

# Ecocidal Elements in the Movie *Bhopal: A Prayer for Rain*

J. Premkumar,  
Assistant Professor of English,  
Bishop Heber College, Tiruchirappalli-17

Dr. Suresh Frederick,  
Associate Professor and UG Head,  
Department of English,  
Bishop Heber College, Tiruchirappalli-17

At the dawn of the millennium, the whole globe is facing serious ecological crisis. The environment becomes the front page news. This is not only a usual news but fact. High rates of deforestation and forest degradation are common in many parts of the world, but it also leads to the rapid loss of tropical rain forests that particularly captured the attention of world's media in this century. It affects the earth in such effect as global warming and climate change. Environmental issues, in turn, have become increasing provocative in both the academia and the cinema. This ecological awareness inspires many authors and movie directors to center the issue in their literary work and movie production. This ecological crisis needs to be paid attention. Literature and cinema are interconnected to each other and comparison comes eventually. Films and stories are reliably the best way to deliver messages to the society.

'Ecocide theory' is a term coined by Arthur Galston. The Oxford dictionary definition of Ecocide is 'Destruction of the natural environment, especially when deliberate'. The word Ecocide was recorded at the Conference on War and National Responsibility in Washington 1970, where Arthur Galston proposed a new international agreement to ban Ecocide. *Bhopal: A Prayer for Rain* argues against the ecocide which occurred in the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India. This research paper attempts to critically examine in the light of Arthur Galston's famous theory called 'Ecocide theory'.

*Bhopal: A Prayer for Rain* directed by Ravikumar, distributed by Revolver Entertainment, on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at United States. This movie is based on real life events. The Bhopal disaster, also referred to as the Bhopal gas tragedy. This gas leak tragedy killed 100,000 people in India, it was the world's worst industrial disaster in human history. The official death count was 3000, a report in New York Times in the year 2002 indicates the death toll has reached above 14,410 due to chronic disease caused by the gas leak.

*Bhopal: A Prayer for Rain* is a movie which shows the real pain of Bhopal people's suffering. People who, watch this movie truly feel that real pain. It creates awareness in people's mind through emotional scenes. This movie clearly explains how the government officials and political leaders were consciously complicit in such a crime for of money. In the movie Warren Anderson, the CEO of Union

Carbide, speaks with the officials “thank God we’ve maintain the strong relationship with the local government” (Bhopal), this statement reveals that the company had a strong support from the government in all its endeavor. They cleverly used India’s poverty and drought to get labor for the company. In a particular scene from the movie ,a dialogue appears “Uncle Sam said; You want our wheat? Dance to our beat”(Bhopal)this evidently explains how American industries used our poverty and unemployment to bring their industries to make money by selling high breed vegetables, fruits and grains. One more dialogue from the movie adds better evidence “all designed to help Indian farmers to feed her own hungry millions”(Bhopal), this statement clearly explains how those hungry innocent farmers are lured into a trap.

At a particular point, people of Bhopal start to beg for jobs from the officials of Union Carbide. This particular scene from the movie shows us how Indians were struggling during the time of drought. Throughout the movie the city of Bhopal pictured with full of dust, like desserts, there is no greenery in it. Only the officials, politicians and the rich people lived a peaceful life in the city. They know what would happen in the city because of the chemical, but they didn’t take any safety measures. Even government doctors of Bhopal support Union Carbide. An employee from Carbide visits hospital for checkup ,the doctor says “All the chemicals used in Carbide aren’t harmful for health”(Bhopal), this clearly shows that how the company officials influenced even the doctors to cover up their crimes, though the doctor knew the consequences of the harmful chemicals, they support the company strongly only for the sake of money.

Union carbide industry used dangerous chemicals without any safety precautions. That led to an employee’s death, as mentioned by a journalist “that widow’s husband was killed with one drop of it” (Bhopal). The journalist later finds the secrets behind the issue. He also finds the deal among the Union Carbide Industry, the political leaders, all the government officials of Bhopal and the local doctors. An American journalist says, “Union Carbide stores 40tons of poison in the heart of Bhopal” (Bhopal),they illegally stored 40 tons of poisonous chemicals in the center of Bhopal. They didn’t worry about the people’s lives, the land including the Indian government. Apparently a faulty valve had allowed internal pipes to mix with forty tons of methyl isocyanate gas around 1.00 AM on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1984, while most of the million resident of Bhopal slept, loud rumbling reverberated around the plant as the safety valve gave way sending a plume of MIC gas into the early morning air. Within hours, the streets of Bhopal were littered with human corpses and carcasses of buffaloes, cows, dogs and birds.

The lesson of acute and chronic effects of exposure to pesticides and their precursors in Bhopal has not changed agricultural practice patterns. An estimated 3 million people per year suffer the consequences of using pesticides all over the world. It is reported to be the cause of at least 22,000 deaths in India each year. In the state of Kerala, significant mortality and morbidity have been reported following exposure to Endosulfan, a toxic pesticide usage that was continued for 15 years after the events of Bhopal.

The tragedy of Bhopal continues to be a warning sign. It is a warning that the path to industrialization, for developing countries in general, and India in particular will lead to environmental ecocide. The Indian economy is growing at a tremendous rate is actually a positive sign but it is also negatively affects environmental health and public safety to a large extent and especially small companies throughout the country continue to pollute the environment.

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