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### **Writing Revolution: Naxalbari Spring Thunder in a Globalized World**

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### Writing Revolution: Naxalbari Spring Thunder in a Globalized World

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#### Abstract

Recently published fictions, two English and one Bangla – Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland* (2013), Neel Mukherjee's *The Lives of Others* (2014) and Supriyo Chowdhury's *Drohaja* (2014), posit interesting discourses on the Naxalbari movement and post Naxalbari Left Radical Politics in India from a distinct global-local perspective. *The Lowland* and *The Lives of Others* were shortlisted for Booker Prize in the Best Fiction category in 2013 and 2014 respectively. *Drohaja* was first published in 2014 (1421 of Bangla era) in the Autumn number (Sharodiya edition) of *Desh*, a bi-monthly Bangla magazine, and then as a separate book in December 2014. This paper situates these texts in the broader tradition of novels which center round Naxalbari movement or touch upon Naxalite politics in passing. It argues that the selected texts mark significant departure from the existing body of literature with respect to political mobilization and participation of tribal and adivasi landless peasants and tea plantation workers and Dalits in the movement. As the revolutionary political actions expanded, new subjects and political landscapes evolved leading to expansion and sophistication of their ideological interface with increasingly complex issues. Instead of closing their narratives in the late 1970s or early 80s like their predecessors, these three texts chart new trajectories from Naxalbari movement to Maoist politics which emerged in India post 1970. Naxalbari movement started as a local peasant agitation but ushered other movements of resistance against exploitations of the subalterns and marginalized groups. These movements bearing local, regional and national dimensions are connected to the global political resistance of different sections to dominant conservative neo-liberal ideologies and economic reforms. Thus over five decades, Naxalbari movement has attained global dimensions in the present world. The three novels capture the different routes of the Naxalbari movement on its way to occupy a central place in the global and local historical and political scenario.

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**Keywords:** Naxalbari, Local-Global, Tribal-Adivasi-Dalit, Maoist, Dissension, Resistance, Globalization.

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Naxalbari movement that broke out in May 1967 in a remote village of West Bengal caused significant alterations and shifts in politics, economy, society, art and culture. It originated as a resistance at Naxalbari involving landless peasants and tea-gardens' workers. The Naxalbari movement can be seen to largely follow the tradition of peasants' struggle of Tebhaga and Telangana of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Its leadership came from the radical section of the CPI (M) which later formed the CPI (ML) and had leaders like Jangal Santhal, Kanu Sanyal and Khokan Majumdar at the forefront. Though Charu Mazumdar, the acknowledged architect of the movement, got involved with it after the initial days of confrontations between the rebels and state forces and quite a few losses of lives, it was his speeches and writings which set the national and international context and articulation of the movement, formulated its immediate and long term agenda and objectives, built an urgent revolutionary ambience in rural and urban Bengal in which it would operate, defined its political rhythm and direction and, above all, gave the clarion call to carry the movement forward to usher a systemic change in political, social and cultural scenario. The intensity of this beginning was powerful enough to instantly affect the lives of people in Bengal – they engaged with its ideals, principles, ideology and political actions along with retributions it evoked from the coercive state often operating in tandem with anti-Naxalbari political parties. None remained untouched by this movement as it set on its ambitious and adventurous political journey.

The Naxalbari movement and evolution of radical left politics induced a significant body of literature, particularly novels, in Bangla. English novels contextualized on Naxalbari movement or having reference to it is a relatively recent phenomenon. This paper proposes to examine significant discourses on multiple linkages of Naxalbari movement and post-Naxalbari radical left politics both at national and global contexts offered by three recent novels, two English and one Bangla – Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland* (2013), Neel Mukherjee's *The Lives of Others* (2014) and Supriyo Chowdhury's *Drohaja* (2014).

### **Local and Global Identity of the Movement:**

The three selected texts mark significant departure from the earlier novels based upon, or having reference to, the Naxalbari movement and Naxalite politics. Lahiri's *The Lowland* is a generational narrative covering the lives and times of three generations of Mitra family over a period of five decades. The geographical locations change with shifts in the timeline, from Kolkata to Rhode Island and other parts of USA. It is the story of two brothers Udayan and Subhash who undertake different directions in life – former sacrificing his life for the cause of Revolution during the course of Naxalbari movement in the late 1960s and early 70s, and the latter opting for a Ph. D program and a subsequent academic career in Rhode Island. However they remain tied by common threads of events and occurrences whereby Gauri is the wife of Udayan and subsequently of Subhash after Udayan's death. Bela, daughter of Gauri and Udayan grows up in Rhode Island under Subhash's guardianship believing him to be her father. Neel Mukherjee's *The Lives of Others* deals with the daily concerns of the Ghosh family and focuses

on the exploitative hierarchal familial establishment that nurtures Supratik, the protagonist, to renounce his family and become a Naxalite political activist. The story begins in the 1960s and covers the socio-economic and political conditions of contemporary India. Mukherjee has established a continuity of the Naxalbari politics with the contemporary Maoist political actions at the face of state perpetrated violence in tribal inhabited areas like Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Supratik is killed by the police in cold blood but he attains a legendary status among the political activists owing to his contribution to the Naxalbari movement. Supriyo Chowdhury's Bangla fiction *Drohaja* is loosely based on a series of political actions executed by students of some schools in North Kolkata when the Naxalbari movement was at its peak in the city. The text traces the evolution of Sudipto and Poone, two such students hailing from completely different backgrounds. Sudipto comes from a Bengaleebhadralok family while Poone represents the culture of the low caste lumpen proletariat. However after almost a decade it is Poonewho emerges to be the committed political activist who shifts to Palamau and gets intricately involved in the political struggle against the upper caste feudal lords there.

These three texts accommodate tribals, adivasis and dalits as political categories in the mobilization of landless peasants and tea plantation workers. They refuse to clamp down any closure of discourse on Naxal politics at the end of 1970s and engage with new political landscapes and subjects and their ever-expanding ideological and political actions. These texts map continuities and chart a political trajectory from Naxalbari movement to Maoist movement in different parts of India. They further locate the alignment of the radical left political struggle at the local-regional and national levels with worldwide resistance to aggressive neoliberal philosophy of development and growth articulated as globalization. Neither the Naxalbari movement nor the subsequent radical movements including the Maoist movement can be discussed without the local-global binary.

The global context of the Naxalbari movement was drawn by China's *People's Democracy* editorial *Spring Thunder Over India* which extolled Indian peasantry for their courage and zeal to resist the oppressive feudal lords-tea-estate owners backed by the state that sold itself to US imperialism and its accomplice Soviet Union – it was reproduced in *Liberation*, the CPI (ML) mouthpiece, in its first issue on 01.11.1967. Elaborating this Doktor'da, a physician, one of the characters in *Drohaja* said:

Just at the time when I am speaking to you in this room, the neighbouring country China is standing under the leadership of Chairman Mao Tse Tung with its head aloft. The immensely mighty American imperialism, beaten hard by Viet Cong guerillas, is fleeing Vietnam. With their hands held together, the university students are resisting tank-forces of the rulers in the streets of Paris. After winning freedom for Cuba under Fidel Castro's leadership and fixing his eyes on the dream of earning freedom for entire Latin America the poet, lover and revolutionary Che Guevara have courted martyrdom in the forests of Bolivia . . . since the death of Che, I am personally haunted by the feeling that we are

*continually running late* (italics mine) ... Long live armed agrarian revolution (Chowdhury 34).

This urge to relate to and catch-up with worldwide liberation-wars was a crucial factor in forging the engagement of educated urban middle and lower middle classes (bhadralks) with the Naxalbari uprising of 1967. Had the Naxalbari uprising not been thus contextualized, it would perhaps have remained a peasant uprising in the tradition of Tebhaga and Telangana of late 1940s and early 1950s with limited discursive frontiers. The mouthpieces of CPI (ML) were simultaneously local and global: the Bangla mouthpiece focused on the country was *Deshabrati* and the English, foregrounding its global connect, was *Liberation*. The three novels contribute significantly to the narratives of local and global binary of the Naxalbari-Maoist movement – while the Bangla novel addresses a comparatively smaller regional audience, the two English novels reach out to a global readership. Together they weave narratives of the local into those of the global and construct an integrated discourse with a new identity which confronts and challenges the dominant established order to secure rights of subaltern and marginal all over the world.

### **Tribals, Adivasi, Dalits and Naxalites:**

KanuSanyal's November 1968 *Report on the Peasant Movement in the Terai Region* defined India as a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country with eighty percent peasant population out of which, at the ground level in Tarai, ten, twenty and seventy percent were rich, middle and poor – 'aadhiyars' (landless-tenant cultivators) and labourers of tea-estates – respectively. Sanyal said that the latter led the Naxalbari movement but did not say that they were predominantly tribals, adivasis and dalits – Saontal, Kurmi, Munda, Oraon etc. The involvement of the left intelligentsia clearly visible in the parts played by KanuSanyal and other activists gave rise to the stereotype of urban educated bhadralk as agency of revolutionary politics. Most of the Bangla novels of 1970s and 1980s, products of urban literati, trapped into the stereotype, affirmed and upheld it and narrated urban bhadralkNaxal activists' journey to villages to organize peasant resistance but remained silent about the adivasis. That the Naxalbari uprising was ignited by adivasi-Mao connections, that it was the first of its kind in post 1947 India or that it had the potential to develop into large scale war on the Indian state, were perhaps not understood clearly enough. As the movement drew to a close by mid 1970s, most of these novels ended in a note of unfulfillment and tragedy. Indeed Samaresh Basu's *Mahakaler Rather Ghora* (1977) is the single novel that not only saw this connect but built its narrative on its Kurmi protagonist Ruhitan (modeled on JangalSaontal) who died with the dream of armed revolution – however, his association with Mao was not direct but struck through Diba Bagchi (modelled on Charu Majumdar).

Jhumpa Lahiri, Neel Mukherjee and Supriyo Chowdhury had the advantage of time and space. With Naxalbari movement and Maoist insurgency as inescapable historical and contemporary living reality, their perspective is wider and deeper than earlier novelists. Unlike

their predecessors, they did not have to close their discourse on Naxalbari movement in the late 1970s or miss the immense revolutionary potential of tribal-Mao connect which led the Indian authorities state that it is the single biggest threat for internal security. True that the stereotype of urban intelligentsia as revolutionary agent influenced both *The Lowland* and *The Lives of Others* – both Udayan and Supratik, the two protagonists who took to revolutionary roads are Kolkata bred, educated youth belonging to bhadralok families. *Drohaja* is different from both the novels in that while its protagonist Sudipto belongs to a well-off bhadralok family, his comrade Poone, the one who refuses to acknowledge defeat and carries the revolutionary legacy to areas outside Bengal is initially a low-caste lumpen-proletariat. As the novel nears its end, Poone emerges as a new political subject, aware of the politico-social injustice and deplorable conditions of the masses and fully committed to change everything for better. Thus Poone's character takes on features of Gramscian 'Organic Intellectual' who through the course of ideological and political actions uplifts his own political selfhood to make a mark beside the 'Traditional Intellectuals'. Poone's political expediencies at Palamau mark a shift in the terrains of radical politics that is evident in the three novels.

However, all the three texts accord more space to the hitherto overlooked tribals and adivasis. Lahiri writes:

Most of the villagers were tribal peasants who worked on tea plantations and large estates. For generations they'd lived under a feudal system that hadn't substantially changed. They were manipulated by wealthy landowners. They were pushed off fields they'd cultivated, denied revenue from crops they'd grown. They were preyed upon by moneylenders. Deprived of subsistence, some died from lack of food (20).

Similarly, Mukherjee in *The Lives of Others*, writes:

We went to indigent agricultural areas where feudalism was still the order of the day, where the exploitation of farmers by jotedaars and moneylenders and landowners was at its inhuman worst. Along the Bengal-Bihar-Orissa borderlands this feudalism was supplemented by the plight of the tribal peoples whose ancient lands had been taken from them and who had been reduced to a form of slavery (61).

Historically and politically, the tribals and adivasis have been excluded from the benefits of national economic policies which seek to initiate and bring about development and progress. The violence wrought by capital-feudal lords-state nexus on tribals, adivasis and dalits during construction of dams at Maithon and Massanjore and mining industries near Purulia, Bokaro and Dhanbad areas finds expression in *The Lives of Others*. Mukherjee writes:

All these had been built on the lands of tribal peoples, flooding and displacing them. Who was going to listen to 100, 500, 1000, or even 10000 dark skinned, backward, jungle dwelling adivasis, the so called 'scheduled tribes', over the collective might and muscle of Steel Authority of India, Tata Steel and Hindustan Cables?" (62).

Poone, a Kolkata-based activist confronts an adivasi village in Palamau for the first time around late 1970s or early 1980s and describes it thus:

How terribly poor the people of this place are. After one meal in the noon they fast in the evening. This is the rule here. Womenfolk don't have more than one saree. After bath in hill streams they stay behind boulders while their clothes dry. They don't know much about agriculture. Collecting jungle wood, mahua fruits and kendu leaves is their only means of livelihood. Most of this money passes into the hands of dalals and traders. Poverty never leaves them (Chowdhury 157).

Thus *The Lowland*, *The Lives of Others* and *Drohaja* together excavate Naxal-Maoist agenda to align themselves with tribal-advansi-dalit struggle against capitalist-feudal lords-state combine since late 1960s to the present times which evolved with time and location of warfare.

### **Moving into a Different Zone of Time and Geo-Political Locality:**

Though Naxalbari uprising happened in North Bengal in late 1960s, its ideology and politics spread over time across different parts of Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha, Nagaland, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Kerala – a few states like Telangana and Andhra Pradesh already had some experience of radical left and Maoist politics. Gauri the female protagonist of *The Lowland*, often found reports of Naxalite-Maoist activities in India in the American newspapers. They revealed the actions to be in the form of attacking the agencies and repressive apparatus of the state, fighting corporations and plotting of seizure of state power. These were “links to time lines of the movement” (Lahiri 275) running deep into India's history in globalization never allowing the movement to die but always “managing to ignite another generation” (275). Thus the phases in the journey of radical left politics in India are links and continuities rather than as separate entities and these were made possible by the deplorable conditions of the advansi-dalit people and their will to change for the better through resistance.

In the years between early 1980s and those deep in the times of globalization, the conditions of advansi-dalit people changed for the worse. Mukherjee vividly portrays the sad story of the advansis and dalits – poor oppressed, exploited and treated with callous indifference by corporate, their agents and musclemen, local magnates and money-lenders, government officials and police:

Her two younger sisters were killed eight years ago – the sixteen year old beheaded with a machete while her parents, tied to the bed, were forced to watch; the youngest sister, fourteen, gang-raped, her eyes gouged out, her tongue cut out and then her neck stabbed. Their crime? The family had tried to resist the moneylender's attempts to take over their land in the village of Pabira. The police at the nearest station, in Ranchi, refused to issue an FIR in response to Sabita's complaint unless she fellated the duty officer; more action would be taken according to the escalation of services she provided (501).

What is this if not the quintessential absence of Indian state that seldom bothered with people displaced and lost? When the presence of India's state apparatus can be felt, it is through its repressive violence on its own people. For instance, the confiscation of the ancestral land of

tribal Majhis who lived along the edges of Saranda forest left them to survive as “daily wage labourer in the city, maidservant in someone’s home, prostitute” (Mukherjee 502). Such incidents, quite commonplace in adivasi-dalit areas, go unreported in the mainstream media. Frustration and anger overwhelm these victims of state perpetrated violence. Consequently they are mobilized by the Maoists who offer them hope to live like a human instead of a hounded animal. Thus the political locations of combat between the Naxalites-Maoists and the state shifted to areas like Daltonganj, Latehar, Chhipadohar etc. These areas belong to the Red Corridor. Texts of different times, *The Lowland*, *The Lives of Others* and *Drohaja* looked beyond the borders of West Bengal of the 1960s and 1970s. Thus they engaged with the political and ideological moorings taking shape after the first phase of Naxalbari movement lost much of its flame and underscored existing exploitative conditions remaining yet to be changed. The various ideological debates indulged into by the radical left parties during the 1980s and 1990s have been explored with efficiency. The idea to keep on challenging the Indian state ideologically and championing the rights of tribal-dalit people have been represented in these texts adequately.

### **The Naxalites-Maoists and Contemporary Radical Left Politics in India:**

It is time to think about the features of this political trajectory. One of the most important features is that the struggle and movement that began in May 1967 is not over. The Naxalbari movement might not have succeeded in winning the war of liberation or transforming the class-based society – indeed the poor exist even today, perhaps in much worse conditions. Neither did the CPI (ML) succeed in establishing a people’s democracy by armed seizure of the State through a mass movement nor could it eliminate the factors which continue to intensify class distinctions and class enmity in society at large. However these failures did not erase the general feeling of the need of an egalitarian society.

While the CPI (ML) fragmented post 1973, numerous political ideas and groups emerged out of it on the Indian political scene. Most of these splinter groups had almost no resources to fulfill the once cherished political aspirations. The 1970s and 1980s marked a period of introspection for the various political leaders, activists and groups involved in their own ideological and political struggles. Out of these exercises over the years two major centres emerged – the CPI (ML) Liberation led by Vinod Mishra and the CPI (Maoist) established in 2004 following the merger of CPI (ML) PWG, the MCC and some other Naxalite groups. CPI (ML) Liberation has played a crucial role in Indian politics – with its emphasis on mass organizations, cultural fronts and broad based democratic agitations it has been able to organize and conduct “militant peasant movements in Jehanabad and neighbouring areas of Bihar, and the mobilization of the long deprived tribal people of KarbiAnglong in Assam behind the demand of autonomy” (Banerjee 366). Gradually CPI (ML) Liberation oriented itself further towards parliamentary democratic politics and met with some electoral success in Bihar and Assam state legislative assemblies and the Lok Sabha elections. However during the 1990s, the party faced difficulties due to dissensions and desertions. Its base in Bihar showed chinks “where despite



popular agitations organized by it on class issues (like distribution of land, better wages for agricultural labourers, etc.), it failed to overcome the traditional caste differences” (367). Despite these difficulties, CPI (ML) Liberation remains one of the significant parties engaged with the complex Indian Left political traditions and culture. It gained considerable success in parts of Bihar and Jharkhand where it led “land redistribution movement and the rural poor’s wider campaign for livelihood, social dignity and political assertion” (367). The economic and political configurations have been changing rapidly in both these places since the last few years with the rise and fall of identity based parties operating on caste and community ties like RJD, rapid industrialization and urbanization in various parts of these states, the discourse of development brought about by globalization and open market championed by both bourgeoisie political parties, the JDU and the BJP – the first oriented towards secularism and the second towards religious orthodoxy, fundamentalism and jingoism. It is to be seen how CPI (ML) Liberation manages to hold its own political space considering the fact that it has many more enemies and rivals to compete against.

Towards the end of 1980s and beginning of 1990s, a militant peasant movement with strong centres in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar and Odisha was organized on the Naxalbari line of armed guerrilla struggle against local ruling class and war against the state. In the last two decades “they extended their influence to some 130 districts in at least ten states of India (accounting for 25 to 30 percent of the country’s land mass)” (Banerjee 369). The control extended over both forest areas and plains, stretching from the state of Bihar bordering Nepal in the north through Jharkhand further south and Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra in the west, down to Odisha in the east and Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu in the south. “The corridor looks larger than the geographical region of the other two insurgency-affected areas – of the north-east (Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Tripura) and Jammu and Kashmir the north-west” (369). Sumanta Banerjee opines that with the formation of the CPI (Maoist) on September 21, 2004, the Naxalite-Maoist guerrilla movement was somewhat strengthened. He writes:

In its programme, it reaffirmed its main political agenda – agrarian revolution through protracted people’s war to capture State power and set up a ‘people’s democratic state’, develop their guerrilla squads into a people’s liberation army, wage struggles against the Indian government’s latest plans to set up Special Economic Zones (SEZs), and resist the displacement of tribals and forest-dwellers due to mining projects (369).

The areas which belong to adivasis are very rich in mineral resources and are at present targeted by Indian industrial interests, sometimes jointly with foreign capital, backed by the Indian and provincial states, which Maoists are trying to resist. Their criticisms notwithstanding, the Maoists’ commitment to build self-reliant egalitarian economic arrangements where adivasis not only develop and share available resources but also get education, health-care and, above all, a life of respect, is not only a critique of neo-liberal ideas of development, but also an articulation of making their alternative functional; they are challenging claims that democracy is

directly proportional to capitalist development. The Maoists managed to mobilize the poor and drive out the oppressive forest contractors, landlords and moneylenders to a large extent. However they are perennially at threat from the political rivals, state forces and a section of the poor villagers who were mobilized by the central and state governments to form SalwaJudum, a counter-revolutionary armed force in Chhattisgarh. The Maoist excesses, claimed by them to be symbolic attacks on an oppressive and exploitative establishment, created a negative impression about them in the minds of the general public and they are at risk of potential alienation from different sections of civil society. One has to see the Maoist activities in the broader historical and political context and try to understand their political aesthetics in the present times of globalization.

### **The Radical Left – Negotiating Dissension and Resistance in the Era of Globalization:**

In the words of the poet, journalist and activist Samar Sen, “nothing remained the same after Naxalbari” (Sen 3093). He added, “Naxalbari exploded many a myth and restored faith in the courage and character of the revolutionary left in India ... People had to readjust their position vis-a-vis every aspect of the system: political, administrative, military, cultural” (3093). Sumanta Banerjee, a Naxal activist himself and one of the most important historians of the movement succinctly summed up its results:

Most of the progressive trends in social activism today (like the growth of voluntary organizations working among the underprivileged and powerless, or the role of the media in exposing atrocities on dalits and the landless, or the affirmative actions by human rights activists as agents of entitlement, acting on behalf of the dispersed social groups) can be traced indirectly to the issues raised by, or associated with the Naxalite Movement in the 1960-70 period. For the first time in post-independence India (barring the short-lived Telangana and Tebhaga struggles in the 1940-50 period), the movement asserted the demands of the poor and landless peasantry in a way that shook the then atrophied Indian political scene. It sensitized the rest of our society to their desperate efforts to escape the intolerable conditions of economic oppression and social humiliation (2115).

The Naxalbari movement not only exposed the sham of the world’s largest democracy, it also tore apart the leftist mask of constitutional left parties of India. However, political observers and scholars who engaged with Naxal-Maoist politics underscored certain areas of their limitations. They assumed the rural poor and landless peasantry to be homogeneous and poverty to infuse the marginalized and subalterns with revolutionary zeal, to indulge in excessive action based politics perpetrating violence which distanced Naxalites-Maoists from citizens, civil society and mass media and, above all, remaining bottled in the twin issues of land reforms and social justice for the poverty ridden backward, low caste and adivasi people. The Naxalites and Maoists have allegedly failed to evolve with economic and political alterations which have long-term significance for the people as well as the political and cultural institutions of the country. They are also said to have not succeeded in incorporating in their ideology and politics the post-

modern reformulations in the ideas and praxis of Marxism, Communism, Maoism and other variants of radical left.

In the present times defined by neo-imperialism of leaders of globalized economy, transnational monopolies, east-west and south-north divides, arbitrary and unilateral wars conducted by the US and its allies against oil-rich west Asian nations in the name of democracy, their manipulation of environmental issues in the name of development on the one hand and internal wars waged by the relatively backward states against their own people and depriving the latter of almost everything necessary to live like a human being on the other. However these do not go unchallenged. There is on one hand the global backlash against globalization and on the other local level popular resistance crystallizing in the 'red corridor'. While the global backlash may ensue periodically, secure different ideological and political forms, and lead to diverse results, the Naxal-Maoists have to keep up protracted war against Indian authorities to make their agenda of justice to adivasis-dalits meaningful. The task is difficult in a scenario where social classes have undergone significant changes:

(i) the changes in the economy brought about by a new technology ushered in by the neo-liberal global order that has changed the composition of both the industrial working class and the professional middle classes, on the one hand; and (ii) the growing self assertion by hitherto ignored oppressed communities and sections of the population, which are being marginalized by the impact of this neo-liberal economic order, on the other (Banerjee 57).

Lahiri writes resistance of the global level around a character who finds new sites of political contests in Rhode Island. Bela, daughter of Naxal activist and martyr Udayan refused a safe and secured career and chose a profession that had an inbuilt resistance to corporatized economic benefits and their monopoly without any idea of her actual father at that point of time. Bela worked as an agricultural apprentice, in the field:

Putting in irrigation lines, weeding and harvesting, cleaning out animal pens. Packing crates to sell vegetables, weighing them for customers on the side of the road. When she came home on weekends he saw that the shape and texture of her hands were being altered by the demands of her labour. He noticed calluses on her palms, dirt beneath her nails. Her skin smelled of soil. The back of her neck and her shoulders, her face, turned a deeper brown (222).

Bela did not work for a livelihood alone. Neither could Subhash fail to notice that over the years "her work started merging with a certain ideology" (224), nor could he fail to see the real strength of resistance which she inherited from Udayan. When Bela chose her own career, it was Udayan who resurfaced in Subhash's memories.

Everything that Naxalbari stood for continued to live on from Udayan to Bela who walked the steps of her father etched decades ago although in a completely different political and social setting. Subhash was in two minds about Bela. While he happily complimented her for her choices, he could not help feeling that the path was rootless. He felt threatened by what he

imagined to be the sheer force of Udayan's inspiration and influence on Bela and at times "Subhash believed that Udayan would come back, claiming his place, claiming Bela from the grave as his own". This sense of possession went beyond the private and personal, into the realms of political citizenship. Subhash was scared that he would lose Bela for her idealism as he had lost Udayan for his ideology. Thus the ideals of the Naxalbari movement were transported to foreign shores and, with time, they emerged as worldwide resistance to all forms of domination against all forms of inequalities. Udayan's voice resonated when Bela "talked to him (Subhash) about why people still died from famines, why farmers still went hungry. She blamed the unequal distribution of wealth" (Lahiri 225, 224).

### **Conclusion – The Local-Global World and its Revolutionary Potential:**

An event can be both global and local. The event which at the global scale is set in dominant and resistant ideological discourses and world-wide network of political actions and counter-actions can also be an issue of identity at local level. While at a global level it can have an articulation which is meaningful all over the world notwithstanding national differences and distinctions, at the local level it may be steeped into the political specificities thereby forging links with other localized political developments to secure a certain identity invested with both localized and globalized elements. The Naxalbari movement was one such resistance movement aimed towards revolutionary systemic changes in postcolonial India. It is because of this multi dimensional character that the movement has not lost its significance.

It is at this interesting backdrop of dialectical crossroads of discourses related to popular dissensions, resistances, upsurges and protests which are going on locally and globally that the recent texts *The Lowland*, *The Lives of Others* and *Drohaja* are situated and contextualized against. Presently, the political experiences at the site of local point out the relevant issues and questions which need to be asked and explanations of these are to be sought for. Simultaneously, the global exhibits a promise, hope and optimism for the marginal social groups and communities who constitute the broad category of the subalterns and the 'have nots'. Perhaps even the struggles of the so called upward mobile middle classes will at times converge, overlap, coalesce and synchronize with the demands and assertions of the former. Thus these features directly and indirectly point towards a future that might cause social transformations in both the local and global scenarios but whether they will complement each other is a vital question which perhaps can be answered only by the future course of direction the socio-political, economic, cultural, ideological and practical discourses are taken or channelized.

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