



## Reflections of Ecocritical aspects in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*

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### Abstract

*Literature reflects the life of humans. It has always been focused on the idea of various themes. The writers bring out the theme of nature in many of their works. Eco Criticism is concerned with the relationship between environment and literature. It also reveals how man's relationships and his physical environment are reflected in literature. Literary scholars examine the texts of environmental concerns and analyze the various ways that literature treats the subject of nature. This paper mainly focuses on the study of ecocriticism and its aspects in the Indian English Novel "The Hungry Tide". Ecocritical analysis of his work reveals the themes of nature as preserver and destroyer of life and nature as the cause of suffering.*

**Keywords:** Literature, Ecocriticism, Environment, Nature.

Eco criticism is a literary theory. It is very significant in the present scenario. Reading of literary texts under the lens of eco critical aspects are one of the functions of eco criticism. It not only explores the nature in a work but also magnifies the literary revelations of the environment. Ecological aspect is vividly portrayed in the works of many Indian English Writers. Kamala Markandeya, Raja Rao, R.K.Narayan, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Amitav Ghosh and Bhabani Bhattacharya were also written about nature and environment.

An Indian born author Amitav Ghosh completed his studies at Dehra Dun, New Delhi, Alexandria and Oxford. He got a doctoral degree from Oxford University. He taught in many universities. The Circle of Reason is the first novel of Ghosh. In 2007, he won the Padma Shri award from the Indian Government for his contribution in literature.

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* is a well known example of using the ecological aspects in the entire story. The Hungry Tide depicts the concept of nature. The novel is based on the system of ecological aspects in the world. The Hungry Tide is the sixth novel of Amitav Ghosh. The novel won the 2004 Hutch Crossword Book Award for Fiction. The novel clearly brings out the wrath of nature and fragility of humans at the mercy of nature. The story of The Hungry Tide centers on Sundarbans. Ghosh depicts the ecological witness in the West Bengal region after 2004. The region is encircled by the Mangrove forest. "...A mangrove forest is a universe unto itself..." (9) The characters are entirely related to the ecological factors in the novel. "...Every year, dozens of people... .. killed by tigers, snakes and crocodiles ... ..every day, thousands of acres of forest disappear underwater..." (25) The aspect of nature such as tiger, crocodile and different other animals in the story are



vidently portrayed through the narration. It takes a major role in the whole story. The characters in the entire story act as the bridge between the past and the present. The Protagonist of the novel is the marine biologist Piyali Roy.

The novel focuses on the relationship between the nature and the protagonist Piyali Roy. The setting of the story is on a train journey in the beginning of the novel. The story begins through the eyes of two educated individuals who undertake a train journey to the tide country. In the train, a city based Translator Kanai Dutt encounters Piya. The reason for returning to her native land is exposed through the conversation with Kanai. As a Marine biologist Piya wants to find out a rare species of Dolphin. Kanai comes from Delhi and travels to Sundarbans to meet his aunt. He was born in Bengal and settled as a businessman in Delhi. He arrives at Lusibari to meet his aunt Nilima. He wants to claim the package left for him by his uncle Nirmal. The package contains an account of his uncle's last days. He discovers the records which revolved around Kusum and her son Fokir. They are the victims of expulsion from the Morichjhapi Island. Nilima asked Kanai to read the hand written diary. She also made him to read the whole letter for the benefits of Kusum, an old friend of Kanai.

There are two temporal narratives given by Ghosh. One relates through the journal of Nirmal's recounting the episode of Morichjhapi which happened before twenty eight years. The second unfolds through the expedition of Piya to study the threatened Gangelic River Dolphins. These two narratives focus the problems and issues of wilderness and conservation. It is also associated to the social cost in the populated places by the socio-economic disprivileged both in the present and the past. The special importance given in Hindu mythology is water. It is mainly related with immortality, creation, place and the feminine. In Indian mythology, running water is very sacred.

The Sundarbans is the post colonial area. It is witnessed the increasing human activity, rejecting biodiversity and recognition and marketing of the uniqueness of the Sundarbans. Recently the Sundarbans' bio network witnesses the change from a menacing ecosystem to a menaced eco system. The refugees were settled in the land from Bangladesh like the settlers Fokir, Kusum and Moyna. The people of the places are interested to like to work for humanity such as Nilima, Nirmal and Piya, the Cetologist. The life is highly precarious for the settlers in the place. Attacking of deadly tigers is very common. Eviction and unrest are permanent menaces in this place. At any time, the tidal floods rise and flow over the land without the warning. The island has faced many hardships, famine, poverty, failed dreams and catastrophes. Death is a stalk reality. In spite of having these dangers people like Kusum feel at home in these islands. "She had dreamed of returning to this place of seeing once more these rich fields of mud, these trembling tides" (21)

The forest guide in the novel is Fokir who accompanies woodcutter and the hunters for their expedition in the forest. Those people are very superstitious. They will not set out into the forest and not accompanying by a Fakir. The guide of Piya and Kanai is Fokir through the waterways. Later, Kanai along with Piya and Fakir set off to Bhotbhoti to resume the research of Piya. Kanai resolves to be as a translator between Piya and Fakir. The local fisherman Fokir though kills animals for living also plays an important role in conserving



them. In the process of steering the outsiders safely through the forest, he loses his life. He connects the myth of the hapless and uneducated native, revealed to sharks, crocodiles, snakes and man-eating tigers living in the tide country.

Ghosh makes an effort to give the solution for ecological aspects to the main issue of the novel by relating to the past and present. Reuniting with nature is also emphasized strongly in the whole story of the novel. Ghosh enlightens him in the familiarity with the tide country. He inherits the creatures and the legacy of centuries old oral tradition. Ghosh personified Fakir as an ecological pioneer.

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