almost central part of the character’s spiritual and moral life. Similarly, in the “Mahabharata,” the Ganges is central to the narrative and spiritual journey of Bhishma, one of the principal characters. Born of the union between King Shantanu and the goddess Ganga, Bhishma’s life is deeply intertwined with the river. His deathbed scene, where he lies on a bed of arrows on the banks of the Ganges, awaiting the auspicious moment of death, highlights the river’s role in his spiritual journey and the quest for moksha. Modern literary works also reflect the enduring spiritual significance of the Ganges. In Amitav Ghosh’s novel “Sea of Poppies,” the Ganges symbolises continuity and spiritual endurance amidst the upheavals of colonial India. The characters’ interactions with the river reveal their deep-seated beliefs in its divine power and their reliance on its spiritual sustenance. The Ganges’ portrayal in these texts illustrates its multifaceted role as a sacred entity influencing various spiritual practices and belief aspects.

From ritual purification and pilgrimage to the quest for moksha, the river remains a central figure in the spiritual landscape of Indigenous Indian narratives.

Themes of Sacred Geography and Spiritual Practices

One common theme in Indigenous literature is the relationships between the material world of nature and everyday practices, on the one hand, and sacred geographies - literal or mythological territories where human presence was felt to be related more deeply and directly than it is now to bio-physical realities. Their stories quite often address how certain natural topographies like mountains and rivers or a forest (shola) or cave have immense spiritual value. Thus, the Ganges is venerated in many Indigenous Indian cultures as much more than simply a body of water - it is an avatar (or incarnation) of divinity and goddess [Goddness] named Ganga. This veneration is often relayed in the literary texts and many oral traditions where its benign nature, as both a cleanser of sins to life giver for those it approves.

A frequent theme is that of power and transformation ascribed to sacred sites. They are typically regarded as gateways to the divine realm, places where earth and spirit meet. “Indigenous narratives frequently depict sacred sites as locations where individuals can communicate with ancestors, spirits, and deities, thereby gaining spiritual insight and guidance” (Sharma 45). Another major theme is the place of sacred geography in Indigenous cosmology. These include creation myths that reveal how the physical world originated through divine acts and which are closely related to specific landscapes.

Sacred Landscapes and Spiritual Practices

The mighty Himalayas, the abode of gods and saints alike, have long stood as a place of spiritual refuge and rejuvenation in Indigenous literature. Texts such as the epic Mahabharata vividly portray the ethereal mountain realm where ascetics meditate in solitude, withdrawing from the world to seek enlightenment through self-imposed penance and sacrifice. Countless sages throughout the ages have made the lofty

peaks their hermitage, finding solace in the rarefied atmosphere far above the bustle of human affairs.

Mahabharata

तत्रास्तां नित्यमेवर्षिः पुण्यं हिमवतः स्थलम् ।

ऋषयः स्निग्धभावेन तत्र ते तपसा युताः ॥

Tatrâstâmnityamevarci%punyamhimavata%sthalam |

[caya%snigdha-bhâvenatatratetapasâyutâ% ||

English Translation:

“There always reside the sages, the holy land of the Himalayas. The sages, endowed with loving devotion, reside there with their asceticism.” (Mahabharata. 3.175.10)

Manusmriti

तपस्यन्ति महात्मानस्तत्रेन्द्रियजयिनः ।

स्निग्धभावेन युक्ताश्च हिमवत्पार्श्वमाश्रिताः ॥

Transliteration:

Tapasyantimahâtmânastatraindriya-jayinah|

Snigdha-bhâvenayuktâû ca himavat-pârûvamâûritâh||

English Translation:

“Great souls perform penance there, conquering their senses and dwelling with loving devotion on the side of the Himalayas.” (Manusmriti. 6.75.)

Rigveda

उपह्वरे हिमवन्तं यत्र गावो निरमिषन्त ।

मुनयो योगयुक्तात्मा तपः स्वाध्यायसंस्थिताः ॥

Transliteration:

Upahvarehimavantamyatragâvoniramicanta|

Munayo yoga-yuktâtmâtapa%svâdhyâya-samsthitâh||

English Translation:

“At the slopes of the Himalayas where the cows graze, the sages,

with minds engaged in yoga, dwell in penance and self-study.” (The Vedas, Rigveda. 10.137.6)

Elsewhere in Indigenous works, dense forests are often cast in a similarly sacred light. Sacred groves, protected by age-old tradition, exist as living temples where nature’s blessings flow freely. Within these woodland sanctuaries, colourful festivals honour the protective spirits believed to dwell there still. Tales tell of mystical rites performed under the sheltering boughs, close communion sought with powers of fertility and growth. Community taboos safeguard *primaeval* glades as places set apart, portals to supernatural realms transcending the mundane. “In these narratives, the forest is not just a collection of trees but a living temple, a place where humans and the divine coexist in harmony” (Sen 102).

Additionally, rivers are essential to Indigenous spiritual traditions. One such example is the Ganges, whose waters are said to atone for sins and provide *moksha* (freedom). The spiritual activities linked with the Ganges include pilgrimages to the riverbanks, ceremonial bathing, and the immersion of ashes. Numerous literary works eloquently depict these rites, emphasising the river’s hallowed position and significance in the people’s spiritual life. Although the spiritual importance of holy places varies among native peoples, there are often two commonalities: distance and elevation or altitude. For example, mountains are often regarded as being holy in Native American and Aboriginal Indian society. For example, in the American Southwest, the Hopi and Navajo peoples believe certain mountains are the homes of gods and ancestors, much like the Indian-man tradition, which reveres the Himalayas.

In the view of indigenous peoples, nature is often regarded as a living person with feelings, and it’s also given to spirit consciousness. The utility of that notion, which is basic in many indigenous cultures, is spectacularly confirmed in their literary works. In this worldview, nature is not just a place where humans can act. Instead, human beings live within nature, and nature itself lives -with flesh and feeling- as an actor in the world. “Indigenous narratives frequently personify natural elements such as rivers, mountains, and trees, attributing to them emotions, intentions, and spiritual significance” (Gupta 67).

Literary Reflections and Implications

This concept correlates with nature's perception as sentient, a common theme in Indigenous Indian literature. Many hymns in the Rigveda depict natural elements such as fire, wind, and water as divine beings. The text espouses Indra's action and might as abode the born human priests with ever-cows and soma for drinking by virtue of the pressing stones. Traditional Indian literature adopts similar perspectives; for example, Agni, Vayu, and Varuna are not mere objects but gods that must be praised and followed. Another point concerning the sentience of nature is that it is also perceived as filled with spirits and deities. For instance, trees are frequently seen as the residences of these apparitions that live among natural landscapes. The sacred fig tree in India, which is believed to house deities and bring spiritual benefits, explains this association. "Such practices highlight the reciprocal relationship between humans and the natural world, where respect and care for nature are integral to spiritual well-being" (Chakrabarti 34).

Various Indigenous literatures provide rich examples of nature as a living entity. In Indigenous Australian Dreamtime stories, the land itself is a storyteller, with natural features being the embodiments of ancestral beings. Similarly, in the oral traditions of the Adivasi communities in India, rivers and mountains are often described as ancestors who guide and protect the people.

The themes of holy geography and the sentience of nature in Indigenous literature draw the vision of the highly spiritual and emotionally meaningful relationship between a human being and the surrounding world, both his ancestral home and nature in general. Since each particular landscape is sacred and the world is living and conscious, it should be treated with respect, awe, and reverence, which is the essential duty and its care. Hence, analysing these indications will increase the understanding of the value, vividness, and brightness of the spiritual world of the Indigenous cultures.

Impact of Colonisation on Geo-centrism and Spirituality in Indian Context

One of the main ways in which colonisation has affected native people's spiritual beliefs and ties to place in India is through the imposition of a colonial-era land ownership model, with respect to resource extraction and the introduction of European religions. Notably, the mapping of land by the colonial administration, the annexation of forests, and outright theft/exploitation of these have negatively impacted native spiritual life. For example, the colonial government's Forest Act of 1865 restricted Indigenous access to forests, undermining their traditional ecological knowledge and spiritual practices that were dependent on these sacred spaces (Guha).

Instead of defining natives' spiritual practices directly, colonisation disrupted their physical approach to their sites of the sacred as well as sought to categorise Indigenous spiritualities as not real. Europeans insisting on the imposing of Christianity and Western rationalism attempted to deprive nature's most direct elements of their sacredness and label it a form of superstition or, at best, primitivism. This being a conscious effort both to tame the landscape and alienate the indigenous from it, the imposition of colonial culture and religion shifted and disturbed centuries-old spiritual practices and geo-centrism of the Indians. But while such disruption seems very heavy, Indigenous people have shown true strength in sustaining their spiritual culture. Many examples of tribal religious practices exist that are still alive today, such as the Gond, Bhil, Santhal, and others. These people have always been – and still are today – resisting the pressure by either practising the rituals secretly or developing new forms that the European eye simply did not catch.

Oral tradition was precious for writing these practices in books and preserving them. Generation after generation, these spiritual data were transmitted through stories, songs, and myths. In particular, such narrations emphasised the principle of the sanctity of earth and land and the necessity to live in peace with nature. For instance, the Gond tribe's oral epics celebrate the forest as a sacred entity and a source of spiritual power (Hardiman).

Literary Works Addressing Colonisation and Reclaiming Sacred Landscapes

Works by Indian authors often focus on the problem of colonisation, and many contemporary authors who represent the interests of various indigenous tribes devote their novels and poems to the tragic plight of local people trying to save some sacred landscapes. For instance, Mahasweta Devi described a considerable part of her life's work in contact with tribal people, as seen from the book's story. In her novel "The Book of the Hunter," Devi portrays the Baiga tribe's deep connection to their forest home and their resistance to displacement by colonial forces (Devi). Another work that can be taken as illustrative is the poems by Mamang Dai, an Indigenous writer from Arunachal Pradesh. Describing the spiritual landscape of her own home, the poet writes about the sacredness of the rivers and mountains. Another poet and folklorist, Nandini Sahu, whose work extensively addresses tribal issues and the marginalised voices within Indian society. In her collection "Sukamaa and Other Poems," she delves deeply into the lives and experiences of the Adivasi communities, mainly focusing on the Kondh tribe. Her poetry captures the essence of these communities, portraying nature not just as a backdrop but as an integral, living participant in their daily lives and spiritual practices. In "Sukamaa," Dr. Sahu recounts the life of Sukamaa, a tribal woman who served as a domestic help and a foster mother to the poet and her sisters. The poem poignantly reflects on themes of poverty, marginalisation, and the silent strength of tribal women. Through vivid imagery and emotional depth, Sahu brings to life the sacrifices, resilience, and often unacknowledged contributions of tribal women like Sukamaa. Being representatives of traditional Indigenous spirituality, not the least important now, the writer's themes also work against the ongoing cultural and environmental stultification. The tribal element in the poem "Sukamaa" is highlighted through various references and descriptions that shed light on Sukamaa's identity, cultural practices, socio-economic status, and her role within the family.

Then, who reminds me time and again
 of Sukamaa, our childhood
 domestic help, our foster-mother,
 the rural poor tribal
 the Kondh old woman
 illiterate, deprived, downtrodden
 the subaltern
 one among the crores
 that constitute real India? (Sahu 1)

Sukamaa is explicitly identified as a member of the Kondh tribe, emphasising her marginalised status in society. Her cultural identity is further underscored by the mention of criss-cross tattoos on her face, a significant cultural marker representing tribal customs and beliefs. The tattoos, etched by her mother to make her less beautiful and thus less desirable, speak to tribal traditions aimed at protecting women.

Contemporary Efforts to Revitalise and Preserve Indigenous Spiritual Practices

Recently, there has been a growing movement in India to revive and protect the spiritual practices of the land. This is mainly done with the motive of a conscious attempt to revive one's own rich cultural and spiritual ethos that had been 'de-spiritualised' and detached from the local people; this is primarily because of the ill effects of both the process of modernisation and the 'spirit of modernisation'. Many projects are undertaken by the marginal groups of India, taking steps to uphold and empower the traditional and spiritual religious legacy that generations of their ancestors have handed down. Efforts such as reviving sacred groves and patches of forest traditionally protected for their spiritual significance are becoming more prominent. These groves are often seen as abodes of deities and spirits, and their preservation is crucial for maintaining ecological balance and cultural continuity. NGOs and community organisations work together to document and restore these sacred sites, integrating traditional ecological knowledge with modern conservation practices (Gadgil and Vartak). In pursuing revitalisation,

literature plays a major role in implementing these anti-hegemonic movements, incorporating uprising geo-centric spirituality and cultural identity. Nowadays, the number of authors and poets of sacred landscapes has increased, as the authors' writing may be an instrument of increasing awareness of what is going on and how awful destruction is. The literature pieces of the authors are more likely to blend traditional storytelling and up-to-date phenomenon stories.

Among the leading writers participating in this literary movement are contemporary Indigenous authors of fiction and poetry, such as Easterine Kire and Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar from India. Nagaland-born Easterine Kire has often traced the profound spiritual relationship between the land and its people in her novels and poetry. Kire's works show the importance of ancestral lands and current efforts to save them from environmental and cultural destruction (Kire).

Through his stories, Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar, a Santhal writer, writes about the themes of displacement and loss of these intangible elements - spiritual connection to one's land. The pieces collected in "The Adivasi Will Not Dance" give us a window into the world of tribal communities who fight to retain their cultural and religious identity against the odds. The works of these authors serve to preserve the wealth of spiritual knowledge in their communities and encourage a rekindling among young people somewhere who have lost themselves. Their works highlight the continued practice of Indigenous cultures and provide examples of geocentricity and spirituality persisting in their environments amidst ongoing struggles. The analysis of the Indigenous books has further demonstrated the deep-rooted relationship between geo-centricism and spirituality in Indigenous literature, focusing on how these themes are so deeply embedded within the cultural or spiritual make-up of Indigenous communities. Indigenous literature often depicts the land or environment as sacred, full of spiritual power, representing a worldview where the physical and metaphysical worlds are all part and parcel. We can see this perspective in the reverence of natural features, including rivers, mountains, and forests, both sacred spaces and part of spiritual practice or cosmology.

One key insight is the role of specific geographical locations in anchoring spiritual beliefs and practices. For instance, the Ganges River in Indigenous Indian stories is not merely a physical entity but a divine being central to Hindu spirituality and cultural practices. The river is considered sacred, with its waters believed to purify and sanctify, making it a focal point for rituals and ceremonies. This reverence for the Ganges reflects a broader Indigenous understanding of the land as a living, spiritual force that sustains and nurtures human life. Significantly, the point of intersection between geo-centric and spiritual worldviews in Indigenous literature also has broader implications for understanding aspects of Indigenous life-worlds and cultural survival. Such literature serves as a counter-narrative to the dominant Western perspective that has often tended to see land primarily as something that is valuable only as it enables exploitation. Rather, they call to a vision of the land, not as a territory but as sacred grounds demanding honour and reverence. These have potent implications for contemporary environmental and societal problems. By placing an emphasis on the sacredness of land and a way in which all people benefit when we have respect for nature, so too would modern conservation/ sustainability principles be reminiscent. Indigenous literatures challenge us to adopt a more relational, dialogical approach towards the environment that acknowledges its inherent worth as an end in itself rather than reducing it entirely to commerce.

This connection to land in indigenous literature places a high importance on the preservation and renewal of culture as well. These stories have remained strongholds in the fight against colonisation, globalisation and environmental degradation that Indigenous peoples still face today. More than anything, they remind us of the importance of protecting and respecting indigenous lands and cultures so that generations in the future will carry on this legacy.

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