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Through the Sociological lens: Portrayal of Indian Youths in Neel Mukherjee's *The Lives of Others*

ABSTRACT

Neel Mukherjee is one of the remarkable novelists in Indian Writing in English. The novel, *The Lives of Others* is the microcosm of West Bengal in which Murherjee highlights the terrified life of poor farmers and their tricky landlords. Mukherjee's skilfully handled red-hot issue of farmer suicide in the modern context. This paper aims to attempts how Sociological criticism examines Indian youths as an outcome of the social protest against the evils and injustices in society. As a social activist, Supratik and his friends, Dhiren and Samir were joined in the CPI (M) in the hope of eradicate social injustice and problems like farmer suicide, corruption, malpractices and class discrimination from the society. He creates master plans for city activities and then left home to go into villages to support poor farmers. He documents his daily events as what kind of lives the farmers were living in villages how they were suppressed by money hunger landlords with the help of local police by bribing them to flourishing corruption. How Naxalites were worked with these poor farmers and guided them through their rights and prepared them for revolutions.

Key words: Agriculture under Stress, Student Politics, Naxalism and Ideological Extremism, Famer Suicides.

FULL PAPER

Nitai Das was a debt-ridden farmer. His wife and children were starved hungry. There was a drought for three consecutive years. From a farmer he became a beggar. He begged from his landlord some food for his children. His landlord refused to help. His landlord scolded him what laid in store for his children and he did not settle his debts. His words create disappointment to Nitai Das and wondered “what to do now” (LO 2). This is a heart-wrenching incident which expresses his extreme anger, frustration and endless miseries of life:

He picks up the short-handled sickle, takes his wife by her bony wrist... across her neck...she collapses with a thud. The boy comes out at the sound...his father pushes him against the mud wall...blade with all the force in his combusting being across his neck...grabs hold of his daughter's throat with both his hands, and squeezes...until her protruding eyes almost leave the stubborn ties of their sockets and her tongue lolls out and her thrashing legs still...last child is crying her weak, ...covers her mouth and nose, pushing his hands down, keeping them pressed, until there is nothing. He lifts the jerrycan of Folidol left over from three seasons ago and drinks, his mouth to the lip of the plastic canister, until he can drink no more (LO 2-3).

Neel Mukherjee projects the plight of Nitai Das and his family. This tells the extent of the life of an ordinary Indian farmer. He is one among the novelists who treats a burning issue that is often reported in dailies now. The farmer's suicide reflects the reality as observed by the truthful events. J. Balaji in his article, “NHRC notice a report on cotton farmer suicides”, in *The Hindu*, dated September 13, 2012, discusses the issues of farmer suicides that has takes place in Maharashtra, Vidarbha. This issue resembles the plot of *The Lives of*

Others. Similarly, Sonora Jha's novel *Foreign* (2013) is based on the true stories of farmer's suicides in Vidarbha. It is a fictionalized account of the farmers' suicide in Postmillennial India. This authenticates fiction's claim to truthfulness. Farmer suicide is one of the main ingredients in the novel. There are countless farmers who killed their families and killed themselves because they could not afford a single bowl of rice.

Neel Mukherjee cohesively connects the beginning of the novel to the year (1967). In an online review "Naxalism in India: Historical Background", in the *General Knowledge Today India's daily E-magazine of GK and Current affairs* dated December 23, 2014, says:

The term 'Naxal' movement finds its origin from the Naxalbari incident that happened on May 25, 1967 at *Bengai Jote* village in Naxalbari, situated in the Siliguri subdivision of the Darjeeling district of West Bengal. In a village, a tribal youth who had a judicial order to plough his land was attacked by the local landlords. The tribes retaliated and refused to part with the land owner's share of their produce and lifted the entire stock from his granary. It ignited a violent movement. To maintain law and order, the state government ordered police action against the rebellions. Police opened fire on villagers and firing killed 9 adults and 2 children. This uprising was crushed in some two and half months but it gained tremendous support and lead from the 'communist revolutionaries' belonging to the state units of the CPI (M) such as Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal.

In 1971, Naxalites gained a strong presence among the radical sections of the student movement in Calcutta. Students left colleges to join Naxalism. Supratik left his home to join the Naxalite movement. Many young men sacrificed their home, family and material needs in order to fight for providing equality for poor farmers. Farmers were powerless before the might of the Government. So, rebellions decide to change the world. Charu Majumdar

belongs to progressive landlord family. He dropped out his college and joined in Naxalism. He was a communist revolutionary from India. He provoked many students into joining his organisation.

Neel Mukherjee's *The Lives of Others* is split in two narrations. The first thread of narration is taken up by Neel Mukherjee who creates the Ghosh family of three generations living under one roof in Calcutta. Each character has his own story to tell which is an exciting chronicle of their life in the four-storied house in Bhowanipore, Calcutta and how one of the grandsons, Supratik, becomes a Naxalite following the farmer suicide incident. The second thread of narration is written by Supratik himself in first person narrative to his beloved aunt, Purba. He describes his daily life living with the ignored sect of the society and explains why Naxalites were born. Through Supratik's letters reveal how much the Maoists movement was going on during the time when India got independence how it got aggravated by imprudent politicians.

In the recent decades some great novelists like Mahasweta Devi's *Mother of 1084* (1974), Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* (2001) and Upamanyu Chatterjee's *English, August: An Indian Story* (2006) were offered glimpses of the Naxal movement. Coming to the next novel, Neel Mukherjee's also takes up a social issue in *The Lives of Others*. *The Lives of Others* is a vivid expose of modern India's growing pains. The novel brilliantly captures the vitality and unfolds how agriculture under stress and tenant farmer-landlord relationship, Naxalism and ideological extremism. One main thread of narrative follows Supratik childhood through his career as a Naxalite terrorist in a vivid and first-person account. The prologue is set in Medinipur, 1966. It describes an impoverished wage farmer, Nitai Das who could not to feed his starving wife and children. So, he picks up the sickle to kill all his children, wife and finally himself in a horrific burst of violence. Nitai Das's story had severely struck in the heart of Supratik. He also learnt that those were the poor peasants

of the same Medinipur district who had flocked to Calcutta in the hope of food but nobody helped them. So, Supratik decides to help the plight condition of poor peasant. Mukherjee's skilfully handled red-hot issue of farmer suicide in the modern context. His attention-grabbing plot engrosses the modern readers, who easily empathize with the grief and destitution of the poverty stricken peasants who ultimately chooses to become a 'Robin Hood' in Howard Pyle's *The Merry Adventure of Robin Hood* like Mukherjee's 'Supratik'.

The novel contains prologue, epilogue, and the map of West Bengal, family chart and also glossary of Indian diction. The novel is divided into nineteen chapters and second half takes epistolary form. But, the novel is harmoniously praised and admired by the critics. In an online Review of Critic, Amitav Ghosh says "*The Lives of Others* is searing, savage and deeply moving: an unforgettable vivid picture of a time of turmoil." Anita Desai's comment on the novel is "A devastating portrayal of a decadent society and the inevitably violent uprising against it... it is ferocious, unsparing and brutally honest."

The sociological criticism examines Indian youths as an outcome of the social protest against the evils and injustices in society. The main narrative is set between 1967 and 1970. It was a time of political unrest in the city, when the Maoist Naxalite movement gained supporters among students and intellectuals. As a social activist, Supratik and his friends, Dhiren and Samir were joined in the CPI (M) (Communist Party of India, Maoist) in the hope of eradicate social injustice and problems like farmer suicide, corruption, malpractices and class discrimination from the society. Supratik also seems hypocrisy and cruelty amongst his family members that leads to frustrated and ran away with a group of his Maoist comrades to the Medinipur district of West Bengal. He is hoped to help the people but learning that party ultimate goal is to create government in state to attain power and he joined Naxalites. He creates master plans for city activities and then left home to go into villages to support poor farmers. He documents his daily events as what kind of lives the farmers were living in

villages how they were suppressed by money hungry landlords with the help of local police by bribing them to flourishing corruption. How Naxalites were worked with these poor farmers and guided them through their rights and prepared them for revolutions. His letters is the second half of the thirteen chapters.

Supratik was a communist activist cum student in Presidency College. He is distinguished between Inside and Outside world reveals: “Inside, the amount of water used daily to keep the lawns and gardens so lush could provide drinking water to each of these men for a month. Outside, these men have to walk miles sometimes to get to a public hand-pump...even dogs piss into their mouths to slake their dried tongues and throats” (LO 32). During last year drought has affected the peoples due to hunger are clearly expressed by Supratik: “The world is prosy with hunger \The full moon is like a piece of singed bread: You might see the pale bronze-coloured full moon, but they see, in its round shape, something to eat” (LO 33).

There was a time of food riots and huge procession of youngsters erupting everywhere in the city. He says: “we want jobs, not diplomas!’...they shouted... ration-shop owner had opened the shop...announce ...no rice, kerosene, or wheat to sell, only jaggery...shopkeeper was stockpiling staples to sell on the black market.” (LO 34). He decides to fight against social ills and poverty reveals: “change the world, change yourself, Today is the day to burn like fire to repay the debt of blood with blood, Poor, landless peasants have given their lives and blood to build this country...I decided who among us was going to work in which segment of the college or the city...” (LO 35). These are the major issue of students involved in politics and he expresses: “...student politics there erupted the troubles in Presidency College over the explosion of students from the Hindu Hostel... yes, I was part of the group that shut down all of Calcutta University for one and a half months ...” (LO 35). During which lot of students were taken into police custody which gave birth to

violation and compelled Supratik and others to join Naxalite for the farmers and villagers on whose behalf they were fighting. He wrote a letter to his mother, Sandhya reveals:

Ma, I feel exhausted with consuming, with taking and grabbing and using. I am so bloated that I feel I cannot breathe any more. I am leaving to find some air, some place where I shall be able to purge myself, push back against the life given me and make my own. I feel I live in a borrowed house. It's time to find my own... forgive me... (LO 60).

Neel Mukherjee shows the shining side belongs to rich and bourgeois class belongs to poor, oppressed and marginalized people. The main character of the novel belongs to bourgeois family of Calcutta, whose harmony is distorted when Supratik becomes dangerously involved in extremist political activism. Supratik was an amiable, sensitive gentleman and caring for working class and his neighbourhood. At the young age, he was a patriotic “Ma, Ma, its independence Day next week, I'm going to play the bugle and lead the Balak Sangha boys in a procession down the street...” (LO 73). He is a social activist, who believes in egalitarian society and refuses to eat sumptuously: “I have one dal, one fry, one vegetable dish, a bit of fish” to eat and thousands of people are dying by starvation. “Gagan, Madan-da, Malati-di, the other people who work for us, do they eat like this”, they should eat like we are eating; unfortunately Supratik is perturbed by the imbalance of the society, so he became involved in student politics, “an important figure, a student leader...” (LO 74).

Supratik left the city to reach in South Medinipur near the border of Orissa. His job was going to the village and organizes them into armed struggle. Supratik, Samir and Dhiren were decided to work with landless peasants, sharecropper, wage labourers and impoverished tenants who were the backbone of the movement. Samir was a top rank student. His father was a clerk in the Electric Supply Corporation but his family lived in a house built by grandfather. Dhiren was a sensible and good hearted man. His father is worked in a light-bulb

factory. Later, labours were fighting against owner because they need proper salary. Immediately, the factory had been shut down for three years. His family faces on economic crisis. He was an elder son, studying B.Com in City College. His family hopes him. But, he did not attend college to join in Naxalism.

Supratik expresses his disgust and frustrations about studying degree are content clearly portrayed by Neel Mukherjee:

What good will the degree do? he had once said to me. ‘There are hundreds of thousands like me, graduates who are sitting twiddling their thumbs because there are no jobs. I’ll be joining that great herd of unthinking cattle. The thing is to get to the heart of the sickness, not tinker around with the symptoms... (LO 62).

Supratik conveys his friends about Tribes’ lands occupied by Landlord. Tea plantation labours wants to better pay and rights over their land. Then, Dhiren says: “...teaching class politics to farmers, how there was no transport where we were going, we would have to walk scores of miles...” (LO 64). Then, they were reached to Medinipur. They met cycle-repair shop owner, Debdulal-da in the village. They were decided to stay with his home. He conveys to them everyday only four hours current was available. They were pay for 500 rupees bribe to the electricity man who had come to connect it.

Samir narrates the story to Supratik about the poor people used to cast their votes to which the village head asks them to cast because the village head was being paid by some political party. There were no such rewards given to the poor villagers who cast their votes. During drought, CPI(M) cadre was distributing rice to hard-hit villagers but on understanding it was not done on the basis of humanity or responsibility but for enhancing their vote bank. Some people of Changripota have also received rice but on discovering that the people of

Changripota have casted their votes to congress not to hammer and sickle sign, “the cadre went back and took away the rice from the starving farmers” (LO 98).

These starving farmers found a radical solution to driven out the greedy Jotedaar from their illegally consolidated lands. Police could not harm the peasants because orders had come from CPI(M) headquarters that this was legitimately the first step of land reform which actually was not so but politics of CPI(M) which the innocent people could not understand and it added nearly five lakh votes to the vote bank of CPI(M). Their masks slipped only when Naxalite came to existence because they wanted people to stay under their set boundaries. But “they underestimated what would really happen if the landless were given a taste of their own power” (LO 100). The Naxal upsurge sparked because the land reform was ineffectual even in the government of United Front in the West Bengal which was fuelled by caste tensions and the sense of desperation by social and economic condition of the people. Nothing seemed to be more natural than the vested interests of the authorities. This socially biased government impeded progress and give birth to unproductive governance.

Supratik learnt from Samir that one old man fight at them. When he saw them at first and Supratik found out that old man, Mukunda Mashan after his father, used to be the tenant of four bighas of land, who was eligible to occupy the land under Land Tenure Act. Mukunda was an illiterate and unaware of the legalities is deceived by the manipulations of the Jotedaar “if Mukunda wanted to register as a tenant, he would be evicted immediately; if he didn’t, he would be kept on as a tenant” (LO 98). The poor innocent thought that things were on the right path, from last two generations everything is working likewise so he believed on his devious landlord and he did not register. On the beginning of the day he was not also in the position to register, if he did so “what would he feed his family, what would he eat, how would they live if he got evicted...” (LO 98) and if the Jotedaar would not have succeeded in his criminal plan he, “his legion of supporters and yes-men have other ways too: arbitrarily

increasing rents, say from half the yield on the land to three quarters; or killing the tenants bullock so that he cannot work the rented land efficiently enough, thus falling behind with the rent; a son or a daughter or a wife threatened..." (LO 98).

Finally, Mukunda was evicted and he had no recourse to the law because he was not a registered tenant. This event shows how the Jotedar pushed the family from bad to worst. Jotedar was a rich man who added these four bighas to his existing two hundred fifty bighas, this is the hard fact of this polluted society that greed has eaten the soul of humanity. Mukunda suffered a lot and nobody came to his rescue because "Mukunda belonged to lower caste, so it was not in the interest of the village head or any official to enlighten him" (LO 99). This incident reveals class discrimination among the peoples is showcased in a clear-cut manner. These uneducated, poor, simple farmers have been deceived by village heads, officials and even by political parties. By this felonious deceit, they were pushed into a real demotion from tenants to wage labourers and from wage labourers to criminals. These and more problems were abiding without any reformation of legislation but the spirit of law remained confined to papers only. The people were left in these circumstances to suffer which enforced them to become aggressive.

Though, this event Supratik learnt that first and foremost to educate, encourage and enthuse farmers. Naxalbari has wanted enough votes so they could come to power in West Bengal. He talks about CPI (M) aims—1) to redistribute land and kill landlords 2) CPI (M) were working with farmer as a units of three to seven in each village 3) landlord were grabbing land to the landless peasant. Supratik, Samir and Dhiren were decided to stay in different peasants home. Supratik was billeted in Kanu Mahato's, Samir at Anupam Haati's and Dhiren at Bipu Soren's. They had been watched farmer's life style. Supratik says: "almost forgot to tell you one big reason why we were in this corner of West Bengal: this was

the hamlet where Nitai Das killed his family—his wife, his son, his two daughters—and then swallowed poison last year in May” (*LO* 104).

When Supratik learnt the story of Nitai Das and his misery from Kanu and Bijli, it struck his mind the conversation of Pishi (Chaya) and Boro-Kaka (Priyonath), when he was seven or eight years old, “a woman lying dead on a narrow side-street and a crow picking out her eyes, while her child, near dead with hunger...” (*LO* 126) and Supratik also learnt that those were the poor peasants of the same Medinipur district who had swarm to Calcutta in the hope of food but nobody helped them. Supratik also learnt that how Nitai Das and his family were suffered by heartless landlords: “shame held her back from asking for food...shame went when the hunger became to much...she had been reduced as a beggar... I’ll give two kilos of rice but you’ll have to return three kilos to me...I don’t care give me the rice now...he couldn’t pay loans of money and rice...last drop of your blood (and your land) squeezed” (*LO* 125-26). Through this incident shows reopened his wound of Supratik. He decides to turns as a ‘Robin Hood’.

Supratik description of harvesting experiences: “... they’d taught me. The sickle was very sharp and was no effort involved in the actual cutting. I wanted to make the cuts worse, deeper, my hands really bloody. Change yourself, change the world” (*LO* 145). Supratik toils with poor farmers and learnt to reap paddy stalks with a sickle that same weapon he later used to decapitate corrupt moneylenders and landlords. Red sickle and hammer can be considered to be a communist emblem. Supratik learnt about ride bullock, plough, ritual and works with Kanu as a wage-labourer in the plots of the two landlords the Rays and the Sinhas. The two plots where they were earned five rupees a day for each plot. Supratik expresses how manger who turns as a money hunger: “...manger of the bigger piece of land...labourers would get only three rupees a day” (*LO* 150). Kanu gives landlord to his entire earning amount due to interest on the loan. During his family faces economic crisis and

Supratik helped them: "...gives Kanu my thirty rupees...he can't look me...I eat your food, I stay in your home, take it as my contribution to your family expenses." (LO 151).

Meanwhile, he taught Mao's principle into practice in the particular context of a small Medinipur village in 400 people. Supratik, Samir and Dhiren were talking to each other at bamboo grove. At the time, they watched Basudeb Ray and his servants as they transferred rice to the lorry to be taken to Calcutta, Bihar, Orissa etc. Rice sold in the black market to prices much higher than the official rate. Samir satire words: "...I wanted to know if the Rays had called in the police to guard their smuggling because they know about us...not three of us specifically, but our... our activities, of our large group in these areas." (LO 153). They were found out rice sold in the black market and police protects them. Mukherjee' reflects greedy, money minded attitudes of the landlords and it is a kind of criminal activity. This incident depicts how the protector who changed as a predator. This is one among the reason leads to farmer suicide.

Supratik also learnt that farmers pathetic conditions: "...farmers who had no money to buy seeds for the next seasons, but without planting they would die...got deeper into debt...going bed on empty stomach for over half year...drowned in debt without any hope...their unborn generation bonded to service those debt; their blood sucked dry...children bony but with malnutrition" (LO 173). So, Supratik, Samir and Dhiren were stepping stone towards more radical action. They planned to arrange a small meeting to motivate the farmers: "we told the farmers about the uprising in Nalabari last year" (LO 172). Then, few farmers were attended a meeting to listen the Mao's principle. They were gathered eight farmers from Majgeria to Munirgra for a huge poster exhibition and mass assembly's organized by Medinipur Coordination Committee. They were also living like farmers. Supratik shows his harvesting experiences: "it was impossible to do this job standing up and bending down...back and neck were going to break" (LO 220). The farmer reaps earth's

treasure for benefit of all but they did not get that treasure. This is the plight condition of Indian farmers. Thus, Supratik expresses his agony and anger towards cunning Lordlords: “beating and raking and pulverising and eviscerating men like Bhaben Sinha, Rays, who were smuggling rice at night, men like police, who were standing guard over the operation, all the jotedaars in this village” (LO 196). Supratik, Samir and Dihren instilled Mao’s words into the farmers and wage-labourers like teaching a parrot. They were talked about migrated people life and Supratik explains Madan’s life: “he was from a tiny village in a particularly impoverished district in Orissa...drought, famine, death, failure of crops ...who escaped ...found a better kind of job in a city, sent money home, moved their families into a brick house” (LO 242). Thus, people left their villages in the hope of making a better life but they faced exactly the opposite fate.

Supratik and farmers were worked in the middle of harvest, when Dhiren informed his friend that Bipul’s brother, Shankar Soren. He was a farmer with a small plot. During last year drought, his land was empty. Suddenly, his wife was not well and he wants to borrowed money from the landlord, Senapati. Some of the landlords were practiced illegal side business like Shankar case. He received some seeds to high rate but he could not produced profit for last two years. Later, he gives only loan amount but remaining amount of Shankar’s can not to pay Senapati. Immediately, Senapati talked with Shankar in a cruel way. So, Shankar was getting an angry towards Senapati instead of his wife. He was hit, blamed and tortured her due to mountain of debt on his shoulder. Then, she killed herself. In recent years extensive reports have appeared in newspapers and television channels all over the country about farmers destroy by debt have committed suicide especially in Tamil Nadu where a heavy drought put enormous financial pressure on poor families in the name of ‘Farmers suicide’. It is one of the burning issues in the current scenario. Vijaykumar Patil in his article, “Another

debt-ridden farmer ends life”, in *The Hindu*, dated July 6, 2015, discusses on the issues of farmer suicides that has takes place in Karnataka. This issue resembles in the novel.

Then, Supratik decides to kill Senapati. When the annual winter Mela in the neighbouring village of Gidighati. Samir, Dhiren and Supratik were going to the Mela to arrange other activists in the area. They discussed about some strategies and updating news about the respective villages. Communist Party of India CIP (M) or Indian national congress (Maosite), All India Coordinate Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR) people, and CR group were come under one umbrella. At the time, they seem to follow Senapati and killed him to wash their hands and legs in the pond of water. Police starts to investigation about Senapati’s murder case. Meanwhile, rumour spread in the village about his murder. They did not find out the exact truth. Supratik talked about Captial and Labour conflict. Samir has encouraged the farmer. They decided to follow the Chairman and Comrade Charu Mazumdar. Anupam, Kanu, Bipul and Shakar were joined to pledge their lives. Anupam said that “This is not life that we have. ... if we die fighting so that our children can have better lives, we will die fighting” (*LO* 307). He has echoed by Kanu, Bipul, Shakar.

They were ready to attack the landlords. Baskin was a landlord. He deceived farmers’ land to illegally sign in their bond papers. They decided to kill Baskin. They reached Baskin’s bed room to demand Almirah keys from his wife. She did not give them after they blackmailed to get the keys. They searched in the Almirah but they did not get documents. Later, they found out all documents in the wooden box. Then, they captured “for documents: loan documents, stamp paper, lease deeds, deeds of sales... loose stack of papers, some with revenue stamps on them, some with thumb imprints... we took it down to the courtyard and set the whole thing on fire” (*LO* 311). This incident reveals debt-ridden famer who ultimately chooses to become ‘Robin Hood’ as a Supratik.

Supratik and his friends were decided to escape from the village. Police searched them. They reached in the deep forest. Samir and Dihren were slept but Supratik did not sleep. Later, they reached to Gidighati. He reminiscent about 15th August last year, hundreds of peasants had seized the autumn harvest and fought with the Police and Landlords. Supratik, Samir and Dihren were motivated to another set of villagers in Gidighati. Samir and Dihren stayed in Bau Mandi's and Supratik stayed in Bir Mandi hut. Then, Supratik knows about the story of Bir. Bir was a poor farmer and his wife, Bela. He had a small plot of land. "Bir, an illiterate man, had put his thumb impression on the lease deed. When the rend fell overdue ... Bir had sold the land to him... Bir had put the imprint of his thumb was a sale deed not a deed of lease. Bir plot has been sold to Nabin Sarkar ... less than one-fortieth of the value of his land" (LO 345). Bir complained police about cunning attitude of Nabin Sarkar. The police could not take further steps because Bir had thumb impression in the documents. Supratik, Samir and Dhiren were decided to kill Nabin Sarkar. They reached his home and found Nabin to kill him. They burnt the documents as usual. Through this incident reveals Supratik attitude is compared to Mario Puzo's *The Sicilian*. Like the historical character, Sicilian Giuliano is a real life hero in past as well as present fictionalized hero, Supratik is assuming various avatars like student rebel, social activist and Naxalites.

Supratik, Samir, Dhiren, Dipankar and Ashu were stayed in the deep forest. They heard conch-shells sound and chorus of disharmony. They knew that Police had arrived in Gidighati. Supratik felt that Samir was dead and how he faced Samir's mother. Dipankar has compromised him. They found Samir bag with one pistol. Then, Police were surrounded them. Comrades wounded inside the bushes and some comrades were dead. Police investigates to Kanu and Bijli. But, they did not give proper information. Police were safeguarded landlords. Dhiren and Debashish wearied in police uniform to attack them. At last, Supratik has escaped from the forest to reach his home.

Meanwhile, Supratik met Sona's teacher reveals that he was a preternaturally talented in mathematics and solved some crucial open problems in the number theory. In an online article, in *The Wall Street Journal*, Aditi Malhotra says, ““want to change the life he has, for the better, using his gifted skill,” is what Sona represents, said Mr. Mukherjee. Through Sona's character, Mr. Mukherjee draws upon work as a significant aspect of life, which he says is infrequently detailed in the 21st-century novel.” Supratik tries to explain Purba: “...her son leaving home at the age of fifteen. ‘You do not want your son to do well?... Become a servant like you, sitting and standing to the demands and whims of everyone in the house? Don't you want him to escape this? Don't you want to escape all this?’” (LO 433). He has the first stirring of hope to Sona's bright future. Through this incident reveals brotherhood is showcased in a clear-cut manner. So, he helps Sona to join in American University.

Then, Supratik discovered to his younger brother, Suranjan was a drug addict. He expresses: “You can never recover from it, the addiction is so strong it's irreversible...then your life as you and others around you know it is over. It sucks you out from the inside and finishes you” (LO 459). This event projects how Supratik expressed his affection towards his brother, Suranjan is beautifully constructed by Mukherjee. Suddenly, Police surrounded to the Ghosh family and caught Supratik. Sandhya pleads to Police but they did not leave him. They arrested him in a cruel way. They start to investigate him. Supratik expresses: “screams and sobs simultaneously, No!No! No! ... grabs hold of the overgrown nail of Supratik's bag toe with the pilers ...screaming himself hoarse...the sound from his vocal cards...sickle and hammer over an area of nearly twenty square inches on Supratik's thigh in pinpricks of blood. He pokes a sharp knife...dig-and-twistpinch formed of his thumb and forefinger has a purchase on the flap” (LO 487). This incident reflects inhuman attitudes of police even in the modern era.

The positive side of the Naxalite episode is handled well because of the focus on the individual experience of Supratik is an authentic voice. As a student activist, Supratik seems their struggle to scratch out a living from the land, getting deeper and deeper into debt at the hands of moneylenders and landlords, that his eyes are opened to the reality of life. Mukherjee provides Supratik with numerous other flashes of insight as a counter to his overall naivety and real lack of understanding of how powerless he and his intellectual bourgeois 'comrades' were against the forces of officials. Thus, the novel depicts the disillusioned youth turning into Naxalites. The Naxalite movements are still active in country and poor people who suffered are still fighting for their rights. The rebellious, revengeful, suffering yet answer-seeking revolutionaries, Supratik, Dhiren, Samir, Sabita Kumari and many more.

In *The Lives of Others*, Neel Mukherjee challenges Indian culture and governance to create an egalitarian society in which individuals are truly equal and independent. The protagonist of the novel, Supratik leaves his happy life in the novel to eradicate injustice and to enlighten the society. The novel is the microcosm of West Bengal in which Mukherjee highlights the terrified life of poor peasants and their devious landlords. Mukherjee's also a portrayal of oppressive socio-political and economic behaviour of village heads, officials, political parties, jotedaars and plight, miserable condition of the poor peasants and tenants, their struggle throughout their lives and finally their indulgence into criminal activities like Naxalites. Mukherjee earnestly pleads for the protection and rehabilitation of the people who have been displaced, authorities should ensure peace, prosperity and social justice to prevent people from sufferings and elimination of discrimination from the society especially for the benefit of these marginalized sections of the society.

In conclusion, *The Lives of Others* is relevant to India's current state of affairs in general and West Bengal in particular. Supratik was a good-natured gentleman left his

luxurious life to live with homeless peasants for the benefit of society so should the government authorities do for the upliftment of the nation. Neel remains faithful to the history of West Bengal and blends it with the fiction, highlighting the issues which were inevitable for the common masses to evade, with the implementation of literary techniques. Mukherjee aims that authorities should ensure peace and prosperity to prevent gentle people like Supratik to become Naxalites.

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