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## **Narrative of Indigenous Survivance in Anuj Lagun's *Baagh Aur Sugna Munda Ki Beti***

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### **Abstract:**

This paper examines Indigenous survivance in Anuj Lagun's poem *Baagh Aur Sugna Munda Ki Beti*, aligning it with Gerald Vizenor's principles of survivance, which merges survival and resistance to underscore Indigenous peoples' active presence and cultural continuity. Lagun's poem, replete with symbolic imagery and cultural references, illustrates the resilience, continuity, and enduring spirit of the Adivasi community. It challenges colonial narratives and cultural dominance while emphasizing the centrality of orality, ancestral knowledge, and storytelling to Indigenous identity. The poem explores themes of struggle and resistance against historical and contemporary injustices and calls for community solidarity to awaken collective consciousness, embodying the essence of survivance in literary narratives. Additionally, the paper investigates Adivasi women's consciousness through this lens, rejecting victimhood in favor of empowerment and active agency as key aspects of Adivasi culture. Through a close reading, the paper aims to highlight the significance of Indigenous narratives within academic and critical fields as a distinct creative category, contributing to the discourse on Indigenous identity, resistance, and cultural preservation. It also seeks to explore the theoretical framework for defining Adivasi literature with regard to global discourse on Indigenous experiences, thus probing the potential and possibility to capture shared Indigenous experiences worldwide while preserving their distinct identities amidst diversity.

**Keywords: Survivance, Indigeneity, Identity, Narrative, Coexistence, Female Agency, Solidarity.**

### **Introduction**

Gerald Vizenor is a prominent Native American writer, scholar, and cultural theorist who propounded the theory of survivance. This critical framework integrates survival and resistance into a singular concept. The thought behind it is to preserve and perpetuate Indigenous identities and cultures through literary narratives. Vizenor's concept allows us to



understand beyond survival the creative resistance of indigenous communities against colonial or mainstream narratives of dominance. Vizenor's critical essays, particularly *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Post-Indian Survivance* (1994) and *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence* (2008), outline the principles of survivance and critique colonial narratives.

Anuj Lagun on the other hand has emerged as a distinguished name among contemporary Adivasi poets. He is from Jharkhand and belongs to the Munda tribe. He is a renowned name in the realm of Hindi poetry and has been awarded many prestigious awards in the literary field including the Sahitya Akademi Youth Award for *Baagh and Sugna Munda Ki Beti*. His literary contributions reflect a significant engagement with the socio-cultural issues of Adivasi communities. Lagun's poetic expressions eloquently articulate the pride and struggles of Adivasi society. He portrays the challenges of the communities that are marginalized in the process of modernization. His verses demand attention as they navigate the periphery, seeking to represent the lives lived on the fringes of contemporary India. Anuj Lagun's critically acclaimed poem "Baagh Aur Sugna Munda Ki Beti" can be analysed as an Indigenous literary discourse through the lens of Gerald Vizenor's concept of survivance.

### **The Concept of “Survivance”**

Gerald Vizenor coined the term in the 1970s to describe a rhetorical theory that aimed at preserving Native American culture through literature while resisting colonial dominance. Survivance is a portmanteau of “survival” and “defiance,” encapsulating the Native experience (Kirpatrik-Matherly 5). The essence of survivance can be traced in the works of Indigenous literary writers who in their creative expressions reinvent traditional storytelling methods, integrating their native languages, and actively engaging with their tribal communities. The concept is closely related to identity, a significant aspect of Indigenous voices globally. In "Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance," Vizenor explains, "Survivance is an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victimry" (Vizenor 7). It rejects the stereotype of the noble savage and the patronizing colonial attitude toward Indigenous communities. Survivance transcends the notion of mere survival, victimhood and narratives of loss through storytelling incorporating resistance, adaptation, and resilience of Indigenous communities against colonial and oppressive forces. It focuses on the active presence, persistence, Indigenous knowledge, narratives, and identities of Indigenous cultures. An act of survivance is Indigenous self-expression in any medium that asserts their



active presence in the world ("Survivance" and the Native American Civil Rights Movement, Late 1960s–Present). It is a forward-looking concept, projecting Native culture into a promising future. It involves passing symbols, ideas, identities, and cultural forms from one generation to another, emphasizing the ongoing communication and creation of knowledge by Indigenous peoples. It aims to heal and remind through ancestral traditions, countering the social and historical erasure of Indigenous communities. Survivance focuses on storytellers' performance, using memories of the visual past to inform present experiences and metaphors (Vizenor qtd. in Premet 8). It represents Indigenous self-representation against colonial subjugation and detrimental developmental plans, emphasizing presence over absence and the continuance of cultural identity. Survivance involves the interplay of irony and Indigenous consciousness highlighting the complexity of Native history and identity. It challenges reductive interpretations that overlook the richness of Indigenous literary art, advocating for an appreciation of its unique aesthetic contributions and visionary narratives.

The concept of survivance as a discourse can be traced in the contemporary voices of Adivasi literature that manifests the ideals of creation and preservation along with survival. In the words of Vandana Tete, a distinguished Adivasi writer... "जो आदिवासियत के लिए, आदिवासी दर्शन वाली, सत्ता रहित सामुदायिक जीवन व्यवस्था के लिए और समूची विश्व मानवता व सृष्टि के रचाव-बचाव के लिए कभी पीछे नहीं हटे। किसी भी कालखंड में समर्पण नहीं किया। अनवरत सृजनरत और संघर्षरत रहे। इस विश्वास के साथ कि- 'हम थे, हम हैं और हम रहेंगे ही...'" (Vachikata 10). Vandana Tete's assertion embodies the essence of survivance by highlighting the persistent and resilient nature of the Adivasi community. Her words emphasize the unyielding commitment to Adivasi identity, philosophy, and a communal lifestyle free from dominance. This enduring spirit is encapsulated in the refusal to surrender across any era and the continuous engagement in creation and struggle, grounded in the belief that "we were, we are, and we will be."

### ***Baagh and Sugna Munda ki Beti and Indigenous Survivance***

Lagun's "Baagh aur Sugna Munda Ki Beti" is a long narrative poem in Hindi. The poem is divided into three parts viz *Baagh* (Tiger), *Sugna Munda* and the longest *Sugna Munda Ki Beti* (Sugna Munda's Daughter). The poem embodies survivance structurally and thematically. In Hindi, the portmanteau of survivance can be the word "Sanjivrodh" a blend of two words; *sanjiv* (vitality) and *pratirodh* (defiance). In the poem, Lagun exploits the metaphorical significance of the natural tiger of the forest i.e. the Adivasis and differentiates it



from the unnatural urban tiger who lives in the capital. The city dweller is now more dangerous and violent than the one who lives in the jungle. The poet reveals sarcastically how the forest and people dependent on it are at the mercy of this figurative tiger who looks civilised and harmless yet is devouring and dangerous to their people.

The poem captures the cultural memory through storytelling. The poet introduces an old man Reeda Haddam who can be interpreted as the inner voice of Birsi, her subconscious. He appears as a sagacious elderly man whose conversation with Birsi awakens her consciousness to fight for the community. The poem also traces a heritable right to continue cultural agencies when Birsi decides to join Dodo Vaidya (community teacher and healer) to learn more about her ancestral value system and worldview. The elements of survivance run throughout the poem. The poem can be analysed with this standpoint vis a vis Indigenous identity. Some of the notable characteristics of survivance are renunciation of victimhood, historical continuity, resistance to dominance, and narrative structure employing orality which involves the knowledge and experience of *purkha* (ancestors) imbibed in their songs and used for community learning for ages in places like *akhra* (community gathering place). Vandana Tete has elaborated on the aspect of orality as one of the quintessential traits of Adivasi literature. She has highlighted ten points of the '*vachikta*' (oral tradition) aspect of '*samudayikta*' (community participation) is crucial to the cultural and economic system of the Indigenous community which encompasses various forms and ways of production. Before the development of the script, they documented their experiences, knowledge, and practices through '*gufa chitr*' (cave paintings), which is a part of their community history. Unfortunately, civilized historians have rejected considering it as a source of history by referring to it as '*aadim*' (primitive). Bu Vizenor calls it the active presence of these people in historical absence.

In the poem, Lagun uses the tribal myth of humans turning to tigers for people who in material greed renounce their adivasi way of life, he calls them *ulatbagha* or *chaanar vaanar* (humans turned tigers). He exploits this myth to warn his community members against cultural assimilation which is leading to a loss of identity and reducing them to no one in so-called civilised society. The tribal story of humans turning into "*ulatbagha*" or "*chaanar vaanar*" reflects how these people navigate between modernity and tradition to preserve their identity. (Lagun 110). The tiger who now lives in the city and has become more violent than ever. Lagun gives a vivid description of the tiger:

जंगल पहाड़ी के इस ओर है और



बाघ पहाड़ी के उस पार  
पहाड़ी के उस पार राजधानी है,

उसने अपने नाखून बढ़ा लिए हैं  
उसकी आंखें  
पहले से ज्यादा लाल और प्यासी हैं...

(The jungle is on this side of the hill,  
And the tiger is on the other side.  
The other side of the hill is the capital,

He has grown his claws longer,  
His eyes are bloodier and thirstier than before...; my trans.33).

The poem reveals the dilemma of young community members who are bound to negotiate between modernity and the Adivasi way of life. In the poem, Birsi, the daughter of Sugna Munda goes through this doldrum too. The dialectics of myth and memory run throughout the poem and Birsi, is determined to resolve the issue of how to recognise and defend the unnatural *baagh* and their *baaghpan* (devouring traits) reflecting the renunciation of victimhood and resistance to dominance. The unnatural metamorphosed tiger is the propounder of *varchasvawaad* (supremacy of one over others) in contrast to the natural tiger, who is the keeper of the forest, very powerful but adheres to the law of nature and does not abuse his power unlike the unnatural city dweller tiger. Birsi's confusion about how to recognise, challenge and defeat this *baagh* to save the dignity of her community's identity is captured with profundity. Lagun writes:

सुगना मुंडा की बेटी हैरान है कि वह उस बाघ की पहचान कैसे करे...?  
कुछ कहते हैं  
वह सभ्यता का उदघोषक है  
सत्ता का अहंकार है  
कुछ कहते हैं  
वह आदमी ही है....  
उस दिन से  
सुगना मुंडा की बेटी



बाघ के सामने तन कर खड़ी है...

(Sugna Munda's daughter is baffled how to recognize that tiger?)

Some say

He is the herald of civilization

The arrogance of power.

Some say He is just a man...

Since that day, Sugna Munda's daughter

Has stood determined before the tiger...; my trans. 34-35).

### **Orality, The Narrative of Historical Continuity and Cultural Memory**

Lagun employs oral traditions to disseminate knowledge in line with Indigenous cultural practices where storytelling, songs, and dialogues are crucial for maintaining cultural identity. This transmission ensures the continuity of identities and strengthens the fabric of Indigenous communities. The reference to "megathelies" or "pathalgarhi," symbols of ancestral values and knowledge, exhibits the importance of orality in Indigenous communities. By incorporating these elements, Lagun emphasises on the preserving Indigenous cultural practices and challenges the written traditions imposed by colonial powers. The poem's narrative structure employs elements of orality, such as *geet* (traditional songs), *samvaad* (dialogues), and *purkha* (ancestral knowledge). The dialogues between Birsi and Reeda, as well as Birsi and Dodo Vaidya, are rich with cultural memory and ancestral wisdom. According to Vizenor, "In the oral tradition, the mythic origins of tribal people are creative expressions...the teller of the stories is an artist, a person of wit and imagination, who relumes the diverse memories of the visual past into the experiences and metaphors of the present" (Vizenor 7). In the poem, Dodo Vaidya's mythic tale of seven people, seven stories, and seven scenes to teach the lesson of coexistence, reflecting the atrocities of civilization on Indigenous communities carries the essence of orality and cultural memory. The exasperation of Dodo's disciples towards the end creates an urgency to confront the *dikus* (outsiders) who have disrupted the essence of coexistence in the natural world order under the guise of development. The poem reflects the deep connection to ancestral heritage and a shared sense of identity among Indigenous youth, highlighting the importance of intergenerational transmission.

Lagun also comments on the necessity for Adivasi's creative expression and its documentation in today's time to present their perspectives globally. He laments that the



imperialistic modern consciousness rejects the unwritten songs of Sugna Munda. Despite colonial efforts to impose their traditions and suggest their ways were the only correct way of life, Indigenous people have continued to sing their ancestral songs, maintaining the act of survivance. He writes:

सुगना मुंडा के सामने  
जो दुनिया बन रही थी  
उसमें लिखित ही वैध था  
वही सभ्य और संस्कारी था  
और लिखा वही जा रहा था जो  
जो विजेता चाह रहा था  
(In front of Sugna Munda  
The world that was being created  
Where only written was valid  
That alone was considered civilized and cultured  
And what was being written  
Was what the conquerors desired; my trans.38).

The lines highlight the systematic marginalization, rejection and refusal of indigenous knowledge and culture by dominant forces. Sugna Munda represents the indigenous identity that is being overshadowed by a new world where written records, controlled by the victors, define civilization and culture. This reflects the struggle to preserve and assert indigenous existence and identity against the homogenizing pressures of dominant narratives.

### **Exhibition of Ecological Balance and Coexistence**

The poem highlights the importance of ecological balance and coexistence, a major principle in Indigenous worldviews. The natural coexistence is threatened by the unnatural "*ulatbagha*," which symbolizes materialistic modernity and greed. Through Dodo Vaidya's teachings, the poem advocates for a return to a balanced, respectful relationship with nature, where all living beings are interconnected and dependent on each other. At the beginning of the second section Sugna Munda, the poet, reflects on the historical and centuries-old relationship of Adivasi communities with the forest. At the beginning of the second section, Lagun writes:





सुगना मुंडा जंगल का पूर्वज है  
 और जंगल सुगना मुंडा का  
 कभी एक लतर था तो दूसरा पेड़  
 कभी एक पेड़ था तो दूसरा लतर....  
 दोनों सहजीवी थे  
 दोनों के लिए मृत्यु का कारण था  
 एक-दूसरे से अलगाव,....

(Sugna Munda is the ancestor of the jungle  
 And the jungle is of Sugna Munda  
 Sometimes one was a vine, and the other a tree  
 Sometimes one was a tree, and the other a vine...  
 Both were coexistent  
 For both, the cause of death was  
 Separation from each other,...; my trans. 36).

The poet also highlights the relationship between predator and prey in the natural world and its necessity for survival and ecology. Both are disciplined in exercising the natural reason, unlike the *ulatbagha* who have become manipulative for untamed greed inviting a catastrophic future by hampering the ecological balance in the name of development and modernity. Dodo Vaidya imparts the spirit and essence of coexistence to his disciples:

“इस धरती में जीवन के तंतु  
 एक-दूसरे से ही बुने हैं  
 हम अपने जीवन के लिए सबके आभारी हैं  
 प्रकृति में कोई भी किसी के बिना अधूरा है  
 एक के बिना दूसरे की पहचान अधूरी है.”

(In this earth, the threads of life  
 Are woven with each other  
 We are all grateful to everyone for our lives  
 In nature, no one is complete without another  
 One's identity is incomplete without the other; my trans. 67).



The loss of *adivasiyat* (the essence of Indigenous identity) is reflected in the poem calling for solidarity, an urgency to preserve their world evoking the consciousness of youngsters of the community not to succumb to this unnatural *baagh*. Sugna Munda realizes that his community, coexistence, land, forests, rivers, freedom, and dignity are all endangered, symbolizing the broader struggle of Indigenous peoples to maintain their cultural integrity, autonomy, and respect in the face of external forces that seek to undermine and assimilate them. (38). Survivance here is about the resilience and active resistance to cultural extinction and the preservation of identity and heritage.

### **Value of Ancestors' Knowledge**

Birsi's dialogue with community elder Reeda Haddam in the third section of the poem reflects her subconscious connection to ancestral teachings. In Indigenous communities' elders are the storehouse of ancestor's knowledge system and worldview. They play a crucial role in passing cultural and historical knowledge to younger generations, ensuring the continuity of Indigenous identities. This transmission often occurs through ceremonies, and community practices, fostering a deep connection to ancestral heritage and a shared sense of identity among Indigenous youth. This process helps preserve and revitalize Indigenous cultures, strengthening the fabric of Indigenous communities. The poem highlights the need to inspire youngsters to maintain the true cultural spirit of the Adivasis while preparing the next generation for future challenges. Reeda Haddam sees potential in Birsi, advising her to become a disciple of Dodo Vaidya. The poet emphasizes the need for action and thought, leading Birsi to Dodo Vaidya. The teacher, with his experience, awakens his seven disciples, using myth and history to create community consciousness.

The poem recounts stories of survivance, such as Singi Dai, the brave Oraon woman who defended Rohtas Garh in the 14th century. (111). This story encourages women like Birsi to exercise their agency with patience, acknowledging the changing nature of threats. Reeda advises Birsi against confronting the tiger, a symbol of oppressive forces, recklessly. Instead, he explains that the tiger can only be subdued through communal efforts and a strategic approach. (49). He comments that the untamable material desire has turned many of them into *chanar vannar* who have become an internal threat to the community value system.

“ज्यों ज्यों अतिरिक्त की लालसा बढ़ेगी  
उलटबाघों की संख्या बढ़ेगी  
और विलुप्त हो जाएंगे सहजीवी बाघ...”



(As the desire for excess increases  
The number of *ulatbagha* will grow  
And the harmonious tigers will extinct; my trans. 57).

Reeda tells Birsi about the history of the unnatural *baagh*, with false pride, has become a maneater. He considers himself God-like while denouncing others as animals. He explains that in the race for civilization, humans have centered themselves and abandoned coexistence and community lifestyle. Lagun has incorporated the Indigenous worldview of harmonious coexistence as asserted by Chief Seattle in his Letter reflecting the similarity of Indigenous beliefs globally which can be traced through survivance. In the poem, Reeda tells Birsi, "This earth does not belong only to humans."

Further, the significance of orality can be noticed in how Dodo Vaidya imparts *purkha* knowledge to his disciples by explaining the importance of community songs (*geet*) in imparting the ideals of cohabitation. He says that while direct communication with all living beings is impossible, songs serve as silent, unwritten, and free expressions that facilitate this communication. In tribal life, there is a song for every event, enabling communication with nature. This is reflected in the lines:

“यह गीत, मंत्र  
रोग के कारण से  
संवाद का एक माध्यम है  
ठीक वैसे ही जैसे  
पेड़ से गिरे मरीज को  
जड़ी बूटी देने से पहले  
उस पेड़ से संवाद स्थापित करते हैं कि  
वह हमें क्षमा करे हमारी अमर्यादा के लिए”

(This song, a chant  
Is a medium of communication  
To the cause of ailment  
Just like  
Before giving herbal medicine  
To a patient fallen from a tree



We establish a dialogue with that tree  
Asking it to forgive us for our disrespect; my trans. 71).

Dodo chants mantras against the authorities. These mantras are community songs that will provide relief from the prevailing ailments. He tells Birsi that without these songs and dialogues, one cannot understand the values of the Adivasi society. He makes them aware that it is their responsibility to impart *purkha* knowledge to the coming generations to retain and reclaim their identity. The lesson of coexistence in harmony is the only way to look to the Earth's future. The following lines of Dodo Vaidya incorporate the praxis of survivance as a discourse calling for action:

“सहजीविता की समझ ही ज्ञान है  
संवेदना, अनुभूति की पहचान ही ज्ञान है  
ज्ञान प्रतिस्पर्धा नहीं प्रेम सिखाता है...  
अब यह तुम सबका दायित्व है कि  
इसका बीजारोपण आगामी पीढ़ी में करो,...  
ज्यों ज्यों इसके बीज  
अंकुरित होंगे, पुष्पित होंगे, फलित होंगे  
त्यों त्यों बाघ पर अंकुश लगेगा....”  
(Understanding coexistence is wisdom  
Recognizing sensitivity and experience is wisdom  
Wisdom does not teach competition, it teaches love...  
Now it is your responsibility  
To sow its seeds in the coming generation,  
As its seeds  
Sprout, blossom, and bear fruit,  
The tiger will be restrained...; my trans. 76).

### Call for Solidarity: An Act of Action

In the poem, Dodo's knowledge acquainted Birsi and other disciples with their history. He exposed them to the corruption prevalent in the outsiders' understanding, the injustices born from the greed for privatization and profit, the increasing crimes against women, and their



objectification. By confronting these issues, he resolved the dilemmas of his pupils. Birsi, along with everyone else, now understands their goal and is ready to participate in this fight with courage and understanding. The written history of civilization and modern policies conspire to marginalize Adivasi society, which is reflected in the poetry. Dodo, the healer, inspires Birsi and others by showing seven scenes to awaken their consciousness.

The awareness is highlighted, and a call for solidarity to unite like-minded people worldwide to save their land from the tiger is made. With the determination and eagerness to preserve thousands of years of knowledge and experience, Dodo and his seven disciples set out with seven stories on their journey. In the end, Dodo reflects on the indigenous communities worldwide and says “Dandkarniya”, “Amazon”, “Saranda” and “Abujhmad” are not merely geographical locations; they embody rich cultural, philosophical, and spiritual significance. They represent songs, metaphors, and worldviews integral to indigenous identity suggesting interconnectedness in diversity. Mentioning sacred sites like “dumbari buru,” “serengasiya,” and “maangarh” Dodo shares heritage and collective memory. (99). This solidarity among Indigenous communities fosters survivance, as they draw strength from their cultural roots and interconnected struggles, affirming their existence and resistance against external (*diku*) threats to their way of life.

In the final section, Birsi's address calls for solidarity or *madait* — collective action to preserve Indigenous knowledge and resist external threats. The poem ends with a powerful declaration of identity and resistance, urging the community to reunite and protect their land and culture. This call to action embodies the essence of survivance, as it emphasizes active presence, resistance, and the continuance of Indigenous stories and practices. To quote:

अस्तित्व की स्थापना के लिए  
 अस्मिता के उत्कर्ष के लिए  
 जन मुक्ति के स्वर के साथ  
 वह वहीं खड़ी थी  
 जो उसके पुरखों की जमीन थी  
 जो उल्गुलान था, हुल था  
 जनवाद का फूल था...

“लड़ाई अधूरी न हो



जय हो! जोहार हो! जोहार हो!”  
(For the establishment of existence  
For reclaiming identity  
With the voices of people's liberation  
She stood right there  
On the land of her ancestors  
That was Ulgulan, that was Hul  
A blossom of the people's revolution...

The fight must not be left incomplete.  
Jai ho! Johar ho! Johar ho!; my trans. 105).

### Rediscovering Female Agency and Indigenous Women's Consciousness

The poem also explores the theme of female agency within the Indigenous community. Birsi, the protagonist, represents the strength and determination of Indigenous women. The references to historical figures like Singi Dai, who fought against invaders, and the conversations between Birsi and Reeda, highlight the crucial role of women in the community's resistance and survival. This aspect of the poem aligns with the concept of survivance, as it emphasizes the active role of Indigenous women in preserving and defending their culture.

The poet rediscovers the Adivasi women's agency and gives voice to Birsi, the female community representative by highlighting Dharti Aaba Birsa Munda in his *ulgulaan* displayed great courage and bravery to defeat exploitative colonial forces and the traces are found in the history written by the civilized. But many women fought tooth and nail with the British yet their contribution is missing. The civilized *baagh* of patriarchal society did not bother to mention the names and heroism of Adivasi women in writing. Apparently, this was deliberately done so that the democratic ideals of equality, inclusiveness and justice cannot be compared to the mainstream hierarchical, dominant patriarchal society. To quote Lagun,

उन्होंने जाने नहीं दिया कि  
सुगना मुंडा की बेटियां घूंघट के नीचे  
सहम कर नहीं जीतीं ....  
वे तो फरसे और धनुष के साथ बलिदानी हैं



सुगना मुंडा अपनी बेटियों को  
 बेटों से अलग नहीं करता है.....(40)  
 (They did not let it be known that  
 Daughters of Sugna Munda  
 Do not live in fear under a veil....  
 They are warriors with axes and bows,  
 Sugna Munda does not treat his daughters  
 differently from his sons....; my trans. 40).

Lagun mentions the contributions of young Adivasi women in the *ulgulaan* (Birsa revolution). He refers to the song in which the wife of an English captain cries after witnessing the scene of a dead woman whose infant is lactating on the mother's breast. (41). Reeda makes Birsi realize how they are being trapped in the ills of civilization and that women are the worst victims, losing their autonomy, agency, and individuality in the race for development. Reeda also makes Birsi aware of the ups and downs in the lives of the tribal people due to the changing environment. The dialogue between Birsi and Reeda is important for moving away from the lost identity and victimhood of tribal women. This is also an element of survivance that can be traced in Lagun's poem. Reeda is troubled by the limitations of the patriarchal thinking of the outside so-called civilized society and draws Birsi's attention to it. He tells Birsi that while warriors like Singi Dai fought against invaders to protect their land without the need for a male army, today's society has brought women down by binding them in chains of restrictions and limitations. Reeda calls this a conspiracy of imperialism and warns Birsi against all the deceptive appearances that seem harmless but are dangerous from within.

“यहां जो आदमखोर पहुंचा है  
 वह जानवर है  
 जानवर नर है, पुरुष है, पुलिंग है  
 सेना, पुलिस, व्यवस्था का स्वरूप,...”  
 (Here is the maneater  
 Who in animal  
 Animal is man, male, masculine  
 Military, police and the structure of the system...; my trans. 99)



The lines depict the predator as an embodiment of oppressive forces—men, military, police, and systemic structure deployed to threaten the indigenous way of life. From the perspective of indigenous women's agency, this highlights the intersectional challenges they face. Indigenous women must navigate not only the broader struggle against colonial and systemic oppression but also gender-based violence and patriarchy. Despite these compounded threats, their resilience and leadership in resistance movements affirm their critical role in preserving autonomy, asserting their agency in the face of pervasive adversities.

## **Conclusion**

By embracing the concept of survivance, Indigenous communities reclaim their agency, challenge colonial narratives, and assert their cultural sovereignty. This concept celebrates Indigenous strength and resilience, promoting a more accurate understanding of their histories and contributions. Anuj Lagun's poem "Baagh Aur Sugna Munda Ki Beti" exemplifies Indigenous survivance, reflecting the resilience of the Adivasi community. Using Gerald Vizenor's concept of survivance, Lagun's work goes beyond survival to embody active resistance and presence. The poem's rich imagery, rooted in Adivasi oral traditions, defies historical and contemporary injustices. Lagun contrasts natural and unnatural tigers to symbolize external threats and internal conflicts within the Adivasi community. The portrayal of Sugna Munda and his daughter Birsi's conversation with Reeda Haddam and Dodo Vadiya highlights ancestral wisdom, community solidarity, and the struggle to maintain cultural identity. The poem aligns with survivance by emphasizing oral traditions, and cultural memory, and rejecting victimhood. Focusing on Adivasi women's consciousness and agency, Lagun challenges patriarchal narratives and celebrates Adivasi women's heroism.

Furthermore, the dialogue between Birsi and Reeda Haddam, and Birsi's journey to Doda Vaidya, symbolize the awakening of community consciousness and the call to action against threats. "Baagh Aur Sugna Munda Ki Beti" reaffirms the importance of Indigenous narratives in asserting cultural presence and continuity. By situating Lagun's work within survivance, this paper highlights broader implications of Indigenous identity, resistance, and cultural preservation. The poem exemplifies how literature can empower and resist oppressive forces, ensuring the resilience and vitality of Indigenous cultures. In conclusion, Lagun's "Baagh Aur Sugna Munda Ki Beti" illustrates survivance through resistance, historical continuity, orality, female agency, and ecological balance, striving to preserve Indigenous identity and cultural practices.





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