

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES TODAY: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE



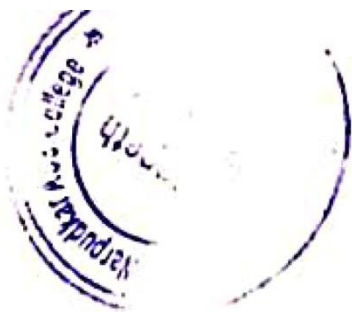
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The Use of Nature in Modern Indian Fictional World

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INTRODUCTION

The nature is the eminence of the universe and the main source of the emergence of the human emotions and feelings which transferred into the form of creative imagination of the literary World. The distinctive role of the nature is the sole source for the human ideas, and that depicted by the writers in the forms of poetry and various types of the nature imagery in the World literature. The concern of the nature has various aspects, where it is called as 'Ecocriticism' in modern sphere of the literary criticism. The term is new but the awareness regarding the nature is very ancient, where the Greek masters like Plato and Aristotle were mentioned about the unique importance of the beautiful nature. Though the nature imagery was anciently used in the writings but the modern human being is going away from the beauty of the nature and killing the nature under the title of development. Hence, to preserve the nature and to increase the awareness regarding the nature is became the new challenge before developing world.

The ecological significance and imbalance of the nature is becoming the key factor for the modern society of the World. The nature and its beauty are not only used in British literature, but Indian writers have the rich nature language in Indian English literature. The nature and Imagery is not only used in Indian poetry, but frequently it is used in modern Indian fiction. The modern Indian fiction is emerged in abundance of fictional writings in the forms of the novel

as well as the short stories. It is found that Indian fictional writers like Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamla Markandya and many novelists have created literary creations by using the rich nature imagery in their writings.

The nature worshiping is the ancient tradition, where it is found in the *Bhagwat Geeta*, "Of the immovable things, I am the Himalayas" (Prabhupada *Tenth Discourse; Shloka 2.5*). As well as the great Indian mythical writer Kalidasa mentioned the importance of Himalaya in his play *Kumarsambhava* that Himalaya is

The snow-clad mountain range as the treasure house of innumerable precious stones, minerals, important herbs, trees, plants, creepers with delightful flowers; as the abode of the Siddhas, ascetics, Yakshas, Kinnaras, Kiratas and various types of animals and birds; as the source of the Ganga and several other rivers. ("Nature Worship")

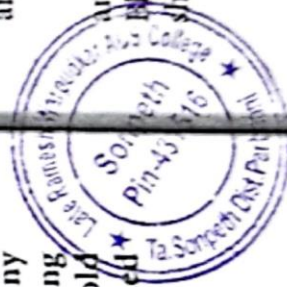
This shows that how the nature was worshiped in ancient Indian literary scripts. The mountains, rivers, animals and birds were worshiped in the ancient literary works. Unlikely, Raja Rao, the prominent Indian fiction writer has used the nature and its importance in his writings. In his novel *Kanthapura*, the mountain Kenchamma was worshiped as the Goddess,

It was Kenchamma you are not kind to us. Our field is full of younglings and you have not given us water ... when the doors are closed and the lights are put out, pat-pat-pat, the rain patters on the tiles, and many a peasant is heard to go into the fields, squelching through the gutter and mire. We gave a sari and a gold trinket to the goddess, and the goddess never touched those that are to live. (Rao 2)

This shows that how Indian fiction was filled with the nature imagery. The nature was the part and parcel of the writings of Raja Rao. His novel *The Serpent and the Rope* also has the nature imagery in the title itself as well as various images were symbolically used by Raja Rao in the novel. The protagonist of the novel Rama was initially influenced by the Western culture, but finally he has fulfilled his desires in Indian cultural sphere. The use of the nature imagery and the deep influence of the nature are truly found in these two fictional works of Rao.

The backbone of the Indian fictional writings R.K. Narayan has also handled the nature and its imagery in his fictional world. Unlikely Thomas Hardy's Wessex, Narayan has successfully and enthusiastically developed the Malgudi in his fictional writings. The nature is the central phenomena in the stories like *The Astrologer's Day* and *The Father's Help*. The banyan tree, the nature atmosphere in the fields, the chirping birds and the nature colors were used by R.K. Narayan in his above stories. R.K. Narayan in his fictional work *The Guide*, he skillfully handled the nature like temple, river, caves and mountain. All these nature imagery are showing the protection and perseverance of the nature with human existence. "The ennobling moral force of the river is revealed in *The Guide*, from Raju's pretentious sainthood to his final self-realization, the events are dramatized on the bank of the river" (Garg 216). It is the use of the nature in literature for projection of moral and dramatization of the situation in the fiction *The Guide*. Narayan is the writer who used the rustic language and the nature to create the appropriate background in his literary works. The nature imagery enriched the arts and characters of R.K. Narayan.

The nature is always superior to man. The controlling and destroying power of the nature is always uncountable. Bhabani Bhattacharya also used the nature imagery to show the impact of the nature on the life of man. Though,



the nature is powerful but we are responsible turn it into calamity. The famine, flood, drought and many natural calamities are held due to the misuse of the nature. Bhabani Bhattacharya has used the nature symbol in the novel *So Many Hungers*, which has the setting of the famine of Bengal, where thousands of the innocent were died due to starvation in 1943. The characters are symbolizing the nature through their behavior, where Laxmi Kanth designed as an extraordinary combination of jackal and the vulture. This shows the importance of the nature in the fiction of Bhabani Bhattacharya.

Kamala Markandaya was another Indian novelist, who used nature image fruitfully in her fiction entitled *Nectar in Sieve*. Markandaya has handled the tool of nature in her novel. Where she writes, "Nature is like a wild animal that you have trained to work for you. So long as you are vigilant and walk warily with thought and care, so long will it give you its aid; but look away for an instant, be heedless and forgetful, and it has you by the throat" (Markandaya 109). This is the use of the nature and imagery to create the fruitful atmosphere in her novel. The symbolic ideas and implications are useful in setting of the novels of Kamala Markandaya.

Apart from the above initial Indian novelists, the later phase Indian novelists like Anita Desai, Manoj Das and Ruskin Bond were inspired the beauty and exuberant importance of the nature in their fictional world. "Their love for nature is seen in the description of their characters, circumstances, emotions, or direct concern for ecology" (Shodhganga 44).

Ruskin Bond, the renowned Indian fiction writer has natural setting from the beautiful state Himachal Pradesh. His stories entitled *Copperfield in the Jungle*, *The Tree Lover*, *An Island of Trees* and *The Cherry Tree* were the major concern of the nature and its beauty itself. The scenic hills of Dehradun and Mussoorie are showing the prodigal beauty of the nature.

The beautiful nature from the stories of Ruskin Bond was showing the importance of the nature.

He shows his worry for the unfaithful actions of man towards nature. Through his short stories for children he has tried to convey an important message to everyone, that is, message of the importance of nature in our life. In his *An Island of Trees* the grandmother reveals to her granddaughter, Koki, the deep bond that grows between humans and nonhumans if only there is love and compassion. *No Room for a Leopard* is about deforestation and its accompanying aftermath. It presents the pathetic condition of the animals after deforestation. (Shodhganga 45)

It shows that, how Bond was very conscious towards the sensitivity of the nature and the long lasting impact of the nature on human life itself. The serious focus regarding the usefulness of the nature is noticeable in the stories of Ruskin Bond. His focus was on the friendly relationship in man and nature itself. His pity for the protection of the nature and harshly attacked the cruel behavior of human being towards the nature.

Above all, the other Indian fiction writers like Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh were prominently handled the nature and wrote for the protection of the nature. Their writings were successful to predict the vastness of nature which is all time useful for the protection of the Earth. They expressed the terror regarding the action of man taken against the destruction of the nature. They focused on the cruelties of man to the sole source of life line nature. Their writing was continuously rotate around the perseverance and protection of the natural habitat. The nature was the source of inspiration for these Indian novelists.



CONCLUSION

To sum up, mostly the famous Indian English fiction writers were firmly focused on the importance and the emergence of the nature. They have personified the nature in their writings by giving various examples in their fiction. The fictional world of these writers was continuously rotating around the nature and its perseverance. They have focused the nature like deity in their writings; where by destruction of the nature can be the end of the human existence on the Earth. In their fictional world, the nature was continuously worshipped in village traditions. The geographical and the hilly setting were the major scenes from their novels. Nevertheless, they picture the natural calamities due to the imbalance of the nature and the destruction of the natural resources. It was mentioned in their novels that the famine, drought, flood and such calamities are nothing but indirectly the curse of the nature to human being. So, we have to realize the consequences of the disturbing phase of the nature itself. It is the need of time that everybody should give serious attention toward the protection of nature. The nature is the only natural source for the life line of human being on the Earth. If the preservation of the natural sources will not handled in proper sense, there will be the Third World War held on the sharing of the natural resources. If trees will be not planted and preserved, everybody has to carry oxygen cylinder on back for live the life. It need of the time that we have work for save the Earth and the human being, otherwise, there will be many natural calamities be fallen on the Earth. Then, the next generation will not excuse us for the destruction of the beautiful Earth.

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