

NATIVISM: VIEWS AND REVIEWS

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Abstract

During post-independence period, there has been much discussion on existentialism, modernism, formalism, structuralism, deconstruction, post-structuralism, surrealism, feminism etc. in literary theory and criticism, In Indian literature, there has also been a sociological set-up on the thoughts of Marx, Phule, Ambedkar, Lenin, Mao. During the post-independence period, BhalchandraNemede started to study literature with 'nativist' point of view i.e. 'nativism'. Nemede thought that national consciousness is not backwardness but it is consciousness of self. Every group has its own culture.He rejected the notions like world literature.Nativism is an inevitable principle and it is everywhere. The principle of nativism is evolved by particular culture and expressed with its varied aspects in all sorts of works of art. So, Nemade does not want to neglect our own Indian culture at the cost of international culture. The roots of any good work of art are deeply rooted in that culture only. This concept of nativism changed outlook of Marathi writers and shocked the literary discussions. Naturally, his concept of nativism is also opposed by scholars. Some scholars like R. B. Patankar, Harichandra Thorat, Vilas Sarang, Aniket Jaware studied, and criticized Nemade's concept of nativism and they raised some doubts. However, Nativism still remained at the center of discussion.

Keywords: Nativism, Aesthetics, Criticism, Poetics,



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Nativism: Views and Reviews

A long essay of B. S. Mardhekar, 'Literary Greatness' (*WangmayinMahatmata*), published in the magazine 'Sahyadri' during 1935 to 1939. In his essay he said that Marathi literature is one sided dependent. Mardhekar objected the view that Marathi Literature is dependent on other literatures but he thought it is not entirely dependent. Mardhekar's point of view was like that of Rajwade'sview. Mardhekar opinioned in his essay 'WangmayinMahatmata' that Marathi literature has been lopsidedly imitating English literature and thoughts – lacking imaginative power. While expressing these views, Mardhekar mentioned two principles – (1) prewriting sincerity and (2) writing sincerity. There had been an absence of sincerity in Marathi literature.

Unity was important for Mardhekar. Mardhekar wrote about criticism and aesthetics in his various essays. He attempted to explain and put forward aesthetics in Marathi first time. He propounded the theory of 'emotional equivalence' in relation to poetry.

After B. S. Mardhekar, SharadchandraMuktibodh propounded 'humanism' as the only important principle in literature. Muktibodh gave importance to the sociological aspects in all works of arts. He considered expression of understanding of life is more important than external beauty. He expected writers and poets should give more importance to their expression of understanding of life.

R. B. Patankar propounded aesthetics on the basis of theory of bipolarity. Besides this, critics like Ashok Kelkar, D. K. Bedekar, PrabhakarPadhye, S. K. Kshirsagar also contributed in literature, literary theory and aesthetics. This has been become the topic of discussion in a literary circle. Much discussion has been taken place on the doctrine of aestheticism and life. Some new movements in literature like rural, Dalit, feminist, adivashi, Christi, Muslim literature have been experienced in 1960s in literature. Intellectual discourses for supporting these movements have also been held. Some of the movements were contradictory and complementary to each other. Much discussion on Western theories like existentialism, modernism, formalism, structuralism, deconstruction, post-structuralism, surrealism etc. has been held in Marathi literary criticism, aesthetics and theory. Moreover, sociological arguments have been made on the thoughts of Marx, Phule, Ambedkar, Lenin, Mao. Literary genres have been discussed. During this period BhalchandraNemade started to popularize and emphasize the need of 'nativism' in literary world.

Today, in the first quarter of twenty first century only two movements remained dominant and noteworthy; they are 1) Nativism and 2) Dalit literature.

Nativism of Bhalchandra Nemade:

Indian society came in contact with western literature, literary criticism and poetics in eighteenth century because of the British people. Some scholars and thinkers thought that it was the beginning of the modern age. In this process of becoming modern and influence of modernism, our literary creation was increased at large scale. On this background, Bhalchandra Nemade wrote his essay '*SahityatilDeshiyata*' in 1983, and started a new topic for discussion. Before that S. K. Kshirsagar wrote his essay on nativism in '*Rahasyaranjan*' in 1961. In 1978, in an interview with Chandrakant Patil, he emphasized the need of 'Villageliration' synonymous to 'Indianization.' 'English culture and our culture do not

match. Indians develop an inferiority complex against western culture and white skin. Our dull journalists and foolish writers have created various myths about England.’ These statements show the views of S. K. Kshirsagar.

‘It is expected that in any literature national consciousness should express naturally. Nemadethought that national consciousness is not backwardness but it is consciousness of self. Every group has its own culture, and that group actualizes itself strongly and confidently in its own culture. Any work of art, statue, painting, music is strongly attached to its place, time and environment. Nemade expressed and explained his views about art and literature and he rejected the notions like world literature. According to Nemade, World Literature is an unnatural and parasitical notion; on the contrary nativism is a multi-centric, descriptive and first-hand concept. Nativism is an inevitable principle and it is everywhere. Because the principle of nativism is evolved by particular culture and expressed with its varied aspects in all sorts of works of art. So, Nemade does not want to neglect our own Indian culture at the cost of virtual international culture. Nemade thinks that it is not necessary to have this reverse process and it is not our basic necessity. The roots of any good work of art are deeply rooted in that culture only. This concept of nativism of Nemade changed outlook of Marathi writers, rather it shocked the literary discussions. Naturally, his concept of nativism is also opposed by scholars. Some scholars like R. B. Patankar, Harichandra Thorat, Vilas Sarang, AniketJaware studied, analysed and criticized Nemade’sconcept of nativism and they raised some doubts. Especially, they doubted Nemade’s views regarding caste system. Norms of nativism and a stand regarding English language became the topics of discussion.

Nemade propounded his stand of nativism in his essay ‘Nativism in Literature’, in interviews and in lectures. The discussion about nativism in literature started in 1983 and it continued for a long time. This shows the great impact of Nemade on literary criticism. Some critics call this impact as ‘*Nemadepanth.*’

Nativism and Rangnath Pathare:

Bhalchandra Nemade propounded his Nativism as a reaction of colonialism. Nativism also hinted at globalization. RangnathPatharedelivered a lecture in Kolhapur on ‘Globalization and Nativism’ on April 12, 2002. Through this lecture,Pathare supported and contributed the Nativism of Nemade. He highlighted the ugly side of globalization. Through his analysis, he shows that that globalization is one side of capitalism resulted by industrial revaluation. He emphasized Nativism as living, surviving, and maintaining our self-identity against the

destructive force of globalization. Nativism is the only hope for our blissful survival. We have only one alternative against the evils of globalization and that is nativism. So, he affirms the need of nativism and its expression in literature, rather he expects literature to be nativist. Further, he divided nativism as 1) aristocratic/elite nativism and 2) Populace Nativism. In spite of RanganathPathare's views, KapilKapoor also contributed in the discussion of nativism. He elucidated his stand in his essay 'Summerhill I. A. S. Review of BhalchandraNemade's book 'Nativism' (2009).(Indian Institute of Advance Studies, Simla) While examining 'Nativism', Kapoor admitted the fact that BhalchandraNemade and his nativism theory raised much curiosity in Indian university languages, sociology etc. Kapoor's stand regarding *Brahminism* is against Nemade. It is somewhat supporting to aristocratic nativism. In spite of having some difference of opinion, Kapoor admitted that Nemade propounded Nativism effectively and it is essential. He also admitted that there are many scholars and critics those who support Nemade's stand. He says that Nemade's nativism created promising and optimistic picture in Indian literature, literary criticism, and intellectual sphere.

Sahitya Academy organized a seminar on Nativism at I. I. T. Kanpur. In the seminar Rajeev Seth presented a paper on 'Nativism an area of Introspection'. In this paper he says that Nativism means to return to our roots. i.e. consciousness of self which was destroyed during colonization. Besides, many scholars and writers participated in the Seminar on Nativism. Dr. Ashok Babar and RajanGavas also contributed substantially in this deliberation.

Objections on Nativism:

Many scholars have discussed on Nemade's theory of Nativism. The scholars like R. B. Patankar, HarishchandraThorat, Vilas Sarang, M. S. Patil basically tried to show the limitations of Nemade's Nativism, and to some extent they rejected this theory. These scholars think that Nativism is stand against modernism. As a principle, Nativism is against modernism. In short, Nemade is against modernism. The objection against Nemade's theory is that Nemade's theory supports ideology of Hinduism. Nemade's theory of nativism favours caste system of Hindu religion. In this way, Nemade's tendency is to preserve caste system. So, SharadPatil and RaosahebKasabe openly and strongly criticized Nemade's theory of Nativism.

Objection of Sharad Patil:

Vasudeo Sawant wrote an article entitled 'Towards an Alternative Aesthetics' in *Paramarsh* (Vol. 11, Issue-1, May 1996). In this article, he discusses literary criticism and critical views of Nemade and Sharad Patil. While answering this article, Sharad Patil analyzed Nemade's stand of nativism. In the issue of '*Paramarsh*', Vasudeo Sawant wrote that our aesthetics is fettered by limited consciousness of class so it is necessary to hold new approach. Considering this view, non-Brahmin poetics of literature of Sharad Patil and new stand of Nemade tried to establish new poetics of literature. Vasudeo Sawant tried to discuss above in his article. On this background, it is necessary to consider the views and opinion of Sharad Patil.

The scholars are aware of Sharad Patil's views and stand against Indian caste system and caste discrimination. According to Sharad Patil's opinion, the root cause of all Indian problems lies in caste system. Indian society today is dominated by caste system and causes of Indian poverty are social and not economic. Sharad Patil thinks not class but caste is a problem. On the contrary, Nemade considers caste system as a fundamental truth of Indian society. However, he thinks caste system and casteism as two opposite poles. So, Sharad Patil dislikes Nemade's stand. He thinks one cannot struggle against casteism unto the last while believing in caste system as a fact. According to Patil, there is no difference in caste system and casteism. There is a difference between religion and fanaticism but there is no difference between caste system and casteism. Religion is not a materialistic system of exploitation, and governance, but it is universal and ideological system. Racism and casteism are the systems of materialistic exploitation. Sharad Patil thinks casteism as a characteristic of caste system, and Nemade holds exactly opposite view in this respect. Nemade's theory of Nativism does not consider that caste system is inevitability casteism.

Even though, Nemade is a scholar of Indian poetics and Western aesthetics, he is not a scholar of Indian philosophy, especially Buddhist philosophy. He explains and refers to caste related stories but he neglects history of literature which characterized by protest of casteism, exploitation of women etc. So, Nemade does not give alternative for Brahmin poetics and aesthetics. Sharad Patil thinks that Nemade only considers his non-Brahmin Nativism poetics. One thing is noticeable here that Sharad Patil does not reject Nemade's theory of nativism. He thinks that this only as non-Brahmin. The difference is regarding consideration of caste system.

Raosahab Kasabe and Nativism:

Now days, instead of theoretical debate of Nativism, much debate has been taken place on Nemade's stand on caste system. It seems that Raosahab Kasabe also might have taken inspiration from Nemade's views on caste system for the discussion of his nativism. He wrote a book of 459 pages '*Deshivad : Samajani Sahitya*', for the discussion of nativism. This is an exceptional case in itself that not only in Marathi but in all Indian languages a book is written for the discussion of a theory. Some scholars suggested him not to waste a time for nativism. Some say nativism is very ordinary and meaningless and to write on nativism is to make it important. These are some of the views on nativism. Still Raosahab Kasabe wrote a book on nativism. This is an important thing in Marathi literature and poetics.

While explaining the background and cause of writing '*Deshivad: Samajani Sahitya*', Raosahab Kasabe says that it was not clear what Nemade wanted to say in '*Tikaswyanvar*.' It became clear when he delivered lectures and gave interviews after receiving '*Gnyapeeth*' award in 2015. He delivered a lecture in S. P. College, Pune and it is cleared. Raosahab Kasabe considered Nemade's views about caste system, secularism, and feminist movement objectionable and Kasabe decided to write a book on the issue. It is noticeable that the objections of Kasabe and Sharad Patil are similar. The only difference is that Sharad Patil became aware of Nemade's views in 1996 however, Raosahab Kasabe became aware in 2015, i.e. after twenty years. Sharad Patil took his stand without any hindrance. However, it is observed that while writing '*Deshivad: Samajani Sahitya*', Raosahab Kasabe deviate from the core issue – Nativism. The result of this is that the expectation of strong argument against the theory of nativism remains incomplete. On the contrary, instead of theoretical stand, many references, thoughts and statements are of personal in nature.

In this way, Nemade and his theory of nativism are still at the center of debate till today. With 'nativism', 'Dalit Literature' will also enjoy the privilege of importance in coming future.

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