

## Exploring New Aesthetics of Tribal Poetry with Reference to Korku, Pawari and Banjara Dialects

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### ABSTRACT

Gond, Korku, Bhill, Pardhan, Madia, Pawar, Santhali are some tribal communities settled in the hills and forest of India. Many of them are found spread in Maharashtra. The area called Gondwan has the largest number of Gond and Pardhan communities, and once they had their territory there. Similarly, the Korku tribe is settled in the Melghat area of Vidarbha and Pawari in the western region of the Sahyadri. During the course of time, they lost their script, but they were able to preserve their dialects and culture, which is rich and erotic. They sing several folk songs at the festivities and cultural gatherings. Now, due to the spread of education and facilities, many talented poets and writers from the communities have come forward and produced a lot of literature, particularly poetry. They used Marathi script for their poetic expressions. The poets like Ramgopal Bhilavekar in Korku dialect, Santosh Pawara in Pawari dialect and Dr. Veera Rathod in Banjara dialect are some of the important names whose poems in their respective dialects have been taken for the study.

This research article is an attempt to bring fore the tribal consciousness expressed by them and a serious and novel attempt to explore their aesthetics with some examples by translating them into English. Hopefully, it will provide an international platform for these tribal senses and sensibilities and bring before the developed world community the richness of rebellious thoughts and a beautiful cadence of content essential in their short but simple compositions.

*Keywords: Aesthetics, consciousness, dialects, tribal, aboriginal, primitive.*

### Introduction

Tribal people in India have had a history, culture, and literature of their own irrespective of the area where they first settled and where they were later forced to migrate. Since they had a typical culture, they also had their languages and picture script since the beginning of human civilization. They were the primitive and aboriginal communities in the Indian sub-continent. Hence, the tribal people are found in almost all South -Asian countries. Several tribes like Bhill, Korku, Munda, Santhal, Nag, Kol, Khasi, Khond, Korwa, Madra, Dhangar, Kathodi, Katkari ,

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Pawari, Korku, Gond have survived in various parts of India and were once in prosperous state competing with the Aryans. But, later, due to the dominance of the Aryans, they were pushed into the forest to survive and thus were alienated from the mainstream. With their lives in the deep forest and caves, they somehow preserved the rich and typical culture of the area and community.

Tribal dialects fall in the Dravidian group of languages. Late Vyanktesh Atram, the tribal research scholar, studied the Aryan script and concluded that it was the Gondi script originally and not the Aryan script (Reference to Gondi Culture, 2001). At present, many tribal and non-tribal linguists and researchers are engaged in reviving the script and literature written in it. G.A. Grierson's seminal work, 'Linguistic Survey of India' (1906), includes the Gondi dialect in the Dravidian Languages in the fourth volume of the work. (Munda and Dravidian Languages- Vol. 4)

It helps to reveal that the tribal languages are ancient, rich in vocabulary, and impressive. To keep up the permanent existence of these languages, several writers and researchers have made a lot of effort and implemented many projects. By means of the Tribal Literature Movement, the first generation of new tribal poets started writing in the 1980s. This generation brought a lot of self-respect, burning consciousness, inspiration, pain, rebellion, and innovation. Vynkatesh Atram, Bhujang Meshram, Vahru Sonwane, Chamulal Rathwa, Dr Dhongde, Dr Vinayalk Tumram. Dr. Nilkanth Kulsange, Ushakiran Atram, L. S. Rajgadkar, and Vitthalsing Dhurve are the revolutionary representatives of this generation. With the poetic achievements of all of them, the tribal poetry blossomed like a palas flower with the radiance of rebellion. As these poets have different experiences from different tribal tribes, they have effectively presented the transparency of life through their poetry.

Many talented poets of this generation had to bear the pain of poverty, negligence, and casteism. The poetry of the first generation of the tribal has been written by experiencing painful life and seeing the great agitation in the outside world, such as running behind the hunt for the sake of a sick stomach. Therefore, it is not surprising if tribal poetry differs in terms of experience, content, subject, language, words, and style. But because of the pride in the native language or the concern about the existence of the mother tongue, talented poets like Bhujang Meshram, Vitthalsing Dhurve, and Vahru Sonawane were able to give a touch of native language to the reality of life. Some of their compositions are cultured in their native language. The rebellious attitude of the poets is seen in these compositions.

The present brief study is an attempt to produce some of the compositions written in Pawari and Korku dialects in English with their critical appreciation and explore their aesthetics. A short analysis of the use of the figure of speech followed by the analysis will add to the exploration. This would be a novel attempt to justify the tribal literary contribution by bringing them into the English language and making them known to the world like the black and Dalit literature. The selected poems are transcribed and translated into English.

### **Analysis and Translation of some Korku Poems of Rangopal Bhilavekar**

The poet Rangopal Bhilavekar is a philanthropic personality from the Satpura division of Maharashtra and a restless poet who observes the reality around him and makes the government and social system aware of it. The poet seems to focus on the complexities of Korku's life, which is his basic burning question. It is the same attempt to present the painful reality through his poetic style. He was born in Korku tribal community in the Melghat region, and Korku is his mother tongue. He seems to focus on the burning problems and the complexities of life in the life of his people. This is a terrible truth. That is what he tries to convey through his poetic style. He avoids unnecessary displays of verbosity. He does have the nature of pretending. His poetry is about authenticity in life. Nestled in the lap of the Satpura Mountains, Melghat is a peaceful and picturesque place. The chirping of colourful birds everywhere, their free flow, and their free movement in a fearless habitat of animal colonies is the glory of the area. The peaks of high mountains, their fountains, reservoirs, dense forest, and its narrow winding paths -all add to the beauty of Melghat. Melghat has many mythological and historical references. There is evidence that Lankadhipati (King of Lanka) Ravana's son, Meghnad, resided in the area for many days.

The temples of Meghnad in this area bear testimony to this fact. Korku is the ancient tribal community residing in this area of Maharashtra. The Korku people say with great pride that they are the heir of Meghnad. Although Nature exudes beauty in this area, it is plagued by malnutrition and other chronic problems. However, the poet Bhilawekar utters with great satisfaction, 'Our Korku brothers live in harmony' in his poem, 'Abuga Melghat'.

#### 1.Abuga Melghat (Transcription) from Korku dialect)

Swabhimān takā avun abuga sanskruti liyen

Abhiman taka avun abuga sanskruti liyen  
Tarai liyem bebhav pyar abuga'  
Tarai hoy ura ga laxmi abuga  
Tarai hoy shan, man, sanman  
Astitva, asmita, abhiman, swabhiman hoy abuga.  
Tarika hot abuga  
Tarai ga byav dauga eden savva ruyen  
Banne eden dahej pratha  
Ban du eden bhrunhatya  
Bhrunhatya eden dau baki mento  
Palapachola, kandmula, fallen  
Enene dodoba niyam  
Atithi devo bhavam  
Dusra ga japay may samman  
Stri purush samanta  
Vasudhaiiva kutumbakam  
Samuhit kutumb do ekta te pera ithuba  
Eni alega samrudha sanskruti  
Adivasi sanskruti!!  
(Transaltion)  
Our Melghat  
  
We're proud of our culture  
And proud of our language,  
Have immense love for girls,  
They're our Goddesses.  
  
A girl's dignity, respect and honour  
Always we do keep,  
Existence, identity, pride, self-esteem  
Never have we made be weep.

A girl is married here  
Only for half a rupee,  
No infanticide here,  
No girl is burnt for dowry.

Leaves, herbs, and tuber-  
Help to make us strong,  
And prevent us from observing  
The traditions wrong.

Even in this, the rules are followed  
We look upon a woman like a mother  
Equality of men and women,  
What we most bother  
'Vasundhaiva kutumbakam,'

Our living in joint family  
Teaches collective living,  
This is our rich culture  
Our tribal culture!!

Melghat is the home of some good practices and is also a home for poor and needy people. The poet Bhilawekar has shed much light on the desperation and destitution of Melghat in one of his poems...

### Eden Banne Melghat

Naisargik sampanna samrudhha Melghat  
Eden taka anek samasya  
Eden vatre rojgar, eden banne shikshan  
Eden banne da, eden banne lain,  
Eden banne vikas  
Eden taka mahabhayankar rog kuposhan  
Eden hoy anyay, atyachar, baltkar do bhrashtachar

Eden dauba manavadhikar ullgghan  
Jagtikikaranga eni ugen bhi  
Ede baki gavage kork doduka lain  
Eden vikas yohna ga  
Inj doke Imabalachak list  
Online do kagdo liyen  
Pan eden doke tason  
Edega korkun banne jijoma anajo  
Edega jumuga patri liyen  
Bhrahstacharaga kagdi ghodgi ke  
Dilli te lekar geli taen  
Do geli te leakr Dilli taen  
De ga hoy neta  
Bogus do adnyani  
Edega korku ga fayada sate  
Bholapana ga do adnyani ga  
Do bhrashtachar sokda de,  
Bhebherti lakken khudga laj  
De ghalaja eden  
Upasmari do kuposhan  
Mya khom ka vikasga tufan  
Do Melghataga kula.

Another Face of Melghat  
Melghat is rich in natural resources, though,  
The seeds of various problems here it sows.

No employment, no education here.  
No electricity and no water, there.

No developmental criterion  
Here they ever apply

Terrible diseases, malnutrition,  
Daily fasting, are what they supply.

Injustice, oppression, rape  
And corruption daily here happen,  
Human rights are violated here  
In this age of globalization.

The people of some villages  
Have still not seen electricity here,  
A long list of development plans  
Remains long only on paper.  
But, first of all,  
People have no food to eat.  
The administration system here  
Running only on name of development line,  
Paper horse of corruption, everywhere,  
From lane to Delhi, digs gold mine.

The leaders here  
Bogus and the unconscious,  
Takes huge advantage  
Of naivety and compliance.

And, with the bread of corruption  
He fills his own stomach  
So here it is  
Starvation and malnutrition.

Only one is the storm of development and....!!!

Employment, education, electricity, water, food, nutrition, corruption, many diseases and health are still besieging Melghat. 'Why is the soil of Melghat, why is Melghat not developing?

The poem takes such many questions and while measuring the damage done by these questions on the traditional lives of Korkus, it insists on research.

Gondi Korku Bhilli, Kolami, Santhali, Mundari, Bodo, Pawari, Dehwali, Halbi are the dialects of these tribal communities. These languages are very ancient and rich. A large class of dialects is also spoken in many parts of India. Some of these speeches are scripted, and some are not. It is older than Sanskrit. It has a wealth of vocabulary. This separate language is the real identity of the tribal group. The poet Bhilavekar is proud of his mother tongue and wants to share it. For he knows that if the language is lost, the identity of the tribal group will inevitably be destroyed. At present, this risk is possible. Many tribal languages are on the verge of becoming extinct today. They will not turn their backs. These languages have survived to this day due to ancient and traditional folklores in their dialects. If we want to preserve the life values of tribes, we should preserve their linguistic characteristics. This is the responsibility of all the tribal talents and these workers. See the poet Bhilavakar's meditation on this matter in another poem:

### Bhasha Abuga Asmita

Gondi Korku Bhilli Mundari

Bodo, Kolami, Santhali, Pardhani

Ini samruddha bhasha abuga

Adim bhasha shan abuga.

Adim bhasha jan abuga

Adim bhasha nishan abuga

Aadim bhasha abhiman abuga.

Adim bhasha anmol dharohar abuga

Adim bhasha ga jatan dada farjo abuga

Adim bhasha ga suraksha abuga

Adim bhasha ga unnati tarkki abuga.

Adim bhasha man sanman, daulat shausrat abuga

Adim bhasha adivasi danega pahchan abuga



Adim bhasha astitva, asmita sankruti abuga

Adim bhasha garimamay dodo ga jimmedari abuga.

Our Language, Our Pride

Gondi, Korku, Bhilli, Mundari

Bodo, Kolami, Santhali and Pardhani,

This is our rich language

Even older than the Sanskrit.

It's our glory

And it's our life

It's our identity

And it's our pride!

It's our precious heritage

And our duty to maintain it, too.

The safety of it is ours

And it's development too.

Our identity lies in its being,

Its respect and honour, for us, precious!

Its existence, identity and culture,

Our duty is to keep it glorious!

Tribal languages should be included in the school and university curricula and should be studied separately. This is the warning given by poet Bhilawekar in this poem. We must understand the essence of this poem.

### **Translation and Analysis of Some Poems of Santosh Pawara in Pawari Dialect**

Santosh Pawara's poem in Pawari language explains the difference between old and new way of life and ethics, and attitude and gives a new vision and sense to the tribal.

He calls out to all the tribal groups getting ready for their justice, and rights and even condemns them on occasion. This is a poem that knocks on the door of the darkness of tribal and brings them to their senses. The poet Pawara has great respect and admiration for his culture, customs, traditions, life views, and beneficial morals of the elders, including their gods and goddesses. Festivals, rituals, songs, music, and dance have played a vital role in the formation of tribal culture. Their language, which is the source of their structure and vocabulary, and their precious and religious folk literature, which permeated through these languages, along with labour group, cooperation, justice, love, equality, humanity, and honest conduct, all the values of life became a valuable honour of the tribal culture. Due to this, tribal culture has a place among the best cultures of the world, and it would not be wrong to say that, 'Tribal are known to the world for their culture.' It is difficult to say what turn the tribal culture will take in the strong current of globalization. The Poet Pawara, in his poem "Gonkatha Dihe Avhot ( Bad Times Will Come) presents this bitter emotion. Hence the poet insists that their culture should be preserved.

#### Gonkatha Dihe Avhot

Kiravan daron hoch  
Nikvi goya botha.....  
Gao oy goyo huno,  
Hoga judidar  
Jiwneh goya gujarateom  
Mottyanhoch monsoon  
Kutra otra bukah  
Pakla pane udartat  
Mandla mane rodtat  
Kuni khate vatu karo  
Kuni hate khelo.....?  
Dul, pavi kahri homwo?  
Gite kahri gavatla ni  
Gotti sur dartli ni  
Muhvo kani kayto ni...!

Bad Times Will Come!

All turned out like the lines of ants,

The village became desolate  
Close friends went to live in Gujarat  
Leaving all deserted.  
Gloomy like a graveyard,  
Only dogs are left to bark  
Ripe leaves to wither, sick minds to yell  
Who to talk to, who to play with?  
And, no one to attend the call.

Where should I hear the sound of the drum and flute?

Songs are not sung anywhere.

Grinder no longer catches tune.

And pounder no longer tells stories here!!

The use of some expressions like, gloomy like graveyard, barking dogs, weeping sick men, grinder not catching tune, pounder not telling tales, speechless drum and flute, are remarkable and the poet is full of sorrow to see this disturbed and changing form of cultures. All the relatives and beloved ones in the village are migrating to Gujrat like the line of ants. Seeing this, the poet's mind is frightened, and the question of whether the tribal culture can survive in the new urban environment is also gnawing at his mind. All the tribal groups need to take the decisive words of the poet in their hearts that 'forgetting our culture means falling into the abyss.' Ravanya kortli mi toho ,sulatu ma sava ( I plead you, Ravnya do not leave school)

In the poem Ravani by the poet Pawara, a mother who pleads her son not to leave school, is an illiterate tribal mother who toils in the hilly valley should be so devoted to education is the basic mantra of transformation. While reading this poem, one can feel the hatred towards the system which is springing in the heart of this tribal mother, but what is more intense is her obsession with education. This poem seems to inculcate in her son how hard life can be in the absence of education, which is a motivational force for him.

## RAVANI

Podta- utha ahe tu bi ogav  
Horgomayla chandonhoch, chomokehe tubi  
Katakutam, boyde khoyde kam amro.

Patine pencil atham lenen, kann taro.

Petomayli atti otri se, ki ulovata ulvaye ni

Kotrok bi kam korhe, kam hore ni.

Khup hikji jiwtu korji sano

Tudtu ma aas amri, Ravnya amari bava'.

#### BEGGING

You will rise and fall, but go ahead,

You will shine like the moon in the sky.

Thorns and sticks, and in the mountain valley we work,

It's your job to pick up the board and pencil.

Stomach fire is so much, will never extinguish,

The work of day and night will not end it.

Learn a lot, and make the ashes live,

Don't break our hope, I beg you, O, baby mine.

### **Translation and analysis of some poems of Dr Veera Rathod in Banjara Dailect**

As a genius thinker born in the Gor Banjara, an ancient and nature-loving nomadic tribe, who will raise the flags of his own making, Veera Rathod is known to the society and the literary world as his writings have appeared in all the three languages namely Hindi, Marathi and his mother tongue Banjara (Gormati). This poet seems to be busy carving the sculpture of our culture and sufferings in a conscious manner in the coming times, worrying about what will be the condition of our society and what should be the formula and form of understanding for it. The poet intends to enrich our language and culture further and use them as a weapon to protect our existence and identity, for the poet's mind has been cultivated to become aware of the struggle of both language and meaning.

India is a vast country with many cultures and many languages. As every human group is proud of its language and culture, it is not surprising that Veera Rathod is also proud of it. The poet Veera Rathod has created a writing phenomenon from his mother tongue with the dream that his mother tongue will live, have good days, have prosperous days, and flourish with literature. If the language survives, the people who speak it and its culture and traditional folklore will survive. Therefore, the poet Rathod takes care that the language should not be distorted and destroyed. He expresses this concern in his poem 'Vat'( Language)

Jibhe klajep

Khanikhanchi rach

Karanch to

Harpniro kal

Raloralo awach.

Vatach to vachren paida karch

Sadetin hatere jiwdam

Mankyapano bharch

Hajar pidhiro uddhar karch

Kalen vajaro deti rach

### Language

On tongue and heart

Tattooed from birth

Hence,

The time of Indus city

Permeating like a spring on the tongue.

Language only creates thoughts,

Sensation fills in three and a half hands skeleton,

Saves thousands of generations,

Illuminates time,

Language is a sign of being alive!!!

Such is the linguistic perception of the poet. He is benevolent and cautionary at the same time. In this poem, the poet's lament reaches its peak. 'Why to believe in lying Goats?' he asks and thus, he criticizes dangerous gangs and tells them to be careful at this time in his poem...

Kay Len Besiya Bhoroso?  
Ma ghane daneti chhu ghorem  
Sawar samajay hamar vat  
Ek kero pakdan hat, nachiya legi.  
Gaya netro?  
Ye thoto kutevalenvuro  
Kayin len besiya bharoso  
Je karte ayen rhameti  
Page pagep ghat  
Marte arech hamar vat  
Hamar mudang fekun  
Sapnewar takda  
Rachte jarech  
Dhatir lakda  
Ma dher kerochu  
Alda aldan marnakep  
Mankya jiwato reheni.'

Why to Believe in these Lying Goats?  
I have been worried for several days  
If language is killed by tomorrow,  
So, whose hand will you hold?  
And dance in the courtyard of the house?  
In whose harmony will you sing,  
With sorrow and happiness?  
Why to believe in these liar goats?  
What they have been doing to us  
Cheating us from step to step.  
And killing our language.

I'm dying to say,  
Shouting and screaming,  
Till my heart breaks,  
Oh, a person is no longer alive  
After his language being dead!!

### **The Aesthetics of Tribal Poetry**

The above discussion and critical analysis of some select poems may help to understand the aesthetics of these tribal poetry. However, it requires a separate and deep study. This article will not, though bring out it in detail. Hence, I invite other researchers and writers to join me in this endeavor of mine. Still, the above critical analysis is a small step to come to proper conclusions.

Today, the domain of tribal poetry has become crowded. Till date, almost a hundred tribal poets' anthologies have been published in the Marathi language, and a few tribal poems have been included in the school and university curriculum with honor. Some of them are prof. Waman Shedmake, Dashrath Madavi, Babarao Madavi, Prabhu Rajwadkar, Sunil Kumre, Dr. Pitambar Kodape, Dr Nilkanth Kulsange, R. C. Jangle, P. D. Atram, Krushnakumar Chandekar, B. D. Ade, Ushakiran Atram, and Kusum Alam.

This tribal poetry in the spoken language is seen to depict history and culture in all forms of life. Pain, rebellion, acceptance, rejection, and disobedience are considered as single ornaments in these poems and vows to reorient society. Tribal poetry cherishes the conscious inspiration of a different world and yearns for the reality of life to be beautiful. The images and symbols in these poems are also unique and beyond the comprehension of common readers. Dhongta Sab Mayajal, Gondi, (The Illusion of Pretense), Kohla Ta Gato, Madia ( Rise of Kosri) , Kagdi Ghidgi ( Paper Horse), Batese Sakri ( Seeming Chains) , Halbi, Vikasaga Tuphan, Bhilli, ( Storm of Development) Conkretnga Jelen, Korku, ( In the Jail of Concrete) Dukhna Dingar ( Hills of Sorrow) are the nature of some images. Tribal poetry is rich in the use of figure of speech. The images and symbols in these poems are also beyond the understanding of ordinary readers. Interest and ornamentation are also found in these poems.

Writings and explaining the form and structure of tribal poetry have also become quite popular. A new addition to Marathi poetry in the form of tribal poetry is to be accepted. Not only poetry, but stories, novels, dramas, prose, criticism about 20 to 25 students have received Ph.D. degree from various universities on tribal literature from various literary genres. See the use of simile in different poems.

1. Duggu lakken mithuga lal chabu chau' means 'your lips are red like the beak of parrot' (From a Korku poem)

2. Aan detamene fule tutte he, tehki ujle fule downenr gola kagye' means "White flowers started pouring out of her eyes like a flower from a stem". (From a Dehwali poem)

3. Kidawan daron hhoch nikvi goya botha, means (All turned out like the row of ants) (From a Pawari poem)

4. 'Hoygomayla chandonhoch, chomkehe tubi' means 'You will shine like moon in the sky) (From a Pawari poem)

5. Vishram Valvi, in his Dehwali daliect uses pathos to describe the plight of a mother in

'Broken Cord'  
'In the flickering light of the floor lamp,  
In a shed without a door  
With pointed questions on what she lacks  
Reclining the woman poor,  
On the cot with broken cords..... !!!'

This poem is the best example of use of pathos. The Love poem of the Ramgopal Bhilavekar decorated with 'shrungar rasa. 'Pyar Ama Do Prit Iyanga''

Jaisa Jaisa meran haje lake 'holi tiwar'  
Vaisa vaisa iya meden dugu lajjen amma  
Di rupwan suandryabhari chehra  
Pavitra pyrga judai dukhga di khat pahada lijen  
Inj dodo lakken  
Di amte milatijunga di awismarniya kkshan  
Chen? Uriven aam kesari rango ga lija  
Uriven kesari rango ga lija mare



Dugu lakken aam sundrata swargapri kesari lija uriven mare  
Dugu laggen mithuga laal chabu rongo aam chabu  
Nila lija iuriven ki duguba aam  
Nayaka jawani hejken  
Alag alag singar te singarken  
Anupam saundarya ga maharani  
Do kesri erango ga lijagendubuga aam sinag te singarken  
Naya ka byav daken newri rongo  
Dharni may aam eya daen  
Aam ke dote dhanya daen Inin jengi iya dharti may.

(Transalation)

Our Mutual Love  
As Holi festival approaches  
Starts to appear in the head  
That beautiful image of yours!  
By reaching the peak of pain of separation in holy love  
I am waiting for that unforgettable moment of meeting  
Come on, you and me  
That unforgettable moment of meeting!  
What? You put on saffron saree?  
As you put on saffron saree  
An angel from heaven in saffron saree  
Your lips like the red chirping of a parrot  
Adorned in a green saree with various ornaments of youth  
Queen of unparalleled beauty!  
And in saffron saree  
You look grow up to be a newly-wed bride  
My mother dam sings  
Happy to see you  
My life, my mother earth!

To sum up, it is believed that due to the literary glory of this tribal poetry in the various dialects, it will mark a new recognition of its form and qualities in the literary world. These poems will

be a substantial contribution to a new global awakening. This is so true because the traditionalism and innovation of the speaker of these languages cannot be avoided. The researchers should understand this. Respect those languages and learn them. The translation work produced here will serve as a means to understand their sense and sensibilities as well as their aesthetics. This exploration is but the beginning of this great endeavor. For this, Tribal Language Studies should be started in all universities in India and outside India so that the tribal groups can be intimately connected with each other and very well studied.

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