

## Blurring Boundaries: Mapping Ethnography in Kavery Nambisan's *The Scent of Pepper*

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**Abstract:** Ethnography as a discipline was formerly used by the colonizer to construct exotic notions of the cultures of the lands they occupied. In recent times, the discipline has entered new terrains through experimentations of various genres and modes of writing. A medical surgeon by profession, Kavery Nambisan, the author of *The Scent of Pepper*, accounts for the life of an ethnic tribal minority group-the *Kodavas*. The region painted in her canvas is Kodagu (Coorg), a small enclave in the hills of the south western coast of India. Her close acquaintance with the *Kodava* community to which she belongs, lends authenticity to her narrative. In chronicling the saga of the *Kodavas*, the text could also be seen as an attempt made by the novelist to preserve their ethnicity from the onslaught of westernization and migration. This paper purports to examine how the novelist borrows from the strategies of ethnography to effectively convey the cultural experiences and everyday lives of the *Kodavas*. It analyses how Nambisan has effectively merged the two different modes of narrative production- the scientific mode of narration with the fictional one. The paper further explores how the novelist/ethnographer shifts roles as insider/outsider offering subjective /objective perspectives to represent the ethnic minority of Kodagu.

*Keywords:* Region; Ethnography; Blurring of genres; Insider-outsider perspectives; Strategies.