

**Eco-criticism in Indian Contemporary Poetry: A Few Aspects to Synthesise in the  
Direction towards Socio-economic and Ecological Development**

**Dr Victor Vaz E**

Assistant Professor

Department of English

Pompei College Aikala

Mangalore University

Karnataka - 574141

[esvictor@rediffmail.com](mailto:esvictor@rediffmail.com)

**Abstract**

Eco-criticism investigates the relation between humans and the natural world in literature. The main motto of the ecological writer is to make the people to realise that Earth is losing its health owing to man's mistake. The need to examine the interfaces between nature and culture, animal and human, is urgent and never more pertinent than it is today. The paper attempts to find out the importance of eco consciousness reflected in the Indian English poetry. It also analysed the socio-economic growth due to ecological development. The paper focuses on the select poems of Nissim Ezekail, A.K.Ramanujan, Keki N Daruwalla and which have ecological importance and also the content which have concentrates on the domestic life of human creeds. The study also stresses that people should live nature and when save nature it will give economic growth and development.

Keywords: motto, ecological, pertinent, interface and domestic

**Introduction**

According to the life cycle of the environment all living organism is inter connected for their life. The study of environment is known as ecology. In the present scenario environment is polluted by so many ways and it's become the duty of the literature to represent the problems. Eco-criticism investigates the relation between humans and the natural world in literature. It deals with how environmental issues, cultural issues concerning the environment and attitudes towards nature are presented and analysed. One of the main goals in eco-criticism is to study how individuals in society behave and react in relation to nature and ecological aspects. This form of criticism has gained a lot of attention during recent years due to higher social emphasis on environmental destruction and increased technology. It is hence a fresh way of analysing and interpreting literary texts, which brings new dimensions to the field of literary and theoretical studies. Ecocriticism is an intentionally broad approach that is known by a number of other designations, including "green (cultural) studies", "eco-poetics", and "environmental literary criticism." The study of Literature and environment consciousness is an interdisciplinary study termed as Ecocriticism

The main motto of the ecological writer is to make the people to realise that Earth is losing its health owing to man's mistake. The term "ecocriticism" was coined in 1978 by William Rueckert in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism." Lawrence Buell an eco-critic in his environment-oriented study of literature identifies two phases of eco-criticism. The first wave concentrates on the nature writing, nature poetry and wildlife fiction. The second wave focuses on the injustice done to environment. Ecocriticism continues to grow as a discipline due to continued global environmental crisis. Eco-criticism aims to show how the work of writers concerned about the environment can play some part in solving real and pressing

ecological concerns. The need to examine the interfaces between nature and culture, animal and human, is urgent and never more pertinent than it is today.

### **Objective of the study**

The paper attempts to find out the importance of ecological consciousness reflected in the Indian English poetry. It also analysed the socio-economic growth due to ecological development.

### **Limitations for the Study**

The paper focuses on the select poems of Nissim Ezekail, A.K.Ramanujan, Keki N Daruwalla and which have ecological importance and also the content which have concentrates on the domestic life of human creeds.

### **Findings of the study**

Indian Writing in English is rich in worshipping nature. The tradition of worshipping nature as God was started from Vedic and continuing till now. People worship Sun, Rain (Varun), Vayu(wind) and Prithvi (the earth), All the elements of nature and planets were also worshipped and given importance to religion and tradition. The great epics Ramayana and Mahabharata are given importance to nature. All the Tamil literature works have given importance to trees and animals.

Toru Dutt's "Our Casuarina Tree" says that the tree symbolizes the ancient and venerable culture of India, while the huge encircling creeper symbolizes the potentially deadly influence of colonialism. The Casuarina Tree is covered with the creeper which bears red crimson flowers that appear as though the tree is wearing a colorful scarf.

LIKE a huge Python, winding round and round

The rugged trunk, indented deep with scars,

Up to its very summit near the stars,

A creeper climbs, in whose embraces bound

No other tree could live. (Toru Dutt, Our Casuarina Tree 1-5)

She says the tree is a replica of Indian history and culture. It shows growth and development the country has from faced Independence. In the forth coming line she brings out the real circumstances which prevail in the society. People and nature face so much of problems due to erroneous done for the society and nature. People should not differentiate that nature and society are different when a society should face economic development the nature should not betray them. The growth and development of a country is interrelated with nature. When man goes against nature then nature regrets like the Casuarina Tree,

What is that dirge-like murmur that I hear

Like the sea breaking on a shingle-beach?

It is the tree's lament, an eerie speech, (31-33)

Ecocriticism is not just studying nature as represented in Literature. This kind of study existed very early even before William Ruceckert coined the word eco-criticism. Ecocriticism helps the human beings have a broader view of nature. It urges humans to have a biocentric view despite their apparently incorrigible anthropocentrism due to their selfish nature. The poems of Nissim Ezekail portray the love, affection, solitude, human foibles, political pomposity and many other things. But the poem which portrays nature merit eco-critical attention is "Squirrel":

An agile flick of grey and brown  
  
And he is gone, like a thought,  
  
To sport with leaves and sun  
  
Indifferent to the bait  
  
Fearing fingers of the watching child  
  
But he must come,  
  
Fluent shape of him, to be caressed-  
  
As thought should be  
  
Be definition of the mind-  
  
As to a home  
  
At any cost  
  
Bound(Nissim Ezekail Squirrel)

The poet presents the realistic image of a squirrel before the readers through his lines. Generally speaking squirrel is of two types five stripped and three stripped and the five stripped squirrel lives in forest but these squirrels inhabitants got changed they started to come to the domestic living place of humans like the rats. They started to depend on man for food. Human do not realise the tragic situation they have done to nature at present for them the wild squirrel becomes an entertainment. They have to realise that people have ruined the wealth of nature because

squirrel plays vital role in pollination when they live in trees. But due to the change in the habitat this chain of biodiversity has got changed. “Sparrow” by Nissim Ezekiel ;

You may not doubt their single aim,

Which is to fly and then to mate,

Aroused to build with twig and leaf

A nest sufficient for the need-

Open, warm and planned to give

A truly bird's eye view of things

Perhaps there is a better creed

Among sparrow-communities;

Artists with plastic sense

Who learn to love their loneliness.

Or statesmen of a sort who say,

‘Our safety lies in unity

And larger nests, prosperity,’

Philosophers in solitude

Unearthing thoughts instead of worms,

And contemplating silently

The destiny of sparrows

I fancy this, and then I face

The fact-the mating and the nest

Primeval root of all rest

Normally sparrow are called as, House Sparrow because they are closely tied to human activity. It is usually absent from extensive woodlands, forests, grasslands and deserts. It builds its nest in human habitats with twigs and leaves. The small nest is much enough for the birds and from the nest it can view everything. The poet articulates that sparrows are better than the human being because people are not able to have unity in the larger house but these birds able to find unity in the small nest. It teaches the human creed with a big lesson that satisfaction is more important than anything in the world.

Another poem that challenges culture is A. K. Ramanujan's "Snakes" from his first collection The Strider's. The persona in the poem afraid of the snake, he kills it and feels that he is safe in the woods. "I leave him sealed, / in a flat-heal whiteness on a strain./ Now/ frogs can hop upon his sausage rope, flies in the sun will mob the look in his eyes"( A.K. Ramanujan, Snake) A.K. Ramanujan's persona kills the snake urged by his inner fear in spite of the cultural and religious background of the fact that his own mother had fed them. By killing a snake he has broken the ecological chain and created a imbalance for the nature. This is what the ecologists like to call the self-destructive or suicidal motive that is inherent in our prevailing and paradoxical attitude towards nature. A.K. Ramanujan has written "Ecology" to stress the importance of nature to man he says;

The day after the first rain,  
  
For years, I would come home  
  
in a rage,  
  
for I could see from a mile away  
  
our three Red Champak trees  
  
had done it again  
  
had burst into flower and given Mother  
  
her first blinding migraine  
  
of the season  
  
with their street-long heavy-hung  
  
yellow pollen fog of fragrance  
  
no wind could sift,  
  
no door could shut out from our black-  
  
pillared house whose walls had ears  
  
and eyes,  
  
scales, smeels, bone-creaks,nightly  
  
visiting voices, and were porous

like us,  
  
but Mother, flashing her temper  
  
like her mother's twisted silver,  
  
grandchildren's knickers  
  
wet as the cold pack on her head,  
  
would not let us cut down  
  
a flowering tree( A.K.Ramanujan Ecology)

He says the work of a tree and how it helps people in announcing the change of climate so that people will get prepared for the coming climate. People done agriculture according to the climate but due to cutting of trees everything got changed. The lines Mother, flashing... say how our ancestors give importance to nature but for the infrastructural growth so much natural environment is smashed and ruined.

An ecocritical reading of Keki N Daruwalla' s poem "A Boat ride along the Ganga", reveals how man is responsible for polluting the holy river. The poem begins with a simple description of an evening, but the poet's "conscience" for "hygiene" makes him curse it. "As the panda points out Dasasvamedh. I listen avidly to his legend-talk Striving to forget what I chanced to see: The sewer-mouth trained like a cannon On the rivers flank. It is as I feared; Hygiene is a part of conscience and I curse it And curse my upbringing which makes me queasy here." This poem throws light on the hazards of polluting the holy river. The author intends to make "One, queasy" and to develop hygiene as a part of one's conscience.

### **Findings and Conclusion**

In the fast moving world people should not get back from their success wheel. But they should always think that they cannot have social and economical development without nature. The victory they get without the ecological balance will be a temporary one. The poems taken for the study also stress that people should live nature and when save nature it will give economic growth. As a saying, when a person loves nature he will have humanity and nation which has people with humanity will not get any breakdown.

### **References**

#### **Primary Sources**

- Dutt Toru “Our Casuarina Tree”, <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/our-casuarina-tree/> 4 March 1856 - 30 August 1877.
- Ezekiel Nissim “Squirrel”[https://www.poemhunter.com/search/ Ezekiel Nissim/](https://www.poemhunter.com/search/Ezekiel+Nissim/).16 December 1924 - 9 January 2004.
- Ramanujan A.K “Ecology” <https://www.poemhunter.com/a-k-ramanujan/poems/> 16 March 1929 - 13 July 1993

#### **Secondary Sources**

- Huggan Graham and Tiffin Helen, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*, Second Edition, Routledge Publication Delhi, 2015.
- LeMenager Stephanie, *Environmental Criticism for the Twenty-First Century (Routledge Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Literature)*. Routledge New Delhi. 2011
- Nayar K. Pramod, *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory: From Structuralism to Ecocriticism*. Pearson, Delhi, 2009
- Rangarajan Swarnalatha and Slovic Scott(ed), *Ecocriticism: Big Ideas and Practical Strategies (Literary/Cultural Theory)*, Orient Blackswan, United Kingdom, 2018
- Selvamony Nirmal, *Essays in Ecocriticism*, Ivy Publishing House New Delhi, 2008

#### **Web Sources**

- Dr.ShreeKumar. “Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis CheryllGlotsfelty—Ecocriticism”. *Dr. Sreekumar’s English Literature & Career Advancement*, 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2017.  
<http://sreekumarenglishliterature.blogspot.com/2017/04/literary-studies-in-age-of.html>.