



Futuristic Narratives for Viksit Bharat: deconstructing the post-colonial legacy in India's path to development

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ABSTRACT

Vision of India for a Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by 2047 calls for an introspective engagement with its colonial legacies and their ongoing impact on society. Literature, especially post-colonial and historical fiction, offers a profound lens to analyze the interplay of history, identity, and development. This paper examines the narratives of R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, and Mamang Dai's *The Black Hill*. These texts critique colonial systems while reclaiming indigenous narratives and exploring themes of cultural identity, resistance, and resilience. Using theoretical frameworks from post-colonial scholars such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha, this study identifies how historical fiction can serve as a tool for envisioning an inclusive and sustainable future for India. This paper argues that revisiting colonial and post-colonial narratives is essential for bridging historical consciousness with futuristic aspirations, fostering innovation rooted in India's cultural and socio-political context.

Keywords: Colonial legacies, Historical fiction , Cultural Identity, Resistance , Inclusive development.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of a Viksit Bharat transcends economic indicators to encompass social equity, cultural inclusivity, and sustainable development. However, India's colonial past continues to shape its political, economic, and cultural frameworks. Post-colonial literature, as a repository of collective memory, plays a critical role in deconstructing these colonial legacies and envisioning a more inclusive future. This paper investigates how literary narratives reflect, critique, and propose alternative visions for India's development.

Focusing on four key texts—R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Amitav Ghosh - *The Glass Palace*, Arundhati Roy- *The God of Small Things*, and Mamang Dai- *The Black Hill*—this study examines the tensions

between colonial histories and post-colonial realities. The selected works not only interrogate historical injustices but also advocate for reclaiming indigenous perspectives and fostering resilience in the face of socio-political challenges.

Colonial Legacies in Indian Literature

The most enduring impact of colonialism lies in its reshaping of cultural and political identities. Edward Said (1978) identifies this as the creation of an "Oriental Other," while Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) critiques the dominance of Western historical narratives over indigenous histories. These ideas are central to *The Glass Palace* of Ghosh, which explores the colonial exploitation of Burma, India, and Malaya through the experiences of interconnected families. Ghosh critiques the dehumanizing effects of colonial capitalism and the transplantation of European ideals, which disrupted indigenous cultures and economies (Ghosh, 2000). Similarly, Mamang Dai's *The Black Hill* delves into the Northeast Indian context, a region often marginalized in mainstream Indian narratives. Set in the 19th century, the novel captures the intersection of indigenous cultures and colonial incursions, portraying the disruption of traditional ways of life. Dai's narrative exposes the layered impact of colonialism on tribal communities and their cultural memory (Dai, 2014).

Resistance and Reclamation in Post-Colonial Narratives

Post-colonial literature not only critiques colonialism but also reclaims agency for the marginalized. Gayatri Spivak (1988) underscores the importance of allowing the subaltern to "speak," a theme evident in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. Roy critiques caste oppression, systemic inequalities, and patriarchal structures, demonstrating how colonial frameworks perpetuated these issues. Her portrayal of marginalized characters like Velutha embodies resistance against entrenched hierarchies (Roy, 1997).

In *The Black Hill*, Mamang Dai emphasizes the resilience of indigenous communities, portraying their ability to adapt and resist colonial forces. The story of Gimur and Kajinsha, who defy societal norms and imperialist pressures, reflects the need to reclaim indigenous identities and

challenge external domination. Dai's work is a testament to the power of storytelling in preserving cultural memory and fostering resilience.

Cultural Hybridity and Future Pathways

Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity (1994) offers a lens to analyze the blending of colonial and indigenous cultures. In *Waiting for the Mahatma*, R.K. Narayan portrays Gandhi's ideals as a bridge between traditional Indian values and modern aspirations. Gandhi's emphasis on self-reliance, non-violence, and rural development resonates with India's contemporary focus on sustainable practices like Atmanirbhar Bharat (Narayan, 1955).

Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* similarly highlights the hybrid identities formed during colonial rule, offering a vision for future reconciliation. The novel suggests that understanding these hybrid identities is essential for building a more inclusive society. By juxtaposing personal narratives with historical events, Ghosh underscores the importance of integrating diverse cultural perspectives into India's developmental vision.

Towards a Vision of Viksit Bharat

India's development journey must integrate historical consciousness with futuristic planning. Literature such as Ghosh's and Dai's provides blueprints for this integration by advocating for: Reclaiming indigenous knowledge systems; Addressing socio-economic disparities rooted in colonial frameworks; Promoting sustainable practices aligned with local traditions; Empowering marginalized voices to participate in nation-building; Bridging regional disparities to create a unified vision of development. By revisiting historical narratives, these texts inspire a vision for Viksit Bharat that is not only economically advanced but also culturally inclusive and socially just.

Summing up

Literature serves as a critical tool for deconstructing colonial legacies and envisioning a more inclusive future. By analyzing the narratives of Ghosh, Dai, Narayan, and Roy, this paper highlights the role of storytelling in addressing historical injustices and proposing pathways for sustainable development. These works emphasize the importance of integrating cultural heritage, grassroots innovation, and inclusivity into India's developmental

aspirations, offering a roadmap for realizing the vision of Viksit Bharat.

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