



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GUWAHATI
SHORT ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Name of the Student : Halim Hussain

Roll Number : 146141011

Programme of Study : Ph.D.

Thesis Title: Narratives of the Naxalbari Movement: A Study of Selected Literary Works

Name of Thesis Supervisor(s) : Prof. Rohini Mokashi-Punekar

Thesis Submitted to the Department/ Center : Humanities and Social Sciences

Date of completion of Thesis Viva-Voce Exam : 28-11-2022

Key words for description of Thesis Work : Naxalite movement, Naxal, West Bengal, Peasant movement, Telangana movement, Tebhaga movement, Red Corridor, Subaltern.

SHORT ABSTRACT

Literary as well as non-literary writings on the first phase of the Naxalite movement help locate many facets of this powerful resistance to the political and social establishment. The fictional and non-fictional representations of the Naxalite movement of the 1960s and 1970s in West Bengal highlight key issues which reveal the factors leading to the rise and fall of the movement. These writings are testimonies to the long-standing exploitation and ruthless suppression undergone by tribal communities and the rural poor in India. Literary representations of the Naxal movement also bring to light its ideological underpinnings as well as the conflict within its leadership arising out of caste and class differences.

The Naxalite movement began in 1967 with violent clashes between the police and the peasants in the Naxalbari area of the Darjeeling district of West Bengal. Several reasons accounted for the open rebellion of the poor and the landless, the most crucial being the atrocities and exploitation suffered by the poor peasants at the hands of the rich and landed gentry. Prior to the Naxalbari uprisings, there were other similar peasant rebellions such as the Telangana movement (1946-1951) and the Tebhaga movement (1946-1947). These, however, could not withstand the might of the state for a long duration. The Naxalite movement though has been a

long-standing and continuing resistance, that has lasted in some region or the other of central and eastern India for more than five decades. The so-called 'Red Corridor' covering states like Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and West Bengal is still operational. However, the movement has changed dimensions with changes in time and place, and has much less in common with its early forms.

Fictional representation of the Naxalite movement is a significant research area, because of the inherent literary excellence of the works as well as for the numerous socio-political issues that they portray. However, this body of literature may not have received the attention it deserves in terms of a full-length literary analysis. This thesis will make a systematic study of the literary texts based on the West Bengal region (both in English and in translated works from Bengali) that have been published in recent decades in the wake of the movement. The selected list of writers includes Mahasweta Devi, Manoranjan Byapari, Bappaditya Paul, Joya Mitra, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Neel Mukherjee.

This study focuses on analyzing literature representing the first phase of the Naxalite movement from and in the West Bengal region of the country. The selected texts attempt to present the struggle and pain of young people who joined the movement in rural and urban areas of West Bengal. A generation of youth, as well as many from tribal communities belonging to bordering areas of West Bengal, fought and died for an ideological cause. The present thesis therefore examines the politics of ideology and the challenges such politics faces in the face of violence.