

Nature as a threat; nature as a refuge with special reference to Amitav Ghosh's "THE HUNGER TIDE"

Dr.K.Yesodha Devi MA, B.Ed., M.Phil., PhD.,
Asst.Prof.of English,
Periyar EVR College, Trichy-2.

ABSTRACT

Amitav Ghosh has expressed environment and animal in his novel the hungry tide. This paper is an attempt to illustrate how Ghosh has used the nature and its hunger. To show the post colonial world and its hunger in making the people colonised and in the literal sense how the people are prayed for the tide which appears without any symptoms.

Amitav Ghosh one of the foremost Indian English writer his work in tune with the global changes, multicultural environs and cosmopolitanism. But at the same time he has not failed to portray darker side of the real Indian in his novel , his novel the hungry tide tell the sad tale of the agonies of the low class refugees and the harsh reality of the life of the sundarbans islanders regarding hunger (or)thirst of the sea . The hungry tide disguises between two hungers the hunger of the rich and the hunger of the poor

Keywords-postcolonial, multicultural enviro, cosmopolitanism refugees.

INTRODUCTION

The novel takes place in the Sundarban Island Ghosh literally portrays the poor islanders fight with the calamitous environment to get their daily single meal. The settlers were mainly farmers but hunger drove them to hunting fishing and honey collecting the result was disastrous many died of drowning many were killed by tigers and crocodiles no day seemed to pass without the news of someone being killed by a tiger, a snake or a crocodile (HT-79).

In his novel *The Hungry Tide*, he has successfully described the environmental essences by using myth, history and legends of the Sunderbans. He also disclosed the human intercommunication with nature by the experiences of main characters like Piyali Roy a researcher who came to the Sunderbans for the research of Gangetic and Irrawaddy dolphins and Kanai Dutt, a translator came to Lucibari, to collect and translate the journal of his uncle, Nirmal, in which he had described the strong relation between the nature and human world.

NATURE A THREAT

The novel is set in the Sundarbans the vast, intermittently submerged archipelago, largely covered by mangrove forest, in this novel from the Himalayan mountain arises the holy river of India The Ganges which runs and forms the delta of the Ganges as it debouches into the Bay of Bengal known as Tide country. The region is supposed to derive its name from the sunder trees as the mangrove is located two third in Bangladesh only one third in India .One among the islands is the Lusibari which is habitat of various animals like The Bengal tiger, huge Crocodiles, Sharks and Snakes. At first Lusibari is decolonized by Sir Daniel Mackinnon at the beginning of twentieth century He decided to create a utopian society in Sundarban offering free lands. Many people came and cleared the forest and lived there as settlers. It is a region whose fishing folk easily traverse the imaginary boundaries of the modern nation state, crossing as the wind and the tides take them, the mouth of many river channels that set up a unique turbulence of fresh and salt water washing the island of the archipelago, in which the readers experience the terrifying beauty of the river and struggle for survival. *"The Hungry Tide"* tells a very contemporary story of adventure and unlikely love, identity and history set in one of the most fascinating regions on Earth among the eastern most coast of India, in the Bay of Bengal, lies the immense Labyrinth of tiny islands known as the Sundarban where the tide changes the environment daily, nothing is certain and everything in life is a shade of grey into the transformative sphere of the tide country where life lived on the margins of greater event for the settlers, here , the life is extremely precarious. We can see the terrifying and dangerous life of the settlers in the tide country Attacks by deadly tigers and eviction cause common unrest and constant threats without warning the tidal floods raise at anytime and many died of drowning.

The novel suggests that while outside or human conflicts which certainly affect life in the Sundarbans, the struggle to survive in a natural world that seems entirely inhospitable to humans is a far more pressing concern.' Sundarbans, an archipelago of islands in the Bay of Bengal. The writer calls the island the "ragged fringe" of India's sari and explains that the islands vary greatly in size, and the waterways that run between them range from tiny creeks to miles-wide rivers. Where multiple rivers meet, it's called a mohona. Salt and fresh water mingle, and the tides create new islands and destroy others overnight. Tigers, snakes, and crocodiles kill dozens every year. "Sundarbans" means "the beautiful forest," though the etymology of the word is questionable. The writer Moreover, by doing so for cultures that are geographically Sundarbans, an archipelago of islands in the Bay of Bengal. The writer calls the island the "ragged fringe" of India's sari and explains that the islands vary greatly in size, and the waterways that run between them range from tiny creeks to miles-wide rivers. Where multiple rivers meet, it's called a mohona. Salt and fresh water mingle, and the tides create new islands and destroy others overnight. Tigers, snakes, and crocodiles kill dozens every year. "Sundarbans" means "the beautiful forest," though the etymology of the word is questionable.

In this novel we have two character Nirmal and Nilima who comes from Calcutta to get settled in Lusibari in 1950 there they were astonished by the poverty stricken condition of the people, they are struggling for their survival, We people now a days struggle for earning more and more money for our children and grand children but here the survival itself a tough job which is our basic right

One of the central characters of the novel Kusum lost her father when she was just five years old. Her father was killed by a tiger when he went to collect fire wood in the reserve forest , her mother was cheated by man called Dilip Choudhury and was sold at a brothel here we see the two kind of hungry the hungry of the environment and the hunger of the rich Like Lusibari, Marichjhapi is an island of tides a couple of hour from Lusibari it is the place reserved for Tiger conservation in 1978 thousands of refugees were settled down there from Bangladesh where there were no inhabitants before at the time of partition government before at the time of partition . Government made settlement of those refugees to a place called Dandakaranya. According to government it is called “resettlement” but it is a kind of prison they suffer exploitation by Muslim communalist and by upper caste Hindus. Most of them were Dalits. In Lusibari people struggled for survival, Ghosh contrast the hunger beast vs. man. Nature has started paying back humankind in the severest manner. Humanity has to rethink re-evaluate redesignate its relationship with its surrounding by acknowledging the fact that we are part of our environment and in no way superior to it . Ecocriticism begins from the conviction that the arts of imagination and the study by virtue of their grasp of the power of word, story and image to reinforce and direct environmental concern Can contribute significantly to the understanding of environmental problems.

There are no borders here to divide fresh water from salt river from sea tides reach as far as three hundred kilometre inland and every day thousands of acres of forest disappear underwater only to re emerge house later when the tide create new land overnight Mangroves begin to gestate and if the conditions are right they can spread so fast as to cover a new island with in a few short year

The climate change is undeniable and visible thing in the novel, it is because of changes in the environment that rare species of dolphins and others fishes are dwindling the population of tiger is reducing day by day the ecosystem is under threat because of climatic changes because of climatic changes human encroachments and nylon nets the population of fishes in dwindling. The people living there are poor and with little means of survival. Submission of island is not a fiction but reality. The water in the Bay of Bengal is rising very rapidly the environmental threat of sundarban island is reality. The rapid erosion and rising sea levels are increasingly threatening the existence of island off the coat of Bangladesh and India. Ecosystem is very important aspects of environment a single problem can start. Here in Hungry tide Ghosh problematizes the tensions between and within human communities and with the environment the

constant threat and attacks by Tiger are most common, tidal floods destroy the stability of life on the island without any warning it discusses the conflict between man and nature in the contest of the sundarbans in India and Bangladesh. Every year dozens of people perish in the embrace of that dense foliage killed by tiger, snakes and crocodiles.

Towards the end of the novel when Piya and Fokir are trapped by the cyclone, it is the extreme desperation and fight for survival that brings them together. Piya begins with a mistranslation of the people and environment around her and proceeds to represent a movement towards equality between elite and subaltern culture. Ghosh wants to suggest if the world is to see the positive change through social anthropology, there is the need to promote such cross cultural relations.

The Hungry Tide is not only a tale of settlers and their physical surroundings in the sunderbans but also an exploration into the hearts of the characters. This fact that the present study detects mental agony of the inhabitants living in a fragile ecosystem is information about the condition of the people, and the present generation can take up fruitful steps to help improve the situation of Tide country.

